The Satellite broadcasting revolution in Africa

Richard Fon Teh Akum Jr

Follow this and additional works at: https://fount.aucegypt.edu/retro_etds

Part of the Journalism Studies Commons, and the Mass Communication Commons
THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING REVOLUTION IN AFRICA
A CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON

RICHARD FON TEH AKUM JR

1999
THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING REVOLUTION IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

by Richard Fon Teh Akum Jr. B.Sc. (Hons.) Mass Communication (Under the Supervision of Prof. James Francis Scotton)

May 1999
THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING REVOLUTION IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON

to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
May 1999
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The degree of Master of Arts
has been approved by

Prof. James Francis Scotton  
Thesis Committee Chair/Advisor  
Affiliation  

Dr. Hussein Y. Amin  
Thesis Committee Reader/examiner  
Affiliation  

Dr. Michael Owen Fowler  
Thesis Committee Reader/examiner  
Affiliation  

Department Chair/Program Director

Date 20 May 1999  
Dean

Date 22/4/1999
THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

LIBRARY

THESIS
Declaration to be signed by the author.

NAME: Richard Fon Teh Akum Jr.

TITLE OF THESIS: THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING REVOLUTION IN AFRICA:
A CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON.

DEPARTMENT: JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

YEAR: June 1989

[Library No: 1949/146]

Please sign and date ONE of the following paragraphs:

1. The thesis may be consulted in the Library and photocopied.

Signed.............................................. Date..............................................

OR

2. The thesis may be consulted in the Library, but may not be photocopied. The restriction on photocopying will cease two years after the date below, unless I apply for, and am granted, its renewal.*

Signed.............................................. Date. May 27th 1999

OR

3. The thesis may neither be consulted nor photocopied without written permission from me, or from the appropriate Head of Department if I cannot be contacted. This restriction will cease three years after the date below, unless I apply for, and am granted, its renewal.*

Signed.............................................. Date..............................................

*Application for renewal of restrictions will be considered by the Librarian, the appropriate Head of Department and the Chairman of the Academic Board or his nominee.
DEDICATION

To Mrs. Theresia Njunwie Akum,
My beloved mother,
Who brought me into this world,
Who taught me my first words,
Who gives me the strength to on living,
Who stood behind me on the academic trail,
Who watched over me when I burnt the midnight oil.
Mum, I will never be able to thank you enough. Please
accept this dedication as a token of my love and
appreciation for your strength and presence. Through good
times and bad times.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

Like every human being, who believes in the power of divine intervention, I wish to thank Allah, the almighty for seeing me through this rung of the academic ladder. He was the silent study mate when I burnt the midnight oil. He was the welcome intruder in all my inner debates. He remained the Father on whose shoulder I could lean on, when nothing else seemed to be going great.

My fervent thanks equally go to my humble family. Dad, Mum, Christy, Stephen, Joe, Nguh, Bih and Barbs. You all sacrificed so much for me to venture into the world beyond our national borders. I guess you all had to spend many nights on your knees in prayer that I might find peace and solace wherever I was. I am most sincerely thankful for the material sacrifices that you all had to undertake to contribute to my success.

My thanks equally go to Justice and Mrs. Wakai who were always there to provide the much-needed counsel to a young man at the outset of his academic odyssey. Uncle Christopher and Auntie Stella, you were always there to provide financial and material support when I needed it most.

In my countless journeys to and from Cairo, I made friends, who will forever remain to me, the family that I needed when I was faraway from home. The Touré family in Abidjan provided more than just a transit roof. They gave me the chance to taste a little of the legendary Ivorian hospitality. Mariam Touré was more than a mother, when she thought about my stomach even while I was in Cairo. I am certain that all the food she sent contributed to keeping me strong through all those days.

My fervent thanks go to the entire Sub-Saharan African family in Cairo. Maférima Touré, you were a special friend and sister, and for that you will always
stay in my thoughts in a very special way. Peter Mwesige, Garour Hamidou, Faisal Oladimeji, Abba Dantata, Abubakar Deribe, Aqiyi Thomas, Ramzy White, Mike Johnson, Eric Hutchins and Kamilah Turner, friends like you survive the trauma of time-bound separation.

My lecturers in the American University in Cairo, may come at the bottom of this acknowledgement, but they are the cornerstone of my success out here. Mr. Jim Napoli, Prof. James Scotton, Hussein Amin, you all gave me faith in my work when I was beginning to lose it under the stress to hard work. Your counsel in and out of class made me strong and gave me new perspective on my potential and capacity to achieve the goals I set for myself. THANK YOU all!!!
ABSTRACT

The American University in Cairo
The Satellite Broadcasting Revolution in Africa: A Case Study of Cameroon
Richard Fon Teh Akum Jr.
Advisers: Prof. James Francis Scotton, Dr. Hussein Y. Amin, Dr. Michael Owen Fowler

The African media landscape has witnessed landmark changes as an effect of the political changes taking place on the continent. One area that has opened up with the liberalization of the African political and economic landscape is that of satellite broadcasting. While many African states do not yet own broadcast satellites, audiences within these states have become massive consumers of satellite broadcast programs. The spread of satellite broadcast consumption in Africa has taken revolutionary proportions. Cameroon is taken as a case study here, to answer the following questions among others:

- Who are the main providers of satellite/cable TV services in Cameroon and what do they have to offer?
- What are the different commercial and personal uses of satellite/cable TV channels in Cameroon?
- What effect is satellite TV having on the local broadcast industry in Cameroon?

The qualitative method was used for this study. The findings obtained by the observation method are either corroborated or refuted by experts interviewed in the field. The study is intended to have a heuristic value, as a base for studying a new information technology which is permeating Africa, with inevitable cultural consequences.

The findings obtained here show that there has been a satellite broadcasting consumer revolution in the African state. This revolution has been fanned by both internal and external factors, which have been explored in the study. Diffusion of innovation and Uses and Gratification models are used in the analysis of the spread of satellite broadcast technology in Cameroon.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations ix

## CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Hypothesis 9
1.3 Research Questions 9
1.4 Statement of Purpose 10
1.5 Definition of Some Key Concepts 11

## CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Literature Review 14
2.2 Media Ownership in the Global Metropolis 18
2.3 Revisiting the new World Information and Communication Order 24

## CHAPTER THREE

3.1 The Cameroon Media Landscape 30
3.2 The Credibility Crisis in the Cameroon Media System: Anecdotal Evidence 37
3.3 The Legal Parameters Surrounding Satellite Communication in Cameroon 39

## CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Methodology 42
4.2 Rationale 44

## CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 An Overview of the Satellite Broadcasting Revolution in Africa 46
5.2 The Providers of Satellite Services and their Audience 47
5.3 The Local Providers 51
5.4 The Informal Sector Providers 54
CHAPTER SIX
Theoretical Analysis of Findings
6.1 The Video Cassette Recorder Versus Satellite/Cable TV in Cameroon 58
6.2 Uses and Gratification from Satellite Broadcast Consumption 60
6.3 Diffusion of Innovation in the Satellite Broadcasting Revolution in Cameroon 63

CHAPTER SEVEN
7.1 Theoretical Recommendations and Conclusion 67
7.1.1 Politics of Accommodation 70
7.1.2 Politics of Comparative Advantage 71
7.1.3 Politics of Co-operation 72
7.2 Conclusion 73

REFERENCES 75
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACAP</td>
<td>Agence Camerounaise de Presse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITV</td>
<td>Agence d’Image Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Cameroon Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPDM</td>
<td>Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRETES</td>
<td>Center for the Study of Public Opinion and Economic Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRTV</td>
<td>Cameroon Radio Television corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBS</td>
<td>Direct Broadcast Satellite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPDC</td>
<td>International Program for the Development of Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDIIA</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute for International Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWICO</td>
<td>New World Information and Communication Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANA</td>
<td>Pan African News Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTI</td>
<td>Radio Television Ivoirienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
<td>Radio France Internationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDF</td>
<td>Social Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCB</td>
<td>Union Camerounaise des Brasseries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URTNA</td>
<td>Union des Radio et des Televisions Nationales d’Afrique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOA</td>
<td>Voice of America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The African media landscape witnessed enormous expansion with the advent of political and economic reform in the early 1990s. This expansion can be understood by describing it in the global political, economic and social context within which this expansion took place. The semantics used in describing the world have continually evolved proportionately with the changes that shape the relationships between states as well as among non-states actors. This would require an international communication presentation of the evolving relationship between state and media actors over history.

The complementary relationship between politics and communication can be traced back to the inter-war years between the First and the Second World Wars. During these inter-war years, Harold Innis established the importance of public opinion polling in public policy formulation. The world equally witnessed the development of extensive international propaganda campaigns designed by Leni Riefenstahl and Joseph Goebbels in Germany. Their pro-nazi propaganda campaigns remain a shining example of the use of mass images in the execution of Hitler’s foreign policy options.

Since that dark period in human history, the world has gone through a Cold War Era, an Era of Detente, and a Post Cold War Era. Over this human history international propaganda have evolved from childhood to maturity. During the Cold War and Detente, a tri-polar political world developed. Polarity here, is far from the Clausewitzian perception of the term. There is overt belligerence, but the polarity was more in the division of the globe into zones of influence and ideological alliances.
Within the post World War II tri-polar world, the Western Capitalist bloc was under the leadership of the United States of America. The Eastern Socialist bloc was led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Non-Aligned Movement had a fluctuating leadership between Egypt for Africa, India for the Asian region and Yugoslavia for Eastern Europe.

International mass media play a principal role in the marketing of different political ideologies. The historical period within which the different international mass media came to life, and the state-defined ideological orientation of their editorial policies show this. The Voice of America (VOA) was founded on February, 24\textsuperscript{th} 1942, under the jurisdiction of the Office of War Information. Its initial mission to encourage America’s allies in WWII. However, after the war, the mission was tailored to meet the needs of the Cold War era. The VOA had to build the capitalist democratic vision as utopian. Radio Moscow, which started in 1929, championed the cause of the proletariat in what the Soviets saw as an inevitable world revolution. This world revolution would oppose the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Meanwhile, according to Hale (1972), Radio Cairo during Nasser’s reign invoked nationalism and the independence and unification of all African states.

