CHALLENGES TO THE HEGEMONIC AFRICAN STATE: MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN KENYA AND ZAMBIA

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of The Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations with Communications at the School of Arts, Communication and Culture in the College of Communication, Culture and Education

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DECLARATION

The candidate hereby declares that this thesis is the result of his own investigations. All sources consulted are clearly acknowledged in the text and bibliography. Further, this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and it is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

DEDICATION

To my family: Florence, a valuable company who has put up with busy me from our undergraduate years; Ruth and Sebbie, both of whom often had to do without my expected fatherly presence for some of those little happenings in their young lives.

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ACRONYMS[1]

AU: African Union
ATM: Automatic (or Automated) Teller Machine
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
BCE: Before Common Era, used in place of Before Christ (BC)
BFN: *Between Facts and Norms* (by Jurgen Habermas)
CBOs: Community Based Organisations
CE: Common Era, used in place of Anno Domino (AD)
CMC: Computer Mediated Communication
CPJ: Committee to Protect Journalists
CSO(s): Civil Society Organisation(s)
DFID: The UK government Department for International Development
EC: European Community
ECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECZ: Electoral Commission of Zambia
ESD: Electronic Service Delivery, especially in e-governance realms.
EU: European Union
FTF (f2f): Face to Face communication
GII: Global Information Infrastructure
GCSOs: Global Civil Society Organisations
HTML: Hyper Text Mark Up Language (used to define WWW text or graphics)
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
IMF: International Monetary Fund
IR: International Relations
ISP: Internet Service Provider
IT: Information Technology
ITU: International Telecommunication Union
LAN: Local Area Network
LDCs: Least Developed Countries
KANU: Kenya African National Union, ruling party 1963-2002.
KBC: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, the national-state broadcaster.
KTN: Kenya Television Network, the first private network.
MNC: Multi-national Corporations
NIGD: Network Institute for Global Democratisation
NGO: Non-governmental Organisation
OAU: Organisation of African Union
PC: Personal Computer
STPS: *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (by Jurgen Habermas)
SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa
TNCs: Transnational Corporations
TNCSOs: Transnational Civil Society Organisations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
URL: Uniform Resource Locator (or web address)
VOA: Voice of America
WTO: World Trade Organisation
WWW: World Wide Web
ZNBC: Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, the state broadcaster.

[1] Abbreviations and acronyms for specific NGOs surveyed in this study are summerised in tables 8.1 and 8.2.

ABSTRACT

The central argument in this thesis is that urban-based political Civil Society actors, particularly Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and news media, in both Kenya and Zambia, perceive Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as presenting them with significant opportunities for achieving greater democracy. Representatives of these non-state actors view the Internet, e-mail and the cell phone in particular as tools that have not only enhanced their operational efficiency but also helped them overcome obstacles that the ruling elites often erected – using human, material and ideological state machinery – to stifle any form of challenge to their incumbency. Increasingly, the new media enable the non-state actors to engage in cross-border communicational activities as a way of effecting changes within states. They facilitate what David Held has described as webs of relations and networks that stretch across national borders. However, unlike recent cosmopolitan approaches to democratic theory and practice, this study privileges local conditions and off-line factors concomitant with the use of rapidly diffusing new media technology.

Taking a structural approach to democratic theory and thereby employing the civil society perspective with a focus on a recently modified public sphere concept, this thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge through an empirical study based on interviews carried out in Nairobi and Lusaka around crucial election epoch. By providing a rare insight into perceptions on new media by a category of Africa's political actors who have been not only considered early ICT adopters and topmost users, but also largely accredited for recent waves of democratisation, this study departs from a plethora of existing literature that have been overly deterministic in favour of technological and conjectural slants to new media in the developing world. To augment authenticity and validity, every effort is made to contextualise the interviewees' claims. This directly addresses a substantial gap in the literature which has been widely identified but not, so far, addressed.

The thesis has four core arguments which form the basis of its claim to originality. First of all, it argues that democratisation in Zambia and Kenya is not merely illusionary, and that the new media have played some role in the transfer of power and political activity from a narrow political elite. To that extent at least, it supports the widespread 'democratisation through new media' thesis. But at the same time, and secondly, it takes a critical view of the naivety of many of the proponents of that argument, and points out that that naivety is sustained, at least in large part, by a tendency to over-generalisation. Through very detailed and carefully researched case studies, the thesis demonstrates that the process of both democratisation and the deployment of the new media by CSOs and NGOs is more complex and much more nuanced than the literature on the subject usually suggests. Thirdly, then, the thesis is original in so far as it is grounded in the original field work which has been conducted over a sustained period of time, including a number of visits to the case study countries and interviews and communications with many of the key players as well as the main theorists in the field. As a former journalist in Kenya, the author is aware that he has at once a privileged position in doing this research, which has allowed him access and insights which might well be denied to others, and at the same time a potentially dangerous proximity to the material, 'dangerous' here in a methodological sense. The strategies which have been used to counter those potential dangers are outlined and explained in the earlier chapters of the study. Fourthly, and finally, the thesis is original in its critical use of the Habermassian notion of the public sphere and its relationship to the potential for degrees of genuine or emancipatory democracy. That concept is helpful in explaining processes of socio-political change in Kenya and Zambia; the limitations may also be helpful to explain why the process of democratisation, though real, has been partial, and why the new media have only partially fulfilled the aspirations which their proponents have held for them in the specific context studied here.

INTRODUCTION

It is the argument of this thesis that ICTs have not in themselves brought about socio-political transformations in Kenya and Zambia, but they have acted as change-catalysts and trend-amplifiers. It is for this reason that much effort goes into the background and context within which ICTs are used by urban political CSOs in both countries in election epoch.

With the advent of pluralism in most African countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s came two distinct phenomena – the rise of a new type of urban civil society organizations (CSOs), especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the emergence of new forms of communications media that could not be easily monitored or controlled by the ruling elite and ruling institutions. Taking Kenya and Zambia as case studies, this thesis probes the link between these two developments. It uses a holistic and contextual approach with a view to establishing from the CSO actors themselves whether they use the new media, and if they do, why, how, and with what perceived effects they use them. It also asks whether in their opinion these technologies have enhanced their efficiency. The question as to whether their efficiency, if any, has led to effectiveness – in the sense of influencing policies and actions of politicians – is not of a primary concern here, but is explored for purposes of analysis.

To place the work firmly in its broader theoretical and contextual framework, the thesis examines three major themes that run through most, if not all, attempts to explain the epochal movement away from authoritarian and autocratic regimes towards some kind of democracy not only in Africa but also around the world in about the same time frame. First to be considered in the first chapter is the idea of the third wave metaphor. There are two distinct but related aspects of this image – both of which the civil society is associated: one is democracy and the other the idea of an information society (or network society or post-industrial society, among others).[2] "Third wave democracy" is most prominently associated with Samuel Huntington who popularised it, but the concept has been taken up

quite universally. For instance, the UNDP in its 2002 *Human Development Report* dubbed 'deepening democracy in a fragmented world', alludes to the third wave in its 'human development balance sheet' that juxtaposes 'global progress' and 'global fragmentation'.[3]

The first item under 'democracy and participation' on the 'global progress side' is the fact that "since 1980, 81 countries have taken significant steps towards democracy, with 33 military regimes replaced by civilian governments" and that "140 of the world's nearly 200 countries now hold multiparty elections, more than at any time in history". Juxtaposed with this, however, is the fact that "of the 81 countries, only 47 are fully democratic; many others do not seem to be in transition to democracy or have lapsed back into authoritarianism or conflict" and that "only 82 countries, with 57% of the world's people, are fully democratic." (*Ibid*).

This is significant for the cases under study given that, as will be seen in chapter four, both Kenya and Zambia were among the first countries in Africa to readopt multiparty politics in euphoric moments, the former in 1992 and the latter in 1991. In fact Zambia was seen as the shining star for other African people encumbered with the excesses of autocrats and military rulers. In this sense, both countries fell within the UNDP's 'progress' bracket. However, this celebration was only shortly lived as opposition disunity handed Kenya's incumbent President Moi victory with less than half the popular vote for another two terms of five years each. Once back in the driving seat, Moi did everything to show he was still in charge until the constitution compelled him to leave office in 2002, but not before he had tried to change the supreme law of the land in order to achieve his ambition of celebrating his silver jubilee as president. Zambians on the other hand managed to throw long-serving Kaunda out of power at the first multi-party elections, but it did not take long before they were disillusioned by Chiluba's autocratic tendencies, and

[2] This by no means restricts the types of 'waves' (for Raymond Williams conceives of a cultural one, separately, as well) but is to aid this analysis as these are the key ones in politics and international relations.
[3] *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, New York: UNDP, p10.

started agitating for a 'third republic'. In other words, these two cases correspond closely to the UNDP's explanation of movement to multipartyism followed by a relapse.

The second juxtaposition that the UNDP makes is that on the 'progress' side, "in 2000 there were 37,000 registered international NGOs, one fifth more than in 1990," with many of them enjoying consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council and the UN Department of Public Information. On the other hand, 51 countries had not ratified a Freedom of Association convention, 39 had not ratified a Collective Bargaining convention and no NGO has consultative status with the UN Security Council. Although the case studies under consideration are not global, the UNDP juxtaposition illustrates the limits to how far civil society organizations (CSOs) can go in their desire to participate in the governance or political process. This opening up of the public sphere and the existence of limitations to participation in such realms is addressed theoretically in chapter two as well as chapter three, where the concept of power and influence is used to examine cosmopolitan democracy as well as cyberdemocracy. It is the argument in this thesis that whereas CSOs have gained some ground as regard civil liberties and political rights, state forces still possess and are in control of apparatuses that make it difficult for the CSOs – not to mention their own operational weakness – to surmount bottlenecks put in their way. A similar argument can be applied to the new media – the tools CSOs are said to use to exercise their 'soft power' in balance with the state's coercive potential, which takes us to the next UNDP juxtaposition.

This is about the emergence of a free or partly free press in 125 countries, with 62% of the world population, accompanied with the doubling of daily newspapers in developing countries and the increase in TVs 16-fold being countered with 61 countries, with 38% of the population, without a free press with journalists still being tortured or killed. Whereas the UNDP does not mention new media at this point, this juxtaposition is applicable in the new media realms. Although chapter three touches on the liberating characteristics of new media of the Internet, email and mobile phones and chapter seven

looks at the use of these media as old media (for news) as well as to distribute old media content, there are also highlights in these chapters plus a discussion in chapter five, on the digital divide, the risks and limitations of McLuhannesque new media capabilities. Both the 'progress' and 'risks' perspectives of new media are also covered in chapter eight which reports respondents' views following fieldwork findings based on 'efficiency' approach – the assumption that new media enhance the efficiency of CSO actors in carrying out their routine functions which may or may not result in their exercise of 'soft power'.

Through the informational activities of the CSOs, ICTs are largely perceived to offer unprecedented plurality that challenges the hitherto excessive powers and influence of Africa's ruling elites. Before the advent of ICTs, many African leaders tightly controlled information dissemination – allowing only the dominant political views. ICTs in general and the Internet in particular are assumed to challenge state hegemony, especially in Africa – where "Africa's cell phone boom" and "the new technology is causing a revolution on the old continent." Ashurst's story had 'changing Africa: let freedom ring,' with further explanations on "how Africans are unleashing the power of the mobile phone" (Ashurst 2001). Africa's cell phone boom is "sweeping up all levels of society" and that "no other technology, not even the Internet, has changed lives and work in Africa as much as the mobile phone has" (White 2003). Scholars (Ott & Smith 2001, Ott & Rosser 2000, Ott 1998) have pointed out that in Africa the impact of the Internet is, ironically, disproportionately greater than its overall spread. This fits within the general argument that the libertarian culture accorded by ICTs shifts the balance of power between states and citizens, especially in developing countries (Loader 1997, Tsagarousianou et al 1998, Wheeler 1998, Hague & Loader 1999, Ott & Smith 2001, Ferdinand 2000, Spitulnik 2002). ICTs have been perceived as an impetus to the third wave of democratisation (Hyslop 1999, Huntington 1991) as they somewhat reduce the influence of political middlemen (Grossman 1995).

The theory of civil society, especially as it relates to a modified public sphere concept, is crucial to this study. Writing on the public service model, Keane (1991:xii) refers to 'representative structures of communication' that he considers 'analogous to representative government'; in both cases irresponsibility can permanently threaten democratic societies. "A revised public service model requires the development of a plurality of non-state and non-market media that function as permanent thorns in the side of state power, and serve as the primary means of communication for citizens living within a diverse and horizontally organised civil society. And emphasis is given to the democratic potential of the new microelectronic technologies ..... encouraging the perception of communication as complex flows of opinion through networks of public spheres." (Keane, 1991:xii). Various recent surveys indicate that the average Internet user in Africa belongs on an NGO or news media (as well as private firms and universities), apart from being young, male, well educated, English-speaking and above-average earner, and that ICTs have "helped the proliferation and strengthening of NGOs and other private associations" (Franda, 2002:18,19). Graham Harrison (2002:1-2) outlines a conceptualisation of popular political struggle and demonstrates the enduring importance of struggle in any understanding of African politics – offering a different 'angle' from that of repression, authoritarianism and generalised decline. This way, he counters the images of passivity, helplessness and incompetence as well as of violence and malice.

Also taken into consideration in this study are questions on the appropriateness of such actors or channels as CSOs and such media as ICTs for Africa. In an age of unprecedented worldwide prosperity, 40 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's population exist on less then US$1 per day, and one-third of its 54 states are affected by conflict. The continent is said to be in a moment of peril and opportunity. (Herbst & Mills, 2003; UNDP, 2002). From the perspective of peril, effects of further weakening of already weak states whose inability to maintain security and provide basic social services is perceived as the main cause of dire conflict and poverty.

> *The ability of African states to provide for their citizens has not, it would appear, improved with the spread of globalisation – in the form of increased capital and trade flows and debt reduction. In fact, African states have, on average, become increasingly marginalized from the world economy, with their share of global trade and capital falling during the 1990s from 7% and 6% respectively in 1950 to 2% and 1% in 2003. Africa's share of developing countries' global foreign direct investment reduced from around 30% in the 1980s to approximately 7% in 2003.* (Herbst & Mills, 2003:7).

Other signs of peril are Africa's chronic problems: terrorism (especially in Kenya), armed conflict costing Africa US$15 billion a year, refugee crises, natural disasters and diseases (HIV/Aids, malaria). Should these or ICTs and CSOs be Africa's priorities? For Herbst and Mills (2003), the future of Africa seems to lie squarely with the state and the benevolence of its leaders. Civil society and the media in general or new media in particular do not seem to have a role in the duo's analysis. Indeed a number of African leaders have themselves been on the forefront of promoting ICTs, saying it is no longer a matter of choosing between ICTs and other development goals. The two should go hand in hand. To tackle its problems, African leaders want to de-emphasise blaming their problems on colonial legacy to focus on twenty first century solutions, like modern technology.

This is the point of view from which opportunity may be seen to be knocking, especially at a time when western leaders are keen in Africa's progress for greater global peace and prosperity, especially after 9/11. Africa is important to the world, with the U.S. government in her post-9/11 strategy considering countries like Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria her key allies[4] so there is a great deal of interest in the continent's development towards such vague values as freedom, free enterprise, democracy and economic progress. The success of the partnership between western states and Africa depends on how genuine

[4] www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html

the westerners are, especially with regard to ICT projects. As part of this context, the thesis discusses such issues.

Finally, Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular, is not viewed here as one great homogeneous whole, almost one country with one pattern and one inevitable destiny as Barton (1979:ix) puts it. There needs to be more care and more subtlety in how scholars differentiate regions, states and communities in discussion of the impact of ICTs in Africa, and this study aims to do that. So conclusions drawn from this study may not necessarily be intended to provide generalised patterns which could be applied in the continent as a whole. The strengths and limitations of the scope of the study are discussed throughout the thesis, but most notably in the conclusions.

In summary, what are the core findings of the thesis that sustain its claim to originality? First of all, the thesis argues that democratisation in Zambia and Kenya is not merely illusionary, and that the new media have played some role in the transfer of power and political activity from a narrow political elite. To that extent at least, it supports the widespread 'democratisation through new media' thesis. But at the same time, and secondly, it takes a critical view of the naivety of many of the proponents of that argument, and points out that that naivety is sustained at least in large part by a tendency to over-generalisation. Through very detailed and carefully researched case studies, the thesis demonstrates that the process of both democratisation and the deployment of the new media by CSOs and NGOs is more complex and much more nuanced than the large literature on the subject usually suggests. Thirdly, then, the thesis is original in so far as it is grounded in the original fieldwork that has been conducted over a sustained period of time, including a number of visits to the case study countries and interviews and communications with many of the key players as well as the main theorists in the field. As a former journalist in Kenya, the author is aware that he has at once a privileged position in doing this research, which has allowed him access and insights which might well be denied to others, and at the same time a potentially dangerous proximity to the material,

'dangerous' here in a methodological sense. The strategies that have been used to counter those potential dangers are outlined and explained in the earlier chapters of the study. Fourthly, and finally, the thesis is original in its critical use of the Habermassian notion of the public sphere and its relationship to the potential for degrees of genuine or emancipatory democracy. That concept is helpful in explaining processes of socio-political change in Kenya and Zambia; its limitations may also be helpful to explain why the process of democratisation, though real, has been partial, and why the new media have only partially fulfilled the aspirations that their proponents have held for them in the specific context studied here. To this extent, the findings reported and discussed in chapters eight and nine show that ICTs have, especially from the point of view of CSO leaders, enhanced efficiency and helped hasten democratic transition but only as trend-amplifiers rather than radical agents of change.

1.0 THE THIRD WAVE METAPHOR

1.1 Introduction

In perhaps even more profound ways than the era of Gutenberg's movable type (1438), Morse's electric telegraph (1837), Bell's telephone (1876), Marconi's radio (1895) and Baird's television (1923), stories abound about the power and utility of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) as agents of socio-political change around the world. However, the 'newness' of the new media presents researchers with methodological challenges in attempts to sift reality from rhetoric. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the central research problem and an overview of the context, then describes data sources to build a base for further exploration in the next chapter of the perspectives and knowledge to be drawn on to address the research questions around the link between ICTs and democracy in Africa – with a focus on civil society organisations (CSOs). This chapter points up the research activities and processes undertaken in the compilation, analysis or interpretation of the data and knowledge. In short, the chapter aims to provide the thesis's context, to introduce some of the concepts to be explored further in the rest of the thesis, and to give justifications for key strategic choices which shaped the research and writing of the thesis.

1.2 Research Problem: Aim And Objectives

This thesis sets out to *examine ways in which the use by civil society of 'new media' – Internet and e-mail as well as cellular phone – impact on CSO effectiveness with the possibility of enhancing democracy in Kenya and Zambia.* Specifically, the study sets out to:

1. Investigate whether, and in what ways, the new electronic network-media, especially the Internet and e-mail as well as the mobile phone, have enhanced effectiveness of civil society, lobby groups and the conventional news media.

2. Propose a preliminary judgement on the ruling elite's reaction to the perceived influence of the civil society and the media.

3. Suggest ways in which the marginalized information-starved rural communities and urban poor can join the so-called network society and reap the benefits of globalisation while at the same time minimising possible risks.

Following the discussion by Fagan (1966:34-52) of the 'Components of Communication Networks', this thesis considers urban NGOs and news media under study as channels of communication. Fagan (1966:36) defines channels as 'structures and institutions in the society [that] are, or might be, used to carry on communication of consequence to the gross functioning of the political system'. He uses a four-fold classification: organisations, groups, the mass media, and special channels for interest articulation and aggregation (Fagan, 1966:36). Although he warns that this typology is neither conclusive nor intellectually elegant, and draws no hard and fast distinction on communicational priorities, it is quite compelling and useful for our purposes. In consideration of the classic Laswellian media research paradigm, that the study of communications involves finding out *Who says What in which Channel to Whom* [*Why*] *with what Effect*[5], this study examine the *process*, rather than the *effects* or *consequences* of the use of the medium of ICTs.[6] Significantly, it is important for our purposes to add, 'in what context'. The Laswellian model may appear hackneyed but in the absence of a more appropriate one, it remains key to communication research even at present. Although examining broader issues of hegemony with regard to new media, Cline-Cole and Powell (2004:5) assert that, "the key issues must be seen as revolving around *who* uses the technology, *how* the technology is used, and to *what end* it is used."

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[5] Harold D. Lasswell (1948), 'The Structure and Function of Communication in Society', in Lyman Bryson (Ed), *The Communication of Ideas*, New York: Harper & Row, p.37 as cited in Fagan (1966:4). In the general model or structure, we can say that every act of human communication involves a *source* generating a *message* (or signal) that travels through a *channel* to an *audience*. What the message means is a different matter.

[6] This distinction is made in Wilbur Schramm (1955), 'How Communication Works' in W. Schramm (Ed.), *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press. (Fagan, 1966:17-18).

This leads us to ideas on power – even though the aim here is not to prove or disprove the power of the channel or the medium. All the same, power is implicit in the very idea of political civil society, which is the main focus. Indeed Fagan (1966:18) defines political actors as "those whose significant role is to carry out 'political communication' – that is communicatory activity that is especially relevant to an understanding of political life. *Communicatory activity is considered political by virtue of the consequences, actual and potential, that it has for the functioning of the political system* (Fagan, 1966:20). This brings in *effects*, the fifth element in the Laswellian paradigm, which we examine later. In a similar vein, issues under consideration in this study revolve around the broader role of communication in social change so it is worth looking at some theoretical aspects of this phenomenon. Everett Rogers pronounced around mid 1970s the "passing of the dominant paradigm", referring to Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm's post-WWII theory of communication and development (Schiller in Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1993:470), but casual observers and expert analysts have never really given up on the media's potential for change. Indeed some authors envisage a clear replacement of the 'development communication' take-off model with a *development informatisation* model (Dordick & Wang, 1993:20-24).

Fagan traces a communication formulation of political development to the work of Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Power[7] who define 'systemic [political] change' as changes without necessary 'direction' which affect in some basic manner the functioning of the national political system and result in structural, cultural, and performance patterns palpably different from those operating earlier (Fagan, 1966:123). A subtype of this is political *development* which is *viewed primarily as a process of national integration, as a movement from less to more national unity* – resulting in a common frame of national political reference and action (Fagan, 1966:124-5, 127).

[7] *Comparative Politics: A Development Approach*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

> *Political development involves extending central communication networks into and across previously isolated sectors of the society. The developing political system is characterised by new horizontal channels stemming from increased socio-economic interdependence and new vertical channels arising from increased pressures for political participation and administrative effectiveness... involves a structural expansion in the communication sector sufficient to make 'national' politics possible* (Fagan, 1966:128).

This is what Lucien W. Pye[8] calls the amplifying function of communication whereby 'man-sized acts are transformed into 'society-sized' acts. Argues Pye: "Without a network capable of enlarging and magnifying the words and choices of individuals there could be no politics capable of spanning a nation."[9] But this definition is far from complete as political development implies not only expanded communication capacity and increased homogenisation of political images and identifications, but also the diffusion of particular types of behaviour stemming from new ways of viewing self, politics, and the world (Fagan, 1966:129). For this reason, Fagan (1966:108-118) describes two models of communication and social change. Borrowing from Karl W. Deutsch[10], Fagan outlines three primary categories of events of 'the model of exogenous change', linked as follows: (1) socio-economic changes with important communication concomitants in channels, content, style, opportunities, etc., lead to (2) new ways of perceiving the self and the world which in turn lead to (3) behaviours which, when aggregated, are of consequence to the functioning of the political system – for instance the expansion of the politically relevant strata of the population and changes in the quality and content of services demanded from government (Fagan, 1996:108-111). This model in its various guises informs much thinking and research on communication and political change. Such phrases as the 'communication revolution' (referring primarily to developments in category one) and the

[8] L. W. Pye (1963), *Communications and Political Development*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
[9] Ibid, p.6 (cited in Fagan, 1966:128).

'revolution of rising expectations' (referring primarily to developments in categories two and three) bear testimony to its pervasiveness in our current thinking (Fagan, 1996:111). In this model, change is seen as a result of developments that occur *outside of* (independently of) the political system that in turn comes to be affected by the new patterns of communication. Social-economic mobilisation is the cause rather than the consequence of change in political system (Fagan, 1996:108-111). Examples include technological innovations, for instance TV, and how they influence politics in important but unanticipated ways.

In the 'model of endogenous change', the starting point is *within* the political system itself: (1) Political strategies and forms of organisation which directly or indirectly imply changes in communication patterns are selected and once in operation lead to (2) new ways of perceiving the self, the world, and politics (including new definitions of proper and improper political behaviour) which in turn contribute to (3) changes in the functioning of the political system (although perhaps not the changes anticipated by those who implemented the new strategies and forms of organisation). (Fagan, 1966:112-3). There is purposefulness and directedness by leaders, to rectify 'conditions' through either the creation of new political resources or the exploitation in an innovative manner of existing resources. Communication changes are both the instrument and the consequence of this policy-oriented leadership. Initial push from political sector and related communication development is confined or manifested there (Fagan, 1966:113).

A full understanding of the relationship between communication change and political change cannot depend exclusively on either model, for both contribute to our understanding in most instances (Fagan, 1966:123). However, exogenous and endogenous models are not the only two exclusive ways of describing change. Economic, sociocultural, political, and historical factors are always operative in communication change (albeit in more or less muted form) if only to establish limits beyond which change cannot occur.

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[10] 'Social Mobilisation and Political Development', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LV, No. 3,

(Fagan, 1966:118). I have singled out the instances in which *politics* is the prime mover (endogenous), holding them up for comparison against all other instances (the exogenous case) and we shall return to these models later at the end. This provides a good starting point to launch into the third wave paradigm.

1.3 Third Communication Revolution And Information Society

As discussed above, models of communication-for-change are linked to the idea of the information society captured in the information posted on the website of the World Summit of the Information Society held in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2003:

> *The modern world is undergoing a fundamental transformation as the industrial society that marked the 20th century rapidly gives way to the information society of the 21st century. This dynamic process promises a fundamental change in all aspects of our lives, including knowledge dissemination, social interaction, economic and business practises,* ***political engagement, media****, education, health, leisure and entertainment. We are indeed in the midst of a revolution, perhaps the greatest that humanity has ever experienced.* (Cline-Cole & Powell, 2004:6).

A markedly similar wording is discernible in the website associated with the G8 Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society that saw the "essence of IT-driven economic and social transformation is its power to help individuals and societies to use knowledge and ideas". Among other things, "our vision of an information society is one that …work to fully realise its potential to strengthen democracy, increase transparency and accountability in governance, promote human rights, enhance cultural diversity, and to foster international peace and stability" (Mercer, 2004:49). Envisaged is a society driven by knowledge and information. It is an idea whose earlier modern roots are in the writings of James Madison:

Sept. 1961, pp.493-514

"A people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."[11] So the idea is not really as new as enthusiasts portray it. Various authors have written about this 'third wave' of information revolution marked by the Internet – the first having been the printing press and the second radio and TV. The Japanese vision about it came in the 1960s when it was mainly seen as a postindustrial service and leisure society (King, 1984:2; Lyon, 1988:2). "It offers the possibility of a gradual replacement of the present top-down, hierarchical type of society to one which is less bureaucratised and in which entrepreneurial initiative can be more widespread within networks with strong horizontal linkages." (King, 1984:2). There are those who visualised a radical shift, a major break. French sociologist Alvin Toffler argues the first 'wave' was agricultural, the second industrial, and the third, information society (Lyon, 1988:2). Futurist Toffler perceives a change of civilization, from hunter-gatherer to agricultural to industrial to post-industrial. The latter is the "so profoundly revolutionary" new civilization "bursting into being in our midst" (Toffler, 1980:18), the "giant wave of change battering our lives today" (Toffler, 1980:21). This grand metaphor, of colliding waves, is not original. Norbert Elias, in his *The Civilizing Process*, refers to "a wave of advancing integration over several centuries." (Toffler, 1980:21). From culture shock Toffler coined 'future shock' right back in the mid 1960s to refer to "too much change in too short a time" (Toffler, 1973:4). Another French scholar, Tourane (1974:3,5) envisaged "new societies labelled post-industrial… They may also be called technocratic because of the power that dominates them. Or one can call them programmed societies…according to the nature of their production methods and economic organization…." His main method is a focus on actors' interaction, exchanges, negotiations and mutual influences. (Tourane, 1974:4). In a similar sense, Castells distinguishes the *capitalist mode of production* and development from the *informational mode of production* and development (Webster, 1995:194). Castells' theoretical starting point, his reliance on the concept of 'informational mode of

[11] James Madison, 'Letter to W.T. Barry (4 Aug 1822)', in *The Writings of James Madison*, Vol. 9, p.103

development' easily drifts into a form of technological determinism found most frequently amongst techno-boosters who insist that the 'information revolution' will transform the way we live (Webster, 1995:213).

One of those falling in this camp, according to Webster, is American sociologist Daniel Bell (1999) but the latter refuses to be classified thus. "I am not a technological determinist, for all technology operates in a context not always of its making (such as politics and culture); yet technology is the major instrument of change (and instruments can be used well or badly). (Bell, 1999:xi, xiv, xviii). He however sees three different waves of societies:

> *We are today on the rising slope of a worldwide third technological revolution. The first was the use of pumps, controlled chambers for locomotion, and machines. The second, about a century ago, can be identified with electricity and chemistry. The third, is about computers, telecommunications, and the like. ...Historically, every society has been tied together by three kinds of infrastructure, the nodes and highways of trade and transactions between peoples. The first is transportation: rivers, roads, canals, and, in modern times railroads, highways, and airplanes. The second is energy systems: hydropower, electricity grids, oil and gas pipelines, and the like. The third is communications: postal systems (which moved along highways), then telegraph (the first break in that linkage), telephone, radio, and now the entire panoply of new technological means from microwaves to satellites.* (Bell, 1999:xlv, xxxii-xxxiv).

To Bell (1999:xlvi-xlvii), communications begins to replace transportation as the major mode of connection between people and as the mode of transaction and as geography is no longer the controller of costs, distance becomes a function not of space but of time; and the costs of time and the rapidity of communication become the decisive variables. Hence we

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(cited in Keane, 1991:176).

are in an "information age", a coeval information or network society (Castells, 2000), a post-Fordist society, a broadband society or an information economy? (Martin, 1995:2).

More pessimistic writers like Douglas (1970), Schiller (1999, and in Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1993:470), Beck (2001) and Chris May (2002), emphasise risks. Schiller warns of a cultural and political pollution of the gargantuan private economic structures. From scarcity to blizzard/overload: The world seems so full of information that what is scarce is citizens' ability to make sense of it. There is the risk, exaggerated by Jean Baudrillard[12] that citizens will become trapped in a never-ending information blizzard, without adequate free time to digest or make sense of the information flows which envelope them (Keane, 1991:183).

The structuralist approach is a synthesis of extremes, introducing some sense of the complexity of the impact of social and technological change, and the likelihood that a diversity of interests, actors and social structures would produce a variety of outcomes or, as Ian Miles[13] put it, many possible information societies. (Martin, 1995:4). Continuity rather than discontinuity is what Anthony Giddens perceives although he does not write much about the 'information society'. It is not a concern of his to discuss the status of this particular concept, not least because he would surely be sceptical of the proposition that we have recently seen the emergence of this new type of society. Indeed, he has quite directly asserted[14] that 'although it is commonly supposed that we are only now in the late twentieth century entering the era of information, modern societies have been "information societies" since their beginnings'. (Webster, 1995:52). Consonant with this statement, Giddens' theorisation leads one to argue that the heightened importance of information has deep historical roots, so deep that, while one may concede that information today – in an era of what he calls 'high modernity' – has a special significance, it is not sufficient to

[12] In *Amérique*, 1986; *L'Autre par lui-Même*, 1987; *The Evil Demon of Images*, 1988],
[13] Information Technology and Information Society: Options for the Future, London: ESRC, 1988
[14] In *Social Theory and Modern Sociology* (1987, p.27)

mark a system break of the kind Daniel Bell conceives as 'post-industrialism' (Webster, 1995:52).

Dordick and Wang (1993:viii) point out that "defining information society is a difficult task"; they look at information society from the perspective of economic development. Almost all nations have chosen informatisation as the most promising means for achieving the goal of joining global economy. "Those few of the least-developed nations in Africa, for example, are very likely to do so after they have achieved some measure of political stability. Indeed, many see economic growth as a means for achieving political stability. They will also choose informatisation as the means by which to achieve this goal." (Dordick & Wang, 1993;ix). We cannot escape the impact of such wider social 'revolutions' and scientific 'paradigm shifts' (McQuail & Blumler, 1997:22). Not when such a revolution is seen to drive such other related movements as the 'third wave' of democratisations.

1.4 The Third Wave Of Democratisation

The 'third wave' of democratisation, which started in Southern Europe in the 1970s and which, in one form or another, spread to most of Latin America, East and Central Europe and parts of Africa and Asia, continued unevenly through the 1980s and 1990s (Huntingdon, 1991; Grugel, 1999:1; UNDP 2002). Factors driving its spread included the expansion and intensification of transnational communication systems (Held, 1995:viii); and the web of relations and networks which stretch across national borders (Held, 1995:ix). The demise of Communism meant that there was less inspiration and support for left-wing governments and political parties as Western governments now concentrated on the restoration of democratic elections with less fear of the 'wrong' side winning. "The extension of democratisation was in many cases less than dramatic but the relationship between state and society changed significantly to introduce a more pluralist order." (Pinkney, 2003:94).

> *World politics have changed radically since around mid 1970s. At the beginning of 1975, (Freedom House reported) there were only 40 democracies in the world, and they were predominantly rich, industrialised nations of the west. In the mid to late 1970s, it was intellectually fashionable to dismiss democracy as a 'luxury' poor states in the third and second worlds could not afford. From early 1980s, a democratic Zeitgist swept the globe as Spain crafted a democracy after recovering from the 36-year-old dictatorship of Francisco Franco, military withdrawal began in Latin America and military regimes gave way to civilian, elected governments in Ghana and Nigeria – albeit only fleetingly.* (Diamond, 1997:xiii).

It was the beginning of a grand process that Samuel P. Huntington (1991) dubbed the 'third wave' of global democratisation. Democracy was restored in Turkey in 1983, in the Philippines in 1986, in South Korea in 1987, and in Pakistan in 1988. In 1989, communism collapsed in Eastern Europe or 'the Soviet bloc', and a regional wave of democratic transition ensued there with the coming down of the Berlin Wall as the Cold War ended. Democracy was entrenched as the typical form of government as the number of electoral democracies – in which multiple political parties regularly compete for power through relatively free and fair elections - increased in the world from 76 in 1990 to 118 in 1996. The percentage increased was from 27.5 percent in 1974 to 46 percent in 1990 and to 61 percent in 1996. (Diamond, 1997:xiv). Diamond distinguishes features of the third wave democratisation as changes in civil-military relations, international factors, civil society, and socio-economic development. (Diamond, 1997:xxviii-xxxvi). Of crucial significance is the salience of international influences. As Huntingdon (1997) points out, international and especially regional demonstration effects played a crucial role in stimulating and providing models for subsequent democratic transitions. Also influential were a variety of more tangible international pressures and inducements, including the growth of governmental and nongovernmental forms of assistance to democratic actors, and the increasing

emphasis on human rights and democracy promotion in the foreign policies of established democracies, especially the United States. (Diamond, 1997:xxxiv). This is perhaps what leads Patomaki (2000:1-12) to associate the 'third wave' of democratisation with the spread of harmful neoliberal world order. More positively, the Internet and related ICTs has been seen by various authors (Ferdinand, 2000a & 2000b; Grossman, 1995) as a stimulant for a third great era of democracy; the first having been direct or classical Greek democracy and the second one representative democracy.

The spread of the 'third wave' of democratisation to Africa in the early 1990s represented the most significant political change in the continent since the independence period three decades before. Throughout the continent, significant political liberalisation resulted in the emergence of a free press, opposition parties, independent unions and a multitude of civic organisations autonomous from the state (van de Walle, 1999:235; Bratton & van de Walle, 1997). Voter turnout in founding elections in Africa was high in many African countries in the 1990s, exceeding 85% of registered voters in Angola, Burundi, Gabon, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa (Bratton, 1999:549-50).

> *The first half of the 1990s saw widespread political turbulence across the African continent... Transitions away from one-party and military regimes started with political protest, evolved through liberalisation reforms, often culminated in competitive elections, and usually ended with the installation of new forms of regimes. ... Together they amount to the most far-reaching shifts in African political life since the time of political independence 30 years earlier.... From 1990, the number of political protests in SSA rose dramatically, from about twenty incidents annually during the 1980s to a peak of some 86 major protest events across 30 countries in 1991. ... African governments gradually introduced reforms to guarantee previously denied civil rights.* (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:3).

The year 1990 marked the beginning of a 'second liberation' and the launching of the 'third republic' in many an African country. By the end of 1994, 38 of the then 47 countries in SSA had held competitive multiparty elections for at least the national legislature and not a single de jure one-party state remained in Africa (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:7,8; Diamond, 1997:xiv). Within the space of a decade, scores of countries throughout Africa made an unsteady transition to some form of multiparty democracy. In the 'Democratisation' section of its *Africa Recovery* report of 1996, the UN indicated that in 1989, 39 of the 45 SSA countries had authoritarian forms of rule, but by early 1995, 31 of the 45 had democratic presidential or parliamentary elections. "Whether these changes are part of Huntington's 'Third Wave of Democratisation' or reflective of Fukuyama's 'End of History', or Africa's 'Second' independence there is a process of profound change occurring in SSA." (Dicklitch, 1998:1).

> *On closer examination, however, the scope of democratic progress in the world is partly illusory, for regular, free and fair elections do not ensure the presence of other important dimensions of democracy. Democracy may be the most common form of government in the world, but outside of the wealthy industrialised nations it tends to be shallow, illiberal, and poorly institutionalised. ...Clearly the third wave of democratisation has had much greater breadth than depth. The number of 'liberal' democracies*[15] *increased during the third wave, although not as sharply as the number of electoral democracies.* (Diamond, 1997:xiv,xv).

1.4.1 Approaches to the Study Of Democracy

Alongside the 'third wave' metaphor has emerged in the 1990s theoretical explanations about regime change – whether, how and why democracies are installed and consolidated,

[15] Liberal democracy encompasses extensive protections for individual and group freedoms, inclusive pluralism in civil society as well as party politics, civilian control over military, institutions to hold

raising paradigmatic issues that lie at the heart of social and political theory (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:19). First is the structural or modernisation (preconditions) model versus contingent (agency) approach, the first one probing whether regime transitions are a function of underlying preconditions at the level of the deep formations of economy and society and the second inquiring whether political change depend on the preference and choices of leaders and on their skills at mobilising resources, counteracting opponents, and taking advantage of opportunities. A complete theory of political agency would also attend to the endeavours of ordinary citizens, the interplay between elite and mass actions, and the unintended as well as the planned consequences of political events (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:19; Pinkney, 2003). Since third world countries lack democratic prerequisites (like material prosperity and a political culture of tolerance and participation)[16], the transition approach ('transitology') held sway especially in the 1990s as it sought to explain the 'third wave' in terms of the ability of different political actors, whether inside or outside government, to consciously reach sufficient consensus on a new set of minimum procedural rules of the political game (Grugel, 1999:5-8; Pinkney, 2003:2).

Not everybody agrees to the efficacy of transitology as an explanation, nor do commentators necessarily all look at it in the same way. Grugel (1999:10) argues that in insisting on 'procedural minimum' for a functioning 'democracy', transitology has devoted little time to the analysis of civil society, associational life, social and political struggles and citizenship. Structuralism, by contrast, which failed to explain why the 'third wave' of democratisation began, "has proved more useful for examining the politics of the period after the collapse of authoritarianism [as] it conceptualises democracy not as the result of luck, tactics and elite compromise, but as an outcome of social and class struggles." Democracy is not therefore located in a set of governing institutions; the institutions

officeholders accountable, and thus a strong rule of law secured through an independent, impartial judiciary. (Diamond, 1997:xiv)

[16] Pinkney (2003:21-42) lists conditions as: economic development, associated with S.M. Lipset; sequences in development (R. Dahl, and L. Binder); political attitudes and behaviour (G.A. Almond and S. Verba); political institutions (M. Heper, and E.H. Stephens); external influences (D.M. Green); interelite relations (D.A. Rustow, and A. Valenzuela); social structures and interaction between social groups (B. Moore).

mediate social and class conflicts. Institutions make democracy functionally possible, but their mere existence does not guarantee democracy (Grugel, 1999:10).

> *Research on structural approach to democracy is also influenced by the normative tradition of political theory. In particular, it recognises that, in order to be meaningful and substantive, democracy is required to have social as well as civil and political components ... This approach emphasises the importance of structures, history and culture and takes into account authoritarian relations on the basis of gender, ethnicity and race. Democratisation, in sum, cannot be seen merely as the establishment of sets of governing institutions but is, more fundamentally, the creation, extension and practice of social citizenship throughout a particular national territory. This approach directs the observer away from an excessive focus on the state in isolation from society and towards the examination of state-society relationships.* (Grugel, 1999:10,11).

In this regard, democracy exists when there is popular consent, popular participation, accountability and practice of rights, tolerance and pluralism; the existence of formally democratic institutions alone does not guarantee or indicate the existence of democracy. It is long-term rather than short-term, and quality of life of ordinary people that is the litmus test; at micro-level of social relationships, not just at the macro-level of institutions (Grugel, 1999:12). From the foregoing and taking into account African political games, this study favours a mixed approach that takes into account different aspects rather than straightjackets.

Another set of approaches is international versus domestic-democratic, probing whether the trajectories of regime transition are best apprehended by paying attention to the separate and distinctive domestic histories of each country or whether a more holistic perspective that locates countries as parts of larger international systems, subject to powerful influences from beyond their own borders, should be adopted (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:19). "In the end, it may be the external factors that will do most to provide a

democratic opening.... At first sight, the external forces seem to be on the side of repression both directly and indirectly (say, through)...ruling elite collaboration with global capitalism..." (Pinkney, 2003:40). However, it is worth noting that political entrepreneurs in Kenya and Zambia have pursued interests that have reflected their needs much more than those of global capitalism, and Western powers have failed to subvert many rulers hostile to their interests. Once again, a mixed approach is favoured here for this study.

The third set of approaches is political versus socio-economic considerations, probing whether the exercise of power gives shape to the social and economic world or whether politics is the dependent or independent variable (Brattton & van de Walle, 1997:20). Using this approach, one would argue that the structural adjustment programmes in Zambia and aid conditions in Kenya weakened the economic realms and stimulated domestic unrest that in turn led to transition. It is such interplay of various factors that lead Bratton & van de Walle to adopt a *politico-institutional approach* – based on *domestic political factors*, with attention given to both their *structural and contingent* dimensions. "We do so by discussing the notion of structured contingency, asking precisely how political agents and political institutions interact to affect one another. In short, we interpret the recent democratic experiments in Africa as the product of purposive political action in a context of inherited political regimes." (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:20). As analytical instruments, macroeconomic and international factors constitute contexts that shape political structures and precipitate political action but because of their secondary or supporting role, "our explanatory model concentrates on the processes and institutions internal to existing political regimes. A country's political prospects derive directly from its own inherited practices." (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997:41).

1.5 Approaches on Civil Society as Agents of Change

Slavko, Calabrese & Sparks (1994) look at the information society in the manifestations of democracy through a global civil society. Diamond (1997:xxx) argues that "perhaps no single factor more readily evokes the romance, excitement, and heady possibilities of democracy's third wave than the image of resurgent civil societies mobilising peacefully to resist, discredit, and ultimately overturn authoritarian rule. Although democratic transitions are typically inaugurated and negotiated by political elites in both the regime and the opposition, civil society has played a crucial role in building pressure for democratic transition and pushing it through to completion". To this extent, Pinkney (2003:ix-x, 3 & 87-106) points out that the questions that scholars are asking about democracy have begun to change, with more attention turning to "the adequacy of civil societies to sustain democracy" or relations between the state and civil society.

> *Civil society tended to be neglected in the earlier literature on democracy because it was frequently assumed [especially by transitologists] that most transitions involved negotiation between government and opposition, or elite and counterelite, with the wider society having little more than a walk-on role in the occasional riot or attempt at communal self-help. It is now widely acknowledged that there is a significant new relationship between state and society. Society has shown its willingness to challenge the state as it pressed for the ending of authoritarian rule, and the state has been forced to accept a more modest role as it suffers diminished resources for economic development, social provision, and the maintenance of order. More human activity now takes place away from the shadow of the state umbrella. Not all of this will be conducive to democracy, but the general effect is to establish a more pluralist political process.* (Pinkney, 2003:3).

Grugel (1999:12) points out that identifying a central role in politics of civil society – the non-marketised sphere of associations, of networks, of agency and of resistance to the state

– has led to the development of 'civil society theory', traceable back to Plato and Aristotle, and which will be explored in greater detail later. Here, I examine civil society as it relates to the third wave paradigm. That civil society has grown in all third world countries since 1980s is hardly in dispute (Pinkney, 2003:99). It is generally accepted that the information revolution has led to a dramatic increase in civic scale in recent years, with the number of formally constituted NGOs (which do not tell the whole story) increasing from 6,000 to approximately 26,000 during the 1990s alone. And news coverage over the past decade has reflected the growth of the NGO sector, with the use of the term 'nongovernmental organisation' or 'NGO' increasing 17-fold in about a decade from 1992 (Nye, 2004b:90; Keck & Sikkink, 1998:1-78).

Tellingly, David Held (1996:358) argues that democratisation now requires "entrenchment in regional and global networks as well as in national politics" and Grugel (1999:12) points out that non-state actors increasingly engage in operations across state borders as a way of effecting changes within states.

Analytically, the first level of this NGO surge is global, leading to cosmopolitan democracy (Hamelink, 1993; Held, 1995; Patomaki, 2000; Patomaki & Teivainen, 2002). However, questions have been asked whether the norms of democracy should be applied to globalisation, given that there is no world government (Patomaki & Teivainen, 2002) and democracy has largely been analysed from a domestic point of view. The focus of the 'new' [global] actors is often on a particular single issue.[17] The development of these kinds of NGOs or advocacy networks or movements is usually assumed to be mostly spontaneous. Instead of aiming at state power, they profess 'cultural politics' or 'extra-parliamentary politics'. They are transnationally organised, and were among the *early pioneers of the use of Internet*[18] (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:114). Against the *monist* trend of globalisation (imposing preferred, autocentric and imperial set of values-norms

[17] While issues like debt relief and environmental degradation are close to the hearts of many Africans, some such as gay or lesbian identities are of greater value only in certain parts of Africa such as Zimbabwe.
[18] My emphasis. The authors point out Greenpeace International's *e-mail service* date back to mid-1980s.

and discouraging polycentric and divergent space), a *pluralist* globalism is beginning to emerge among those social movements that seek to develop a 'civil society' on a global scale (Hamelink, 1993:384). The problem is that Hamelink seems to contradict himself by insisting on some kind of consensus "on basic values which can be shared across the globe – by all citizens of the world." (Hamelink, 1993:385). Often these global NGOs aim at changes in the policies of particular states or corporations. Others, like Amnesty International[19], attempt to enforce and also develop international law (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:114). Greenpeace aims also include enforcement of international treaties and conventions, in particular by *using media and the Internet* [my emphasis] to make appeals to 'international public opinion' (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:114). These movements often relocate political space non-exclusively in less territorial terms. They reify or demonise the 'enemy' (like WTO, IMF and the World Bank) in ways that other NGOs don't. The main focus has been on being against something concrete (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:117-8). It is discernible that they provided a model for domestic NGOs. For instance, political NGOs in Kenya and Zambia tend to be initiated or run by professionals like lawyers

At the second, national and sometimes regional level, Dicklitch (1998:123) informs us that NGOs and civil society have become increasingly important in Africa as harbingers of democratisation in the 1990s – a phenomenon reflective of the dual processes of economic and political liberalisation that have propelled NGOs to the forefront as significant actors in the political and economic arena. How and why they are important is controversial, not whether they have become important. "The recent surge of interest in NGO activity in Africa calls for an examination of what role they actually play as opposed to what role they are expected to play in democratisation." (*Ibid*, p.3). This provides a justification for this study. Given the traditional power systems as well as the strength and diversity of CSOs in Africa – including the churches and other religious formations, co-

[19] Launched in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson, to promote all the human rights enshrined in the

operative self-help associations, non-governmental development organisations etc – the civil society becomes a very useful term to understand the complexity of African society (Jørgensen, 1996:43). As we shall see later, the CSOs in Africa also happen to be the largest ICT users thus making them even more appropriate 'channel' through which to analyse new media use for political networking. Apart from where their use of ICTs is related to the CSO use or where they collaborate with NGOs in political agitation, this analysis therefore leaves out political parties as a number of observers are reluctant to include political parties as organisations of civil society[20] especially given that in much of sub-Saharan Africa the general absence of a system of competitive and ideological party systems is regarded as an obstacle to the consolidation of democracy (Grugel, 1999:13). However, it is instructive to state at this early stage that this study does not adopt an uncritical view about the influence of CSOs or new media in politics.

1.6 Why Perception?

The point of entry into the CSO use of ICTs is a probe into what these actors themselves perceive about the impact of such usage. In his study of ICTs in Egypt, Wheeler[21] relies on respondents' first-hand experiences (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:8). This is in line with the assertion by Hines (2001:8) that "our beliefs about the Internet and what its properties are can be opened up to enquiry just like Azande beliefs about witchcraft, English beliefs about kinship, American understandings of the immune system or any other ethnographic topic." This is because "beliefs about the Internet may have important consequences for the ways in which we relate to the technology and [to] one another through it". (Hine, 2001:8). Hine's book takes a starting point which is in dialogue with the theoretical projections of the Internet's significance, using some of them as the foreshadowed problems for an ethnography of the Internet use. The specific research questions raised in here the

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UDH and other international standards.

[20] For a good collection of writings on political parties and the Internet, see Gibson, Nixon & Ward (2003).

[21] In the *Review of African Political Economy*, 1998.

theoretical review are: how do the users of the Internet understand its capacities? What significance does its use have for them? How do they understand its capabilities as a medium of communication and whom do they perceive their audience to be? These happen to be the kind of questions we are concerned with in this study.

By way of elaboration, it is important to note that because so many analyses of Africa have been done from the desktops of the west, a number of researchers are increasingly keen to get an insight into the views of Africans through their own voices. In noting that Malawian "churches have to *regard themselves* [my emphasis] as custodians of democratic values, champions of the constitution and spokespersons for the people", Ross (2004) relies on a survey of the statements issued by the churches and an analysis of their role in the defeat of the third-term proposal. The author combines his analysis with the *perceptions* of the actors to assess their *effectiveness* and arrive at the judgement that "within civil society, the churches have proved to be the most effective agents in challenging the ruling elite" and that "the unity and unanimity with which they opposed the third-term bid is identified as the key to their effectiveness". In a similar vein, Potts and Mutambirwa (1997:549), noting that "less attention has been paid in published academic and official literature to how the people of Zimbabwe assess the land resettlement programme", examine resettled people's own "perception that redistribution of land is a moral issue." Like in the current study, the subjects' "perceptions about the resettlement programme were gathered via semi-structured interviews" and the researchers "wanted the results to be as true a reflection of the people's 'voices' as possible". (Potts & Mutambirwa, 1997:552).

1.7 Why Urban?

While focusing on CSOs, this study concentrates on the urban environment – especially the capital cities of Nairobi and Lusaka. There are theoretical as well as practical-political reasons for this. "Does the city have a future in democracy?" After asking this question,

Engin Isin (2000:blurb) goes ahead to identify the urban environment as "the bedrock of democracy and citizenship" or simply a "space" of democracy, one of those that "constitute themselves as political and social agents" – alongside other emergent non-state actors such as "the cyberspace of the internet and international organisations such as the IMF, UN, World Bank, the European Union and Greenpeace" which have gripped the attention of popular media and scholarship. Rather than create a nostalgic image of the city-state as it existed before the nation-state, contributors to the volume edited by Isin "articulate empirically founded but normative ideas about how the city must be rethought as a space of democracy" (Isin, 2000:blurb). While the focus of the book is global and it arose out of a June 1998 Toronto symposium whose "substantive focus was liberal democracies in predominantly English-speaking states such as Canada, America, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand" (Isin, 2000:ix), it brings to theoretical focus issues of relevance to cities in general – including those in the third world.

Whereas the bulk (averagely 70%) of most African populations reside in rural areas and many a politician like Zimbabwe's Mugabe and former Kenyan President Moi would at the height of political tension go to any length – including orchestrating 'land' and 'ethnic' clashes in rural locations to divert or focus attention, urban areas in general and capital cities in particular are normally the bedrock of political activism. Castells, one of the most eminent of contemporary writers on urban change analyses changes in information and the urban environment in the *Information City* (1989). He wrote his first major work, *The Urban Question* (1972) while teaching and researching in the University of Paris where he was influenced by Marxist thought, especially Louis Althusser's structuralist version (Webster, 1995:193). His central thesis is that a combination of capitalist restructuring and technological innovation is the major factor transforming society and hence urban and regional terrains. (Webster, 1995:194). In *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (1991:3), Saskia Sassen underwrites Castells' general argument by identifying a trend towards "spatially dispersed yet globally integrated organization of

economic activity", the result of which is a "new strategic role for major cities" that function as the "highly concentrated command posts of the world economy" (p3)(Webster, 1995:200). Castells (1989:184) calculates that upwards of 30 per cent of the workforce of these [information] cities are informational employees situated in occupations ranging from systems analysts, advertisers, brokers and mangers to bankers. (Webster, 1995:201). This may not be the case in Africa, but still African cities like Nairobi host groups, individuals and firms that are much more technically conscious and globally in touch than many residents of New York or London. It is through this prism that we can view Guèye's work[22] on the intersection between urbanisation and ICT use in Touba, Senegal's second largest city and the spiritual heartland of Mouridism. (Cline-Cole & Power, 2004:8-9).

The political role of cities was displayed at the Geneva 2003 WSIS when the cities of Geneva and Lyons symbolically asserted their 'sovereignty' when they made initial contributions to the controversial Africa-originated Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) initiative which their western states had refused to agree to.[23] Geneva mayor Christian Ferrazino and Lyon mayor Gerard Collomb accused states of only paying lip service to major issues affecting citizens. On the issue of ICTs comes some practical considerations that Paul Ansah puts into proper perspective:

> *Whereas access to and availability of mass communication facilities are fairly even and widespread in the west, one notices glaring disparities in Africa. On the one hand, there is a relative abundance of mass media facilities in the urban areas, where the elite minorities live and where the situation is close to what obtains in the Western societies; on the other hand, there is a media scarcity in the rural areas, where the vast majority of the people live. This means that in terms of penetration and possible effects, the situation is not comparable to that*

[22] In the *Review of African Political Economy*, 1998.
[23] Geneva pledged Swiss Francs 500,000 while Lyon pledged Euros 300,000 as Turin indicated it would also avail funds for the project aimed at funding ICT development in poor countries. (The author attended the event).

> *of the West, and in the African situation it may be more accurate to examine issues at two different levels.*[24]

This obviously limits the impact of the modern mass media on the rural dwellers. However, Africa is unique enough for a two-step flow model of communication can and does work fairly well. The elite with media access constantly pass on, even through traditional f2f encounters, information of relevance political significance to those who are poorer information-wise. This is because, for instance, an overwhelming number of Kenyan urban workers are still tightly tied to the rural peasant community. The city is a place to earn a wage, it is not home, it is temporary. This is the way they see it. Many workers register and vote in rural areas in national parliamentary general elections. "Indeed, they are expected to be full members of the local church while in rural areas. These same workers are subject to the local chief's authority, and once one or any member of the family dies, the burial place is on the farm in a rural area. The city or town is a place to generate a cash income to buy a farm if one has none, or simply to sustain one's own family." (Nyangira, 1987:23). At times nearly every weekend or fortnight, some city dwellers, including most members of parliament, leave their urban 'houses' to spend time with families and folk in their rural 'homes'.

