

# POWER AND PRESSURE: AFRICAN MEDIA AND THE EXTRACTIVE SECTOR

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Journalism in Africa has come far in recent decades. The decline of one-party dictatorships, which traditionally kept a grip on the press, has brought about rapid changes.<sup>1</sup> The number of media outlets has expanded and in many countries, such as South Africa and Nigeria, the press is now known for being lively and outspoken. The old days in which the government controlled the one broadcaster, strictly licensed just a few newspapers and kept a tight grip on newsprint allocation are gone in most countries.<sup>2</sup> From having a few dozen media outlets at the end of the colonial period, Africa now has hundreds. Across the continent, small newspapers and radio stations have sprung up, many with just a few thousand listeners and tiny staffs. The rapid expansion of new technology also bodes well for journalistic freedom. Online publications also allow wider participation and the growth of citizen journalism, which can boost governance and promote transparency.

A well-functioning media in Africa is a critical development need. African governments face serious policy challenges, and many government institutions do not function effectively. High-quality journalism, which is necessary to highlight the problems that need solving, digs deep and explains the topics of the day in clear language. Despite these needs, and despite the recent changes described above, there are grave deficiencies in the quality of African journalism.<sup>3</sup>

Critiques of the portrayal of Africa by the Western mainstream media include its focus on crisis, disaster, war, famine and its oversimplification of social organization and ethnicity.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, the local African press remains a disappointment for many people on the continent. Not only would Africans like to see well-written and detailed coverage by Africans of the news that affects their lives, but they want the media to cover the important topics that will affect their country's economic and political development. With some notable exceptions, the quality of daily journalism is not as good as it should be, and there is a shortage of detailed investigative reporting on key topics. As a result, many of the African urban elites rely

on foreign media such as the BBC or CNN for their daily news diet.

There are a number of exceptions to this gloomy picture and the good news is that change can and does happen quickly in many developing countries. Shifts in political regimes, media ownership, investment in education, economic growth and the introduction of new technology have all contributed to rapid improvement in countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and South Africa. Today, in many African countries, there are a handful of quality dailies and broadcasters adhering to high standards, employing the best reporters and editors they can find and paying above-average salaries.

It is also important to recognize that many of the problems endemic to African media are shared by journalists all over the world in both developing and developed countries. Many of the criticisms made about newspapers and television reporting in Africa can be made about media in other parts of the world. One must also remember that what African journalists are being asked to do (i.e. cover in great detail all kinds of technical topics related to economic development) is not a kind of journalism seen frequently in the Western press either. An in-depth investigative story on mining or oil companies appears only rarely in places like the *New York Times* or *Financial Times*. When these types of articles do appear, it is often because the journalist was helped by government investigators or tipped off by short stories that appeared in the local press.

This article argues that one of the reasons for the poor performance of African journalism is the difficult conditions under which African journalists work. This has naturally affected their reporting. Underpaid, poorly trained and working under both political and commercial pressures, many African journalists suffer from the devaluing of their profession, which has left them vulnerable and isolated. Typifying these conditions, in countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, some journalists are not given a salary but simply left to rely on payments from sources. “The main problem facing the African media is the lack of [financial] resources,” one Ghanaian editor told me recently.<sup>5</sup>

Improving the quality of media in Africa requires an understanding of both the importance of a well-functioning media and the reasons for its failure. Therefore, this paper begins with an examination of the link between the role of the media and economic development, followed by an articulation of the key challenges facing journalists in Africa today. These challenges are illustrated through a case study of African coverage of the extractive sector.

## **JOURNALISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The hardships described in this article affect African journalists covering most beats. However I would argue that the implications are particularly serious for

journalists covering subjects related to economics and development. A journalist who does not have a background in literary criticism may write an uninformed book review, but the consequences will be limited. A journalist that covers economics, without being educated in the subject, can cause harm by misinforming his readers.

