



Radio Voz Coop, Maputo/Bagamoyo, Photo by Patrícia Mota

## Community Radio: the future speaks “glocal” An African experience: the Guinea- Bissau & Mozambique cases

This article focuses on a comparative analysis of community radio realities in two Lusophone African countries: Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, whose local field research refers to 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2009, respectively. It focuses on the tense relationship between political power and community radios through theoretical reviewing of two emerging concepts: “Communication for Development” and “Glocalization”. A comprehensive ground-breaking study, it aims at determining what role these media can play so as to build challenging and participative citizenship. It exposes the dangers threatening the sustainability of these tools of empowerment, on being deprived of viable institutional frameworks. The main objective is to identify similarities and differences, to discuss resulting issues and to investigate the feasibility of unifying criteria, formats and definitions.

**Keywords:** Lusophone Africa, Community Radio, Sustainable Development, Human Rights, Empowerment.

**Search Tags:** Communitarian radio, Communication and development, Human rights, Empowerment.

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### Source of the article:

This article results from fieldwork carried out in Bissau (2003, 2004 and 2007) and in Maputo (2009), in the context of the author’s PhD thesis, with the aim of investigating the role of Community Radio in the empowerment of rural, poor and marginalized people.

## Radio comunitaria: el futuro habla “glocal” Una experiencia africana: el caso de Guinea-Bissau y Mozambique

Este artículo es un análisis comparativo de realidades de radio comunitaria en dos países africanos lusófonos: Guinea-Bissau y Mozambique, cuyas investigaciones se refieren a 2003, 2004, 2007 y 2009, respectivamente. Se centra en la tensa relación entre poder político y radios comunitarias a través de una revisión teórica de dos conceptos nuevos: “Comunicación para Desarrollo” y “Glocalización”. Un estudio amplio e innovador con el objetivo de determinar el papel que estos medios tienen para construir una ciudadanía exigente y participativa. Expone peligros que amenazan la sostenibilidad de estas herramientas de empoderamiento, estando privadas de los marcos institucionales viables. El objetivo principal es identificar similitudes y diferencias, discutir problemas y proponer soluciones viables a la normalización de los criterios y definiciones

**Palabras clave:** África lusófona, radio comunitaria, desarrollo sostenible, derechos humanos, empoderamiento.

**Descriptores:** Radio comunitaria, Comunicación y desarrollo, Derechos humanos, Empoderamiento.

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# Community Radio: the future speaks “glocal”. An African experience: the Guinea-Bissau & Mozambique cases

## Introduction

**A**gainst expectations, the Globalization phenomenon has not eliminated social and economic obstacles in the contemporary world. On the contrary, it has greatly contributed to a growing gap between developed and developing countries, with poverty and social exclusion emerging as immediate consequences of this process. On the other hand, in Africa, in particular, globalization is responsible for the emergence of local development initiatives that require new perspectives for the adjustment of national policies to local singularities of urban and rural areas. Community radios are essential tools for structuring these new physical, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Local development comprises a vast range of practices and perspectives, a reality deriving from the multiplicity of actors involved in the management of territories. Democratic engagement and endogenous entrepreneurship stand out as primary aspects of human and social development which requires the participation of civil society and local socio-economic fabric as a precondition for

the sustainability of development. Redesigning sustainable strategies for social inclusion based on the paradigm “Think globally, act locally”<sup>1</sup> is a pre-requisite for Africa to board the train of modernization.

For more than 15 years, international Development Aid organizations, NGOs, media activists and world renowned academics have been campaigning for the right to establish sustained and sustainable Community Radios in Africa. To empower rural, poor and marginalized populations so as to enable them to understand social issues is the general aim of these citizenship tools whose development has arisen from partaking approaches towards Development. New social movements - that once focused on subsistence, training and mobilization - are now redirecting their attention to increasing access to media technologies as a way to empower those without a voice. Human Rights, Post-natal Health, Youth Literacy, Gender Equity, Civic Training and Rural Development are key-subjects for these counter-power media bodies seen as potentially “subversive” by political decision-makers who hold back from creating the institutional frame-

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1. Awareness of problems and global trends, at international and planetary levels, should not be an inhibiting factor for action at local level but rather an incentive to local authorities and other agents who, given their increased proximity to local peoples, can provide motivation for changes on development concept, territorial organization objectives and urban management of economic agents behavior and of individual lifestyles.

works that might prove them viable at all levels.

What is a «community radio»<sup>2</sup>? This is a theme under debate presently and umbilical linked to key-concepts such as: Good governance, sustainable development, participatory citizenship, public opinion, human capital, freedom of expression, inclusive democracy, information society, empowerment, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Communication for Development (C4D) amongst others. This study aims, therefore, at answering the following questions: how to define these media as alternatives to commercial and state radios? What opportunities do they offer? What problems do they face? What values do they broadcast? What themes and issues do they approach? What legislation are they regulated by? What human, capital equipment and financial resources do they require? What training action is needed? What mobilizing agents are presumed? What current problems compromise future sustainability? What pathways for a sustained and sustainable future?

Analysis general objective: In a scene set of plural, inclusive and participatory democracy to identify the conditions that should be met for community information to become a tool for emancipation in these African societies. Particular objectives for the article: to present two case studies, featuring distinct realities, meaning to analyze Community Radios development stage in these Portuguese speaking African countries; to identify functions for these mass-media within civil society; to understand their relationship with the political powers that be; to analyze the legislation frameworks regulating the sector and suggest a few recommendations towards its growing upgrading.