> *In Kenya, towns were generally looked upon as the potential centres of development of a new social order that would provide a basis for a new kind of politics. Urban workers, it was felt, would form a political consciousness along the lines of common economic interests cutting across ethnic barriers. Instead the cities generally became centres of increased ethnic awareness, although personal contacts among men of different ethnic groups were often friendly.* (Kaplan et al, 1975:222).

[24] P.A.V. Ansah (1994), Communication and Development in Africa – An Overview, in C.J. Hamelink & O. Linne, *Mass Communication Research Problems and Policies: The Art of Asking the Right Questions*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, cited in Berger, 1998:602.

In the Mau Mau era, "it was in Nairobi that politics acquired much of its violence; but it was in Nairobi's competitive ethnic political economy that divisions between Africans ensured that militant politics would be confined largely to the Kikuyu" (Lonsdale, 1986:174).[25] Nairobi was the arena in which establishment politics was most decisively overturned by militant action. When the urban militants were invited by the rural gentry, Kenyatta among them, to assist in the general process of political mobilisation they proceeded to overturn its strategic premise, changing it from a weapon of political control to a lever for direct action (Lonsdale, 1986:174-5). In recent years, both Lusaka and Nairobi have been the seats of radical NGOs and alternative news media. This may be seen to negate the very focus on such CSOs, but as explained above there exist dynamics – albeit imperfect – on rural-urban networking, including through formal civic education programmes by political NGOs.

1.8 Qualitative Empirical Inquiry

Taking into account the optimist-pessimist views on information society, this study takes a "dialectical" approach, cognisant of different kinds of informationality (or digitality), in different settings, with specific socio-cultural and political expressions (Castells 2000:5, 13 & 20-21; van Audenhove 1999). The epistemological and ontological premises of this study are that people studied construct their own reality and that human action is determined by various environmental conditions. The inquiry goes beyond the people's conceptions and everyday life, and looks at power relations too (see Gunter, 2000:1-22; May, 1998:38ff; Lindlof, 1995:27ff). Taking cue from Miller & Slater (2000:5), the study treats ICTs, mainly the Internet as "continuous with and embedded in other social spaces, … within mundane social structures and relations…" It is not a case-study of localisation

[25] The Kikuyu formed over half of Nairobi's black population. Many more commuted thither daily, as workers, market gardeners and stallholders. The Kikuyu fed black Nairobi, they owned much of its lodging, controlled its retail-trade, transport, short-term credit, and prostitution; they had a good hold on the skilled and clerical occupations, they ran the trade unions. Little wonder moderate non-Kikuyu politicians and shopkeepers were the first victims of political terror in the early 1950s and in the first months of the October 1952 declaration of the State of Emergency by the colonial government. (Lonsdale, 1986:174)

or appropriation or domestication of ICTs. It is largely about how specific civil societies form part of the forces that constitute global ICTs, but do so quite specifically as groups with particular physical space and goal commonality (see Miller & Slater, 2000:5). It is for this reason that the Internet is seen within a context as numerous new practises and technologies, used by diverse people, in diverse real-world locations – not as a monolithic 'virtuality' or denaturalised placeless cyberspace 'disembedded' and disconnected from offline reality (Miller & Slater, 2000:1, 3 & 4). This conception departs from the focus on virtuality in Internet discourse that has had more to do with the needs of the then fashionable intellectual projects.

> *The Internet appeared at precisely the right moment to substantiate postmodern claims about the increasing abstraction and depthlessness of contemporary mediated reality... and postructuralists could point to this new space in which identity could be detached from embodiment and other essentialist anchors..."* (Miller & Slater, 2001:5).

Of particular relevance to this study are the works on mediation by Bruno Latour, which demonstrate how to avoid the pitfalls in the dualism of sociologism and technology, or more generally science and society (Miller & Slater, 2000:8; Whitley, 1999). Latour would affirm the Internet as an 'actant', contrary to Castells' primary distinction between the Net and the Self which, treating the Net as a monolithic 'reified' structure or 'morphology', runs too close to technological determinism and replicates the sociological distinction between structure and agency (Miller & Slater, 2000:8). Much as the Internet media positions people as actors in more global stages, the networks or 'spaces of flows' that transcend immediate location only place users in wider flows of cultural, political and economic resources. It does not uproot users from their actual settings.

In consideration of Lasswell's maxim referred to earlier in this chapter, this study employs a mixture of methods within the qualitative inquiry ambit. Qualitative research is the most appropriate for this kind of study as it is multi-method in approach, and builds a complex

holistic picture by interpreting social phenomena in terms of meanings people studied in natural settings bring to them (Creswell, 1998:15; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:2; Bryman & Burgess, 1999:x). David Silverman[26] points out that qualitative researchers use multiple methods to collect rich, descriptive, contextually situated data in order to seek understanding of human experience or relationships within a system or culture (Mann & Stewart, 2000:2-3). Julia Brannen[27] adds that processes of analytical induction from the data might then lead to the formulation of simple explanatory hypotheses or, using systematic approaches such as grounded theory, the development of complex theories (Mann & Stewart, 2000:3); in this case, it is the former that applies.

The qualitative method adopted in this study is that of ethnography, neither in the conservative sense of a prolonged engagement in a social setting nor in the fashionable sense of almost entirely the study of online 'community' and relationships – the ethnography of the cyberspace (Miller & Slater, 2000:21-22). It is a combination of 'fieldwork ethnography' and some kind of 'virtual ethnography' (examination of contents of selected websites). It still shares the objective of Miller and Slater's ethnographic approach, to show particularity and also form a firm basis for building up bigger generalisations and abstractions (Miller & Slater, 2000:1).

This study employs two key ethnographic techniques that require the investigator to be "eye witness to the problem" and extract meanings in a spatial-temporal context.[28] The main one is key informant interview. The other related one but of less significance is 'naturalistic' observation – the gathering of impressions of the surrounding world through all relevant faculties (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:82). A naturalistic approach is more commonly used to study how people act or react when using CMC, with less emphasis on task-related communication and more emphasis on the CMC – as a medium of human relationships, or as a mode for conducting online activities such as distance learning,

[26] *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, London: Sage, 1999.
[27] *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1992.

support groups, interest groups and interaction in virtual worlds (Mann & Stewart, 2000:4). The main purposes these methods serve is to help the researcher find out how and why the subjects use ICTs.

Describing the interviewer as a miner and a traveller, Kvale (1996:10-12) points out that research interviews reflects alternative conceptions of the subject matter. Although e-mail interviews were used in some cases, preference was given to individual face-to-face (f2f) interchange of non-standard (semi-structured or unstructured) nature, with key civil society and media actors. While semi-structured interviews are conversational and offer 'purposive topical steering' (Flick, 1998: 106), unstructured or 'in-depth' interviews put more emphasis on the subjective experiences of individuals (Denzin, and Clandinin & Connelly, cited in Mann & Stewart, 2000:75). Of course, as Mann and Stewart (2000:76), there are concerns that the interview may reflect the researchers' own agenda too closely, but emphasis is normally on the 'narratives' or 'stories' that the prime 'knower' tell in their 'voice' (Mann & Stewart, 2000:76; Seidman, 1991) – perhaps with partial borrowing from Habermas' communicative-action presuppositions "that what the speaker says is true, that it is sincerely meant, and that it is normatively appropriate" (Outhwaite, 1996:11).

> *Unstructured interviewing provides a greater breadth than the other types, given its qualitative nature. The traditional type is the open-ended ethnographic (in-depth) interview. Many qualitative researchers differentiate between in-depth (or ethnographic) interviewing and participant observation. Yet the two go hand in hand. Many of the data gathered in participant observation come from informal interviewing in the field* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1999:56).

Naturalistic observation of political communication activities, especially of busy or deviant or hostile people (Mann & Stewart, 2000:84), is most appropriate in complementing interviews given the scheduling of the fieldworks around election time – a moment when civil society actors traditionally reach the height of their political hyperactivity in both

[28] John van Maanen et al (1982), *Varieties of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage in Uche (1998). Also see

countries. In general, election time provides the ultimate conditions for democratic practice (Adar, 1999; Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987:26,32). "Election time is the type of period of high excitement when it is perhaps right to inject into a political system something like the fluorescent tracers, used by doctors in medical diagnosis, to follow something like the primary channels of political communication." (Fagan, 1966:34-5). For instance in Kenya just before and after independence, "the most important areas of political participation – attendance at rallies, voting, joining a party, paying party dues, working for a candidate, etc – were election-related while the others – following the news, talking politics, making contacts with higher placed persons – were to do with acquiring information and presenting views and demands to the elite. [Marc Howard Ross (1971), 'Grassroots in the City: Political Participation and Alienation in Nairobi after Independence,' unpublished manuscript, p.304, cited in Bienen, 1974:14-15] Both nations under study held crucial parliamentary and presidential elections in late 2001 (Zambia) and late 2002 (Kenya). The elections came at an opportune moment to reflect on the loosening of state stranglehold on communications over the past decade during which Internet and cellular phone media have dispersed dramatically, as well as to review the maturity of the transition from single party rule to multi-party democracy.

At this point, it is worth noting that the case study design for this project is linked to the fieldwork process. Apart from the commonality of historical and political experiences of both case nations (Kenya and Zambia),[29] their choice was influenced by anticipated ease of access. Bryman & Burgess (1999:XV) note that gaining access to many settings is fraught with difficulty, hence access is a legitimate criterion for choice of case to study. De Laine (2000:4ff) points to the "harmful possibilities of fieldwork", or the pitfalls and dangers likely to confront the fieldworker. Election time is a moment of tensions in the

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Lindlof (1995).

[29] Both countries share characteristics typical of most African states. Both are former colonies – specifically of Britain – that won independence around the same time, toward mid 1960s. Both adopted single-party politics, *de facto or de jure*, on gaining self-rule and both embraced multi-partysm around the same time in early 1990s. In both, incumbents attempted to manipulate the constitution to extend their limited terms of

host nations; some of the people interviewed were being closely monitored by state machinery, and some may well have been on the "hit list" – those to be silenced, one way or the other, for political reasons. Anyone seen with such people would be at risk and therefore the researcher would need to fathom such realities. Having lived and worked in such an environment proved to be an asset.

A further aspect of an ongoing field relationship is exactly whom to observe and/or interview (Bryman & Burgess, 1999:XVI). Denzin and Lincoln (1998:56) point out that apart from accessing the setting, other factors to consider include deciding on how to present oneself, locating an informant, gaining trust, and establishing rapport. It may be worth considering John Creswell's ideas regarding choice of what or who to study on the basis of purposeful sampling.

> *I prefer to select cases that show different perspectives on the problem, process or event I want to portray, but I also may select ordinary cases, accessible cases, or unusual cases.... The data collection is extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews.* (Creswell,1998:62-3).

In this study, sampling was done purposively to select only those civil society and media organisations widely known to be active in the area of political (and perhaps social) mobilisation and activism – especially around election time. In some cases, the researcher drew on personal experiences and connections – having practised journalism in Kenya and interacted with a number of potential subjects, including some of those in Zambia. Edward Bruner[30] notes that good ethnographers now increasingly return to the experiential component of their work with 'illustrative snatches of personal narratives, bits of biography, or vivid passages from their notes' (Bourgault, 1995:XIII). However, the emphasis here is given to the point of view of the civil society actors – especially their

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office. The opposition parties have been divided and non-party urban civil society actors have been active in providing checks.

[30] Edward M. Bruner (1996), 'Experiences and Its Expressions', *The Anthology of Experience*, Truner, Victor and Bruner, Edward (eds.), Urbana: University of Illionois, pp.3-29.

reasons for using ICTs and their narration of how they use them – hence the other aspect of observation, of online activities of some of the groups under focus.

The primary focus, of the three types of 'Internet politics' identified by Margolis and Resnick (2000:8-21), is *Political uses of the Net* (WWW and e-mail) as well as the mobile phone, by the civil society and media organisations. Margolis and Resnick (2000:14 & 14) define *Political uses of the Net* as the activities of ordinary citizens, political activists, organised interests, political parties, and governments to achieve political goals having little or nothing to do with the Internet *per se*. It refers to employing the Net to influence political activities offline. It is an extension of political life off the Net. This concurs with the current study's conception of the link between ICTs and politics as a phenomenon that has to be looked at within the context of organic (offline) politics. Inevitably, the study also touches on *Politics that affects the Net* – the host of public policy issues and government actions – and to a lesser extent *Politics within the Internet* (intra-Net politics) – matters that can be settled without reference to political or legal entities outside the Net community itself. The central focus is however *Political uses of the Internet* by people acting on behalf or as part of civil society and media organisations. This tests claims that these 'special interests, pressure groups, and non-partisan public interest groups have found the Net a cheap and fast way to communicate with their members and inform and plead their causes.' (Margolis & Resnick, 2000:14).

This study involves not only interviewing leaders of such civil society groups but also looking at the web sites of some of them with a view to monitoring their political communicational activities and also attempting to validate claims they make during interviews. To act as some kind of control, or provide a basis for comparison, one or two political party websites are looked at from each country with a view to probing reasons for their creation and establishing the manner of their use. Margolis and Resnick (2000:14) state that 'political parties and candidates design Web sites to affect the political behaviour

of those who visit the sites,'[31] but assessment of the actual effect of such use of the Internet is outside the scope of this study. Qualitative content analysis is employed to study Web sites. Gunter (2000:91) notes that a certain amount of counting may be involved in qualitative content analysis, but the depth to which media texts are assessed is the distinctive factor from quantitative content analysis. The type of analysis proposed is not semiotic but interpretative, aimed at identifying the types of information selected by media producers for presentation to an audience (Gunter, 2000:90-91).

The concept of the audience is significant in this study because ICTs characterise a move from the passive audience notion in monological 'old' mass media to the active audience notion in interactive ICTs – where an interlocutor is often producer and audience at the same time. This adds impetus to the paradigmatic shift from the erstwhile dominant perspective to the alternative-critical approach, which employs mainly qualitative methodology (McQuail, 2000:46-51).

1.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to define the scope of the inquiry. It establishes some priorities by delimiting the scope of this study with conceptual signposts and an exploration of relevant underlying theoretical and methodological issues that are vital for background and context. A deeper examination of some of these issues within the context of democratic theory comes in the chapters that follow. The chapter has looked at the metaphor of 'waves' or 'revolutions', taking into account what Raymond Williams (1961:x-xi) lists as the democratic revolution, the industrial revolution and cultural revolution (including advanced communication). It is vital to note that, "there are two fundamentally opposing visions of an information or knowledge society. Put crudely, the first conceives of knowledge as something which can be objectified and controlled, and to which citizens or customers can then be given or sold access, so that they can gain benefit from the

[31] See also Paul Nixon & Hans Johansson, 'Transparency through technology: the internet and political

commodity. The second sees knowledge as essentially common property from which people and social groups gain value as they create it, exchange it, interpret it and adapt it". (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:9). The emphasis is on networking to exchange news and political-public information rather than cultural, educational, and social aspects? Content of new media and their effects on audiences receive secondary consideration?

The primary focus is on the media of the Internet, e-mail and cellular phones as part of ICT or new media software-hardware applications. Whereas computer mediated communication (CMC) can be examined in different fields (industry, business, science, education, the home), this focus is on politics. The new ICTs, especially the Internet, have not been spared debates on democracy that characterised the introduction of early electronic media – radio, television, cable, satellite, video camera – in the 20th century. The Internet has been looked at both from the free-market libertarianism ideologies of neo-liberalism as well as the Net libertarianism prism, from post-modernism (Ross in Miller & Slater 2000:16). The term 'normative freedom' seeks to capture the apparent paradox by which no notion of freedom is really absolute, but necessarily takes the form of a normative structure, a social order (Miller & Slater 2000:16). This chapter has examined tools employed in the examination of the use of ICTs by civil society organisations in Kenya and Zambia. The process and nature rather than the outcome of communication seems particularly important as new communicative forms are taking shape which may alter fundamental characteristics of mediated communication. (Nowak, 1997:38). Subsequent chapters develop these points and arguments.

parties,' in Hague & Loader (1999)

2.0 THE PUBLIC SPHERE PERSPECTIVE[32]

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on recent modifications of Habermas' notion of the 'public sphere' following the rapid erosion of hegemony of the early modern unified public by the development of various networked spaces of communication through the new ICTs. The open arena for public debate may not be completely 'protected' but the role of the civil society in balancing state power and defending individual liberty from state intrusion has been enhanced by networked new media such as the world wide web, email and mobile phones.

The traditional late modern mass media-constructed public sphere, conceived some decades ago mainly from the perspective of public interest journalism and public service broadcasting, tends to be dominated by a few voices, flow is vertical and commercialisation has been heightened to the extent that the rosy tenets of libertarianism have been undermined, especially in hitherto totalitarian territories. It is for this reason that the public sphere concept is being re-directed to the relatively freer-for-all new media – especially the Internet – even if these are not completely free from determined governments like that of China.

Highlighting a twisted 'refeudalisation' of the public sphere concept, the chapter looks at the movement from unified to disintegrated public sphere, from the 18th century coffee houses, salons and table societies to the 21st century cyber cafes and 'hot spots', from rational ideal-type consensus-seeking reasoning by the bourgeoisies to ordinary exchanges by all sorts of often antagonistic Information Age interlocutors. Unlike in other recent conceptions of networked public sphere, this chapter does not wholly embrace the idea of a radically 'deterritorialised' communication space.

[32] Some sections of an earlier version this chapter together with sections of the last chapter appeared online (Mudhai, 2003a).

2.2 Habermasian Rationalist Public Sphere

> *I cannot understand how anyone can make use of the frameworks of reference developed in the 18th and 19th centuries in order to understand the transformation into the post-traditional cosmopolitan world we live in today. ... Where most post-modern theorists are critical of grand narratives, general theory and humanity, I remain committed to all of these, but in a new sense* (Beck 2000:211&226).

The 'public sphere' notion, linked to related thinking by Kant and Hegel among other earlier scholars, remains hugely popular in diverse fields[33]. The recent publication of yet another volume on this concept (Crossley & Roberts, 2004), promising a perspective beyond Jurgen Habermas, foregrounds the continuing relevance of this approach in analysing such problems of democracy as moves to 'colonise the lifeworld' – attempts that often engender the civil society. The relevance of Habermas' theory increased following the translation into English, nearly three decades after publication[34], of his seminal *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (STPS). Habermas' socio-political concept *Öffentlichkeit* or 'public sphere'[35], an arena of public interaction and debate, is often used to analyse problems of democracy – especially the emancipatory discursive-deliberative type, particularly as it relates to the civil society (Baynes, 1995; Chambers, 1995; Warren, 1995; White, 1995).

Habermas' account of the public sphere has two sides, one optimistic and the other pessimistic. On the brighter side, the eighteenth century Britain, France and Germany boasted intellectual journals and periodicals, salons and coffee houses that provided forums

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[33] These include Film Studies, Music, Literature (including Race Literature, Feminist Literature), Art, Sociology, Identity and Constitutionalism, and Biotechnology. Also see Thomas McCarthy in Habermas 1989:xiii.

[34] Calhoun (1992) informs us that the delay in translation had something to do with heavy criticism of Habermas' concept of the public sphere at that time by German students and intellectuals which perhaps resulted in Habermas' own dissatisfaction with the work and his unsuccessful desire for a major revision. Holub (1991:2ff) also points out that STPS was one of the most hotly debated works in Germany from 1960s.

[35] The term 'public sphere' could be seen as an imperfect translation of the original *Öffentlichkeit* which does not contain the same spatial metaphor and therefore suggests a greater emphasis on the *process* rather than the institutional locus of public deliberation (Goode 1999:6, citing Strum).

for rational-critical and literary debate among elites. However, in the late nineteenth century the franchise expanded with the growth of the popular press and increasing sophistication of government. Habermas feared the commercialising news mass media would lead to a homogenisation of political information and a shift from 'real' to 'virtual' political debate (Norris 2000:25). With the degeneration of opinion formation emerged interest groups (corporations, trade unions and political parties) bent on manipulating public opinion (Calhoun 2002) – as the bourgeoisie and literary intellectuals had done. In other words, what Habermas calls the transformation of the public sphere involves a shift from publicity in the sense of openness to the modern sense of the term in journalism, advertising, and politics – resulting in a "gap between the constitutional fiction of public opinion and the social-psychological dissolution of its concept" (Outhwaite, 1996:7-8). Intertwined in Habermas' promising-worrying narrative is whether a people's lifeworld would be defined by the *influences* of reasoning and communication or by the *powers* of inherited tradition (culture), politics, and economics (wealth).[36] Hence for Habermas, the main issue is whether a citizenry could guide a state. Indeed in his focus mainly on political life he assumes the existence of a state to be influenced (Calhoun, 2002), and the demise or collapse of the bourgeoisie public sphere occurred because of the intervention of the state into private affairs and the penetration of society into the state (Holub, 1991:6).

> *The nation-state is what gives unity to Habermas' public sphere. Habermas doesn't thematise the place of the public sphere in securing particular national identities; nevertheless, he appeals to these identities in* Structural Transformation *as he highlights the German* Tischgesellschaften, *the English coffeehouses, and the French salons. Moreover, he describes the political activity of the public sphere as targeting the state* (Dean 2002:153).

Specifically, Habermas (1989:5-14) describes the demise of representative publicness. After examining feudalism when the 'public realm' existed merely as a

[36] My emphases.

representation rather than as a sphere of interaction and debate, he describes the emergent forms of trade and finance capitalism and the eventual pull towards the establishment of a civil society, underpinned by the ideology of 'private' autonomy, that eventually subjected 'publicness' to radical transformation (Goode 1999:11). Of course the earlier mercantilist era had significant implications for a newly emergent sense of 'publicness'. "The feudal powers, the Church, the prince, and the nobility, who were the carriers of representative publicness, disintegrated in a process of polarisation" (Habermas 1989:11) as the Reformation contributed to the 'privatisation' of religion, as public authority assumed more bureaucratic dimensions (including a greater demarcation of parliament and judiciary), and as the state budget was increasingly separated from the monarch's private holdings (Habermas 1989:11-12; Goode 1999:11). The people were still merely subjects, but 'public' now signified an unprecedented depersonalised state authority (Habermas 1989:18) while the publicness and public significance of the noble and aristocratic courtly cultures began to diminish (Goode 1999:12). "Civil society came into existence as the corollary of a depersonalised state authority." (Habermas 1989:19). At this juncture, it is worth pointing out the comparison by Cohen and Arato (1992:xv, 177-341) of Habermas and his rediscovery in mediation model of the bifurcation of the public with Hannah Arendt's notion and with Niklas Luhman's idea of differentiation as well as with other modifiers of Hegelian notion of civil society.[37] Habermas recaptures a richer set of mediations between civil society and state (compared to Schmitt) and re-emphasises and revalorises the normative claims of the public sphere (*Ibid*, p.211).

Jodi Dean (2002) argues that the aspirational quality of publicity features strongly in Habermas' work but takes issue with its configuration within a depoliticised – a legitimised rather than an inciting – use of universality.

[37] These are Carl Schmitt and Reinhart Koselleck put together with Habermas under as those taking historical approaches, as well as Michel Foucalt as a genealogical critique (Arendt's is seen as normative critique while Luhman's s system-theoretic critique). Cohen and Arato also show how Antonio Gramsci and Talcott Parsons, though in overly monistic and functinalist terms leading to ambivalence and apologia, improved on Hegel's original theoretical synthesis of civil society (legality; plurality and association; publicity and

> *From STPS to* Between Facts and Norms (BFN)[38], *Habermas has argued for the ultimately universal character of the public. Unlike in the accounts of the 'public' by earlier critical theorists like Marx and Mercuse, Habermas' emphasis on the public sphere shifts critical theory's attention away from the agents to the sites of political change (or, more precisely, to the spaces that agents produce in the course of their communicative engagements). What the concept of the public sphere does is find within society and the state, within the norms of the bourgeoisie, the potential for, minimally, the democratic legitimation of the late-capitalist state and, maximally, the possibility of universal emancipation through the rule of law* (Dean 2002:152-153).

In other words, Dean (2002:153) is concerned that Habermas replaces revolutionary energy with democratic procedure and political will with democratic will-formation. Habermas' focus on legitimation is ultimately depoliticising as it posits in advance a unified community, withdrawing the revolutionary energy long associated with claims to universality (Dean 2002:171). Though she does not explicitly mention it Dean seems to favour Hannah Arendt (1998) who, writing slightly earlier than Habermas in 1958, emphasises the broader process of creating social institutions and also the moments of creation of states in acts of founding and revolutions.[39] Dean further points out that the universal claim for the public sphere, Kapoor (2002:476-481) faults as noted earlier for being too Western-oriented, appears in somewhat different – although still depoliticised – version in Habermas' theory of communicative action. Here, Habermas emphasises the fundamental inclusivity of the public sphere, the primacy of reason (rational argumentation), and the ultimately legitimising role the public plays. The aspirational and

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privacy; and mediation and interpenetration) by abandoning his statist bias and economism. (Cohen & Arato, 1992:xiv, xv, 177-341)

[38] Originally published in 1996.

[39] See note 25 in Calhoun 2002. Habermas also borrows heavily from Arendt with regard to structuring law by life world of actors, expressed in 'communicative power', and 'administrative power' of systemic control (White, 1995:12).

universalising dimensions of the public that Habermas systematically reconstructs have a historical context in the nation-state, a *national* public.... (Dean 2002:153).

Habermas acknowledges the process of globalisation but is, understandably, careful not to abandon his earlier focus on the state as a crucial element of identity formation.

> *In BFN, Habermas continues to highlight the universality of democratic norms even as he acknowledges the historical link between popular sovereignty and "the nation". In fact, at the same time that he appeals to the possibility of "the phenomenon of a world public sphere" which is today "becoming political reality for the first time in a cosmopolitan matrix of (global) communication"*[40]*, he grants a certain priority to the nation. He admits that "up to the present the political public sphere has been fragmented into national units." So again, as in STPS, Habermas' appeal to a cosmopolitan public sphere remains bounded by the priority of the nation* (Dean, 2002:154).

Part of the problem could be Habermas' attempt to modify his earlier thoughts without appearing to have changed his mind – especially from "a normatively obtuse, monolithic, administrative state" to "a differentiated state' with a multiplicity of "public spheres" emerging across civil society and other formal political institutions (White, 1995:13). On his part, Goode (1999:5) seems to prefer 'public spheres' more localised and specific than the state, as opposed to what he terms "globalising approach pursued by Habermas". He argues that Habermas' emphasis on commonality (measuring politics against a yardstick of rationality) situates differential modes of political participation within a pre-constructed binary framework that underplays the distinctiveness, the unclassifiable aspects of specific, localised practices. This is of interest given Dean's argument for a more non-territorial approach. It is worth noting that territoriality lends states power to control apparatuses such as the media.

[40] Citing from 'Citizenship and National Identity' chapter in BFN, p.514

> *Unlike his 'poststructuralist' adversary Michel Foucault who argues, in* Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, *that 'power' should not always be conceptualised as a negative force working "only through the mode of censorship, exclusion and repression", Habermas focuses on the negative conception – the dynamics that serve to limit and obstruct the fullest possible interplay of information and argument in the public sphere* (Goode 1999:4).

For Habermas the public sphere is constituted by moral-practical discourse[41], which is rational-critical interaction free from domination – oriented to resolving political problems (White, 1995:6; Dahlberg, 2001). In contrast to other concepts in communication studies (like "cultural imperialism" or media hegemony) the concept of public sphere is posited as a positive one, a mode of communication seen by many to be a desirable and attainable state of affairs. It is an idealised communication venue or "theatre"[42] into which all people can freely enter (Schuler, 2000). The public sphere concept has over the years been used to analyse the role of traditional mass media – the press, radio and TV – in relation to the state, particularly with regard to press freedom and public service broadcasting (Garnham, 1992; Price, 1995; Lacey, 1996; Goode, 1999; Barker & Burrows, 2002). In the view of Dean (2002), the theoretical ideal of the public sphere, based on the public's right to know, reduces real-world politics to the drama of the secret and its discovery. She asserts that democracy has become a spectacle, and that theories of the 'public sphere' endanger democratic politics in the Information Age. Several authors, as we saw earlier, have cast doubts on the public sphere ideal (Fraser, 1994). Goode (1999:1) is more cautious: "As we remain focussed on democratic ideals, we risk losing sight of the fact that the goalposts themselves have shifted. We are, says Habermas, no longer in pursuit of quite the same ideals as our 18th century forebears." As Garnham (1992:360)

[41] For Habermas, moral-practical discourse is just one form of problem-solving communication. He also refers to theoretical discourse that seeks truth in scientific investigation, aesthetic criticism that seeks beauty in artistic endeavours, and therapeutic critique that seeks understanding in self-reflection. (Dahlberg 2001)

puts it, criticism does not detract from the virtues of the central thrust of Habermas' approach; the public sphere notion continues to be refined and developed.

2.3 Africa and the New Public Sphere Concept

Whereas African communications scholars like Paul Ansah question how applicable Western theories are in developing countries, leading South African media scholar Guy Berger (1998:605) asserts that "the role of a public sphere outside a single source of power seems to be something that transcends both North and South, and has value for all societies". While Europe and America worry about the freedom that the World Wide Web, the e-mail and the cell phone has given to hacktivists and global civil society protesters (alongside cybercriminals and cyberterrorists), Asian countries, especially China, India and South Korea, are investing huge resources on censorship technology to muffle the ICTs tide. In Africa, where a recent Privacy International report[43] indicates anti-terrorism legislation and other strategies are now being used to censor the Internet, more and more anecdotes indicate that the continent is changing, having "let freedom ring" as "Africans are unleashing the power" of new technology that "is causing a revolution" (Ashurst, 2001; White, 2003). For instance, in 2003 Nigerian consumers switched off their cell phones and denied network providers revenue to protest exorbitant airtime charges and poor road conditions (Mudhai, 2003b). Of concern for researchers is how to discern myth from reality and, in doing so, whether to use old theories and methods.

There are those scholars who decry the absence of a coherent broad-based research approach due to the recentness of the new media, the complexity of development dynamics and methodological challenges.[44] For others, the way out is not to jettison but to modify old theories and apply them to ICT research. "The new media need to be included in

[42] Attributed to Nancy Fraser.
[43] Privacy International & GreenNet Trust. Sept 2003. Silenced: Censorship and control of the Internet. http://www.privacyinternational.org/survey/censorship/index.html. Accessed: 2004.06.26.

traditional communication research, but we need to look at those traditional theories untraditionally."[45] Possible new media research methods may be extensions of existing methods, but still "the new media researcher should consider alternative methods, or even multiple methods, and attempt a triangulation of methods".[46] Highlighting the range of methods employed in research on Internet technologies, Schneider and Foot (2004) show that "the emergence of the Internet, and especially the web, has challenged scholars to both adapt familiar methods and develop innovative approaches". Jones (1999:xi) emphasises that the Internet is a "different sort of object" that requires a "conscious shift of focus" and method in an interdisciplinary approach – the kind Manuel Castells acknowledges in his 'word on method' (Castells, 2000:25), and utilises. Calhoun (2002) also concurs that ICT research "will advance best if there are more researchers with serious knowledge of both information technology and social science." Although scholars like Debra Howcroft wrote some years back that "there is a pressing need for descriptive and empirical work" given the rhetoric and hyperbole surrounding (simplistic) deterministic utopian predictions (visions) about immense social change brought about by technological developments (Howcroft, 1999:277), others have recently indicated that "there are beginning to be interesting case studies to complement the usual journalistic anecdotes [even though] social science research on the Internet has barely started" (Calhoun, 2002). However, most of the empirical ICT research conducted (and data-backed commentaries written) so far focus on anywhere but Africa (e.g. Hill & Hughes, 1998 & 1999; Klein, 1999; Howcroft, 1999; Norris, 2000; Tsui, 2002; Hajnal 2002). Though empirical studies on ICTs in Africa come in a trickle of journal articles (like Mercer, 2004), there have emerged quite some substantial edited volumes on Asia (Banerjee, 2003) and the Middle East (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003).

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[44] See comment in working research paper, "The Internet in Kenya: Impacts and Development," Telematics for Development Program of the Centre for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, at www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/events/theinternetinkenya.htm (Accessed: 2001.08).
[45] Rice, R.E. & Williams, F. 1984. Theories old and new: The study of new media. In: R.E. Rice. Ed. 1984. *The new media.* Beverley Hills, CA: Sage. Pp.55-80. Cited in Preface, Jones (1999:x).

The call by Hacker & van Dijk (2000:220) for a break from the optimist-pessimist oppositions over digital democracy and an entry into "a phase of empirical research and conceptual elaboration" as well as the declaration by Uche (1998) that time is ripe for "empirical studies to ascertain the socio-cultural, economic and political ramifications" of ICTs on democracy in Africa could be a reaction to the fact that much of the writing on ICTs has focussed too much on the 'digital divide' and the optimist-pessimist debate. (See also: Slevin, 2000; Abbott, 2001a & 2001b; Main, 2001; Hacker & van Dijk, 2000:220). Indeed Ott and Smith (2001) note that recent analyses of ICTs and the global information infrastructure (GII) have either been too technologically deterministic or overly focused on (American) imperialism and on the need for global governance. "Less has been said about the effect of growth in Internet access on state-society relationship, particularly in the developing countries of Africa" (Ott & Smith, 2001). Significantly, John Tomlinson points out that underestimating the media is "foolish" yet the entrapment of media-centredness, or, worse, technological determinism, "is to risk losing a larger and more broadly enabling theoretical perspective provided by giving primacy of attention to 'deeper' social, economic and cultural transformations."[47] At the same time, Tomlinson censures the use of predominantly Western theories to explain research problems in the developing world. In fact some ICT authors have pointed out that Africa is "a region with very specific 'patterns of distribution' and a certain testing ground for the social impacts of new technologies" (Polikov & Abramanova, 2003:43). Whether such regional uniqueness warrants questioning the relevance of 'grand' theories and methods remains debatable. Clearly, more empirical research is needed to drive ICT policy, especially around the country strategies linked to the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS).

The distinctiveness of Africa is reflected in a number of recent writings presenting ICTs in general and the Internet in particular as threats to the state, especially in Africa. As

[46] Williams, F., Rice, R.E., & Rogers, E.M. 1988. Research methods and the new media. New York: Free Press. P15. Cited in Preface, Jones (1999:xiii).

stated in the introduction, a number of scholars have noted that despite problems of access in Africa the impact of the Internet is, paradoxically, much greater compared to more developed parts of the world where access is taken for granted. The resulting reconfiguration of the relationships between rulers and the ruled have led analysts to perceive ICTs as an impetus to the 'third wave' of democratisation (Hyslop, 1999; Huntingdon 1991) in the continent. Comparative lack in relevant web content makes the e-mail the most common application used in Africa, especially in public access centres. With regard to the cell phone, text messaging is a popular application. Both applications cost less, especially in terms of time and bandwidth – which translate to monetary cost. These tie in with what Tsui (2002) terms legal, economical, social and technical sphere that need to be consideration in region-based ICT research. It is for this reason that this study of urban political NGO perception of their use of new ICTs in Kenya and Zambia takes a dialectical approach, cognisant of different kinds of informationality (or digitality), in different settings, with specific socio-cultural and political expressions (Castells, 2000:5; 13 & 20-21; van Audenhove, 1999). By this token, the study involved gathering data through the CSO leaders in Nairobi and Lusaka. This is not just because the civil society as an urban phenomenon have been credited most for recent democratisation efforts in Africa (Hyslop, 1999) but also because surveys indicate NGOs are some of the largest users of ICTs in the continent (Jensen in Ott & Smith, 2001; Polikov & Abramova, 2003).

In studying civil society and democracy within the pluralist perspective, the focus here is on the public sphere concept, largely attributed to Habermas (1989) though linked to the works of other political theorists.[48] The concept has been critiqued actively or passively by contributors to the volume edited by Craig Calhoun (1992), by Hannah Arendt (see Benhabib, 1992), by Bruno Latour (Whitley, 1999), by Jodi Dean (2002), by Chantal Mouffe (see Kapoor, 2002), among many others. Vitally, Kapoor (2002) questions

[47] John Tomlinson (2001) in *European Journal of Communication*, 16(2): 251-52, reviewing G. Wang, J. Servaes and A. Goonasekera (eds), *The new communications landscape: Demystifying media globalisation*, London: Routledge.

the relevance for the Third World of Habermas-Mouffe 'debate' over democratic theories. The fact that Habermas' point of reference is 18th century West, that he ignores thorny colonialism-imperialism issues and, albeit to a lesser extent, downplays the significance of economic conditions and the role of the state, means his theory "can be projected onto other parts of the world only up to a point" (Kapoor, 2002:476-481). This calls for modifying rather than discarding his idea. The conditions and circumstances under which Habermas discussed the concept no longer prevail but this does not invalidate his idea of the public sphere – "a category typical of an epoch," a historical category that cannot be abstracted, transferred or "idealtypically generalised." (Habermas 1989:xvii; Calhoun 1992:6)[49]. In any case, the development of capitalism at that time could be comparable to the currently prevailing global political economy and its reliance on the GII. Indeed Thomas McCarthy notes that the idea the liberal public sphere claimed to embody – that of rationalising public authority under the institutionalised influence of informed discussion and reasoned agreement – remains central to democratic theory.[50]

> *In a post-liberal era, when the classical model of the public sphere is no longer sociopolitically feasible, the question becomes: can the public sphere be effectively reconstituted under radically different socioeconomic, political and cultural condition?*[51]

McCarthy argues that Habermas' ideas, as well as giving a framework for research by communication and media scholars, provides political sociologists with a new insight into familiar problems of democratic participation. The public sphere idea fits in the wider and also current notion of a civil society, where diverse 'intermediate institutions' provide a zone of protection for citizens in their relations with the state.[52] Referring to Ernest Gellner's 1994 phrase, "no civil society, no democracy,"[53] Fukuyama (2001:11), argues

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[48] These include A. de Tocqueville, K. Marx and F. Hegel, covering also the concept of "public opinion."
[49] He also acknowledges the *plebeian* public sphere and the regimented plebiscitary-acclamatory version.
[50] Thomas McCarthy in the "Introduction" (Habermas 1989:xii).
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Michael Walzer in McQuail (2000:158).
[53] In *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals,* London: Hamish Hamilton.

that the civil society subsists in a "protected sphere" – serving to balance the power of the state and to protect individual liberty from state interference – in liberal democracy. To Larry Diamond the civil society, "...involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere ... (as) an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state."[54] It is for this reason that this study looks at civil society as an extension of the media audience – in this case individual ICT users, and non-users too.

The rationale is that all hypotheses about human collectivities can and should ultimately be reduced to statements about individual agents (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987:19). This assertion is based on the methodological individualism doctrine of the interest group theory. The "group theory", described by J.K. Galbraith as the "theory of countervailing power", was originated by Arthur Bentley who described a group as "the raw materials of political life" (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987:16, 36). The interest group[55] process is central to pluralist thought. The attention in this study is mainly with social pluralism, which not only rejects absolute unified and uncontrolled state power but also opposes the majoritarian tyranny of the institutional pluralism.

> *The ways in which mass public controls its government and politicians have less to do with parliaments and constitutional constraints, and more to do with elections, party competition and interest group activity. The chief watchdog guarding the "public interest" against governments are not the law courts but the news media* (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987:25).

Despite criticism by scholars like J.B. Thompson, media-constructed public sphere has been conceived mainly from the perspective of public interest journalism and public service broadcasting (Goode, 1999; McQuail, 2000). However, the 'old media' tends to be dominated by a few voices, flow is vertical and commercialisation has been heightened to the extent that the tenets of the libertarian or free press theory has been undermined

[54] Larry Diamond, 'Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation,' Journal of Democracy, Vol. 5 No. 3 (1994) quoted by Funso Folayan, 'Civil Society, Popular Culture and the Crisis of Democratic Transitions in Nigeria,' in Hyslop 1999:72-79.

(McQuail, 2000:143,148), especially in Africa (Bourgnault, 1995; Mudhai, 2002). It is for this reason that the public sphere concept is being re-directed to the relatively freer-for-all 'new media' – especially the Internet – even if not completely free from government. Indeed one of the basic problems all concepts of digital democracy address is the dysfunctional role of space-biased (Innis, 1951) 'old' mass media in the political process (Hagen, 2000).

2.4 Conceptualising The New Public Sphere

Guy Berger (1998:609) terms it 'a transnational public space', Damian Tambini (1999:306) sees it as the new 'third sphere', Craig Calhoun (2002) calls it 'international public sphere', Roman Gerodimos (2004) views it as '21st century public sphere'. Jodi Dean terms it a "world public sphere", citing later Habermas (1996), or "digital public sphere". It is perceived as a decentred yet integrated space-of-flows, operating in real-time, existing alongside the spaces-of-places (Ruggie in Nye, 2004a:84). In recent times, there has been a tremendous increase in academic literature arguing for modifications of the public sphere concept, for instance by Keane (2000:76-77, 83-87) and by Sassi (2000:92-94) among many other scholars. The early modern unified public sphere is regarded as obsolete, and its hegemony is rapidly being eroded by the development of a multiplicity of networked spaces of communication (Keane 2000:76).

> *The old dominance of state-structured and territorially bounded public life mediated by radio, television, newspapers and books is coming to an end. ... public life is today subject to* 'refeudelisation', *not in the sense in which Habermas'* Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit *used the term, but in the different sense of the development of a complex mosaic of differently sized, overlapping and interconnected public spheres...* (Keane 2000:76).

[55] James Madison (1751-1836) wrote about interest groups – the core of 'civil society' (Hajnal 2002:1&13).

In presenting 'a revised political theory of the role of public spheres', Keane (2000:77-83) distinguishes between micro- (sub-nation state), meso- (nation state level) and macro- (supranational or global) public spheres, identifying the Internet as a key stimulant for their link. The new public sphere need not conform to the Habermasian ideal type of rational discussion oriented toward reaching consensus based upon the force of the best argument (Keane 2000:85, Sassi 2000:92-94). Any 'ordinary reasoning' in Wittgensteinian philosophy[56] is acceptable and disputations (for instance in Internet discussion lists and e-mail discourse) need not follow the high roads of Ideals and Truths. There is no need to take the path pointed to by John Dewey who, at the infancy of broadcasting in 1920s, called for "a unified system of methods of debate, discussion and persuasion" (Keane 2000:87). Instead, Keane (1991, 1998 & 2000:86) argues for a nonfoundationalist understanding of democracy as a regime enabling plurality of individuals and groups in power disputes over who gets what, when and how. Normatively, a healthy democracy is one in which various types of public spheres are thriving, with no single one of them actually enjoying a monopoly in public disputes about distribution of power (Keane 2000:86). Indeed even Habermas has recently, partly in response to feminist critics, conceded to the existence of fragmented and unorganised public spheres (Sassi 2000:93).

It has been suggested that the supposition that public-spirited citizens can best act within an integrated politically constructed international framework of the nation state should be rejected because the emerging public spheres – such as the Internet – "are politically constructed spaces that have no immediate connection with physical territory" (Keane 2000:86-87; van Dijk 1999:164-5).

> *De-territorialisation ensures citizens' shared sense of proximity to one another in various milieux bears a declining relationship to the places where they were actually born, where they grew up, fell in love, worked and lived, and where*

[56] Wittgenstein's *Philosophisce Untersuchungen* (1958) referred to in S. Livingstone and P. Lunt (1991),

> *they will eventually die. ... In the present era of universal franchise, it is not so much who votes but where people vote that is becoming a central issue in democratic politics* (Keane, 2000:86-87).

The processes of globalisation, which include worldwide communication networks, challenge the configuration of the public sphere in terms of a national public given that "the nation can no longer provide the fantasy of unity necessary for the ideal of a public"; in fact "...the nation was never unified, whole or coherent...national public, as Bentham makes clear, was split" (Dean 2002:156 & 159). To be fair, Habermas while discussing 'Citizenship and National Identity' envisages "the phenomenon of a world [rather than a national] public sphere ... becoming political reality for the first time in a cosmopolitan matrix of [networked] communication" (Habermas 1996:514; Dean 2002:156-7). The circulation of "information content and points of view uncoupled from the thick contexts of simple interactions" (Habermas 1996:361) promote democratic discourse. "Put somewhat differently, the digitisation of contemporary telecommunications doesn't simply enable the realization of the public sphere; it is the public sphere" (Dean 2002:157). In other words, Habermas has in his recent writings recognised the reconfiguration of the public sphere in terms of the new ICTs.

Although the media are generally expected to be the chief watchdog and agenda-setters guarding the public interest against governments (Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987:25; McNair 2000:1-41), the 'old' (print and broadcast) mass media tends to be dominated by a few voices, flow is vertical and commercialisation has been heightened to the extent that the tenets of the libertarian or free press theory has been undermined (Innis 1951; Bryan et al 1998; McQuail 2000:143&148; Good 1999). Jospeh Nye (2004a:81) points out that from their advent about a century ago, the truly mass communications and broadcasting, though not the telephone, 'tended to have a centralising political effect'. He elaborates that 'while information was more widespread, it was more centrally influenced even in

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quoted in Keane 2000:87.

democratic countries than in the age of the local press' (Nye, 2004a:81). The centralised control of mass media has been particularly prevalent in developing regions like Africa (Bourgnault 1995). It is for this reason that the public sphere concept is being re-directed to the relatively freer-for-all 'new media' - especially the Internet - even if not completely free from government. 'Not only can the new media be harnessed to reverse the decline of public communication due to commercialisation and bias, but they offer new possibilities to surpass all that was previously achieved using old media' (Bryan et al 1998:6). This is because 'the Internet is more difficult for governments to control than the technology of the second information revolution was' (Nye, 2004a:82). Supporters of civic networks readily voice the advantages of new media. "Many explicitly make reference to a broader Habermasian view of the new media as providing hope of a new arena of communication, a new public sphere that can replace the old one now crippled by commodification and fragmentation" (Bryan et al 1998:6-8). Of course there is the risk society perspective on the dangers of imperialism, digital divide, conflicts and confusion with regard to ICTs (Ott 1998; Beck 2000; Slevin 2000; Schiller 2000; Hacker & van Dijk 2000:220; Abbott 2001; Main 2001; Norris 2004). Despite Bill Gates' contention that the Internet will create conditions for what he hails, in his 1995 book *The Road Ahead*, as a "friction-free capitalism", new ICTs are commerce-driven in what has been termed informational capitalism (Castells 2002) and cybercornucopia or *digital capitalism* (Schiller 2000:xiii). Dean (2002:157) finds it "astounding…that even as Habermas acknowledges – indeed fully supports – the digitisation of communication, he says nothing about the ruthless economic preconditions of this digitisation". The fact that the public still count on states to invest in the global digital information infrastructure for global competitiveness shows that the revision or further expansion of the public sphere does not lead to absolute theoretical progress.

Keane acknowledges the fact that his "attempt to radically rethink the theory of the public sphere…opens up new bundles of complex questions with important implications

for research in politics and communication" (Keane, 2000:84). Indeed while my research on new media and democracy in Africa concurs with the idea of fragmented and complex public spheres blurring public-private distinction,[57] it slightly contradicts the Keanean conception of space by the very fact that here, as per Miller and Slater (2000:5), we look at the use of ICTs in physical territorial spaces which are still occupied and claimed by state powers. Wherever they are in the world, networked people share citizenship, heritage and concern for political issues in their specific states. This specificity is still in recognition of the fact that, as Sassi (2000:95) notes, all kinds of combinations of issues and publics, local and global, are possible on the Net.

Granted, the discourse of nation-building, especially in post-colonial societies like Africa's, is no longer relevant but digital politics cannot be de-linked from flesh-and-blood organic politics if – as illustrated by the Chinese and Malaysian cases – political, social, cultural, physical, material and even mental conditions are crucial factors (Hacker & van Dijk, 2000:218-219; Abbott, 2001a and 2001b). Henri Lefebvre may have predicted movement from a society in which space is seen as an 'absolute' toward one in which there are ongoing 'trials of space',[58] but offline space – including that of the territorial nation state – has yet to be rendered irrelevant. In fact van Dijk (1999:165) points out that the exact ways in which new public spheres will be reconstructed cannot be anticipated yet. The ongoing reconstruction does not mean that the three conditions of the modern public sphere (territoriality, unitary and public-private distinction) will disappear completely and all common ground for societies at large will dissolve (van Dijk, 1999:165).

> *Public communication will be less tied to the parameters of time, place and territory than ever before. But this does not mean that the physical, social and mental make-up of the people engaged and the material environment of the*

[57] See also van Dijk 1999:164-5.
[58] Keane (2000:87), qtng from Lefebvre (1974), *La production de l'espace,* p.116. Jayne Rodgers applies Lefevbre spatial theories in *Spatializing International Politics: Analysing NGO's use of the Internet* (2003).

> *resources used in this type of communication will no longer matter.... Their relevance will even grow as the new media offer better chances to select and confront directly the different conditions, needs and opinions of their users* (van Dijk, 1999:165, 222).

This study is not about a transitory global civil society, an attenuated sense of global commonality of "a people lacking a past in common" (Tomlinson 1994 in Sassi, 2000:94, 102). It is about groups of individuals who, wherever they are in the world, share citizenship, heritage and concern for political issues in their specific states. This specificity is still in recognition of the fact that, as Sassi (2000:95) notes, all kinds of combinations of issues and publics, local and global, are possible on the Net. Noting that "we cannot make sense of localised practices and experiences without reference to wider social dynamics that cannot be apprehended empirically," Goode (1999:5-6) says:

> *I would like to see studies of specific 'public spheres' carried out in a more empirical and ethnographic vein as a necessary complement to the theoretical and, yes, globalising approach pursued by Habermas* (1999:5).

Of particular interest is the view by Hagen (2000:55,66) that political, cultural, economic and social factors shape the forms and extents of political uses of ICTs which rather than changing political system are only trend amplifiers. This is linked to the argument by Rogers and Malhotra (2000)[59] that the role of actors and their interests has been decisive in the development of new technological applications. This is significant given that urban civil society have been credited most for recent democratisation efforts in developing regions like Africa (Hyslop 1999) and surveys indicate NGOs are some of the largest users of ICTs particularly in Africa (Jensen, in Ott & Smith 2001). Much as the Internet 'actant', as Bruno Latour would call it, positions people as actors in more global stages, the networks or 'spaces of flows' that transcend immediate location only place users in wider

[59] Everett M. Rogers and Sheena Malhotra (2000), 'Computer as Communications: the Rise of Digital Democracy,' in Hacker & van Dijk (2000), pp11-29.

flows of cultural, political and economic resources; it does not uproot users from their actual settings (Miller & Slater 2000:8; Latour 1991), or 'spaces of places'.

2.5 Conclusion

The new ICTs, especially the Internet, have not been spared debates on democracy that characterised the introduction of early electronic media – radio, television, cable, satellite, video camera – in the 20th century. The Internet has been looked at both from the free-market libertarianism ideologies of neo-liberalism as well as the Net libertarianism prism, from post-modernism (Ross in Miller & Slater 2000:16). The term 'normative freedom' seeks to capture the apparent paradox by which no notion of freedom is really absolute, but necessarily takes the form of a normative structure, a social order (Miller & Slater 2000:16). This chapter has examined tools employed in the examination of the use of ICTs by civil society organisations in Kenya and Zambia.

The notion of the public sphere has been proposed as an analytical-empirical and normative tool. The public sphere, in the South, has taken on very different sizes and shapes in different historical periods, and in some cases media has been so controlled as to fall primarily into government space rather than public sphere (Berger, 1998:606). Net-mediated public sphere, allowing plurality of viewpoints and multiplicity of actors, has been preferred to the exclusionary mass-mediated public sphere. Emphasis has been placed on the study of ICTs within a context. The central assumption in this study is that ICTs do not replace existing socio-political networks and f2f communication, but are added to them. Some attention is paid to Latour's work supportive of a comparative study that eschews simple relativism but maintains a sceptical attitude in the face of glib assumptions about what the Internet 'must' mean or do. A hybrid stance has been preferred in the examination of the concept of digital democracy in Africa although the dependency theory model and the fear of what Castells (2000:18) would call informational capitalism of the new techno-economic system is not to be ignored in the analysis.

3.0 POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: CYBERACTIVISM AND E-DEMOCRACY AS CHALLENGES TO STATE HEGEMONY IN AFRICA[60]

> *Today, the Internet rests on servers located in specific nations, and various governments' laws affect access providers. The real issue is not the continued existence of the sovereign state, but how its centrality and functions are being altered.* (Nye, 2004:84)

3.1 Introduction

Three interconnected questions run through both academic literature and practitioner debates about the political impact of the new media. What can the new media influence in contemporary societies, and how do they do so? What can civil society and its organisations influence in drawing on the potentialities of the new media? How do these two combine to aid and/or shape cosmopolitan democracy and cyberactivism at the global level and cyberdemocracy at the national level? These complex questions point towards a fourth, which grows directly out of the discussion in the last chapter: how is the public sphere reconstituted, and how is the public conversation redrawn, in a given society under the impact of the new media. To answer these questions is to raise issues which are all couched in the language of power and influence. This chapter opens these questions looking primarily at theoretical debates, and so laying the foundation for the empirical analyses of the succeeding chapters. In order to pursue these issues further, the study needs interdisciplinary analysis of both the state and of new media and the activism which it is said to involve. The chapter starts with ideas of power and influence, and then looks briefly at debates on power and influence in the media, including arguments about the role of technology change in the media as drivers of political change. It turns next more

[60] Excerpts of this chapter have appeared in two forms. The first was a presentation titled 'Media Effects and Influences in the Age of the Internet', presented at the 44th International Studies Association Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon, 25th February to 1st March 2003. The second is a research memo (Mudhai, 2003b).

specifically to the new media in particular, and the nexus of relationships between media, technology change, political organisation and political action which they evidence. It evaluates some of the mythologies of the new media, including the notion that they erode state power. This chapter goes on to examine the direction of the discourse on the 'effects model' following the emergence of the new ICTs, especially the Internet. The chapter is in part a literature review, but it also lays conceptual ground and begins the critical analysis of the significance of the new media which is developed in later chapters.

In this chapter, and elsewhere in the thesis, I shall refer to conflicts over state 'hegemony'. This word carries potential theoretical connotations, some of which it is not intended to pursue. By 'hegemony' here, I mean in a general sense the domination of the state and its institutions over social and cultural arrangements including civil society. A reduction in state hegemony implies an opening of civil society influence. To move from the rather closed and controlled societies of the 1970s to a more democratic future in the 1990s and after, challenges to state hegemony are necessary (but not sufficient) conditions of change. The thesis is, as has already been explained, looking at the development of, and consequences of, conflicts between state and civil society in Kenya and Zambia, using a loosely weberian notion of those terms. Thus 'hegemony' as it is used here does not, for example, refer to a specifically Gramscian or related conception of power relations.

3.2 Power and Influence

The concept of power is central to claims people make about the state, about non-state actors, and about their relations with the media and civil society. The perceived effect of the media, especially electronic media (particularly TV, video and cinema), on their consumers or users has been a subject of debate for several decades. Compared to more than twenty years ago, it is now widely assumed that the media – television, radio, the press and the new media – have emerged as autonomous power centres rather than remain mere tools and messengers of other subsystems, such as political parties (Street 2001:231).

However, the meaning of media power, particularly where and how it manifests itself, is debatable. For instance, the distribution and exercise of media power in dictatorships and democracies cannot be the same. Media content and form may not have the same effect on users. In the relational sense of power as the capacity that A has to get B to do something they would not otherwise have done, media 'power' refers to who controls the media and their content, and about what effects such controls have (Street 2001:232). Street identifies three forms of such power. First is *discursive* or ideological or knowledge power, the way media privileges particular discourses and constructs particular forms of reality. Second is *access* or gate-keeping power, the way in which the operation of mass media controls (acknowledges or excludes) the range of voices (identities) or interests. Third is *resource* power, the way in which media owners (industry) can affect the actions of governments and states.