Thus the ideological warfare that had replaced conventional warfare was on and it lasted nearly four decades (1945-1990). Fortner (1993) indicates that there was a great use of propaganda during this period, especially through the use of clandestine radio stations. Some examples are U.S. sponsored stations like Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (directed against the Eastern Bloc). Meanwhile, Radio Marinas was directed against Castro’s Cuba. These clandestine radio stations worked to undermine socialism around the globe.
The importance of the media in post World War II international affairs can best be shown against the background of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The NWICO debate rocked the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the early 1970s. On one side of this debate, were the United States of America and Great Britain, who favored a free flow of information around the globe. On the other side, were Third World states demanding a licensing system to give them more control of this information. This antagonism led to the United States and later Britain leaving UNESCO, with 25% of the organization’s revenue.

The Third World states failed in the presentation of their NWICO case at UNESCO. They failed because they did not look back on the modes of media control in their respective states before accusing the West of keeping them at a level of dependence. These structures of control are shown by Nyamnjoh, Wete and Fochingong (1996) as they describe difference that existed between the principle and the operations of the Cold War African state. They hold that in principle, the executive and the legislature are expected to formulate and debate policy; the civil service implemented government policies and programs; the judiciary interpreted and applied public laws which were enforced by the police; and the military was responsible for defense and security.

However, they note that within this system, the African state used the media as willing or reluctant accomplices in the asphyxiation of civil society. The government expected the media to disseminate its goals of national unity and national development. Sources of information within the Cold War Africa state were limited and debate was absent, because views opposing government views were considered seditious. That aptly describes the state of the African media landscape during the
Cold War. It also suggests a systemic reason for the failure of the African press to carve a niche for themselves on the international scene.

The demise of the Soviet empire pushed political researchers back to the drawing board in an attempt to find a theoretical reconceptualization for the post Cold War globe. In an attempt to redefine the relationship between states and non-state actors, the leading concept out of this scholarly debate is ‘globalization.’ The concept of globalization is reminiscent of McLuhan’s ‘global village’ prophesy made in the early 1960s. It is not, however, the same. McLuhan’s arguments predict that new information technologies are going to bring peoples and cultures closer together. This argument that television screen would serve as a fireside glow around which the entire globe will gather, creating a ‘global village,’ has been countered several times. The main reason for the failure of the McLuhan prophesy lies in its over-simplified assumption of media effects. Fortner (1993) sees the new information technologies as an intervening variable and not necessarily a cause in the creation of what he describes as a ‘global metropolis.’ This is because he is of the view that there are other social, political, financial and economic factors that operate together with the media to lead to the creation of the ‘global metropolis.’

In the early 1990s, Africa witnessed some liberalization, best described as an effect of the emerging concept of ‘globalization’ amongst other variables. Srebreny-Mohammadi (1996) quotes Appadurai arguing that globalization takes place in different spheres. These include: the infoscape (the area of information dissemination), the mediascape (the area of media growth), the financescape (the area of international financial interaction) and the culturescape (the area of cultural accommodation). These different concepts define the limitless terrain within which globalization is operating.
However, this study is more concerned with a combination of the mediascape, the technoscape and the culturescape in Cameroon within the era of globalization. All these are symbolized by one technological innovation, the satellite dish and related cable television technology. The mediascape would present the Cameroon media landscape as it has evolved with the changing political moods in the country. This evolution would be studied within the theoretical framework of changing patterns of uses and gratification. The technoscape looks into the satellite dish and related cable TV technology, as a new information technology in Cameroon. Its proliferation is analyzed within the theoretical framework of Everett Rogers’ diffusions of innovation studies. The culturescape remains a very difficult terrain within which to trudge. The uses and gratification theoretical framework would also attempt to answer questions related to the cultural issues defining media use patterns in Cameroon today.

Among scholars who have tried to demystifying globalization, Wilson (1997) defines globalization as a process in which local events have global consequences and vice versa. He notes the inevitable death of the “imperialistic” connotation within media literature in the era of globalization. This is exemplified in events like Rupert Murdoch’s (an American of Australian origin) attempt to purchase Manchester United (a leading British soccer team); the purchase of Columbia Pictures (an American corporation) by Sony Incorporated (Japanese); the purchase of the Seattle Mariners (American) baseball team, by Nintendo (Japanese); and the purchase on June 28, 1992 of United Press International by the London-based Saudi-sponsored outfit, the Middle East Broadcasting Center (Alleyne and Wagner, 1993). The effects of these, Galtung and Vincent (1992) over-optimistically term as the “Thirdworldization of the First World.” According to them, the First World in made up of the West, New Zealand and Australia. The Second World is made up of the former Communist world. The Third
World is made up of “culturally penetrated Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.” The Fourth World is composed of East Asian countries, with Japan at the top. Countries of the Fourth World are Chinese culturally and Japanese economically. The concept of “thirdworldization of the First World,” suggests that the First World has become vulnerable to capitalist intrusion from Second, Third and Fourth World actors.

- Globalization has led to some degree of interdependence among the former dependents in the global communication. According to McAnany and La Partina (1994) the most watched TV genre globally is probably the Latin American telenovela, or soap opera. It has a dominant presence during prime time in most of the Latin American regions’ networks. These Latin American soap operas have equally made a mark in African TV channels. *Dona Beija* was a very well received Brazilian series which passed on Ivorian Radio Television’s (RTI) Channel One. This was the same case for *Isaura* which passed over the Cameroonian Radio Television Corporation. The popularity of the Latin American soap operas shows that quality products would always find a respected place in the global information landscape.

It is the within the context of local issues having international consequences and vice versa, that contemporary scholars are defining the changes that continue to take place on the African political, social and economic landscape. Monga (1997) looks at the democratization of the African political landscape as a consequence of two factors. They are: the release of Nelson Mandela from the Victor Vester prison in South Africa and the first National Conference in Africa held in Benin. A national conference is a court conference which incorporates members of civil society, political parties and the government. Mandela’s release represented the turn of the tide against the apartheid system in South Africa. This led to the end of Apartheid with the coming of black majority rule in 1994. In Benin, the National Conference gave birth to multi-
party democracy. The Marxist dictator Matthew Kerekou (who had ruled Benin for 17 years) was defeated in Presidential elections by Nicephor Zoglo, the leading opposition figure. These events helped generate the political wind of change that swept through the African continent in the early 1990s.

Looking from a more global perspective, these events were taking place consequent to the fall of the Berlin Wall and glasnost and perestroika’s end to the Cold War. Hence Fukuyama’s (1992) analysis of the world moving towards a liberal democratic end, where capitalism prevails. It is over this background that in the early 1990s, the African political landscape witnessed some liberalization, including a privatization of the economy. The privatization of state corporations, was recommended by the Bretton Woods institutions. Prescribed as a prerequisite for aid, privatization became a national goal throughout Africa. This principle of political and economic conditionality began to guide the relationship between western donor agencies and African states. It led to the creation of a new economic class who indulged in private sector investments.

Within this political and economic change, another silent revolution was taking place, a revolution that touched the socio-economic fabric of the Cameroonian society. Parabolic antennas, prior to the liberalization of the Cameroon society, had been a preserve of diplomatic missions and a few strategic government services such as the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Communication, and the Directorate of National Security. However, after the liberalization, they started appearing on rooftops in high socio-economic status residential areas. They were at that initial stage, a symbol of high financial and social status. The forces of the new market economy, despite continued government control, have worked towards reducing the cost of obtaining a satellite dish and decoder. Satellite services providers like Spectrum
Media and Tele Plus came into the market. Cable providers like Digicom and Cablestar joined them. They have reduced the cost of a service that had hitherto been considered a preserve of the rich.

Communication has often been described as fulfilling the four functions of informing, entertaining, educating and mobilizing people (Dominick, Sherman and Copeland, 1990). These are some of the functions through which this thesis will address the issues related to satellite/cable broadcasting in Cameroon in the face of government reticence to privatize the audio-visual media sector today.

It is now a common sight in Cameroon to see enthusiastic crowds of people converged in bars or cafes before a TV screen. They are there in an effort to, inadvertently be in communion with many people around the globe. They share via cable television events as emotional as Lady Diana’s funeral mass in Europe, as criticized as the notorious Tyson-Holyfield ear-biting fight in America, and as entertaining as the African Music Awards in South Africa. Hence, it can be argued that as ardent consumers, Cameroonians, like many other audiences in Africa, are partaking in the large global communication cake. Therefore, as members of that audience they should be taken into consideration in the decision-making processes in these international cable/satellite TV channels.
1.2 HYPOTHESIS

Even within the framework of this qualitative study, it is important to state various hypotheses which give the study direction and theoretical weight. At the end of this thesis paper, the following hypothesis should either be supported or not supported:

- Satellite/cable communication has created a new media entrepreneurial elite in Cameroon.
- Government reticence to privatize the audio-visual media sector has fostered the spread of satellite/cable television.
- The satellite broadcasting revolution in Cameroon is defined by media uses and gratification patterns.
- Satellite TV proliferated in Cameroon through stages similar to the diffusion of innovation model.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Beyond the hypotheses, the following research questions are important in providing a description of the state of the satellite/cable TV within the communication landscape in Cameroon:

- Who are the main providers of satellite/cable TV services in Cameroon and what do they have to offer?
- What are the different commercial and personal uses of satellite TV channels are put into in Cameroon?
• Can the satellite TV channels replace the Cameroon Radio Television Corporation (CRTV) as an alternative information source about Cameroon?

1.4 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

There are academic, practical and theoretical reasons why this study is being carried out. At a first view, it is a pioneer study in the area of the satellite/cable television consumer revolution in Cameroon. This gives it value as a basis for future research in this area.

Practically, it should serve as a guide to media planners who hope to advertise in national media houses in Africa. It introduces a new variable in the media system, satellite communication. Satellite TV is revolutionizing the manner in which people consume media messages and advertisers schedule advertising messages. Therefore, it should serve as a guide to advertisers in their media planning and buying, since it provides a profile of satellite/cable TV in Africa. This falls in line with the shift from the public service motive to the commercial motive, that increasingly guides the media industry around the world today.

