

<p>Institution: University of Bedfordshire</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 36 - Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</p>
<p>Title of case study: Building Media Development and Journalism Education in Africa</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The impact outlined here derives from research done by Professors Ivor Gaber and Jon Silverman in the related fields of political reporting, justice and democratic accountability through freedom of expression. This work, conducted under the aegis of the Centre for International Media Analysis, Research and Consultancy (CIMARC) at the University of Bedfordshire (UoB), has influenced both the policy environment and professional practice. For example, (in Gaber's case) improving the news coverage of elections in Nigeria, Malawi and Uganda; and (in Silverman's) working towards post-conflict reconciliation in Liberia and Sierra Leone, through an analysis of the media's reporting of war crimes trials.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Ivor Gaber, Professor of Media and Political Communication, commenced 01/09/2006 Jon Silverman, Professor of Media and Criminal Justice, commenced 03/07/2007</p> <p>Silverman's research dates from 2007, with a field trip to Sierra Leone to examine the media and post-conflict justice ahead of the trial of the former 'warlord' Charles Taylor in The Hague. This was followed, in October 2007, with ethnographic work in the Central African Republic at the request of the prosecutor's office at the International Criminal Court. Silverman's acknowledged expertise in this area led to the award, in July 2010, of a three-year, £25,100 grant by the British Academy, under its <i>Africa Partnership</i> programme, which has as a principal aim the establishing of links between UK and African institutions and intra-regional links within Africa. Silverman has supervised a PhD student based in Sierra Leone, whose thesis is a qualitative examination of the response of civil society in Sierra Leone to media coverage of two war crimes trials – including the trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague.</p> <p>Silverman's research on media content and ethnographic fieldwork in the four regions of Sierra Leone helped to build bridges between civil society groupings, lawyers, academics and activists, using the war crimes reporting as a focus. The research shows that strengthening the lateral links between media and civil society can be an effective antidote to the arbitrary imposition of power by African 'big men' which has, so often, institutionalised weak and corrupt governance and led to violence and the breakdown of order.</p> <p>Gaber's underpinning research relates to his prolific output investigating relations between journalists and politicians and, in particular, his analysis of how the media has been reporting election coverage in a mature democracy (UK) which he has then been able to apply to countries in Africa that are transitioning to democracy. He has also investigated issues regarding fair reporting of conflict and post-conflict situations in other regions (e.g. Israel–Palestine). In his 2007 book, particularly Chapter 11, Gaber applied his research findings about election coverage in the UK to Africa. In a publication targeted at African reporters he outlined his research findings and demonstrated its relevance, and application, to reporting politics and elections in an African context. This set out the key role the media should play in a democracy, enabling citizens to make informed judgments, seeking to represent and crystallise public opinion to the politicians, giving politicians a space to respond to public concerns and to set out their own policies and providing a 'public sphere' for debate.</p> <p>In his 2006 research, which analysed the previous year's General Election in the UK, he demonstrated how the issue agendas of the media, the public and the politicians diverged, and also demonstrated how the Labour Party – the eventual winners – whilst differing most radically</p>

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from the agendas being pursued by the media, was closest to that of the public's. Not only did this research bring him to the attention of those organisations involved in promoting democracy in Africa but also provided him with the contextual basis to enable him to undertake the various initiatives with which he was subsequently involved.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Silverman J. (2012) 'Taylor Verdict: Implications for International Justice' cited (p.40) in 9th *Annual Report of the President of the Special Court for Sierra Leone*.
- 3.2 Silverman J. (2013) 'Strengthening the links between media and civil society'. Paper delivered at a two-day seminar in Monrovia, Liberia, April 10/11, 2012 + one-day seminar in Freetown, Sierra Leone, March 13, 2013.
- 3.3 Silverman J. (with Cole B.) (2013) 'The media's reporting of war crimes trials and its impact on post-conflict democracy in Sierra Leone and Liberia'. *Journal of African Media Studies*, Vol. 5 (1). pp.53-67.
- 3.4 Gaber I. (with Seymour E. & Thomas L.) (2009) 'Is the BBC biased? The Corporation and the Coverage of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War' *Journalism Theory, Practice & Criticism* Vol. 10, No 2, 2009.
- 3.5 Gaber I. (2007) *Live from Africa: a handbook for African Radio Journalists*, produced for and published by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, London.
- 3.6 Gaber I. (2006) 'Dislocated and Distracted': Media, Parties and the Voters in the 2005 General Election Campaign *British Politics* 2006 Vol. 1 No 3.

4. Details of the impact

Silverman's research and expertise in the media and international justice underpinned a unique training programme, developed by the BBC World Service Trust (now re-named BBC Media Action) and the international N.G.O. – Search for Common Ground – to bring daily radio coverage of the war crimes trial of Charles Taylor in The Hague to audiences in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The programme ran from 2007-10, with Silverman as consultant/mentor. Silverman's contribution was acknowledged in media coverage of the trial (e.g. report on the BBC World website on August 12, 2010 – www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-10930834?print=true).