The media have the potential to play key roles in the power balance in civil society if we accept that civil society functions as the citizens' curb on the power of the state and its tendency to try to dominate (Hayes 2001:43). This notion originates in the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, who first realised its importance as the space within which the struggle for democratisation takes place (Cohen & Arato 1994:16; Hayes 2001:43). Civil society is thus traditionally viewed as a means both to limit state power and to promote intra-citizenry solidarity (Warleigh 2001:619), functioning as the citizens' curb on the power of the state and its tendency to try to dominate (Hayes 2001:43). In this context, in developing nations, the international donor community are increasingly turning to civil society as a political territory separate from (although connected to) that of the state, in which citizens are able to make demands and exert some control over the use of state power (Pankhust 2000:156). The UN and World Bank have come to refer explicitly to NGOs as key actors in the process of constructing a new civil society as a necessary condition of transformation towards development (Warleigh 2001:625). This implies the existence of a nexus of power operating in civil society in which the media play a central

role. This is hardly contentious: well established examples such as the role of the Hearst press in driving the US to war in 1898 against Spain for Cuba and the Philippines, the role of CNN in reporting the Gulf War in 1990-91 and the US military intervention in Somalia, and the impact of media reporting (including on the internet) of the death of Princess Diana in 1997 all point to a range of arguments about media power.

This begs the question of what is meant by power more generally, before the specific forms of power in the communications media is discussed. Although the concept is widely contested, one standard definition which can be taken as a conceptual benchmark is that power 'is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants' (Nye, 2004b:2). In this context, Nye has defined as 'soft power' as the ability to get what an actor wants through attraction or seduction or persuasion rather than through out-and-out coercion or direct inducements such as payment (Nye, 2004:x, 5). Examples cited include young people behind the Iron Curtain listening to American music and news on Radio Free Europe, and young Iranians surreptitiously watching banned American videos and satellite television broadcasts in the privacy of their homes: "When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. ... many values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive" (Nye, 2004b:x).

3.3 Power and Influence in Communications Research

After 1945, the field of communications research (like, perhaps a little later, that of International Relations) was dominated by American paradigms of causal, behavioural, scientific, quantitative, empirical research drawing on epistemologies and methodologies from the natural sciences and applied to social and psychological research questions. Central to the application of this paradigm was the model of communication as a transmission process, in which a message was intentionally sent and received, with predictable and measurable changes or impacts on the receiver. (McQuail & Blumler,

1997:21). From the late 1960s, new critical (especially linguistic and cultural) researchers rejected especially the functionalist and positivist approaches as new theories, methods and objects of study emerged. However, developments in media technology have also promoted conceptual change, since fundamental properties and effects of 'new media' are said to diverge from those of 'mass communication' (McQuail & Blumler, 1997:21). A proliferation of approaches to the impact of media and communications technologies on politics included David Morley, James Curran, and Karl Eric Rosengren. James Elihu Katz's 1959 functional 'uses and gratifications' approach contested with Joseph Klapper's 1960 *The Effects of Mass Communication*. Subsequently, George Gerbner's 'cultivation analysis' in the 1970s rivalled Stuart Hall's 'encoding/decoding model', which emphasied different accounts of how audiences received or read and interpreted the mass media (Lewis, 1991:11-44; Nowak, 1997). At the same time, perceptual-cognitive theories of communication effects emphasise the importance of the receiver's subjective perceptions and experiences of the message as well as the situation in which the text and the reader meet (Nowak, 1997:33).

This plurality of approaches all have at least one element in common: the most enduring of all concepts in the political lexicon, the concepts of power and influence, are understood as inextricably linked to communication. We cannot conceive of the exercise of power by A over B without some communication, direct or indirect, from A to B. Equally, while power can be exercised without its effects being communicated, it is often for the purpose of communicating to others (third parties) that power is used by P against Q, rather than merely to effect a change in Q's behaviour alone. In the field of international relations, 'the exchanges of documents, people, goods, and even violence that take place across national boundaries can almost all be considered forms of communication' (Fagan, 1966:6). As one of the most influential 'conventional' liberal models asserted, political interactions of various persons and groups are constituted by patterns of *influence* and *power*, manifested in and affected by *symbols*, and stabilised in characteristic political

practices (Lasswell & Kaplan, 1952:53). A *form of influence* is a kind of influence relationship specified as to base value and scope. A *form of power* is a form of influence in which the effect on policy is enforced or expected to be enforced by relatively severe sanctions. A form of influence is a *form of power* whenever the effect on policy is enforced by relatively severe sanctions. Any form of influence may be regarded as in fact a power relation if the deprivations imposed by the influential are important enough to those over whom influence is being exercised (Lasswell & Kaplan, 1952:84, 85). One might also note that since social, political and cultural power may rest on various bases, differing not only from culture to culture, but also within a culture from one power structure to another, approaches to the study of power and influence which do not look through the lens of careful differentiated case study are likely to be less useful. The idea that power and influence are not only wielded by public authority but operate also in the hands of private interests is hardly new: Beard discussed the role of interest groups in America in 1934 in his *Economic Basis of Politics* (Beard,1934: 67), noting a continuity, and a legitimacy, of such private interests. Democracy is shaped, and may be enhanced, but not necessarily compromised by such interests, so long as they do not provide an 'alternative state'. That proviso is, however, clearly an important one.

3.4 The Media Influence Debate in Context

The influence of the media is not only something which causes people to do what they might otherwise not do. It shapes perceptions and world views, alters agendas, excludes argument, demonises individuals and groups and transforms the metaphors and language used to make sense of the world. The most obvious, and still one of the most important examples occurred on July 20, 1969, when close to a billion people listened to the brief speech made by US astronaut Neil Armstrong before he and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon on the *Apollo 11* mission. Equally, visual images shape popular views of humankind and of the world: during the ten lunar orbits of the first

manned spacecraft to the moon, *Apollo 8*, the crew sent TV images home and took spectacular photos of the earth and the moon from the spacecraft.[61] The field largely began with a set of practical and policy-relevant questions concerning both the unintended effects of the new mass media (print, film, radio and later television) and also the potential for intentional effects, especially education, advertising as well as propaganda (McQuail & Blumler, 1997:20). Those who emphasize content stress common codes and their disciplinary power, and ascribe to the media a considerable shaping capacity in influencing consciousness and action, while those who focus on audiences stress course-outcome variations, assign the media less (or at least qualified) power and adopt a socially and culturally differentiating perspective (Nowak, 1997:35-6). The extended power of the most intrusive electronic medium, television, has been described as an 'ideological octopus' (Lewis, 1991). Debates on the impact and significance of the new media need to be set alongside the existence of widespread continuing debate about the capacity of the old media to shape our lives, questions which are not yet resolved.

During the early years of the electronic mass media, the 1920s-1940s, sweeping assumptions were made about the power of the mass media to influence behaviour, especially through propaganda (McQuail 2000; Defleur & Ball-Rokeach 1989; Cumberbatch 1989:3). The basic assumptions were that media messages are received in a fairly uniform way by every member of the audience and that the messages trigger immediate and direct responses (Cumberbatch 1989:3). "The early students of mass communication were interested in the process of remote social control." (Cumberbatch 1989:3, quoting Elihu Katz, 1988) To explain the media's limited power on behaviour change, a number of theoretical notions were developed. Most importantly, the problem was turned round (Cumberbatch 1989:3): instead of asking what the mass media 'do' to people, why not examine what different people do with the mass media? This approach, more generally called the "uses and gratifications" approach, became fashionable. Among

[61] See: http://www.historychannel.com/cgi-

early research was the work of Herzog from the mid 1940s to mid 1950s on the motivations and gratifications of listeners to daily radio serials. Another example is Berelson's 1948 study, "what missing the newspaper means" (carried out during a newspaper strike: Cumberbatch 1989:3). A second concept in the 1940s and 1950s was "personal influence" and "diffusion", the two-step flow theory where opinion leaders play a major role in shaping ideas and behaviour (Lazarsfield, Berelson & Gaudet 1968; Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955; Rogers 1995; Cumberbatch 1989:4). Much of the post-war research then shifted to selective influence, taking into account various intervening variables in the form of psychological and sociological factors – religion, sex, education, race and social relationships (De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989:195). By the late 1950s, there seemed a reasonable consensus among mass communication researchers that the media ordinarily had very little effect. Media reinforced prejudices and opinions, but rarely changed them. This may be counter-intuitive, and was a conclusion counter to what both most media professionals and most commentators believed. But it was a strongly framed view of the limited influence the media really exercised. Nonetheless work continued within this field: in their 1988 book, *Violence and Terror in the Media*, Nancy Signorielli and George Gerbner listed 784 annotated bibliography on violence and terror in the media (Signorielli and Gerbner, 1988). However, other scholars looking over this research effort have found it lacking both methodologically and in its scope: "as a developing field, the study of mass communication has been particularly unsystematic. Because they come from a variety of disciplines, communication researchers in the past have almost never co-ordinated their efforts or built on the results of previous research. Seldom have they been willing to abandon a theory because someone else's data failed to support it. Many investigations have been carried out simply because there was a substantial amount of money to do so and the public wanted answers to some policy questions" (Lowery and Defleur 1983:3).

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bin/frameit.cgi?p=http%3A//www.historychannel.com/speeches/archive/speech_436.html).

This reflects uncertainty as to appropriate paradigms, but also a conflict between disciplines involved in what has always been an interdisciplinary field.

3.5 New Media Power

The new media are significant not just in themselves, but also as a major symptom of economic and structural change, including the growth of what has been called the knowledge economy, in which they form a key element. This implies a shift from resources to knowledge as a vital factor of production, although knowledge capability also affects security and what security threats arise, and what potential there is to resist such security threats. (Nye, 2004a:75-6). Nye draws attention to the capacity of NGOs to exercise soft power, to share information, and to make themselves believable at times when governments may lose public trust (Nye, 2004:31).

It has been suggested by Mathews and others that the most powerful engine of change in the 'relative decline of states and the rise of non-state actors is the computer and telecommunications revolution' … but that they can also have 'the opposite effect, amplifying political and social fragmentation by enabling more and more identities and interests scattered around the globe to coalesce and thrive' (Mathews, 1997:51; Franda, 2002:19). This certainly makes the picture one is trying to trace more difficult to analyse in so far as it is true. But in this chapter I shall suggest that this argument about the decline of the state is at once mistaken and over-simplifying. Non state actors of different kinds can evolve, and can acquire real political leverage, without necessarily taking away from the state's power; but this probably cannot be the case without a reformulation of the nature of the state.

The internet poses particular issues among the new media. It is no longer uncommon to come across expressions alluding to the power of the Internet, such as 'cyberpower' (Jordan, 1999) and 'cyberimperialism' (Ebo, 2001). Jordan (1999) conceives of three interconnected levels of power in relation to the Internet: individual control,

technosphere defining the limits of cybersocieties and collective imagination of cyberheaven (e.g. the immortality of silicon) and cyberhell (complete surveillance). This resource is of course not evenly distributed: Americans represent one twentieth of the global population total, but nearly half of the world's Internet users (Nye, 2004b:30). The existence of cyber-cafes and public telecommunications facilities of different kinds means that people who may not themselves have a private telephone line or who cannot afford to buy a computer may nonetheless be able to gain access. This has sparked a speculative literature about the influence of the net which encompasses fears about pornography and the ability of terrorists to circulate ideas (or bomb recipes). In some respects, these debates echo those surrounding the older question about the influence of TV, but in some respects they are quite new, reflecting concerns and potentialities in the new technologies themselves.

3.6 The McLuhanian Newness Of New Media?

Ithiel de Sola Pool wrote:

> *Electronic media, as they are coming to be, are dispersed in use and abundant in supply. They allow for more knowledge, easier access, and freer speech than were ever enjoyed before. They fit the free practices of print. The characteristics of media shape what is done with them, so one might anticipate that these technologies of freedom will overwhelm all attempts to control them. Technology, however, shapes the structure of the battle, but not every outcome. While the printing press was without doubt the foundation of modern democracy, the response to the flood of publishing that it brought forth has been censorship as often as press freedom. In some times and places the even more*

capacious new media will open wider the floodgates for discourse, but in other times and places, in fear of that flood, attempts will be made to shut the gates[62]

Drawing on the famous phrase coined by McLuhan, Castells declares that 'The Network is the Message", in the opening sentence of *The Internet Galaxy* (2001). Castells goes on to make some extravagant claims for the impact of the net, including that the net has the capacity "to distribute the power of information throughout the entire realm of human activity" (Castells, 2001:1), and that "we are entering, full speed, the Internet Galaxy in a state of informed bewilderment" (Castells, 2001:4). McLuhan's presence is seminal to the debate on the impact of the new media, even though, in its emphasis on immediate transformation and technological determinism, it is also justly widely disputed (see McLuhan, 1962; Levinson, 1999). This thesis is not intended to ask the wider questions about the social significance of technological change, which it will steer well clear from, but to ask narrower questions about how, and how far, the new ICTs can act as technologies of freedom, or, equally, perhaps, of control (see also Pool, 1983 and Keane, 1991).

The new information technologies have proved important facilitators of a political learning process (of civic actors acting regionally and globally to counter the transnational nature of socio-economic restructuring and governance of neoliberal 'empire'), by creating a widely available free media for alternative news and interpretations. (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:119). Their influence does not lie only in the message, nor in the medium alone, but in the ways they can be used. This begs questions about the sustaining hardware and software, and how far that is in turn capable of being manipulated by competing interests. But much of the literature assumes that computer hardware is available freely to deliver the Internet and e-mail via their respective software, while the cell phone hardware can also be a platform for delivery and transmission of the Internet, email-like text

[62] Quoted in Franda, 2002:236 from de Sola Pool as excerpted in Lloyd S. Etheredge (ed.) (1998), *Politics in Wired Nations: Selected Writings of Ithiel de Sola Pool*, London: Transaction, p.363.]

messages and pictures. In the first chapter of his edited volume, Steve Jones (1999:1-27) examines research on the perception of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) or Computer Mediated Communications (CMCs) as engines of social change and the Internet in particular as an information highway. He concludes that "the Internet is … an engine of social change … (but) our metaphors have led us astray: The Internet is not an information highway." (Jones, 1999:2). In the opening sentence of the introduction, 'Forests, Trees, and Internet Research' (Jones 1999:xvii-xxiv), James T. Costigan confesses: "I am not sure that I know what the Internet is; I am not sure that anyone does." The impression one gets is that researchers are either not sure or not in agreement about what constitutes the Internet, and its complex interaction of hard and software, although it forms the centrepiece of all ICTs. "There is not yet a field known as 'Internet studies', although there may be one before long." (Jones 1999:xi).

The Association of Internet Researchers[63] has since been formed with some of its founders and key players designated as professors of Internet studies, but some confusion still persist even about the field of ICT in general which is sometimes taken to include earlier 'traditional' media technologies. Given the absence of consensus on the subject matter or object of study, one of the tasks at hand for researchers, given the generalised assumptions about Internet effects, is to identify the specific applications they are focusing on, including the World Wide Web (WWW), e-mail, chat rooms, Usenet, multi-user domains (MUDs), and MUDs object oriented (MOOs). In the case of Africa, in particular, the cell phone and the e-mail are popular applications worth focusing on. But these specific applications need to be seen in a social and technological context.

3.6.1 What are the New Media?

Even the term' new media' is contested. Mathews (1997:51) lists new media technologies as "fax machines, satellite hookups and the Internet [which] connect people across borders

with exponentially growing ease". Others argue that the so-called new technologies used in politics are not really 'new' technologies, but are a result of the merger between computers and telecommunications (Meadow, 1993:443). Other new technologies include teleconferencing, email, electronic databases (especially in legal realms), political databases (for instance register of voters), PCs, electronic newsgathering equipment, and the telephone, much of which tends to be excluded from systematic research on the new media. (Meadow, 1993:443-452). Most often, the new technologies have not *replaced* [original] the aging ones, they are used to *supplement* [original] them (Meadow, 1993:453).

Although CMC is not itself new, mass access and user-friendliness are, and they mark a turning point in media development. It is not only new communications protocols, which render possible our email and internet facilities, but browsers, message routing, and intelligent agents make information provision much more flexible and interactive than were previous broadcasting and print-based media. As Tambini suggested, icon-based and menu-driven interfaces render literacy a lower hurdle to communication, and, furthermore, CMCs no longer demand knowledge of specialist programming languages by most users. (Tambini, 1999:308-99).

It is less often that scholars go one stage further back to enquire what it is about the Internet that has led to the idea that it might be a powerful democratic instrument at all? Graham's study of the internet, which includes a chapter on 'the Internet as democracy', examines "the advantage of the email and the power of the web" (Graham, 1999:62-71). Some of this democratic potential existed in the minds of early users, who idealised the properties of the system. This may blind one to a possible totalitarian potential. But it is also true that the Internet's packet-switching architecture, which was designed to enable the US communications systems to withstand nuclear strikes, make it difficult to censor. "It is impossible for outsiders like governments to intercept [messages] en route without

[63] AoIR organises an annual conference and among the resources at its web site, < www.aoir.org > is "a list

destroying most of the technology's efficiency gains." (Ferdinand, 2000b:12). Censorship after the event is possible; censorship of the act of communication itself is very much more difficult (for the history of the net see Castells, 2001:9-35; Grossman, 2001; Berger, 1998). The Internet offers several tools that can be used to locate, collect, organise and package information. These include: communication tools (email and Internet Relay Chat or IRC0; file movement tools (file transfer protocol or ftp, and anonymous ftp); remote access tools (telnet); access and search tools (WWW and related HTML, gopher, etc); and newsgroups and discussion groups. (Kizza, 1998;15-21). Whereas older technologies like TV have limitations on target and scope, the Internet's "freedom from national politics, its non-affiliation with any one individual interest group, and the absence of physical and jurisdictional boundaries have all made it the best global outreach medium with the greatest potential to influence global cultural changes" (Kizza, 1998:25). The major difference the Internet has brought to international relations at the beginning of the 21st century is a vast reduction in the cost of communicating and sending data across great distances in the most developed parts of the world. Whereas all forms of interactive transcontinental communication prior to the Internet were too expensive to be used except by the wealthy and very sparingly by others, the purchase of a computer and access to the Internet make frequent global communication affordable to many more people than would previously have thought of using an international telephone line or sending a cable. (Franda, 2002:7). It is well known that the networks and networks of networks that founded the internet had military applications, but they have transcended their origins in many important respects. That is not to say that some of the most extensive uses of the net are not still government and military. But the Internet creates a system in which power over information is much more widely distributed, although it is hardly a 'flat' system without any concentrations of power. Compared to the radio, television, and newspapers, controlled by editors and broadcasters, the Internet creates unlimited communication: one-

containing all Internet related liservs in the known universe" – at http://aoir.org/list.php.

to-one (via email), one-to-many (via personal home page or electronic conference), many-to-one (via electronic broadcast), and, perhaps most important, many-to-many (online chat room). (Nye, 2004a:82).

These features have led many specialist writers to maintain that the internet has 'a momentum, a force of its own. It's damn near unstoppable', (Mann & Stewart, 2000:1). They go on to suggest that it has the potential to revolutionise political activity far more profoundly than the telephone or television ever did, for unlike them it offers the possibility of direct two-way interaction between the citizens and politicians. (Ferdinand, 2000b:1). This may under-estimate the impact of both older technologies in political debate, but it points to a high degree of transformational capacity on the part of the net. We might say that there are four particular dimensions in which the Internet can expand the scope of democratic communication and action, although it does not supersede the dominant role of mass-media communication. First, the net dramatically enhances the access activist groups will have to internal information from various institutions and the centres of political decision-making. The Internet can also be used directly or indirectly to set up independent group initiatives, or as the starting-point for intervening in politics along more traditional lines. In either case, the Net multiplies opportunities for political participation. Third, the Internet has already proven to be effective in organising local and regional citizens' action networks in civil society, as in the case of the students' strike in German universities in the summer of 1997. When authoritarian political leaders impose communications blockades, the Internet can also provide a forum for transmitting information, exchange opinion, and coordinating specific protests that central authorities cannot easily control. Finally, activist internet communities can put neglected public issues on the 'conventional' mass media's agenda, and thus make political actors aware of them as well (Meyer, 2002:122).

The Internet has had a major impact on many areas of life, from e-commerce to distance education. The availability of government documents on the Internet has changed

not only the access issue, but also the way information is now provided in an unfiltered fashion (McPhail, 2002: 227). One of the largest user days was September 11 1998, when millions flocked to the Internet when independent counsel Kenneth Starr released his 445-page report about President Clinton with graphic details about Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky (McPhail, 2002: 228). Internet tracking groups collectively reported that about six million Americans read the text of the report over three days, and that globally over 20 million people accessed the report within 48 hours of its electronic release. It also appears to be the case that, with internet use, public opinion polls are becoming more accurate as people are becoming more informed and knowledgeable. But the internet retains the potential to amplify the voice of those who use it, and if those voices are already dominant, then it has the potential to become an agency of what McPhail calls 'electronic imperialism' (McPhail, 2002: 236).

3.6.2 The Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

In 1988, Richard Jay Solomon wrote : "Over the past decade and a half there has been established an effective global electronic mail system – without carrier or government sanction, without planning, and without even a fully agreed upon data transfer protocol … It generally works well though it has no directory, no map can be drawn of it, [and] it collects no direct revenue… Though its services are illegal in some jurisdictions and ignored in others, its official non-existence makes it impossible to monitor" (Camilleri & Falk, 1992:122). It is certainly true that the email may be the most commonly used service of the Internet (Mann & Stewart, 2000:9; Kizza, 1998: 15)). Two key features of the e-mail are immediacy and reliance on computers. Email is one of the many technologies that has the *potential* to enhance participation but in reality may limit participation to those who are computer literate and who have (usually paid) access to computer bulletin boards. The ability of computer users to send multiple messages far outpaces the ability of those using traditional communication to send multiple messages. In addition, email may be subject to

censorship by email provider. (Meadow, 1993:447-8). At the same time, the very commonality of email use means that the technology has provided a powerful new metaphor for other forms of expression, and a focus for other kinds of cultural attention (e.g. the film *You've Got Mail!*).

3.6.3 'Let Freedom Ring': Cell Phones As Tools For Change

While emphasizing appropriation – the process, rather than the outcome, of using technology strategically, politically and creatively – as a pressing issue that civil society faces in the information society, Surman and Reilly (2003) argue that most Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have not moved much beyond e-mail and basic web sites. The authors further identify six 'emergent' technologies – "things that are on the horizon ... new ideas, approaches and technologies that have not yet been adopted within civil society in any significant way." (Surman & Reilly 2003:60), going on to suggest that mobile and place-based mapping technologies like GPS top this list of "things that we should keep an eye on". Although few CSOs have taken advantage of their full strategic value, mobiles offer great potential, especially in the area of mobilisation. We can therefore excuse the optimistic tone, that they are poised to take CSOs to a higher level of sophistication (Surman & Reilly 2003: 44). So far, the mobile phone has taken a backseat in information and communication technology (ICT) discourse currently dominated by the Internet – the main subject of Surman and Reilly's report. With the development of third generation phones, and with the much greater capacity of mobile phones to send images as well as text or voice messages, this is likely to change, but the scope of image transmission by mobile phone is beyond the scope of this enquiry (not least because the technology is in its infancy in Africa).

To look at the impact of mobile phones, it is important to see them in context. Taking cognisance of concerns over analytic 'impact' model on ICTs and social change, it is significant to note that just as ICTs in general cannot be studied in isolation from the

rhythms of daily life (Anderson & Tracey 2002; Mudhai 2003). This chapter not only further justifies the need for researchers and practitioners to pay greater attention to the strategic potential of the mobile technology, but also provides some examples and points up to possible directions for deeper inquiry. The justifications are offered for focusing on the mobile phone not in isolation but as a vital and significant partner of the more standard networked technologies (NTs), the world-wide-web and email.

3.6.3.1 'Extraordinarily Slender Literature': Making Sense of the Mobile Revolution

There is a huge volume of literature on the scientific-technical aspects of the cell phone, a few studies of its economic and cultural features, but little on the technology's social-political impact – except for brief mentions in discussion of NTs in general. Even authors of one of the largest anthologies on mobile communication technologies (MCTs) regret that the literature on mobiles is "extraordinarily slender" (Katz & Aakhus 2002: 317). In the continuing bid to make sense of MCTs a few authors use various perspectives, including post-modernist, feminist, world-systemic, developmental and ethnomethodological, to explore the impact of mobile and other forms of personal communication technologies (PCTs). For instance, partly reliant on industry press releases from Nokia and Orange, George Myerson (2001) links the communication visions of Heidegger and Habermas to recent hype around a 'mobilised' world. Even if not overly reinforcing Myerson's thesis, Rheingold (2002) points out that the 1980s PC wave and the 1990s Internet revolution would be overtaken by the 21st century mobile explosion – with the fast sophisticated always-connected smart MCTs (cell phones, PDAs, pagers and other portable Internet devices). Another author, Catharin Dalpino (2000:52-72) uses the title, 'Mothers and Mobile Phone Mobs: Renegotiating Civil Society' in one of her chapters, which suggests a special attention to the mobile, but there is hardly more than a passing specific mention of the cellular phone in her piece. These works would appear to

strengthen the notion of a dearth in empirical enquiry on the mobilising potential of MCTs, especially in political realms.

The mobile phone in particular has been forgotten partly due to complexities of conceptualisation. Part of this theoretical hesitation derives from the mobile's relation to an older and more routine and mundane technology-the handset telephone, and part of it from its current state: it is said to be in the process of 'convergence' (Cooper *et al* 2002: 9):

> *In comparison with other technologies, the mobile has a somewhat equivocal status, and is difficult to conceptualise. It seems to belong to the category of 'new media', but much of that literature is not pertinent, for the mobile, resembling in part its ancestor the fixed-line phone, seems relatively transparent, at least at an intuitive phenomenological level: speaking on the phone appears so natural that the mediating technology is often forgotten* (Cooper *et al* 2002:288).[64]

The theoretical aspect is explored at a deeper level by James Elihu Katz and Mark Aakhus (2002) who argue that functional and structuration[65] theories fail to deal with or account for some core aspects of the way people use mobile and other forms of personal communications and the way they make meaning from them and their use. In particular, they point out that the former is instrumental and goal-oriented at the expense of the symbolic while the latter emphasize process at the expense of the values that animate process (Katz & Aakhus 2002:315). They propose *Apparatgeist* perspective, with its logic of perpetual contact, which sees mobile phones as both utilitarian and, even more, symbolic and spotlights how personal technology can be used creatively to empower some individuals, often at the expense of others (Katz & Aakhus 2002:315). The *geist*, German

[64] See also G. Cooper (2001), 'The Mutable Mobile: Social Theory in the Wireless World', in B. Brown, N. Green, & R. Harper (eds.), *Wireless World: Social and Interactional Aspects of the Mobile Age*, London: Springer-Verlag.

[65] Katz & Aakhus (2002:315) catalogue structuration theories as including: W. Orlikowski's "duality of technology" (Giddens' duality of structure?), that technology shapes and is shaped by human action; M. S. Poole and G. DeSanctis on "adaptive structuration theory", that people appropriate advanced information systems into their work; Silverstone and Haddon propose "domestication" variant, emphasizing the integration of personal technology into everyday domestic life.

for spirit or mind, of the *apparat*, Germanic and Slavic for machine, influences both the designs of technology as well as the initial and subsequent significance accorded by users, non-users and anti-users (Katz & Aakhus 2002:304-317). Katz & Aakhus (2002: 316-17), while inviting further research on the consistencies in people's interactions with technologies and in understanding the heuristic value of their theory, offer their own view:

> *We see in the emergence of mobile communication, in a wide variety of nations, how the mobile phone initiates new questions about appropriate contact and renews contests over communication competence when new means for communicating require a new practical mastery of everyday activity* (Katz & Aakhus 2002:308).

It is clear that the search for some method, theory or concept, or a set of them, needs more attention in the study of the use of MCTs in general and mobile or cellular phones in particular. One area to look at is how conceptualising patterns of individual personal use compares with strategic group use, say by CSOs.

3.6.3.2 The Cell Phone as the New 'Mass' Medium: Ubiquity = Utility?

The fact that mobile phone use far exceeds landline and Internet use in developing countries is one of the most commonly cited ICT phenomena even though these references hardly go beyond a passing mention. Perhaps the most phenomenal cellular phone growth rate has been witnessed in African countries – mainly because they are late or initially slow adopters and because governments have been more forthcoming in liberalising[66] cellular markets than loosening decades-old stranglehold on the fixed networks. Recent statistics indicate 65 per cent of all African phone subscribers are on the cellular networks and mobile phones outnumber[67] fixed lines in more than 30 of the continent's 54 nations – only

[66] The mobile sector is open to competition in 66% of the countries featuring between two and five operators. While fixed-line growth is poor (except in low-population Reunion Island with 38% penetration and Mauritius with 26% subscribers), FWA (fixed wireless access) has been adopted in different areas to serve remote, sparsely populated areas and meet roll out obligations (Budde 2003a).

[67] In mid 2003, Zambia mobile phone penetration reached 2% compared to less than 1% for landline and less than 0.5% for Internet; Kenya's two cellular operators shared a subscriber base of 1.9 million, 6.3%

one (Guinea-Bissau) of which had not embraced mobile phone services by mid 2003 (Budde, 2003a). Uganda opened the gates as the first country in Africa in mid-1999 where the number of mobile subscribers passed the number of fixed line users, and now makes up more than four fifths of total phone users (White, 2003). Recent dramatic growth examples include Morocco, one of the fastest growing mobile phone markets in the world, from 400,000 subscribers in 1996 to 6.4 million in March 2003. In sharp contrast, Morocco's fixed network has declined (Budde, 2003b). Another one is Nigeria which recorded the highest annual mobile phone growth rate in the world in 2002, at 369% having added 1.3 million subscribers (*Ibid*). The demand has been so high in Africa's most populous nation that operators suspended new subscriptions in order to expand network capacity in early 2003. Cell phones cannot yet rival the radio as the mass media of Africa and other developing regions but rural penetration makes them a little more reachable than the Internet.

The mobile coverage is moving beyond the big towns and is often reaching populations ahead of telephone landlines, mains electricity and drinkable water – even in collapsed African states, like Somalia, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (White 2003). Industry forecasters indicate the number of mobile users across Africa will at least double over the next five years to at least 89 million, from about 47 million today (White 2003). Around the world, there are 900 million mobile phone users and at least 200 million mobile Internet users (see Gebauer 2002). Predictions[68] for 2003-2005 in 2001

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penetration, nearly five times landline subscribers, by end of 2003; Lesotho's mobile penetration passed four per cent in 2002 while fixed line remained at 1.57% with Internet penetration of about 1%; Angola's fixed line stagnated at 0.7% penetration while the mobile sector grew by 70% to a penetration of 1.5% at the end of 2002; In Cameroon, with two cellular networks and plans to privatise Camtel, mobile penetration increased from 0.02% in 1999 to over 5% in mid 2003 while Internet penetration remained less than 1%; Democratic Republic of Congo, with fixed line connection of less than 2000, mobile phone subscribers grew from 7,200 in 1996 to 600,000 with eight networks at the end of 2002; Botswana, with two cellular network and one fixed operator, has 26% of its 1.6m population as mobile phone subscribers, more than twice fixed line reach at under 10%; Ivory Coast, with three mobile operators (landline monopoly until 2004) registered 885,000 subscribers by end of 2002, more than double the 336,000 fixed-line subscribers with Internet penetration of 0.54%; Senegal's cellular lines are about three times fixed lines; South Africa has 14 million mobile subscribers compared to five million fixed line connections; Egypt, with two private operators with WAP and other services, had 5.1 million subscribers by mid 2003 compared to 1.5 million Internet users by end of 2002 (Budde 2003b).

[68] 'Internet Untethered: A Study of the Mobile Internet', *The Economist*, October 13, 2001.

indicated there would be more Internet-connected phones than Internet-connected PCs, making the mobile phone the predominant means of Internet access (Gebauer 2002). No doubt statistics conceal the stark realities of disparities within countries (urban versus rural), regions (for instance southern and northern Africa versus the rest of the continent) and global (the North versus the South). The International Telecommunications Union concede that although Africa has the highest proportion of mobile users among all telephone subscribers and mobile telephony has grown faster in the continent than in any other region of the world over the past seven years, hitting an average 78 per cent a year, the penetration rate in Africa is still far lower than any other region (White 2003). For instance, whereas in America 45 per cent of the population are mobile phone users and Western Europe boasts 75 per cent penetration (Gebauer 2002), "owning a mobile phone remains a luxury afforded by less than 5% of Africa's 820 million people" (Dubbe 2003a). Yet as Surman & Reilly (2003) point out, access is not a major issue for CSOs as they tend to be much better resourced, even if operating in rural settings, than the ordinary member of the public.

The issue that needs to be addressed is how to utilise the mobile phone features in a deliberate and strategic manner, for specific purposes. This way, text messaging service (SMS) would be easily seen alongside world-wide-web and e-mail. Even before considering more advanced second generation (2.5G) technology, such as the Wireless Access Protocol (WAP) and General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) that offer multimedia web-browsing and picture-messaging, and the third generation (3G) variant that promises to make the mobile phones the 'killer app', the basic second-generation (2G) offers SMS as a simple cost-effective application. The earlier move from analogue to digital Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) offered enough features – better speech quality, confidentiality, built-in security number and international roaming – for the mobile phone to be the 'killer app' even before 2.5G and 3G. Indeed for makers such as Nokia, Africa offers a market for less fancy models (White 2003). Of course when the cost and

infrastructure of these advanced MCTs diffuse well enough to be reasonably affordable, the mobile phone will still remain in contention with other ICTs. For the moment, SMS remains the most appropriate application and cheaper handset is the most practical option that can be easily appropriated by CSOs for their activities especially in developing countries.

3.6.4 Enhancing Audibility of Weaker Voices Within and Beyond Boundaries

This does not mean that Africa and other developing countries completely lack the more sophisticated cellular technology for use even in rural areas. A BBC (2002) report indicates that WAP, launched around 2000 in the West where it failed to take off considerably, is of significant value to African villagers. In Senegal, where 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and very few would normally access market information, Manobi, a joint venture between Senegalese and French entrepreneurs, uses teams to independently gather information about the prices of foods and goods being sold in the markets in and around the capital, Dakar then upload prices to a central database using mobile phones that dial in to the server via WAP (BBC 2002). This greatly improves price transparency and guards against exploitation of illiterate and semi-literate farmers by middlemen. Prices are kept low and farmers pay for the service as part of a deal between Manobi and the national telephone company. This model can be applied in socio-political realms as well. For instance in Zambia elections of 2001 and Kenya elections of 2002, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – some with official mobile phone policy – used their field observers to monitor elections and gather data then relay information instantly to NGO head offices in the capital cities where the data and analyses were disseminated to media houses for immediate broadcast, say by the recently licensed private FM radio stations. Unlike in previous elections especially in Kenya, the resulting greater transparency made it difficult for incumbents to rig the vote by altering figures. This alongside the use of the Internet and off-line CSO agitation and political deal-making by the erstwhile divided

opposition, facilitated the defeat of Kenya's ruling party that had regularly rigged elections to stay in power for nearly three decades. Another telling potential of the mobile phone for social change in Africa could be gleaned in Nigeria where residents of the eastern part of the country texted each other to mobilise for a December 1, 2003 symbolic work boycott to protest poor state of roads.[69]

The increasing mobile phone presence, for instance through "the umbrella people"[70] of Nigeria, has led to the assertion in the *Financial Times* that Africa's cell phone boom is "sweeping up all levels of society" and that "no other technology, not even the Internet, has changed lives and work in Africa as much as the mobile phone has" (White 2003). Two years earlier, the *Newsweek* in a report titled, 'Africa's Cell Phone Boom: The New Technology Is Causing a Revolution on The Old Continent' and subtitled, 'Changing Africa: Let Freedom Ring', explained "how Africans are unleashing the power of the mobile phone..." (Ashurst 2001; Mudhai 2003).

It is not just in Africa where the mobile phone is being used for social change, in the same way as the fax was used by Chinese dissidents to coordinate the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations, or the Internet by Indonesia's anti-Suharto demonstrators in 1998. The Philippines is fast becoming distinguished as a hub of mobile phone activism. For instance, text messaging played a key role in the January 2001 downfall of President Joseph Estrada. Minutes after the collapse of Senate impeachment proceedings against Mr Estrada for plunder charges, hundreds of thousands of Filipinos passed around a message via text to gather at a religious shrine – forcing Estrada to step down after four days of intense rallying at the shrine (Tan 2002; Rheingold 2002). More recently, an environmental watchdog NGO called BK (Bantay Kalikasan in Tagalog) held a campaign in mid 2002 to report vehicles that choke with exhaust fumes[71] and force the government to implement the country's Clean Air Act 1999. The Smoke Belchers campaign involved

[69] *This Day*, 'Another Look at Federal Roads', AllAfrica.Com, November 23, 2003 (via Lexis-Nexis).
[70] Vendors of mobile phone services who carry out their 'mobile' business stationed under umbrellas.

any cell phone user reporting to BK any vehicle they see emitting black smoke (Tan 2002). At the end of each week, BK compiled a list of vehicles with five or more complaints against them and sent it to the Land Transportation Office (LTO) – the licensing arm of the Department of Transportation and Communications. The LTO would then summon offending vehicle owners to their offices for an exhaust test. Those that failed were required to clean up their engines in a garage and those that didn't comply lost their licenses (*Ibid*). With a mid 2002 figure of 13 million Filipino cell phone users, mostly youths over 18, sending out an average of 25 million text messages a day – as many as the entire European Union (*Ibid*), it is not too hyperbolic to link the success of such campaigns to the mobile phone.

Earlier and recent examples exist in other parts of the developing world. For instance in Bangkok in 1992, members of the Thai professional classes – dubbed "mobile phone mobs" – coordinated antimilitary demonstrations with student leaders and with one another, using cellular phones (Dalpino 2000:70). More recently, in the October 2003 'Gas War'[72] in Bolivia, cell phone co-ordination enabled ordinary people from different parts of the country to lay a week-long siege on La Paz – facilitating the biggest indigenous siege of the capital in about 300 years (Plath 2003). When women went on hunger strike in churches the mobile communications network made it a coordinated act (*Ibid*). Being South America's poorest country, not many Bolivians have direct access to mobile phones so their case is nowhere near the so-called 'smart mobs' phenomena. "The groups were well organised with cell phones used to co-ordinate between leadership of existing organisations and networks." (Plath 2003). This third-party or two-step flow tactic undermines concerns over access and underscores the value of more strategic use. The Bolivian use of community radio outlets like Pios Doce (whose transmitter in Oruro was bombed) provides yet another lesson, that such technologies as the mobile phone amplify

[71] With a population of 11 million, Filipino capital Manila is among the ten worst polluted cities in Asia - with automobile PM10 and gasoline emissions linked to 5,223 deaths in 1996 (Tan 2002, qtg ADB).

best when combined with other more established forms of communications as well as organic social networking.

Some critics have contended that the invasion of poor villagers by ICT tools like the mobile phone is part of imperialist and capitalist scheme-of-things by Westerners, especially Americans, to influence the developing world. Citing common "network fail", Akhter (2001) argues that the famous Bangladeshi Grameen mobile phone project "is a conduit for undesirable access to poor people by multinational corporations and their products". While these sentiments are completely valid, it is difficult to wholly reduce the rapid expansion of ICTs to a strategic game rather than economic pursuits – especially when users fully embrace the technology and even gain from it. Hermida (2003) provides testimonies of previously impoverished village 'phone women' proudly praising the transformation in their lives as a result of the Village Phone (VP) project.[73] Although, for sustainability, the VP project is based on a commercial model, its network can be easily appropriated for socio-political use. Going by the Malaysian Internet expansion experience, one can postulate that the Bangladeshi VP services, including electronic funds transfer, Internet access, market information, and cell broadcast (of disasters, etc), are adoptable to fit in the four ICT activities identified by Surman & Reilly (2003) – especially mobilisation and observation – in times of socio-political crises. All it will take is some kind of strategy, especially by CSOs.

The above illustrations reinforce Surman and Reilly's observation that most existing examples tend to be local and national due to the nature of cell phone systems and infrastructure. Transnational Civil Society (TNC) successes have mainly been attributed to

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[72] Citizens were protesting attempts by US-educated President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada's $5 billion project to export the country's natural gas reserves to California and Mexico through neighbouring historical enemy, Chile – which annexed Bolivia's coastline in an 1879 'War of the Pacific'.

[73] The payphone project by Grameen, one of Bangladesh's largest NGOs, plans to install 40,000 village phones by 2004 in a bid to serve 100 million rural inhabitants in the country's 68,000 villages. One VP covers about 2,500 people of a particular village. Average usage is 1,600 calls a month – out of which 600 minutes are outgoing. Grameen Telecom (GTC) provides the GSM 900 cellular mobile phones to the villagers, using digital wireless technology, and also acts as a sales agent for urban mobile phone subscribers. GTC is a non-profit company, holding 35% share of Grameen Phone Ltd., the company awarded a nationwide license for GSM 900 cellular mobile phone services. Organisational and infrastructural support is provided by Grameen Bank, a sister organisation. (Grameen Telecom 2003).

ICTs in general or 'the Internet' in particular as demonstrated by the definition by Heidi Ulrich (2002) of John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt's 1997 coinage of 'NGO swarm' as a "large number of diverse NGOs focusing on an issue through the use of the Internet". Indeed the increase in the number of individuals involved in TNC activism around trade-related multilateral meetings – from 50,000 demonstrators at the 1999 Seattle Third Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, to the 100,000 at the 2001 Prague annual meeting of the World Bank and the IMF to the 200,000 at the Genoa G8 Summit in 2001 – has largely been credited to ICTs in very general terms (Ulrich 2002:175). In a rare case of specificity, Rheingold (2002) indicates that Seattle demonstrators relied on cell phones to co-ordinate action and evade barricades. There is therefore need for research inquiries to find out what specific ICT applications are used for what sort of activities by TNCs. Generalities need to be reduced in order to establish what applications are most effective for what sort of activities and for which kind of thematic and geographic CSOs.

This leads to a major point of this section – that of information disparities among Northern and Southern CSOs and the possible repercussions on activism labelled 'global', but which evidently does not form a homogenous pattern. In fact, up to about 90 per cent of TNCs accredited to major international meetings are based in industrial countries calls for a more critical examination of the dynamics of their help in agitating for issues that mainly affect developing countries whose real voices are least represented in their midst. Beier (2003) gives the example of the umbrella anti-mine organisation, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), headquartered in the USA, whose founding members[74] are all based in Northern countries, none of which are mine-affected. The location of these NGOs is understandablly based on practical realities that reflect global inequalities – especially "accessible air travel and, more importantly, access to the Internet" (Beier 2003). Yet these very essential requisites for activism, though out of reach

[74] Handicap International (France), Human Rights Watch (USA), Medico International (Germany), Mines Advisory Group (UK), Physicians for Human Rights (USA) and Vietnam Veterans of American Foundation (USA). (See Beier 2003:807 footnote 33).

for many Southerners, were strongly credited for enabling ICBL to push states to accede to the 1997 Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines.[75]

> *It is primarily in the developing South that these requisites of effective civil society mobilisation are not as readily available to majority populations, meaning people living in many of the world's most mine-affected areas are effectively disenfranchised from equal participation in transnational networks of mine action* (Beier 2003:804).

As a result, privileged voices are relatively advantaged through "structural inequalities that limit access to audible speaking positions" (Beier 2003:805). A stated preference, in late 2000, that job applicants to ICBL e-mail their applications allegorised "the effective inaudibility of some voices (notably from many of the world's most mine-affected areas) in the realm of mine action" (Beier 2003:795-6). Although Beier (2003) gets quite symbolic using phonic imageries, the author seems Internet-blinded enough not to make specific references to the mobile phone in a piece of work that quite categorically mentions emails and the Internet.

> *The majority of those living in rural mine-affected areas are much less likely to have email access thus their marginal voices can hardly be heard. There are important senses in which they cannot 'hear' either, residing as they do beyond the pale of the Internet-based outreach efforts of the (mine action) campaign* (Beier 2003:804).[76]

The author goes further to argue that the 'exclusion' from transnational networks of majority of populations from many of the world's most mine-affected areas, due to limited email and Internet access, poses a serious challenge not only to mine action 'rhetoric' and ensuing ethical practises but also to the global civil society notion. Although Beier does not clearly distinguish individual and NGO access in the South, the point the author makes

[75] The convention's origin is widely seen to reside not in any state action or initiative, but in civil society. ICBL brings together more than 1300 NGOs from over 90 countries and has succeeded in getting at least 141 states to ratify the Mine Ban Treaty (ICBL 2003; Beier 2003).

is worth some attention. In their report, Surman and Reilly (2003) also cite the frustrations of Ugandan partner NGOs of TNCs not gaining regular reliable Net access, thus missing crucial updates. Strategic mobile phone use, for sending text messages in addition to PC emails and website updates, is one way through which TNCs can enable participation of Southern partners. This is based on the notion that NGOs in developing countries that have limited Internet access are likely to be able to access SMS relatively easily given the already explained ubiquity of mobile phones compared to landlines, the primary means of accessing the Internet via PC – especially in the developed world. Although Cooper *et al* (2002:288) state that mobiles render location insignificant, allowing undifferentiated access to the worldwide network of satellite-enabled communication, it is important that TNCs seriously consider the geographical constraints of building true consensus on their campaign issues. TNC use of SMS to involve partners in geographically disadvantaged areas would strengthen their collaboration – a key activity area Surman and Reilly (2003) identify.

Increasingly, cell phones are becoming tools for mobilisation in Africa. In mid 2004, a growing constituency of mobile phone users in the continent was being mobilised to send text messages in support of a petition for women's rights in Africa.[77] Mobile phone users across the world could now send SMS's (Short Message Service, or text messages) to sign an online petition in support of a campaign urging African governments to ratify the African Union's Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (*Ibid*). "To our knowledge, this is the first time that SMS technologies will have been used on a mass scale on the African continent in support of human rights," said Firoze Manji, Director of Fahamu, a human rights organisation that developed the technique. "The facility enables those with poor or non-existent internet access to sign the online petition and takes advantage of the fact that there are about eight times more mobile phone users compared to email users in

[76] Also quoting Warkentin & Mingst, 'International institutions, the state, and global civil society in the age of the world wide web', pp. 251 & 253.

Africa" (*Ibid*). Manji reported that initial testing of the SMS function showed that it would be possible for mobile phone users to send SMS's from many countries and mobile phone networks in Africa. "We cannot be certain that people in every country will be able to use this facility, but we think most should be able to," said Manji (*Ibid*).

The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted by the African Union on 11 July 2003, but had not yet entered into force because only three countries (Comoros, Libya and Rwanda) out of a required 15 had ratified it when the CSOs launched the campaign. A coalition of human rights groups, spearheaded by women's rights organizations Equality Now and FEMNET, together with Oxfam, CREDO for Freedom of Expression and Associated Rights and Fahamu, developed the campaign to promote the ratification and popularisation of the Protocol, which included a petition addressed to African leaders (*Ibid*). "Once it enters into force the Protocol will be a powerful new tool to achieve equal rights for women in Africa. It could well serve as a model for the rest of the world," said Faiza Jama Mohamed, Africa Regional Director of Equality Now (*Ibid*). Mary Wandia of FEMNET noted concerns about the reluctance of African countries to ratify the Protocol yet, as Rotimi Sankore, Coordinator of CREDO for Freedom of Expression and Associated Rights emphasied, women constitute half of Africa's population of roughly 800 million (*Ibid*).

The professionally crafted press release pointed out that in the light of the UK Treasury announcement that UK aid is set to increase by UK £1 billion from next year, the cell phone could further help African people influence the way these funds will be spent in the continent (*Ibid*). "The use of such mass based technology is going to be critical in getting people's voices heard in the 2005 G8 meetings to be chaired by Britain's Tony Blair," said Irungu Houghton, Oxfam's Pan Africa Policy Advisor (*Ibid*).

Around that time, Africa had 52 million mobile phone users and figures indicated that the continent had caught on to the global SMS fad, with 450 million SMS messages

[77] See press release: 'Africa Mobile Phone Users Rally for Women's Rights',

sent in December 2002, compared to 350 million for December 2001, nearly a 30% increase in one year (*Ibid*). As one of the fastest growing mobile phone markets, Africa was predicted to reach 67 million mobile phone users by the end of 2004 (*Ibid*). On why IDRC had supported this initiative, Sandy Campbell said, "Fahamu's strategy with SMS marries advocacy with the technology people actually have, not the technology we hope they have." (*Ibid*).

This campaign confirms the thrust of this thesis: that although ICT use in Africa, especially for political mobilisation, is concentrated among the more urban and cosmopolitan CSOs that network with donors and like-minded global players, the policies these tools are used to influence often affect the ordinary people of Africa, in this case women whose rights are often easily ignored if not trodden on in the continent. It is a case of global technology being applied to alleviate local problems.

3.7 Participation: Civil Society Power and Influence

For interest groups and CSOs, "power and influence is manifested in the clamour for political participation" (Bienen, 1974:8-18). Bienen distinguishes between political demands and political participation. For instance, people may get what they want with relatively low participation. Secondly, participation can also have supportive rather than destablising effect on a regime that imposes controls on political life by encouraging specific forms of participation and curtailing others.

To take this argument further, it is necessary to consider the conditions under which networks have influence. To assess the influence of advocacy networks, we must look at goal achievement at several different levels. Keck and Sikkink identify the following types or stages of network influence: (1) issue creation and agenda setting; (2) influence on discursive positions of states and international organisations; (3) influence on institutional procedures; (4) influence on policy change in 'target actors' which may be states,

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http://www.pambazuka.org/petition/pdfs/PressreleaseSMS.pdf (Aug 2004).

international organisations like the World Bank, or private actors like Nestle Corporation; and (5) influence on state behaviour. (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:25). In his *Democracy and Civil Society,* Keane (1988) argues for the extension of the process of democratisation from the political sphere (where individuals are regarded as citizens of a state) to the civil sphere, where individuals are regarded variously as men and women, entrepreneurs and workers, teachers and students, speakers and listeners, producers and consumers. Struggles over *where* citizens can vote should be given as much priority as the struggles in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries over *who* can vote. Keane goes on to claim that: "In *Public Life and Late Capitalism*, I argued (against Habermas and others) that democracy should not be treated as a form of life guided by substantive normative principles. I questioned the view, associated with various forms of 'Socratism' (Kierkegaard), that argumentative reason can separate truth and falsity and produce a consensus among speaking and interacting subjects ..... I further proposed that democracy can survive and thrive without philosophical presuppositions, that it is best understood as an implied condition and practical consequence of the recognition that our modern world is marked (however imperfectly) by trends toward philosophical and political pluralism (Keane, 1991:171-2; emphases as in the original).

Free speech and equal access to the means of communications form preconditions for a genuine open democracy. It can be argued, building on Habermas' conception of republican democratisation. Without them, a community may be led astray and excessive power may be accumulated in the hands of rulers – resulting in repression and tyranny. (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:15). In a similar vien, Hannah Arendt argued that political action and speech – which are by definition pluralist – constitute higher forms of human existence than a mere satisfaction of physical needs, or technical work for the production of material goods to satisfy those physical needs. Her point is that they are only conditions for democracy, but that they are equally conditions for the possibility of an emancipatory social exchange, which is itself an object of democratisation: in public political space,

human beings recognise each other as free actors, capable of exposing and developing their identities; demonstrating their virtues; and creating something new (quoted in Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:15-16). These debates point to potential roles which the new media may play in shaping not just the fact of democratisation but also the specific of the processes whereby it comes about in particular instances.

In both Kenya and Zambia, there has been regular and periodic change of leadership through elections from 1990s, although before then both countries could be seen as more of autocratic-totalitarian. This process is discussed in more detail in chapter four. In the process, one can observe civil society attempting to define political problems which were ignored, discredited, coerced or repressed. At times, a 'circus' was offered to divert public attention (Fagan, 1996:29). Citizens, except relatives and cronies, had little room to participate or be consulted in policy-making affecting them. The scope of allowable criticism was very narrow or non-existent, conforming with claims by Fagan that the standard method of limiting public criticism is punitive: citizens, groups, and media that step out of line are subjected to swift and severe punishment which is meant to be a deterrent to others. Thus although licensing, censorship, and harassment are used to contain those who would speak out against the regime or its policies, the most important control is fear of incurring the displeasure of the rulers with all that might follow in physical and fiscal discomfort (Fagan, 1966:30). An analysis of the details of the processes associated with these changes are explored in subsequent chapters in the Kenyan and Zambian cases.

3.8 Sovereignty – Cosmopolitan Democracy

Around the world, governments (especially authoritarian ones like Cuba and Iraq, as well as some less closed ones like China, Iran and Malaysia) have variously sought to either shut down the Internet or restrict its access by populations, especially in moments of crisis (Simon 2002, Samii 2003). All the same, it does not follow that more Internet access and

use necessarily translates to less sovereignty. (Everard 2002, Giacomelo & Mendez 2001). Dahlberg's important study of computer mediated communications in Minnesota provides an interesting comparison, not least in its methods and question formulation, even though one immediately accepts that there are considerable differences between the African and provincial US contexts (Dahlberg 2001). A second US example, The Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (CPRS), were inspired by their 2000 symposium 'Shaping the Network Society: The Future of the Public Sphere in Cyberspace' to launch the 'Public Sphere Project' based in Seattle – the venue of the ground-breaking 1999 anti-WTO global civil society protest (Schuler 2000). In this section, the two studies and some related other work and their implications for this project will be discussed.

Lincoln Dahlberg, in his important 2000 Doctoral Dissertation in Sociology at New Zealand's Massey University, 'The Internet and the Public Sphere: A Critical Analysis of the Possibility of Online Discourse Enhancing Deliberative Democracy', draws on Habermas to develop a public sphere model with six sets of normative conditions (Dahlberg, 2001). These include autonomy from state and economic power, exchange and critique of criticisable moral-practical validity claims, reflexivity, ideal role taking, sincerity, and discursive inclusion and equality. He uses this template to evaluate the extent to which online deliberation is facilitating the public sphere in his case study of Minnesota E-Democracy project. Dahlberg gives a persuasive vision of the criteria one might employ in thinking through the interaction of the new media and civil society, one which will be followed through later in this study.

Using the writings of Richard Rogers and Noortje Marres, Dean (2002:169-171) suggests an emphasis on "issue networks" resulting in neither a set of norms and procedures, nor a democratic public sphere, but configurations which she terms "neo-democracies", an idea derived from Manuel Castells. These networks arise not through the relatively liberal or open debate suggested by other writers on cyberspace as public sphere, but through contestation and conflict. The fantasy of unity or harmony of shared interests

is rejected for the antagonisms that animate political life. In making these points, Dean clearly holds that the naïve aspiration towards political harmony in the cybersphere guts social life of its essential political (and essential conflictual) dimensions (Dean 2002:170). Indeed, not only is Dean suspicious of the notion of 'public sphere, but also of the idea of the public as such. And since the notion of the public, though important to utopian imaginings of democracy, has "co-opted by a communicative capitalism that has turned them into their opposite", it may well be necessary to abandon them – if only to realize them. Hence, instead of prioritising plurality, inclusivity, equality, transparency, and rationality, neo-democratic politics emphasizes duration, hegemony, decisiveness, and credibility (Dean 2002:172). In this conception, 'neo-democratic' politics are struggles for hegemony; they are partisan, fought for the sake of people's most fundamental beliefs, identities, and practices. (Dean 2002:173). The replacing of transparency by decisiveness follows from the critique of publicity as ideology. The politics of the public sphere has been based on the idea that power is always hidden and secret. But clearly this is not the case today. All sorts of politics processes are perfectly transparent. The problem is that people don't seem to mind, that they are so enthralled by transparency that they have lost the will to fight. With this in mind, neo-democracy emphasizes the importance of affecting outcomes, and rejects an emphasis on process as key to democratic potentiality. (Dean 2002:173-4). It matters more whether outcomes such as WTO or World Bank interventions can be changed or reversed than whether the procedural structures of democracy work in exactly this or that way. This approach also qualified the emphasis on rationality in other ideas of cyber democracy and the public sphere. It is not my purpose in outlining Dean's account here to say necessarily that this is the only way of developing an effective cyber democracy. Rather, it is more my intention to point to the existence of a real debate over the conditions of re-imagining democracy under conditions of global technoculture, a project that is only just beginning.