New information technologies are playing their own role within the context of globalization. This complex phenomenon needs to be studied from an African perspective. It should thus provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the infant African media industry within the context of globalization. Also almost three decades after the NWICO debates at UNESCO, it becomes important to revisit the issues raised to see their relevance to the present context. The literature review takes a new look at the evolution of the NWICO debate with the changing perspectives from its inception up until relatively recent views.
These purposes move towards the end of making policy recommendations to African states on changing their communication landscapes to meet the changes that are taking place in other media environments around the globe.

1.5 DEFINITION OF SOME KEY CONCEPTS

Globalization: Sukko (1996) argues that the current globalization process shatters the autonomy of the state. This makes old state-centered notions of politics and democracy partially obsolete. Social movements and non-governmental organizations, now inhabit and articulate their views in the nexus between the global and the local spheres. This middle area is becoming a new and very crucial site of politics. Here, social movements in local areas have established networks that furnish information to non-governmental organizations, which operate in global centers. This networking, implies the easy transportation of communication between global and local actors, thereby making local issues have a global impact and vice-versa. Globalization has put to question Galtung’s (1963) concept of center-periphery characteristics defining international news flow. This has been achieved by the narrowing distance between the center and the periphery, by peripheral actors having more access to international mass media focus. The local issues affecting these peripheral nations (within the context of globalization) has an impact on the center nations and vice versa.

For the purpose of this study the concept of ‘Second Track Diplomacy’ would be introduced to describe the role that media agencies, multinationals and international non-governmental organizations play in international politics. This role would be analyzed within the context of globalization. However the concept itself will be used to describe the effects the non-state media actors have had on globalization.
**Satellite Broadcasting**: According to Dominick, Sherman and Copeland (1991) satellite broadcasting is the technologically whereby audio-visual images are beamed up to a satellite through an earth station, and those images are received by consumers through satellite dishes on roof tops. For the purpose of this study, satellite broadcasting revolution would refer to a consumer revolution, and not the proliferation of satellite up-link stations around Cameroon. This is because the local Cameroon Radio Television corporation does not possess the financial potential to rent transponder space to broadcast her programs via satellite. Therefore emphasis would be placed on the down-link part of the satellite broadcasting system.

Satellite TV and cable TV are used either together or interchangeably in the text except where specified. This is because cable TV and satellite TV service providers in Cameroon are linked. There is a very thin line between the two in the mind of the consumer.

Meanwhile, the concept of revolution refers to the spread/proliferation of the satellite/cable TV services within the Cameroon community. Within the qualitative framework of this study the evolution of the demand of these services over time is the work of the author’s direct observation and participation within the community.

**Cameroon Media Landscape**: At an initial stage in the study this concept refers to the entire landscape that makes up the Cameroon media-print, and audio-visual media houses. However, as the study proceeds, the Cameroon media landscape drops out of frequent use, with the focus diverting to the audio-visual media in Cameroon. Since the government maintains monopoly of the audio-visual media
sector in Cameroon, the Cameroon Radio Television corporation will be the focus of
observation, comments and criticism.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, there have been more changes in worldwide
communications. These have been changes in the system of control, ownership and
production patterns. These changes have been followed by media being catering
towards a greater understanding of market needs. These changes have also shifted
the genre of how news is communicated from state-controlled propaganda to
commercial communications. This chapter is dedicated to the path of African
transitional means within the world of communications of the international media system. The
analyses

As independent, post-African states adopted media policies aimed at the
facilitating frameworks of national development and national unity (Dovinick, Theron
and Gayselaar, 1990). The African state that emerged out of the independence
struggle was a parochial one, characterised and promoted the notion of national
development and national integration, while expecting "the masses" to follow without
question. At independence, many African leaders saw a one-party political state as
an outcome of the rhetoric of national development and national unity. Within this one-
party state, the state electronic media allowed to operate were those owned by the state.

Publications that were licensed to operate were under strict government censorship.
The media were kept in check by being "merely normal "information" and "the
propaganda of false information." Since all public voices were left open for
uncensored by state political authority, the African state after independence
unquestionably a state propagating the media.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, there have been massive changes in worldwide communications. There have been changes in the systems of control, ownership and consumption patterns. These changes have been followed by media houses tailoring their general orientation of to meet market needs. These changes have in turn shifted the goals of international communications from state-funded propaganda to commercial profit-making. This chapter is dedicated to the study of African media systems within the wider framework of the international media system. The analyses are based on the political and historical evolution of the continent from independence to the present era of democratization.

At independence, many African states adopted media policies aimed at the mobilizing functions of national development and national unity (Dominick, Sherman and Copeland, 1990). The African state that emerged out of the independence struggle, was a paternalistic one. It described and prescribed the modes of national development and national integration, while expecting “the masses” to follow without question. At independence many African leaders saw a one-party patrimonial state as the epitome of the tenets of national development and national unity. Within this one-party state, the only electronic media allowed to operate were owned by the state. Publications that were licensed to operate were under strict government censorship. The media were kept in check by harsh laws against “subversion” and “the propagation of false information.” Since all these concept were left open for interpretation by state judicial authority, the African state after independence maintained a firm grip over the media.
Therefore, African media systems were founded on nationalistic propaganda, which often changed into personality cult propaganda. The heads of many African leaders showed up on the currency; party uniforms carrying the effigy of the president were adopted and extreme praise was directed at the leader (characteristically called "the strongman") by the government-controlled media. According to Katz and Wedell (1977: 128) the broadcast media in Africa had to play their own role in the creation of new national myths and events, adjust news values to meet national objectives and help in the personality projection of the independence African leaders. Though these practices have not yet disappeared, Africa has been affected by the political, economic and technological changes going on around the globe.

For instance, on a political level, the end of the Cold War has had a chain effect on the African continent. While it might have left Angola, for example, a devastated casualty of East-West rivalry (since it was an area of proxy war), there are hopes for a lasting peace today. African states are slowly moving away from monolithism to liberal democracy and capitalist economics. Such transformations are evidenced by the thumbs-up given by international election monitors and observers to moves towards democracy in Africa. Some examples of democratic reform are shown in the last elections which took place in Ghana in December 1996; the free and fair elections that returned Matthew Kerekou to leadership in Benin and Didier Ratsiraka in Madagascar. Both Kerekou and Ratsiraka had been ousted by the first waves of multi-party democracy that swept through their various countries in the early 1990s. In 1997, they were brought back to power by free and fair elections. These stand out as clear examples of moves towards building a democratic culture into certain African states. These advances in democracy have had effects on the media which are hard to
assess. However we can note the improved level of debate and tolerance to opposing opinions.

A look into African history provides evidence of extreme governmental control of the media. Those who advocated liberal journalism were persecuted with either jail terms, punitive transfers, long periods of exile or the loss of jobs (Boh and Ofege, 1992; Epule, 1996; Nyarumjoh, 1996). Such ‘regulatory’ practices have reduced the potential and productivity of the African media houses within the international communication system. The best journalists always looked for a place in the highly competitive global market where they seemed more welcome. Hence, as in many other professions, there is a brain drain of journalists from African countries. These media professionals migrate into other countries along with other professions. This reasons for the underdevelopment of the African from independence until its rebirth in the years following political liberalization.

The extent to which the autocratic state-controlled media system was bound to fail can be seen on its negative chain reaction on the Pan African News Agency (PANA). National news agencies were the main contributors to PANA’s information pool. This implies state control of the news that got out to PANA. The link that tied national news agencies in Africa to the Pan African News Agency is the reason why it failed to achieve its goal as the prime source of news, information and photos about Africa in the world (Ereku, 1996). According to Ereku, PANA’s failure is because it made the different national news agencies around Africa, its primary source of news that it sought to disseminate about the continent. PANA thus became more of a propaganda agency for African governments, rather than one providing factual information. Instead of serving as reliable news source on the African continent, it deepened the credibility crisis in the African media system.
The traditionally most popular medium for mass communication in post-independence Africa has been the transistor radio. Its popularity is attributed to low cost, its reach and the oral tradition of Africa society. In Africa, the spoken word has a wider reach than the written word. Radio also overcomes Africa’s high illiteracy rate. African history was handed down through word of mouth. This accentuates the importance of the spoken word within the African society. From the way most African states controlled the press, it is evident that they assume a stimulus-response effect of media messages on “the masses.” However, despite the government media controls, the African living within the autocratic state did not become a sycophant. He did not obediently believe all the messages that were churned out of the government-controlled media infrastructure. What the excessive control did, was create a credibility crisis within the system which today is very hard to overcome. Many Africans turned to the international mass media for news and information on events that were taking place within their own countries (Browne, 1982).

Browne’s qualitative study of African media systems shows that there is a historical preference for alternative media sources in the African state. This, he posits, is due to the lack of credibility in state-controlled media institutions. This view is corroborated by Hale (1975) who holds that citizens from authoritarian states look beyond their national media for information concerning happenings within their respective countries. This is because they are aware of the oppressive hierarchical controls through which information must pass before reaching them. This sets the stage for penetration of African audiences by international mass media institutions, which generally have a higher credibility score within the African media system. It should be noted here that the satellite/cable TV channels fall within the group of international mass media institutions.
At least partially due to the government media controls, informal modes of communication like interpersonal communication have continued to play an important role within the African state. Some of these informal sectors through which information is disseminated are: bars, restaurants, hair dressing saloons and chicken parlors. Within the authoritarian African state, the news that comes out of the international mass media about the African state is diffused through these informal networks. It is within this informal sector at the fringes of the African state that the credibility crisis in the African media system was strengthened.

The fringes (local communities) are the area most vulnerable to change and they are the actors that fuel the machines of change within the society. They are important in the study of globalization, because they are being affected by global actors and vice versa. Since they are important in the study of globalization-related change within the African society, it is important to know who owns the international mass media today. This knowledge will help in understanding the group of people who control the media power to effect change in the African society. Knowing the owners of these international mass media also points to the agendas that they might set for themselves and for their audiences.