In terms of field research methods highlights should be made of: media speech content analysis; documental analysis (newspapers, magazines, statements, reports, official bulletins, information leaflets); bibliographic research at NGO's, international libraries (School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), British Library and Senate

Library), bookshops (Waterstones, Foyles and Blackwell's) and government press offices; nearly 300 individual, collective and family (open and closed) interviews (held in person, by telephone and through electronic means) with numerous personalities from the most varied social walks of life (such as politicians, social scientists, businessmen, trade unionists, local associations, media activists, national and international NGO's, Church representatives, communication professionals, writers, university students and teachers); analysis of content from audio recorded statements; informal talks; street *vox populi* actualities and opinion polls (enquiries). In Guinea-Bissau I have analysed daily and detailed programming from four community radios: *Voz de Quelélé, Jovem, Djalicunda, SolMansi*. In Mozambique I have visited seven radio stations: *Cascatas, Komati, Xinavane, Moamba, Muthiyana, Voz Coop, Maria*.

### Communication and/or Information: a precious **social world asset**

The communication praxis should be charted as a human right. The struggle for such right to become effective is ages old and has intensified over the last 150 years, above all, over the last two decades, namely as a result of new ICT's that came to allow for broadcasting messages in real time to increasingly numerous and distant audiences. To communicate is to interact culturally, to spread values and share knowledge, to cooperate with the OTHER and to establish a dialogue on development. True communication does not become effective through just one sole voice or a single individual. Indeed, it comprehends multiple individuals, numerous discourses, democratic

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2. "Community Radio is defined through five considerations: non-profit making purposes, community ownership engagement, community asset ownership and control, community partaking, low cost radio broadcasting (long-term sustainability)". In: Community Radios Conference, Luanda, 20-21 September 2006).

structures, active citizens, social alterity and community engagement. “One single voice, on its own, nothing solves or brings to an end, two voices being the bare minimum for life, the minimum for existence” (Bakhtin, 2005, p. 257). Communicating is the antithesis of geographic isolation and/or intellectual imprisonment, and is synonym to space-time closeness. If there is no communication there is no society. This is indispensable to Mankind’s survival (an innately social and sociable being) and it is one of the Fundamentals for human evolution as it presumes individual and collective emancipation. Quoting from Wolton (2004, p.18), “Tools and markets are not the most important in information and communication. The human being, society and cultures are. Therefore, there is no communication without a theory of communication, that is, without a representation of social and human relations and, ultimately, without a theory on society and on democracy”. Breathing is for the individual what communication is for society: it is a matter of survival! Etymologically, to communicate means “to make it commonly available, to relate”. For me, to communicate means to share, to integrate a society, to work towards the collective good, to turn an IDEA into a RESULT. Once a minority privilege, the access to the words is nowadays a fundamental tool in modern societies. A reality made possible by universally widened mass-media access and new technologies that brought over radical changes into the daily lives of human beings. The concept of topicality is therefore intrinsically associated to the media and these in turn fragment the countless dimensions of reality and turn them into social discourse. According to Bordenave (2003, p. 89), “Communication contributes to changing meanings that people attach to things. And through the change of meanings, communication cooperates with transforming beliefs, values and behaviours. Hence, the immense power of communication, hence, the use powers make of communication”. There are no doubts that communication, and above all the mass-media (stone-stepped on NTIC), are at

the epicentre of modernity’s social and cultural changes - A true differential that aggregates value to any society in the Age of “Information Globalization”. Global communication, contrary to what might be expected, tends to value its own cultural aspects and identity particularities, bringing to evidence inter-personal communication mechanisms and local mediation ways of which Community Radios are an example. For Ferin (2002, p. 10-11), “The complexity and multiplicity of established inter-relations – by people, at any time, in every situation, be they mediated or not by institutions or technologies - allow us to talk about a global communication and a global culture, where daily concerns, lifestyles, traditions, beliefs and views of the world, in short, the diverse cultures, become intertwined at an accelerated pace and with unforeseen consequences. This global communication – driven by ICT’s, by traditional media (press, cinema, radio, television, and advertising), by new media (mobile telephones, Internet and interactive television) as well as by content and cultural industries – has created the mirage of a global culture established upon a universally shared modernization paradigm”, she concludes. The current hegemonic (public and private) mass-media concentration is, however, a warning on the need to adopt a new paradigm that allows, on one hand, for changing information into a universally accessible heritage asset and, on the other hand, for developing local communities by integrating them into the Globalization. I am talking about «Communication for Development»<sup>3</sup>, a process that responds to social, cultural, political, economic, religious, educational and environmental needs.

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3. Development as targeted at people can achieve all its potential only if rural populations get involved in the process and have an interest in the sharing of information and knowledge. Communication deals with the human dimension of development: this, in turn, establishes a dialogue with the rural populations, gets them involved in planning their own development, supplies them with the information as a basis for social change and conveys the necessary knowledge and skills so that they can improve their quality of life. (FAO 1996).

The media scene reflects a country's degree of domestic development. Unfortunately, the universe of knowledge and technological modernisation is still a privilege of industrialised nations: the North controls production and dissemination of information, and the South essentially consumes it in a climate of constant pressures (as many journalists are mere hostages to the political classes and sponsors of dominant ideologies). This scene set takes us to the Information and Communication New World Order (NOMIC)<sup>4</sup>, an initiative launched in the 1970's by the Non-Aligned Movement in the name of a rebalance of the information flows representing a Third World nations need – whose arrival on the international stage begins through the Bandung Conference in 1955 – to claim for: equitable distribution of communication resources, safeguard of their cultural heritage and a right to equidistance from the two antagonic power blocs: the USA and the Soviet Union. The information gap between industrial and development countries was therefore an issue for debate and international confrontation, and as result, in 1977, UNESCO set up the International Commission for Studying the Problems of Communication (chaired by Sean MacBride, an Irish journalist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize) that issued in 1980 the report “One World and Many Voices”, also known as the “MacBride Report”<sup>5</sup>, to date the most wide and in-depth universal text about «democratization of communication», suggesting a “new communication order” so as to solve problems that are still topical: media concentration, information marketing and unequal access to information and communication. Since then, what progress have we managed to achieve?