Linked to these debates about democracy are a set of concerns about the impact of cyberpolitics on the sovereignty of the state. Of course, some writers may point to the decline of the state and regret it, while others may celebrate it; but are either camp correct? Giacomello and Mendez (2001) conceive a *techno-driven* hypothesis (an enhanced Internet leads to less state sovereignty), while others advocate a *politics matters* hypothesis (that Internet growth does not inevitably lead to a decrease in state sovereignty: it depends on political action how the impact is felt). In the former group we can put authors like Grossman (1995) and Negroponte (1995) while in the latter we can include Margolis and Resnick (2000), Everard (2000), and Keohane and Nye (1998, 2004). Citing A. Rosas (1993), Nordenstreng conceives a shift to a third stage in the evolution of the concept of state to one where the civil society plays a crucial role:

Table 3.1 **Transformation of the nation-state**

	Feudal state	**Capitalist state**	Civic state
Legal structure	Monism	Dualism	Pluralism
Organisation	Fragmented	Centralised	Decentralised
Legal sources	Natural law contract	Laws, private contracts	Plurality, including reason & justice
Ideology	Authority	Freedom	Equality
Admn. of violence	Private armies	Standing state armies	Police

Source: Nordenstreng, 'Sovereignty and Beyond', in Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1993:463.

Attempts at regulation and control of the net are recorded by Mueller (2002) and Kizza (1998:66ff). They list areas of concern identified by the European Commission. These include: national security (bomb-making, drugs, terrorism); protection of minors (violence, pornography); protection of human dignity (racial hatred, discrimination); economic security (fraud); information security (hacking); protection of privacy (electronic harassment); protection of reputation (libel, comparative advertising); and intellectual property and copyright theft (Slevin, 2000:223). From the mid 1970s to 1980s, many other governments started getting worried that the transnational data flows (TDF) via computers,

particularly by American-based TNCs, could jeopardise national sovereignty and independence on economic, legal and socio-cultural fronts. In 1978, delegates from 78 governments reported that TDF "could place national sovereignty in jeopardy". The phenomena posed in 1979 "was possibly the most dangerous threat to Canadian sovereignty"; the Commission of the EC was worried in 1979 that TDF threatened "a reduction in [Europe's] independence in decision-making"; and French President Francois Mitterand said in 1982 that TDF use for the "dissemination of information processed and largely controlled by a small number of dominant countries could cause the rest to lose their sovereignty." (all reported in Drake, 1993:259ff). But until the 1990s, there was little government-initiated regulation of Internet access and content (Slevin, 2000:220). Most countries started regulating the Internet using existing laws but it was reported that most governments also realised that "the capacity for the negative regulation of communication systems has generally been slipping away" (Slevin, 2000:221).

Surprisingly, or perhaps not, an African country – Kenya – is one of the few countries around the world that have made moves to manage their own national top level Internet domain name system (Highway Africa news dispatch from Africa Telecoms, Cairo, May 2004). However, the Kenya Networking Commission Centre will have to overcome numerous bottlenecks before it comes operational and credible. Quite apart from the question of the regulation of allegedly 'undesirable' material, however, it is worth noting that states still play a big role in financing, building and maintaining telecommunications infrastructure. They also generally play a critical role in licensing operators and service providers, and this includes those with the most impeccable 'neo-liberal' credentials. Kenya too retains a high degree of involvement in the national telecommunications infrastructure, and this provides an important resource for intervening in communications on both the Internet and mobile phone system if it is seen as necessary. At the same time, new media are economic systems, and provide key actors with the opportunity to raise income (governments through licensing and fees as well as

corporations). Saskia Sassen (1995) argues that the formation of new economic systems centred on cross-border flows and global telecommunications and computer networks "has affected two distinctive features of the modern state: sovereignty and exclusive territoriality" (Sassen, 1995: xii,1-31). She further suggests a concept of "economic citizenship" that "does not belong to citizens" but "to firms and markets – specifically, the global financial markets" (Sassen, 1995:xiv, 33-62). She also, in a different paper (Sasssen 1998: 551) points out that transnational corporation intranets and encryption behind firewalls 'represent private appropriations of a public space'.

Hacktivism (using techniques of internet based activism including but not limited to hacking into other systems to make protests) provides a particular focus of global protest, using the internet and email systems to challenge established power, a focus for most Global Civil Society protesters. Nye, who does not approve of such action, notes that the information revolution makes states more porous, and more vulnerable to such action. Governments now have to share the stage with actors who can use information to enhance their soft power and press governments directly, or indirectly by mobilising their publics (Nye, 2004b:91). Throughout the 1990s, transnational or global civil society seems both to be strengthening and to have major impacts on some aspects of international decision-making. One example lies in the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, where NGOs roused enough public pressure to push through agreements on controlling greenhouse gases. Another is provided by the 1994 protesters who dominated the World Bank's anniversary meeting with a 'Fifty Years is Enough' campaign, forcing a rethink of the Bank's goals and methods. In 1995, the company Royal Dutch/Shell, although technically in the right, was prevented by Greenpeace, the most media-savvy of all NGOs, from disposing of its Brent Spar oil rig in the North Sea (Franda, 2002:20, citing the *Economist*). It was not Greenpeace's near suicidal interventions at sea on their own that made the difference, but their ability to commandeer media space on both conventional and new media to promote their argument that made the difference.

Lipschutz argues that there is emerging a global civil society--that is, "a parallel arrangement of political interaction, one that does not take anarchy or self-help as central organising principles but is focused on the self-conscious constructions of networks of knowledge and action, by decentred, local actors, that cross the reified boundaries of Space as though they were not there" (Lipschutz, 1992: 389-420). This argument may well make some sense. But it requires specific testing and detailed analysis in particular contexts of political action and social structure rather than the kind of generalised discussion it often receives. The thesis will return to 'global civil society' and its potential to impact on individual political systems in future chapters.

3.8.1 The Resilient State: State Control and Censorship

In 1977, when the Internet had barely emerged, Keohane and Nye (2001) concluded that "modernists point correctly to … fundamental changes now taking place, but they often assume without sufficient analysis that advances in technology and increases in social and economic transactions will lead to a new world in which states, and their control of force, will no longer be important" (Franda, 2002:228). "The prophets of a new cyberworld …. often overlook how much the new world overlaps and rests on the traditional world in which power depends on geographically based institutions … classic issues of politics – who governs and on what terms – are as relevant to cyberspace as to the real world" (Keohane & Nye, 1998:82; Franda, 2002:228). Political sovereignty and legal regulation work within specified territorial jurisdictions. And to at least some considerable extent, greater than some cyber activists readily concede, the cyberworld too depends on this (for example for the management of intellectual property disputes). Arquilla and Ronfeldt caution that prevailing hopes of peace-enhancing tendencies of interconnectivity in the new media must be tempered by a realisation that the information revolution augurs a new epoch of conflict, in which, they suggest, new modes of armed combat and social upheaval will emerge (Arquilla & Ronfeldt 1998). There have been a number of occasions in the

past when interconnectivity was hailed as the end of warfare, that war had become unthinkable. But more than 30 nations have developed aggressive computer-warfare programmes (Nye, 2004a:85), and these capabilities have been used in different conflicts, including the current war in Afghanistan as well as between China and Taiwan. Furthermore, the technologies create new insecurities and vulnerabilities: every night, American software companies send work electronically to India, where software engineers can work while Americans sleep and send it back the next morning. (Nye, 2004a:86). Thus it would appear that an info-warfare race is already taking on the proportions of the Cold War era nuclear arms race. In early-mid 2001, there were widespread reports of imminent cyber attack of the USA by Fidel Castro's Cuba.[78]

Anne-Marie Slaughter has sought to rebut the claim that the state was in decline and that global politics were increasingly fragmented, while acknowledging the role of ICTs in general and the Internet in particular in expanding CSO allegiances and reach. She argues that the "new mediaevalists" miss two central points: one, that "private power is still no substitute for state power"; and two, that "a gain in power by non-state actors does not necessarily translate into a loss of power for the state" (Slaughter, 1997:184; Franda, 2002:20). This is especially significant in the African context. Although the Internet and other aspects of IT have enabled a small elite class of Africans, Asians and Latin Americans to organise somewhat more effectively than had been the case previously, they have not been able to overwhelm or supplant state power, and their ability to pressure governments and international organisations on specific issues has been dependent on considerable support – especially funding – from organisations (including government organisations) in the developed world. (Franda, 2002:20-21). These so-called pro-poor interventions by global-Northern NGO that bypass the state in Africa cannot replace or significantly weaken it, activists Jenny Rossiter and Robin Palmer suggest: "NGOs cannot seek to replace the state, for they have no legitimacy, authority or sovereignty and,

[78] Although it is perhaps much more likely that he US would use cyber-warfare techniques against its small

crucially, they are self-selected and thus are not accountable" (cited in Ranger and Vaughan, 1993:260). Franda (2002:21) agrees. NGOs may be guilty of exaggerating their own influence, and their impact in mobilising and ordering civil society organisations "have been marginal rather than central to the purposes and dominance of the governments of most nations".

Information technologies have provided the state with the ability to collect, analyse and utilise unprecedented quantities of data associated with the running of both the state apparatus itself and the civil society .... [hence] some analysts have referred to the 'self-reporting state' [although] there is little convincing evidence that these data flows are significantly enhancing the internal autonomy of the state, which is a necessary condition for sovereignty. (Camilleri & Falk, 1992:120). But governments of course also have access to the web, and as Everard (2000) has pointed out, it is governments who have much the greatest technological capacity if they choose to deploy it. More simply, governments have their own websites, and their own information management teams. Cyberspace is not an arena dominated by anorak clad hacktivists, so much it is a territory held by expensively suited consultants who are willing to work equally hard for clients from the cyberworld, from opposition, from corporate power or from the state, providing only that they are suitably paid. Thus it is undoubtedly the case that the same technologies could reinforce control and surveillance powers of centralised authorities which pose threats to individual privacy and democratic rights (Raab *et al* 1996:283). Central surveillance has proved highly effective, although it has needed to be targeted (hence the effective prosecution of child pornography, at the cost of huge state resources, while other forms of pornography remain largely unregulated. But in specific target areas (the war against terror is presumably another, although its history is yet to be written, and this lies outside the scope of this thesis), central surveillance is possible, but governments that aspire to control information flows through control of the Internet face high costs and many frustrations

neighbour (http://english.pravda.ru/world/2001/07/05/9358.html),

(Nye, 2004a:82). It may also be that not all states can manage either the technology or the resources to do this; but it is in principle not outside the capability of many states to do this if they choose, at least within certain limits. Thus the uses of the US Patriot Act of 2001 and China's campaigns against cyber cafes both illustrate state power against the web community. More than half of China's 200,000 cybercafes have been penalised for not complying with legislation passed in 2000 requiring them to install filters. The authorities had shut down 3,000 cybercafés for good and 12,000 temporarily since the start of the inspections.

Alternatively, instead of seeing the net as undermining the sovereignty of the state, in the case studies by Franda (2002), the nation-state has been conceived as the gatekeeper of technological innovation, particularly in matters related to IT (Franda, 2002:230; Calhoun, 2002). This gatekeeping notion does not escape some of the issues raised in the debate about control, but it does at the same time capture some of the salient features of the networked polity and the complexity of relations between state and civil society.

3.9 Public Sphere, New Media and Democracy

The decline in voting support in established democracies in Europe and the US is one widely noted feature of recent elections.[79] One might ask how far new media and new techniques of organising elections can revive voting confidence in the electoral system. While this is a relevant question, which highlights the expectations put on e-democracy, it may seem less of an issue in an African context. But there is behind this idea an assumption that e-democracy can transform the public sphere which is certainly relevant to an African context, and all the more if technological developments continue.

3.9.1 E-Democracy Theory and Practice

[79] See http://www.democracyusa.org/media/71503.html accessed September, 2004, and Ferdinand, 2000b:7.

Tambini (1999:310) has pointed out that e-democracy is not a new phenomenon in so far as Ben Barber had it in mind in the development of cable TV when envisaging 'strong democracy' in 1984, while in 1972 Amitai Etziomi called for 'electronic town halls' to provide for deliberation on local policy issues. Others have traced the concept much further back (Graham, 1999:65-6). New means of communication and new avenues for the expression of political opinion shaped political behaviour in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, beginning with the technoloigcal innovation of the printing press. Indeed, this helped to found the idea and practice of representative democracy (Graham, 1999:66). More recently, at the level of democratic theory and practice, new technologies are altering the relationships between the governors and the governed and are raising new questions of campaign communication, public policy, and, perhaps most significantly, the nature of political competition (Meadow, 1993:442-3). This was once reflected in the use of radio by political leaderships (Lerner, 1957:2 66-75). However, the specific political consequences of the new technologies are the subject of much controversy. (Fagan, 1966:149). Although we can agree that the presidential campaign in the age of national television is a phenomenon qualitatively different from the campaign of whistle-stop days, we can nevertheless argue at length on both empirical and normative grounds about why and in what ways the new differs from the old. … to specify and evaluate the political consequences of the new technologies is by no means easy. (Fagan, 1966:150). The critical question is: *Who shall control the new instruments of communication, and for what purpose shall they be used?* Obviously this is not a new question nor a new problem. But it assumes a special urgency and a new relevance in the twentieth century due to three factors. First, centralisation: the pervasiveness and potentialities of the new mass media and our dependence on them for political information define a system in which a limited number of persons in key communication roles control vast power for the short-term (and ultimately the long-term) conduct of politics. (Fagan, 1966:150).

The second point, that of access, is related to the first. The scale, complexity, and increasing centralisation of the new technology create a host of what might be called problems of access and diversification. No matter how serious or well founded one's 'cause' may be, even in a political system which purports to encourage diversity in public communication, it is neither easy nor cheap to get a national hearing unless the organisation or individual already enjoys special mass communication privileges or automatic access. Issues of resources and access are intertwined: money buys access; poverty or isolation denies it. And there is a further point, privacy. The most dramatic manifestation of the problem is seen in the surveillance of the electronic media: wire taps, long-range and miniature microphones and recording machines, and infrared gadgets and camera systems backed by computer systems for gathering, transmitting, cataloguing, storing, and retrieving astronomical amounts of information (Fagan, 1966:152).

E-democracy is therefore not free of problems, and raises many of the issues that other forms of democratic openness do as well as some new ones. Tambini, in arguing for a 'very broad notion of democracy and participation', points out that the new technologies have implications not only for information provision, voting and polling, as well as party and community activism, but for the very formation and organisation of political identities (Tambini, 1999:306). We might therefore note that ICTs have a role, for good or ill, in the managerial use of new technologies, some of which might enhance real democratic potential, while other enhance the capacity for state or elite control. ICTs also have a considerable range of uses in political campaigning (Meadow, 1993:453), including the shift from broad- to narrow-casting, focussed political activity looking at key groups of marginal voters or ensuring that supporters come out to vote while opponents are encouraged to sit on their hands at home. One can ask whether new media make it more likely that there will be more information for voters, and what the quality of that information might be (Meadow, 1993:457). The answers to these questions, though not certain, indicate that not all the consequences of the new technologies will be positive. In

the US, at the state level, the election for governor in Minnesota in 1998 which led to the victory of Jesse Ventura as Governor, was recorded as the first that could be attributed to superior campaigning based on the Internet (Ferdinand, 2000b:10-11).

Having said that, ICTs have not yet affected the practice of voting itself. Even the US has yet to embrace Internet voting. Attempts have been made in the US to use the net or email to improve voter-turnout, to reduce absentee voting, where ballots are mailed to voters before election, and 'early voting', whereby voting machines are set up in shopping malls and other public places for up to three weeks before election day so that citizens may stop by at their convenience and cast their votes (Traugott, 2004). In this context, across the U.S. as a whole, more than one fifth of the electorate cast their ballot before what was formerly known as 'election day' (Traugott, 2004). In other countries, while experiments with e-democracy have been tried, no elections have been held based on net technologies. But the web does facilitate deliberation amongst the voter public. A great variety of equipment is becoming available to allow us to say, or write, more to one another in less time than ever before. (McLean, 1989:1). Drawing on Alexis de Tocqueville, Klein (1999) focused on online forums as one way of using the Internet to create and sustain citizen associations, during and outside election time. One radical approach links new technology to direct or 'strong' democracy, where citizens get together in some form of virtual community or digital agora or plebiscites (Budge, 1996:193; Barber, 1984 & 1998). Proponents of this perspective, Ferdinand (2000b:6) notes, argue that "the need for representatives to make decisions in their name is no longer so great" especially in the West where representative democracy is in crisis. Thus ICTs could potentially change the triangular relationship between citizens, parties and parliament, especially if all the parties have Internet facilities. There are a number of other examples from countries such as Germany, the UK and Sweden which show shifts in this configuration which it is unneeccesary to develop here (Berger, 1999; White, 1999. See also: Grossman 1995; Raab

et al 1996:283; Bryan et al 1998; Ott 1998; Dahlberg 2001; Jay G. Blumler & Stephen Coleman 2001; Kahney 2003, Clift 2004; Norris 2004).

In early discussions of 'teledemocracy', it was often suggested that wide citizen use of ICTs was a way around the continuing frustrations of representative institutions and the political process. There are examples where citizens from the outside have established new online news sources (like Malaysikini.com), forums, and e-organised citizen campaigns (like the e-mail and text-messaging efforts supporting protests to force the resignation of Philippines President Estrada) that do have political agenda-setting power and ability to generate public opinion. They have potential, but successful efforts of a dramatic nature are extremely rare. (Clift 2004:22). Nonetheless, it has been claimed that "The potential for public sphere online, where people become citizens online, is an area of increasing interest." (Clift 2004:33). Lincoln Dahlberg (2001), in his study already cited, explores Minnesota E-Democracy's facilitation of online forums (e-mail discussion lists), which meet many of Habermas' attributes required of the "public sphere." The Minnesota project has influenced online projects within the US (with chapters in Iowa and Chicago among other areas) and globally (for instance in the UK and Nova Scotia) (Dahlberg 2001). The Minnesota E-Democracy project focuses deliberations upon 'real' political problems of those living within a particular geographically bounded political jurisdiction. (Dahlberg 2001). The key researcher concludes that "My research also found a number of areas where these exchanges tend to fall well short of the public sphere conception ..... the colonization of cyberspace by state and (increasingly) economic interests is limiting the extension and autonomy of online discourse...." (Dahlberg 2001).

The issue of e-governance rose to prominence when the World Wide Web emerged as a mass medium following the launch of the first graphical point-and-click browser (Mosaic in 1993), Netscape Navigator (in October 1994) and Microsoft Explorer (in August 1995) (Norris 2004:1). It marked changes, Pippa Norris suggested, that could be collectively seen as a shift from the Weberian bureaucratic state towards 'networked

governance' with power diffused to multiple agencies, including the non-profit sector (Norris 2004:2). However it is the governance or administrative functions of state systems rather than the participatory functions which egovernance has supported effectively (Norris 2004:3). This outcome might well be anticipated in both developed and developing societies. Thus the earlier optimism that the Internet would transform the relationship between citizens and states have been tempered in more recent years by greater scepticism about the power of technology to alter bureaucratic government organisations, deep-rooted patterns of civic engagement, and the structure of the state (Norris 2004:17). Similarly, Raab et al (1996) explore the emergence of an 'information polity' in which the development of tools for use in an electronic democracy is intertwined with those involved in the electronic delivery of public services. To the extent that the new ICTs will open up the processes of administration to outside observers much more effectively than before, as Ferdinand (200b:5) has also claimed, they may at least increase transparency. On balance, as Norris concludes in her assessment, the new ICTs have greater potential for deepening pluralist and representative democracy, by strengthening government transparency and by improving public satisfaction with the delivery of routine public services, more than by stimulating new forms of civic activism, even though no positive outcome is inevitable in this process (Norris 2004:19).

3.9.2 Countering E-Democracy: Does the Centre Hold?

Meyer (2002:119-122) points out that objections can be raised against optimistic scenarios for democratic renewal via ICTs on four different planes: society and culture; mass culture; communication theory; and, socio-economic conditions. I will address the first and the last in the 'digital divide' chapter later in this thesis. On the second issue, one challenge is the "widespread tendency for the older media to colonise the new ones" (hence the distribution by 'old' media of news via the Internet, as explored in a different chapter here), and another related one is the fact that "the net is literally swamped by overt or covert

commercial entertainment". On the third level, "the Internet tends to largely privatise the political public sphere, since individuals can only tap its potential in isolation" (Meyer, 2002:121). These criticisms only rein in overdrawn expectations. They do not defuse the main argument, that the Internet does in principle offer new possibilities for democratic communications. It is also true that the internet is unlikely to change the habits of most user-groups, but instead reinforce the tendencies they have already shown in their response to the more traditional public sphere (Meyer, 2002:122-3). Alongside the optimistic arguments, there are also criticisms of the Internet's possible role in deliberative democracy as well as its use for public discourse exist. Cass Sunstein suggests that citizens will self-select online exchanges and information that represent "extreme echoes of our own voices" (Clift 2004:33). Certainly, there has been widespread evidence of concern about the growth of internet extremism and the promotion of extreme agendas in Europe and elsewhere, but this potential has not evolved to a point where it affects democracy as a whole in any country the literature can identify.

Of course, the strength of the Internet as a medium does not automatically translate into a strong democratic moment: reactionary elites can also use their access to the Internet to strengthen themselves and consolidate anti-democratic trends. But the medium is there, it is growing, and if we resist the temptation to overrate the political power of the media in relation to developing democracy, it will have significant impact (cf. Berger, 1998:609).

3.9.3 New Media and Democracy in Africa

Africa's post-colonial states are successors to profoundly anti-democratic colonial forms of governing, and the influence of that past is not negligible (this point is developed in chapter four) (Hageurd, 1997:5). In addition, many sceptics from academia and politics, including some African leaders, have argued that "African soil is infertile for democracy" due to "structural bottlenecks" (Dicklitch, 1998:31). If this is a serious argument beyond a lazy search for a justification for continuing one party rule, it raises questions about the

continuing predominance of neo-patrimonialism and the parasitic and exploitative role of the political elite. It suggests that the social barriers to political development, including low levels of literacy, lack of civil society institutions and an inability to access an effective electronic infrastructure, determine outcomes, a pessimistic view that needs to be tested empirically (and will be so tested in subsequent chapters). This is not to take the optimistic alternative a priori, but to argue that the possibility for democratisation needs to be tested in detail against a sophisticated set of criteria.

Richard Sklar (1983) provides four current models for democracy in Africa. First, he observes the liberal model (more correctly called a republican model), wherein government powers are limited by law, and citizens enjoy freedom of association to compete for office in free elections at regular intervals. Secondly, there is a guided form, a government by the guardians of the public weal who insist on political uniformity – a form of developmental dictatorship in a democratic cloak. Kenya ranks here. His third category identifies social democracy in situations where democracy implies the effective pursuit of an egalitarian social order, in addition to a government that is accountable to the people. He finally identifies participatory democracy, which affirms the existence of a relationship between democratic political institutions and participative social institutions. (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1987:188). Sklar sees signs of the emergence of 'developmental democracy', which accommodates the goals of social reconstruction implicit in socialist democracy, the resistance to authoritarianism implicit in liberal democracy, as in the struggle for trade union autonomy in Zambia, and the recognition of cultural diversity implicit in consociationalism, as in federal experiments in Nigeria (see also Pinkney, 2003:17). This provides a qualified, but relatively speaking more optimist view of democratic potential in Africa (Glickman. 1988: 234-254).

Writing in 1988, Glickman saw prospects for the emergence of 'nonliberal democracy' in several African states, with a general retreat of the state, intra-party elections in Zambia (subsequently followed by inter-party elections in 1991), the

development of the ruling party as a watchdog over the government in Tanzania, the search for greater political participation in Ghana, and the growth of such groups as cooperatives, trade unions, and professional bodies (Glickman, 1988:241-250; Pinkney, 2003:18). Between 1990 and 1994, a wave of reform swept through Africa when 23 of the continent's 42 one-party states held competitive elections and installed nominally democratic regimes. Using multivariate statistical analysis, the authors of one study try to determine what political, economic, and international factors most convincingly account for patterns of mass protest, political liberalization, and regime transition. They find that legacies of neopatrimonialism strongly shaped regime transitions, but that differing experiences of political participation and competition prior to 1990 helped determine varying outcomes. Economic conditions explain little about varying political patterns, and explicit political pressures from foreign donors do not correlate positively with liberalization. Given the lack of cohesion among opposition forces in many countries, plus a shallow commitment to democratic procedures and principles among elites, the authors are pessimistic that widespread consolidation of democratic regimes in Africa will soon occur. One must question whether all the relevant influences can really be reduced to numbers. Nevertheless, the exercise produces many stimulating ways of looking at democratisation. (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997). By contrast, Ayittey concludes a sometimes rather romanticised tour around African institutional weaknesses by arguing that the only solution to economic failure is radical political reform to rid Africa of its 'vampire' states and to restore the accountability and democracy said to be characteristic of African political tradition. The agents of this transformation must be Africa's intellectuals, particularly those like himself who have gone into exile rather than sell their services to immoral regimes. (Ayittey, 1998). Whether this is entirely convincing, it does point to the role of networks –including electronic and virtual networks in the promotion of political and social change which carries some real conviction. Pinkney, more pessimistically, also suggests that there is a link between the new media and more established and specifically

'African models' of democracy. But he holds that in this space, opposition parties contest elections but on terms dictated by their masters and deference to dominant elites carries into the new media. Civil society, for all its growing importance in social and economic life, is similarly told to know its place when it comes to constitutional matters. Some NGOs may enjoy influence in high places, but virtually all are required to register their existence, as if groups in society gain their legitimacy from the state rather than the other way round. (Pinkney, 2003:211). There have been cases where elements of the civil society have challenged authoritarian tendencies in government, but civil society's role is generally seen to have diminished when one moves from challenging authoritarianism to consolidating democracy (Pinkney, 2003:212).

One might draw some of these threads together by suggesting that there is a great deal of dynamic change occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, but the nature of that change as well as the key actors involved must be clearly understood. These new democracies combine authoritarian and democratic methods of governance, ensuring primarily that economic liberalisation occurs. NGOs and civil society fit into these new democracies as service-providers and legitimacy providers. Thus they have a limited, but important, role. (see Dicklitch, 1998:170). At this point, it is useful to ask what the sources of democratisation in Africa are. They include a complex process involving the interaction of agency and structural factors, domestic and international ones, and both economic and non-economic processes (van de Walle, 1999:239). First, in the 1980s legitimacy crises in Africa, restive populations were increasingly willing to contest central state power, notably through the fledging civic associations that had begun to emerge in response to state decline. Often, these populations were not political or politicised when they began to protest, but these protests quickly escalated into demands for regime change, often as a result of clumsy government responses to the protesters. African politics had long been punctuated by more or less spontaneous protest, but now governments found it harder to repress or accommodate the protesters. Protests were typically initiated by students, civil

servants, and an array of civic associations. (van de Walle, 1999:239-40) Also, after the end of the Cold War, donor countries and institutions increased their emphasis on human rights and were less tolerant of government repression. And the economic crisis and strong fiscal pressure on states made it difficult to coopt or placate dissent with access to state resources. Leaders found it harder to sustain critical clientelist networks, with the result that the old political aristocracy was more likely to fractionalise. (van de Walle, 1999:240). The willingness of donors to support or undermine incumbents often played a key if unwitting role. In both Benin and Zambia, the IFI decision to withdraw support from incumbents in the middle of the political transition may well have sealed their fates. (van de Walle, 1999:241-2). But the decline of aid to Kenya, which can be linked to the growing political conditionality from the Western donors, occurred only after 1993, after the democratisation movement had crested. From 1988 to 1993, the period during which the regime was under the most internal threat, Kenya averaged well over a billion dollars in annual aid. (van de Walle, 1999:242).

Political communications provide a system of rule as well as a system of dissent, and one can easily find examples in the recent past from across Africa where leaders such as Obote in Uganda, Kenyatta and Moi in Kenya, Kaunda in Zambia, and Nasser in Egypt developed a mastery of different kinds of media in order to exercise degrees of control over their peoples. This begs the question of whether the new media have the potential attributed to them by their optimistic proponents of resisting governmental manipulation as older media such as radio and cinema demonstrated. At the moment, it is fair to say that the optimists hold the ring; but it is also only fair to add that the debate has a long way to go.

3.9.4 Assessing the New Media and Democracy in Africa

Although the average number of Internet users is limited[80] in Africa compared to other parts of the world (Mudhai 2002; Jensen 2002), the Internet has made authoritarian rulers considerably more vulnerable there. At the least, they cannot control the flow of information any more (Laakso 2000:71). This is mainly because ICTs enable ordinary citizens to participate more directly in their politics and increases their role in policy-making at the expense of those Grossman[81] terms political "middlemen" (Ott 1997). But the increase in the range and accessibility of sources of information makes it much more difficult for the last word to rest with a Ministry of Information spokesperson in whichever country. It is not much wonder that *Newsweek* so hyperbolically proclaimed that Africans are "unleashing the power" of new networked media, especially the mobile phone (Ashurst 2001). The "small media" of ICTs is one of the manifold ways by which African people exchange information of political significance without relying on the formal mass media – which are still not wholly free (Spitulnik 2002:177). Thus despite its shallow penetration, something is happening in Africa as a result of the Internet that is likely to have a significant impact on international affairs in the future: the growth of a new group of Internet communicators more readily able to converse with one another across international borders and even within nations and cities with frequencies and in ways not previously possible. (Franda, 2002:18). These new communicators constitute a relatively identifiable group (if not always a very homogenous one), whether they might seem more a 'class', a 'community' or a new elite to set alongside existing power elites. Apart from what one can describe as 'the usual variables' –users are largely young, male, well-educated, above-average earners and English-speakers- most Internet users in Africa are in

[80] Measuring Internet users in Africa is difficult because accounts are predominantly shared and public. However, projections based on UN reports indicate there were 10-12 million Internet users out of a population of 780 million at the end of 2003. Nearly a third of the users are in North and South Africa, leaving an average Sub-Saharan access of one user for every 250-300 people. Compare this to 2002 UNDP World Development Report figures of one for 250 in South Asia, one for 166 in Arab States, one for 43 in East Asia and one for 30 in Latin American and Caribbean.

[81] Lawrence K. Grossman (1996), *The Electronic Republic: Reshaping Democracy in the Information Age*, New York: Penguin.

NGOs, the news media, universities and private companies. (Jensen, 2000:216ff; Mutume, 2000; Franda, 2002:18, 37 note 35).

The average levels of Internet use among respondents to the ECA survey was three to four pages of email daily, with interaction most frequent with Internet sites outside the continent. Surfing the WWW or downloading data are relatively minor activities for this new elite when compared to sending and receiving e-mail. This is primarily because the online time necessary for non-email activities brings the cost to prohibitive levels (Franda, 2002:18). Apart from personal and family use, the ECA survey identifies a number of broader online interests that have implications for organisational behaviour, both within Africa and in the international arena. It profiles a group of young elites interested in international affairs and taking advantage of unprecedented opportunities to use Internet technology to become more meaningfully involved with a wide variety of people from other countries. (Franda, 2002:18-19). The potential for increased internet use in Africa is undoubtedly substantial, but depends on further falls in costs as well as infrastructure growth and the spread of education. There is a widely held view that the libertarian culture accorded by ICTs shift the balance of power between states and citizens, especially in developing countries (Loader 1997; Tsagarousianou et al 1998; Wheeler 1998; Hague & Loader 1999; Ott & Smith 2001; Ferdinand 2000; Spitulnik 2002). Similarly, Ott (1998) proposes that access to electronic information can have a positive impact in promoting electronic democracy in Africa, by providing civil society with greater leverage vis-à-vis the state and political elites. While it could also be argued that there are already sufficient opportunities to provide political input in the U.S. and that the Internet might become lost in the larger array of media available, in Africa, there are very few opportunities for political articulation, and it is possible that the Internet could become a major tool by which NGOs and citizens exert political influence (Ott 1998). This thesis will return to these hypotheses in chapters six, seven and eight.

It is not so difficult to suggest general connections between the trajectory of greater democracy in Kenya and Zambia and the growth of the new media. To suggest very specific points of causal connection is much more difficult. The effects of Kenya's 2002 free and fair elections continued to be felt as official transparency and accountability improved while civic and political life showed increased vibrancy. All these factors contributed to welcome incremental improvements in political rights and civil liberties. In both Kenya and Zambia, the combined if uncoordinated efforts of opposition parties and civil society have helped to end the ruling parties' overall majorities. Some people might see such developments as part of the unfinished business of transition rather than an element of consolidation. But they have all occurred after the initial stage where authoritarian rulers came to concede multiparty elections (Pinkney, 2003:203). Previously, both Kenya and Tanzania had allowed a choice between parliamentary candidates of the same party, a form of 'intra-party democracy' which can reasonably be said to have bordered on out and out authoritarianism (Pinkney, 2003:11). But the difference is that, unlike in an authoritarian system, contested elections are at least permitted as long as they do not threaten the power of the executive. This authoritarianism was not wholly selfish on the part of the rulers. It embodied a theory which had links to strongly held national ideologies which were seen to have triumphed with independence: society was perceived as an organic whole with common interests, in contrast to the uncontrolled aggregation of undifferentiated individuals' interests which took place in radical democracy. In the authoritarian nationalist system, leaders claim to know what these interests are (the general will), and the state exists to execute the general will without being inhibited by constitutional checks to protect minorities or – as in radical democracy – by majorities who have a false perception of their real interests. This rationale is not one that might reasonably be accepted; but it is important to note that the kind of authoritarian nationalism which preceded the moves to more genuine democracy did have *some* kind of rationale

(Pinkney, 2003:11). This rationale also reflected a view of the constraints of the level of economic development, a problem which remains.

As part of a national e-strategy, Kenya has embarked on an e-governance project that involves investing in computerisation of government offices and launching of websites for each ministry. "The e-government will facilitate better and efficient delivery of information and services to the citizens," said National Security Minister, Chris Murungaru. It is hoped the project will enable the public to vote online in the next General Election.[82] A week to the 27 December 2002 general election, the Kenya government blocked a range of Internet services from transmitting Jambonet, the Internet backbone service and the only Internet gateway in the country. State monopoly Telkom Kenya claimed the blocked ports were being used to transmit voice over IP (VOIP) traffic – which was illegal in the country. The blockage also cut off interactive Internet applications such as MSN and AOL Messenger, Netmeeting and a number of other chat utilities and most critically VPNs (Virtual Private Networks) which was mainly used by businesses. The ruling party, KANU was facing its first election defeat for nearly 40 years of independence.

There is also evidence to parallel these narratives from other parts of Africa. In Tunisia, eight young Tunisians were recently imprisoned for up to 26 years for downloading files from the Internet in an alleged bid to plot for terrorism. Reporters sans Frontieres (RSF) awarded its first Cyber Freedom Prize to Zouhair Yahyaoui, an imprisoned Tunisian Internet activist and online writer. RSF created the prize to honor Internet users who, through their professional activity or principled positions, demonstrate their support for the free flow of information online. Zouhair Yahyaoui, whose pen name is "Ettounsi" or "the Tunisian," is the founder of the TUNeZINE.com Internet magazine, an online journal used to disseminate information on the development of democracy in Tunisia. According to the PEN American Center, Yahyaoui was arrested on June 4, 2002

by six plainclothes police officers who detained and tortured him for five days before he finally revealed the access code for his Web site. The authorities were then able to remove TUNeZINE from the Internet. His family members restarted TUNeZINE as a platform to campaign for his release (the site was available at: www.tunezine.com). Yahyaoui's fiancee, Sophie Piekarec, accepted the EUR 7,600 award on his behalf at a ceremony in Paris on June 19. The event coincided with RSF's release of its new report, "The Internet under Surveillance - Obstacles to the free flow of information online," which documents the "attitudes to the Internet by the powerful in 60 countries, between spring 2001 and spring 2003". Comparable uses of internet censorship in Zimbabwe are recorded in a variety of sources.[83]

The Kenyan Jambonet exchange point is said to be sometimes equipped with filters to prevent certain content material from being uploaded in Kenya. The VSATs used in Kenya are uni-directional for downloads only. In protest, Kenyan ISPs built their own IXP, but not without some fight with the regulator and the government. A week before the December 2002 Kenya elections, Jambonet blocked a number of its ports claiming, they were being used to transmit VOIP. The blockage seriously affected virtual private network (VPN) communication and also cut off interactive Internet applications.

3.10 Conclusions

This chapter has explored a wide range of issues which form both conceptual and practical grounds for the thesis as a whole. Research has over a long period of time explored what the media do to people or what do people do to or with the media (message). This work has not necessarily thrown up any definitive conclusions, but it has at least been influential in defining questions that are widely asked about the power of the media. The question of the relationships between the media, the state, key elites (as they change and restructure) and

[82] 'Government Offices to Acquire Internet Access', the *Daily Nation*, Feb 28, 2004 available at http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/Today/News/News2802200426.html

civil society is complex and requires an approach which is multi-levelled, non-reductive and open minded. It also requires an approach which is sensitive to the African context without allowing that context to provide excuses for the unacceptable.

Among the civil society responses, at the Geneva World Summit on Information Society PrepCom3, to Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade's Digital Solidarity Fund proposal, was that the fund should envisage tools that go beyond the Internet. The mobile phone is clearly one such tool, and the potential of the mobile phone as a factor in African political and social organisation is considerable. Rheingold (2002) states that text messaging in particular is one of the fundamentally new ways which people use to engage in collective group action (both of traditional and new forms). The focus, especially with regard to the developing world, should not be on the next leap-frogging craze or on the buzzwords of the expensive frontier technologies 3G, MMS (multimedia messaging service) [84] and M(obile)-Commerce, but on basic phones offering basic services – especially text SMS.

In order to enhance meaningful engagement in transnational civil society networks, rather than the promotion of what Beier (2003) calls 'transnationalised' or 'globalised' elements of activities of Northern NGOs, compression of political time needs to be matched with a modification in the character of geo-political space. Taking into account the endurance of deep structural inequalities should be a driving force for more strategic mobile phone use. Another significant point is the fact that mobile phones need to be used, and understood as being used, strategically within the wider framework of other related ICTs rather than in isolation. Besides the Internet, the private FM radio remains a vital tool – especially for local and national NGO activism – for the developing world. It is cheap, easily usable, and available to very much larger numbers of people than any of the new media. In fact the digital 2G and 3G cellular networks themselves are part of the radio

[83] See for example 'Arrests Over Anti-Mugabe Emails' at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3227008.stm Friday, 21 November, 2003, 15:05 GMT, and Meldrum, 2004.

spectrum which includes PAMR (public access mobile radio), FWA (fixed wireless access) and public data and mobile satellite services (MSS). But at the same time, users have to realise that these are state controlled resources and as CSOs embark on mobile phone 'swarms' governments will respond accordingly. Plath (2003) cites the case of India, where texting has previously been shut off at critical points to stem the spread of rumours and coordinated race riots during communalist uprisings in the past year. In this case, these may be reasonably good motives to interfere with the medium, but the example does at the same time emphasise how fragile the 'independence' of the new media actually is. Hope lies in the fact that governments also need the mobile phone network infrastructure for business and for their own communications (hence Bolivia bombed the Pios Doce radio transmitter but not mobile phone base stations, and the US spared Iraq's cellular infrastructure for their own communication during the 2003 invasion, and the UK made it illegal to use cell phone jammers, devices that block mobile phone calls).

This chapter has raised questions of how new media technologies and their use affect the state. It has suggested that the claim that state formal sovereignty is little affected, that the state's capacity to act may be changed, but that it is not necessarily diminished. At the same time, if one does not see the state as inevitably constituted in predatory opposition to civil society, the new technologies open the possibility of a move towards a version of Hannah Arendt's conception of performative politics, and of an agonistic public sphere seems to offer a more productive way forward (Lacey 1996:15). However (whatever other issues arise) this is not possible unless questions of unequal access, cultural diversity, and multiplicity of agents of power are addressed. This debate hovers on the frontier between the successor ideas of 1950s liberalism and 1960s critical theory in an interesting but not wholly satisfactory way (unsatisfactory because so hard to resolve, and so hard to apply in the specific African context, an issue returned to in the thesis' conclusions). However, there are significant limitations for contemporary critical

[84] Major phone companies have launched multimedia phones for MMS. Jupiter research estimates that 40 per

theory in any conception of the public sphere which requires a sharp separation between civil society and the state, a requirement which characterises both the Habermasian and the Arendtian accounts of the decline of the public (Benhabib 1992:72-81; Fraser 1992:132-136; Lacey 1996:226). Mouffe's sense of the possibility of a dialogic democracy or contested dialogue may provide a different (because not grounded in a liberal discourse) way of coming to a possible acceptable form of public conversation in which realities of power and conflict are not neglected alongside an increased consociationalism.

Despite the difficulties of the political theory, a number of key organisational players are more optimistic about the possibilities of the new media and their effect on democratisation. The UN sees e-governance as presenting a historic opportunity, among them the opportunity to empower citizens for participatory democracy. There is a particular need to focus on "e-deliberators" or e-citizens, that is citizens with experience and comfort with online political conversation to promote its spread among groups and individuals (Clift, 1998; Raab et al 1996). Although limited to a specific area and jurisdiction, the Minnesota E-Democracy project mentioned earlier relating to Minneapolis, St Paul's and their surrounding area, offers some insights into the potential and working of edemocracy. It also offers some ideas on the appropriate (ethnographic, interview based, reflexive) ways to research this topic which are developed and adapted to the distinct context which this thesis studies, notably in the last three chapters (see Dahlberg 2001).

Reviewing the debate concerning the retreat or resilience of the state, Joseph Nye suggests (in the passage used as the opening quotation of this chapter): 'complicating the task of national governance is not the same as undermining sovereignty. Governments adapt. In the process of adaptation, however, they change the meaning of sovereign jurisdiction, control, and the role of private actors.' (Nye, 2004a: 84-5). Private systems such as corporate intranets or worldwide issue-specific newsgroups 'do not frontally

cent of European mobile phones will be MMS-enabled by 2007.

challenge the governments of sovereign states; they simply add a layer of relations that sovereign states do not effectively control… If we restrict our images to billiard ball states, we miss this layer of reality.' (Nye, 2004a:84). The state is changed –arguable transformed- by the new media, as Everard (2000) argues. Its potential is enhanced in some respects as it is limited or pushed back in others. But it is not necessarily reduced *as a whole*. Even in economic terms, although the nation's role in the goods economy is diminishing, its role in the services sector is stronger than ever. Empirical research work indicates that both the utopian and the dystopian narratives about the immense social change brought about by ICTs have some force; the question is how to balance out both processes (Howcroft, 1999). Or, as the leading Dutch scholar of global communications has argued, "networks can lead to either a more powerful state, through concentration of political power, or more power for citizens and social interests, through dispersion of political power" (Van Dijk, 1999:79). This happens in part through state-controlled infrastructure and the states ability to conduct research and manipulate commercial technology producers through its purchasing capacity. Thus the vast legal, administrative, military and ideological apparatuses of the state remain powerful and functional, albeit somewhat weakened to varying degrees. The conclusion drawn by Giacomello & Mendez (2001) that more Internet activity equals more politicisation provides a more fruitful research agenda, and a starting point for the empirical enquiry which follows, rather than the now rather empty and one-dimensional argument about the 'decline of the state'.

4.0 *LA LUTA CONTINUA*: TRANSITION AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN THE 'SECOND LIBERATION' AND THE 'THIRD REPUBLIC'

In Kenya we see a debate about whether pressure from outside, or protest from below have done more to undercut the one-party state; we wait to see whether 'moral ethnicity' or 'political tribalism' will triumph; we watch as women are mobilised in the cause of democracy. (Ranger & Vaughan, 1993:261).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter serves the purpose of providing a context of the development of democracy and transition in Zambia and Kenya, looking back over the whole period since independence. It is therefore primarily a descriptive chapter which helps the reader to make sense of the later analysis, for it enables one to identify what it is that is changing with the advent of the new media and the political structures and process associated with them, and what the significance of the changes is, in the chapters that follow.

Following the development of Zambian moves towards multi-party plural democracy, the questions remained whether Kenya follow the example of Zambia, "sweeping away after three decades of rule the party that had secured independence" (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:1). A combination of internal protest, external pressure for change and a series of mistakes by the government's elite between 1988, the year of the fraudulent party elections, and 1991 forced the Moi regime to allow multiparty politics (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:2). Kenya's 'democracy wave' started with the *Saba Saba* (Seven Seven) uprising of July 7, 1990. Donor pressure, including the 1991 Paris Consultative Group's decision to withhold US$1bn aid pending political reforms, ultimately led to repeal of section 2(a) of the constitution in 1991 and the controversial 1992 multi-party general election. (Ajulu, 1998:275). This initiated a process of gradual, and not always smooth, transition.

In Zambia, the second republic demonstrated a highly flawed rhetoric of popular democracy, according to Peter Burnell (2001). Burnell recognises the significance of Hargeud's analysis of the so-called historical divide, with a turning point around 1990. In the Zamiban case, as in a number of other countries in the region, there has been seen to be a trade-off between stability and democracy: the more democracy the less stable the state and the society. To move towards a more genuine democracy is to seek ways of breaking this (apparent) bind, and 1990 represents a move away from that apparent obstacle to a more popular and open form of governance which was a pre-condition for later transformations.

There are strong enduring patterns in Zambian political behaviour, not least in an enduring political culture (van Donge, 1995:194). For example the 'big man' syndrome, clientelism, megalomania, ethnicity, economic mismanagement were all manifest in the political system under Kaunda, and this was not simply a politics of the centre. It was reflected at lower levels of party and government structures. This kind of political culture has proved highly resistant to more transparency or accountability, perhaps not surprisingly. But at the same time, as Burnell has suggested, Zambia was a haven of political stability in a very troubled region (Burnell 2002:1107). So too is Kenya – save for the early 1990s 'ethnic' (politically-instigated) clashes, and the recent threats of terrorism due to Nairobi's political-military cohabitation with USA and Britain. The former British colonies (Northern Rhodesia and British East Africa), each ruled by a strong man president after independence in 1963 (Kenya) and 1964 (Zambia), were among the first African countries to repeal their constitutions and to embrace multi-party politics in 1991. This move included the imposition of presidency term-limits. Whereas in Zambia, the former trade unionist Chiluba beat Kaunda in the 1991 multi-party election, Kenya's divided opposition twice (1992 and 1997) 'voted Moi back in, in spite of the electorate voting him out'[85]. Both countries created constitutional review commissions while, at the same time,

[85] The total votes to opposition presidential candidates exceeded Moi's votes.

the incumbents (Chiluba and Moi) realised they had given in to pressure and tried to amend the constitutions to rule beyond their two terms. In other words, the late 1990s was a turning point marked by unprecedented public debates on democracy compared to the first quarter-century after independence. This atmosphere of debate and of the potential for realising a more effective democracy was itself one of the factors which made the transition from the 'old' politics possible.

The reluctance with which incumbents opened the doors to pluralism meant that civil liberties would still not be guaranteed. Most commentators judged multi-party Zambia as a one-party dominant system, almost a *de facto* one-party state (Burnell 2002:1106) under the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) that returned to power – albeit with the compelled retirement of President Chiluba in favour of his former Vice-President Levy Mwanawasa – in the December 2001 general election. A similar predominant-party-system could be said of Kenya until President Moi's Kenya African National Union (KANU), which had ruled since 1963 independence, was unseated by the now deeply wrangling National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in the December 2002 general election. While one could detect a shift in power within a ruling elite, this represented only a limited opening of the elite, and certainly not a movement towards a more ideal form of democracy. On the other hand, it did register a shift in so far as it marked a move towards a more open form of government and towards a greater involvement of press and public. There was a sense in each country that, if not fully accountable, government was nonetheless more accountable than had hitherto been the case.

Table 4.1 **Basic political-economic country information**

	KENYA	ZAMBIA
Population July 2004 est.	32,021,856	10,462, 436
Population density 2002	55 people km^2	14 people per km^2
Land surface area km^2	569,259 km^2	752,600 km^2
Country capital	Nairobi	Lusaka
Head of state	Mwai Kibaki	Levy Mwanawasa
Languages spoken	English & Swahili(official) Kikuyu(22%); Luhya	English (official). Eight main ethnic language (and 72

	(14%); Luo(13%); Kalenjin(12%); Kamba (11%); Kisii(6%); Meru (6%); other African (15%); Non-African(1%)	dialects) – largest language groups are: Bemba (18%); Tonga (10%); Nyanja & Lozi
Religion	Protestant 45%; Catholics 33%; Indigenous 10%; Muslim 10%; other 2%	Christian 50-75%; Muslim & Hindu 24-49%; Indigenous 1%
GDP in 2002	US$11.3 billion	US$3.5 billion
GDP/capita in 2002	US$360	US$330
Real GDP growth rate	0.8%	4.7%
Public debt	62.9% [GDP in 2003]	133.6% of GDP [2003]
Unemployment	40% [2001 est.]	50% [2000 est]
Popn below poverty line	50% [2000]	86% [1993]
Income distribution	lowest 10%: 2% highest 10%: 37.2% [2000]	lowest 10%: 1.1% highest 10%: 41% [1998]
Currency	Kenya shillings = 100 cts	Zambian kwacha
Literacy (15+ can read and write) in 2003	85.1% total (90.6% male; 79.7% female)	80.6% total (86.8% male; 74.8% female)
Major industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, tourism, financial, manufacturing, transport, communications.	Mining, hydro-electric power, construction, transport, manufacturing.
Main exports	Cement, tea, horticultural products, coffee, petroleum products, fish.	Copper 55%, cobalt, electricity, cement, sugar, tobacco, flowers, cotton.
Export destinations **2003 est.**	Uganda(19.3%); UK(11.7%); US(8.8%); Netherlands(7.9%); Pakistan (5.1%); Egypt(4%).	SA(28.3%); Malawi(8.7%); St Pierre/Miquelone(7.6%); Japan (6.2%); Egypt(5.3%); UK (5.2%); Thailand (4.8%); China (4.4%); Netherlands (4.1%).
Main imports	Industrial machinery, refined petroleum products, motor vehicles, iron, steel pharmaceuticals, resins.	Petroleum, metals, fertiliser, machinery, transportation equipment.
Import origins **2003 est.**	UAE(13.3%); S. Arabia (9.7%); SA(8.6%); UK(7.4%); China(6.4); US(5.2%); India(5.1); Jpn(4.9%); Grmny(4.2%).	SA(71%); China(2.8%); UK(2.8% %).

Source: Compiled from World Development Report 2004, BMI-TechKnowledge Communication Technologies Handbook 2002, CIA Factbook.

4.2 Kenya

In the Kenya of the 1960s and up to around the mid 1980s, "clear norms and procedures were evolved for regulating the relationship between state and society – norms that were accepted by both the rulers and the ruled, and that remained constant over time." (Barkan,

1992:168). This relatively authoritarian system of governance made sense in a patriarchal and relatively traditional society, although it frustrated the dream of fuller democracy, which had been part of the struggle for independence in many people's minds. Both social and political stability seemed to be guaranteed by this order; but there were considerable costs to be borne. Not least, this form of political order in effect encouraged the growth of an endemic pattern of corruption at all levels of administration. Although corruption is a deeply embedded social malaise permeating every sphere of life in both Kenya and Zambia, it is the high-level official corruption that has had the most devastating effects on the economies and the people. Apart from being repeatedly ranked among the top most corrupt nations by Transparency International, Kenya had a crucial $205 million loan suspended in 1997 by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) due to corruption. The IMF's action resulted in the slashing or stopping of aid by other multilateral lenders, like the World Bank, and by bilateral donors.

At the same time, much of the effort to maintain the existing system and to resist the pressure for a more democratic system of government centred on the established parties of the ruling elite. This necessitated the prevention of the emergence of new political parties and movements. But this could also be counter-productive. The Kenyan government's banning of the Kenya People's Union (KPU) in 1969 and the subsequent period of *de facto* one-party state could have planted the seeds for multi-party struggle. In 1982, then Constitutional Affairs Minister Charles Njonjo rushed through Parliament a bill, seconded by then Vice-President Mwai Kibaki, that made Kenya a *de jure* one-party state. They did this in order to counter attempts by George Anyona and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga to form a political party. This action in turn precipitated the fight for political pluralism and the expansion of democratic space in the country.

However it is fair to say that the fight for pluralism continued with its aspiration unsatisfied and its leaders, including many journalists, gaoled or exiled or otherwise neutralised, until transformation elsewhere in the world provided additional impetus for

change. Fear of economic sanctions from multilateral donor institutions and bilateral Western donor nations had some impact. But the transformation of the global political and social environment associated with the ending of the Cold War was the most significant change. It is not an exaggeration to say that the transition to democracy in Europe had a compelling effect on the expectations of many African people, but also on their sense of what was possible. If Poland or even, in a limited way, Russia, could seem to become democracies accountable to their people, running open economies and removing an old and deeply entrenched (and deeply corrupt) elite, then surely such changes could happen anywhere. In the Cold War era, corrupt African leaders were propped up by their Western 'allies' if they had the 'right' credentials as opponents of 'communism' and its influence. After 1990, it became apparent both that western government's priorities had shifted and that new threats had overtaken communism. Some of those threats could best be countered, it seemed to be felt in western capitals, by abandoning the old allies and looking for changed political structures. It is wrong to say that African democratisation was dictated from outside, but foolish to ignore the impetus of outside events in its emergence.

In post-1990 Kenya, a candidate has to win at least 25 per cent of votes in at least five provinces before being declared President. This is designed to promote ethnic balancing. But it also promotes party alliances and coalition building. This is not seen as undesirable, but as a mechanism which, if it can work, provides a framework for a different basis for political stability than that offered in the one party state: political stability has certainly not ceased to be a main goal of political managers and of the state.

4.2.1 Parties, Clientelism and Corruption

Following the 1960 end of an eight-year state of emergency following a 1952 armed Mau Mau insurrection, Kenya African National Union or KANU (transformation from a district association, Kenya African Union) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) were formed in 1961 for that year's election. However Kenyatta's regime triumphed in the 1963

election and took over from the British colonial authority. The new government starved KADU of state resources, and co-opted its leaders a year after independence. Following the resulting collapse of KADU, its deputy leader, Daniel arap Moi, was made KANU's vice-president. Kenya became a *de facto* one-party state. Kenya's Socialist-leaning Vice President, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, resigned, protesting against Kenyatta's capitalist *modus operandi*. He formed the Kenya People's Union (KPU) in 1965. But Odinga and 29 other defectors from KANU were forced to seek a renewal of their mandate in the Little General Election of 1969 in which 20 of the dissenters lost their seats. KPU was then banned in 1969, making Kenya a *de facto* one-party state once again. Complementing Kenyatta's commitment to a professionally run single party state was Kenyatta's tolerance of a relatively free press and the emergence of autonomous associational life, as long as they did not challenge Kenyatta's authority directly (Barkan, 1992:174).