2.2 MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN THE GLOBAL METROPOLIS.

The issue of ownership of media institutions in the “global metropolis” is of direct relevance here. With the advent of globalization, states are sharing their central place on the diplomatic stage with international non-governmental organizations and multinationals. Center stage here is used to define the state system that operates within the United Nations, within which equality and equity between states should reign
supreme. It does not merely refer to the former narrow bi-polar world, where the United States and the Soviet Union were the main players. The donation Ted Turner (CEO of CNN and Time Warner) of US$ 1 billion to the UN in 1997 is evidence of a potential new alliance between the state system and the international business society.

Through waves of reform movements on the African continent, modes of ownership have also changed in the age of globalization. The move towards liberalization and privatization has led to the recent construction of an African private media sector. Though the African governments’ move towards tolerance for opposing viewpoints remains timid, the current liberalization process is an optimistic move towards further reform.

According to Pearson and Rochester (1988), the future world system could be based in networks of non-governmental organizations in a variety of ways. Welch (1995) defines these NGOs as intermediary organizations and arrangements that lie between primary units of society-individuals, families, clans, ethnic groups of various kinds, village units- and the ruling collective institutions and agencies of the civil society. Serving as early warning mechanisms, these NGOs are taking an upper hand in international politics and have come to be an alternative source of information on their various issue areas.

To support this perception of the role of NGOs as information sources in international politics, Serra (1996) notes that they produce and disseminate data, create public agendas, and mobilize international public opinion. These functions, she holds are facilitated by new communication and computer technologies, which aid in the production of information and interconnectedness between organizations and groups in society. Local and international media are used by these NGOs to publicize issues in their interest areas. Many functions which had been reserved for
governmental agencies are now being performed by international non-governmental and multinational actors.

An understanding of the issue of second track diplomacy which is fundamental to the relationship between state and non-state actors on the global scene. The concept of second track diplomacy is also of extreme importance in the study of globalization, and the role of the African media therein. Second track diplomacy refers to the area of international civil society. This area is filled by international non-governmental actors, who bring pressure to bear on states in the service of international civil society. For example, the United Nations could not stop the Russians and Japanese from whaling in the early 1980s. The Greenpeace Foundation acted by speeding out in small boats to stand between harpoonists from Russia and Japan, and the whales they were hunting. This action alerted the world to the politics of the International Whaling Commission (Pearson and Rochester, 1992). Other examples are in the area of Amnesty International which seeks minimum respect of human rights. There are also the activities of the Co-operation Assistance and Relief Everywhere in the area of humanitarian relief and assistance. These international NGOs have been known to provide more information about different countries on the international scene than the state actors concerned.

The international role of NGOs, leads to the reduction of the role of the state as the most important player on this information scene. This is because there is a continuous struggle between the state and the local civil society. Different local civil society actors conglomerate and network with foreign groups with which they share similar interests, to form a potent international civil society.

While changes are taking place within the development of an international civil society on one hand, economic factors are equally affecting the role of the state
in international affairs. It can be argued that the increasing participation of the non-state economic actors on the global scene is leading to a capitalist economic world. Within this capitalist economic world, the center stage players are non-state actors too. This is the reason why the African state, which once argued in for a New World Economic Order, alongside a New World Information and Communication Order is making a change. The African state is turning away from the state-controlled economic systems adopted at independence, to fall in line with liberal economic practices. Thus, there is evidence of such concepts as participatory community development and the use of capacity building to empower the civil society in Africa (Monga, 1997; Dissanyake, 1981).

As much as the economic liberalization process has taken the African continent by storm, there is no other part if the world that has not been overwhelmed by the effects of new communication technologies. These new technologies seem to inevitably be leading us to an era of complete deregulation of communication systems worldwide. They break the essence of government media control and move a step ahead of the legislature that normally control and define their modes of operation. This seems to affirm Fukuyama’s prediction of the world moving towards a completely liberal democratic end, working within a complimentary atmosphere with capitalist economics. Hence, the patterns of communication systems in the emerging liberal democracies are shifting from the development model to an inevitably libertarian model or social responsibility model. In the development model, the state controlled virtually all modes of public communication, defining the objectives of the media. The libertarian model is a free-press establishment within which the press is protected by law from government-control. Within the libertarian model, the press has usually assigned herself the watchdog role.
Within the “global metropolis,” media ownership has shifted from the state to multinational corporations. With the changes in ownership, the objectives of media houses are also shifting from propaganda to profit-making. These changes make a difference on the outlook of international communication altogether. The change of orientation leads to the quest of markets for advertisers, and not the quest for ideological spheres of influence, which had characterized Cold War international communication. According to Mandela (1994) TV has shrunk the world and has, in the process of transformation, become a great weapon for eradicating ignorance and promoting democracy. Without making any value judgments on the strength of the media in development, it is evident that democracy is a prerequisite for the empowerment of civil society, and thence the move toward the eradication of ignorance, which is at the root of underdevelopment. This is a perspective that states the developmental perspective on mass communication in the age of globalization.

It is hard at this juncture to draw a definite conclusion how media functions will change in the post-Cold War years, when the media had to play a vital psychosocial role in the proxy wars in Korea and Vietnam, and in the independence struggle in Africa. Patrice Lumumba, about to be executed by Mobutu in the Belgian Congo, in 1963, was described in the American media as a Marxist. This was enough justification for the first military takeover on the African continent. Hultman (1992) goes ahead to describe the nature in which Western journalists simply reported following the direction of their states’ foreign policy options. Using the Katangese uprising of 1978, as his basis for analysis, Hultman states that the Associated Press described the situation as “a rampage of murder and rape” on the part of the Katangese; the United Press International called it “a frenzy of killing and looting,” and Time said “the rebels were, after all, only a rabble of dazed, ignorant savages.”
This type of reporting at the time was reflective of the pro-Mobutu stance of US policy. These perceptions were incorporated in many African state media because of their dependence on these Western news sources for information about each other.

Looking at the international communication landscape today, Moisy (1997) argues that the Cable News Network (CNN) is not as international as any of the other news agencies operating on the globe, be they Reuters, Agence France-Presse, United Press International or the Associated Press. He bases his assertion on the low number of foreign bureaus and foreign correspondents that CNN operates in comparison to these news agencies. However, it is clear that CNN is redefining the journalism profession, and thereby reshaping international communication. The commercial orientation of CNN equally warrants what Amin and Napoli (1997: 31) term the “Politics of Accommodation.” The “Politics of Accommodation” describes the respect for different cultures in reporting the news within the increasingly commercial world of international communication. This novel policy, which arises with the challenges brought forth by the commercial focus of satellite broadcasting, describes the importance of the customer in the communication process. Within this changing international communication landscape, state empires have to work beside and with corporate empires where multi-million-dollar mergers continue to take place on a daily basis.

On the other hand, Hamelink (1996) is not very optimistic about the increasing role that private actors are playing on the international communication scene. He defines global communication as the transnational proliferation of mass-marketed advertising and electronic entertainment produced by a few mega-companies, with disparity as its main feature (1996:7). According to him, oligopolization, which has been caused by very large and profitable companies merging to form mega-
companies, is having a nefarious impact on global communication. It is leading to the erosion of the public sphere in many countries, as entertainment diversity becomes the only choice that the markets can offer.

2.3 REVISITING THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER.

At the 1970 Summit of Non-Aligned Communication experts in Tunis, Mustapha Masmoudi, the Tunisian Minister of Communication propounded the concept of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Stevenson and Cole (1984) quote Mustapha Masmoudi as having stated that 80 percent of the world news flow emanates from the major transnational news agencies, however, these devote only 20-30 percent of news coverage to the developing countries. This happened despite the fact that the developing world accounted for almost 75 percent of mankind.

Many scholars have studied the dynamics of the dominance-dependence relationship that triggered the NWICO. Albritton and Manheim (1990) identify 2 dimensions of the dominance-dependence relationship existent between the developed and the developing countries. One is, the technological sphere where the highly industrialized nature of the developed world give them more access to satellite and other communications technology. Second, there is the sphere of media content. Through the predominance of the debate on media content, the issue has acquired a status of greater importance in shaping the cultural orientation of societies worldwide. The stress on phobia of foreign media content on indigenous cultural values remains very much the case despite Klapper's
(1960) view that mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors.

The NWICO thesis was carried to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), where it met stiff opposition from the Western powers. These Western powers, led by the United States of America, argued in favor of a free flow of information at the international level. They saw the NWICO concept as an extension of the authoritarian tendencies prevalent in Third World states, and the violation of the freedom of speech as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Stevenson and Cole (1984) came up with five arguments upon which the developing countries founded their NWICO thesis which were the following:

- **World News is defined by the West and distorts or excludes authentic but non-Western values of the Third World.**

- **The cultural filter excludes much of the world especially that part not of immediate interest to the West.**

- **Whatever information from the Third World that does get into the world news system emphasizes fragile aspects of the Third World.**

- **Distorted negative treatment of the Third World in the Western media is transferred to the Third World itself because of the latter's dependence on the Western news agencies for its foreign news and information content.**

- **Development news is lacking in the transnational news agency coverage of the Third World.**
MacBride and Roach (1991) describe the NWICO as arising because Western international news agencies had international monopoly control over the flow of news to and from developing countries. These same Western international news agencies exercised this control from a limited perspective, reflecting the economic and cultural interests of the industrialized nations. They were charged with a lack of understanding of social realities, and with giving financial and ideological undertones to their “cultural colonialism.”

The results of the NWICO debate at UNESCO were diverse. The United States walked out of UNESCO proceedings in 1984, taking with them about 25 percent of the organization’s revenue. This move was followed by the withdrawal of Great Britain with another 5 percent of UNESCO’s revenue (Galtung and Vincent, 1992). Amadou Makhtar M’Bow, the Senegalese Director of UNESCO lost his place. A new degree of mistrust was born between the countries of the North and the South, in the heart of the Cold War era, leading to the activation of a third bloc in the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Bloc. However, this bloc has been latent since its creation in 1955 in Bandung.