### From rights to freedoms from theory to practice

Speaking of the right to communication implies speaking of other worldwide acknowledged human rights: the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of information (to inform, to be informed and to get information), the right to

freedom of the press, among others. *Article 19*, a London based NGO established in 1987, argues that “The access to information is not an elitist right. On the contrary, it is a right for everybody (...) it is an integral part of the “open government” concept that describes the idea that government processes and procedures should be transparent”. The above referred to organisation fights against all forms of censorship and voice silencing and, just like its name indicates, it highlights Art. 19 of the Human Rights Universal Declaration (HRUD) that guarantees “the right to seek, receive and spread information and ideas of any nature, as part of the right to freedom of expression”.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, Harms says that “The entire world has the right to communicate. The elements that integrate such Mankind's fundamental right are the following, without being anyhow limitative: a) the right of assembly, discussion, partaking and other association rights; b) the right to ask questions, to be informed, to inform and other information rights; c) the right to culture, the right to choose, the right to privacy protection and other rights related to the development of the individual. In order to ensure the right to communicate, there would be a need for devoting all communication

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4. NOMIC aims at: prioritising communication self-sufficiency; encouraging production and distribution of cultural products at national level; establishing community press in rural areas; establishing national policies to strengthen cultural identity and creativity; upholding non-commercial means of communication and information; contributing to Human Rights through mass-media; experimenting new ways of public engagement in mass-media management; encouraging cooperation between media professionals and their associations so as to increase knowledge across nations and cultures; improving international sharing of the radio-electric spectrum; establishing regulation on the cross-borders flow of data and communication (SURPRENANT, 1985; UNESCO, 1987).
5. General Recommendations: acknowledgement of global interdependence, attention to communication flows imbalance, recognition of communication as an individual right, communication policies for development (planning and financing) and social participation at all levels.
6. Such right is also ensured by Art.º 19 of Civil and Political Rights International Pact and by Art.º IV of the American Declaration on Human Rights and Duties.

technology resources to attend to Mankind’s needs in that regard”.<sup>7</sup> It should be mentioned that the first Law of Access to Information was promulgated in Sweden in 1766 but only recently has such reality become a world trend. In the late 1990’s, early 2000’s, many nations have adopted laws of Access to information and, presently, more than 100 countries all over the world guarantee such right. According to the above mentioned MacBride Report - suggesting a «New Communication Order» in order to promote Peace and Human Development – “Freedom of Information is, above all, the right of all members of the community to be aware of events of likely interest to its existence, guidance to its thinking reflexions and influence on its choices. (...). From this freedom of information results the informant’s freedom to get access to the knowledge of facts and documents, thus overtaking the secrecy behind which public issues get wrapped up, and the freedom to divulge the knowledge thus obtained”.

For well known historical reasons (colonisation, liberation struggles, civil wars), it has been particularly difficult for African nations to make progress on the issue of the right to access information. The African Regional Conference for the Right of Access to Information, held in Ghana between 7 and 9 February 2010, did approach the political and institutional constraints “that limit the exercise of the right to know in Africa”. Participants have described the main obstacles as “lack of political will” and delivered possible answers as “regional instruments” for a sustained and sustainable advancement in this area. The former American president, Jimmy Carter, who chaired the opening day of the conference, said that “Unlike other world regions, there has been no wave of countries approving and implementing laws of access to information. In Africa, only five countries have approved such laws, and that number includes Zimbabwe, of whom many say that it uses the law for repressing rather than supplying information”<sup>8</sup>.

This is a reality reflected in the World Press Freedom Index 2010<sup>9</sup>, from Reporters Without Borders (RSF), where over 50% of African coun-

tries are downwards the 89<sup>th</sup> position (second half of the table), a fact also verifiable in this group of 15 countries randomly selected (see table). On this NGO website we can read “With many African countries at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their independence, 2010 should have been a year of celebration but their journalists were not invited to the party. The Horn of Africa continues to be the region with the least press freedom but there were disturbing reverses in the Great Lakes region and East Africa” and we can also see the list of journalists killed in the last years: Carlos Cardoso (22 November 2000, Maputo, Mozambique, *Metical newspaper*), Didace Namujimbo (21 November 2008, Democratic Republic of Congo,

Rank	Country
22	Namibia
26	Cape verde
38	South Africa
60	Togo
67	Guinea-Bissau
91	Sierra Leone
98	Mozambique
104	Angola
108	burundi
118	Côte d'Ivoire
123	Zimbabwe
139	Ethiopia
146	Nigeria
172	Sudan
178	Eritrea

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7. Harms, L.S., (1976). An Emergent Communication Policy Science: Content, Rights, Problems and Methods, Honolulu, Hawaii: Department of Communication, University of Hawaii.
8. In: <http://www.foiadvocates.net/en/news/43-news/240-action-plan-for-right-to-information-in-africa>
9. The Ranking includes 178 countries. Position 1 = higher press freedom. Position 178 = least press freedom. The RSF Index measures press freedom in the world, reflects the level of freedom enjoyed by journalists and journalistic businesses in each country and the efforts by authorities to guarantee for the above mentioned fundamental freedoms. In: <http://en.rsf.org/>

*Radio OKAPI*), Sheik Nur Mohamed Abkey (4 May 2009, Somalia, *Radio Mogadixu*), Jean-Léonard Rugambage (24 June 2009, Rwanda, *Umuwugizi newspaper*), Lucas Mebrouk Dolega (17 January. 2011, Tunisia, *European Press Photo Agency*), Ahmed Mohammed Mahmoud (4 Feb. 2011, Egypt, *Al-Ahram newspaper*). From my own research, I can say that even in countries where the media enjoy fair levels of freedom (Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique being examples), the authorities show some disquiet and willingness to hold back the information flow. There is even self-censorship among media professionals who feel inhibited to cover some political events in fear of possible retaliation, including death, at its most extreme.