There is a nascent but excellent literature documenting the role of the media in promoting economic development. Works by Alexander Dyck, Tim Besley, Roumeen Islam and others have shown that an active media can help expose corruption and promote fair elections.<sup>6</sup> Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has demonstrated the role of the media in preventing famine.<sup>7</sup> The media can not only expose wrongdoing but can also help decide development policy by putting topics on the agenda for public discussion and covering topics in a way that educates the public and policymakers and helps societies decide how they want to approach certain developmental questions.<sup>8</sup>

In short, having a well-informed and well-developed media aids a country's political and economic development. It has become commonplace to argue that good governance is important for development. The standard argument is that democracy prevents the abuses that are common in its absence and is a necessary, but of course not sufficient, part of an effective system of checks and balances. It is not sufficient partly because democracies can give rise to populist leaders who may make promises that cannot be fulfilled, encouraging their countries to follow unsustainable policies. Countries need to decide how they want to tackle matters such as trade regimes, privatization, banking regulation, setting up of stock markets, land reform and exchange rate regimes. A lively and well-informed debate on these topics, in the media as well as in other fora, is necessary if democratic processes are to lead to decisions that are consistent with long-term robust and equitable development. An uninformed citizenry can be misled into supporting policies that are not in the interests of a majority of the citizens.

The link between an effective media and economic development is illustrated by the coverage of the extractive sector. In much of Africa, the wealth from the extractive sectors (oil, gas and mining) poses challenges for African governments. Nigeria is often pointed to as an example of poorly managed natural resources. Despite having had oil income since the 1960s, \$380 billion in revenues is estimated to have been stolen by corrupt politicians.<sup>9</sup> In 2002, per capita income had fallen to about one-fourth of what it was in the mid-1970s.<sup>10</sup> Nigeria's GDP per capita was only \$1,161 in 2007, and 54 percent of the population lives on less than one dollar a day.<sup>11</sup> There are a number of nongovernmental organizations working in Nigeria to improve governance, including the New York-based Revenue Watch Institute and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Many of these

groups are committed to finding ways to ensure that the country's resources are used to promote the country's development. As their names indicate, these groups believe that a more informed citizenry is essential. The focus is on watching where the revenue goes and on advocating greater transparency in the processes by which oil is extracted and the revenues used. It has almost become an article of faith that improved press coverage will help solve some of the problems commonly found in countries that depend on revenues from the extractive sectors. So far, these organizations have centered their attention on training, reflecting a belief that more effectively trained journalists would better cover these sometimes highly technical topics, which would be of help to society at large. Indeed, the call for better-trained African journalists has been around since the 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

### **PROBLEMS FACED BY JOURNALISTS IN AFRICA**

My analysis suggests that there are three fundamental reasons for the problems facing media in Africa: (a) a lack of quality training for journalists; (b) the basic business model of African journalism; and, more broadly, (c) the political, social and economic context in which the media operates, including the lack of an educated readership and low incomes in many areas, which reinforces a flawed business model.

Much of the attention of outsiders trying to improve the quality of media in Africa has focused on the first and third problems mentioned above but given short shrift to the second. For instance, outside reformers have worked hard to improve the quality of training, but have been frustrated because these expenditures have had so little effect. So too, they have focused on certain aspects of the political context—arguing for greater freedom of the press.<sup>13</sup> Eventually, they realized that more was required—there had to be access to information, and there developed an emphasis on transparency in government and on the passage of freedom of information acts; yet these too have not been as effective as hoped.

#### **Lack of Education and Training**

The first obstacle to creating a high quality media is the lack of education. Reporters are often inadequately trained and lack the requisite tools to report on oil, for example, or to understand the technical aspects of the industry. They are neither equipped to follow the money (to trace what happens to the revenue streams generated by the sale of natural resources) in the industry, nor to understand how joint ventures work. Readers might want to know why it was, as oil prices soared after 2003, that oil revenues did not increase in tandem. To explain this, journalists would have to understand the design of oil contracts. Readers might also want to know why governments signed contracts of this form. To

answer this question, a journalist would have to have some understanding of the functioning of oil markets and contract law.

The low pay of journalists (discussed more extensively below) helps explain why so few are adequately educated. Those who have formal education in finance, economics, trade, government and other topics related to reporting on oil are likely to choose working in those industries over being a journalist—there is considerably better money in them.