As a result of the NWICO, Third World countries had the chance to make their voices heard on the international scene. The physical fallout of the NWICO debates was the creation of the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC). This program has contributed to the training of Third World journalists, the transfer of technologies from the North to the South and the development of a research pool on Third World communication issues. However, the contributions made by the IPDC in Africa have been clouded by the internal discord and authoritarianism that has prevailed on the continent since independence. Hence, there is the need to visit Africa in a bid to see the internal issues that have left her at a level of dependence.
until now while revisiting the concept of the NWICO two decades since its evolution. Today, there is talk about globalization, therefore it would be interesting to attempt an analysis of the changes that have taken place in the concept of NWICO. This analysis is done in the face of this new phenomenon that seems to be living a symbiotic relationship with the media industry.

Some authors have explored the impact of globalization on the global communication landscape. Wilson and Dissanyake (1996) observe that regions and region’s states increasingly override national borders and create special economic zones of uneven development and transcultural hybridity. According to them, the complexity of globalization is visualized in the hyper-circulation of imagery that lends itself to the survival, not of Detroit but to a transnationalized Hollywood financed by Japan. Within this framework, it is increasingly difficult to place products and services within the national gambits of one particular location or identity. Therefore, there is the assumption of some degree of interdependence which lends more credence to the concept of a multi-polar world, than to that of a unipolar world under the leadership of the United States of America (as described by Rothkopf, 1997).

Kleinwachter (1996) believes that the NWICO is on a rebound as communication has gained top priority on the international scene, comparable to peace, development, ecology and energy. From his viewpoint, some transnational mass media have improved their coverage of events and processes in Third World countries. Kleinwachter goes ahead to show a kind of boomerang in the nature and renaissance of the NWICO debate as it reappears today. He shows that some of the proponents of a free press in yesteryears, are today turning towards protectionism, and some of the very concept that they had decried in the 1970s. In the Council of Europe Convention and European Economic Community (EEC) Directive on Television in
1989, Kleinwachter holds that there were discussions on how European states could protect and develop European cultural identity in a global communication environment. These European states came up with the proposal of developing a quota system aiming at a reduction of the influence from outside. The main proponents of these protectionist media reforms, were France, Germany and Great Britain. This argument is buttressed by White (1996) who argues that Western Europe and Canada are just as concerned with “cultural imperialism” as Third World countries. They have established effective policies to encourage indigenous cultural expression in the media.

MacBride and Roach (1996), reappraising information imbalance believe industrialized nations are increasingly attentive to information markets, including those in the Third World. Deregulation and privatization of public sector enterprises are causing this. They base their argument on the premise that Third World governments are becoming aware that national public opinion is as important as international public opinion. This is because today’s media are capable of diffusing information on international questions to every part of the world much faster and at a cheaper cost.

These arguments point to the importance of the construction and sustenance of an indigenous cultural identity, within the changing terrain of international communication. Therefore, the NWICO is a concept that was as valid yesterday as it is today, however, other countries need to make themselves and their cultures more competitive within the highly commercialized international communication setting. Cameroon is one of those countries that needs to make herself more competitive within the highly commercialized international communication setting. This is not a question of narrowing the gap between her media infrastructure and the rest of the
world automatically. It is going to be a gradual process. However, there is the need at this juncture to visit the modes of control within the Cameroon media landscape and the prospects for future growth and competitiveness, if there are any.

The Cameroon media landscape has witnessed substantial transformation since the Law on Civil Liberty was passed in December 1994. Many freedoms are now guaranteed in these conditional circumstances. They include, among others, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and the right to freedom of expression and the right to free access to information. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion was followed by the banning of the Cameroon Civil Code and the removal of the ban on publishing political, economic and social documents. However, the right to freedom of expression and the right to free access to information were only granted by law in 1994.

With these laws, the government has adopted a more liberal approach to media in different parts of the country. The government now guarantees these freedoms in their entirety. Article 11 of the Cameroon National Union (the law that preceded the independence of Cameroon) in March 1960, which guaranteed the right to free access to information. It guaranteed the right to free access to information. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion was followed by the banning of the Cameroon Civil Code in 1994. However, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion was followed by the banning of the Cameroon Civil Code in 1994.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1 THE CAMEROON MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The Cameroon media landscape has witnessed remarkable transformation since the Laws on Civil Liberty were passed on December 1990. Many freedoms are guaranteed in these constitutional amendments. They include, among others, the abolition of prior censorship and the right to private ownership of the print media. The promulgation of these laws was followed by the flooding of the Cameroon print market with publications spanning political, economic and social domains. Prior to this wave of liberalization, the Cameroon media landscape were ruled by the 1962 Laws on Subversion. This coercive law made it illegal to publish anything which the government considered “subversive,” or a “threat national security.” This was similar to the Official Secrets Act of 1962, and Decree Number 4 of March 1984 in Nigeria, which carried heavy penalties for the publication of unauthorized information about public officials (Eribo, 1997).

While these laws were viewed as attempts to stifle the press in different African states, the governments saw them otherwise. Addressing the first national congress of the Cameroon National Union (the lone party after independence) in March 1969, Ahmadou Ahidjo described the role of the press in Cameroon as fulfilling the functions of “informing and educating at home, and exposing and promoting abroad” (Encyclopedia of the United Republic of Cameroon, 1981). Epule (1996) observes that Law No 66/LF/18 of December 21, 1966 which successfully muzzled the press in the former West Cameroon had differing consequences on the press. They led to the demise of many newspapers, the banning of some local and foreign publications, and the arrest and detention of journalists.
Even before the enactment of the 1966 law further restricting the press, the 1962 laws had been put into operation in the ‘Train of Death’ incident. This case acted as a pointer to the independence government’s treatment of the press.

During the transfer of 52 political prisoners from Douala to Yaounde on February 1, 1962, 25 of the prisoners suffocated in a windowless wagon after a day of travelling. Neither the Cameroon News Agency (ACAP) nor the national radio reported the incident. However, the director of L’Effort Camerounais, a Catholic publication, uncovered the story. After a failure to get the government to denounce the negligence of the prison authorities involved, an editorial “The Train of Death” was published, denouncing the act. The government reacted by seizing No 325 of L’Effort Camerounais that had carried the story. This government action was followed by the deportation of the editor, Frenchman Pierre Fertin, who had signed the editorial (Isaha’a Boh, 1998). This was the fate that the journalism profession had to suffer under the brunt of autocratic governments in Cameroon.

Statistical evidence shows a shackled press under the first government of independent Cameroon which stayed in power for 22 years (until Ahidjo’s resignation in 1982). The figures show a decline in the number of publications, from 170 in 1935 (15 years before independence) to 22 in 1981 (21 years after independence). Most of these publications sold fewer than 10,000 copies. They mostly abstained from covering politically sensitive issues, as a form of self-censorship (Encyclopedia of the United Republic of Cameroon, 1981: Vol. 2, pg. 851). This supports Hachten’s (1993) hypothesis that the African media were freer prior to independence than after. He argues that the growth of the African media after independence was stifled by censorship and government definition of the media’s role in society. According to Hachten, meaningful news and intelligent commentary on public affairs are rare in
Africa. This is because the press has been both an instrument of politics (under colonialism) and a victim of political manipulation and oppression after independence. That was the case with the Cameroon media immediately after independence—during the Ahidjo era (1960-1982) and the first decade of the Biya regime (1982-1992).

A description of the media system in Cameroon from 1960-1990 would not fit within the traditional framework set up by Siebert in 1960. This is because it was neither libertarian, totalitarian, authoritarian, nor free press. It would be more apt to describe the Cameroon media system between 1960-1990, within Rugh’s (1979) framework of mobilizing (authoritarian, government-controlled media), loyalist (semi free, with private media that are loyal to the political regime) and diverse (a mixture of public and private press exists) media systems. The mobilizing media system is a form of an authoritarian system in which the media are actively mobilized by the government in the interest of economic, social and other development. This is the way the media systems in most developing states have been designed. The media are exorted to emphasize the development aspect of the news. This is the system that best describes the nature of the media in Cameroon from 1960-1990.

The history of the media in independent Cameroon can be divided into two political eras. The first era was from independence to 1982 under Ahmadou Ahidjo. The second era was from 1982 to present day under Paul Biya. This second era has been tagged the “New Deal Era,” whose major slogans have been “rigor and moralization.” These slogans were used to signify a departure from the repressive years of Ahidjo. However, for many years, that departure stayed at a cosmetic level, with a change of the name of the single party from Cameroon National Union to the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement in 1985. The law regulating the media in Cameroon hardly changed despite the cosmetic change in political ideologies of the
different leaders. However, both governments worked towards building media infrastructure in Cameroon. The work which had been started by Ahidjo in the area of radio broadcasting was completed by Biya in the area of television broadcasting. Television came to Cameroon in 1985, with the launching of the Cameroon Television complex, which later metamorphosed into the Cameroon Radio Television corporation in 1988. Despite the moves by the New Deal government of Paul Biya to make a break with the autocratic past, the government still maintains a large degree of control over various areas of the communication industry. It maintains tight monopoly control over the electronic media.

The Biya government, despite its half-hearted attempts at liberalizing the media, has continually tried to pressure “recalcitrant” publications out of the market through seizures (by security forces) and suspensions of some publications. *Le Messager* and *Mutations* suffered seizure by security forces and suspension by the government in September 1996. They were charged with refusal to submit their copies to prior censorship (which was supposed to have been abolished by the controversial Law on Civil Liberties of December 1990). The government also sporadically increases import duties for newsprint which forces a rise in the price of newspapers and other print publications published in the country. Their aim is to reduce the potential audience for these print products. This tactic has only succeeded in partially cleansing the market of mediocre publications, which still appear, though on an irregular basis. Meanwhile, the good publications have stood the test of time and distinguished themselves in the face of trials and tribulations coming from the government (Nyamnjoh, 1996).

Broadcasting in Cameroon remains deplorable in content and orientation. Despite CRTV’s monopoly of the indigenous audience, the Cameroon Radio
Television corporation (CRTV) has lost a lot of the impetus it had in its early days. Many journalists who advocated liberal journalism lost their jobs because they were antagonistic to the government. There have been instances where it has become a matter of selling one’s conscience to remain afloat in the wavy propagandistic machinations of the only TV channel in Cameroon. There is the example of the “Cameroon Calling” (“CC”) crew of journalists which shows the amount of repression within the government-owned TV/radio channels. The “CC” crew and guests were incarcerated for disseminating information that the government found embarrassing, since the program was pro-democratic in an authoritarian era. May 1990. They were only allowed to return to their jobs on condition that they sang the government song (Boh and Ofége, 1992). Some of them accepted and others did not. Those who could not sell their consciences, were walloped by the waves of intimidation, and they were subjected to punitive transfers and arbitrary dismissals.