### Radio: the ex-libris of African communication

In spite of shortcomings in above mentioned fundamental freedoms, to talk about Media in Africa is, above all, to talk about Radio. An idea shared by Tomás Vieira Mário, Chairman of MISA<sup>10</sup> Mozambique “Just like all over Africa and in the so-called Third World, in general, Radio is overwhelmingly the main communication medium accessible to local populations and it is through Radio that they get public information, acquire wider knowledge, communicate events to families and to the community, express themselves culturally and get entertainment” (Mário, 2008, p.23). This Mozambican journalist describes the reasons

for distinguishing this particular social medium: **1.** Use of national local languages (spoken by forgotten minorities); **2.** Comparatively economic accessibility and availability on the market for radio sets and batteries, as alternative to scarce energy power (sometimes non-existent in more remote rural areas); **3.** Mobility of the receiver set; **4.** Possibilities for collective listening through a single radio set. And I add: **5.** It overcomes barriers placed by illiteracy (by reaching people with no reading or writing skills); **6.** Better accessibility (reaching invisible communities on the development path); **7.** Better adapted to cultures dominated by oral traditions (by contributing to retrieve and uphold cultural heritage). Described by many as the “people’s medium”, Radio achieves listeners within a fairly wide public segment and plays a very important role in promoting the average citizen active partaking in public life. In post-independence times and during armed conflicts, radio has been the main and most enriching (if not the only one) source of news broadcasts and even used for proselytising populations (though being a unilateral and vertical communication system) as corroborated by Alumuku & White (2005, p. 54-55) “Most countries in post-colonial Africa saw radio as a tool for unity and national cohesion. Although that may have been necessary, at that particular time, the services provided by radio stations very often did not respond to local information needs of grass root communities. Radios became frequently a tool for national propaganda. State controlled radio has remained a non participatory vertical medium used by a single dominant party or by military governments as a party apparatus body or in support of military power. Generally, there was no consistent policy on broadcasting development. For each change of government, a new wave short of ideas became established in radio stations with the appointment of inexperienced

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10. Media Institute of Southern Africa – Promoting Media Diversity, Pluralism, Self-Sufficiency and Independence. In: <http://www.misa.org/>

party faithful with little or no training in the use of radio for development". Even nowadays, both Public and Commercial Radios in Portuguese-speaking African countries seem to have been "held up" by elites that use the microphone at will so as to convey party political messages. Result: "A significant number of voters feel that politicians do not share the troubles of ordinary citizens or understand the everyday impact of their political decisions" (Coleman 2003). That raises a problem for the legitimacy of the democratic State! In this regard, Giddens (1994, p. 16) asks the question: "Is it possible to overcome the distance between governments and the citizenry, to 'democratic democracy', when both parties are considerably ambivalent about engaging with the other?" Rennie (2006, p. 1) shares my view: Participatory, community-based media would seem to hold at least a partial solution to this problem as it allows citizens to bring their concerns into the public sphere. The author adds that participation and representation have become two key-concepts in a globalised world. Mill (1859/1964, p. 218) sums up the complexity of the issue: ( ) it is evident that the only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate; that any participation, even in the smallest public function, is useful; that the participation should everywhere be as great as the general degree of improvement of the community will allow; and that nothing less can be ultimately desirable than the admission of all to a share in the sovereign power of the state. But since all, in a community exceeding a single small town, cannot participate personally in any but some very minor portions of public affairs, it follows that the ideal type of a perfect government must be representative. Access to Community Radios may, therefore, offer the only solution for free and independent debate as they can help to achieve the change of the predominant public sphere and to allow for the creation of counter-power mini-spheres, controlled by society's lower layers that put themselves forward as viable alternatives for integration and/or social change in spite of the

absence of legislation framework: "Community media has been imbued with ambitions of social change and simultaneously marginalised in communication policy the world over" (Rennie, 2006, forthcoming).

### Community Communication: in support of Human Rights

Consequently, to talk about Broadcasting in Africa is to talk about Community Radio: concept and applications on the ground, distinctive features, importance, mission, general and particular objectives, coverage/audiences, ownership and management formats, financing and administration models, programme grids (broadcasting content), problems on the ground (human, capital and financial ones), legislation/regulation (eligibility criteria for frequency allocation and broadcasting licences), political pressures/interferences, strategies for sustainability, country specific conditions and international perspectives (progressive policies). According to Dagrón (2001, p.12), Radio is the most penetrating and economical electronic means worldwide with the potential to be "the ideal medium for change". For this author, Radio has been for over 50 years the "most attractive tool" for participative communication and for development, and Community Radios having been "multiplied by thousands" all over the world. Why? Brecht (2005, p. 42) raises the challenge: "Radio would be the most fabulous means of communication imaginable in public life, a fantastic piping system. It would be, that is, if not only it would be able to transmit but also to receive; therefore, if not only it would be able to make itself heard by listeners but also to establish communication with them. Broadcasting should therefore move away from those that supply it and build up listeners as suppliers. Therefore, all efforts by broadcasters so as to give public affairs the feature of ownership by the public are wholly positive". This vision is, in my view, an answer to the questions asked by Wolton (2004, p. 28): "How to save the humanistic dimension of communication when witnessing the



triumph of the instrumental dimension? How to promote the creation of a new paradigm for communication on the basis of dialectics between those two dimensions”? It is complicated, I’m the first to admit, mainly at this phase of ‘post-modernity’-characterized by the current hegemonic (public and private) mass-media monopolies - in which “Human Rights live in a contradictory situation “as they have acquired an unusual discourse strength but are still being threatened from all sides. They have asserted themselves as goalposts for institutional legitimacy but they suffer tough blows from economic globalization. They have become strong in political science and are almost disfigured by epistemological philosophy. At the 1993 World Conference, held in Vienna, they received from governments the seal of universalism, those being times of great exacerbation of particularities” (Lindgren Alves, 2005, p. 9). But it is not impossible! I argue that, at a time of Globalization, the speech about Human Rights and its effectiveness will have visibility only within a new communication paradigm “Think Global, Act Local”<sup>11</sup>, whose feasibility relies on local, rural, community media whose maximum exponent lies in Community Radios (CR).