In many African countries, the education system has suffered as incomes have stagnated over the past quarter century. This is truer in those countries that have seen larger reductions in their incomes, such as Nigeria, whose per capita income has fallen significantly since the 1970s. Nigerian journalists interviewed for this article suggest that an important reason for the decline in the quality of journalism in their countries was the overall slide in the university system. Journalists who want to develop expertise on these topics generally look abroad for such education, yet few can afford this option. Additionally, few African media outlets are willing or able to fund the education abroad of their reporters. The declining economic conditions (and, often, the adverse political conditions) mean that many who manage to go abroad to be educated do not return. While there are deficiencies in overall education, journalism training is particularly inadequate. Often what is taught in journalism courses about standard practice is irrelevant when journalists start work. For example, anthropologist Jennifer Hasty describes Ghanaian courses in news writing that emphasize the traditional news lede of five Ws and one H (who, what, when, where, why and how), yet she found that in practice, article ledes in Ghana's state-run media were largely based on official speeches at government press conferences.<sup>14</sup>

One of the ways in which this lack of education manifests itself is that business reporters will often write stories neither they nor the average Nigerian is equipped to understand. This is characterized by stories that begin with a few paragraphs of straightforward, relatively simple writing, followed by a string of paragraphs using technical language without clear explanation in layman terms. This technical language tends to come directly from speeches, press releases from politicians and oil companies and oil-related conferences.<sup>15</sup>

There are a few reasons for this practice. First, if the reporter is unable to understand the technical language or the mechanics of what this language refers to, he or she has little choice but to reprint it verbatim. This is a common problem in oil reporting. Second, the reporter or editor is often paid by the politician or oil company to print the story. While it is part of the ethical strictures of the press in the United States and Europe not to accept money from sources, it is an essential part of the business model of much of the media in Africa. Publishers can

pay journalists low salaries, knowing that the journalists have this other source of revenue.

Third, according to Darren Kew, “Under Nigerian journalistic standards, part of the journalist’s credibility depends upon how technical his or her content is.”<sup>16</sup> In her book *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana*, Jennifer Hasty argues that local oral traditions require flowery and unclear language. She cites many examples of journalists taking statements from government officials and turning them into lofty and general comments because government officials are expected to speak in “Big English” a pompous and indirect language.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, it is easier for the journalist to simply excerpt information directly from a press release. The more complex the subject, the more effort required to write a story that will be intelligible to readers.

### *Brain Drain*

While lack of training is a key problem, training programs have sometimes been less successful than hoped because of “brain drain.” The brain drain from journalism is high. Many journalists who receive education in financial and business reporting from programs run by organizations such as Thomson Reuters Foundation or during the one-year course offered by the Knight-Bagehot Fellowship Program at Columbia University later leave the field of journalism. A retired staffer from the World Bank Institute (WBI) who ran economic training programs in Africa for decades, estimates that the majority of his alumni has left journalism, often helped by the credential (a certificate) they receive from the WBI once they have completed their training course.<sup>18</sup>

Jobs in journalism are a “second choice” for most Ghanaian journalists; when they decide to move out of the profession, journalists often end up working for the very officials they used to cover. According to Hasty, “While relying on well-placed politicians and business people as regular sources of news, they may also consider the value of those connections for future career possibilities.”<sup>19</sup>

### *Lack of Specialization*

A contributing factor in the lack of training necessary to cover more specialized topics, e.g. economics, is that—as in many newspapers around the world—there is not enough specialization among reporters. Even reporters on the oil desk do not necessarily have degrees related to oil, finance, economics or other associated topics, though they may have had some training on how to report the industry on a general level. For example, research conducted for Revenue Watch Institute estimates that less than 10 percent of reporters in Nigeria have had advanced training of any kind in covering these topics.<sup>20</sup> Reporters tend to go into the trade first to

make a living, not to become experts in oil, finance or economics. The normal practice is to take a reporter with a degree in journalism and post him or her to the oil beat to learn on the job. Moreover, because a journalist may be reassigned to another beat, there is little incentive to invest in becoming better trained to cover a technical beat like oil. Because reporters have little technical competence, experts such as geologists and engineers are afraid to speak to them because they fear being misquoted.<sup>21</sup>

### **A Flawed Business Model**

Much has been written about the problems posed by the standard business model of the media, and particularly by its dependence on advertising. While low entry barriers make for a more competitive sector, which is generally viewed by economists favorably, the high level of competition gets reflected in low profitability, which leads to low salaries and a lack of resources. But worse, it leads to business practices that undermine the quality of coverage. For reasons suggested earlier, competition does not always manifest itself in striving to improve quality and credibility, but rather sometimes results in a race to the bottom.