“Minute by Minute,” the TV program, which won the 1990 Nouvelle Expression Award for the Best Investigative Program, went off the air because it exposed cases of corruption within the Cameroon police force. Legendary journalistic figures, mainly from the Anglophone part of Cameroon, were subjected to punitive transfers. An example is Akwanga Joe Ndifor, anchor of the “Minute by Minute” TV show. He was transferred to the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research. There, the government thought he would not have access to the highly volatile audience that he had access to on national television. Many others, such as Larry Eyong Echaw and Julius Wamey, have emigrated to the United States of America, where they reside with their families as refugees. Meanwhile, Eric Chinje, the pioneer anchor of the English news on Cameroon Television has moved into a career at the World Bank.
These channels of control exist simply because of the inability of the highly authoritarian system to accommodate progressive potential. Such repressive methods of media control are the reason behind the incessant drain of potential from broadcasting in Cameroon. This has greatly reduced CRTV’s potential, which has become nothing more than a dump for foreign programs like “Melrose Place,” and “Beverly Hills 90210,” and for some old programs produced in the early 1990s. This government intervention in the CRTV’s programming operations affirms Head’s (1977) observation that:

“The treadmill of broadcast production by tenured civil servants can have a deadly effect on morale and creativeness. It is all too easy to slip into dull, repetitive routines and to fail to make that extra effort which alert and timely programming and production always demand...the most effective antidote to this retrograde tendency is competition,” Head (1977: 355).

Therefore, as far as entertainment is concerned, CRTV can hardly compete with the cable/satellite channels even if she tried to. Katz and Wedell (1977) explain this by noting that the resources devoted to external broadcasting may be out of proportion to the resources available for the major purpose of the organization - to contribute to the development process.

Despite the inherent problems in the broadcast sector in Cameroon, for news about Cameroon, there certainly is no better source than CRTV. These satellite broadcasting services carry little or no news about Cameroon. Therefore, within this area, CRTV still holds a monopoly despite its propagandistic orientation. Handl (1995) observes that the CRTV uses a lot of camera techniques to mask the reality of the situation. For example, to cover an opposition rally, which occurs very rarely, it shows a thin portion of the crowd as a representation of the whole. This is followed by cuts and then the camera focuses on the speaker, before the announcement is made
that far fewer people attended the rally than actually did. This is always done in a bid to minimize the potential of the opposition (NDIA report, 1992). This has accentuated the credibility crisis, since the foreign radio channels which cover the news in Cameroon always have a story different from the CRTV’s.

However, technologically, CRTV has showed the potential to make excellent productions and go into cooperation with cable channels. One of its productions, the “Voices in the Wilderness” series, presented by Wongibe Emmanuel, got a place on “CNN World Report.” In July 1996, it received an award for Best Environmental Series from the CNN.

No in-depth studies have been done on the content of the CRTV. This makes it difficult to ascertain the extent to which the programs are foreign imports. However, from observation, there is an obvious prevalence of foreign programs on the CRTV ranging from documentary series to sitcoms. As far as news and information from outside Cameroon are concerned, all the content is from foreign sources, which are either CNN or the AITV (Agence Internationale de Television, based in Brussels). Therefore there is a dependence on news and information about other parts of the world, on outside agencies (CNN, AITV and Canal France Internationale mainly).
3.2 THE CREDIBILITY CRISIS IN THE CAMEROON MEDIA SYSTEM: ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE.

Browne (1982) posits that a sub-group of international mass media exposure 'malcontents' (particularly audiences in Communist and Third World states) turn to other sources for possible keys to power and success. This also serves as an escape from the society in which they live. He equally holds that they turn to international mass media for information to counteract arguments and information put out by members of the societies within which they belong. This has been the case in Cameroon. During crises, the Cameroon audience finds more credible information from international mass media sources than they do from home sources. The anecdotal evidence that follows goes to support this statement.

On May 26 1990, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party was launched in Bamenda, against the wish of the government, which had not yet approached multi-party democracy. The government used constitutional clauses to describe the launching as illegal, while the founding fathers of the SDF saw it as the wish of the people to take back their power from the government. This political ambition was encapsulated in the party’s slogan “Power to the People, With Equal Opportunity.” In an attempt to block the launching of this political party, (whose ban the government media had announced), government security forces at the launching ceremony killed six people.

The government media, the Cameroon Radio Television corporation, announced during the prime hour news show that the people who had died had been trampled by the crowd. Meanwhile, eye-witness accounts supported by the international mass media (the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Voice of
America, Radio France International and Africa N° 1) covering the event, reported the contrary. The six people had been shot by security forces who had fired into an unarmed crowd. This case epitomizes the credibility crisis that many African media systems suffer because of their affiliation to autocratic governments. The Cameroon government media had thus been put to the test at the dawn of the new democratic era—a test at which they failed woefully. Credibility in international mass media sources has been fortified by some of these occurrences of deliberate distortion of the truth by the government.

According to Ngwa (1997), today, space-age telecommunications, informatics and optical electronics have converged the conventional ‘mass media’ to give people an unprecedented array of tools—from the cellular phone to the Internet. These tools diversify peoples’ perceptions, permit interaction with others, understanding and reaction to change and even the amplification of human thought. He concludes that these new information technologies have broken into the government monopoly of information. Therefore, as new information technologies get into the market, authoritarian states find it harder to control information. The new information technologies are running ahead of the law meant to define their use (read “control them”), making information control very difficult.

Along with the political wind of change, another silent revolution was taking place. Parabolic antennas, prior to the advent of liberalization in Cameroon, had been a preserve of diplomatic missions and a few strategic Cameroon ministries—the Presidency of the Republic, Defense, External Relations and Communication. However, after liberalization, they started appearing on roof-tops in high socioeconomic status residential areas. Initially, they carried with them the symbol of a high financial and social stature. Nevertheless, the forces of the emerging market
economy have worked to reduce the cost of obtaining a satellite dish and decoder. Local satellite service providers licensed by major satellite TV houses came into the market. Cable providers equally came into the market reducing the cost of a service that had hitherto been considered a preserve of the rich.

Therefore, the definition of the Cameroon media system since 1990 falls within the framework of what Rugh (1989) described as the ‘diverse’ media system. Within this system there has been a blend of public and private press. The distinction, however is not as clear cut as that since there are still vestiges of authoritarianism in the system.

3.3 THE LEGAL PARAMETERS SURROUNDING SATELLITE COMMUNICATION IN CAMEROON.

Section 52 of the Law on Civil Liberties, deals with the media. This law defines the terms of operation of private print media houses. Nyamnjoh (1996) notes that consequent to this liberalization, the Cameroon print market has flourished with publications. These publications cover a wide range of interest areas. However, coming in the heat of the political transition from authoritarianism to democratization, most of the publications concentrated on political issues.

At the level of traditional electronic media, the government keeps the prerogative to operate as a monopoly. Therefore, the only audio-visual media operating within Cameroon’s legal gambit is the Cameroon Radio Television corporation. Cameroon’s socio-anthropological structure shows the radio as the most popular and far-reaching medium. Asante and Ziegler (1992) give the reasons for this spread of radio communication in Africa to be threefold: it is a relatively inexpensive
medium, high illiteracy permits better understanding of the spoken word over the written word, the high incidence of multi-language states and low personnel requirements for operation. They proceed to describe the hoe and the transistor radio as both instruments of survival.

The government of Cameroon’s persistence in controlling the electronic media outlets stems from the pathetic lessons learned from the role of the Radio Mille Collines in the Rwandan genocide. This radio station promoted the extermination of Rwanda’s Tutsi. It served as an example for Ansuman Mane’s Radio Bombolom rebel station in Guinea Bissau, which tried to destabilize the regime of Joao Bernado Vieira in August 1998 and eventually succeeded in its destabilization campaign in May 1999. These examples of the use of electronic media to fuel ethnic dissent fills the Cameroon government with apprehension at liberalizing the electronic media sector in the heat of political transition.

This apprehension is coupled with the government’s continuous attempt to maintain its political base, unrivalled by conflicting voices, which would come out of a liberalized electronic media setting. However, there is evidence that a competitive media system would serve the public better in the event of a coup or the political upheavals that proliferate in Africa. In times of crisis, media outlets are among the initial areas over which control is sought. With a diversified media structure, it would be difficult in the event of a coup d’état, for the revolting forces to gain entire control of the media outlet. A diversified and free media system would serve the purpose of sustaining stability in political institutions, where modes of succession are defined by constitutional means. Therefore, most of the apprehensions of the Cameroon government are myopic.
There is no law governing satellite communication in Cameroon. This leeway has given the chance for private investors to get into the scene, despite government attempts to halt the proliferation of cable television distribution in Cameroon. According to Isaha’a Boh (1998), government attempted through the Yaounde Urban Council in March 1998 to halt the proliferation of cable TV in Yaounde. Council officials went out to pull down cable lines, which they claimed had encumbered the sidewalks. With such occurrences, it becomes evident that the proliferation of cable channels in Cameroon has not come on a platter of gold for the suppliers.
Methodological and theoretical discussions were conducted with Dr. Enoch Tanjong, a mass communication researcher. This was done to fortify the relevance of the qualitative method in contemporary research.

Since satellite communication, has grown on a commercial premise, it became relevant to address the effect that the advent of satellite dishes is having on the media planning of advertisers. This led me to Tayo Clement, the account executive of the multi-national Nelson McCann advertising firm.

Ben Fondufe, the account manager of Spectrum Media was equally interviewed. Spectrum Media is the licensed provider of the Multichoice channels in Cameroon. He presented the consumer profile of the Spectrum Media’s clientele.