Thus within these norms of permissibility, a wide range of associational life made its presence felt in Kenyan society. These included professional associations and economic interest groups such as the Law Society of Kenya, the Chamber of Commerce, the Kenya Manufacturer Association, the Kenya Farmers Association, and the Central Organisation of Trade Unions. It also included church organisations of various denominations. Kenyan-based NGOs such as the National Council of Churches of Kenya, *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* (the Women's Development Association) emerged. Powerful ethnic welfare associations, including the Gikuyu Embu Meru Association (GEMA) and the Luo Union played a significant role in social and political life. And community self-help development organisations, known as *Harambee*, evolved (Barkan, 1992:175). It is therefore fair to say that there was a great diversity of social organisations and CSOs of different kinds. But all this was under the condition that they engaged in politic only on a limited way, and that they did not come to be seen as a direct threat of any kind to the existing regime and the elite the regime supported.

Whereas professional and economic associations served mainly urban constituencies, a distinctive feature of other associations was the extent to which they established linkages between the Kenyan state and rural society. On the one hand, these organisations broadened the social base of the Kenyatta regime. On the other hand, they served as counterweights to the state and fostered a process of bargaining and mutual accommodation between the regime and civil society. (Barkan, 1992:175). Thus although Kenyatta's regime was an authoritarian one, especially during its latter years, and while he ruthlessly repressed any direct challenge, it was not a system marked by the excesses of personal rule found elsewhere in Africa and later in Kenya itself. Kenyatta never sought to monopolise all sources of authority, and he did not fear the emergence of a social debate across the nation, providing its political impact was muted (Barkan, 1992:175).

When Kenyatta died in office in August 1978, Vice-President Moi took over as the constitution required. But he was faced with serious economic pressures. "The end of the world coffee boom in 1979, the dramatic rise in the price of imported oil in 1980/81, the world recession of 1981/82, and the continuation of a 3.9 percent annual rate of population growth combined to slow 15 years of economic advance. Severe droughts in 1979-80 and again in 1984, which necessitated large importation of food, further complicated the economy." (Barkan, 1992:178). Despite these pressures, and partly in response to them, Moi embraced a populist approach to governing based on what he termed his *Nyayo* (initially Kenyatta's footsteps then his own from 1979) philosophy of "peace, love and unity".

As part of this approach, Moi cracked down on corruption, ordered ethnic associations like GEMA to wind up, focussed attention on the small tribes, which had been in his defunct KADU, and adopted personal rule. "Public debate of new policy initiatives was discouraged and ultimately forbidden. Only praise was acceptable." (Barkan, 1992:180). By 1982, the semi-free press that had operated throughout Kenyatta's tenure came under intense pressure and began to practice self-censorship as KANU established its

own newspaper, the *Kenya Times*. (Barkan, 1992:180). A process of gradual but significant closing down of channels of communication and debate took place.

After the elections of 1983, dissenting MPs – who did not *fuata nyayo* (toe the Moi line) – were expelled from KANU and the legislature. "With uncertainty came both fear of the president and sycophancy to ward off his suspicion." (Barkan, 1992:180). The system became increasingly monarchical, and often increasingly arbitrary in its use of power. To consolidate his powers, Moi put in motion institutional changes such as the measure already mentioned of getting parliament to amend the constitution to make the country a *de jure* one-party state in May 1982 (in response to Odinga's attempt to form an opposition party in the 1980s). The resulting press criticism and an attempted military coup that August only made the regime more manipulative and repressive. (Barkan, 1992:180).

From then onwards, leaders viewed as a threat to Moi such as Charles Njonjo, the former Attorney General (and then Constitutional Affairs Minister), and G. G. Kariuki, Minister of State in the Office of the President, and former Vice-President Mwai Kibaki (now the President), were hounded out of office, and removed from the party and parliament by the KANU machinery. Some, like prominent Kikuyu politician Kenneth Matiba and former Nairobi mayor Charles Rubia, were detained after calling for the abolition of the one-party state following their expulsion from KANU. (Barkan, 1992:181). It is against these significant levels of authoritarian and arbitrary uses of power that the subsequent moves towards democratisation mapped later in this thesis need to be measured.

4.3 Zambia

By contrast, democratisation in Zambia can be considered a success story – or much more of a success story. It is reasonable to suggest that democratic culture has been more evident in the behaviour of the Zambian political elite at least in some respects from the beginning (van Donge, 1995:193). This cultural basis in the elite has been important since independence, although one cannot say that Zambian politics have altogether lacked some

of the features that have characterised Kenyan party and intra-elite relations. Formerly 'Northern Rhodesia', Zambia became the 36th independent African country on 24 October 1964, when it also became the 20th member of the Commonwealth. Compared to Kenya, Zambia is sparsely populated, although the urban areas have a high density of population and a high level of political and social exchange and communication.

It did not take long before Kaunda's rule degenerated into urban riots in protest at rising food prices which led to more serious instability, with some clashes like one in 1987 resulting in 15 deaths (van Donge, 1995:197). But the balance between perceived stability and perceived central control was different in Zambia from Kenya. Thus there were several coup attempts. The most important one in 1980 was foiled at the last minute. (van Donge, 1995:197).

One of the most important factors in Zambian political difficulties has been the very high level of dependence on copper exports. This in turn makes the polity dependent on world copper prices. The disastrous decline – especially since the mid-1970s – of copper prices has seriously impaired the underlying strength of the Zambian economy. (van Donge, 1995:198). It has also had an impact on the very considerable growth of international indebtedness, and on the government's ability to deliver on promises and expectations of increasing welfare. As these pressures piled on, two trade unionists called for a referendum on the one-party state in February 1990 and Kaunda consented two months later, a month ahead of the formation of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). This new political party, featuring prominent lawyers like Roger Chongwe and Levy Mwanawasa, as well as trade unionists like Frederick Chiluba of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), took centre stage in the opening up of political activity away from the established parties. On November 30 1990, parliament voted to re-introduce multipartyism (see Ihonvbere, 1995 & 1996; Rakner, 2003).

In the elections of 31 October 1991, Chiluba and the MMD won 125 of the 150 parliamentary seats. Only a quarter of the voters (24.2%) voted for Kaunda. Turnout at the

polls was low (45%) – due to a defective registration system and to voter apathy (van Donge 1995:202). Nonetheless, even if the result was hardly a ringing endorsement of the new party and its incoming government, it was a decisive rejection of the old established political system and the party, which had up to then predominated. From this moment onwards, an emergence of greater and more genuine democratisation seemed more possible and more desirable, although it probably could not be seen as inevitable. There was also a climate that encouraged rather more debate after Kaunda had left office: the public space was more open, the public conversation less restricted, relatively speaking. In 1995, the Zambian constitution was amended to read that "non-indigenous" Zambians could not contest presidential elections; and that both parents of a candidate must be native-born Zambians. This was to bar Kenneth Kaunda, whose parents were born in Malawi. The aim was to ensure that Kaunda could not contest the elections and that Chiluba would be re-elected in 1996.

4.4 General Observations and Comparisons

To some early 1970s observers, Kenya was a post-independent Africa political and economic 'success story' – one of the most stable and open societies in Africa (Bienen, 1974:3; Kaplan et al 1975:213). To others – especially western nations pursuing strategic political interests, Kenya was until as recently as the early 1990s a 'beacon of success', an 'economic miracle' and "a showpiece of economic prosperity and political stability", before the burnished image became tarnished almost overnight (Hargeurd, 1997:4).

Kenya is an atypical African country. It does not exhibit patterns of coup and counter-coup[86], which characterise a number of African states, and it is relatively well endowed (Bienen, 1974:195). It has had a relatively stable social structure, and sophisticated elite, and quite significant economic resources (including the bases for a

[86] It is vital note here that there have been at least three coup attempts in Kenya from 1970s to mid 1990s.

strong tourism industry). Unlike Zambia, it is not dependent on a single crop or commodity, although coffee exports have been an important source of external earnings.

Kenya had a politics which involved more participation both at local and national levels, and among elites and non-elites alike, than most African states (Bienen, 1974:195). It had the preconditions for a move towards a more open democracy, including a tradition of debate and dissent in the political culture. Although the political leadership looked for deference, the political culture was not deferential as they might have wished.

Postcolonial Kenya opted for national capitalist economic development, rather than for an emphasis on redistribution. This policy was based on a determination to keep ties to Western countries and companies, and to gain foreign aid and investment. This thus encouraged private ownership and the growth of a middle class (Bienen, 1974:3-4; Kaplan et al, 1975:213; Ajulu, 1998; Throup & Hornsby, 1998:3). In turn, this had effects on patterns of social and political communication: there were more channels of communication and there was more demand for communication in the political system as a result of this social formation.

Aid conditions by the USA and the World Bank were also relatively favourable. Kenya has always been the most favoured for British aid in Africa (Throup & Hornsby, 1998). Set against this, one must emphasise that the political economies of both Kenya and Zambia have been dependent on multilateral and bilateral donors as well as on MNCs (Nzomo, 1994). Kenya's growth has always been hostage to levels of foreign investment, aid, and other external items like tourism. Critics, including Kenya's own first Vice-President Oginga Odinga, in his book *Not Yet Uhuru* (1967), have pointed out how seriously this was in limiting the development of autonomous business and autonomous economic development. These disadvantages are not redressed by the continuing high profile of Kenya in the western media (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:1), although western attention to Kenyan developments, both successful and unsuccessful, could be said to give the country an advantage over other more ignored African societies.

It is worth setting these political, social and economic development patterns in the context of overarching political philosophies articulated by the ruling elites. *Harambee*, Kiswahili for "let's pull together", was a rallying call to pool resources for self-help (Thomas, 1985). This happened through funding drives across the country. But too often, funds looted from public coffers were given to politicians. The Moi government wanted to win elections so that they could 'donate' parts of this funding for development projects in their areas and thus become popular. Moi combined Kenyatta's *harambee* with his own ambiguous motto, *Nyayo* – the shortened form of *fuata nyayo*, Kiswahili for 'toe the line'.[87]

These political events unfolded within the context of a formal set of relationships between the state and state power. It has been said that the African state, from the beginning of colonialism, was charged with the duty of establishing and maintaining "law, order and good government" (Atieno-Odhiambo, citing A. Allot). The evolving nature of the African state has promoted a burgeoning literature, much of it very critical. One of the things we can say Zambia and Kenya have in common is that they are not characterised, and have not even nearly been characterised, by failing statehood. It may be that state power has been used unwisely at times, and on occasions dictatorially too. But the framework of state, law and authority has remained intact, and has provided a jurisdictional and political continuity from independence.

The political process, having been participatory in the era of decolonisation, had found itself depoliticised and canalised into mainline one-partyism, as well as into personal loyalty to the presidency. This regimentation has involved increased control by the state of the political processes, legally, administratively, or at times extra-legally. In sum, there is regime control of the rights to free speech and assembly, the agenda of parliament, voluntary associations, and party politics, particularly in Kenya. This might betoken a problem that the state is too strong rather than 'failing'. These impositions have had to contend with the struggles of institutions and individuals, who have fallen back on the

[87] For a further discussion of *harambee* see also Mbithi and Rasmusson (1971) and Thomas (1985).

received notions of democracy and the traditions of dissent to contest their legitimacy (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1987:189). Control largely rested in the hands of a leader and his authoritarianism, aided and supported by a small group around him with strong ethnic ties with each other (Bienen, 1974:3-4; Throup & Hornsby, 1998:3). This created a structure of politics that has been characterised by what one author has described as the ruling elite's 'benevolent elitism'.[88] This pattern of authority cannot be wholly detached from the colonial past: Kenya was under the control of a strong neo-colonial elite influence. Patterns of administrative style, language, social discipline and authority carried over from the polity before independence. This, together with a parasitical elite of top politicians and civil servants bereft of any conception of development, or even of national interest and dignity, or a sense of nationhood, shaped the emergence of a strong but corrupt centralised political apparatus (Bienen, 1974:4-5). They arrogated to themselves the wisdom to choose the development path on the grounds that citizens were ignorant. "Curtailing effective mass participation is thus justified. Organised dissent is not allowed and the heavy hand of civil administration and, if need be, police and riot squads are used to put down opposition." (Bienen, 1974:5). Paternalism certainly did not end with formal decolonisation. And the paternalism of Kaunda and Kenyatta, although modified, did not disappear with their removal from the political stage.

This was so despite tensions that led to the ban on the opposition KPU in 1969, and the assassination in the same year of the popular politician Tom Mboya, which later led to direct demonstrations against Kenyatta resulting in turn in the police killing 43 protesters in Mboya's regional town of Kisumu. Earlier in 1965, radical Asian politician Pio Gama Pinto had also been assassinated. The attempted coup in March 1971, and the assassination in mid-1975 of Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, a popular figure within the opposition wing of KANU, can also be traced directly to reaction against the forms and impacts of state power at the time. These actions on the part of the ruling elite and its henchpersons seem to have

[88] Marc Howard Ross (1971), 'Grassroots in the City: Political Participation and Alienation in Nairobi after

had profoundly contradictory effects, for they were devised to ensure the continuation of the ruling party and the stability of the system it maintained, but could at the same time be seen as undermining both.

All the same, in many estimates, "Kenya's politics had been noteworthy for the continued tolerance by the government to a considerable degree of public criticism of its leaders and programmes … the press and the members of parliament felt free to criticise, condemn, and call for major changes." (Kaplan et al, 1975:214). This judgment may be seen as somewhat generous, but it does capture one dimension of openness in the Kenyan polity. The same author suggests that the large and weakly organised single ruling party, KANU, "was open enough to contain nearly all shades of Kenyan political opinion." (Kaplan et al, 1975:214). An adherence to the practice of secrecy and collegiality kept from public view the method of operation within Kenyatta's cabinet that exercised effective political control of national power (Kaplan et al, 1975:214). This was reflected in a closeness, as well as the closedness, of the inner elite. Bienen (1974:21-22) argues that "the Kenyan regime 'works' for a large number of Kenyans despite the gross disparities in power and income between individuals and groups"[89], and that "Kenya is a participant society in important respects despite a curtailing of political competition and a fall-off in voting turnout". He claims that "Kenya's leaders are sensitive to rural demands despite the real limits on participation that exist", and that despite myriad economic and political problems "Kenya has maintained a stability of regime" as the ruler-ruled relationship "remained relatively unchanged in the decade since independence". While this is a reasonably accurate picture, it is hardly a desirable one, and it points to the context of clientelism, corruption and the detachment of many people from their government and from politics altogether which characterised both countries under one party rule and its often very watered down alternative up to the mid 1990s. Nonetheless, Kenyan politics

Independence,' unpublished manuscript, p.304, cited in Bienen, 1974:4

[89] J.M. Kariuki feared for Kenya of ten millionaires and ten million beggars (wa Gĩthĩnji, 2000).

appear more stable and more capable of satisfying people's aspiration when compared to some other countries in the region.

It was the formation of classes and new class fragments that would affect stability. Kaplan et al (1975:213) observe that from around 1975, the country "was certainly facing newly strengthened forces of dissent" over government policies, especially "disagreement over the distribution of political power and economic gain in the modernised centre of the society". New cleavages were slowly beginning to replace the basic political division along ethnic lines. Kenya became increasingly authoritarian state during the 1980s and the ruling party, KANU, developed into a key apparatus of political control – harassing dissenting politicians, church leaders and lawyers who dared criticise it (Widner, 1992; Throup & Hornsby, 1998:3). But this could not contain the emergence of new groups, most significantly in the larger cities. For the emergence of a stronger middle class and of more active political groups especially in the urban environment helped to bring about change despite the domination of old elite single party politics.

Nyangira (1987) has argued that both ethnicity and class are important in gaining a balanced view of politics in Kenya. Turning first to class, Kitching (1980:453) argues that "the structural situation of the rich, the poor and the middling groups in Kenya's distribution of income and wealth justifies theoretically the view not only that Kenya's ruling class is a petit bourgeoisie, but that Kenya is predominantly a petit-bourgeois society and economy". Kitching however modifies his theoretical approach and points out that Kenya's society cannot be divided into what he views as Althusserian Marxist class analysis of 'exploiters' or (bourgeoisie or capitalist class) and 'exploited' (proletariat or working class). Engaging with the debate in the writings of other Kenyanist scholars points to the triangular relationships between the Kenyan bourgeoisie, external capital, and the state – with the latter playing at least a significant, and sometimes a dominant, role.[90]

[90] This touches on a large literature. See in particular: E.A. Brett (1973) *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa: The Politics of Economic Change, 1919-1939*, London: Heinemann; Colin Leys (1974), *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neocolonialism 1964-1971*, London: Heinemann; C.

The Kenyatta regime inherited a state, but it also inherited a society characterised by class contradictions. The representatives of various class interests saw in the state a potential instrument for extending the hegemony of their specific class interests on the rest of society (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1987:190). Together with these specific concerns, the ideology and practice of 'regime-building' shaped a quest by the leading elite for hegemony by the state in all spheres of national life (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1987:191). Goran Hyden argues that in a peasant society such as Kenya, where the economic base is fragmented, "the most common political response to these structural contradictions has been to create a unified, usually coercive political superstructure" (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1987:191). This suggests that the countryside, as well as the cities, were characterised by increasing diversity of wealth, consumption and expectations.

Turning to questions of ethnicity and diversity, Zambia is one of the most ethnically and linguistically hetereogenous nations in southern Africa, with 73 distinct ethnic groups and over 80 identifiable languages, including seven official languages (Reynolds, 1999:42). The four main cultural groups are: (1) The Bemba (Chiluba's tribe), dominant in the Northern, Copperbelt, and Luapula provinces; (2) The Nyanja (Kaunda's tribe), originally from the East, now majority in Central Province and the capital, Lusaka; (3) The Tonga, from the agricultural south; (4) The Lozi of the Western Province. Despite this cultural and ethnic diversity, Zambia avoided 'significant inter-ethnic strife' throughout the First and Second Republics (1964-1991).[91] Ethnic differences have always shaped political behaviour, and have often been sources of conflict, which has challenged

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Leys (1978), 'Capital Accumulation, Class Formation and Dependency: The Significance of the Kenyan Case', in Ralph Miliband and John Saville Eds., *Socialist Register 1978*, London: Merlin Press, pp.241-266; Michael Cowen (1979), 'Capital and Household Production: The Case of Wattle in Kenya's Central Province, 1903-1964', Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University; Bjorn Beckman (1980), 'Imperialism and Capitalist Transformation: Critique of a Kenyan Debate', *Review of African Political Economy* 19:48-62; Nicola Swainson (1980), *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya*, 1918-1977, Berkeley: University of California Press; C. Leys (1982), 'Accumulation, Class Formation and Dependency: Kenya', in Martin Fransman Ed., *Industry and Accumulation in Africa*, London: Heinemann, pp.170-192; Raphael Kaplinsky (1982), 'Capitalist Accumulation in the Periphery: Kenya', in Martin Fransman Ed., *Industry and Accumulation in Africa*, London: Heinemann, pp.193-220.

[91] Eric Bjornlund, Michael Bratton & Clark Gibson (1992), 'Observing Multiparty Elections in Africa: Lessons from Zambia', *African Affairs* 91:405-31; Larry Garber & Clark Gibson (1992), *The October 31 1991 National Elections in Zambia*, Washington: NDI.

the stability of government and state alike. Chiluba's MMD came to power in 1991, riding a multi-ethnic backlash against Kaunda's failed one-party state. But Chiluba's administration quickly opened up ethnic and regional cleavages which had been successfully contained by Kaunda's policy of 'regional balancing', which had been a transparent effort to balance tribal differences rather than a simple geographic formula. The majoritarian electoral system provided the incentives for increased ethnic mobilisation and polarisation (Reynolds, 1999:274). As a result, Zambia went ahead with multiparty elections in November 1996 with a fragmented and ethnically based party system. This gave an impression of ethnic breakdown of the pattern which has occurred in other states in central Africa and the Great Lakes region, but that conclusion goes much too far and is over-simplified. It is true that Chiluba's cabinet was increasingly dominated by Bemba ministers. Furthermore, the deeply flawed 1996 general elections did not merely illustrate general alienation from the political system (only 28 per cent of the voting age population turned out to vote), but Kaunda's Nyanja-based UNIP retained the sympathies of the Eastern Region even though they boycotted the official vote (Reynolds, 1999:275). Thus provincial and ethnic distrust continue to complicate and undermine the give and take of democratic competition in Zambian multiparty politics (Reynolds, 1999: 40-44). But this was a challenge rather than a breakdown to both state and society.

Kenya is one of the countries where ethnic hostilities have increased, and become electorally codified, as elite entrepreneurs react to the new incentives of a winner-take-all multiparty constitutional dispensation (Reynolds, 1999:274). Kenya has about 40 tribes; three tribes, the Kikuyu (otherwise the so-called GEMA: Gikuyu, Embu and Meru), the Luo and the Luhya together form about 50 per cent of the African population, while two smaller tribes, the Kamba and the Kalenjin form about 10 per cent of the populace. At the same time, ethnic aggregation can be misleading, for there are crosscutting cleavages within groups and mutually self-serving relations between members of different groups.

(Cohen, 2001). True to Moi's 'prediction', the advent of multiparty politics sparked off 'ethnic clashes' in the Rift Valley and coastal areas where at least 1000 people from 'opposition tribes' were killed and at least 30,000 evicted from their land ahead of the 1992 general election (Cohen, 2001).

To use the language of 'class' is problematic also because while it is possible to distinguish class divisions, they over-run ethnic and other divisions. Furthermore, class fragments are deeply divided against each other. Thus it has been claimed that the bourgeoisie in Kenya was factionalised, and that the factions or fragments pursued different interests in a struggle to co-opt the state. There have been several instances in which various factions have organised themselves and attempted to grab power. These have included the so-called 'change the constitution' group, a collection of prominent politicians from Central Kenya whose objective was to amend the constitution in such a way that the vice-president of the republic did not automatically assume power upon the demise of serving president (Nyangira, 1987:25). More recently, there was another group of prominent politicians who coalesced around Charles Njonjo, with the aim of staging a constitutional coup. Their object was to promote a vote of no confidence in the then head of state (Moi) followed by installing their man in power (Nyangira, 1987:25). Although the support of the Kikuyu was more or less assumed automatic, the most ardent beneficiaries were just not ordinary Kikuyu, but the Kikuyu bourgeoisie who looked to him for patronage in business, and in bureaucratic jobs. At this same level Njonjo received widespread support from the bourgeoisie of other ethnic groups (Nyangira, 1987:25-6). Again, one can see that political cleavages cut across the social, ethnic or class divisions which one might predict as the dominant factors in shaping political behaviour. This is not to say that those older divisions no longer matter, but that the political context is more complex than an emphasis on either class or ethnic or regional allegiances on their own might suggest, and that this complexity has grown rather than diminished in the last twenty years.

4.5 Political Rights and Civil Liberties

Freedom House provides a composite measure of civil liberties and political rights, which gives a useful guide to the trajectory of political decency and tolerance in each of the case studies (Reynolds, 1999:31). Zambia did not manage to move into the *free* category despite continuous periods of multiparty competition. It has experienced multiparty competition since 1991. The country was considered free during 1991-92, but state respect for individual liberties and rights rapidly worsened, returning the country to the *partly free* category between 1993 and 1996.

Table 4.1 **Subjective Indicators of Democracy**[92]

	Polity Score[a] 2000 (-10 to 10)	Civil Liberties[b] 2000 (7 to 1)	Political Rights[b] 2000 (7 to 1)	Press Freedom[c] 2000 (100 to 0)	Voice and accountability[d] 2000-01 (-2.5 to 2.5)
Kenya	-2	5	6	70	-0.68
Zambia	1	4	5	62	-0.17

Source: UNDP *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, New York: UNDP, pp.40-41.

These categorisations are imperfect, and lump together very different countries with different problems in their categories. Nonetheless, they do provide a rough but significant measure of the direction of movement of polities, and they demonstrate the fragile nature of the limited measure of democracy in both Kenya and Zambia in the recent past as well as its imperfections.

Table 4.2 **Freedom House Ratings (Political Rights, Civil Liberties, 'Free' Status)**

	1994	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**
Kenya	6,6NF	7,6NF	7,6NF	6,6NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	6,5NF	4,4PF	3,3PF
Zambia	3,4PF	3,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	5,4PF	4,4PF	4,4PF

Source: Compiled from Freedom House, www.freedomhouse.org .

[92] The measures are based on different methodologies. a. University of Maryland's polity score reflects the presence of institutional factors necessary for democracy – whether laws and institutions allow democratic participation – but not the extent of participation. Scores range from –10 (authoritative) to 10 (democratic); b. Freedom House designations for civil liberties and political rights: 1-2.5 (Free, F); 3-5 (Partly Free, PF); 6-7 (Not Free, NF); c. Freedom House designates free space as follows: 0-30 (Free Press); 30-60 (Partly Free Press); 61-100 ((Not Free Press); d. The World Bank's tool based on statistical compilation of perceptions of the quality of governance, based on a survey covering a large number of respondents in industrial and

The Kenyan elite clearly considered it unnecessary that there should be any popular political participation other than through representative government, especially through voting. This presents a very limited idea of democracy (see chapter three above) where governments are elected, but expect public conversation to be silent and the public space to be closed between elections to allow the elite to rule as they choose (Barkan & Okumu, 1979:27); in the eyes of the leadership, any meaningful participation beyond election day would threaten political order because the country and the people were 'not ready'. This is not only a rejection of any more genuine or participatory democratic form; it is also a curious echo of the language of colonial administrators into the 1950s.

After the 1982 attempted coup, in a climate of political tension and immanent violence, Moi's ruling regime adopted an intimidating new set of electoral procedures, like queue-voting or *mlolongo*. At the same time, the government instituted a systematic reduction in press freedom. This containment of potential democratic aspirations lasted throughout the 1980s. But it came to clash not only with internal activism, but also with external political and economic forces. Eventually, in the changed climate of the post-Cold War years, "aid agencies imposed an aid condition requiring the government to (1) amend the Constitution to end the one-party state and allow a multiparty system; (2) establish an impartial elections board, reinstate the secret ballot, redistrict where population shifts require it, and update voter registration roles; and (3) relax direct and indirect state censorship of the press" (Cohen, 2001:102). Other international organisations, including NGOs, put similar although less effective pressure on the regime. The conditionality pressure on Kenya was led by the United States government, whose so-called 'rogue' ambassador, Smith Hempstone, a former Texan journalist, mingled easily with local people and local CSO groups, much to the chagrin of the ruling regime.

Further pressure to democratise, and to move the existing institutions to a more genuinely and effectively democratic basis, came from other outside groups, including

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developing countries as well as NGOs, commercial risk taking agencies and think tanks. The index ranges

well-funded ones. Steered by the academic Joel Barkan, USAID's $7 million 'Kenya Democracy and Governance Project' to strengthen parliament (and the independence of parliament from the state), the role and effectiveness of the Auditor and Controller General's offices, and civil society, and its institutions and networks. The government showed little interest for some time, and was reluctant to add its own funding, but eventually found itself forced to adapt to at least some of these pressures (Cohen, 2001:104). Civil society funds were used to sponsor conferences on "democracy in a multi-ethnic society", support local human rights groups in their efforts to track "state-sanctioned ethnic cleansing", and study "weaknesses in civil society", giving particular attention to the "Asian-African split" and "ethnic divisions among Africans".[93] When Smith was replaced as US ambassador, his successor, Aurela E. Brazeal, adopted a somewhat more conciliatory approach. But US pressure on Kenya did not diminish. And the German and Japanese ambassadors, along with the Australian High Commissioner, continued to exert pressure, at their governments' behest, to promote democratisation (Cohen, 2001:104).

Political change in Kenya owed something to the activities and economic and social pressures of powerful external actors, as well as to the persistence, and often the courage, of civil society activists. Many of these changes have their origins, as this discussion has suggested, well before the new media started to have a significant impact. Later chapters will attempt to analyse and explain how the new media came to overlay these existing forces for change and to push the changes that had occurred significantly further.

4.6 Conclusion

In Kenya, the national movement was betrayed by post-colonial elites who were at the same time deeply rooted in colonial experience, so we can speak of them without tautology as forming a neo-colonial elite. They accepted and protected – and benefited from – the

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from around –2.50 to around 2.50 (higher better). [UNDP HDR 2002, p.41).

[93] 'Kenya Democracy & Governance Project (615-0266) (1994-97)', Washington DC: USAID, in Reynolds, 1999:104.

norms of the old rulers, resulting in bitterness and exacerbating tribal tensions among Africans who fought and died for freedom (Bienen, 1974:4-5). In Zambia, a ruling elite did some of the same things, although for rather different reasons and with less effective impact in stifling democracy. It is ironic, but also perhaps not surprising, that in the country with the greater tradition of social dissent of the two, Kenya, a greater effort was made to suppress dissent, while in the country with a weaker tradition of dissent, Zambia, a more open democratisation came more easily. Some of these failings can certainly be attributed to the failings – vanity as well as hunger for personal power – of individuals. But the political system, the institutions, and the elite fabric, all participated in the maintenance of forms of government, which worked against popular representation and open accountability. To change this was going to take a significant effort in both elite and broader society, and required a change in the terms of social and political discourse to which, subsequent chapters will argue, the new media made a significant contribution.

5.0 DIFFUSION OF ICTs: AFRICA AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

> *Trying to understand the Internet by simply counting terminals and technical infrastructures leads to a dead end. This is particularly true in Africa. Only a dual approach, based both on the possibilities of technologies and actual ways of using the Internet, makes it possible to broaden the framework and to understand the impact of the Internet on the whole of the environment which supports the life of humankind* (Cornu, 2002).

5.1 Introduction

Damian Tambini (1999:306) points out that, "as long as access to the new media is restricted, it will be impossible to realise their democratic potential". Heralding the internet as a means of freedom, productivity, and communication comes hand in hand with the denunciation of 'the digital divide' induced by inequality on the Internet (Castells, 2001:247). Focusing on Africa, this chapter examines the concept of the digital divide with the examination of the variables or factors that determine or affect ICT communication channels – economic socio-cultural (skills, norms and institutions), political, historical and technological. It begins with a critical look at the digital divide debate.

5.2 A Critical Look at the Notion of Digital Divide

Information revolution and the idea of the Information Society is just one of the many modernisation paradigms. This becomes clearer on reading Guy Berger's assertion regarding modernisation's "infrastructural focus on the reach of media" with the reality that "much media in the South did not, and still does not, reach beyond the elite" (Berger, 1998:601). Does the rest of the world genuinely want Africa to progress? Was Mugabe out of tune in his hard-hitting speech, delivered within about a week of withdrawal of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth, at the WSIS Geneva Summit in December 2003

when he predictably took an imperialist approach to the question of Information Society and lamented about the digital divide? This he did while one Africa head of state after another enthusiastically chronicled their ICT achievements and future plans, including Nigeria's plans for a second communications satellite.[94] Mugabe is not alone in viewing ICTs as tools for capitalism, imperialism and 'electronic' or 'virtual' colonialism (Schiller, 1999; Ya'u, 2004), a weapon for the rich and the powerful which will smother the voices of the small and the weak (McLean, 1989:1; Ya'u, 2004).

From the G-8 Osaka (Japan) meeting in 2000, Western donors have been downplaying the debt crisis while elevating "a real danger of a global digital divide emerging between those countries actively using ICTs and those without access to these technologies" (Cline-Cole & Powell, 2004:5; Alden, 2004:457ff). With mounting pressure in 2000 over poverty and the need for debt cancellation, especially for Africa, the G8 diverted attention by enticing South Africa's Mbeki, Nigeria's Obasanjo and Algeria's Bouteflika to, among others, purchase former US Vice-President Al Gore's GII idea as an antidote for the digital divide. By creating a global information marketplace through such facilities as fibre-optic cables and satellites, the GII would narrow the poverty gap and eliminate many of the existing geographical barriers to prosperity and equality. On the other hand, there is a risk that the Internet will concentrate economic activity among richer countries and thus accentuate the existing divisions between North and South (Main, 2000; James, 2001).[95] Come 2003, and the G8 would not support Abdoulaye Wade's Digital Solidarity Fund to improve ICT infrastructure in Africa. Two problems here, one the G8 appear less than sincere. Two, there is too much focus on mere physical access to software and hardware, yet access alone does not solve the problem. Little wonder a number of donor-funded ICT in, among other areas, Mexico and India (Andhra Pradesh) have failed after applying top-down diffusion-transmission model (Mudhai, 2004b citing: Wilkins &

[94] The author was present at the WSIS as a researcher with the US Social Research Council and as a newspaper writer.

Waters, 2000; Wade, 2000; Chakravartty, 2004). It is for this reason that the digital divide concept is being examined anew. The ITU points out that equating digital divide to Internet access alone is too narrow a definition, and that digital divide reflects how power is distributed. Although evidence exists that the divide in access to ICTs is shrinking, the nature of the divide is shifting, from basic to advanced communication, and from quantity to quality.

Coaching digital divide in terms of power divide (Franda, 2002:11), argues the introduction of the Internet has not made any part of the world poorer. But the Internet is contributing to a widening of the gap between the better off and the worse-off parts of the world because it has enabled some nations to create new sources of wealth and of international diplomatic and political power relative to others. The divide exists between countries at different levels of development, and within a country, for instance between urban and rural areas, between men and women, between the educated and the unschooled, between the young and the elderly and between people of different races (see Castells, 2001:248-56). It is a result of socio-economic disparities and therefore little different from other income, health and education divides. For those with access, there is the technological divide between those with regard to speed and capacity of access between those with differential access to high broadband services (using technologies such as integrated services digital network or ISDN, digital subscriber line or DSL, cable modems, and wire-based Internet access or WAP). (Castells, 2001:256). There is the knowledge gap (Castells, 2001:258-260) in addition to the better-known global digital divide (Castells, 2001:260-270). Compaine (2001:xv) argues that the skills level to use intelligent devices keep getting lower thus lowering the divide that may affect democracy. Indeed his large edited volume on the divide focuses exclusively on the US, thus elaborating the fact that there are a good number of people in the developing world who are much more connected than many in the west. Hellawell (2001:3,5) examines the divide in the UK.

[95] James (2001:813) responded directly to this vie, arguing that low-cost forms of IT developed in the third

In its 2002 World Telecommunications Report, the ITU indicates that at last recent rapid ICT development in Africa put to rest some overused clichés. It was often said, for example, that Tokyo has more telephones than the whole of the African continent. "While this may have been true some 20 years ago, when the Maitland Commission drafted its *Missing Link* report in 1984, today there are more than twice as many main telephone lines in Africa as in Tokyo. Similarly, the story which ITU reported in the 1997 Report, that there were "more mobile phones in Bangkok than in Africa," proved to be short-lived. Africa now has more than 20 million mobile users, more than the total population of Bangkok. By the end of 2001, twenty-eight African nations – or over half the region's countries – had more mobile than fixed subscribers; a high percentage than any other continent. However, there is need for considerable caution. "The rate of growth in Internet host computers in Africa, around 73 per cent per year in the latter half of 1990, while still impressive, is much lower than that achieved in Latin America or Asia-Pacific." (Kelly 2000). In other words, Africa still lags behind in the realms of global digital divide. Recent statistics show that the entire African continent, with the exception of South Africa, has been at the bottom of the list of world regions with Internet connectivity (Franda, 2002:12). Various data sources indicate that with 54 countries and nearly 800 million people (about 13 per cent of the world's total), Africa has just about one per cent of the world's Internet users and only about half a percent of people in sub-Saharan Africa use the Internet.

At continental level, the countries of northern and southern Africa were among those that predominated in first introducing the Internet in Africa, and they have continued to predominate among countries with increasing numbers of Internet users (Franda, 2002:12). At the national level, there exists rural-urban disparity. Most telecom services are concentrated in the capital cities (Falch, 2004:104).

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world, like those in India, provide more scope for optimism regarding the GII than is commonly realised.

5.3 Obstacles to ICT Diffusion and Access

The major reasons that the vast populations of Africa have been unable to gain access to the Internet include lack of basic telecommunications and the Internet related infrastructures, the extremely high costs of using those facilities that do exist, and the lack of skills, resources, and awareness necessary to enable people to use the Internet for any purpose (Franda, 2002:12). The first obstacle is economic poverty. Extensive poverty is an insuperable barrier to any ICT access in Africa at anywhere near the levels in the West. On average about 40 per cent, in many countries more than 50 per cent, of SSA's people exist on less than US$1 per day, and one third of its 54 states are affected by conflict. Today, average per capita income in Sub-Saharan Africa is lower than it was 20 years ago, and human development has actually declined in recent years. (UNDP, 2002; Herbst, 2003:5). Labelled 'The Hopeless Continent' by *The Economist* of 18 May 2000, Africa through NEPAD needs to invest US$64 billion annually to achieve economic growth rates of 7% to reverse economic decline and to arrest poverty (Herbst & Mills, 2003:8). It is on this basis that questions are often raised about the wisdom in the 'fad' that is ICTs.

> *Economics has been, and will continue to be, a major inhibiting factor for the vast majority of international states when considering programmes to provide the telecommunications infrastructures that would make Internet access possible for larger portions of national populations. The sheer poverty and isolation of most countries, particularly when combined with the many conflictual and demoralising carryovers from past international relationships, have often thwarted attempts by leaders who have tried to move their nations more aggressively into the world of twenty-first-century information technology* (Franda, 2002:229).

Yet as already hinted above a number of authors have pointed out that issues of information poverty is not just a North-South issue given that even the west has the 'fourth world' (Castells, 2000; Mills, 2000).

The paradox is that although Africans are poor, they pay much more for ICT services than users in the richer west, and this is not just a result of the economies of scale. "Internet services cost seven times more than in the US largely due to the monopolistic structure of Internet service in Africa." (K. Speight, cited in Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Adeya, 2003:68). In many countries, the cost of one hour of Internet access can wipe out a day's wage. *Foreign Policy*[96] has designed a map showing sample hourly rates at Internet cafés and the percentage of people living on $1 per day in 26 nations. Africans pay much more than Americans and Europeans for both telephone and internet access. An estimated $600 million is added to Africa's annual phone bill through obligatory routing of international calls within Africa via Europe. An Internet account in Africa costs an average $60 for five hours a month compared with about $29 a month for 20 hours of Internet access in the US, according to the OECD.[97] While prices have dropped drastically, especially in capital cities where there are better facilities, more clients and greater competition, Internet connection is still very expensive in rural areas.

Access is further restricted by the quality of technology and infrastructure; poor quality fixed line complicates data transmission, yet the capacity in wireless lines is not suitable for web browsing, but can only be used for simple emails and other low-capacity data applications (Falch, 2004:113). However, it is the policy, legal and regulatory realms that tends to bring about other obstacles. Slow liberalisation and privatisation of inefficient state telecom service providers is one sticky point. Another area of concern is lack of legal framework for not only e-commerce but also e-democracy. "The legal status of many of the new technologies may serve to constrain their ability to enhance democracy. ....The legal status of these technologies with respect to political campaigning is at best uncertain." (Meadow, 1993:454).

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[96] www.foreignpolicy.com

[97] These are widely cited statistics. See, for instance, excerpt of UN Africa Recovery Report, 'No Phone, No Computer for Most Africans', at http://www.nathanielturner.com/africanophonenocomputer.htm (Aug 2004) or the pdf version at http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/subjindx/subpdfs/134tech4.pdf (Aug '04).

In an area like Africa, cultural factors can also affect access – especially at individual level. There are some people who just dread interaction with any form of technology. They prefer face-to-face dealings. One cultural limit to the political applications of the new technologies is the willingness of voters to adapt to, and be more than passive recipients of, the products of the new technologies. Even if the hardware of electronic democracy were in place, some voters would prefer to vote the old-fashioned way. Just as ATMs are not used by those who are intimidated and confused by them, there will be voters who are reluctant to participate in any form of teledemocracy that robs them of the ritual of going to the polls to vote.

5.4 Bridging the Digital Divide?

Recent policy attention has tended to focus almost exclusively on *why* a 'wired' Africa is an absolute and urgent necessity in the current information age; and on *how* African countries can formulate e-strategies, among other things, to facilitate their incorporation in the so-called global information society (Cline-Cole & Powell, 2004:5). Here, we examine a number of multi-level initiatives to correct the digital divide. At the global level, there is the G-8 Digital Opportunity Task (DOT) Force, an international coalition of government, industry and CSOs (Cline-Cole & Powell, 2004:6, quoting the World Bank). Another one is the World Economic Forum Digital Divide Task Force. However, such initiatives tend to be flawed as they ignore or promote existing structural power relations in a number of ways (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:6; Thompson, 2004). "An Africa locked in as a powerless junior partner in what should, at least according to WSIS, be an 'inclusive' Information Society based on relations of 'partnership' between 'key stakeholders', stands as little chance of prospering now, as it did under previous dispositions or world economic orders." (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:7). This is not to suggest that Africa should just sit and wait, as "the heart of the issue is not technological determinism reflected in many

global policy statements, but how men, women and children use and exchange information at work, school and play" (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:7).

At regional level, there are several projects although nearly all of them depend on funding from outside Africa. Examples include the *Imfundo* initiative, by the UK's DFID, that supports education in Africa through the use of ICTs "and aims to acknowledge local cultural priorities, create long-term opportunities for local business, and to offer the potential for the development of open-source (non-proprietary) software." (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:8). Others include the e-Africa Connection funded by the World Bank, DFID and EU; USAID's US$15 million five-year Leland Initiative to improve access and use in 20 countries; UNDP's US$12 million Internet Initiative for Africa to reinforce national Internet development in 12 countries; UNESCO's Regional Informatics Network for Africa (RINAF); the UN ECA's Africa Information Society Imitative (AISI); ECA's National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) project; the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC) linking South Africa with Mozambique. There is also the eAfrica project of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). "While initiatives such as NEPAD's adoption of ICT as one of its eight priority sectors, and President Wade's (coordinator of NEPAD's ICT sector) call for a Global Digital Solidarity Fund may help in creating some space for Africa-based initiatives, they offer little or no significant challenge to imperialism's overarching strategy." (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:7).

Perhaps a little less donor-led is the SchoolNet Africa project in which refurbished computers from universities and companies in the west are shipped to Africa. Some critics have, however, seen this as dumping of obsolete computers that may cause environmental hazard. However, some public-private partnership may worsen access or not improve much. Therefore Angola would have to be careful in their signing of a 'strategic and exclusive partnership' with Microsoft, a dominant ICT supplier, and the government of Angola, as part of which Microsoft was to provide support for Angola in the formulation of

its national e-strategy, in addition to selecting the Angolan firms to be the country's official representatives at the WSIS (Cline-Clone, 2004:9).[98]

At the national level, there are a number of ways of narrowing the digital divide within the control of specific governments. One such way has been the liberalisation, which has encouraged competition and improved services. However, this can only work for ordinary people if conditions are attached to licenses to ensure some kind of universal access. Infrastructurally, new alternatives to old-fashioned twisted-pair telephone wires – satellites and fibre-optic technology – are in the process of ending bandwidth scarcity and cheapening communication and information provision. Even where the wires are not being changed, digital compression is finding ways of sending much larger amounts of information down them faster (Tambini, 1999:309).

It is perhaps in Africa where shared access to ICTs works best. Internet cafes and the connection of public libraries, schools and hospitals help ensure that those who do not own hardware are able, in principle at least, to have access to online communication and information facilities (Tambini, 1999:306). Modelled on public pay phones: community telecentres, commercial multipurpose access centres, private Internet cafes, etc. In low-income countries like those in Africa, where affordability is a barrier to implementation of universal services, telecentres as part of universal access strategy offer a low-cost opportunity for many who cannot afford their own phone or Internet connection (Falch, 2004). A number of different models for development of telecentres have been applied in different parts of the world. (Falch, 2004:103-4).[99] Like in other developing countries, many of the telecentres in Africa are essentially phone shops, sometimes also offering public access to fax or other supplementary services. But in the past three years, Internet cafes have popped up in larger cities. The most ambitious centres offering a multitude of services like IT training, distance learning, telemedicine, informational services, etc are

[98] , www.digitalopportunity.org/article/country/950

[99] For example: to reverse rural-urban migration and increase IT awareness and capabilities, e.g. Scandinavia; to create new job opportunities for 'teleworkers', e.g. UK, France and N. America; to promote rural

usually supported by international agencies, like ITU, FAO and UNCTAD (Falch, 2004:104).

5.5 ICTs Spread and Status in Kenya and Zambia

Kenya's reaction to the wave of liberalisation, privatisation, digitisation and convergence of telecommunications and ICT sector has been typical: Faced with the global spread of the Internet – in a rapid, disorderly, and unpredictable manner in the 1990s – national leadership groups in most countries were immediately cautious about accepting it fully and were determined to make sure its introduction was consistent with national interests. In well over half of the countries examine by Franda (2002),[100] "leaders responded to the invention of the Internet by pursuing isolationist position, trying to confine Internet use …while severely controlling the circumstances under which the bulk of the population was able to gain and use Internet access" (Franda, 2002:229). Due to its strategic location and relative economic and political stability in East Africa and Central Africa, Kenya was one of the countries expected to be among the first to obtain full Internet access. However, it was not until late 1995 the capital Nairobi obtained (albeit illegally) a large concentration of dial-up email services (Mike Jensen, cited in Mudhai, 2002). Also, Kenya did not liberalise and split her communications sector until 1998.

On the other hand, Zambia separated the postal, regulatory and telecommunications services in July 1994. Despite being one of the poorest nations in Africa, Zambia became the fifth country in Africa (and the very first in SSA outside of South Africa) to obtain full Internet access. The medium started its journey at the ivory tower, the University of Zambia (Kasoma, 2002:150; Leslie, 2002:113). This is perhaps a history similar the origin of the Internet itself as ARPANET in US universities and the military from 1969. UNZA's

development, including agricultural extension services and support for marketing and export of local food products, e.g. Eastern Europe (esp. Hungary and Estonia) and Australia. (Falch, 2004:103-4)

[100] Israel in the Arab World; Russia and Central Asia and Caucasus in Eurasia; Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland in Eastern Europe; Albania, Romania and Yugoslavia in Former Soviet Union and Other Eastern European States; China and India.

computer centre had been experimenting with email for three years. UNZANET collaborated with Rhodes University, which had primitive Internet links from November 1991 with the support of South African Universities Network (UNINET), founded by the Foundation for Research in Development (Kasoma, 2002:151). UNZANET soon opened its services to the public and by early 1993 users were transmitting large volumes of international messages via the Internet. Demand increased and ZAMNET Communications was incorporated in 1994 and started operating the following year with a U$122,000 World Bank grant for initial capital. Subscribers grew from 30 to 1000 within a year. Three years later, it had increased three-fold. (Leslie, 2002:113). Its capacity began from an average link of 14.4kbs to 512kbs on the downlink with 120 telephone dial-in lies in Lusaka in 2002. It divorced the university and became a private company and the largest ISP (Kasoma, 2002:151-2), sharing 7,000 subscribers (in late 2004) with Coppernet and Zamtel as well as three smaller competitors while bracing for the entry of Africa Online.

Teledensity in Zambia, like in Kenya and other African countries, is higher than average in urban areas. In four major Zambian cities, teledensity reaches 2.01 per 100 persons whereas in rural areas it is estimated at 0.09 per 100 (i.e. 9 telephone for every 10,000 people). Household penetration, on average, is approximately 5.63% while the average annual growth rate in teledensity of 3.7% has barely kept up with the population growth rate of 3% (Kakubo, 2000). Table 5.1 shows recent statistics for both countries.

Table 5.1 **ICT Diffusion in Kenya and Zambia**

HDI rank[101]	Per 1000 people ⇨ / ⇩ Country/Region	MDG[102] Telephone mainlines		MDG Cellular phone subscribers		MDG Internet users	
	Year ⇨	*1990*	*2002*	*1990*	*2002*	*1990*	*2002*
64	Mauritius	52	270	2	288	0.0	99.1
119	South Africa	93	107	(.)	304	0.0	68.2
120	Egypt	30	110	(.)	67	0.0	28.2

[101] Human Development Index is a tool that eschews economic determinism, used for monitoring human development in UN member countries with reliable data in each of its components. A country with the highest HDR is ranked 1st (Norway from 1999 to 2002) and that with the lowest is ranked last, Sierra Leone (162nd in 1999; 173rd in 2000; 177th in 2002). The HDI for 2004 report is methodologically improved.
[102] Telephone mainlines and cellular subscribers combined form an indicator for Millennium Development Goal 8.

131	Ghana	3	13	0	21	0.0	7.8
139	Sudan	3	21	0	6	0.0	2.6
146	Uganda	2	2	0	16	0.0	4.0
147	Zimbabwe	13	25	0	30	0.0	43
148	Kenya	**8**	**10**	**0**	**37**	**0.0**	**12.5**
151	Nigeria	3	5	0	13	0.0	3.5
157	Senegal	6	22	0	55	0.0	10.4
159	Rwanda	2	3	0	14	0.0	3.1
162	Tanzania	3	5	0	22	0.0	2.3
164	Zambia	**8**	**8**	**0**	**13**	**0.0**	**4.8**
170	Ethiopia	3	5	0	1	0.0	0.7
	SSA	5	15	(.)	39	0.0	9.6
	LDCs	3	7	0	10	0.0	2.8
	Developing nations	29	96	(.)	101	(.)	40.9
	World	81	175	2	184	0.5	99.4

Source: Extracted from UNDP *Human Development Report 2004*, pp.182-183.

Despite Kenya's late and slow start, and the delay in privatisation of state telecommunications firm Telkom Kenya, the country boasts one of the largest Internet communities in SSA. The number of Internet users has recently grown from 30,000 in the year 2000 to an estimated 500,000 active users in September 2004 – with the possibility that the total number of Internet users (factoring in those who use Internet irregularly) could be upward of one million, being served by 30 active ISPs out of 76 registered.[103] The government was planning to license a second fixed line provider in late 2004 after the expiry of Telkom Kenya's monopoly. At the cost of US$5.4 billion, to be met largely by the private sector, the Kenyan government hoped to improve penetration per 100 population by the year 2015 from 0.16 to 1 in rural areas and from 4 to 20 in urban areas, according to a telecommunications sector policy paper.

In the cell phone sub-sector, a third provider had joined Safaricom, Telkom's subsidiary, and Kencell that together had more than two million subscribers in 2004. In Zambia, there are three cellular service providers (Zamtel, Telecel and Zamcell) and a fourth one, Vodacom, had been licensed, which is quite a good number for a country of only about 10 million. In both countries, users still pay a lot more for airtime than they believe they

[103] Email from Christopher Wambua, Public and Media Liaison, Communications Commission of Kenya, to George Nyabuga (Sept, 2004).

should; in fact in Zambia, airtime is routinely charged in US dollars instead of the local currency – the kwacha – thus making it even more expensive.

A major feature of ICT usage in both Kenya and Zambia is through sharing in public places. With regard to telecentres and private cyber cafés, the Communication Authority of Zambia issues unrestricted licences. Licences for rural and underdeveloped areas do not attract a fee. "We have quite a number of telecentres and Internet cafes in the four of our major cities. The Communications Authority has undertaken a study to determine telecentre requirements in rural areas. Currently, the Communications Authority is working out modalities to fund telelcentres. One option is that part of the money realised from royalty fees is provided as seed capital to rural based community telecentres at low interest rates." (Kakubo, 2000). Zambia recognises the fact that telecentres in rural areas could promote good governance and enable the peasant farmers and the community at large have access to markets in the cities. One of the service providers has initiated a policy to provide free Internet access to government and missionary funded schools that have computer equipment and this is being done with the help of the British government. (Kakubo, 2000). In Kenya, a move to license regional fixed telephone operators to boost universal access has not taken off very well due to few incentives, among other factors.

A number of barriers affect new media access in both countries. The Kenya case was covered in my MA dissertation at the University of Leeds in 2000, and the Zambian case is covered by Kasoma (2002). Briefly, access in both countries has been determined by the usual economic, cultural, legal, political, regulatory, and technological factors. Kenya's telecommunications system is reported by CIA Fact Book to be "unreliable with little attempts to modernise except for business". This is because the Kenyan government is very jittery and reluctant to lose control of the sector. For instance while VSAT terminals are easily installed privately in Zambia, it is illegal to do so in Kenya and those who have broken this law have had their equipment confiscated by the police and the regulator, the Communications Commission of Kenya. All Kenyan ISPs and other Internet

users must go through the government-controlled exchange point (IXP), Jambonet, to upload content onto the Internet. The country was planning to license a second national operator (SNO) for landline as well as ten companies to provide Internet backbone service on expiry of Telkom Kenya's monopoly in mid 2004. However, the process has hit a hitch due to problems on the side of eventual winners of the tender award.

For Zambia, the CIA Fact Book reports about "facilities aging but still among the best in Africa". A recent workshop on Zambia's national ICT policy observed that lack of vision for ICT resulted in the absence of any policies governing its implementation and as a result government commitment was effectively non-existent. Participants lamented about infrastructure being poor, expensive and unevenly distributed – favouring the rail line. "If the development of rural areas is to become a reality, then there is need to take a leaf from Asian countries that have embarked on putting infrastructure in the rural areas."(Chilambwe 2001).

Table 5.2 **Telecom performance indicators**

	KENYA				ZAMBIA			
Fixed Lines	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**
Lines connctd	*310000*	*350000*		*328400*	*79468*	*82205*		*88400*
Eqpmt capacity	*420000*	*470000*			*138839*	*145033*		
Waiting list	*100000*	*50000*			*13437*	*145033*		
Avg install wait	*3mnths*	*3mnths*			*1mnth*	*1mnth*		
Teledensity	*1.05*	*1.16*			*0.84*	*0.84*		
Digitalisation	*67%*	*70%*			*80.43%*	*83.01%*		
No. of staff	*20,025*	-			*3100*	*3061*		
Cellular Lines	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**
Operators	*2*	*2*			*3*	*4*		
Total subscribers	*127404*	*615500*		*1.6m*	*38000*	*95000*		*241000*
Teledensity	*0.41*	*2.04*			*0.4*	*0.98*		
Int'nal leased	-	-			*9*	*9*		
Local leased	*196*	-			*119*	*119*		
Public phones	*7000*	*10000*			*825*	*873*		
Internet accounts	*35000*	*43000*			*4,993*	*8,000*		
Internet hosts				*8,325*				*1880*

Internet users	*400000*	*20,000*	*68200*
Radio broadcast stations	*AM24, FM18, SW6*	*AM19, FM5, SW4*	
TV stations	*8*	*9*	

Source: BMI-TechKnowledge Communication Technologies Handbook 2002, CIA Factbook, Kakubo (2000)

One obstacle not covered well before has to do with management. Analysts say Telkom Kenya needs only 2000 employees, as opposed to the about 20,000 on its payroll, to offer the core telecommunications and Internet services. They base this on the fact that the two mobile phone companies, Safaricom and Kencell, have a combined work force of only 2000 serving over two million customers compared to Telkom's 18,000 employees serving only 300,000 customers.

5.6 Conclusion

The continuing difficulty of overcoming economic, political and cultural barriers to the successful implementation of ICT strategies in Egypt, one of Africa's richest countries (and its second most wired economy), "raises serious doubts concerning the chances of success of similar strategies elsewhere in Africa, and serves as a timely reminder of the need for interrogating first-hand experiences" (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:8). Whether or not African countries are resisting 'virtual colonisation', this brings us back to Tambini's point at the beginning of this chapter, that lack of communications access limits the capacity for democratisation. Meadow (1993:453) partly provides a perspective, that "economic, cultural, legal, political, policy and regulatory factors are inevitably intertwined with participatory questions when it comes to new media" (Meadow, 1993). So we cannot even begin to consider democratisation without taking into account the overall context. First from the perspective of the voter, the hardware required to participate in politics electronically is prohibitive – even if the government acquires it own voting system like the Kenyan government is trying to do. "Even when 'most' voters are hooked

into the electronic political network, the issue of what is to be done about those who cannot afford to be part of the network must be addressed." (Meadow, 1993:454). The result [for candidates] is likely to be a reduction of political competition as classes of political 'haves' – those with access to newer technologies – are more successful than the political 'have-nots' who are unable or unwilling to harness the new methods of campaigning (Meadow, 1993:456).