#### *Market Incentives for Self-Censorship*

Because the media is often at the mercy of the government and the oil industry, a lot of what is reported is reputed to be little more than public relations for these entities. I noted earlier that journalists and editors are often paid by those whom they cover. But in the case of an important sector—like oil in Nigeria—there are often severe economic consequences to printing something that goes against the political and economic interests of those who are largely responsible for the sustainability of the media. Oil companies and businesses with ties to oil companies make up a vital and influential share of advertising revenues for media, leaving media little choice but to comply or risk bankruptcy. This gives the government and oil companies the ability to withhold information that could be damaging to them and to release information that promotes them and their interests. Citizens groups and NGOs, while well-intentioned, do not necessarily have the economic or political clout—nor the expertise or the public relations machine—to counter the onslaught of self-serving announcements put out by government, international financial institutions and oil companies.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Low Salaries*

The basic business model of African media contributes to the prevalence of low, or even non-existent, salaries for journalists. The range for a reporter is from zero to several hundred dollars a month. Understandably, this means a career in

journalism is not necessarily the first choice for many people working in the field, and turnover is high. The low salaries also mean that many reporters take freebies, gifts and tips from their sources, and some accept—or even ask for—bribes in return for favorable coverage, strategic story placement or the suppression of stories that they would otherwise publish. As in other developing countries, people who

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are not journalists pretend to be so they can get the freebies and cash given at press conferences.<sup>23</sup>

“It’s an all-comers profession. The barriers to entry are low,” said one senior Nigerian government official responsible for an important economic ministry, “They are given a job and a desk and told to fend for themselves.” According to this official, journalists routinely mangle the financial stories they are given, make frequent mistakes and do not understand the basics of the industry, no matter how thoroughly his country’s public affairs office explains the story and provides detailed press releases. “It’s frustrating,” the official said. He complained of extortion attempts by journalists, saying that they often approach him and his colleagues asking for payment in return for burying stories and

gossip items, which they—the journalists—manufactured. Not seeing the irony, he also explained that his office routinely pays journalists to feature stories about his government’s agency prominently on the front page of the paper; “otherwise they pop it in a little corner somewhere.”<sup>24</sup>

### *Capture*

The level and ubiquitousness of “capture” or co-optation of African media also present a problem for successful journalism. For instance, many journalists view the professional associations of energy reporters in Nigeria as essentially captured by or beholden to the industry. Those reporting on government are often captured by those whom they are supposed to be covering critically. We have already noted one of the reasons for this—only by providing favorable coverage can one maintain access to news sources. But the economic and political conditions in Africa, as well as prevalent social norms, make the problems that are common everywhere particularly serious.

Large inequalities and high unemployment create a culture of deference in which the low-paid journalists are far more deferential to those in authority, both in the public and private sector. In her book on the Ghanaian press, Hasty



describes the journalist from the state-owned press on assignment to a formal visit to a benefactor: arriving, kept waiting, given information, offered a cake and a soft drink and then sent on his way with a small amount of cash. “[T]he existence of a strong cultural frame is evident in the formality of invited visits, the recognition of a social and cultural code of conduct, and the humiliating consequences of any breach of that code.... To some extent, all Ghanaian journalism is influenced by this model; but the tendency to deference and assent is more pronounced in the domain and presence of state authority.”<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, those in the government try to induce reporters into believing that writing stories supporting the government is a matter of good citizenship. Indeed, in Ghana, payments made to journalists by their sources, ostensibly for taxi money are referred to as “soli,” short for solidarity.<sup>26</sup> Many scholars have noted that this view of the role of the press dates back to the immediate post-colonial period, when journalism was viewed as a way of boosting national unity and development.<sup>27</sup>

## **Political, Social and Economic Context**

### *Lack of Resources*

The low profitability of media is reflected in a general lack of resources. Many newsrooms lack the basic equipment needed to do the job. There are few computers or telephones, no ability to make long-distance phone calls for ordinary reporters and often few or no laptops. Reporters who want to go on reporting trips are forced to rely on their sources for transportation and accommodation.<sup>28</sup> In Ghana, journalists taken on a visit by a mining company complained that, despite repeated requests, they were not taken to neighboring villages to interview local residents about the environmental impact of the mine.<sup>29</sup>