These in-depth interviews were meant to counter the observational and analytical biases that I could have borne in the execution of my research project. This qualitative method was backed by a secondary analysis of data published by CRETES (the Center for the Study of Public Opinion and Economic Issues) located in Yaounde, Cameroon. This study on the media consumption patterns in Cameroon, was carried out in 1995 and forms a basis for the analyses of the same issues today. The part of the CRETES study of particular importance is the presentation of satellite/cable TV consumption patterns. This study is to lend credence to the claim of a satellite/cable TV consumer revolution in Cameroon within the theoretical frameworks of the uses and gratification and diffusion of innovation research. This in turn stems from the understanding that satellite TV in Cameroon has come as an innovation, to provide a certain gratification to its users.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 METHODOLOGY

The qualitative method of communication research was deemed necessary for the purposes of this pioneer study on the nature of the consumer market of satellite broadcasting in Cameroon. From June to August 1998, the researcher submerged himself in the Cameroon setting as a participant observer. According to Dominick, Sherman and Copeland (1990) in the qualitative method, the researcher makes direct observation and in-depth analyses of mass communication behaviors in their natural settings.

Originating from that same setting, I had to watch against socio-economic biases for or against the use of satellite TV. To err is human and I take full responsibility for the limitations that might be caused by observation. However, in the interest of scholarly rectitude, I attempted to be as objective as I possibly could, by entering the setting with knowledge about the African communication setting as has been provided by Western and African media scholars. This was done in a bid to avoid the same mistakes that had been made in the past.

To shed some of the biases that could arise from a personal observation and analysis, interviews were conducted with several media scholars. To cover the wide range of issues related to the topic, weekly interviews were conducted over a period of one month. Dr. George Ngwa, a specialist in the use of new information technologies, talked on the proliferation of satellite dishes in Cameroon and also about the legal parameters surrounding the proliferation of satellite dishes in Cameroon.
4.2 RATIONALE:

There are many reasons to use the qualitative method in a study of the satellite broadcasting revolution in Cameroon. Browne (1982) argues that the qualitative method is the best manner of studying patterns of international mass media use within the African society. His study on international propaganda and international mass media use, in employing the qualitative method, has stood the test of time, and his findings are still valid today, despite a few variations. This study falls within the purview of international mass media use in Cameroon. It takes on even more intricate dimensions since it deals with the use of a new information technology. It is still extremely difficult to carry out a quantitative study in Cameroon, without elaborate funding. Tanjong (1993) supports this reasoning with evidence from the Cameroon setting. He identifies five difficulties in the execution of quantitative research in Cameroon. There is the lack of infrastructural facilities, which would normally ease the sampling process. These include the lack of named and numbered streets, home delivery mails and well developed telecommunication technologies. He says this makes it easier to locate a respondent in a well planned city like New York (with 12 million inhabitants), than in Yaounde, which has under one million inhabitants.

The vestiges of the authoritarian state equally impede the respondents from establishing a credible rapport with the interviewer. Suspicion always reigns supreme, which in turn affects the kind of data that is got from the sample. These limitations on the quantitative method support using the qualitative method, including interviews with scholars in the area.
The use of secondary analysis as designed by Becker and Schoenbach (1989) lends a quantitative quality to a rather qualitative research project. Analyzing the figures published by CRETES in 1996, can provide quantitative support to this qualitative study.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING REVOLUTION IN AFRICA.

Since the wave of political and economic liberalization, one area that has received visible expansion is the media sector. There is doubtless a satellite broadcasting revolution in Africa. This is evident from the numbers of satellite dishes that adorn the roof tops of buildings in cities across Africa. However, the extent of this revolution varies from one country to another. One central player in the expansion of satellite service provision in Africa is MultiChoice, with headquarters in Randburg, South Africa.

According to the Multichannel News International (May 1998) MultiChoice Africa has about 150,000 subscribers in Africa. The first private television network began operating in Ghana in October, 1993. The network, called MultiChoice Ghana is a subscription service and mainly televises events outside Ghana, via satellite. It rebroadcasts the services of M-Net international of South Africa, and the BBC World Service Television, and also programs, movies, sports, and children’s shows (Notebook, 1993b).

The case of Nigeria, shows a little variance in the composition of the content of satellite/cable TV content. The law states that for cable and satellite redistribution organizations, the local programming shall not be less than 20 percent on any channel. This implies a degree of representation of local content (Amienyi and Igor, 1996). Amienyi and Igor (1996) go ahead to state that in major metropolitan areas of Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, Benin, Jos and Port Harcourt, most housing estates have been wired, making television viewing in these cities possible around the clock. The services (in partnership with MultiChoice) offer a range of channels such as CNN
International, C-Span, Canal Horizon (a French channel), MM Abatoho TV, Boputhatswana TV (Bop TV), South African TV, MTV Europe, Angolan TV, M-Net, VOA Europe, K-TV/Super Sport, Algeria TV, BBC International and a host of local channels (Multichoice, 1994).


This gives a broad overview of the ground broken by satellite redistribution services in Africa. The trend is revolutionary and it is still expanding. However, at the moment, M-Net, Multichoice, Canal Plus Horizon and PanAfNet dominate the African market.

### 5.2 THE PROVIDERS OF SATELLITE SERVICES AND THEIR AUDIENCES.

There are four major providers of satellite broadcasting services in Cameroon. These are Spectrum Media, Aston, Tele Plus, Alcatel. The one, which receives the most publicity, as measured in the amount of adverts it deploys in the newspapers, is Spectrum Media. It is the corporation in focus in this study because of its extensive publicity and openness to the public. It is equally the licensed provider of the South Africa-based Multichoice, which is also represented in over 40 other African countries ([http://www.mnet.co.za](http://www.mnet.co.za)). Multichoice was formed in 1994 for analog satellite distribution, and it went digital in Dec. 1995, sending its signals across all of Africa and the Middle East via the PAS-4 satellite. Another reason for this choice of focus is its popularity within the Cameroon setting. It can be said unequivocally that it is the
most known provider of satellite channels in Cameroon. Spectrum Media provides 19
channels in its package.

Cameroon witnessed a visible proliferation of satellite dishes on roof-tops in
elite residential areas after the liberalization of the political and economic landscape.
This period, which is usually traced back to the early 1990s, coincides with the
beginning of the operations of satellite service provision in Cameroon.

A satellite dish standing on the roof of a building, or in an individual’s yard, is
a status symbol, which speaks more than a thousand words. So it is easily described as
another elite invention to increase the knowledge gap between the rich and the poor
following the assumptions of Olien, Tichenor and Donohue (1978). This assumption
may be true to the extent that one ventures on an argument of individual links to the
global media and finance terrain. Within the framework of globalization, therefore, it
can be argued that the acquisition and use of the satellite dish could increase the
knowledge and finance gap between the rich and the poor. This is because the rich
with their financial backing have a near limitless access to this commodity which they
can use to enhance their social and financial chances in a world that is spinning on the
information superhighway.

Ben Fondufe of Spectrum Media asserts that a satellite dish remains an
inaccessible commodity to a vast majority of Cameroonians because the cost is highly
prohibitive. The cost to receive the entire Spectrum Media package amounts to about
1.6 million FCFA (approx. US$2500).

Due to the high costs involved in the acquisition of the service, Fondufe says
that, Spectrum Media’s main customers are the expatriate population. These are
foreign nationals and Cameroonians working within the many multinational and para-
public corporations in both the economic capital, Douala as well as in other parts of
Cameroon. He explains that, despite the fact that individuals (out of the expatriate population) hardly subscribe to these services, it does not imply that they do not subscribe to the services at all. There is a small number of Cameroonian nationals working out of Fondufe’s earlier defined audience who do subscribe to Spectrum Media despite the costs.

It would be incorrect to conclude from this description that there is a very small audience for satellite broadcast programs. With the technology moving from the analog television to digital satellite television, there is the implication of an improvement in the picture and sound quality. Coupled with the current provision of radio channels in the package, the world of satellite broadcasting is in constant mutation.

The audience, which is in league with the evolution in satellite technology in Cameroon, as described by Fondufe, could be termed the ‘virtual audience,’ because the ‘actual audience,’ which is exposed to satellite broadcasts is much more extensive. The ‘virtual audience’ could be defined as the elite class who can afford the satellite services at their high cost. Due to the social ties, which network the Cameroon society, it would be difficult to pin down this audience to specifics. However, it remains a rather negligible part of the population.

Meanwhile, the ‘actual audience’ is composed of those who do not have direct access to the expensive services, as provided by Spectrum Media, but who succeed in circumventing the financial hurdles, to gain access to cable television. Cable TV is considered as much a diversion as satellite TV channels.

There are equally those who have such a limited access to satellite TV that they only get near it in the event of some occasion. This ‘occasional audience’ indirectly pays for access, when they have to witness an event like the burial of Lady
Diana or to watch a high profile boxing game. The satellite TV audience in Cameroon could be described as of a pyramidal nature since it extends as it nears the base.

While it is still fashionable to delineate between the urban and the rural masses of the Cameroon population in macro terms, it becomes extremely difficult to describe in actual terms the reach of satellite television. There are many factors which make the ‘actual audience’ much larger than the ‘virtual audience.’ At this point in time, it is hard to describe the effect that the new information technology is having on the broad base of the pyramid, which is composed of the ‘actual audience.’

Some companies, which Spectrum Media serves are the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and the Cameroon Oil Refinery Corporation (S.O.N.A.R.A). The residential areas of the top executives of these corporations are organized in such a manner that the houses are provided with the digital satellite channels at the cost of the corporation. Despite its Anglphone connotation (since its package contains only 2 French channels), it serves a homogenous audience. Spectrum Media is trying at the moment to compile a package of eight French-oriented program channels.

However, Fondufe admits that though the English package has purely commercial motives, the French package is coming in as a cultural means to work against what they see as the Anglo-American revolution the world over. Third World countries may be concerned about the erosion of culture, but the French too, are equally concerned about losing the world to the Anglo-American coalition. This shows the clairvoyance of the Third World states who raised the concept of the New World Information and Communication Order since the 1960s. The cultural erosion argument is the reason why the French government is pushing this new package into the international satellite broadcasting market.
5.3 THE LOCAL PROVIDERS

Beyond the providers of satellite broadcasts, there are certain stations, which do not require a decoder in order to be connected. All that it takes is the satellite dish pointed in the right direction and the images from distant places are in the living room. This gives access to a limited number of channels, but for some, it provides enough diversion from the monotony and boredom, which comes with watching the CRTV. This is for the people who go out to get access to satellite channels themselves, without the help of one provider or the other. They use the help of local tinkerers, who have some training in basic parabolic technology, some of who are graduates of the National Higher School of Engineering. The cost of this venture (package plus technology) could be about 400,000 FCFA (approx. US$ 800). This is more affordable for the upper middle class Cameroonian, who cannot afford the luxury of digital satellite TV, but wishes for some distraction from the monotony of the CRTV.