Although cellular phones alleviate problems of access, the service is still expensive and is not available in all rural areas in most African countries. Liberalisation has not benefited rural areas much as most new companies have concentrated on urban areas where more people with disposable income are available. In certain case, observers say economic viability of commercial telecentres threatens their existence. This seems to point us towards some kind of 'productivity paradox'[104] where donor-funded ICT projects end up being defective. However, there is another perspective – which is more optimistic, and this is offered by among others the person whose quote opens this chapter.

Cornu (2002) argues that, "in Africa, even more than elsewhere, it is impossible to judge the impact of the telephone or the Internet simply by counting numbers of lines or connections. We need to look at things from a different perspective: that of how people use them." Rather than count how many computers are connected to the Internet, he suggests, "let us instead look at who Africa's Internet users are, or more precisely, on whom the Internet has an impact". This is exactly what the current study is about. The need to probe who uses new media and how they use them is further captured by a UNESCO report on a digital video focusing on Africa: "Statistics show that Africa is well behind the rest of the world in terms of information technologies. But the numbers fail to show the original ways Africans are using the little that is available." One telling survey by ECA and others has indicated that the average Internet user in Africa is young (25-35 in the majority), predominantly male, well-educated (e.g. 87 percent in Zambia and 98 percent in Ethiopia),

[104] This is the 1980s notion that investment in IT had not paid off in productivity improvement.

above-average earners and English-speakers (Mutume, 2000; Jensen, 2000; Franda, 2002:18). Although much of the email activity among these African 'netizens' is for personal or family use – for example, to stay in touch with relatives abroad or apply for admission to universities in the West, there are also organisational angles as we shall examine in more detail (Franda, 20002:18). Use of the Internet by young African elites is particularly impressive because few have full-time access to their own computer, either at home or at the office. They use whatever access is available, often spending hours a day waiting for their turn to get online. (Franda, 2002:19). In addition, a recent empirical research show that roughly 90 per cent of Kenyan lecturers use the Internet daily for one to two hours on average (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Adeya, 2003:75). These so-called 'cyber-elites' happen to belong to the very group of actors that have been on the forefront of liberation struggles. One such user, the publisher of a major South African newspaper, argues that "the very reasons why Internet will succeed in Africa are the very reasons often cited for its slow diffusion: bad phone lines, bad roads and bad postal deliveries."[105]

There is another point. Service providers could adjust the way they do business to suit the circumstances of Africa. For instance, Franda (2002:19) points out that because of the high cost of full Internet-based services and slow access speeds, many African ISPs offer lower-cost email-only services, and a large proportion of Africans gain Internet access through free services such as Hotmail, Yahoo! or Excite – most of which are based in the US. The use of public facilities for getting online is rapidly increasing throughout Africa, including use of privately run kiosks (small, stand-alone Internet access units in markets or public places), cyber cafés, and community Internet units located in schools, police stations, and clinics. This pattern of Internet development – using public rather than

[105] Irwin Manoim, 'Writing Up African News', delivered to the Commonwealth Editors Conference in Durban by publisher of the *Daily Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), Feb 22, 2000. (Franda, 2002:37, note 34)

private facilities – is consistent with the way radio and TV was previously introduced and continues to be used in Africa.[106]

[106] A 1995 UNESCO survey indicates radio ownership in Africa is estimated at 180 per 1000 inhabitants, compared to 35 per 1000 for TV and 3 per 1000 for computers.

6.0 CSOs-NGOs AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE

6.1 Introduction

The legitimacy of Africa's 'predatory' or 'vampire' state has been called into question in recent times (Fatton, 1992: Ranger & Vaughan, 1993; Osaghae, 1994; Olukoshi & Laakso, 1996).[107] As a challenge to the legitimacy of state and party dominance, the urban civil society as a recent phenomenon sprang up in SSA due to a variety of factors: economic and political liberalisation; the stoppage of donor assistance via states; change-euphoria around the world significantly linked to the fall of the Berlin wall, the end of communism and with it the Cold War which freed donors from the East-West power balance that often propped undemocratic regimes particularly in Africa. The upsurge of CSOs is not unique to Africa. Throughout the 1990s, political parties as mass organisations lost much of their significance in the large European countries like Italy, Germany and Great Britain. Their role as elements of political power-struggles waned, and they no longer had as much influence over societal discourses as they once did (Meyer, 2002:100). However, civil society is not really such a new phenomenon only traceable to early 1990s; it is just a new breed of civil society that emerged during that period in Africa. The African nationalism movements like Kenya's Mau Mau, though perceived as 'terrorist groups' by the powers they fought, have been recognised in some quarters as resistance social movements. For instance, the Assembly of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland in their 23 February 1992 open letter wrote: "Africa's search for democracy is not new and has not merely stemmed from changes in Eastern Europe: it came out of the anti-colonial struggle." (Ranger & Vaughan, 1993:259).

This chapter takes a 'civil society approach' or adopts 'civil society theory' to provide an insight into political activity outside of, and often in challenge to, the realms of the state. It is an approach to democratic theory that does not focus on political institutions,

[107] See also: J.H. Frimpong-Ansah (1991), *The Vampire State: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana*, London: James Currey, cited here.

and is part of the process of developing "civil society theory" (Cohen & Arato, 1992:vii) – that downplays the role in politics of political or economic societies. It is an approach in recognition of the fact that democratic structures and fairer laws cannot produce democracy without strong civil societies. Given the inevitable tendency of power to concentrate and control citizens, citizens cannot sustain involvement and influence without strong organisations (VeneKlasen, 1996:239).

6.2 Theoretical Exploration

The politics of protest is an elusive and poorly defined area of study, "sitting uncomfortably between revolutionary models of structural change and pluralist/functionalist conceptions of pressure group politics" (Camilleri & Falk, 1992:199). Neither of these two theoretical perspectives adequately characterises or explains what is now a global phenomenon. However we will focus on pluralism – a concept that is ambiguous and contentious in democratic theory. Indeed, "there is no single, definitive statement of pluralism" (Baggott, 1995:33). Nicholls (1974) looks at three traditions of pluralism concerned with the distribution of power and authority in democratic systems, and crucially with the role of the state, and the balance between state and society. Grillo (1998:6) informs us that, "plural societies are conceived as democracies in which there exist groups and institutions mediating between state and individual". But different views of pluralism exist(ed), and we will cite two of them. In the British view, non-state actors serve to limit the autocratic tendencies of the sovereign authority by locating some power outside the central institutions. English political pluralists drew attention to the fact that between the state and the individual are to be found numerous associations and groups of various kinds – cultural, religious, economic and civic, among others. These groups absorb much of the life of the individual, and have an existence that does not derive from the state (Nicholls, 1974:1). The American version, which is also concerned with 'countervailing powers', differs somewhat by emphasising the role of

groups external to the state as 'interest groups', whose task it is to promote their particularistic view. The state as 'umpire' (Nicholls, 1974:22) has the task of arbitrating and balancing. Plural societies are thus defined as 'non-authoritarian, non-totalitarian democratic societies', in which different interests are recognised as legitimate, and in which mechanisms exist for promoting those interests. That is, pluralists are concerned with the existence and strength of what others would call the institutions of the 'civil society', though they would not normally use that term, just as those who speak of civil society would not normally refer to 'pluralism' (Grillo, 1998:6).

The early forerunner of pluralism in political science was known as 'group theory', most widely associated with David Truman's 1951 book *The Governmental Process*, which popularised Arthur F. Bentley's ideas in a similarly titled work. The pluralist influence in political science reached its zenith a decade later when Robert Dahl published the influential title, *Who Governs?* which called more attention to C. Wright Mills' 1956 work, *The Power Elite* while at the same time going a step further than James Madison's discussion of 'interest groups' in *The Federalist Papers* No. 10 of 1961. (Berry, 1997:1-11). It is in this context that Dahl introduced polyarchy as a label for rough approximation to the democratic goal, in that non-leaders exercise a relatively high degree of control over leaders (Jordan, 1993:50). Dahl's pluralist concept faced methodological and normative challenges, from authors like Theodore Lowi (in *The End of Liberalism*), but the concept still lives on. Baggott (1995:32ff) identifies five political perspectives on the nature and extent of group participation in the political system, and a judgement about the consequences of their involvement. These are: pluralism, neo-pluralism, corporatism (stable and close relationship with government and specific groups have monopoly over representation in their specific area), the New Right (self-interested organisations and distort views of the public) and Marxism (cynical about the ability of pressure groups to challenge capitalist interests). Of concern to us here are pluralism and neo-pluralism.

Pluralism in democracies has tended to focus on pressure groups with the following principles central to pluralist thinking: power should be dispersed throughout society, rather than narrowly concentrated; government should be based on public consent; government should share power with the people's chosen representatives; the public participation in decision-making should be encouraged; and diversity in society should be at least tolerated, if not encouraged (Baggott, 1995:33). However, there exists a distinction between the old pluralism and the new pluralism, neo-pluralism that emerged towards 1980s in the works of Dahl and others.

> *Neo-pluralism is a more pessimistic perspective than the traditional pluralist standpoint. Although neo-pluralists accept the basic principles of traditional pluralism (indeed, many are former pluralists who have revised their ideas), they doubt that these are being upheld in practice. Compared with the pluralist standpoint, neo-pluralists are less optimistic about the democratic contribution of pressure groups. In particular they are less likely to accept that the balance of power between pressure groups mirrors the strength of support for them in society. They are also less likely to see pressure groups as autonomous, independent of government manipulation, and accept that the inequalities between groups are systematic and often damaging to democracy.* (Baggott, 1995:40).

All the same, few neo-pluralists have lost faith entirely in modern democracy; they still favour more participation of non-state actors in governance. Looking at the African context, it is neo-pluralism that informs the views on CSOs in this study – although this does not necessarily mean the African states under consideration conform to the ideals (such as non-authoritarianism) of pluralist societies as described above. As we have seen, non-state actors in this context have moved from being 'interest groups' to 'pressure groups' (Baggott, 1995) and, more recently, 'civil society'. Those who have written on 'groups' or 'interest groups' include Loveday (1962), Fagan (1966) Bienen (1974) and

Jordan (1993) but it is those who have overstretched the elasticity of the term, like Cammisa (1995) who refers to government and state agencies as interest groups, who have contributed to the abandonment of this concept. It is the 'civil society', and related terms (Camilleri & Falk, 1992:206), that has attracted the most number of writers to the extent that there is emerging a theory of civil society within (neo-)pluralism realms.

Civil society is defined as "a sphere of social interaction between economy and state… created through forms of self constitution and self-mobilisation" (Cohen & Arato, 1992:ix).[108] However, civil society is not necessarily always opposed to the state and the economy, nor is it confined to the social sphere. Besides, antagonistic relations only exist when mediation fails. "The political role of civil society in turn is not directly related to the control or conquest of power but to the generation of influence through the life of democratic associations and unconstrained discussion in the cultural public sphere. Such a political role is inevitably diffuse and inefficient." (Cohen, 1992:x). Civil society actors especially in the African context include NGOs, churches, trade unions and professional associations. Based on CSO 'types' proposed by Jørgensen (1996:47) in table 6.1, the focus of this study is on the 'national' category.

Table 6.1 **Types of CSOs**

Nature of Interaction	**'Grassroots' civil society**	**'Middle-range' civil society**	**'National' civil society**
Associations	In rural or urban communities.	On district level or with limited national coverage.	National or international
Organisation	Informal or minimum	With some professional staff, audited accounts.	Professional staff, large turnover, funding from several sources.
Confronting…	Local government.	District government.	National government or international institutions.
Co-operation between organisations…	Within the local community.	Nationally	Internationally.
Dealing with	Arising in the	Relevant to large	Confronting whole

[108] See also Keane, 1998:1,4; Diamond, 1997:xxx; Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:119; Pinkney, 2003:88;

problems…	community	groups of people.	social classes, nations, the world.

Source: Slightly modified in presentation but not content, from Jørgensen (1996:47)

The development of 'middle-range' and 'national' civil society by no means replaces the grassroots initiatives, and a highly evolved civil society exists on all levels at once. Of course other than area-based categorisation, there are issue-based categories, for instance environmental, political, health, educational and communications CSOs. Hence, this study focuses on national political CSOs.

The focus is on the operations, especially communicational activities, that enable CSOs to be involved in the political process. At this juncture, we need to briefly revisit issues related to those discussed in chapter three, specifically on CSO power and influence. Jørgensen (1996:47) informs us that the more favourable the political and legal conditions, the educational standard, *the access to means of communications* [my emphasis], among others, the stronger civil society will be able to grow. Jørgensen (1996:48-9) discusses external and internal preconditions or enabling environments for CSOs to operate effectively as represented in table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 **Pre-conditions for successful CSO operations**

Pre-conditions for CSOs	Enabling environment for CSOs
*A functioning state apparatus and some measure of social stability within recongised national borders. *Democratic institutions and the rule of law. *Social and cultural homogeneity (or at least lack of open conflict between sections of society) and a sense of 'cohesiveness' or willingness to cooperate with others. *Freedom to conduct economic activities and the existence of a business sector (and of a middle class). **Literacy and access to communications technology*; **Freedom of speech and organisation.* People with organisational experience.	*They should be free to organise themselves; *Regulations for registration and incorporation should be as simple as possible, not least for small organisations. *They should be allowed to raise funds from the public and to receive funds from funding agencies abroad. *Government controls of CSOs' administration and accounts should be simple and politically neutral. *There should be tax concessions for CSOs doing work which benefits the public.

Source: Compiled from explanations by Jørgensen (1996:48-9).

The text italicised in the table represent in table 6.2 are the conditions that most concern us in this study, and which help highlight the 'efficiency model' concerned with better operations for CSOs in a bid to realise their objectives.

6.3 The African Civil Society and Its Critics

The seminal political socialisation study by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), relating civic culture to political attitudes and behaviour, seems relevant to the politics of new and weak developing countries. To the duo, the heart of democracy has to do with citizen competence and participation (Bienen, 1974:9), what many African CSOs strive to achieve through some of their projects. Karl Deutsch and his students analysed processes of social mobilisation and the creation of new patterns of social interaction and political participation.[109] He called attention to the expansion of politically relevant strata. In the case of Africa, this politically active layer is the so-called urban elitist group from which CSOs derive their core staff.

To revisit the third wave metaphor, the US Social Science Research Council's group on political development referred to the crises of legitimacy, integration and participation appearing all at once instead of sequentially in the third world. Samuel Huntington called attention to the dangers to stability of increasing participation under conditions of weak institutions which obtained in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America (Bienen, 1974:10).[110] By the late 1960s, the early association of participation with democracy had given way to this concern for stability (Bienen, 1974:10). The assumption in liberal democracy is that a strong state and a strong civil society, each with a clear notion of its own role and limitations, are mutually reinforcing (Pinkney, 2003:88)

...[yet]... in most of tropical Africa the state is weak owing to colonial legacy, but civil society does little to provide an alternative basis for democracy, except at the most

[109] Karl Deutsch (1961), 'Social Mobilisation and Political Development', *American Political Science Review*, 55:439-514.
[110] S. P. Huntingdon (1965), 'Political Development and Political Decay', *World Politics* 17(3):386-430.

parochial level (Pinkney 2003:90). The retreat of the state in the face of retrenchment, privatisation, the delegation of function to NGOs, and demands for greater respect for civil liberties may be seen as both a cause and effect of the promotion of more diverse interests and values. (Pinkney, 2003:98). Dicklitch (1998:Pref.) argues that the failures of earlier statist development approaches "laid the foundation for the euphoric embrace of civil society and NGOs as the panacea for underdevelopment and authoritarianism" and that "the current fixation on NGOs as vehicles of empowerment, democratisation and development falls within the parameters neo-liberalism [which] advocates economic liberalisation, the creation of a (minimal) liberal state and the adoption of multi-party politics as crucial elements of 'good governance' approach." (also Hydén & Bratton, 1992; Ndegwa, 1996:15; Abrahamsen, 2000).

To a number of observers, the erosion of the postcolonial authoritarian-developmental African stateness is significantly attributed to the civil society's part in reconfiguring the post-1990s African political dynamics (Young, 2004). The notion of civil society has become so prevalent in Africa that even sceptics who doubt its relevance to African polities admit the concept is popular among Africans and Africanists (Chabal & Daloz, 1999:17-30) Clientelist, patrimonial and vertical networking in Africa make the idea of a politically salient cleavage between 'state' and 'society' misleading and illusionary dichotomy. Warleigh (2001:627) points out that governments and NGOs are interdependent particularly in Africa where the cadres in both circles often share similar backgrounds, education and values.[111] Civil society in Africa is an evolving entity, an evolutionary concept (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:292).[112]

Among the forces that dislodged entrenched authoritarianism in Africa and brought about the beginnings of formal democracy in the early 1990s, the continent's nascent civil societies were in the forefront. Although external influences such as the fall of

[111] Quoting M.K. Van Klinken (1988), 'Beyond the NGO-Government Divide: Network NGOs in East Africa' in *Development in Practice*, Vol. 8, No.3, pp.349-53

Communism and pressure from foreign donors were important, it was often the resourcefulness, dedication, and tenacity of domestic civil society that initiated and sustained the process of transition… civil society can take a large share of credit. (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:278). Thanks to their efforts a number of African countries have become part of what Huntington (1991) calls democracy's 'third wave' (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:278). "The third wave hit Africa in late 1989" with worker-trader demonstrations in Mali, then "similar phenomena became commonplace in other parts of Africa in the early 1990s, similar domestic forces …leading them." (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279).

Trade unions and worker groups (including civil servants and teachers), religious organisations, student groups protested autocratic and authoritarian policies and methods in Zambia, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Kenya and Togo. "Religious based civil-society groups, in particular the ecumenical bodies, played key roles not only in starting but also in guiding the process of political opening. In several groundbreaking cases, the success of the transition to democracy owed much to the broad credibility, political skills, and commitment of Christian organisations and their leaders. In many cases they served as 'honest brokers' in bitter political conflicts between intransigent autocrats and impatient democrats." (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279-80). Churches played a significant role in frustrating the Malawian government's attempts between 2001 and 2003 to secure a constitutional amendment to allow President Bakili Muluzi to stand for a third term in office (Ross, 2004). "Having played a prominent role as midwives of the democratic dispensation inaugurated in 1993–94 at the end of Kamuzu Banda's autocratic rule, the churches continue ten years later to play an integral role in the nurturing and development of democratic politics." (Ross, 2004:91). A 1992 pastoral letter from Malawi's Catholic bishops, openly criticising both political repression and the government's mismanagement of the economy, was a seminal event in a country that had long been a bastion of autocratic rule. (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279). Roman Catholic prelates such as Bishop Ernest Nkomo

[112] Quoting: Peter Lewis (1992), 'Political Transition and the Dilemma of Civil Society in Africa', *Journal of*

of the Congo and Monsignor Laurent Monsengwo of Zaire were pivotal in the transitions and national conferences of their respective countries. In Togo, when long-ruling President Gnassingbé Eyadéma agreed to convene a sovereign national conference to chart the country's political future, he named Archbishop Fanoko Kpodzoro to head that body. And in Benin, Bishop Isodore de Souza became head of the interim High Council of the Republic, which presided over the successful multiparty elections of February 1991 and the transition to democratic rule. (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:280).

However, as attention shift to consolidation[113] and expectations regarding civil society's contribution run high, civil society remains too weak to be democracy's mainstay …the ability of civil society to help deepen democratic governance and put it beyond reversal remains in serious doubt. (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279).

> *Civil society's weakness as a force for democratic consolidation is most glaring in the crucial area of ensuring public accountability. The relaxation of press censorship has allowed the emergence of independent newspapers with a zest for uncovering official misdeeds, yet these same papers typically lack the resources needed for in-depth analysis and sustained investigation. On the whole, civil society is too weak to redress state-society relations in favour of the latter. Despite the return to formal democracy and the promulgation of constitutions with all the usual checks and balances, officials retain enormous power. In all but a handful of Africa's new democracies, the threat of an "executive coup" is ever present.* (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:280).

As Schmitter (1997) points out and as per table 6.2 above, civil society can contribute to democratic consolidation if other institutions are also favourable and if civil society actors behave in a 'civil way'. Schmitter (1997) also points out that a key post-transition dilemma is that the 'primacy' of social movements and other democratising civil society actors

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International Affairs 27:31-54.

inevitably declines after the transition, as the authoritarian state disappears, political parties and more established interest groups take centre stage, and people turn to more private concerns (Diamond, 1997:xxxi). What has followed the democratic revolutions in East Central Europe, Russia, and Africa has not been adaptation so much as retreat and dissipation of civic energy. The broad fronts of religious, professional, student, labour, and other associations broke up once their common goal of bringing down a despised regime had been achieved. Class and ethnic divisions once again fragmented society, and the leadership ranks (and thus operational capacities) of civil society organisations were rapidly depleted as activists were drawn into politics, government, or business (Diamond, 1997:xxxi). The civil society has also been affected by the lack of a culture of free collective activity and the harsh economic realities of 1990s which have driven people to the exigencies of daily survival. (Diamond, 1997:xxxii).

Often, the civil society in Africa and the south often depend on external funding. This way, donors are able to determine many policies and priorities without the need for consent from either the indigenous population or its elected representatives. (Pinkney, 2003:105). It is an interesting observation on the political nature of civil society in African countries that donors have calculated that bringing civil society into the reform process will not undermine it but strengthen it. Donors apparently see civil society as a potential ally in their 'free marketeering', which suggests that civil society is not a very deeply rooted locus of opposition to the free market (Pinkney, 2003:101).[114] Yet others argue that because of the financial and political weakness of civil society in Africa, direct international assistance to NGOs and the cooperative linkages that Schmitter (1997) terms 'transnational civil society' loom increasingly large in the quest for democratic consolidation. Such international support and linkages have been especially important in

[113] Defined by Larry Diamond (1994) as "the process by which democracy becomes so broadly and profoundly legitimate among its citizens that it is very unlikely to break down" in 'Towards Democratic Consolidation', *Journal of Democracy* 5:4-18.
[114] J. Hearn (2000), *Foreign Aid, Democratisation, and Civil Society in Africa: A Study of South Africa, Ghana and Uganda*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, p.19. Online at http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/hot/civsoc.htm (Pinkey, 2003:101).

encouraging new types of NGOs (and critical media) that seek to reform and deepen democracy as they "foster group and individual autonomy from the state" (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997).

At the local level, some argue that the initial rise of civil society belonged to the authoritarian era of the 1970s and 1980s. Much of it had less to do with democracy than with personal survival in the face of falling living standards and the inadequacy of state services. (Pinkney, 2003:102). The pressure for democratisation and democratic consolidation may come from a small counterelite of religious leaders and urban intellectuals who have only tenuous links with the wider society, as in Haberson's description of Kenya.

As currently structured, NGOs are not viable vehicles for African democratisation. Their democratic promise is impeded by inhospitable structural conditions, historical legacies[115], regime restrictions and internal (NGO) limitations. (Dicklitch, 1998:3). The author makes this judgement based on a study in Uganda. First, she argues rather interestingly that "the current political economy of neo-liberalism in Africa, which encourages privatisation, and the supremacy of the market, significantly undermines the empowerment function of NGOs (Dicklitch, 1998:3). Second, that "NGOs are increasingly relegated to service-provision and gap-filling activities by the retreating state, but those supportive functions are not matched with increased political efficacy". (Dicklitch, 1998:3). NGOs are also fundamentally constrained by regime impediments and the current political-economy of development. They are often discouraged from performing more politically sensitive advocacy or empowerment roles by the regime as well as the IFIs (Dicklitch, 1998:3). These constraints reinforce internal NGO shortcomings including a heavy reliance on foreign aid, a tendency toward competition rather than co-operation between NGOs, weak co-ordination, relative youth, a lack of democratic decision-making, and paucity of finances which in turn leads to external dependence. For the most part,

NGOs fail to empower their constituencies or wider community, and fail to provide a stable source of pressure on the regime for democratic transition and consolidation (Dicklitch, 1998:3-4).

It is therefore not surprising that Li (2000) warns against civil society determinism and urges limits on predictions about the prospects for democracy on the basis of a non-state civil society. "Flourishing non-state sectors *may* benefit pro-democracy forces but not necessarily ensure democratisation." (Li, 2000:418). One should sort out the forces or elements that are either conducive or hostile to democracy in non-state civil society, rather than referring to them as the precondition of democratisation in authoritarian developing countries (Li, 2000:418). The potential of a non-state civil society to deter democracy should not be underestimated. Based on Chinese case study, Li suggests that efforts to promote democracy should focus on pro-democracy forces rather than non-state civil society as a whole (Li, 2000:418). It is those pro-democracy forces, rather than non-state sector in general, that we focus on here.

Statist approaches have admittedly been too focused on the state to the exclusion of other societal actors and forces, but the current focus on NGOs and civil society as the vehicles for empowerment and democratisation are also overstated and unrealistic. (Dicklitch, 1998:169). As long as the state remains at centre stage in African politics, most advancement in popular political and economic empowerment by NGOs and civil society will be contingent on state acquiescence. In other words, the parameters within which civil society and NGOs can operate are defined by regime in power (Dicklitch, 1998:169). The author judges NGOs and civil society in Uganda as 'weak' and further points out that they are not unique in their weakness. "In Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, the Gambia and Senegal few NGOs have established structures that widen participation."[116] (Dicklitch, 1998:169). "Democracy and civil society are mutually dependent. In order for democracy

[115] Weak development of political parties and the ethnic, regional and religious divisions that often characterise African societies.

to be consolidated and deepened, an effective and democratic civil society must be in place. In order for civil society and NGOs to make a democratic difference, there must exist a minimum level of democracy." (Dicklitch, 1998:170).

6.4 Precursors to New Social Movements in Kenya and Zambia

Although no harm was done as such to European or colonial officers or missionary officials, "riots and treason which took place in Zambia under the slogan of *Cha Cha Cha* caused heavy losses to public and government property" (Virmani, 1986:xiv). These marked the peak of African protest against colonial exploitation and racial oppression and defined the eventual formation of an African national party. To protest the treatment of African Christians as inferior in the eyes of the whites, a crop of Zambia's African evangelists claimed to have a link with the Watch Tower Movement that had grown in Europe and later spread to the USA and Australia. Followers of the WTM preached disobedience of existing authority because the world was going to end so the African evangelists stressed on the disobedience of the white people's administration and the chiefs of the Native Authority. They stressed that the new world was going to start soon where the oppressed people of the black race would be the first beneficiaries and would enjoy the best things of life (Virmani, 1986:46). A desire was cultivated among the followers of the WTM to throw away the yoke of civil authorities of the whites with the hope of curing their social and economic ills. They also demanded equality with white people (Virmani, 1986:46). However, the WTM met opposition in part from other groups, like the Mwenzo Welfare Association in the mid-twenties. "On the whole, WTM was a weak movement.... However, it had brought momentarily people of all ethnic stocks into one fold against the white colonial government and enabled the Africans to demand indigenous control over the religious matters." (Virmani, 1986:47).

[116] Citing K. Wellard & J.G. Copestake (Eds.) (1994), *Non-Governmental Organisations and the State in Africa: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development*, New York: Routledge, p.290

Unlike Zambia of the 1950s and 1960s where mine workers riots and mild agitations by the African National Congress (ANC), led by Harry Nkumbula and Kenneth Kaunda, represented the main forms of opposition to colonial policies (Mulford, 1967), Kenya's was much more organised and often violent. Nyangira (1987:16-18) examines "the era of the associations" and "ethnic alliances in national movements" from early 20th century. Keck and Sikkink (1998:39-78) classify efforts by Western missionaries among the Kikuyu of Kenya in 1920-31 as one of the historical precursors to modern transnational advocacy networks.[117] This qualifies for what Jodi Dean and Nortje Marres call 'issue networks' given comparison by Keck and Sikkink of these advocacies to 'noncampaigns' or related issues around which activists did not organise, for instance "the absence of a campaign among other cultural groups like the Maasai that also practised female circumcision was a puzzle even to reformers at the time". (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:39-41). One way of viewing this is that the campaign started by Protestant missionaries (especially the Church of Scotland Missionary Society, led by Dr John Arthur) was meant to counter the equally transnational freedom struggle that manifested itself most prominently among the central Kenya communities that experience British settlement earlier in larger scale compared to other parts of the country. The missionaries countering freedom fighters by discrediting cultural practices associated with communities actively involved in it and using local collaborators.

The campaign, in the context of what Kenyan historian Bethwel Ogot and others recall as increasing African opposition to British colonial practices,[118] partly bred counter-movements such as the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:69). Advocacy by the emerging young mission-educated African elites, led by Kenyatta as KCA secretary general, turned the missionary anti-cut campaign into "a symbol for colonial attempts to impose outside values and rules upon the population" (Keck &

[117] The others are the 1833-65 Anglo-American campaign to end slavery in the U.S.; the efforts of the international suffrage movements to secure the vote for women between 1888 and 1928; the campaign from 1874 to 1911 by Western missionaries and Chinese reformers to eradicate footbinding in China..

Sikkink, 1998:70). It is worth noting that Kenyatta used his British-life experience and anthropology training at the London School of Economics in mid 1930s to take the fight to the enemy, employing advocacy tactics such as bypassing local missionaries to present a formal petition directly at meetings in London with top Scottish Prebysterian church authorities as well as senior UK political and government leaders all of whom cherished the opportunity to hear the other side of the story from the horse's mouth (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:70)[119] The second strategy was to use the British press. In a convincing letter to the London *Times* on five other key issues, he argued that the repression of native views was a "short-sighted tightening of safety valve of free speech which must inevitably result in dangerous explosion – the one thing all men wish to avoid" (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:71)[120]

Communication strategies changed on the local front, where pro-circumcision forces "circulated a satirical song that ridiculed missionaries, chiefs, and officials, and praised Kenyatta" (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 71). The authors do not, however, mention the vernacular newspaper, *Mwigithania*. The government and missionaries, fearing a threat to public order, repressed the singers, flogging them, sentencing them to detention camps, and prohibiting public meetings (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 71).[121] "Kenyatta and his organisation had helped reframe the debate from one about health and Christianity to one over nationalism, land, and the integrity of traditional culture. … by the mid-twentieth century African intellectuals like Kenyatta were holding up an idealised version of the traditional past as an alternative to Western lifestyles and 'progress' that they feared were inappropriate for their countries. The anti-circumcision campaign became associated with colonialism and interference, and the practice of female circumcision with independence, nationalism, and tradition." (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:71-2). The result was that the colonial rulers backed down on anti-cut campaign and asked its chief architect, Dr Arthur to resign

[118] Such as land alienation for European settlers, heavy hut and poll taxes, and an oppressive labour recruiting systems.
[119] Citing Ann Beck (1966), 'Some Observations on Jomo Kenyatta in Britain 1929-1930', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 6(22):308, 313.
[120] Citing Beck (1966), p.325.

his seat on the Governor's executive council. In effect, the anti-cut campaign "was far more limited than the missionaries hoped for, and less successful than other similar campaigns" (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:72). Emboldened locals discredited leaders associated with the missions and increased the influence and membership of KCA and similar organisations (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:71). The ensuing struggles and tensions culminated in the Kikuyu-dominated Mau Mau uprising, one of the bloodiest and most vicious movements in the history of freedom struggle in Africa and other former Western colonial 'spheres of influence'.[122]

Katumanga (2003) highlights secret social movements in both Kenyatta and Moi era when freedom of expression and assembly were greatly curtailed. Among them were *Dini ya Musambwa*, armed groups *Shifta*, underground movements like the February 18 Movement and the December 12 Movement, which published and distributed, often in the peak of the night, newsletters such as *Pambana* (struggle), *Mwakenya* and *Mpatanishi* (reconciliation). There were also labour-related organisations like Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) and the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU).

6.5 'Third Wave' Post-1990 Social Movements: Kenya And Zambia

Compared to Zambia, Kenya's NGO arena is much more crowded. A 1998 estimate puts Kenya at the very top, with 400 NGOs, of Africa's four countries with the highest number of NGOs (Ditcklitch, 1998:246, note 3) but the number of all NGOs of various types in Kenya is indeed nearly 1000[123] – though recent estimates put the figure at between 2,500 and 3,000. Although NGO-NET Africa in a project proposal for networking NGOs in Kenya[124] does not include political NGOs in their categorisation of the sector, this is mainly because for a long time NGOs did not register or describe themselves as 'political',

[121] Citing Marshall S. Clough (1990), *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan Chiefs and Politicians, 1918-1940*, Niwot, Colo: University of Colorado, 1990, p.145.
[122]More on Mau Mau: Rosberg & Nottingham (1966); Kitching (1980); Lonsdale (1986). Kagwanja (2003) compares the Mau Mau with *Mungiki*, a more recent ethnic-political group also associated with the Kikuyu.
[123] An estimate by an official of the country's NGO Council in a f2f interview (Sept 2002).
[124] NGO-NET, Internet for NGOs in Kenya, http://www.ngonet.mgn.fr/main/index-us.html (Sept '04).

for fear of government harassment. In Zambia, University of Zambia student riots in 1970s, Law Association of Zambia and Economic Club intellectuals in 1980s provided undercurrents for the 1990s CSOs. Kaunda contained their power until the 1980s through measures like cooptation of trade union leaders and government controls over trade unions, but when these strategies failed Kaunda was met with a militant trade union movement (van Donge, 1995:197).

In the 'second liberation' struggles in Zambia, the Congress of Trade Unions and its chairman, Frederick Chiluba, successfully challenged the three-decade incumbency of President Kaunda and his United Independence Party (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279). In Kenya (like in Ghana and Togo), middle-class associations of lawyers, college professors, and students were highly active in the service of democratisation (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279).

Significant contributions to democratisation have also come from Christian churches and their national organisations acting as believable and credible voices in bruising political battles. In Kenya in 1992, 15 Catholic bishops, together with six top officials of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), called on President Moi and told him to his face: "Unless you change your policies, Kenya will not be KANU but a cemetery for thousands of its sons and daughters… Whether you like it or not, the truth is that the people have lost confidence in you and those close to you." Three weeks later, the bishops repeated that Moi had no legitimate claim to power (Ranger & Vaughan, 1993:262)[125] The NCCK had been in the forefront of opposition to the authoritarianism of President Moi and his ruling party, KANU. The NCCK was an early and vocal critic of the lack of a secret ballot. Anglican bishops Manases Kuria, Alexander Muge, and Henry Okullu earned a reputation as advocates of political change when they disagreed publicly with the conclusions of a government investigation into the causes of the 1990 'Saba Saba' (Kiswahili for 'Seven Seven' or 7th July) riots in Nairobi and called for the release of two

[125] Citing Paul Gifford (1992), 'Bishops For Reform', *Tablet*, 30 May 1992, pp.672-3.

opposition politicians who had been detained for their alleged involvement in these riots (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279). The Kenya churches also played a key role in the Ufungamano consensus initiative and the Safari Park peace brokerage. In Zambia, the churches have also acted as mediators. For instance when the MMD threatened to boycott talks over constitutional matters, Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) and church leaders got them to resume dialogue with UNIP (van Donge, 1995:202). Christian groups and Episcopal conferences in Zambia (like in Ghana and Nigeria) also actively fought authoritarianism and supported democratisation (Gyimah-Boadi, 1997:279).

The post-1990s CSOs in both countries have employed a number of tactics to strengthen their role in agitating for change. Like in Peru (Scurrah, 1996:170), the tactics employed by NGOs have contributed to the undermining of national institutions. NGOs have been effective at developing links and networks involving local, regional, national and international actors. Thus, when pressures within the country have been unsuccessful they have often been able to generate pressures and influences on foreign governments and international institutions in order to obtain the desired results from national governments (Scurrah, 1996:170). Scholars (VeneKlasen, 1996:222) have argued that donor dependence generate competition among many NGOs and make them reluctant to build alliances, but in Kenya and Zambia collaboration – sometimes explicitly encouraged by donors – has been encouraged. For instance the Oasis Forum in Zambia brought together different CSOs to put pressure on Chiluba to abandon his bid for a third term presidency ahead of the 2001 general election. In Kenya, the Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) worked with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) and National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) to monitor the 1997 general election under the motto, 'Together for Peaceful Elections'.

Borrowing from GCSOs tactics such as reification and demonisation of a common 'enemy' and focus on a single issue (Patomaki & Teivainen, 1995:118), Kenyan and

Zambian CSOs seemed to have succeeded where they took a largely common stand on a particular issue. For instance, Kenya's CSOs only succeeded when, together with opposition political parties, they specifically called for a repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution to allow multi-party electoral democracy.

Apart from national advocacy, political NGOs carry out civic education activities around the country – including in the rural areas for which they justify the use of donor funds on expensive four-wheel-drive vehicles. The aim as in Peru (Scurrah, 1996:166) is usually to "enable the poor and marginalized [and less educated] people to develop the skills and resources which will enable them to become 'citizens' and participate effectively in the promotion and defence of their own interests and of the well-being of society as a whole". For instance, to realise its vision of "an informed and democratic society where all citizens participate effectively" in politics among other spheres, Kenya's IED has been at the forefront of civic and voter education. In the run-up to the 1997 general election, they produced widely distributed posters – one of them showing how to mark the ballot paper correctly. They also produced a video, *Utaratibu wa Kupiga Kura* (Swahili for *Polling Procedure*) which was aired on the eve of the poll by both the KBC and the KTN. Apart from civic and voter education, paralegal training is often conducted in both countries. In Kenya, for example, the *Muungano wa Wanavijiji* slum dwellers project was conducted by two NGOs, *Kituo cha Sheria* and *Mazingira* Institute (Ngunyi, 2003). Ahead of the 2001 elections in Zambia, 11 CSOs[126] collaborated with the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to form a National Voter Education Committee (NVEC) funded by the Norwegian aid agency, NORAD. Of course in reaching out to the rural folk some Kenyan and Zambian NGOs have, like in Peru, adopted paternalistic, dependent or patron-client relationship, and sometimes generated conflicts and dissatisfaction with 'democracy'

[126] These included: National Organisation for Civic Education (NOCE), Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA), Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT), Democratic Governance Association of Zambia (DGAZ), Zambia Reconstruction Organisation (ZAMRO), Voters Association of Zambia (VAZ), Anti-Voter Apathy Project (AVAP), Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP), Zambia National Women Lobby Group (ZNWLG), Forum for Human Rights (FORIGHTS) and Southern African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (SACCORD). See ECZ: http://www.elections.org.zm/ (Sept '04).

(Scurrah, 1996:165-6). However, Kenya's CJPC point out they adopt the "respectful intervention model, where participants are drawn from the grassroots, trained as trainers and sent back for multiplier effects" (IED et al, 1998:22).

Civic participation as a function of the work of civil society formations in Kenya has gradually developed from a state of political departicipation in the 1980s to active civic engagement in the 1990s (Ngunyi, 2003). An overall assessment of civic education in rural Kenya shows that levels of civic competence have been enhanced significantly. This is however only at the level of *subjective competence* where the individual believes that they are capable of influencing the actions of government. Levels of *actual competence* where the individual actually influences the actions of government in a specific area are still low. Similarly, the individual in the rural setting feels competent to influence municipal government only. "Asked whom they believed they had capacity to influence, almost all our respondents named the local chief, his assistant and the municipal councillor. Most of them observed that they were incapable of influencing the actions of government at the district, provincial and national levels." (Ngunyi, 2003). In Zambia, CSO civic education activities – including drama shows – have resulted in greater citizens' knowledge and values (Bratton & Temba, 1999).

Another tactic is 'mass action' or mass-based demands for political action or changes. Mass action in Kenya was in the form of sustained strikes and civil disobedience. The massive street demonstrations, especially in the early 1990s, were spearheaded by the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC). They often resulted in Moi's government giving in to some concessions in the political game.

Although analysts (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:2) rightly point out the other (f)actors, that included other forms of internal pressure (for instance economic-ethnic dissent from the Kikuyu) and Western bilateral and multilateral donor conditions (especially the USA and the World Bank), urban CSOs were the focal point of funding (for donors) and activity (for the masses) – often through 'mass action' that sometimes got out of control and turned

violent. Their nature at that time allowed them to carry more legitimacy than openly ethnic groups or party-like political groupings and they could go further than diplomacy would allow donor representatives. However, when the CSOs had played their part and left the real political battle to real politicians in the 1992 general election, the fragmented opposition political parties, whose birth marked partial success of civic activism, derailed the liberation train – handing victory to KANU against whom majority of electors voted. A united and focused opposition, as happened in the latter election in 2002, would have made KANU vote rig much more difficult. "The opposition was divided, defeated and humbled, and during the 1993-4 the ruling party gradually developed a strategy which ensured that it would dominate electoral politics until the millennium." (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:2). With regard to Zambia, Burnell (2001) highlights the weakness of the political opposition amidst attempts by CSOs to change the status quo of a dominant ruling party.

As well as the strengths over political parties, the CSOs in both Kenya and Zambia have weaknesses that make it difficult for them to play a meaningful role in the democratisation process. Like Gyimah-Boadi (1997:280) puts it, "pressure from civil society has seldom been strong enough to bring wrongdoers to book". Katumanga (2003), argues that although Kenya's NCEC (through mass action) was able to force the regime to initiate dialogue with the opposition and civil society formations, it did not succeed in engendering state commitment to the letter and spirit of accords emergent out of these engagements. Due to poor capitalisation, mushrooming popular press in Nairobi are hampered by debilitating libel suits from scandalised politicians, low professionalism, and sometimes confiscation of their papers – as well as those of the major dailies – from street vendors by use of draconian laws.

CSOs in civil society must navigate between the forces at play. Neither the state nor civil society is homogenous and conflict-free. CSOs may find allies in different tiers of government depending on the matter in question, sometimes seeking assistance from parties and politicians, at other times accessing the resources of the bureaucracy. "Civil

society itself is by no means a unified force …[it is]… a meeting place – sometimes a battleground – for people and organisations with widely different aims. They seek allies but not doubt find opponents as well." (Jørgensen, 1996:40). As we have seen elsewhere, even some respected media actors often aligned themselves with the ruling elite. The Kenyan churches are as divided over political legitimacy as they are over theology – and over whether Moi's Kenya is Paradise or Purgatory. While the Catholics and Anglicans were agitating for change, the leader of the African Gospel Redeemed Church preached in front of his tribesman Moi, announcing that "in heaven it is like Kenya has been for many years. There is only one party – and God never makes a mistake". (Ranger & Vaughan, 1993:262)[127] Moi upstaged the NCEC and other lobby groups by convincing the principal opposition parties to abandon them and join an inter-party parliamentary group (IPPG) tasked with negotiating a minimum package of reforms, which facilitated opposition participation in the 1997 general election and provided for constitutional review but gave Moi power over the Review Commission (CKRC). One opposition politician, Kenneth Matiba who remained uneasily allied to the NCEC was known to be wary of their "more radical agenda as he was dismissive of its primarily academic, professional and middle-class leadership". (Southall, 1999:101).

Under further pressure, the Moi government formed a 25-member inter-party parliamentary committee (IPPC), chaired by the attorney-general, to suggest changes to the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission Act 1997, with NCEC still marginalized, while the churches opted to work within the official process, before conceding to pressure and take part in Safari Park I and II meetings under expanded IPPC. (Southall, 1999:102-3). Ahead of the 1991 vote, the Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) under the leadership of former Kaunda golf partner David Phiri and supported by the British government was accused of impartiality so the churches formed the Zambian Elections Monitoring Coordinating Committee (ZEMCC) under the leadership of Rev John Mambo

[127] Citing Gifford, as above.

of the Church of God. It worked closely with the Carter Centre and other monitors and was supported by LAZ, Women's Lobby Group and the Press Association of Zambia (van Donge, 1995:207).

Another problem is that of representation. The handful of Zambia's politically significant civic associations is concentrated in Lusaka. They cannot claim to be representative of the half of the country's population living in rural areas or to have strong organisational networks there (Burnell, 2001a:207). A similar scenario is discernible in Kenya. "The NCEC is heavily Nairobi-centred, without organic linkage to mass support outside the capital and the major urban centres." (Southall, 1998:110).

As Schmitter (1997) points out, civil society can contribute to democratic consolidation if other institutions are also favourable and if civil society actors behave in a 'civil way'. In late July 2004 'executive coup', the Kenya government pandered to political expediency and ignored its voter mandate in a bid to calm intra-party squabbling by appointing to the cabinet opposition politicians from former President Moi's party and 'demoting' anti-graft czar, John Githongo, from the Office of the President but President Kibaki only rescinded the latter decision more due to donor pressure than due to civil society agitation that dominated political sphere following the reshuffle. Commentators writing in a local daily and online, while happy about the Kibaki about-turn, expressed deep disappointment that it was a result of external rather than domestic pressure.[128]

Political heavyweights that control the police and criminal intelligence still wield power. Like other freedom fighters, the church leaders had to face the consequences of their popular actions. While Okullu died quietly in 2004 after witnessing partial achievements of his campaigns for justice and fairness, Muge was killed at the height of political tensions in a mysterious and suspicious road accident coincidentally after he openly defied a politician's public warning of dire consequences if he visited the

politician's geographical sphere of political influence. The fate that befell Okullu also later caught up with another priest, American-born Father Kaiser who also died in a highly suspicious road accident after he was publicly involved in 'justice fight' for victims of the early 1990s 'ethnic clashes' and for a girl who had been raped by a powerful minister in Moi's cabinet but whose family was being bribed to drop Kaiser-supported rape charges by the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)-Kenya.

Post-transition retreat or dissipation of CSOs as funding run out, activists settled down to daily survival exigencies in harsh economic conditions and usual ethnic and other divisions take over (Schmitter, 1997). After initial agitation especially by the churches, professional interest groups and human development NGOs around 1990, CSOs in Kenya retreated and left the battle to politicians who squandered the chance and lost to the incumbent regime in 1992 general election. "In fact, were it not for the rise of the Democracy and Governance (DG) sector of civil society comprising of human rights groups, the democratic initiative driven from civil society would have probably died." (Ngunyi, 2003).

Although CSOs led protests in Africa, it is the class of excluded political elite with experience in past cabinets "but who had a falling out with the head of state and had been consigned to the political wilderness at some point" who emerged during the transition to take control of new governments (van de Walle, 1999:240). Even so-called outsiders often had extensive links with the authoritarian state. For example, in Zambia, Fred Chiluba, a long-time unionist did not have cabinet experience, but much of the rest of the MMD leadership did (van de Walle, 1999:240). Little wonder Zambia's democratic reputation has been tarnished by evidence of the government's continuing authoritarian proclivities and various abuses of its power (van de Walle, 1999:249)[129]

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[128] See, for example, blogger Cidan's posting of July 7, 2004 titled 'and he's back', at http://mithlond.blogspot.com/2004_07_01_mithlond_archive.html (February, 2005). Githongo later resigned and fled the country to seek refuge in London amidst death threat rumours.

[129] Citing: Carolyne Baylies & Morris Szeftel, 'The 1996 Zambian Elections: Still Awaiting Democratic Consolidatin', *Review of African Political Economy* 71:113-28; Michael Bratton & Daniel Posner, 'A First

One issue that seriously limits CSO activities in both countries is their funding. Like in Peru (Scurrah, 1996:170), most NGOs are overwhelmingly dependent upon external funding for their financial survival. This means they are subject to the often subtle pressures of the funders to promote their agendas for the country, which may or may not coincide with the priorities of the NGOs themselves or their beneficiaries. (Scurrah, 1996:170; VeneKlasen, 1996:219). This limits their impact on the political and social priorities of their countries and the distribution of wealth and income to the poor. NGOs are heavily funded by and reliant on Western donors to the extent that, as part of what has been described as yet another 'scramble' for Africa, "we can speak of the 'NGO-isation' of Kenyan society. ..We are not simply describing the proliferation of NGOs, but the western sponsorship of private voluntary organisations in order for them to play an increasingly pivotal role in the economic, social and political life of the country" (Hearn, 1998:89).

A survey carried out by A. Fowler around mid 1995 indicated that the vast majority of NGOs in Kenya rely on foreign aid for more than 90% of their funds – resulting in the donors setting the agenda. (Hearn, 1998:98). Mutahi Ngunyi corroborates in a 1996 study[130]: "The formation of the democracy sector of civil society was the result of a partnership between the donors and local actors …between a senior and junior partner [leading to] … increasing dominance of the donor in the operations of civil society and emergence of the donor as the 'alternate' state." (Hearn, 1998:99). Hearn points out that this raises questions of the artificiality or contrived nature of 'civil society'. In Ngunyi's study of 11 CSOs promoting 'democracy' and human rights in Kenya, nine were donor-created or prompted. (Hearn, 1998:99). In a more recent study, Ngunyi concludes that the ability of the civil society groups to create some form of tranformation is inhibited by the 'funding seesaw' in which the donors support an initiative today, and pull out tomorrow. (Ngunyi, 2003). The fact that NGOs in Zambia orient themselves with international donors

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Look at Second Elections in Africa, with Illustration from Zambia, in Richard Joseph (Ed)., *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner, 1999), pp.377-408).

for funding present the government with a pretext to raise suspicions about their agenda, especially when they engage in criticism of the government (Burnell, 2001a:207). Due to the weakness of their financial base, "a number of NGOs are co-opted by public money provided to them for the purpose of delivering education, healthcare and relief aid. In effect, they choose not to take part in public advocacy. They serve the government's agenda." (Burnell, 2001a:208).

Another handicap for CSOs in both countries is the requirement that they register their details with the government, which in turn also has powers to control their finances at will. On several occasions, Kenya government threatened to deregister NGOs for failure to file their returns with the registrar. While these are routine procedures, governments often become malicious when it suits them. A case in point is when in 1996 the government froze the bank accounts of Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) and of Clean Campaign Committee (CCC), and later charged ZIMT official Alfred Zulu with "illegal reception of foreign funds". Zulu had been arrested alongside Ngande Mwanajiti of CCC for declaring that year's elections neither free nor fair.

6.6 Conclusion

The successful outcome of the reintroduction of multi-partyism cannot be explained by the competition between parties alone: wider forces in society have to be taken into the reckoning (van Donge, 1995:206). The gains achieved for democracy since the early 1990s by a slimmer, less intrusive state and a freer, expanded civil society are certainly remarkable in much of the third world. The problem lies largely with the disparity between what many observers expected of society in the early 1990s and what has proved feasible when the resources of different groups within the state and society have become clearer. (Pinkney, 2003:106). Whereas the African state and international NGOs suffer the crisis of

[130] 'Promoting Democracy Through Positive Conditionality', University of Leeds.

legitimacy in rescuing the continent from ills and upheavals, some scholars do not really see much hope in the national civil society movements, as explored in this chapter. Like in Peru (Scurrah, 1996), the good-intentioned activities of NGOs in both countries have both helped as well as brought the unintended consequences of hindering the consolidation of civil society and democratic politics and political institutions. Two 1992 research projects on Zimbabwe by Jonathan Moyo and Lloyd Sachikoye warn against too much faith in the African civil society (Ranger & Vaughan, 1993:260). Moyo censured Zimbabwe's civil society – bar association, 'independent' press, agricultural unions – for their concern for the rights of property rather than for the rights of the poor. Sanchikoye argues that "the long overdue reaction against statism and particularly the one-party state variant and its authoritarian co-optation of mass organisations … has provoked an uncritical adulation and over-estimation of the capacity of the long-suppressed civil society institutions to contribute to democratic change". (Ranger & Vaughan, 1993:260). Clearly, Moyo and Sachikoye are focusing on a different kind of civil society – a more economically-than-politically-oriented category, perhaps closer to White farmers affected by Mugabe's hostile land-accusation policies, who use a 'free-market approach' in their strategies.

This chapter has confirmed the ambivalence surrounding the role of CSOs in Africa, but like many things with positives and negatives it is important to point out that this category of political actors have played a key role in political transition in both Kenya and Zambia – their weaknesses notwithstanding. Without them, change would have been inconceivable. Their performance has been curtailed because of the absence of the requisite preconditions cited above. The chapter was intended to address the role of CSOs in political transformation in Africa with particular reference to Kenya and Zambia, although by looking at other examples it has sought to illuminate those two cases. What it has not done is to connect those relationships explicitly to the sphere of activity of the new media. It is to that question that next two chapters turn.

7.0 UNMUZZLING OLD DOGS TO BARK ANEW FAR AND WIDE

"The media in most societies has a very important role to play in the promotion of civil society. Media organisations, whether the electronic media, the press, the Internet or other forms of communication are, in many countries around the world in general and in particular to Third World countries, powerful entities with the ability to influence the public opinion and promote issues of importance to the public." ('The Role of the Media in Promoting Democracy' programme, 14th Jan-12th Feb '02, International Institute – Histadrut, Beit Berl, Kfar Saba, Israel)

7.1 Introduction

Before the dawn of the second liberation and accompanying political pluralism from the 1990s, physical and legal harassment by government officials often forced Kenyan and Zambian journalists to engage in self-censorship that enabled the state to monitor and control content for the private press, not to mention publicly-owned print and broadcast media. Whereas liberal-minded citizens regularly tuned to short wave radio broadcasts on Africa by international stations like the BBC and VOA in order to avoid locally censored news, access to critical foreign news publications were still under government control. It was common for copies of British or US newspapers and magazines to be confiscated on arrival at the airport by security officers, especially in Nairobi.

With the arrival of donor-forced liberalisation programme that included freeing the airwaves to allow FM stations as well as deregulation of the telecommunications sector in the 1990s, state stranglehold on the media has loosened. Unlike in the single-party era when acquiescence was the norm with only one dominant view diffused via repressed media and every citizen expected to 'follow the footsteps' of the incumbent, the Internet and mobile phone era has greatly reduced state incentive to censor the media. Being what

Levinson (1999:5, 13, 14, 42) terms the "medium of media", the Internet in particular has enabled the old news broadcast and print media to publish their content online to be accessed globally. This means if the government bans a newspaper and mobilises its officials to physically remove print copies from the streets, like did the Zambian government with the *Post*, local and foreign audiences would still access the content. Similarly, confiscation of the *Times* of London or the *Washington Post* would prevent citizens from accessing the offending contents. Of course, as does China, the state can attempt to block the websites but these can easily be mirrored, as happened in the *Post* case in Zambia. In any case, apart from Zimbabwe hardly any SSA country has seriously embarked on the futile and expensive game of Internet censorship. Consequently, this chapter looks at the distribution of 'old' media via new media. The chapter begins by very briefly highlighting main media-democracy theories then proceeds to give an overview on Africa before looking at the situation in Kenya and Zambia.

7.2 Political Communication: Theories of Media and Democracy

Although the news mass media – radio, TV, newspapers and magazines – are perceived to be influential and catalytic instruments of social change, these institutions are largely shaped, and mostly constrained, by the societal environment. Indeed, McQuail (2000:153) points out that the observation by Siebert et al (1956:1) that "...the press takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" is a key truism in their now hackneyed *Four Theories of the Press.* For instance, Barton (1979) summed up post-independence characteristics of West African press as "a black press for black men" and Kenya's in East Africa as "a white press for white men".

Habermas' influential mediation theory of the public sphere has won many followers. Communications media, it is argued, should aim to empower a plurality of citizens who are governed neither by undemocratic states nor by undemocratic market forces. "The media should be for the public use and enjoyment of all citizens and not for

the private gain or profit of political rulers or businesses." (Keane, 1991:xii). That is the media as a key player in the realms of civil society. There is also a view of the media as the 'estate' of governance.

Classic enlightenment and post-enlightenment free press theory associated with John Milton (truth triumphs on collision with error), John Stuart Mill (free expression is a basic political right), Thomas Jefferson (press freedom is essential to democratic politics) and William Blackstone (freedom is not absolute) are well known (Fagan, 1966:137). From such a liberal perspective, Guy Berger (1998:600) reminds us that "we all know the rhetoric" of the media as the 'fourth estate of government' and a 'watchdog' on the authorities. On close inspection, of course, we can take issue with both the normative and the empirical bases of such ideas, as well as with their viability in political practice. Evidence invalidates Milton's thesis, and Marxists have challenged Mill's notion (Fagan, 1966:137-8).