### Community Radios: Guinea-Bissau «versus» Mozambique

The following reflexions result from theory-practice maturing disquiet that has led me to the field (Guinea-Bissau: 2003, 2004, 2007 and Mozambique: 2009) in order to ascertain similarities and discrepancies on «community broadcasting» in these two Black African countries. According to the current definition by AMARC<sup>12</sup>, “Community Radio, rural radio, co-op radio, participative radio, free, alternative, popular or educative Radio (...) When a radio station promotes participation by citizens and upholds their interests, when it reflects their majority tastes and it produces good humour and true information; when it helps to solve the one thousand and one problems of daily life; when their programmes debate every

idea and respect every opinion; when cultural diversity rules over commercial homogeneity; when women are the main participants in the communication and are not just a lovely voice or an advertising attractiveness tool; when no dictatorship is tolerated; when everybody’s words can be aired without discrimination nor censorship, that is a community radio”. The widening of the broadcasting spectrum in Africa is a recent, vibrant and multifaceted phenomenon whose flourishing came about with the opening to multiparty politics (1994) and subsequent media liberalisation. Guinea-Bissau has been the first Portuguese-speaking African country to launch the experience of «community radio» through the NGO Acção para o Desenvolvimento (AD). This NGO has supported the establishment of *Rádio Voz de Quelélé* (RVQ), in 1994, famous due to its excellent work fighting the cholera epidemic that invaded the capital Bissau that year and made hundreds of casualties in all its neighbourhoods, except in *Quelélé*, where awareness radio programmes were broadcast conveying messages on individual and collective hygiene, disinfection of water wells, removal of public rubbish, health conditions control and evacuation of patients with cholera symptoms to the central hospital. In the following years, these new media have seen their

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11. “Think Global, Act Local” is the motto for the Global Action Plan “Agenda 21” (adopted by 178 nations) resulting from the United Nations Conference for the Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992). It is an action programme based on a strong partnership between local actors (grass roots associations, NGO’s, businesses, trade unions, local agents) aiming at sustainable development in the 21st century. A development model making economic growth compatible with social progress and the safeguarding of the environment and natural resources, ensuring the well being of present generations without compromising future generations.
12. The World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) gathers 4.351 community radios (voting members) in 126 countries. AMARC’s main aim since its establishment, in 1983, has been following and supporting the creation of a community radio world sector. AMARC advocates the right to communication at local, national and international levels. In: <http://www.amarc.org>

numbers multiplying and irreversibly achieving their intervention space and their right to active citizenship. The Guinean reality is easily noticeable: **1.** Public Radios, i.e. *Rádio Difusão Nacional* (RDN); **2.** Commercial Radios, i.e. *Bombolom-FM, Pindjiguiti*; **3.** Community Radios: more than 30 spread throughout the country's nine administrative Regions, including the Bijagós archipelago. With very few exceptions, all of them belong to the Guinea-Bissau Community Radios National Network (RENARC)<sup>13</sup> seeking to promote: **1.** The exchange of programmes between members of the NETWORK, **2.** Equipment and materials joint purchase mechanisms, **3.** Joint lobbying initiatives before the legislation and political bodies towards upholding joint and individual interests, **4.** Training and Job recycling for broadcasters and technical staff **5.** Facilitate access to national and foreign information sources. It should be mentioned that AD is an associate member of AMARC and that RENARC is a membership applicant and/or member candidate. Guinea-Bissau's CR have got editorial propositions for every taste: some opt in for **INFORMATION** (messages about births and deaths, organisation of traditional or religious ceremonies, requests for family relatives visits, announcements about trips or convening meetings); others favour **CULTURE** (life story-telling, youth memories, jokes, advice counselling, conflict resolution; some others (very few) attempt the differentiation through a determining crusade in favour of **TRAINING** (awareness of fundamental themes related to citizenship, sustainable development, Human Rights, child death rates, environment, health and women rights). Lastly, there are those (a large number) that go for **ENTERTAINMENT**: music programmes (requests for music titles playing and dedication messages), interviews with new artists, local singers promotion, sports programmes and radio drama.

In the case of Mozambique, the ownership issue is extremely complex, hard to understand and subject to wide realities/interpretations on the ground: **1.** (pure) State Radios (35); **2.** Public

Radios, i.e.: *Rádio Moçambique* (RM); **3.** Commercial Radios, i.e.: *99FM, KFM, SFM* and **4.** Community Radios (40). Both the first category and also the latter are, sometimes, inserted in Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs), implemented by UNESCO in partnership with the IT Centre at Eduardo Mondlane University (CIUEM) and Swiss cooperation actions, whose momentum came out from the World Summit on the Information and Communication Society (Geneva, 2005). Created in support of "ICT in rural development". Each CMC (currently more than twenty) has two components: Community Radio and Telecentre which provides several services such as: photocopies, internet, fax, bindings, house-keeping accountancy, computer use training, publicity leaflets, etc.

Pure (local) State Radios «versus» Community Radios: it looks like being a simple segmentation, but it is not! Why? The former are: **1.** Owned by the State, as represented by the Institute for Social Communication (ICS), created in 1977 for promoting communication in rural development; **2.** Managed centrally from the ICS Directorate through local province level delegations; **3.** Financed through the national state budget. These radios have no legal, finance, asset or even editorial autonomy. The latter are members of FORCOM, the National Forum for Community Radios, established in 2004, aiming at "Representing and defending CR interests on the basis of an effective coordination of needs and interventions by all affiliated members with no geographic, ethnic, religious, political and gender discrimination"<sup>14</sup>, clarifies Father João Carlos, its Deputy-Chairman. In his turn, Director Benilde Nhalevilo has described the objectives: to stimulate a common space for discussion and agreement around issues

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**13.** The decision to create RENARC was taken on 8 April 2001, in S. Domingos, on the occasion of the 5th Guinea-Bissau Community Radios Meeting. In: <http://www.renarc.adbissau.org/>

**14.** Statement gathered in the field on 01-12-2009 at Forcom's office in Maputo.

of common general interest, to promote close coordination and cooperation with the government, national public and private bodies, donors and other people or institutions involved in similar development programmes, to defend CRs before Government institutions and other decision making bodies, to promote and to mediate regional and international cooperation and to encourage gender equity<sup>15</sup>. Clearly, it is very similar to RENARC in Guinea-Bissau.