### *Lack of an Educated Audience*

An additional problem is the lack of education for the general public. A whole host of media outlets cater to listeners, viewers and readers who have a low level of education. Illiteracy rates are high, and news is traditionally circulated orally rather than in print. Many people are too poor to buy newspapers; instead, they rely on old copies that are shared with dozens of other people.<sup>30</sup>

Making matters more difficult is the two-tier system of news in many countries. Elites rely on foreign sources of information and the Internet, though they do provide some readership for the handful of quality dailies available. The rest listen to radio, watch commercial television and read mass market papers. Local radio often practices a journalism “of intermediation” in which viewers call upon the local radio station to solve problems such as a road that needs to be fixed.<sup>31</sup>

### *Ownership*

In almost every sector in Africa, there is a shortage of entrepreneurship, and this is perhaps more true in the media than in other sectors. Given the shortage, it is natural that the few entrepreneurs look for sectors with high returns; media typically does not make the short list.<sup>32</sup>

Ownership patterns mean that the strongest and most powerful outlets are owned or subsidized by the government. Some of the most active press is owned or controlled by the opposition. Opposition press is often focused on critiques of the government. Neither of these kinds of outlets tries to publish objective and hard-hitting reports based on deep reporting and fact-checking.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, government-owned press can get preferential access to information from the government, which may put increased pressure on other media to make sure that their stories are not overly critical.

### *Political Pressures*

In many countries journalists must be willing to compromise their content if they are to get this information from the government and oil companies. Yet even if they do manage to get information, if they write stories that are critical, it is very likely that their editors will change their stories to meet the needs of the powerful people cited in their pieces. Thus, journalists who write exposés may find they will not get their stories published. Such problems arise everywhere, but the problems are more severe in Africa. Because journalism is not a lucrative field and unemployment rates are high, journalists find themselves with strong incentives to compromise their work in the name of earning a paycheck.

### *Threats Against Journalism*

In spite of these subtle and not-so-subtle political and economic pressures, there are courageous journalists who do write critical stories. Therefore, when these normal economic pressures fail to suffice, some governments take stronger measures, including the threat of violence and arrest. Nigeria, for instance, has a history of arresting journalists for trying to promote transparency through reporting. This continued through President Olsegun Obasanjo's tenure. In its 2007 report on Nigeria, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) found that:

In many areas of Nigeria, local journalists operated amid violent conflict between ethnic, religious, and political factions. These challenges were especially stark in the southern Niger Delta, where militias, separatist insurgents, and armed criminal gangs battled the government for control of lucrative oil exports. Kidnappings of oil workers and

shoot-outs between rival gangs were frequent; while journalists were not directly targeted, their ability to operate in the Delta was curtailed by general insecurity.

For example, on June 5, two gunmen entered the bureau of the national newspaper *Punch* in the main Delta city of Port Harcourt and attempted to kidnap a staff member, who escaped by jumping out a window, according to the Lagos-based organization Media Rights Agenda. On July 25, gunmen stormed the Port Harcourt offices of the *National Point* newspaper, having apparently followed Michael Watts, a visiting professor from the University of California, Berkeley, from a nearby bank in the hopes of robbing or kidnapping him. The gunmen shot and wounded the professor and a security guard working for the paper. Watts' research concerned oil-related violence in the Delta region, Reuters reported.

One Lagos-based journalist who reported on energy issues told CPJ that while many Nigerian media outlets maintained correspondents in the Delta region, reporters were constrained by the difficulty of accessing remote areas and by the often-conflicting accounts given by law enforcement agencies and militant groups. Federal authorities were particularly sensitive to international media coverage of the Delta. The government lashed out at CNN in February after it broadcast a report on kidnappings, accusing the U.S.-based news channel of lacking balance and paying "criminals" to participate in interviews. CNN stood by its reporting.<sup>34</sup>

The Committee to Protect Journalists also reported on threats to journalists in Ghana and Uganda, but the situation in these countries is more stable than in Nigeria. While these explicit threats have an enervating effect on independent journalism, the reality is that the "cash-induced" self-censorship discussed earlier probably plays a much larger role in silencing the media. The fears of losing access and angering one's editor and publisher and the related pressures from advertisers work together to stifle independent journalism.