Communism may have been vanquished in the sense of Fukuyama's 'End of History' but their theoretical challenge to media theory of liberalism remains evident in such autocracies as Zimbabwe where Mugabe still adopts a strong-arm approach to the media's attempts to challenge his authority. This approach is not unique (to Africa) or new given that Socrates was condemned to death for speaking his mind (and allegedly corrupting the young with a questioning truth) two and a half millennia ago.[131]

7.3 Mass Media and Democracy in Africa

From a disassociation paradigm (at variance with the liberal perspective), the media in Africa – like in most of the south – tended historically to serve the narrow interests of the colonial power and/or local settlers, and – since independence – those of an indigenous ruling group (Berger, 1998:601). Paradoxically, as political freedom from colonial masters

[131] Plato, *The Apology* in The Last Days of Socrates, translated by Hugh Tredennick (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1959), pp.73-74, cited in (Fagan, 1966:6).

came to the African continent, so did press freedom disappear (Barton, 1979:ix). The broadcast media in particular was under tight control of both colonial and postcolonial regimes. The rationale was that radio and TV had wider reach that makes it easy for anyone in control of these tools to exercise a considerable level of influence. Yet although the radio remains the true mass medium, "the press … is much the most important since it reaches that relative handful of people in every state who really matter – the politicians, the urban elite, the rising tide of well educated students, the businessman and, possibly the most important of all, the officer corps of Africa's armies" (Barton, 1979:4). This argument by Barton can be applicable to any type of media – including new media – that may be considered elitist, for it is this very elitism that may result in transformative politics. Perhaps it is in this vein that Barton (1979:7) argues that the two SSA states that are the most capitalistic, Kenya and Nigeria, are also the ones with the greatest degree of press freedom. Of course this judgement reflected the status at that time, for both countries have had nightmare periods in media history – with journalists from Nigeria resorting to 'guerrilla' tactics of publishing on the move to avoid arrests or worse consequences. When did the recent rain of media repression start beating Africans?

With the 1960s independence euphoria came expectations of greater political freedom with the hope that this was an opportunity for Africans to map their own destiny. "We clapped, knowing that free press would be part of that destiny; after all nationalist media, despite all forms of colonial inhibitions, had effectively accompanied the struggle for *uhuru* (independence). This was not to be in later years."[132] Soon after independence, most African leaders were faced with some kind of ambivalence on how to handle the media. On the one hand they wanted effective mass media to convey national development and unity messages, especially the national leader's political thoughts packaged in some kind of philosophical catchword or phrase,[133] to mark a break from colonial rule. On the other hand, the pioneer African ruling elite was wary of the democratising potential of

[132] Mitch Odero, 'Press in Kenya: An Overview', in Odero & Kamweru (2000), p11.

public communications channels. John Merril argued in 1971 that in the transitional stages, truly mass media was irrelevant to African leaders and that "only elite lines of communication really mattered." (Bourgnault, 1995:47). In a similar vein more than a decade later, Graham Mytton argued political elite do not necessarily desire an effective means of mass communication or have a clear policy on how to use it. "They may want to control the media capable of reaching large sections of the population, yet at the same time be suspicious of the power these media possess: power which is ultimately beyond their control." (Mytton, 1983:94).

Such mixed feelings were especially manifest in the early 1970s when scholars like Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm and Everett Rogers advanced arguments on the role of the mass media in promoting positive change in developing countries. Most African leaders chose the nation-building exigency to counter the effects of not only excessive Western cultural and political influence, especially in broadcasting, but also of mass disenchantment following worsening of the economies in the 1970s and 1980s. The oral tradition feature of respected leaders meting out "kernels of wisdom liberally peppered with formularly sayings or proverbs" was exploited to justify the devotion of a lion's share of media content to didactic and moralistic speeches and pronouncements by national leaders. (Borgnault, 1995: 47-50). The broadcast media was particularly vulnerable to the distortion or *betrayal* of the original intent of oral tradition, yet traditional styles of chieftaincy rule was through consensus.[134] Mytton (1983:91) shows how much broadcasting in early 1970s in Zambia was devoted to lessons on Kenneth Kaunda's philosophy of humanism, even though research indicated these broadcasts were among the least popular programmes.

[133] For instance J. Nyerere's African Socialism in Tanzania and Leopold S. Senghor's Negritude in Senegal.
[134] George Ayittey (1992), *Africa Betrayed*, New York: St Martin's, pp37-77 (quoted in Bourgnault, 1995:50-1).

7.4 News Media and Liberation Struggle in Kenya and Zambia

As in the rest of Africa, the modern news media in Kenya and Zambia were largely created by the colonial powers, primarily for their white audiences resident in these territories. Many of the large numbers of Europeans, mostly Britons, who migrated towards the end of the 19th century to eastern and central Africa settled in Kenya, the "white man's country,"[135] and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). In addition to Britons, Zambia also attracted European immigrants from South Africa. Naturally "settler" media emerged in both countries as did in Kenya newspapers owned by Asians, mostly Indians, imported to provide cheap labour to build railroad. Over the years, internal and external factors have built mainly on the colonial legacy, as well as on some aspects of pre-colonial traditions, to define the structure, operations and content of the news media in these countries. Under the chapter heading, 'From Settler Press to One-party Media: Kenya and Zambia', William Hachten (1971:199-233) describes how the news media have evolved from newspapers and broadcasting formerly dominated by and subservient to European interests toward 'Africanised' news media controlled by one-party governments.

As hinted above in this chapter, incumbents in both Kenya and Zambia preferred 'tutelage' and 'emergency' strategies within the endogenous communication-and-change model discussed in chapter 1 (Fagan, 1966:115). Zambia's first President, Kenneth Kaunda expected the country's journalists to advance the cause of Humanism (Malama, 1994).[136] Yet in reality, contrary to the spirit and norms of humanism the government and ruling party became the centre of the Zambian society (Mkandawire, 1992:16). Nearly two decades of one-party rule tended to persuade the media to accept reluctantly the basic principles of authoritarianism as a guide for social action in Zambia (Mkandawire, 1992:40). As revealed by insider Philip Ochieng' (1992) in *I Accuse the Press*, a similar

[135] In contrast, West Africa was considered the "white man's grave". (Hachten, 1971:199). Kenya's fertile highlands made it more popular than the other British East Africa neighbours of Uganda and Tanzania.
[136] Kaunda's personal philosophy of Humanism was adopted in 1967 by the ruling UNIP as the official philosophy of Zambia. It placed man at the centre of society and above all institutions, and advocated respect for human dignity and quality of life. See: Kaunda, K. D. (1967), *A Letter to My Children*, Lusaka: Government Press.

fate of self-censorship gripped the Kenyan media that were expected to support Kenyatta's *Harambee* maxim and Moi's *Nyayo* philosophy. A number of subjects were just off-limits for the media. Often, says Hilary Ng'weno, who resigned as editor-in-chief of Kenya's *Nation* Group in the mid 1960s to become later one of Africa's few owner-editors at that time, Kenyan journalists knew best how they found out how much freedom they had – "poking their necks as far as they can go without being chopped" (Barton, 1979:9). Yet some observers are of the opinion that Kenya was comparatively better off within the African context. "Although there are careful limits to Kenya's press freedom, its biggest daily, *The Nation*, has probably more influence on the government of the country than any Fleet Street newspaper has over political life in Britain." (Barton, 1979:7). A similar argument that has been applied to new media, that such media have greater impact in less open countries than they do on democratic societies.

A number of obstacles have over the years greatly limited the performance of news media – and by extension new media – in both countries. The first of these is political interference directly by political leaders or through harassment by state security machinery. During the Kaunda era, journalists operated in constant fear because of threats and innuendo. Kaunda often seized control of the newspapers and sacked editors and reporters who displeased him. He did his utmost to bring the country's two dailies to heel. His government owned one and controlled the other. The resulting self-censorship created a media blackout on the 1986 food riots in which more than 30 people were killed. A similar blackout faced the popular opposition rallies at the turn of the decade (Barton, 1979:3,9; Mkandawire, 1992:3-4). As agitation for multipartyism mounted, Kaunda called a press conference on November 23 1990. There, he only ordered companies and government institutions to cease advertising in the weekly *National Mirror* because, "the paper published rubbish and downright lies", but also dissolved Zambia Broadcasting Service without parliamentary approval as required (Mkandawire, 1992:24). Between 1990-91, the *National Mirror* relentlessly exposed the corruption and malpractices committed by the

Kaunda government, and these articles formed part of the many forces that contributed to Kaunda and his party losing the October 1991 parliamentary and presidential election (Mkandawire, 1992:39). In Kenya, the government often arrested and tortured 'offending' journalists. For instance a photographer, Wallace Gichere was paralysed after he was thrown from a window of *Nyayo* House, a notorious Moi-era torture headquarters. Gichere, now in a wheelchair, later sued the government, but it was not until after Moi was replaced that the Kibaki government compensated him with a pittance. The government often raided and disabled printing presses of 'offending' publications.

In both countries, censorship did not cease completely with the arrival of multi-partyism but it reared its ugly head in a more civilised and tactical manner – through legal and regulatory instruments. In Zambia, Kaunda's successor Chiluba attempted to adopt his predecessor's repressive tendencies, especially as his support was waning in the second term of office. In August 1997, the Zambian high court found that the government's decision to create a government-appointed Media Council of Zambia would have an impact on the freedom of journalists to assemble and associate freely with other persons. The draft bill envisaged compulsory registration of journalists and set minimum qualifications for anyone intending to practice. It was also to institute a disciplinary body for media practitioners. It would have the power to reprimand, suspend or withdraw accreditation to offending journalists. Those without a license would be liable to a three-month jail term or a fine or both (Berger, 1998:608). Following an outcry, the government only suspended the bill rather than scrap it. Zambian journalists, like their Swazi counterparts, responded by introducing their own voluntary independent media-driven non-statutory self-monitoring and self-regulatory body with powers to censure erring journalists. Journalists in state-owned media set up a separate one (Berger, 1998:608). In May 2002 ahead of the general election in December that year, the Moi regime rushed through parliament a repressive 'media bill' to effectively allow the government to control the media. The Statutes Law Bill (Miscellaneous Amendment Bill) required publishers to

submit copies of their publications to the registrar before distribution and, ridiculously, to broadcasters to reveal their content before going on air. It also raised the cost of newspaper publishing bond from Sh10,000 (Euros 150) to Sh1 million (Euros 150,000), especially in a bid to cripple alternative 'newsletter' press that often published sensitive information about the politicians that would not even appear in the mainstream press. Like other African countries instead of creating laws guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression, Kenya has introduced new anti-terrorism laws that grant authorities even more powers to monitor communications – especially through the Internet – between individuals and groups. Designed to appease the US and the US Patriots Act, new legislation[137] make it a criminal offence to 'collect', 'make' (produce and make available on a website) or 'transmit' (by email, voicemail, or any other telecommunication method) any record of information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing to commit an act of terrorism (PI, 2003). Such laws can be applied very arbitrarily especially in countries like Kenya where, unlike the US, there are no guarantees of press freedom and generally making provisions for freedom of expression in the constitution do not seem to apply to the press.

The second area of concern is proprietorial and managerial. Statistics from 1999 indicate that by market share, while Zambia press was about 74% state-owned, the Kenyan press was about 88% private-owned and about 12% party-owned meaning the Kenyan government does not own a newspaper. The broadcast media was nearly half-owned by the Kenyan government by share while in Zambia the government owned all broadcast media. The former ruling party KANU is the ultimate owner of *Kenya Times*, the country's fourth largest daily. However, KBC is state-owned (Djankov, 2002). As we know it, whoever pays the piper calls the tune. Although Zambia has publicly claimed the existence of a free press since 1964, the government owned nearly all media outlets to serve Kaunda's

[137] Part II 5 of the Suppression of Terrorism Bill (2003). The bill needs to be seen in the context of the August 1998 bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and neighbouring Tanzanian city of Dar es Salaam,

interests. "Because Zambia was a one-party state, the party so to speak, 'owned' the government and therefore the press. So media practitioners have had to toe the line on purely political issues as well as governmental concerns. Equally, the criteria of appointing editors and directors-general ceased to be professional but political." (Mkandawire, 1992:2). In Kenya, party (KANU) ownership of the *Kenya Times* was distinct from government ownership of the Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). Whatever ownership regime, the two governments have flexed their muscles to show they are in charge. Zambia still retains the trappings of the old political order – a predominantly government-owned media system. Despite the advent of political change in 1991, the mainstream media is still dominated by government, except for a few privately-owned newspapers that have emerged under the liberal political climate. "Diversity of opinion, a key feature of political pluralism, could not be easily attainable if the mainstream media remains an appendage of the government establishment." (Malama, 1994: v). The development of a vigorous independent media is hampered by a shortage of money. Like NGOs, the two independent newspapers, *The Post* and *The Monitor* rely on international support (Burnell, 2001a:208). The ownership-control mentality has been applied to the new media as well, with the government not only restricting Internet bandwidth offering but also sometimes demanding that ISPs produce their subscriber lists, listservs or discussion groups. In one instance, an ISP shut down a list created to discuss the 1997 general election out of fear about what was being expressed (Mudhai, 2002; PI, 2003).

A third obstacle has to do with the media people themselves, their professional conduct and ethics. In a country deeply immersed in corruption and patron-client networks, it would be expected that politicians trying to cover up their misdemeanours or simply want to be projected in good light would not spare an instrument perceived to be as powerful as the media. It is not much wonder that in Kenya, much has been said and written (especially in the so-called 'gutter press') about top editors and media managers

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resulting in more than 250 deaths and another terrorist attack on Israeli tourists in Mombasa in 2002, and the

who were on the payroll of certain corrupt and powerful personalities. (Mudhai, 1998a:65). Top party leaders in particular did everything to ensure they 'bought' or 'pocketed' journalists and the publications they worked for. Not surprisingly, then official opposition leader Kenneth Matiba in the run-up to the 1997 general election sent shockwaves in newsrooms and the whole nation when he disclosed at a press conference that he bribed the *Daily Nation* investigative editor with a car. The editor sued Matiba and won the case. Yet this did not necessarily vindicate the editor given, as his colleague Kwendo Opanga put it in his September 1996 'The Week That Was' column article, corruption is "fiendishly difficult to prove for it is, after all, not a spectator sport." In this preview to the judgement, Opanga wrote: "The issue will be one of proof... It is a delicate decision. Even if, at the end of the day, he (the editor) wins (the case), a great deal of mud will have been thrown and reputations are going to be dragged through the mud." (Mudhai, 1998a:66). Reacting to reports that top editors in the region's most successful media house were corrupt, the Nation Media Group's Chief Executive Officer, Wilfred Kiboro had this to say in an interview with the defunct *Expression Today* media journal: "Allegations against editors are not new... The question is whether there is any concrete proof from people making those allegations... If somebody comes with documentary evidence, ... then we would take action but we can't run this company on the basis of rumours." (Mudhai, 1998a:66).

Alluding to the one-time labelling of the UK's Fleet Street, then the hub of British and Commonwealth journalism, as the 'Street of Shame', Opanga said in his article that "let it be very clear, we too easily stand condemned as scribes of SHAME." Indeed Opanga, then Kenya's pithiest and most virulent political columnist with large celebrity-status following, seemed so sure his ilk were living in glass houses that if they dared hurl too many stones then they would be providing munitions for the politicians they were 'doing business' with, as the Matiba court case seemed to have illustrated. In fact Opanga was sure ruling party KANU leaders in particular would not sit back and watch people they

issuance of travel advisory to US (and also British) citizens not to visit Kenya.

had secret dealings with throw mud at them. He wrote: "KANU will again run against the *Nation* and the most formidable weapon that the party and its paper think they could deploy against the newspapers is that there are among its reporters and editors, as there are in every sector of our national life, corrupt people."[138] Ironically, Opanga was to be the most infamous casualty among journalists posing to be critical of KANU's regime while at the same 'moonlighting' (working clandestinely) with or for them. When he wrote a series of articles deeply critical of KANU and especially of President Moi in the run-up to the 1997 general election, Opanga found himself at the receiving end of propaganda from KANU-aligned press. Charges of hypocrisy, especially from the *Weekly Sun*, one of the *ad hoc* pamphlets or newsletters that littered Nairobi streets, and the *Kenya Times* were so prickly that Opanga found himself making history as the first journalist to call a well-attended press conference to clear his name. He ended up appearing to confirm the accusations against him, and lost his job as a result.[139] He admitted that he worked for the ruling party as part of the think-tank that designed strategies to help the ruling party win the first multi-party general election in 1992. Although his defence was that he did this as a consultant, and got paid a fee of KShs60,000 (US$1,000) only in total, as opposed to the reported 'bribe' of KShs50,000 (US$834) per week for more than ten weeks, there was a clear conflict of interest. Apparently Opanga was even visiting State House yet he was then the most popular and influential columnist, and his employer had promoted itself as an independent non-partisan publication. More worrying was the fact that Opanga indicated that other journalists who he would not name formed part of KANU's team of spin-doctors who included university lecturers.[140] Although Opanga later got himself rehabilitated by joining the Standard Group as one of its senior editors, his reputation, by his own words, had been dragged in the mud – even though there existed other senior private-sector

[138] Opanga seemed to believe KANU would target the Nation rather than individual journalists. It did both.
[139] The Nation reported the following day that Opanga opted to resign but he appeared to have had not choice (a jobless Opanga later said his priority was putting bread on the table) after falling into some kind of trap set by KANU and machinated within and outside the Nation.
[140] While the few so-called 'KANU scholars' (especially at Kenyatta University) were widely known because they did not hide their rendezvous with the then largely unpopular party, 'KANU journalists' were furtive.

journalists and media managers much guiltier of professional impropriety. Contrary to Opanga's earlier belief, the Nation succeeded in partially preserving its reputation while Opanga got himself soiled and sacrificed. Another senior journalist, Philip Ochieng' (the author of *I Accuse the Press*) was mentioned in 2004 as one of those who benefited from the gargantuan Goldenberg fake gold exports scandal. Observers could not help linking this to the defence in his writings of the Moi regime, especially against western donor and media attacks, towards its twilight.

Despite these bottlenecks, the Kenyan and Zambian media played a crucial role in democratisation process, especially in uncovering and condemning corruption as well as censuring the government over politically instigated violence, like tribal clashes riots and police brutality in Kenya, and political assassinations, like those of ambitious or dissenting ministers like Tom Mboya, J.M. Kariuki and Robert Ouko. The emergence of new media, especially the Internet has made the media's role in these realms even more significant.

7.5 Old Media Distribution Via New Media[141]

Let us start this section with a highlight of the futurist debate on whether new media such as the Internet, email and mobile phones are harbingers of doom or survival of existing print and broadcast news mass media. Soon after the web emerged, pundits and technophiles began to predict the demise of newspapers. In one of the best-known pronouncements, writer Jon Katz predicted in 1994 in the pages of *Wired* magazine[142] that newspapers would vanish without trace within ten years (Nerone & Barnhurst 2001:468). This is the tenth year, but his prediction is of course unfulfilled. What prompted such a radical proclamation? Worried by the apocalyptic message, newspapers in the US and the rest of the world moved quickly but reluctantly and precipitously into publishing their contents electronically from around 1994 (Nerone & Barnhurst 2001:468). It emerged this

[141] An earlier version of this section, 'New Media Distribution of Old Media: Role, Viability and Potential', was presented at the Seventh Highway Africa New Media Conference at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, 8th-10th September, 2003. Exemplifying excerpts are also in the chapter on Kenya and Zambia.

was a process in the 'colonisation' of the new media by the old. A group of media corporations even found it necessary to subscribe to the 'News of the Future' project established at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab in order to get regular updates on the form and technology of the digital newspaper of the future (Nerone & Barnhurst 2001:469).[143]

> *Like previous technologies, the Internet's intrusion into newspaper operations has been both conservative and revolutionary, both progressive and retrogressive. Although often considered the anti-thesis of the press, the Internet in daily use has so far acted as a surrogate print medium. Users share Internet news in much the way that they used to clip and mail newspaper stories* (Nerone & Barnhurst 2001:469).

Indeed, media historians Asa Briggs and Peter Burke have asserted powerfully in their detailed work that as new media are introduced, older ones are not abandoned but coexist and interact with the new arrivals. This is exactly what the old media are doing with the new media.

There is a compelling view in the opposite direction is being peddled – and with some telling, even if not completely convincing, illustrations. One of the most prominent of such views was widely diffused around the world following initial reporting by Associated Press journalist D. Redmont after covering and industry forum (2004). Publishers from Europe and America (the *Los Angeles Times*, the *USA Today* and the *New York Post*) warned in early May 2004 that non-traditional communications — such as, and especially, cell phone text messages — were rapidly outflanking radio, television, and print media because of their immediacy and proximity to the public. In a two-day meeting to stimulate newspaper readership among the young, the publishers exchanged views with European media leaders on shrinking newspaper circulation and the European and American media scene. Lachlan Murdoch, deputy chief operating officer of News

[142] J. Katz (1994), 'On Line or Not, Newspapers Suck,' *Wired* 2(9):50-8.

Corporation, owners of the *New York Post*, said the drop in news readership "is indeed an emergency." (Redmont 2004). The growing "thumb generation" posed the greatest new challenge to traditional media, with cell phone text messages conveying news, rumours and gossip, said Pedro J. Ramirez, editor of Spain's *El Mundo*. That challenge, it is argued, was evident after the March 11 train bombings in Madrid, Spain, that killed 191 people and injured more than 2,000 others just three days before national elections. Nina Calarco, editor and publisher of southern Italy's *Gazzetta del Sud*, said information spread through cell phone messages contributed to Socialist Party candidate Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero's election as Spanish prime minister. "The (Jose Maria) Aznar government in Spain was unseated by a shower of telephone text messages, an alternative to the traditional print media, which was initially repeating the government line that the train bombings should be blamed on Basque terrorism instead of al Qaeda," Calarco said (Redmont 2004). Youth participating in a round-table discussion criticised the newspaper publishers and editors for using arcane language, rehashing crime stories already seen on television and wasting space by reporting on reality TV shows (Redmont 2004). Zapatero's Socialist Party reportedly called a massive rally in Madrid the night before the March 14 elections on short notice by having people spread the word through cell phone messages. "This is a communications circuit very difficult to control but easy to manipulate because it's as if every citizen had a printing press at home," Ramirez said. "And whoever wants to insert himself into the chain can make an exponential effect during crises. It can be ephemeral, but in Spain it had a great effect." Perhaps this 'effect' was largely influenced by the already simmering and existing thinking among the majority in the populace, so that the text messages simply reinforced their inclinations and thus easily triggered their reactions – if indeed it did. Like in all media effects claims, there is no way of proving cause-effect beyond reasonable doubt.

[143] For similar ideas see: Lapham (1995); Breecher (1999); Finkbeiner (2003); Gelenter (2003).

Apart from the cell phone, the Internet is even more significant for the news media and as a news medium. In a section on the changing boundaries of journalism, a book edited by Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, *Journalism after September 11* highlights the Internet's contribution to informing Americans and other nations about the twin bombing by terrorists of USA's power symbols in 2001. Stuart Allan in 'Reweaving the Internet' praises the Internet's role as an alternative source of news and as a forum for a whole range of opinions. The WWW was also a source of contacts and stories for professional journalists. However, he also criticises Internet coverage and warns that the Web also served as a source of rumours. Whether that is a good or bad thing is a matter of debate. From his Africanist standpoint, Guy Berger (2002) takes a media ownership-management path of analysis. He lays the ground by pointing out that in their current form, newspapers have four characteristics: privately owned, ad-dependent, delivered on paper and portable, and text-driven but integrated with visuals in a particular design. "These four factors are facing diverse development depending on where you are in the world." (Berger, 2002) The first point he makes is that although there are many state-newspapers across Africa, the only avenue for independent, opposition or unofficial voices to make themselves heard is through the private press. In other words, newspapers' historic role in politics and democracy is a major factor in their survival – often against huge economic and repressive odds. Second, and related, is that advertising, however, remains the Achilles' heel of newspapers in the weak and/or state-controlled economies of the fourth world. For different reasons, ad- dependence also renders newspapers vulnerable in the super-competitive First World. The point is that where non-newspaper media can deliver audiences to advertisers cheaper and better than newspapers, the latter will lose out. So does this sound a death knell for the press? Perhaps not, so this leads us to his fourth point. "Digitalization has done a great deal to make newspapers more viable enterprises, but it cannot cheapen the core costs of newsprint and delivery. Unless electronic delivery to electronic paper becomes a reality, a time will come when fully digital media platforms

will simply take over from the newspaper." (Berger, 2002) He points out that either of these scenarios will take much longer to unfold in the fourth world than the first world. "What digitalisation does do is make it possible to converge newspaper content onto non-newspaper platforms. Even, however, where such convergence is done on a pure-shovelware basis, the point remains that a web-published newspaper is really no longer a newspaper. There's not much point in stretching the language to pretend that it is." (Berger, 2002) Even if and when newspapers as we know them eventually die out, their text-oriented contribution to communication will live on – even if it becomes integrated with, or linked to, other elements. Stand-alone newspapers will increasingly become relics of the past. "In the interim, however, the resilience of the press ought not to be underestimated – and that's no bad thing!" So much for the debate; what does digitalism hold for the African print and broadcast media, and what are the implications for democratisation and democracy?

Of particular significance in the policy arena are the deliberations of the Bamako Africa Media Forum meeting of May 2002 whose main objectives were to discuss the role of the media in the development of the information society, to outline the challenges to the media of globalisation and the knowledge economy, and to create a network of journalists for promoting Africa's digital opportunities.[144] One of the four published highlights of the conference was the need for Africa to improve its presence in the information society by developing its own content. The meeting was part of the many preparatory conferences for the first round of the December 2003 World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, Switzerland. Among the key recommendations was the need to develop strategies for the creation of African content that finances and sustains the media in a bid to encourage "ICT media" that promotes information society. The last, but not least, recommendation was the need for investigation of new models that use electronic

[144] Among the 50 participants were representatives of the Economic Commission of Africa (Ethiopia), Media Action International (Geneva), Open Society West Africa (Senegal), Groupe Afri Concept (Benin), and AMARC Africa. See: www.geneva2003.org/bamako2002/doc_html/media-en.html (Accessed: Sept '03).

commerce for the delivery of content by African media. The second development is much more significant for Africa given that it focuses on the distribution of what has come to be known as the 'mass medium of Africa'. The 'Digital Opportunities for Africa - Community Multimedia Centres' was held in Dakar, Senegal, June 12-17, 2003, organised by UNESCO in collaboration with the Africa branch of AMARC (Association Mondiale des Radio Diffuseurs Communnautaires, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters). The aim of the pan-African symposium on Community Multimedia Centres in Africa was to find out more about how community radio stations across Africa used ICTs in order to forge a strategy for larger-scale CMC development in the continent.[145] The meeting brought together "representatives of a selection of community radio stations that were successfully offering some form of public access to ICTs or planning to do so and also ICT-based projects such as community telecentres planning to start community radio as part of their operations." (*Ibid*) It also brought together "international partners including national development agencies and international governmental and non-governmental organisations in a roundtable on CMC project support in Africa." (*Ibid*) The gathering examined best practice models and determined partnership strategies for programme development with provisions for "full community appropriation of ICTs, sustainability, networking, and technical support systems" (*Ibid*).

While efforts are being made to distribute African radio content, the continent's print media is firmly entrenched in the online media and helping demolish the notion of a dearth in African content online. Upwards of 120 African newspapers and news magazines are available on the Internet, many hosted by Africa's largest ISP, Nairobi-based Africa Online,[146] with offices in eight countries and ever expanding. Another outlet for African news is the Washington-based All Africa Global Media's AllAfrica.com[147] that hosts more than 100 African news publications and posts over 800 articles daily in English and

[145] One World, at http://radio.oneworld.net/index.php?fuseaction=cms.fullContent&id=1280 (June, 2003).
[146] www.africaonline.com (July, 2003).
[147] www.allafrica.com (July, 2003).

French. In one month, the site served over 11 million page views (some 80 million "hits"). The reliance on it as a resource by government offices, boardrooms, educational institutions and international organizations around the world, as well as by interested individuals has earned them good Nielsen ratings, accolades, and prize nominations, sometimes alongside media powerhouses such as BBC, MSNBC and Google!.[148] There also exist two continent-wide African news agencies – Inter Press Service[149] and the Pan-African News Agency[150] – that use electronic media extensively.[151] At subregional level, the Media Institute of South Africa Network (MISANET)[152] is one of the most comprehensive online news-resource for southern Africa.

It is not just media companies and news content that are taking advantage of the new media. It is well known that African journalists have widely turned to the Internet and email applications not just as a research tool but also as a 'gold mine'; they contribute to foreign publications, many of which no longer need to station correspondents out there, and earn hard currencies (dollars, pounds etc) much more than they would from their monthly salaries if employed locally. Franda (2002:19) informs us surveys indicate that "prominent among Africa young elites using the Internet and email regularly are journalists and aspiring journalists who use the Internet to research and send stories, either as employees of an African news service or as freelances". This makes journalist not worry too much about the 'spiking' of their sensitive stories – as long as they are professionally done. This way, the Internet creates the opportunity for African journalists to help remedy the problem of the information rich being "in fact information poor when it comes to information about the information poor." (Berger, 1998:609-10).

[148] AllAfrica.com, 'Who We Are', http://allafrica.com/whoweare.html (July 2003).
[149] http://www.ips.org/africa.shtml (July 2003).
[150] www.panapress.com (July 2003).
[151] See also: see also Joe S.M. Kadhi (1999), 'Internet Plays Increasing Role in Africa's Press', a paper delivered at a Freedom Forum conference in Johannesburg, Sept, www.freedomforum.org; Tanya Accone (2000), 'Digital Dividends for Journalism in Africa', *Nieman Reports* 54(4):67-70; Mudhai, 2001; Franda, 2002:19.
[152] www.misanet.org (July 2003).

7.6 News Media and Public Sphere Expansion – Kenya and Zambia

Berger (1998:609-10) credits the Internet as "the media institution that will face the greatest test of both its accessibility to those outside of government, and its contribution to democracy". It is perhaps in this context that Berger (1998:609) points out that the reach of the Internet not only extends beyond the nation state but also creates communication between, *inter alia*, people of the North and people of the South, whereby journalists among others can discuss what to do about non-democratic states. Indeed despite various state attempts to limit media freedom in Africa, he points out that "journalists across the continent have been very active in lobbying against violations of the public sphere" (Berger 1998:607). The fact that the recent wave of democratisation in Africa has coincided with the development and spread of new information technology, notably the use of computers for communications purposes (Bourgault 1995:206-208), underlines the need for the traditional media to embrace these networked technologies in their service to the public. Africa's traditional print media have, as already discussed, used ICTs to enhance their contribution to the expansion of the public sphere. In fact journalists were among the first early adopters of the Internet in these two countries (Kasoma, 2002; Mudhai, 2002). The *Post*, Zambia's leading independent newspaper, was one of the first in SSA to go online, in 1995. Through reciprocal arrangements with other online newspapers, such as London's the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Post* would save money and – for the most part – avoid censorship in disseminating news and commentary to its readers. With the coming of the Internet, it stopped using the Zambian News Agency (ZANA), the state monopoly provider of wire service stories. The *Post* was so successful in communicating the views of the political opposition, especially abroad, that the two government-owned newspapers, *Times of Zambia* and *Daily Mail*, were forced to create their own online versions.

Table 7.1 **Major Kenyan and Zambian Newspapers Online**

Newspaper	Website	Newspaper	Website

The Nation	www.nationmedia.com	*Zambia Daily Mail*	www.daily-mail.co.zm
Kenya Times	www.kenyatimes.com	*Information Dispatch*	www.dispatch.co.zm
The Standard	www.eastandard.net	*The Post*	www.post.co.zm
The People		*Times of Zambia*	www.times.co.zm
		The Monitor	http://afronet.org.za/monitor.htm

Although we have argued in this thesis that the old print and broadcast are dominated by the official view and therefore tend to perpetuate state hegemony, it is important to point out that the advent of the Internet as well as private newspapers and FM stations in places like Zambia and Kenya has enhanced media freedom – even if this has not gone far enough. Prof. Francis Kasoma (2002:156) points out that although CPJ at one time cited Zambia as holding the record for more pending criminal defamation cases and other legal actions against journalists than any other African country, it notes that the country's independent press had remained resilient and undaunted. "There can be no doubt that the use of web sites and email by the Zambian media has helped to enhance press freedom. When the government banned one of the *Post's* editions, it was available on the Internet for some time before the government intervened and shut it down." (Kasoma, 2002:156). In fact the even though the government forced the ISP Zamnet to remove the *Post* edition 401 of February 5, 1995 from its web site where it was hosted, Zambians in the US had already got the wind of the ban of the print edition and in the intervening period (two days) had 'mirrored' the online edition onto a US website. So the government's move to shut down the original website turned out to be futile although making it illegal for anyone to possess or read the printed copy may have worked locally. It is at this point that when the government tried (as they were to do later) to ban online hosting of the *Post* altogether, Zamnet convinced the state to publish its own newspapers online.[153]

[153] Bits and pieces of this information were repeated during interviews in Zambia in 2001 with, among others, the *Post* founder and editor Fred M'membe.

Another way that the Post and other Zambian as well as Kenyan media workers have utilised new media is "to complain, within seconds of an incident of censorship or arrest, to organisations and governments throughout the world that can exert pressure on the government for denying press freedom". (Kasoma, 2002:156). The organisations the author is referring to are journalism bodies like CPJ, Reporters sans Frontiers (Reporters Without Borders), the International Federation of Journalists and Article 19 as well as human rights organisations like Human Rights Watch Africa and Amnesty International. All these organisations have detailed chronologies of violations of press freedom and freedom of expression in Kenya and Zambia as well as around Africa and the world.[154] The third way is promotion of online interaction beyond the newspaper web postings. This is particularly a major feature of the recently revamped *Nation* newspaper web site. At the end of the story, the reader has the option to print, email to a friend or save. In what appears to be competition for online audiences and revenue, the *Standard* has also relaunched their website with the options to print or forward stories. These are features that did not exist in these two countries, except in the enterprising online newspaper *Information Dispatch* of Zambia, which had some funding problems that threatened its ability to stay afloat.

The fourth way that the news media website promote interaction is through the interpersonal online discussions and e-mail relays that often find their way in the mainstream media – sometimes without the realisation of conservative newspaper editors who hardly take part in electronic networking. For example, the *Daily Nation* recently published as one of its main stories the content of a speculative e-mail that was being forwarded among some Kenyan Internet users about the possible ailment of the late Vice-President Michael Wamalwa. The innuendos in the e-mail suggested that the V-P had, for a long time, been consulting as his lead doctor a HIV/AIDs specialist in the UK, Dr Margaret Johnson. The content was actually a press release on the website of the hospital

[154] Country reports can be accessed from their websites: www.cpj.org; www.rsf.org; www.ifj.org;

detailing Dr Johnson's profile when she was promoted. What the Daily Nation editors did not realise – or conveniently chose to ignore as Tawana Kupe would suggest[155] – when they published the story headlined, 'Wamalwa doctor promoted', was that the press release was more than a year old!

In more successful instances, a number of African newspapers publish protest or suggestion letters or declarations from organised groups, like the Kenya Community Abroad (KCA). One of the most concrete products of Zambia-list listerv debates took the form of a collective letter of protest that appeared in the *Post*, Zambia's leading independent newspaper (Spitulnik 2002:187). The letter was drafted and revised on the Z-list over a period of several weeks. Entitled "Special Report: A letter to President Chiluba from Zambians living abroad" (the *Post*, no. 340, Nov. 8, 1995), it was an extremely detailed declaration of "dismay and disappointment at the state of affairs in Zambia." (Spitulnik 2002:187). Signed by forty individuals, the letter carefully diagnosed the state of the nation – including inter-party violence, the nose-diving economy, and political corruption – and called on then President Frederick Chiluba to "curb the culture of political intolerance" and to "create moral standards for civil servants." The letter clearly demonstrates how political discussions on the Internet can be consolidated as a collective voice in a more visible mass media arena. (Spitulnik 2002:177). Although not directly referenced, many of the themes raised in the letter subsequently recurred in the *Post* editorial columns, letters to the editor, and other 'Special Reports,' and in that sense the letter joined a loud chorus of other voices in the independent press (Spitulnik 2002:187).

In other cases, Internet users post material from mainstream newspapers as a basis for the discussions. For example, a few subscribers to Zambia-list discussion listerv regularly re-post the full texts of newspaper articles from the Web pages of the *Times of Zambia* and the *Post* (Spitulnik 2002:187). It is for the reason that mainstream media need

www.hrw.org; www.article19.org; www.amnesty.org.

[155] In an open-floor contribution at Media in Africa conference at Stellenbosch University in South Africa in 2003.

to embrace more solidly the benefits accorded by the new media in order to expand space for dialogue that influence policy issues. This happens a lot especially among the various listservs and discussion groups for Kenyans and Zambians in the diaspora. The Internet has therefore "opened up Zambia's [and of course Kenya's] media institutions to readers outside the country, giving them the opportunity to keep up with the news and to respond via email to advertisers and editors". (Kasoma, 2002:155).

7.7 Conclusion

With the agitation for multiparty democracy in Africa in the 1990s came the demand for more press freedom. These 'dual cries', coupled with a wave of privatisation of the media and other government structures made authors like Bourgault (1995:42-44) conclude, quite understandably, that the continent's media was 'poised on the brink of change'. As mainstream newspapers lost credibility, attendance of political rallies surged and privately owned newspapers like the *Weekly Post*, the *Daily Express* and the Church-owned *National Mirror* thrived (Mkandawire, 1992:4). The role of the print media in transition to pluralism was validated by the 1992 Commonwealth Observer Group's Report (p.11): "Our analysis of the coverage by the leading daily newspapers showed that both the *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* made real efforts to report the campaign in a fair manner. While the other newspapers made no efforts to conceal their partisanship, the two established dailies covered the campaign in a reasonably impartial manner. Both papers used their comment columns to criticise aspects of the electoral process, the retention of the State of Emergency and the claims by both parties that violence would inevitably follow the announcement of the results. They made real attempts to identify and serve the interests of the Zambian people." In the October 1991 election, the local media played a more prominent role than ever before in the history of Zambia. (Mkandawire, 1992:45, 16).

One may argue that the duplication of print content onto the online editions does not add much value to the news, but this is an important step in the direction of free expression in Africa. First, the media are freer than they were before. Secondly, a number of media websites, like that of the *Nation*, allow users to 'finish' (debate or expand on) their stories through interactive features. Even though Kasoma (2002:155) indicates that "most newspapers and stations have an online presence that has brought news to places previously not reached", one may argue that Internet access is limited – yet so is access to print and broadcast media. In fact Internet and mobile phone diffusion is far greater than that of the news media in Africa. In any case, the already explained two-step flow model that has always worked in Africa can be applied to these new media as well. At the same time, it is important to point out that although digital technology and electronic distribution enhances news media effectiveness, it does not necessarily increase their effects. "Zambia's *Post* can do exposés continuously, with little apparent effect on the accountability and restraint of government." (Berger, 1998:602). What is clear from this discussion is one of the main contentions of the thesis, that one cannot study the new media in isolation from the old; it is in the interaction between the two that much of the political impact of the new media is to be found.

In the case of Zambia, continued state control over public media has been a cause for considerable concerns – especially given the dominance of government press. In any country, particularly a developing one, there is real justification in having a government media that can be used as a genuine tool to inform and provide education for the community as well as much needed entertainment. However, public media should be under the control of an independent body whose members are not beholden to government ministers or bureaucrats. The recently formed Media Trust Fund (MTF), though mainly donor funded, has joined Zambia Independent Media Association (ZIMA) and other organisations in filling a vacuum in this regard. In Kenya, private media managers were up in arms recently when Kenya's Information Minister, Raphael Tuju directed that broadcast

media should dedicate at least 20 per cent of their airtime to local content. These media operators did not give any tangible reason for their protest, other than the fact that they had not been consulted. Media houses need to display more commitment towards content creation rather than taking the shortcut of filling airtime and newsprint with stale foreign material. They should recognise the place of online or digital journalism with its unique attributes of immediacy, hypertextuality, interactivity and multimediality and pay particular attention to accuracy. On the other hand, governments should provide enabling policies and incentives that enhance content creation. In other words where the African state should not be overbearing in monitoring and controlling public communication space, it need not be rendered completely irrelevant – it needs to be strengthened, not in a coercive sense but in the sense of having the capacity to provide direction situations where global structural matters may affect negatively healthy local democracy.

8.0 PERCEPTIONS OF KENYAN AND ZAMBIAN URBAN CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS ON THEIR NEW MEDIA USE IN POLITICAL REALMS

Despite limitations of resources and cost of Internet access, larger numbers of African NGOs, both on the continent and in the Diaspora, are making effective use of Internet communications tools, including email and the web.[156]

8.1 Introduction

Through the informational activities of some of Africa's key urban political civil society organisations (CSOs), the new ICTs are largely perceived to offer unprecedented plurality that challenges the hitherto excessive powers and influence of the continent's ruling elites. Before the advent of ICTs, many African leaders tightly controlled information dissemination – allowing only dominant political views. Based on interviews in Kenya and Zambia, this chapter examines the perceptions that in Africa the impact of ICTs is, ironically, disproportionately greater than their overall spread, and that the libertarian ICTs, as impetus to the 'third wave' of democratisation, shift the balance of power between states and citizens, especially in hitherto autocratic developing countries (Mudhai, 2004b). To borrow from Keck and Sikkink (1998:x), the goal here is more than highlighting the presence of CSOs; by delving into the experience of particular CSOs, we hope to generate a more powerful understanding of their origins, strategies, limits and effectiveness, making it possible to situate them within the rapidly changing configuration of activist politics. Where some of the information from earlier chapters appears, the purpose is to provide a

[156] Posting title, 'Africa: NGO and Electronic Communication', distributed Apr 29, 2002 reposted by US-based Africa Action (inc. Africa Policy Information Centre, Africa Fund & American Committee on Africa) on the Africa Policy Electronic Distribution List, at http://www.africaaction.org/docs02/ict0204.htm (Feb '03).

context for the explanations and corroboration by key CSO players in a bid to get their perspectives.

8.2 ICTs, Civil Society and Democracy

Civil society can be expected to stimulate both a renewal of the mass media in the direction of more appropriate reporting and the emergence of other complementary forms of public communication (Dahlgren, 1996; Meyer, 2002:137).[157] When it comes to new media use, Northern CSOs have embraced ICTs far more easily, and relatively effectively in certain cases, than their Southern counterparts. In mid 1990s, the 150-member American Council for Voluntary International Action published an Internet guide for CSOs due to "myriad requests for information we were receiving from international NGOs that were eager to join the information age" (Parada, 1997:4). Contributors to a volume edited by Peter I. Hajnal (2002) give case studies on how TNCSOs, like Amnesty International, Oxfam International, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Médecins Sans Frontières, have made efforts to use ICTs strategically in their operations and especially for campaigns on the policy areas of security, development, international law, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. Other authors, like Rodgers (2000 & 2003) and Beier (2003), have done related or divergent research on these and other TNCSOs.

The UN Rio Earth Summit in 1992, attended by more than a thousand NGOs in the parallel Global Forum, saw the first mass use of ICTs to interconnect and network such an enormous gathering. One of the most significant documents to emerge from the Global Forum was the 'Communication, Information, Media, and Networking Treaty' which declared the right of communication as a basic human right (Hassan, 2004:108). These 'com-activists' or critical social movements or what Surman and Reilly (2003) call 'social tech' movements, like Indymedia (born at the 'battle at Seattle'), Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Communication Rights in the Information Society

(CRIS) and Computes for Social Responsibility, have used ICTs to create a network of individuals and NGOs supporting communications rights and also fairly successfully involved many actors from the developing world and employed decentralized networked command-and-control strategies (Mudhai, 2004b). These groups promote DIY 'tactical media' of ICTs and use such strategies as 'culture-jamming' (brand-bombing of America), 'warchalking' (hitching free rides on institutional and business wireless hot-spots) and other forms of digital direct action.

There have been other cases of successful NGO collaboration that focus on human rights and development in general. One well-known 'swarm' case of NGO collaboration is the support given to information operations to prevent the Mexican government from harassing the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas (Garrido & Halavais 2003). "Were it not for the innovative use of ICTs by their leader 'Subcommandate Marcos' in promoting their struggle against the Mexican government and military, then the Zapatista movement may well have remained an obscure rebellion that was quietly, but no doubt viciously, crushed." (Hassan, 2004:108). Through use of the fax, the laptop, email and the Internet, the movement connected rapidly with sympathetic groups and movements around the world. (Hassan, 2004:108-9). In another case, Northern NGOs have networked using ICTs to help Brazilian resistance movements, the Yanomami Indians as well as rubber-tapper communities, the *seringueiros* and the *empates*, to call for extractive reserves and sustainable development to protect their livelihood at the Amazon forest area. New communication networks that connect indigenous groups with NGO networks create discursive space for indigenous groups previously excluded from public discussions. There are also unconfirmed reports that most of the 100,000 activists who met to critique neo-liberal globalization at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2003 were from developing countries' NGOs – which hints to not only greater ICT networking but also real-life collaborative action (Todd, in Mudhai, 2004b).

[157] As we have seen, the mass media are in themselves CSOs.

Since transnational advocacy networks are not powerful in a traditional sense of the word, they use the power of their information, ideas, and strategies to alter the information and value contexts within which states make policies. Keck and Sikkink (1998:16) propose a typology of tactics that networks use in their efforts at persuasion, socialisation, and pressure includes (1) *information politics*, or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it to where it will have the most impact; (2) *symbolic politics*, or the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away; (3) *leverage politics*, or the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence; and (4) *accountability politics*, or the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies or principles.

> *A single campaign may contain many of these elements simultaneously. Information binds network members and is essential for network effectiveness. Many information exchanges are informal – telephone calls, e-mail, fax communications, and the circulation of newsletters, pamphlets and bulletins. They provide information that would otherwise not be available, from sources that might not otherwise be heard, and they must make this information comprehensible and useful to activists and publics who may be geographically and/or socially distant* (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:18).

Nonstate actors gain influence by serving as alternate sources of information and the media is an essential partner in network information politics. To reach broader audiences, networks strive to attract press attention (Keck & Sikkink, 1998:19, 22). In an increasing number of cases, the Internet has proven extremely useful in monitoring membership and mobilising members behind NGO programmes but, as we have already seen, this does not necessarily translate into an all-powerful tool compared to states (Franda, 2002:21). With regard to Africa, the continent is host to or associated with a number of 'social tech' and related NGOs or projects like APC, Kabissa, Fahamu, SANGONeT, Pambazuka,

Africa Democracy Forum (ADF), Women's Organisation of Uganda (WOUGNET) and NGO-NET.[158] A glimpse at their websites reveals more. APC strives for "Internet and ICTS for social justice and development". Kabissa styles itself as "space for change in Africa" and hosts an African CSO mailing list and bulletin board. Fahamu (Swahili for 'understanding' or 'consciousness') "has a vision of the world where people organise to emancipate themselves from all forms of oppression … serves the needs of organisations and social movements that aspire to progressive social change and that promote and protect human rights" by harnessing and using ICTs – especially the Internet. SANGONeT describes itself as "a facilitator for an effective and empowering use of ICT tools by development and social justice actors in Africa". *Pambazuka* (Swahili for 'awaken'), a project for Kabissa, Fahamu and SANGONET, is "a weekly electronic forum for social justice in Africa". The ADF, launched in Abuja, Nigeria, in October 2000, is an African regional network of democracy, human rights, and governance organisations seeking to consolidate democracy "by providing opportunities for democrats to openly express their views while also acting as a platform for mutual support and the sharing of resources." Over 120 organisations and individuals working on democracy issues in Africa currently participate in the ADF activities. WOUGNET, initiated in 2000, is "breaking down barriers to information inequality with a strong emphasis on women". NGO-NET, founded in France in 1998, has the mission of using the Internet "to support NGOs and CBOs, particularly in Africa". All the organisations emerged in the last decade or so and receive a great deal of donor support. Whether or not they are effective in using of ICTs as political tools is a matter keen watchers are just beginning to investigate.

Although not much has been done empirically or written academically about African CSOs and their use of ICTs for political purposes, a small body of work is just beginning to emerge. From a theoretical and panAfricanist perspective, Herman

[158] See their websites at: www.apc.org; www.kabissa.org; www.fahamu.org; www.sangonet.org.za; www.pambazuka.org; http://www.wmd.org/africa/africa_democracy_forum.html; www.wougnet.org; Fahamu is based in Oxford, with an office in South Africa.

Wasserman (2003) explores "the role that new media technologies might play in facilitating an African public sphere in which civil society organisations from different African countries might co-operate in influencing public policy". My earlier work (Mudhai, 2003b) cites the populous Nigeria as perhaps one of the first African countries where mobile phone mobilisation has played a major role in socio-political protest, going by the December 2003 case in which residents of the eastern part of the country texted each other to co-ordinate a symbolic work boycott to protest the poor state of roads. Nigerians used a similar strategy to boycott mobile phone services by co-ordinating a daylong 'switch-off', thus deny the phone companies revenue for a day as a way of protesting unreasonably high charges and constant network failure. Ellen Kole (2003) seems to be deriving useful data from her fieldwork for her NGO-ICT link in Africa which she has been working on since early 1997.[159] Sylvie Niombo (2003a, 2003b) gives a glimpse into the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mwesige (2003) focuses on the use of cyber cafes in Uganda by a predominantly urban cyber elite, from a digital divide perspective. The study closest to this one focuses on Tanzania's most connected cities of Dar es Salaam and Arusha. Within the context of what she terms the 'Zaptista effect', in an allusion to the well-known 'CNN effect', Mercer (2004) describes the relative failure of donor initiatives to introduce ICTs into NGOs in Tanzania, with the aim of achieving externally-desired changes to local organisational practices. Her findings support other ICT studies which suggest that if they are to work, ICTs must be structured around the needs and perspectives of their users. Such users are situated within broader social, cultural and political contexts. (Cline & Clone, 2004:7). While pointing out that "access to ICTs has to some extent facilitated networking among Tanzanian NGOs whose advocacy and lobbying activities have had some impact upon national policies", she concludes that donor engineering of elite civil society leads to 'ICT fetishism' likely to result in a case of misplaced optimism.

[159] However, this PhD at the University of Amsterdam under Prof Cees Hamelink has been delayed. (Email

At this juncture, we turn to our case studies. Leslie (2002) carried out a survey of Internet users in Zambia in 1996 and not only revealed the experimentation with the e-mail by the then new Radio Phoenix, which was quite radical in news reporting ahead of the 2001 elections to the point the government had it closed on a small technicality, but also other media and CSOs. "A number of CSOs with emphasis on the civic education of citizens have sprung up in Zambia as part of the campaign for democracy. Although only a handful of these organisations have access to the Internet, there is a growing awareness of its utility as a tool for networking." (Leslie, 2002:116). My current study is more comprehensive and up-to-date.

8.3 Civil Society Perception of their Political Use of New Media

The model applied here on political use of ICTs by social movements, to publish, collaborate, observe and mobilise, is borrowed from the work of Surman and Reilly (2003) who point out that most CSOs have yet to learn truly strategic uses of these technologies, by moving beyond e-mail and basic websites. Surman and Reilly's "uses" have been combined here, given that publishing tends to go with research and intelligence-gathering (observation) while mobilisation, though not manifest in the African context in its online form, often results from collaboration or networking. A third aspect, that of administration, has been added. Summaries of the interviews carried out appear in tables 9.1 and 9.2.

8.3.1 Observation and Publishing

As already observed, online newspapers have become one of the most visible aspects of African content on the web. In Kenya, the two main dailies, *The Daily Nation* and the *East African Standard*, competed to update their Web sites with breaking news especially around election time. In its annual financial report, issued in November, the Nation Media Group said the online edition of its flagship *Daily Nation* newspaper received more than 1

communication, Nov 11, 2003; and website update Apr, 2004). See: www.xs4all.nl/~ekole/research.html .

million hits per day (CPJ 2002). In September 2003, the Nation's editor in charge of media convergence, Charles Onyango Obbo said "the successes has been the over three million hits the online Nation gets".[160] Indeed the Nation recorded peak hits during the August 1998 Alqaeda bomb blasts in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. While hosting an Africa Forum then US President Clinton suggested he sometimes read the *East African* online, Nation's upmarket weekly newspaper. Little wonder President Moi, especially whenever he I arrived back in Nairobi from abroad where Kenyan online newspapers would be his news source, lamented about the unpatriotic journalists who embarrassed the country by publishing negative stories on the Internet for the whole world to access (Mudhai 2002). One time within days after arriving back from such a visit, staff on the Nation's online desk claimed, in a report published by their newspaper, that they were being trailed by security agents in an unmarked car.

Table 8.1 **Select CSO Key Informant Interviews in Kenya (Summer 2001 & 2002)**

Organisation, Key Informant &Year NGO Formed	**New Media Status ('01/'02) & Declared Communication Goals**	**Summary of Perceptions of Interviewee**
CCCC or 4Cs (Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change); Prog Officer in charge of Advocacy, George Morara; 1994.	Email, cell phone *To give alternative proposal to the constitution*	Optimistic-sceptical: Uses email to communicate with other CSOs and parties. Laments: network failure.
CJPC (Catholic Justice & Peace Commission); Projects Officer, Joseph Jakaiti; 1988.	Email, cell phone *Provide info, advice & encouragement...* ***No website*** (in plan)	Optimistic-sceptical: All dioceses networked. Lament: State interference.
CRECO (Constitution & Reform Education Consortium); Programme Officer, Wambua Kituku; 1998.	Email, cell phone *Formulate national civic education programme.* ***No website*** (in plan)	Optimistic: Used email a lot for networking and info dissemination.
FIDA-K (International Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya); Prog Officer, Anthony Mugo; 1985.	Internet, email, cell phone www.fidakenya.org *Just society free of discrimination against women*	Optimistic-sceptical: Local for networking, regional info exchanges. Laments: Problems of connectivity, especially during peak time.
IED (Institute for Education in Democracy); 1993	Internet, email, cell phones. www.iedafrica.org	Optimistic-sceptical: Uses cell phones for election

[160] Email Interview (Aug 2003).

	"To provide information & skills for positive political behaviour."	monitoring.
LRF (Legal Resources Foundation); Project Officer Media, Black Odanyiro; '93.	Internet, email, cell phone www.lrf.or.ke Help Kenyans access justice	Optimistic-sceptical: More interactivity. Lament: Only a few have access.
YA (Youth Agenda); Prog Co-ordinaotr, Cecily Mbarire; Administrator, Joyce Lihanda; 1996	Internet, email, cell phone *Enlighten the youth on civic education.* ***No website*** (in plan)	Optimistic-sceptical: Used two cell phones for office. Lament: Network problems.

Perhaps the most telling of fear of Internet news was demonstrated in the story of Zambia the *Post* newspaper edition 401 which carried a report the government claimed violated state secrets.[161] "They were planning to have a snap referendum and change the constitution which would effectively bar Dr Kaunda from contesting the Presidency. We carried a story that exposed all that," said the *Post* founder and managing editor, Fred M'membe. The government banned the newspaper and confiscated copies from the streets. "It was too late; the story was already on the web site. They went to Zamnet, our ISP, and forced them to pull that edition out but it was too late as other people in the USA had already downloaded the whole edition and put in back online (on a mirror site)." Mr M'membe and his staff were arrested and charged but they won the case. The court ruled that there was no violation of state secrets as by that time Chiluba's strategy to bar Kaunda was being executed and therefore was public knowledge. The *Post* continued to get covert and overt harassment, including phone tapping – to which the Chief Inspector of Police conceded. The newspaper's change to exclusive use of the mobile phones apart from making phone tapping a little difficult (but not impossible) for the government, M'membe says this made the *Post*'s own operations much easier and efficient. Another harassment came in the form of suspected arson by a *Post* staff suspected to be a government mole who was left behind in the office at night to update the newspaper's website.