The community nature of a radio station should in my view embody the following minimum four features: **a)** ownership by the (geographic or stakeholder) community it serves; **b)** non-profit making, with social aims only; **c)** managed by the community with no public or private, political or commercial external interference; **d)** its programming should reflect the aims of the community. "Community radios and televisions are private actors that have a social purpose and are characterized by being managed by non profit making social organisations of several types. Their fundamental feature is the partaking by the community, being it on ownership or programming, management, operations, financing and assessment. They are independent and non-governmental media that do not do religious proselytising nor are they owned or controlled by or linked to political parties or commercial businesses"<sup>16</sup> (AMARC, 2008).

The difficulty with the issue in Mozambique and much discussion it has been raising lies in the ICS Radios that, in my view, and given the apparent features (that diverge from the AMARC definition) are unquestionably local state radios rather than community radios! Sofia Ilale, Director-General of ICS, has a different view: All our radios are community radios. They are established within the community, are managed by the community, they belong to the community and their programmes are defined by the community, only the ownership title deed is the State's! Educating its people is the State's responsibility. Our backbone is the educational programming. There is a management committee that represents

the people. The funding is decentralized, that is, no particular state fund exists for CRs and ICS requests funding amounts according to its needs, hence the importance of a Broadcasting Law so as to provide legislation to the sector!<sup>17</sup>. This government official states categorically that the survival of these media relies exclusively on the State and criticises NGOs for establishing radio stations and then withdrawing from the field without meeting "the terms of the Government Plan", showing "lack of seriousness".

In short, there are Forcom's (voting member of AMARC) community radios and ICS's (associate member of AMARC) local state radios. A question arises: Does this multiplicity of stations designated as community radios encourage the trivialisation of the existing concept (itself somehow permissive in what concerns ownership)? It is a complex problem, for which I got an answer at the 10th AMARC World Conference (Argentina, 8-13 November, 2010): These things are not black and white, there are grey zones... and this does not imply to exclude and/or to minimize these projects as least digestible from a «freedom of expression» viewpoint. Although being a property of the State or of the Church, they continue to serve communities involving more people in the communication process. Step by step, they will eventually move onto the right direction", said Jim Ellinger (*Austin Airwaves*, USA). Where to draw the boundary line? It is a problem that arises from the multitude of realities at world level that will always generate hybrid examples of difficult categorisation.

Because there is no national consensus on «how to categorise ICS radios», another question arises: after all, when and how did community radios were established in Mozambique?

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15. Statement gathered in the field on 23-11-2009 at Forcom's office in Maputo.

16. Document: "Princípios para um Marco Regulatório Democrático sobre Rádio e TV Comunitária", In: <http://legislaciones.amarc.org/Principios/>

17. Statement gathered in the field on 14-12-2009 at ICS office, in Maputo.

Felisberto Tinga, Director of Gabinfo<sup>18</sup> (State Information Office) explains the process: In 1977, The Information Ministry asked Mr. Juarez da Maia (a Brazilian citizen), founder and director of the Social Communication Office (whose name changed later to ICS), to find a New Paradigm for Social Communication aiming at breaking out from the information inheritance left by the colonial past and unifying dispersed and impoverished populations, under a costs/benefits logic. This expert on Communication/ICTs has suggested the Project for Communal Villages (copied from Tanzania where Jamal means «a place of unity»), financed by UNICEF and based on a logic of bi-headed action with simultaneous and peaceful cohabitation: 1. Radio Listening Centres and 2. Collective Listening Centres (whose designation later changes to Social Communication Centres)<sup>19</sup>, he clarifies. What were the differences? The earlier had a system of 3 to 4 loudspeakers on a tower 20/30 metres height, a cassette player, and it allowed for anybody to convey messages: soccer matches reports, educational programmes and on basic sanitation and domestic violence. In Gaza Province, drunken men used to beat up their wives, these would complain at the Centres and they would make public announcements naming the aggressors. The violence levels came down considerably he adds. In the latter, the person in charge of the neighbourhood would set the day and time for people to gather around and listen to the news from the same radio set. The Social Communication Centres (also under the tutelage of the Information Ministry) would be more elaborated, they had loudspeakers, amplifiers, news editors, announcers, own programming, transmitters rooms and people's correspondents who would walk miles or cycle by bike, gathering news from neighbouring communal villages so as to update information, for example, about the number of child deaths from cholera on a particular week. For Felisberto Tinga, these were the embryos of Community Radios! The chairman of MISA Mozambique disagrees vehemently: These centres were very much an integral part of strate-

gies and policies on rural collectivism promoted by the Government in the years immediately following independence, implemented exactly through communal villages. They were centres for collective listening to political and ideological messages of mobilisation of rural populations. The transmission through loudspeakers to all corners of the village meant that its listening was compulsory for everybody and reflecting the political options of those days. These centres were therefore profoundly anti-democratic. There was nothing of community about them but their localism<sup>20</sup>.