Legal pressures are also brought to bear. In one notorious case, the online publication *Sahara Reporters* was sued in Texas for libel after publishing a report alleging that bribery was involved when the Nigerian government settled a case against the multinational Pfizer. Investigative journalist Ibiba Don Pedro has also been harassed for her work covering the effects of the oil industry on the Niger Delta.<sup>35</sup>

## PRESS COVERAGE OF THE EXTRACTIVE SECTOR: A CASE STUDY

The results of the problem faced by journalists can be seen in the press coverage of the extractive sector. A recent study of the major newspapers in Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda concluded that the press coverage of this sector in Uganda was the strongest, though still lacking.<sup>36</sup> Much of the coverage, as with all business publications around the world, stems from press releases or other news originated by the companies being covered—in this case the oil and mining companies. Events that would not be considered news in the Western press are routinely covered in Ghana as well as in other places.<sup>37</sup> These include donations by major companies, openings of schools and hospitals and visits to local festivals by government officials.

The Nigerian newspaper the *Guardian* is considered one of the better papers in the country and one of the largest circulating papers, competing with the *Punch* for educated readers.<sup>38</sup> An analysis of the *Guardian*'s coverage of the electricity and oil sectors in January and February 2008 exemplifies above-average coverage in the region. On many days there were two to four stories on the oil and electricity sector. Nearly all were short and superficial. They were largely written from press releases or driven by events, such as coverage of a speech at a conference or a signing ceremony for a new plant opening. These stories were mostly single-sourced, though occasionally two sources were cited, and had commentary only from the government or industry. Most of the time, when the articles presented complex material, it was not properly explained and there was not enough background information provided. A piece that appeared on 20 February about changes to the “sharing and disbursement formula for excess crude savings accounts between the federal and state governments,” almost surely was comprehensible to only a few readers.<sup>39</sup>

The more business-oriented coverage was stronger. There were, for instance, daily oil comments on the front of the business section or the occasional front of the entire paper. These focused on market movements in New York and were not different from market comments in the press anywhere in the world. They may have been drawn from news agency reports.

There were some stories in the *Guardian* about the National Assembly questioning or critiquing some aspect of government policy. An example is the 1 February piece, “Representatives Probe \$10 Billion Spending on Power Projects,” which explained that the House of Representatives was worried about the electricity situation in the provinces. An editorial in the 29 January issue commented on Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua's criticism of his predecessor's poor management of \$10 billion invested in the electricity sector. But there was seldom consistent follow up to these articles.

There were also some full-page focus pieces that covered the subjects more in-depth such as one on the inability of the government to stop oil companies from


flaring gas.<sup>40</sup> On 29 February there was a story, “Lagos Season of Darkness,” which featured interviews with people in Eggon Town who complained of constant power shortages. The story concluded by citing vandalism as the problem.

Several UN reports on climate change and the environment were covered during this time period—in one case in a two-page spread—with the help of news agency reports. Interestingly, these appeared in the “Houses and Property Section.”

While these were sufficiently well-written such that the source was not obviously a press release, many other pieces had the flavor of press releases or possibly paid insertions. On 22 February the article, “Oil Firm Donates Station to Lagos Police Command,” began with the line, “History was made yesterday....as oil giant Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Ltd. donated an ultra modern building to the Maruko Policy Division, Lekki Peninsula Station.”

According to Austin Onuoha, a community development activist and author working in rural Nigeria on land conflict issues, “Media report mainly what [I’d] like to refer to as the ‘bandwagon news’ of the oil industry. These are routine stories such as an oil spill, community uprising, kidnapping, etc.”<sup>41</sup>

The weakness of coverage of the extractive sector in Nigeria highlights the difficulties faced by journalists working in this country and exemplifies the challenges across Africa. It will take a great deal to change the situation for the media. Training efforts have made a difference but have not, and will not, address the larger social, economic, and political context. Education levels, salary increases and the political and legal climate need to change before the press can fully reach its potential. New forms of media and online publications show promise but have not yet had a massive impact across the continent.<sup>42</sup>

These are critical issues for those foundations and NGOs that see governance and accountability as an important part of democratization development.<sup>43</sup> Most of these entities have now come to the realization that democratization movements will only be successful if there is a more educated citizenry. Many now grasp the need for improved journalism training. This work is important, but our analysis has suggested that by itself it will not suffice. There needs to be a more comprehensive attack on the difficulties facing journalism in Africa. 