[161] These were transcripts of a cabinet meeting on MMD election campaign strategy. "They were planning to have a snap referendum and change the constitution which would bar Kaunda from contesting the presidency." (M'membe).

Yet another example is Zambia's first Internet-only newspaper, *Information Dispatch* launched in 2000, a year before the general election, by a group of young journalists. The website recorded between 10,000 and 14,000 visitors, with an average monthly figure of 300,000 visitors located in North America (especially USA) and Europe (especially UK) as well as Zambia and other African countries. Their website received the highest hits whenever there was a major political debate or crisis. "During the third term debate, we were a very authentic source. Almost on a daily basis something was happening and we kept hammering and hammering until at one time we had a conflict with the state because of that," recalled Information Dispatch founding Managing Editor, Kennedy Mambwe. "We had an interview with one of the Western diplomats whom I can't name. He told me categorically that 'our feeling as the diplomatic community is that the President is being hypocritical because he had promised to abide by the constitutional provision' (limiting his rule to two five-year terms). That story was picked up by the wires, and seen by officials in one of the Zambian missions abroad who faxed it back to (their superiors) Zambia," Mambwe explained. "Agents from the government intelligence came to probe us to find out who we talked to but we chose to abide by our ethical values not to disclose the identity of our source." The government issued a press statement accusing the diplomatic community of meddling in their internal affairs. In response, the Dean of the Diplomatic Community issued its press statement to ameliorate the situation. "From then on, we have been under surveillance, but we are not intimidated. We just report accurately," said Mr Mambwe who later took time off to study sharpen his skills with a Masters degree in new media at London's City University. Mr Mambwe said he felt much freer to express himself as an online journalist compared to his days as a traditional media practitioner. "Currently in Zambia, there is no law that could be applied against *Dispatch* (say to shut it down). I can operate from my home. I can host my site from free software space wherever – in the USA or the UK, on the dot.com. They can't stop me. This is bringing checks and balances to the government because they know that even if they try to censor the dailies, they can't

do anything against us." Despite these pronouncements, some level of vulnerability could be discerned from the group's shoestring budget and their use of the state ISP Zamnet. This is discernible in the experiences of the *Monitor* which viewed faults in their Internet connections, that manifested themselves as technical, as acts of interference by government agents because the glitches almost always occurred when they received emails from some two Zambian exiles critical of the government.[162] When the Monitor carried a lead story in early 2001 that President Chiluba was running for a third term and that he had drafted district administrators to voice this on his behalf, a State House media spokesperson contacted the quasi-state ISP Zamnet to get them to pull out the story. "People at the Zamnet were really scared. The ISP was really intimidated," recalls Arthur Simuchoba, editor of the *Monitor*. It is worth noting that the state did not even try to intimidate the newspaper directly, perhaps due to the earlier experience with the *Post*. (The management of Zamnet must be commended for their diplomatic resistance of pressure to stop hosting newspaper and giving links to their websites.) "The concern was more on why the material was being disseminated internationally. In many cases, that has always been the problem – why Zamnet, which is not a newspaper, put anti-government material on the web," said Simuchoba.

It would appear the Zambia government was more worried about reports on *The Monitor* online than the hard copy on the streets. "What is posted on the Internet is accessible to the wider world therefore Zambia is monitored effectively by the World Bank, the IMF and the bilateral donors. Just the fact that these lenders are aware of cases of bad governance creates pressure on the government. It makes the government uneasy," said Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) President Alfred Zulu who stressed that this does not necessarily mean the government is not worried about domestic opinion as well. "As the world becomes a global village and information becomes readily available, governments become a little more jittery that their conduct at home is brought to

immediate international scrutiny at once and that challenges their ability to practice bad governance. It challenges them much more quicker because they are being monitored, scrutinised and examined," Mr Zulu explained further, pointing out at that "the new media, the Internet is not owned by anybody so they constitute a new haven – a departure from the current structure of print and electronic media".

An interesting and attractive aspect of online editions is their provision for interactive features allowing users to comment, give feedback and vote on controversial issues. The *Nation* recently revamped their website and included interactive features. The *Dispatch* had this feature much earlier. "We have an interactive feature – an attraction to the readership. At the end of every story, there is a provision for readers to comment. People feel free to express their views. We also get instant feedback," said Mambwe. Political and human-interest stories triggered more interest, some having up to 20 comments compared to an average of seven. However, non-media NGOs have not had much success in this area. "We have discovered that not many people visit the website. We have put discussion forum there where from time to time we update the topic but it appears people who submit to the discussion forum are not many, so we have realised that not many people visit our website. The reason could be that in Zambia, and in most of Africa, most people have no access to the Internet," said Beatrice Simwapenga Hamusonde, Head of Research, Information and Documentation at the Zambia National Women's Lobby Group (ZNWLG), a country-wide membership organisation with 5000 members in 2001. However, the other reason could also be to do with poor advertisement.

A number of CSOs also used new media during election to issue their statements and collective positions. "We (usually) put current information on our website. For example, we monitor political party conventions where they choose top party leadership and whatever transpires there we put the statements on the website," said Ms Hamusonde.

[162] These were then Australia-based political activist Roger Chongwe and US-based Prof Muna Ndera (Cornell University).

Not surprising, CSOs found ICTs quite useful for monitoring elections during the period under study. In the 2001 Zambia election and the 2002 Kenya election, a number of NGOs (some with staff mobile phone possession and use policy) used their field monitors to gather data at polling stations around the country then relay information instantly to NGO head offices in the capital cities of Lusaka and Nairobi from where the information and analyses were often disseminated to media houses for immediate broadcast, say by the recently established private FM radio stations. Unlike the previous elections especially in Kenya, the greater enhanced transparency through mobile phone and Internet updates on newspaper and NGO websites made it difficult for the incumbents to rig the vote by altering figures (Mudhai 2003b).[163] "In 1991 when we had our first multiparty election, this new technology was not a factor but in 1996 and 2001, it is becoming an important forceful factor in providing knowledge and information around especially the academics, scholars, researchers and the learned community," said ZIMT President Mr Zulu. Does this not show that the ICTs are just elite tools for the privileged? Mr Zulu responds with what media scholars have referred to as the two-step flow theory. "There is a trickle-down effect that the usage of computers, the Internet and cellular phones has made Zambia a smaller space in terms of exchanging knowledge though the coverage may not be 100 per cent. In those areas where there is the Internet service and cellular phone systems, the communities are becoming more informed, there is more exchange of knowledge, there is effective communication, there is more arguments, there is more knowledge about what is happening in Chilelabombwe, in Chawama and people talk about it in Livingstone and in Mpika," Mr Zulu explained.

There are also plenty of personal experiences and anecdotes, especially with the cellular phones. "The other day I was coming (flying into the country) from Durban (South Africa) and when I arrived in Livingstone and switched on my cellular phone, I got the information that Radio Phoenix had been closed. I hadn't known about it, but I was able to

[163] These together with off-line NGO agitation and political deal-making among the erstwhile divided

get the political situation in Lusaka much more quickly compared to a few years ago," said Mr Zulu.

ICTs have also been used in monitoring legal precedents and information. The Legal Resource Foundation (LRF) and the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) have used the Internet for their legal operations, some in challenge to the state. "The Internet has proved to be of tremendous assistance particularly in so far as getting information about what is happening around the world regarding human rights," said LRF Principal Advocate, Geoffrey Chilufya Mulenga. "In fact in the recent past, we have succeeded in getting two favourable judgements against the State of Zambia at the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. We cited a number of precedents that we got from the Internet." Another example is a treason trial in which some of those accused were convicted and sentenced to death. "We did make use of cases that we got off the Internet – treason cases in apartheid South Africa," Mr Mulenga said.

Churches within countries and in the region have also been collaborating via the Internet, especially on political matters. The Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), a mother organisation of Ecumenical Christian churches totalling 18, uses email to network with not only local partners like the Zambia Episcopal Conference (Catholics) and Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (Charismatic) but also, and especially, Christian councils in neighbouring countries, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. "Each time we produce something, it is an agreement among ourselves as communication officers within the network to share out information," said CCZ Communication Officer, Ing'utu Mutembo. Alongside the civil society, the NGO Coordinating Council and the Law Association of Zambia, CCZ was one of the organisations that came together in early 2001 to form a strategic alliance, Oasis Forum to lobby against attempts by Chiluba to change the constitution to allow him to vie for a third term in office.

opposition facilitated the defeat of Kenya's ruling party that had regularly rigged elections to stay in power.

Kenyan and Zambian Diasporas CSOs have encouraged online discussion forums (as well as chatrooms) where all manner of observations are published. The politics forum of US-based Kenyan Community Abroad (KCA) website[164] records a lot higher number of topics and posts compared to those on 'business', 'computers and technology', 'jobs & careers' or special debates. US-based Zambia community online[165] runs a message board and a mailing list. These complement other initiatives where participants are not necessarily Diaspora, the main criteria being that they belong to either country and are interested in developments there – wherever they are in the world. Indeed some of these forums, like Kenyans' Mambogani (www.mambogani.com) dubbed "the voice of the *wananchi* (ordinary citizens)", indicate the local time of the accessing computer as well as Nairobi time. Other, less formally constituted, political forums can be found in The Zambian (www.thezambian.com) and Mashada (www.mashada.com). Also available is web log (blog), for example The Zambian's (www.thezambian.com/blogs) and Onyango-Oloo's Kenya Democracy Project (http://demokrasia-kenya.blogspot.com).[166] Fackson Banda of PANOS Southern Africa says Zambians living abroad have been so active in online debates about what goes in the country that in some cases government officials have been forced to respond to some of their concerns – "which is amazing". He recalls that "some party functionaries in their own offices would write, 'we don't like what you are saying here. You don't understand what is going on in Zambia, you are only depending on what the *Post* gives you'. But it doesn't matter; the point is, debate has been generated and people are beginning to talk – which is very good". This is an explication of what Hannah Arendt and Chantal Mouffe would term 'agonistic', where people do not have to agree, rather than Habermas' deliberative model, where it matters to reach some kind of consensus.

[164] www.kenyansabroad.org. Though based in Washington, KCA has branches in other US states like New England (Boston) and Michigan as well as in other countries, such as Canada, the UK, Germany and France.
[165] www.kachaka.com This at one level a personal initiative of Veronica Mahongo Kachaka, based in Houston, Texas while at another level well supported by Zambians. (See also: www.ukzambians.co.uk
[166] Also see: http://kenya.rcbowen.com/

One controversial feature of online interactions among the Zambians and Kenyans abroad is the litany of loose talk and insults, but that is part of the consequences of freeing the public sphere. Due to the absence of social pressure to be civil, communications often degenerate into what Robert Putman terms 'flaming out' or vicious attack campaigns (Meyer, 2002:121). "One threat to the standards of democratic deliberations is the fact that the Internet chatrooms are notoriously full of racist statements and ungrounded, dogmatic accusations that their authors would never dare utter in a traditional public setting." (Meyer, 2002: 124). On Zambian Internet forum, ZIMT president Alfred Zulu is reported to have had constant stormy political arguments with a white Zambian whom he is said to have accused of commenting on the country disparagingly in a manner that revealed his racist point of view.[167] Whether such antagonistic dialogues threaten democracy is debatable. Here is Fackson Banda's take on this issue:

> *I think almost all the key NGOs are online and there are a number of electronic discussion forums on which they participate actively. For example, there is an e-mail service run by David Simpson, called Go-Brain. He writes his opinions on media issues in Zambia and sends it out to all of us so that we can then comment on what he says. In fact there has been some 'fights' between him and Alfred Zulu, the ZIMT president. I think it is a good way of opening up issues as serious as racism. This simple medium of email is beginning to link people, to make them expose their fears, their worries, their celebrations, their hopes for Zambia, etc. Where else would one do this? The fax cannot do that for you, the telephone cannot, so the new media is creating spaces for people to express themselves. In my view, this is the best thing that has ever happened in Africa generally.*[168]

[167] Interview with an NGO official privy to the online dialogue.
[168] Interview with Banda at PANO offices in Lusaka at around 10am Lusaka time, 10th Sept 2001.

8.3.2 Mobilisation and Collaboration/Networking

Ahead of the elections in 2001 (Zambia) and 2002 (Kenya), CSOs in both countries networked effectively at the international level during the Jubilee 2000 NGO coalition movement that lobbied the then G-7 developed nations to cancel third world debt and denounced the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative as a 'cruel hoax' (Collins, 1999:419).[169] Several organisations including the Green Belt Movement (GBM) led by aggressive Wangari Maathai, churches, NGOs and women's organisations came together in Kenya to launch the Jubilee 2000 Africa Campaign in Nairobi in 1998. In Autumn 1999, the Jubilee 2000 Nairobi and the Kenya Jubilee 2000 Africa Campaign came together to form the Kenya Interfaith Debt Campaign under the auspices of the GBM. The new organisation included women groups, youth groups, church clergy, businessmen and women as well as NGOs. "They continue to organise activities regularly including seminars and workshops as well as processions, despite occasional repression by police forces."[170] In cooperation with the CCJP, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) coordinated Jubilee 2000-Zambia and linked to national and international debt campaigns. On 22 May 1999 a 'Freedom from Debt' event was held in six cities across Zambia and 300,000 signatures (45% from rural areas) were collected and sent to Cologne, Germany. A three-day regional conference was held in May 1999 with representatives from 14 African countries issuing the 'Lusaka Declaration'; a follow-up meeting was held in August in Nairobi to move the African consensus further, rejecting HIPC and ESAF (Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility).[171] Father Pete Henriot, a US Catholic priest actively working with the Zambian Jubilee 2000 campaign, argued that conditions imposed from the outside undercut "the responsibility of decision makers within the country to seek and effectively represent the wishes of their citizens" (Collins, 1999:421-2).

[169] Because 33 of the original HIPC countries were African, SSA's debt burden was a major focus of Jubilee 2000 advocacy (Collins, 1999:419).

Despite the reported harassment in Kenya, the Jubilee 2000 was an issue around which CSOs could cooperate with governments rather than in opposition to it. However, the GBM had earlier at the peak of transition politics in 1989 and 1990 broke away from its cooperation with the government to protest attempts to build multi-story complexes in Nairobi's recreation areas of Uhuru Park and Jeevanjee Gardens. "The GBM uses multiple methods to voice their opinions. This can include simple letter writing to officials as well as participating in serious protests concerning major issues."[172]

Cases of actual online (Internet) or mobile phone mobilisation are rare within the two countries. However, one of the most active aspects of mobilisation and networking is that of lobbying the international community to put pressure on government on specific issues or crises involving NGOs. ZIMT president, Alfred Zulu:

I recall vividly that in 1996 working together in the Committee for Clean Campaign with Mr Ngande Mwanajiti (Executive Director of Lusaka-based human rights NGO network, AFRONET) and myself had made statements to the effect that the Zambian elections were not free and fair. The reaction by our government was harsh and immediate. Within a week, the police clamped down on us. They came to our homes in the middle of the night at 4am on a Saturday. They arrested me then they arrested Mwanajiti. We carried our cellular phones and charges. When they locked us up in the cells, we communicated with the rest of the world, with the BBC, with some colleagues in Zimbabwe and South Africa, with the Amnesty International and Africa Watch, and with NGOs within Zambia. By the time the police realised what had happened, the whole place was filled with our supporters and many journalists had filed stories about what had happened to us. There was already pressure mounting on the Zambian government. By 3pm that afternoon, the government instead of detaining us as they intended they released us on bond. This is just one example of how (we use) cellular phones as a tool of defence, and a tool of advocacy –

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[170] Jubilee 2000 Coalitions Worldwide, at http://www.jubilee2000uk.org/jubilee2000/wwcol2.html (Sept '04).
[171] *Ibid.*

challenging our government on bad governance and excessive use of force. The Zambian government dropped the charges and the matter never went anywhere because we were able to communicate effectively, immediately and promptly.

In Kenya, similar lobbies have been conducted on a number of issues. For example, the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) has been very aggressive in using the Internet especially to lobby the international community to react to a particular issue. One area was the anti-torture campaign that was carried out in 2000 by KHRC and People Against Torture (PAT) who were in constant contact with Amnesty International. "The critical mass support was to the point where the President (Moi) was extremely alarmed and he had to make policy statements against torture, and the AG (Attorney General) had to start looking at a bill that would then eradicate torture from government institutions," recalls Blak Odanyiro of LRC. It is estimable that thousands of emails and ordinary mail letters were sent directly to President Moi, the AG Amost Wako and other senior government officials and institutions, including the police, and copied to the media. Most of the letters, sent from all over the world but mainly from Europe, were generic duplications of each other. The idea was to 'swarm' Moi to take action, which he eventually did.

Diaspora Kenyans and Zambians have perfected specific forms of lobbying and networking, especially email petitions. For instance, the Kenyan Community Abroad (KCA) has been active on thorny issues such as dual citizenship, constitutional reforms, representation and voting rights. From their vantage positions, Kenyans and Zambians abroad have been very actively using ICTs not only to coordinate their activities and carry out their operations, but also to lobby the government directly by sending e-petitions to the seats of power on a regular basis and sending copies to newspapers which then publish them in the letters pages for local readership. Sometimes, issues they raise are so crucial that their petitions get covered as news items in their own right. KCA motto, 'connecting

[172] The GBM uses multiple methods to voice their opinions. This can include simple letter writing to officials

Kenyans abroad' and 'towards accountable government and economic independence in Kenya', underscore their commitment to networking in a bid to promote democratisation in their home country. One very active KCA member, Onyango-Oloo, exiled in Canada emails politicians directly regularly and even when they do not reply he is normally satisfied to have communicated his thoughts[173], which are known to be radical among the Kenyan online community. In essence, ICTs play a key role in maintaining links between long-distance émigrés and their rural home communities, enabling them to appropriate technologies and adapt them to their needs, sometimes in highly personalised and unexpected ways (Cline-Clone & Powell, 2004:8; Tall, 2004).

Table 8.2 **CSO Key Informant Interviews in Lusaka, Zambia (Summer 2001)**

Organisation, Key Informant &Year NGO Formed	**New Media Status ('01/'02) & Declared Communication Goals**	**Summary of Perceptions of Interviewee**
AFRONET (Inter-African Network for Human Rights & Development); Exec Director Ngande Mwanajiti; 1994.	Internet, email, cell phone. www.afronet.org.zm *"Coord & networking among HR organisations."*	Sceptical: Addressed the critical question of access and said technology cannot drive mass movements. Laments: Possible interference with their LAN.
CCJDP(Centre for Justice, Devt & Peace); Director, Fr Joe Koma Koma.	www.ccjp.org.zm *A just society where pple have freedom and means..*	Sceptical: Emails column to *Post*; State is too powerful for CSO, media forces; cell phone access limited.
CCZ (Christian Council of Zambia); Comms Officer, Ing'utu Mutembo; 1914.	Internet, email, cell phone.	Optimistic-sceptical: Networks with churches; Uses online bulletin. Lament: limited access & cell phone expensive.
FODEP(Foundation for Democratic Process); Info & Research Mngr Mweelwa Muleya; 1991	Internet, email, cell phone www.fodep.org.zm *Enhancing general awareness of population.*	Optimistic: Networking offices in all the nine provinces and upgrading computers.
Information Dispatch; Founder Kennedy Mambwe.	www.dispatch.co.zm *First online newspaper in Zambia, based in Lusaka*	Optimistic: Received highest hits at the peak of third term debate. Lament: high costs, low speed.
LAZ (Law Association of Zambia); Chairman Christopher Mundia;	Internet at secretariat, and individual law firms. ***No website*** (in plan)	Optimist-sceptical: Networks with international bodies.

as well as participating in serious protests concerning major issues.

[173] Interview with Onyango-Oloo in Montreal in March 2004.

1973		
LRF (Legal Resource Foundation); Geoffre C. Mulenga; 1991	Internet, email, cell phone www.lrf.org.zm *Enlighten people about their rights.*	Optimistic: Internet research on human rights cases in UN/EU and in the SA region.
The Monitor; Editor Arthur Simuchoba; 1996.	www.afronet.org.zm	Lament: Email hitches, suspects "active interference"
NGOCC (Zambia NGO Coordinating Council); Prog Officer for Comms & Advocacy, Evarine Mooya; 1985 (65 afflts)	www.ngocc.org	Optimistic: Computer centre in Lusaka, at least 4 workstations to enhance networking. Also two networked computers per province of nine provinces.
PANOS (Southern Africa); Regional co-ord, Fackson Banda	Internet, email, cell phone www.panos.org.zm www.panos.org.uk	Optimistic: Internet can open public space for networking and antagonistic debates.
ZNWLG (Zambia Nat. Women Lobby Group) Head of Research, Info & Documentation Beatrice Simwapenga Hamusonde; 1991	Internet, email, cell phone www.womenslobby.org.zm *"Networking...a resource base for info & policies"*	Optimistic: Networks & calls meetings via email. Lament: Not many people use web site for interactive discussions.
Oasis Forum; 2001; Co-ordinator Andrew Mwenda.	Networking system soon.	
The Post; Founding Editor Fred M'membe. (Second newspaper to go online in Africa.)	Internet, email, exclusively cell phone. www.post.co.zm	Optimistic-sceptical: Stresses historical context; Uses ICTs to get round govt obstacles. Laments: virus infestation on web pages; skills shortage; cost.
SAHRINGON (Southern African Human Rights NGO Network); Zambia National Co-ordinator, Rinos Simbulo; 1996.	http://afronet.org.za/sahringon *Collective activism against governmental organisations.* like SADC; 11 of 12 members networked.	Optimist: Relies heavily on use of Internet and email to network. Lament: Not all affiliates organisations within and outside Zambia are at the same level re. ICT facilities.
ZCEA (Zambia Civic Education Association); Civic Educ Prog Mngr, Ngoza Yezi & Leadership Devt Prog Mngr, Ada Lopa; 1993.	Internet & email at secretariat; cell phones, field workers. ***No website*** (in plan).	Sceptical-optimistic: Regularly use email to network with other organisations. Laments: Cost, access problems, no network in rural areas where they often work.
ZIMA (Zambia Independent Media Association)	www.zima.co.zm *"Media monitoring, advocacy, ..."*	
ZIMT (Zambia Independent Monitoring Team) President Alfred Zulu	No Internet; no e-mail; no website BUT does have regular access via shared public areas.	Optimistic: Ardent user of e-mail and Internet.

The ICTs were particularly a bonus for women's organisations that were able to overcome gender barriers to lobby for their lot. During the run-up to Zambia's 2001 elections, women's lobby groups made considerable efforts to sensitise Zambia's female voters and persuade the parties to adopt female candidates – 182 of whom contested parliamentary seats though with only 16 successes (Burnell 2002:1110). "We use email to send statements to various sister organisations and other organisations that monitor elections as well. We also use the email to invite women for meetings and to send messages to political parties," said ZNWLG official Ms Hamusonde. "We communicate daily with a lot of organisations with which we have similar interests. We use e-mail to get in touch with (these) other organisations," said Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA) Leadership Programme Development Manager, Ada Lopa. The Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers (FIDA) uses the Internet to exchange notes on women's participation in politics in neighbouring countries, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa, "especially with organisations which have been instrumental in ensuring women are well represented in political office."

Another category of CSOs taking advantage of new media is the youth. Besides such youth outfits as Zambia's *Information Dispatch*, there emerged youth-oriented CSOs like Kenya's Youth Agenda (YA). They lobbied using mobile phones, especially when their main telephone lines were disconnected around election time, to get their lot in leadership positions at various levels, including parliament. Like women, the youth feel the new media accord them better networking and lobbying possibilities compared to the conventional media, in which they are less visible. "They don't report what the youth said or deliberated but (only concentrate on) politicians' speeches," said YA's Cecily Mbarire. Regional and issue networking were other common features among NGOs that used ICTs. "The medium has made easier, effective and more proficient our networking with various NGOs, corporate organisations and even government agencies on any issue – be it death penalty, the debt burden, the environment, the Palestinian question, immigration,

xenophobia, human rights, HIV/Aids or gay rights," said Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) President Mr Zulu. "We are able to interact, to exchange information and to create strategies within the 14-member nations of SADC (Southern African Development Community). We are able to communicate, meet and rally behind a particular issue using the Internet," explained. "So the Internet has provided us with a new frontier of communication and strategising on issues of common interest, whether in Zambia, Malawi or the entire region. So networking has become more efficient." An example is the SADC Electoral Support Network of NGOs that shares information on election processes and practices, making it easier for them to engage with government agencies such as the Electoral Commission of Zambia.

One of the most successful regional purely network-based organisations is the Southern African Human Rights NGO Network (SAHRINGON), formed in 1996 and launched in February 1997 at the Regional Human Rights Network Conference in Johannesburg before being incubated at the AFRONET premises in Lusaka. It drew NGOs from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The organisation declares that it was established to create a platform for a collective voice to respond to the ever-increasing regional and global challenges facing human rights NGOs in Southern Africa. It boasts that its formation marked a move towards a new paradigm in collective activism in the region through collective, cross-country and cross-cultural diversity. "As a network, we rely heavily on the use of the Internet and the email. We depend solely on the Internet to know what is happening in .. in all countries involved. We normally come together and go through all the communication we have exchanged via email and Internet at that level," said Rinos Simbulo, the Zambia national co-ordinator of SAHRINGON. This underscores the crucial need in Africa to maintain old methods like f2f even while embracing new media. Part of the reason for this is that not all affiliate organisations (the Zambia chapter has 12 affiliates) are at the same level with regard to ICT facilities.

As part of their strategies, the CSOs initiated all forms of (donor) partnerships to enhance their effectiveness. "The Internet has provided us with good capabilities. It expands our capacity. It is a welcome useful tool," said one ZIMT official. The *Information Dispatch* operated in partnership with One World International, which has a regional office in Lusaka, and the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) in the Hague, Netherlands – with links to the World Bank's Infodev programme.

8.3.3 Administration

Virtually all the CSOs use ICTs for administrative purposes in a manner they perceive increases their efficiency. "We had no people on the ground to organise a recent workshop in Kitwe, one of the copperbelt towns, so we emailed a local Oxfam contact who went round for us so that by the time we travelled there for the workshop, everything was ready; all we did was using email and fax," said Ms Lopa of ZCEA. "We've been to get a lot of information in terms of what we can use in our work," Ms Lopa corroborated. This illustrates one of the properties of new media, saving time and money – resulting in efficiency. FIDA Kenya similar sentiments to share: "There has been a significant impact in terms of savings on time, on communication. For example, we do our hotel and ticket and ticket bookings online, and we exchange papers online," says FIDA Programme Officer for Advocacy, Anthony Mugo. Fackson Banda of PANOS Southern Africa that the use of ICTs by journalists is reflected in the better quality of their output. "Journalists are becoming more and more inquisitive," said Banda whose information-intensive organisation, a branch of PANOS London, was considering entering into a strategic alliance with ZAMNET to provide free Internet access to journalists. PANOS SA itself was at the time of the interview boosting its own information capacity by engaging database managers. "We are always sending email messages; our work would not be successful without that." For Kenya's Constitution & Reform Education Consortium

(CRECO), email was an ideal, cheap, timely and efficient way of keeping in touch its 22 affiliates involved in civic education programme.[174]

As discussed in chapter three, the capabilities and attributes of the new media are important for CSOs. Tracing the context to independence struggle, the *Post* editor M'membe says "anything that will enable us to communicate to not only our people but also to a maximum number of people, globally, is a medium of liberation. It is a medium of liberty, of the extension of liberties. So today more people know about what is happening in this country." This further elaborates an expansion of the public sphere for many CSOs. The expansion is not just quantitative, but also qualitative. "We are benefiting heavily from the email, in terms of columns, letters to the editor, from all over the world. Our people are able to follow debates or contribute to debates in the country. This has helped us have quality debates," M'membe says.

8.4 Conclusion: Enhanced-Efficiency Thesis

This chapter has examined the use of ICTs by CSOs in Kenya and Zambia, taking into account the socio-political context. Data from interviews with CSO actors indicate that most of these organisations started at the dawn of the latest wave of democracy, from around 1990. The CSOs generally perceive ICTs as enhancers of their organisational and networking efficiency, which in turn improves their potential in influencing policies, issues and decisions on political matters especially around election time. However, this effectiveness is not independently verifiable as evidence shows that the ruling elite often simply ignore or downplay civil society agitation, as we have seen in the previous chapter. The central assumption in this study is that ICTs do not replace existing socio-political networks and face-to-face communication, but are added to them. ICTs are merely trend amplifiers rather than radical tools of social change. The CSOs also use other media, like

[174] These included: Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change (4Cs), Release Political Prisoners (RPP), Labour Caucus, Centre for Law and Research International

land lines, faxes, letters, postal services, radio, TV, leaflets, village meetings, workshops and conferences.

The fear by state functionaries of online publications has been demonstrated through attempts to muzzle the ICT media, but these attempts have tended to be less successful compared to intimidation of mainstream media. As a result, states have come up with their own online content, including through government-leaning newspapers and broadcasters as well as government and party websites. This should be considered a positive development in the democratisation process. Indeed Fackson Banda of PANOS Southern Africa regional office in Lusaka says the political climate in Zambia has changed, given that "politicians or perhaps the state can no longer control the flow of information, particularly if it is going over the Internet. All they can do is perhaps try to counter what is going on out there". He explains that new media "forces the state machinery to open itself up to more scrutiny". What emerges here is the agonistic aspect of public sphere notion, associated with Arendt and Mouffe.

Gender-related political NGOs in particular have used new ICTs to expand political space for themselves and for women, especially among the dominant entities. However, most of the NGOs are conscious of the unique conditions and constraints that need to be taken into account. Another significant point is that the increased use of ICTs by NGOs, often to the disadvantage of some political parties, led to the launch of websites by individual politicians and political parties in the Kenya and Zambia elections.

Infrastructural challenges like high cost and unreliable service limiting access. Interestingly NGOs and members of the public need not have their own Internet access at home or in their offices to have experience. For instance Mr Zulu's ZIMT does not have in-office Internet but Zulu was all the same very active in online discourse on Zambia.

Finally, two other issues emerge from this chapter. One is the intersection of national and international forces and pressures which together combine to have some

(CLARION), Education Centre for Women in Democracy (ECWD), Youth Agenda (YA) and Pastoralists

impact, however little, on the ruling regime. The other is a confirmation of the argument by Kevin Hill & John Hughes (1998 & 1999) that the less democratic a country is, the more active her citizens are online; that ICTs have better prospects for democracy in faulty democracies, or what Dahl would call polyarchies, rather than in the extremes of autocracies and liberal democracies.

Development Community.

9.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Discussion of Findings

Four years ago, Dennis McQuail (2000:136) observed that it was "too early to conclude that politics has been given new life by new media, but there are emerging possibilities for 'electronic democracy' which do challenge" hegemonic political communication processes. Two years earlier, Luke Uka Uche (1998) indicated that time was ripe for the study of the link between ICTs and democracy in Africa, more so because "empirical studies are yet to be conducted to ascertain the socio-cultural, economic and political ramifications" of ICTs. The results of this study on new media use by CSOs supports the 'reinforcement' or 'trend amplifier' model, and confirm that ICTs have indeed enabled the expansion of public communication space but only within the limits of what the technological, social, cultural, economic and political environments could permit.

The majority of Kenyan and Zambian CSOs, especially NGO and media actors, agreed that the communication landscape had changed significantly with the advent of new media. They used the Internet, email and mobile phones to gather and disseminate information, collaborate and network with their local constituents or 'clients', among themselves and with foreign donors and partners, with much greater ease than was possible before. They could also use ICTs to lobby the central government and its officials and bureaucrats. In both Nairobi and Lusaka, the author immersed himself into typical daily routines of CSO operatives. Despite being such an attraction to petty Nairobi muggers and thugs to the extent that few want to risk to use it in public, the mobile phone tended to be ubiquitous and a common method of communication among media and NGO operatives. While interviewing one NGO leader on a Friday, his mobile phone rang. It was one of the youth leaders finding out details about a meeting the NGO had organised for the following day in Buru Buru, a suburb in the relatively more crowded 'Eastland' part of Nairobi.

Sitting in front of a computer based at the reception of one of the NGOs that had no problem offering a glimpse into their communication, one could watch all sorts of

collaborative and strategic emails flowing in. Some emails would review previous operations; others would be about planning future short-term projects and many would debate the goings-on in politics, and possible course of action for the NGO 'community'. To fathom what it would feel like to not to be privileged with in-office or at-home Internet access, the author walked into public access Internet cafes to use the facilities and also watch CSO actors as well as ordinary folk use them. In Nairobi, there were so many private Internet and telephone centres competing for clients that costs had come down to KShs1 a minute with a minimum charge for 10 to 15 minutes, or KShs60 (GB£0.40 or Euros0.60 US$0.75) per hour, with generous discounts for clients staying longer. In Lusaka, the cost was a little higher due to lower demand, lower income levels and less competition. However, Lusaka is unique with non-corporate access centres, for example at the British Council and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, where, especially in the latter, CSO actors particularly journalists get free or nearly free access based on prior arrangements. Turning up at the World Bank premises in Lusaka for an IT-facilitated live televideo conference linking World Bank President James Wolfensohn with NGO leaders in Lusaka, in Sarajevo, in London and in Brussels, it was striking that the very first question asked from Zambia, by a woman NGO leader, was about efforts to facilitate IT access for enhancement of national and regional networking. Hanging around with some of the NGO officials at the Lusaka conference centre, it was interesting to watch one of them type a press statement on his lap top computer while discussing NGO matters with a leader of another NGO. The following day, the subject of the press statement was the lead news story in a leading local daily – and was second lead or in the inside front page of the other newspapers. Even for the researcher who had lived and worked in Africa since birth, things had significantly changed within just a few years of absence, with prospects of further changes in the horizon. A few observations need to be made.

First, local NGOs and media have developed local, regional and international links with actors whose resources they sometimes summon to bring to bear pressure on their

own governments. Violations of human rights and harassment of media workers were quickly reported via modern ICTs to international monitors of breaches in these realms, some of who wrote directly to the president to condemn a repressive action or appeal for release of arrested journalists or NGO officials. We have seen how in one instance, two Zambian NGO officials got freed after using mobile phones to draw attention to their plight in a police cell.

Second, the new network media have rendered futile, and therefore reduced, tyrannical efforts by the two governments to clamp down on the mass media workers, owners and their production equipment. Senior figures have resorted to using less primitive means, the due process of the law, to control at least local media content. For instance in Kenya, former President Moi got the courts to issue a gagging order preventing the *Nation* from publishing a story on corruption scandal involving his son. In March 2000, Moi's henchman Nicholas Biwott was awarded KSh20 million (US$250,000) against the *People* newspaper over an energy-sector corruption story, bringing Biwott's total awards over libel to Kshs60 million (US$750,000) in two years.[175] Within 100 days of being in office, President Kibaki instituted contempt of court proceedings against the *East African Standard* and the *Kenya Times* for covering a court case about a KShs10 million (US$125,000) debt the president had owed for a long time before he took office after the 2002 elections. In other words, even though the president no longer phones newspapers directly to 'kill' stories, journalists are no longer sacked, arrested, tortured or killed for doing their work, and printing presses are no longer raided – at least as much as used to happen before[176], journalists still exercise self-censorship due to new forms of curbs on their freedom. In Zambia, the *Post* editor Fred M'membe is often being arrested and

[175] Earlier in 2000 a local bookstore was ordered to pay Biwott KShs10 million (US$125,000) merely for selling the book, *Dr Ian West's Case Book* by British investigators Ian West and Chester Stern. The book implicated Biwott in the murder of former Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Robert Ouko. The Britons were ordered to pay Biwott Sh30 million (US$375,000) though they had refused to be drawn into the Kenyan case.
[176] In January 2004, Kenya police raided newsstands and confiscated thousands of copies of 'scandal sheets' (*The Independent, Kenya Confidential, the Citizen, News Post, the Weekly Wembe, Summit, Dispatch, the Patriot, The Mirror*), seized printing plates and other press equipment at the *Independent* and arrested 20

arraigned in court, for instance because his paper quoted rival politicians calling former President Chiluba 'a thief' or current President Mwanawasa a 'cabbage'. By the end of 1996, the Post faced over 90 libel and defamation cases filed against it by the government or its officials over stories on corruption and unpopular policies.[177] As a result, M'membe has resorted to increase his capacity to understand the law, by training as a lawyer at the University of Zambia.[178] What we are saying here is that there are obstacles that still result in censorship of media content. For as long as these media merely replicate content from their main print editions, qualitative expansion of the public sphere remains in jeopardy.

Having said that, it is important to note that journalists in both countries are very resilient. They continue to report on sensitive scandals despite the risks. In fact, many are turning to ICTs to make their reporting more accurate and defensible (assuming the courts are fair – but, part of the problem is that judiciaries in these countries are not independent). An example is the way Kenyan journalists used the Internet and email to investigate three cross-border scandals.[179] Another point is that the mere presence of online editions of newspapers makes the leaders conscious that the world is watching, a realisation that somewhat checks their excesses. Former President Moi was in the audience of an Africa meeting in 2000 where former US President Clinton said in his speech: "We can go online and read ....the *East African* or dozens of other African newspapers." And the *East African*, an upmarket weekly subsidiary of the *Daily Nation* and *Sunday Nation*, reported with the headline: "I Read the *East African* – Says Clinton." (Mudhai, 2002). Moi had often complained about the way online editions of newspapers spread unpleasant news about Kenya, thus damaging the country's image. Soon after taking over from Moi, there were media reports that Kibaki's entourage to the US included someone whose only job was to download stories from online editions of Kenyan newspapers and take or show

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vendors. This embarrassed the Information Minister Raphael Tuju who said the police acted illegally yet it would appear they were applying an archaic, but revived, law the new government had promised to scrap.
[177] US embassy Zambia report, available at http://www.usemb.se/human/1996/africa/zambia.html (Sept '04).
[178] Interview with M'membe, Summer 2001.

them to the President and his team. This 'joy rider' underscored the importance the president and his top officials attach to local media reports appearing online.

Third, it is discernible that the Internet, email and cell phones were useful especially by NGOs during elections in both countries as election results were promptly posted on websites. In Kenya, cellular phones helped identify problems in rural polling stations and combat fraud.[180] Using fixed and mobile phones where possible, election monitors communicated results as soon as ECK officials announced them – thus reducing chances of vote rig.[181] It would appear the government had realised the utility of ICTs in elections, going by the blocking of Internet services via state monopoly backbone.

Fourth, NGOs are poised to embark on even more intensive use of ICTs especially in Kenya, going by a US$180,000 National Council of NGOs proposal by NGONET.[182] One significant aspect of this proposal is its delineation of a gender component.[183] Indeed, ICTs have made it possible for previously less visible categories of elites – particularly women and the youth – to thrive as they embrace the new media much more readily. A good number of those surveyed for this study fall into such categories.

Fifth, CSO use of ICTs in a manner that has made them more efficient in their operations has awakened the state to embrace similar technologies to match their CSO nemeses. We already saw in the Zambian case that the *Post*'s aggression compelled the government to launch online editions of state-owned newspapers, *Times of Zambia* and *Daily Mail*. In Kenya, new ICTs, especially computers, form a crucial part of the government's planned radical reform of its justice, law and governance structures at the

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[179] One on purchase of military planes, another on security tender by Anglo Leasing and Finance Company and the third child trafficking allegations against a UK-based Kenyan preacher whose accomplishments included meeting the British royal family.
[180] BBC, 'Africa Calling: The Mobile Revolution,' Focus on Africa magazine programme, January – March 2004, 19-25, cited in Alden, 2004:476, note 52.
[181] IED Synopsis – 2002 General Election, http://www.iedafrica.org/elections2002_synopsis.asp, 2.0 (Sept '04).
[182] Internet for NGOs in Kenya: Kenya Proposal, available at http://www.ngo-net.org/docs/html/kp-uk.htm (Sept '04).
[183] Internet for NGOs in Africa: Gender and Research Aspects, available at http://www.ngo-net.org/docs/html/gra-uk.htm (Sept. '04).

total cost of Ksh2 billion (about US$25 million or GB£14 million).[184] The ruling elite that, under Moi[185], had banned government officers from using the Internet and attempted to ban the use of fax machines, has been converted into the discourse of Information Society. Viewed as "the most radical overhaul of the nation's governance structure in recent history", the reforms that Justice and Constitutional Affairs assistant minister Njeru Githae described as "nothing short of a revolution" would "alter every Kenyan's way of life" through "dramatic changes into diverse areas in which the public interacts with the government"; and "when this thing is over, Kenya will be a changed country." (Mutiga, 2004). It is envisaged the e-governance project will include e-voting system in future. This is perhaps what Cline-Cole and Powell (2004:6) would see as donors urging developing countries to develop e-strategies and allocating increased shares of their aid receipts on ICT-related activities. As long as the facilities are maintained in working order, such a project – even if donor driven – will be a bonus for ordinary people not only in terms of service delivery but also in expansion of channels of communication between the rulers and the ruled.

Already, there is intra-elite communication among government officials, going by news reports indicating that former Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) chairman Yash Pal Ghai often sent senior government colleagues official communication by e-mail while he was out of the country. The government has also launched an official website, with links to its organs like the State House and the National Assembly, as well as the 40 registered political parties and – wonder of wonders – the three main local daily newspapers and one weekly newspaper. A user has the facility to email the State House as well as the President himself. This is no clear evidence that Zambia has embarked on 'wiring up' the government, but indications are that this is a trend that will catch on.

[184] The project which started in 2003 has KPMG Peat Marwick as consultants, with financial support for the first phase from Finland, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.
[185] President Kibaki was for a long time Moi's Vice.

This brings us back to ideas on models of communication and change. Instances of governmental information and motivation campaigns qualify as endogenous when in fact new communication facilities are created in order to make possible the implementation of new policies. At times such changes are truly massive in the sense that the new policy objectives of the leadership call for nothing less than the transformation of existing patterns of political communication and the creation of a new set of structures, relationships, and linkages (Fagan, 1966:113). As Raab et al (1996:284) puts it, such e-governance initiatives may introduce significant broad second-order e-democracy. Other than creating a 'joined up' government, "the new technology will also open up the processes of administration to outside observers much more effectively than before. In so doing, administration will become more transparent, and more amenable to democratic pressures. This will lead to a virtuous circle of increasing transparency leading to greater efficiency and then to greater democracy" (Ferdinand, 2000b:5). This reinforces the earlier cited point by Graham (1999:66) on the relationship between ICT, enhancement of organisational-institutional efficiency and democracy. Elites articulate developmental ideologies that incorporate ambitious plan for expanded media facilities designed to be used in the service of the state (Fagan, 1966:120). Whether or not in the final analysis the desired systemic changes actually occur, whether the citizens actually become more participant (*sic*), the bureaucracy more responsible, [and so on], is another question. (Fagan, 1966:113). Countries like Malaysia embraced such endogenous change that ended up leading to a substantial expansion of the public sphere as unintended consequences (Abbott, 2001a & 2001b).

The sixth point to make here is the fact that previously the Kenyan and Zambian governments would not have taken up any such ambitious programme aimed at strengthening its institutions because there was little room for new or alien ideas. It is in this light that can be seen Kenyatta's ban on Ngugi wa Thiong'o's community theatre play, *Ngaahika Ndeeda* (Kikuyu for, *I Will Marry When I Want*) in the 1970s, for promoting

dissent, and Moi's ban on Kenyan TV soap opera, *Tushauriane* – ostensibly for being vulgar. Some theorists have argued that the 'package' of manifestly non-political mass communication presented to audiences in the less developed countries nevertheless has important political consequences for political change. "That is, by watching even such vulgar fare as the English-language horror, love, and adventure films widely circulated in Asia and Africa, the new citizens of these nations come to develop skills and attitudes of political relevance."[186] More simply, they learn to read the media in more sophisticated and potentially independent ways. The possible consequences of manifestly non-political artistic communication are well understood by absolutist rulers who strive to control cultural life lest the tastes and habits of independence and self-expression formed there carry over into political life (Fagan, 1966:21). Browsing the Internet, using email or using mobile phone even if for personal purposes may appear harmless to authorities but these cultural artefacts, as we have seen, have the capacity to be technologies of power.

Until 2004, and perhaps more accurately up to 1998, ICTs developed in Kenya only exogenously as systemic elements and concomitants of the modernisation process rather than because, endogenously, political elites decreed they should, as in Malaysia and the Super Corridor project. For a long time, all that mattered in both Kenya and Uganda were the visions of leaders, Kaunda's Humanism, Kenyatta's *Harambee* and Moi's *Nyayoism*, which dominated all media outlets. Cabinet secrecy, intolerance of dissent, personal rule, authoritarianism, the big-man strong-man syndrome and 'maximum' leadership have been used by various authors to characterise the leadership of both countries, resulting in several coup attempts. Atieno-Odhiambo (1987:189-91) sees such leadership in terms of "regimentation", "depoliticisation", and "canalisation", part of the "quest for hegemony by the state in all spheres of national life". Barkan (1992:180) sees "manipulative and repressive" regime while Goran Hyden saw uniform coercive political superstructure. All

[186] Herbert Hyman (1963), 'Mass Media and Political Socialization: The Role of Patterns of Communication,' in Lucian W. Pye, (Ed.), *Communications and Political Development*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, cited in Fagan, 1966:20-1.

these lend credence to the use of state 'hegemony' here, not necessarily in a strict Gramscian sense.

Seventh, even though both countries slipped back to a pre-dominant party system rather than true multiparty democracy after the reforms, there is little doubt that as a result of their aggressive activities, urban CSOs played a major role in some kind of weakening of the state and the authoritarian ruling elites in both Kenya and Zambia. In Kenya, "President Moi's authority [to govern] began to unravel and his always fairly feeble 'party state' disintegrated *under pressure from radical intellectuals and politicians in Nairobi* the 'democratisaiton' process in Kenya was a relatively *peaceful affair*, providing both a classic study in *civil protest* and testimony to the *power* of the external world over the Kenyan economy and upon the *attitudes* of Kenyans" (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:2). The italicised [my emphases] words and phrases seem to add up to 'soft power' that CSOs in particular tapped into through their ICT-enhanced faster global networking, especially with the donor community.

"From 1990, at the peak of the government's authoritarian hold over all aspects of the country's life, it took only two years for the single-party system, with all it implied about the role of the state and the autonomy of the individual, to be *humbled* and *abandoned* [my emphases] in the last weeks of 1991." (Throup & Hornsby, 1998:2). The implication is that the state's sovereignty was clearly being threatened. While challenging the notion of hegemonic post-colonial African state and the consequent perception of counter-hegemonic functionally operative civil society, Chabal and Daloz (1999:25-6) write:

"It could be argued that control over public media has enabled states to control information for their own hegemonic purposes. Even here, such manipulation of the information media is of little significance, for two main reasons. First, virtually all Africans have access to international radio (BBC, Radio France International, Deutsche

Well, etc) and not a few can now receive satellite television. Second, informal means of communication (from gossip or rumour to the dissemination of news through non-official organisations like ethnic associations or African churches) are undoubtedly more efficient and more strongly influential than the official state-controlled media. Moreover, the resources devoted to the official media are regularly mis-employed, thus further weakening their impact. In Zambia, large sums have been spent not on improving media coverage but on air-conditioning the television headquarters."

Like many other Africanist scholars, these authors do not mention new media. Part of the answer to this omission can be found in a 2002 survey by the International Republican Institute in 55 of Kenya's constituencies, which indicated that the main sources of information on politics for Kenyans were as follows: radio (68.2%), newspapers (64.7%) and TV (35.9%). Others included political meetings (15.5%), family and friends (11.4%) and religious meetings (4.9%). The mainstream media thus constitutes over 70% of the main sources of information on political issues in Kenya (IED, 2002). Indeed this is precisely the reason why our study of ICTs focuses on the urban CSOs who have greater access to new media according to surveys cited in chapter one which profile typical users. Eighth, although we have discussed the rural-urban nexus as one that is blurred, it is important to visualise ways in which both CSOs and new media can reach out to the rural dwellers. CSOs in both countries already play a major role as channels of communication with the rural folks; hence as mediators they are in a position to pass on their information and knowledge privileges or apply these plus skills in their service delivery. Zambia's FODEP operates national, provincial, district, constituency and ward level executive committees through which respective volunteers initiate and implement civic and voter education programmes in accordance with the unique needs of their own communities. In 2001, FODEP had 6,500 election monitors deployed in 5,509 polling districts and 72 collation centres. They bought 81 bicycles, one for each of the nine provinces and 72 districts to facilitate voter awareness and election observation. NGOCC, with 65 affiliates,

reaches 75% of women in Zambia. The Kenyan Catholic network has about 630 parishes and around 7,000 prayer houses; they deployed over 28,126 poll observers in the 1997 elections. These penetration levels can be complemented by attempts to get new media to the rural areas, for instance Kenya's scheme on regional telecommunications providers. In addition, Posta Kenya has started using V-SAT to link up hundreds of post offices including those in rural areas. In Zambia, an ISP is making plans to penetrate rural areas. "We have what they call the e-Link project and this is designed to bring broadband to rural areas. .... We want provide Internet access on a single local number to bring the cost down. We're doing a pilot in Choma to prove the concept. We have done a wireless link from our broadband network using connectivity leased from a cellular phone provider."[187]

Finally, it is important to reiterate that there are limits to the democratic potential of both CSOs and new media (Meadow, 1993:442, 452-3). They do not have unlimited virtue in enhancing public participation and democratising the practice of politics, as their abilities are limited by the cultural, economic, legal, and political environments. They have internal pressure (economic-ethnic tensions) and external weaknesses (reliance on bilateral and multilateral donors, especially the US and the World Bank; government repression) that often result in post-transition dissipation. It is also vital to point out the fact that CSOs and the new media are embedded in existing processes, and represent a continuity of off-line political interactions, like Kenya's ubiquitous public political gathering or *baraza* – "an institutional window on contending forces in Kenyan social and political life" which "offer a window on processes occurring at multiple 'levels' of social agency (from locality to nation-state, from assistant chief to cabinet minister or president)" (Hageurd, 1997:2-4,7-8). Fagan, (1966:4) reminds us that "ultimately the communication process as it interests us must focus both on man himself and on the artefacts which man the toolmaker has created to extend his communicatory powers. No matter how a man's words and actions are multiplied and diffused by technology, no matter how impressive the structure

[187] Russell Southwood, State of Zambian ISP Market, interview with Thomas Lungu, Acting Chief Executive

of the mass media or the political organisations that he commands, it is still man the symbol producer and manipulator who stands as the one indispensable link in the communication process." Barton (1979:8) argued that Africans (owing to the impacts of the colonial-era struggle for independence) are the most natural politicians in the world; they are intrigued by the political process, the wheeling and dealing of politicians, the machinations of party politics. Hence, the political rumours, innuendos and speculations taking place via new media represent continuity, rather than a radical break from Africa's past. Perhaps what may be new is the fact that new groups, like women and youth, are participating more actively in political realms, not necessarily because they had not been there before but perhaps more because the instruments of political power are more diffused and user-friendly. The soft power that is becoming more important in the information age is in part a social and economic by-product rather than solely a result of official government action (Nye, 2004b:32). Yet in the information age, governments that want to see rapid economic growth find that they can no longer maintain the barriers to information flows that historically protected officials from outside scrutiny (Nye, 2004:91-2).

To borrow from Fagan (1966:35), the picture revealed here is specific to the period and conditions around the time of the interviews and observations, but are pointers to more generalisable conclusions besides providing explanations to certain developments in the realms of ICT-CSO nexus in governance and politics.

9.2 What The Thesis All Adds Up To: A Summary of the Main Claims

This thesis has advanced the argument that urban-based political Civil Society actors, NGOs and news media, in both Kenya and Zambia, perceive ICTs as presenting them with significant opportunities for achieving greater democracy. Representatives of these non-state actors view the Internet, e-mail and the cell phone in particular as tools that have enhanced their operational efficiency and also helped them overcome obstacles often put in

Officer, CopperNET Solutions, available at http://www.thezambian.com/technology/isp1.aspx (Sept '04)]

their way by the ruling elites whose aims are to ward off any form of challenge to their power. While recognising that the new media enable the non-state actors to engage in cross-border communicational activities as a way of bringing about changes within states, the focus here has been on enabling or constraining local conditions and off-line factors.

Employing the civil society theory with a focus on a recently modified public sphere concept, this thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge through an empirical study based on interviews carried out in Nairobi and Lusaka around election time. In a departure from some of the overly deterministic literature, this study pays particular attention to the perceptions on new media by a category of Africa's political actors who have been considered early ICT adopters and topmost users, as well as largely accredited for recent waves of democratisation.

In essence, the thesis has four main arguments that support originality claim. First, it argues that democratisation in Zambia and Kenya does exist, and that the new media have played some role in diffusing power and political activity more widely. The public sphere has opened up and broadened the elite to include groups such as women and the youth that were hitherto invisible due to the dynamics of less open political arena and news values of mainstream media. Given the relatively closer relationship to the ordinary people of these new elite, this has meant possibilities of greater involvement of a wider society. For the state, the implication has been that of encroachment on a part of its authority, especially with respect to political views, by CSOs – hence the state's attempt to regain control by embracing new media as well. Up to this point, this work augments the widespread 'democratisation through new media' thesis. Yet, and secondly, it critically examines the naivety of many of such a line of argument, and shows that such naivety is sustained mainly by a tendency to over-generalise. Through case studies, the thesis demonstrates that the processes of both democratisation and the deployment of the new media by CSOs and NGOs are more complex and much more nuanced than the literature on the subject usually shows. Hence, thirdly, the grounding of the thesis in the original

fieldwork carried out in the case study countries and interviews and communications with many of the key players further shows its originality. Finally, the thesis is original in its critical use of a modified concept of the public sphere in explaining processes of socio-political change in Kenya and Zambia, paying attention to why the process of democratisation, though real, has been partial, and why the new media have only partially fulfilled the promises commonly associated with them. It is the proposal of this thesis that CSOs, especially church-based organisations with their wider grassroots reach, should do more to pass on, directly through provision of hardware or indirectly through two-step flow model, their ICT-based knowledge and skills to rural people and urban slum dwellers. In particular, they should help these categories include their own local content in the new media in order to minimise the risks, associated with globalisation, of ICT-enthusiasm.

9.3 Future Work

This study has looked at the use of new media by CSOs. However, there are number of related approaches and research initiatives that would be useful in future. As already hinted, a deeper analysis of e-governance, the Kenyan project cited above, is necessary using more penetrating methods than have been used so far (White, 1999).

Another area worth examining is the use of ICTs by individual politicians and political parties (White, 1999; Gibson, Nixon & Ward, 2003). The fact that in Kenya, "political parties made use of the Internet for the first time in our political history, with the National Rainbow Coalition coming out strongest" (Khisa, 2003) is worth investigating.

The third area that needs further investigation but which was, also, outside the scope of this study is whether there exists political use of new media by ordinary folk, and if so in what forms.

Appendix

SELECT WEBSITES

KENYA	
Name	Website
Government of Kenya (official)	www.kenya.go.ke
National Assembly	www.parliament.go.ke
State House	www.statehousekenya.go.ke
Kenyaweb (unofficial, includes politics and govt)	www.kenyaweb.com
Electoral Commission of Kenya	www.eck.or.ke
Electoral Commission of Kenya	www.electoralcommission.go.ke
Kenya Socialist Democratic Alliance (KSDA)	http://kenyasocialist.org
Uhuru Kenyatta (presidential candidate 2002)	www.uhurukenyatta.co.ke

ZAMBIA	
Name	Website
Government ('dead')	www.state.gov.zm
State House (under construction)	www.statehouse.gov.zm
Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)	www.elections.org.zm
The National Online (unofficial, includes politics)	www.zambia.co.zm
Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD)	www.mmd.org.zm
United Party for National Development (UPND)	www.upnd.org
Nevers Sekwila Mumba (Pastor & politician)	www.zambiashallbesaved.org
CopperNET	www.coppernet.zm
Zamtel	www.zamtel.zm
Zamnet	www.zamnet.zm

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