I am now opening a parenthesis in order to mention that the intention of the Communal Villages Project was put into question at a given time. There were those who described it as a way to colonise people through government propaganda. Out of concern, UNICEF in 1981 asked Michèle and Armand Mattelart professors of Communication Sociology at Paris University (VII e VIII) as consultants and experts in this field, to assess the nature and capacity of the project so as to guarantee a prosperous future in terms of communication. José Luís Cabaço, sociologist and ex-Information Minister (1980-1986), has offered his explanation: My predecessor, Jorge Rebelo, made a proposition to UNICEF for the establishment of Social Communication Centres (SCC), an idea that was given a welcome. They had to transmit programmes from this UN agency, music and news in local languages. They were also made use of for local court judgements (infidelity cases in the villages, sanctions to classroom missing pupils, etc). Transmissions would start at 04:30 a.m. (when peasants would start working on their fields) until 10:30 and then later at night. People felt thankful to Frelimo to make their day a bit longer. The Project was questioned and Mattelart and his

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18. Created in 1995 after the Information Ministry extinction. In: <http://www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz>

19. Statement gathered in the field on 30-11-2009, at Gabinfo's office, in Maputo.

20. Statement gathered in the field on 01-12-2009, at Hotel Avenida, Maputo; By E-mail on 03-08-2010.

wife went up to Cabo Delgado, visiting almost all the existent centres (36). They concluded that the project's structure was authoritarian and/or vertical but that were at the same time tools managed by the community and holding a very interesting local dynamic<sup>21</sup>. In Mattelart's field report we can read: The vertical dimension inherent to the nature of the medium and its accompanying image seems to be to a large extent offset, if not eliminated, by the close control which the people exercise over the message broadcast. In this connection, the various sectors of the population must be made to participate more actively in producing the messages<sup>22</sup>. José Luís Cabaço corroborates Felisberto Tingá's view saying that The idea was already about CR ! In 1984, *Rádio Xai Xai* (in Gaza province), starts broadcasting as an ICS radio designated as community radio and, in the following years, a few others are established. This state monopoly began to come down after the passing of both the 1990 Constitution of the Mozambican Republic establishing the principles of freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the right to information and The Press Law nº18/91 of the 10th August regulating information plurality. The State monopoly over broadcasting activities became extinct and the spectrum is widened to the private, mixed and cooperative sectors. In 1994, the Government changes the state owned *Rádio Moçambique* (RM) status into a public company. In the late 1990's, in parallel to RM and ICS, other interesting initiatives begin to emerge: within the ambit of the *Rádio Rural e Televisão* (RRTV) Project, the National Institute for Rural Development (INDER), under the tutelage of the Ministry of Agriculture, established 10 more rural radio and television stations. With the extinction of INDER, in 2000, ICS inherits all its broadcasting assets. In 1992, the year of the Mozambican peace agreements signing, two new sub-sectors emerge: 1. Party broadcasting, licensing award to Radio "*Voz da Renamo*" (VOR), later renamed as "*Terra Verde*"; 2. Civil society organisations, including Community Communication. The Chairman of MISA Mozambique also highlights three initia-

tives: 1. The Project Media for Development of Rural Communities and Empowerment of Civil Society (MIRAC, 2003-2007), by IBIS, a Danish NGO that brought on air another four community radios in the Niassa Province (at Maúa, Massangulo, Muembe and Majune), 2. *Buzi Community Radio* supported by the Austrian Institute for North/South Cooperation, 3. *Radio N'tyana*, supported by Oxfam-America.

For Tomás Vieira Mário, and I share his viewpoint, the Mozambican community radio sector emerges inspired, sponsored and supported by two United Nations agencies (UNESCO and PNUD) that are going to establish the project Strengthening Democracy and Governance through Media Development (1998-2006). Considered to be the world's largest of its genesis implemented up to now by UNESCO, this project (financed by bilateral donors to Mozambique: Scandinavian countries and Ireland) it has resulted in the creation from scratch of eight Community Radios: 1. *ARCO de Homoine* (Inhambane Province), 2. *Voz da Cooperativa* (Bagamoyo Borough, outside Maputo), 3. *Dondo* (Sofala Province), 4. *Cabeça do Velho* (Chimoio, Manica Province), 5. *Massequece* (Manica Province), 6. *Cuamba* (Niassa Province), 7. *Metangula* (Niassa Province), 8. *Milange* (Zambezia Province), as well as a few CMC s. It is in this context that, in April 2004, the national dynamics for local broadcasting under a community matrix, reaches a peak by the official establishment of FORCOM, whose constituent conference took place at Chimoio, with representatives for the then existing 42 radios (UNESCO, IBIS, ICS, Church, etc.), community televisions, CMC s and other national and foreign

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21. Statement gathered in the field on 18-12-2009, at Universidade Técnica de Moçambique (UTM), in Maputo, of which José Luís Cabaço is currently the Dean.
22. "Social Communications for Development in Mozambique. A tentative evaluation. Report by Michele and Armand Mattelart, English (original in French), Maputo, Mozambique, October 1980".

guests associated to the community broadcasting field, he clarifies. FORCOM's birth took place, consequently, as an answer to the question: how to aggregate all these radios and ensure their long term sustainability? Both ICS (state) and FORCOM (private) therefore have been sort of Partners/Stakeholders in the world of community broadcasting. However, due to incompatibility around the rules of the game, they go their own separate ways in 2006. A split that has been beneficial because it has separated the waters and therefore it has separated the underlying intentions, say the majority of the interviewees.

However, incongruence and disagreements do not take place around ICS only. One of the members affiliated to Forcom, *Radio Maria* (1995, Machava), is part of a WORLD FAMILY spread throughout over 50 countries in all continents. It belongs to the Roman Catholic Church (although it is not under control of any Church dioceses), it has got as its mission the evangelization of laicism, owns state of the art equipment, broadcasts intercontinental programmes and it does not "broadcast content seen as against Catholic moral doctrine, for example: the use of condoms in HIV/AIDS prevention"<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, there is no community editorial autonomy! The community is subjected to what Roman Catholic Church sees as broadcasting permissible! The programming grid is self-explanatory - 95% of its programmes are Catholic religious programmes: The Art of Living the Gospel, A Year walking with St. Paul, Mass of the Day, Meeting the Lord, Bible Readings in Portuguese, Chope e Ronga, etc. Over the week's seven days, there are just nine programmes that could be seen as truly community ones: Cultural Magazine, Youth Channel, Human Rights, Housekeeping Economy, School Tuning, You and Health, Community News and Messages and Dedications. Even Music is religious and varied. Father Alberto Buque, the Radio's Director, argues in its defence: We are a community radio of Christian education. God's message is not just for Catholics, we all use the same Sacred Scriptures, the Bible. It is a radio for