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom House, “Historical Trends in Media Freedom,” *Freedom of the Press* (1984-2007). For more information see the annual reports by Freedom House, which has been tracking press freedom

in Africa since 1980: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.

<sup>2</sup> Louise Bourgault, *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Africa's Media, Democracy and the Politics of Belonging* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Lilian Ndangam, Review of *New News Out of Africa: Uncovering Africa's Renaissance*, by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, *Media Culture and Society*, 432-434.

<sup>5</sup> Interview by the author, September 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Roumeen Islam, *Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2002), 45-61, 107-139.

<sup>7</sup> Amartya Kumar Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

<sup>8</sup> Anya Schiffrin and Joseph E. Stiglitz, "The Importance of Critical Thinking," in *Covering Globalization*, ed. Anya Schiffrin and Amer Bisat (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 3-15.

<sup>9</sup> Chris Albin-Lackey, "Chop Fine: The Human Rights Impact of Local Government Corruption and Mismanagement in Rivers State, Nigeria," (Human Rights Watch Report, 19, No. 2(A), Washington, DC: 2007).

<sup>10</sup> "By 2002 Nigeria's per capita income had plunged to about one-quarter of its mid-1970s high, below the level at independence. Along with the endemic malaise of Nigeria's non-oil sectors, the economy continues to witness massive growth of 'informal sector' economic activities, estimated by some to be as high as 75% of the total economy." Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Nigeria: Background Notes," (2008).

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, "Nigeria: Country Brief," (Washington, DC: 2008), <http://go.worldbank.org/FIIOT240K0>.

<sup>12</sup> Bourgault, 158.

<sup>13</sup> Islam, 45-61, 107-139.

<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Hasty, *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Ben Colmery and Anya Schiffrin, (unpublished paper, Revenue Watch Institute, Spring 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Nigerian journalist, interview by Ben Colmery, Revenue Watch Institute, Spring 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Hasty, 59.

<sup>18</sup> Retired World Bank Institute staff member, interview by author, New York, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Hasty, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Colmery and Schiffrin.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Anya Schiffrin, "PR in Developing Countries," in *Where the Truth Lies: Trust and Morality in PR and Journalism*, ed. Julia Hobsbawm (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 184-193.

<sup>23</sup> Indonesian journalist, interview by author, Accra, Ghana, August 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Senior Nigerian official, interview by author, New York, December 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Hasty, 73-74.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>27</sup> Nyamnjoh; Bourgault.

<sup>28</sup> Ghanaian journalists, interview by author, Panos Institute Conference, Bamako, Mali, July 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO estimates literacy in sub-Saharan Africa at 60 percent of the adult population. UNESCO,

“EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004,” [www.unesco.org/education/efa\\_report/zoom\\_regions\\_pdf/ssafrica.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa_report/zoom_regions_pdf/ssafrica.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Joy-FM, interview by author, Accra, Ghana, July 2008.

<sup>32</sup> In emerging markets, where incomes are high, advertising revenues can be substantial, especially in television, where there are government-created and natural-entry barriers.

<sup>33</sup> Nyamnjoh.

<sup>34</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Attacks on the Press 2007: Nigeria,” 5 February 2008: <http://cpj.org/2008/02/attacks-on-the-press-2007-nigeria.php>.

<sup>35</sup> “Aondoakaa’s man, Paul Botwev Orhii Becomes NAFDAC Director General,” *Sahara Reporters*, 9 January 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Hulland, “Reporting the Curse: The Role of the Press in the Extractive Industries of Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda,” (unpublished paper, December 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Hasty, 18.

<sup>38</sup> “Nigeria: The Punch newspaper seeks to knock out the competition,” *Rap 21*, no. 15 (2004), <http://www.rap21.org/article18257.html>.

<sup>39</sup> *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 20 February 2008.

<sup>40</sup> *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 16 January 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Colmery and Schiffrin.

<sup>42</sup> “Internet Usage Statistics for Africa,” Internet World Stats, June 2008, <http://www.internetworld-stats.com/stats1.htm> (accessed 1 February 2009).

<sup>43</sup> “About RWI,” Revenue Watch Institute (2008), [www.revenuewatch.org](http://www.revenuewatch.org).