The research in Sierra Leone and Liberia led to seminars in both countries in 2012 and 2013, attended by leading representatives of civil society. Arising from the Monrovia (Liberia) event in April 2012 a virtual policy forum was established – uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/medialegitimacy/ – offering a space for the sharing of ideas/research/ initiatives on fostering democratic legitimacy in a post-conflict setting. The event in Freetown (Sierra Leone) in March 2013 was attended by the Chair of the Anti-Corruption Commission, as well as by the President of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists. A 63-page report of the proceedings – "The Impact of the Special Court Trials on the People of Sierra Leone and Liberia" – was published and circulated widely in political, NGO and academic circles in Sierra Leone.

The research in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the subsequent fostering of institutional relationships has led to an initiative – CIMARC Scholars – in which early career academics from Anglophone West Africa, with an interest in media, human rights and governance, will spend short periods at UoB participating in the academic life of the university, thus fulfilling a primary goal of the British Academy's *Africa Partnership Programme*.

Prof. Gaber's professional and academic reputation has been the foundation for election training programmes and reporting projects in Tunisia, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi and Burkina Faso. The Ugandan project – the *Ugandan Radio Network* (URN) – is, at the time of writing still ongoing. It initially entailed training 202 correspondents in election reporting techniques, the production of radio packages, (including simple editing) and how to transmit these packages to a central newsroom in Kampala, where the reports were then distributed to FM radio stations throughout Uganda. In a country, still in post-conflict recovery from the LRA insurgency (The North of Uganda was convulsed by an uprising by a group calling itself the Lord's Resistance Army which

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from 1986 until relatively recently created terror and chaos throughout the region.) URN has played a crucial role in promoting independent reporting, freedom of expression and democratic elections, in both providing news that was seen to be reliable and independent and empowering (and funding) Ugandan journalists to undertake robust, accurate and unbiased political reportage. Gaber's role in planning the project prior to launch, and then organising and undertaking the national training programme prior to its launch, can be attested to by the NGO that employed him.

The Nigerian project – funded by the UK and US governments – was based around establishing and running the *Nigerian Election News Report* (NENR) of which Gaber was the designer and first editor. During the 2011 general elections a nationwide team of journalists, who had earlier been trained by Gaber, emailed news stories to the NENR headquarters in Lagos. These were edited, voiced and uploaded to an open-access website for downloading by any Nigerian website, newspaper, radio or TV station. What was particularly innovative was that the packages were also delivered via a mobile phone direct-dial system to over 1500 Nigerian journalists. The mobile phone material could either be put to air by journalists working in remote areas who had poor internet access, or be transmitted as alert mechanisms that directed journalists to the NENR website. In this way, journalists were being given unprecedented access to breaking election news stories that were uncensored, accurate and timely.

The workshops – involving more than 100 Nigerian journalists – and the NENR service had a significant impact. Over the life of the project the NENR website received 34,229 hits (from launch in March to end on 16th June 2011). Kemi Aduroja, political reporter for the TV news channel NN24 TV in Lagos said: “This service (NENR) equipped journalists and made them to be more active and more effective in reporting electioneering stories which will eventually enhance non-partisan politics in Nigeria’s democracy” and the President of the Nigeria Guild of Editors, Gbenga Adefaye said that NENR “would bring about professionalism in journalistic style and reporting”. A full report of the project, Nigerian Election Support Programme, (International Press Centre, Lagos www.ipcng.org) was distributed widely at the conclusion of the project and a paper outlining the project and its impact was delivered at the 2012 conference of the UK’s African Studies Association.

He is currently (2013 and 2014) working on a major project in the run-up to elections in Malawi in May 2014. This involves training and mentoring 25 reporters with the aim of increasing the amount and quality of issue-based reporting in the Malawian media. He is also undertaking a national media monitoring project covering the eight weeks of the election campaign.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 **Chair**, Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone.
- 5.2 **Director of Policy and Learning**, BBC Media Action.
- 5.3 **Head of Outreach Section**, Special Court for Sierra Leone.
- 5.4 **Director, International Press Centre**, Lagos Nigeria.
- 5.5 **International Partnerships Manager**, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Washington DC.
- 5.6 *Report on the Nigerian Election Support Programme* (July 2001) L. Arogundade, I. Gaber & V. Oakeshott, IWPR & IPC, c/o, House 11, Dideolu Court, Dideolu Estate, Ogba, Lagos, Nigeria. www.ipcng.org/election.doc.
- 5.7 *The Impact of the Special Court Trials on the People of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (report of seminar organised by the Mass Communications Department, University of Sierra Leone and CIMARC (University of Bedfordshire, UK) hard copy only.
- 5.8 *Uganda Radio Network's* website which Professor Gaber helped establish ugandaradionetwork.com.