peace, calmness and transcendental meditation. We promote respect towards women in the home, justice, honesty, education and health. There is plenty of room for defending values that are all ours, that belong to Mankind, he concludes. I raise the question: Is *Radio Maria* a community radio? What about the members of the community who do not wish to be proselytised or who are atheists, do they become excluded from the editorial line? In Argentina, Steve Buckley, outgoing chairman of AMARC, explained: "That is a question on which we have never taken a clear position. The Church seeks very often to operate radio stations arguing that they are community radios because they serve a particular «faith community» with interests of their own, something that is both arguable and confusing. The «bottom-up» process means the inexistence of a higher authority (State/Church) and the community has ownership of management. Therefore, Radio Maria is imperfect. However, Networks/National Forums have got total authority to choose their members. AMARC cannot, in an authoritarian and unilateral way, define a set of fixed goalposts when different countries have different particularities. It becomes more tangible, to define objectives, to identify best practices, to draw statements of intentions, to ensure regional level workshops, and to work with local populations – something more organic and less regulating".

What is **the future** for Community Radios in these African Countries?

Nowadays, RENARC has got 28 affiliated CR's and FORCOM has got 40. Although Guinea-Bissau may be the forerunner for Community Radio in the Portuguese-speaking African countries, evidence shown demonstrate a stronger sector in Mozambique. However, the overall number of these media outlets still sees a few threats to their

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23. Statement gathered in the field on 18-12-2009 at Rádio Maria premises, in Maputo.

sustainability given constraints of several sorts: human (in the absence of adequate training and staffing instability as voluntary work generates high staff turn-over), equipment (technical problems around repairs and equipment maintenance) and financial (absence of consistent revenues flow and access problems to renewable energy sources), persecution by autocratic governments that make difficult the access to the radio-electric spectrum, inappropriate legislation (provisional licenses), disparities in the access to media (poor rural areas), women's exclusion from knowledge (ICTs promote inclusion), concept trivialisation and lack of statistics indicators.

In terms of staff training and support to get a good command of ICTs, mention should be made of the work done by Informorac (National Initiative on Mobile Training for Community Radios), created in 2003, in Guinea-Bissau, and by CAICC (Community Communication and Information Support Centre), created in 2006, in Mozambique, whose attributions are similar: technical support through training courses and follow up visits, productions of tools and useful studies for regional activities and strengthening of decentralised dynamics through partnerships with other organisations for local development. Informorac promotes this interconnection through a mobile unit and through «blended learning» (mixed teaching combining presence and remote learning through the internet) and CAICC operates through a helpdesk made available in person, by telephone, e-mail, Skype or Messenger and through a discussion list. Both RENARC and FORCOM have a Gender Unit that aims at training/encouraging women to work at CRs and to create continuous support mechanisms for the ones already in such work so as to become role models to the community. It should be stressed that disagreements in the field are not exclusive of Mozambique. Indeed, in Guinea-Bissau, AD and Informorac are rivals in a behind the scenes dispute with no end in sight: AD accuses Informorac of supplying CR's with state of the art equipment, inadequate therefore for the particular

realities on the ground, and Informorac's Director, Ladislau Robalo, accuses AD of taking over the reins of RENARC and not allowing for its legalisation/growing autonomy after so many years of existence. Unlike in Latin America, African CR's have been created from exogenous processes, hence the noticeable lack of people's engagement, mainly in Mozambique, where I have noticed a lesser degree of dynamism in the production of own programmes and in news gathering at rural villages, transmissions rely heavily on rebroadcasting State radio programmes.

In neither of these two Portuguese-speaking African countries is there a Broadcasting Law and the 1991 Press Law prevails. There is good news, though. In late 2007, the Mozambican government has begun the process of preparing the future Broadcasting Law, the first on this matter since independence in 1975, aiming at regulating radio and television activities. "As successor to Press Law 18/91 of the 10th August, this has become necessary in order to respond to the growth occurred in this sector over the last 10 years and also as dictated by the 2004 Constitution that enforces the regulation through ordinary laws of freedoms of expression and press as well as the right to information" (Mário, 2008). According to Gabinfo, the Broadcasting Law green paper is now concluded. When passed by Parliament, this Law (still at public debate stage) will fulfil the present sector legislation shortcomings and it will corroborate the key-idea of this paper: "A popular Government without popular information or the means to acquire it, is but a Prologue to Farce or Tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives".<sup>24</sup> African countries should adopt specific legislation on these C4D tools (like Uruguay did in 2007) and Conduct Codes (like Australia in 2008) towards homogeneous

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24. JAMES MADISON PROJECT, In: [http://www.jamesmadisonproject.org/press.php?press\\_id=18](http://www.jamesmadisonproject.org/press.php?press_id=18)

practices/concepts. More importantly, Knowledge Society should go for Glocalization<sup>25</sup>, a strategy that aims to provide Globalization with a multi-dimensional approach (the presence of a local dimension in the production of a global culture).

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25. "Structural changes experienced by societies and the international system have been determined by the interaction of three distinctive processes: globalization, emergence of the society/economy of knowledge and networked society. Thus, we see a process of globalization-localisation – so-called «glocalisation». Localisation is associated to the emergence of the society of knowledge where, production, dissemination and effective use of knowledge and their translation into innovation, besides learning, are the most relevant social activities. «Tacit knowledge» (know how and know who) is decisive. Contrary to «coded knowledge», production and dissemination of tacit knowledge demand personal interaction, face to face, establishing trust, a high level of social capital and a territorial base – ultimately providing a new strategic value to the territory, one that offsets the loss of relevance generated by globalization". In: <http://www.ieei.pt/publicacoes/artigo.php?artigo=808>