There are ‘smaller’ individuals who get into the business of providing cable/satellite services too (they could be described as ‘gypsy providers’) depending on the individual’s capital in establishing the venture. This occurs where an individual subscribes to one of the major providers and then redistributes the service to almost an entire neighborhood with the aid of multi-unit dwelling (MUD) equipment. The individuals in this neighborhood in turn come together and pay a certain collective sum at the end of each month. This amount normally ranges between 16,000-20,000 FCFA (approx. US$ 30-40) a month per household.

This is more affordable for the average Cameroonian who wishes and seeks an escape from the indoctrination of the CRTV, while in turn inadvertently becoming
part of that big family of consumers of satellite services. This goes with the status symbol of being called a ‘parabolisé’ (a French slang which turns the word parabolic into a verb, as used, it means ‘parabolized’). Though the major providers argue that this is an illegal practice, the opinion on the field is divided. Dr. George Ngwa, assistant lecturer at the University of Buea’s Department of Mass Communication in Cameroon, maintains otherwise. He asserts that because satellite broadcasting is virtually unregulated, many people can get into the area and make some fast money for themselves. However, recently, the major providers are trying to get their customers to sign contracts restricting this practice.

A provider like Tele Plus, which has predominantly French channels, is trying to reach as extensive an audience as it possibly can. As a major provider, it has made it possible for a wider audience to have access to satellite broadcast programs by reaching a contract with the National Real Estate Company (SIC). This contract permits residents of SIC houses in the capital city, Yaounde, and Douala, the economic capital, to subscribe to the satellite services at a monthly rate. Their rates were very similar to those of the ‘gypsy providers,’ who make the service accessible to entire residential areas. There are about a million people living in SIC residential areas, with an overwhelming majority of them potentially subscribing to these services. That changes the potential audience that is reached by such a provider as Spectrum Media. There are a few differences between Spectrum Media and Tele Plus. While Spectrum Media’s relatively large package is reserved for a high status audience, Tele Plus’ relatively smaller package has popularized cable communication. It blows the size of the audience up. That is the reason behind the assertion that there was a satellite broadcasting revolution, taking place in Cameroon from 1990-1995.
This revolution has left a permanent effect on the Cameroon media consumption patterns.

The service is being provided at a low cost, which actually runs quite high in the long run. However, it is still more affordable for the family that cannot afford the luxury of a parabolic antenna to face the high micro costs. The rate at which people were subscribing to these services in its initial days was exponential.

Furthermore, it was not just the two most important cities in Cameroon that were involved in the satellite broadcasting revolution, though the shape of the revolution varies depending on the place. The case of the North West province in Cameroon is peculiar, because it is the political hot spot in the country. After the 1992 post-presidential election violence which wrecked the provincial capital, Bamenda, a state of emergency was declared in the province and TV signals from CRTV were blocked from reaching the province in a kind of quarantine. This was the price that they had to pay for political obstinacy.

Hence, due to the political history and because the North West province is a major opposition stronghold where the CRTV was seen as a propaganda arm of the government, many local providers of satellite/cable TV services erupted. They came into the scene to make some profit out of the political cold war raging between the North West and the capital city. The terms of these local service providers are basically the same as those that bind the entrepreneurs who provide satellite/cable TV to large residential areas (‘gypsy providers’).
5.4 THE INFORMAL SECTOR PROVIDERS

These are the people who expose large audiences to satellite broadcasts through a commercial interest of their own. They could be called ‘intermediate’ providers. Their main motive is profit, and their profit does not come immediately out of the provision of satellite TV services to the customer. This group comprises mainly hotels, snack bars and restaurants for whom satellite services give an added advantage in the face of competition. However, hotels are not responsible for popularizing access to satellite TV since they serve an essentially elite sector in Cameroon.

The businesses that make a tangible profit out of their satellite links are the snack bars and the restaurants. The prices of food and drink in these restaurants is normally above the average, and it is mandatory to consume something while watching their satellite TV programs. That is the reason why the Alliance Franco-Camerounaise in Buea, which was built to maintain cultural ties between the English-speaking part of Cameroon and France, has been enormously profitable. It is not strange to find extremely large crowds composed of a cross-section of Buea’s society, from students and lecturers (since it is a university town), to soldiers and government workers, gathered in front of the numerous TV screens at the AFC. The highest attraction is usually the soccer games and high profile boxing bouts that are shown of the French overseas TV channel, Canal Horizon. The example of Alliance Franco-Camerounaise in Buea has been copied by many other snack bars and restaurants. These business enterprises, have an edge over their competitors who do not provide this satellite TV diversion. Therefore, it would not be a long shot to say that the
satellite dish has transformed the modes of TV consumption patterns in the semi-urban university town of Buea.

This shows evidence of the fact that the satellite broadcasting consumer revolution in Cameroon in not just for a particular class or segment of the society. It is a commodity, which many people would acquire if they could afford it, thereby putting the CRTV out of the market. A scientific study carried out by the CRETES (Center for the Study and Research of Public Opinion and Economic Issues) in 1995 is very revealing. According to the CRETES study, 94.4 percent of the quantitative sample of the Cameroonian population across the socio-economic board would subscribe to cable/satellite TV if they had the financial resources to do so.

The example of bars and restaurants, has also been copied by a number of inter-city transportation companies, who make satellite channels available at their departure lounges. This keeps the travelers free from boredom while they wait to file into the buses. This is the case of “Guarantee Express” and “Centrale Voyages,” whose customers enjoy the pleasure of satellite TV while waiting to embark on the journey. This is all an attempt to take an edge over competitors.
5.5 COMPETITION FOR THE CAMEROON RADIO TELEVISION CORPORATION.

CRTV could be seen as abetting the satellite broadcasting consumer revolution, since they almost always do direct or near direct broadcasts of soccer games from Europe. This is achieved through an exchange of services agreement between CRTV (through the African Union of National Radio and Television Stations-URTNA) and the Canal France International satellite channel. This agreement brings all the European Champions’ League and other international soccer competitions to many Cameroonian households.

So it is a commercial agreement through which the CRTV delivers a particular audience to the advertiser on CFI. This same agreement exists with almost all other French-speaking African state TV networks (members of URTNA), because most of the products that are advertised during the games are meant for African markets. Those people who are normally connected to satellite would have access to these same programs. Therefore, through this agreement, CRTV delivers that audience which is not connected to satellite and extends the advertiser’s potential audience.

Beyond this agreement, CRTV has driven itself out of competition since it has lost credibility and fails to satisfy its audience. This failure to satisfy its audience is evident in the CRETES (1995) study which shows that across the educational spectrum, 63.5 percent of people educated at the elementary level are disappointed with CRTV’s programming; 65.7 percent of secondary educated people are disappointed with the CRTV and 78.5 percent of higher educated people are disappointed. Clement Tayo of Nelson McCann-Cameroon notes that his agency has
advised many of its clients to place their adverts in foreign television channels like Canal Plus Horizon. His reasons are that advert space in these agencies per minute are cheaper than they are on CRTV. They have a wide audience within that part of the Cameroon population which commands the purchasing power for classy goods. So Cameroonian corporations like the Union Camerounaise des Brasseries (UCB have advertised both their brews and the Kadji Sports Academy (their affiliate sports institute) on the Canal Plus Horizon.

However, in an interview, Enoh Tanjong, head of the Mass Communication department in the University of Buea asserted that CRTV will remain the lone most important source for in-depth news and information about Cameroon. This is corroborated again by the CRETES 1995 study, which shows that news is the most watched program across the national territory.
CHAPTER SIX

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

6.1 THE VIDEO CASSETTE RECORDER Versus SATELLITE/CABLE TV IN CAMEROON.

Home entertainment in Cameroon, over a long period in time has been based on the ownership and use of the Video Cassette Recorder. The VCR became very popular with the advent of television in Cameroon in the mid-1980s. During this period, the spread of the VCR was attributed to the complementary role that it played viz-a-viz the TV screen. However, with the advent of digital satellite TV and cable TV this trend is changing and the VCR is slowly fading out as the major source of entertainment beside the TV screen. This segment of the study seeks to show the changing trend in home entertainment consumer patterns in Cameroon.

The first reason that can be used to explain this trend is the cost. The VCR feeds on video cassettes which are not produced in Cameroon. Considering the import duties that the authoritarian state in Cameroon placed on such “pervasive” home entertainment products, the cost of a video cassette was relatively high. Therefore, if a family had to entertain itself with home video every month, they could acquire five high quality (as opposed to bootleg) movies at the cost of about 50,000 FCFA (approx. US$ 200 at the time). That was a very high price to pay for home entertainment.

These high quality products were challenged on the market by extremely low quality bootleg movies. There was an in-flow of such movies from Cameroon's western border with Nigeria. These movies which were dubbed versions of original
copies were of low visual and audio quality. Low costs could be attributed to their being usually smuggled into Cameroon. Five of these bootleg movies were sold at 7500 FCFA (approx. US$ 30). Though they did not satisfy the home audiences the way Hollywood's producers would have wanted, they provided an alternative and cheaper source for home entertainment.

Together with the high cost of the originals and the low quality of the bootleg movies, there was the lack of very good maintenance technicians. This required replacement of VCRs when they underwent serious technical blows. It was for all these reasons that the VCR was easily replaced by cable/satellite TV when it came.

Cable TV came with a specific price tag, which was paid at the end of each month. There is not much maintenance that has to go with it since the cable providers assure most of the technical cost. Despite the fact that the argument goes that the cumulative cost of cable TV runs high, it provides a variety of entertainment which almost adequately replaces the continuous purchase of the video cassettes which feed the VCR. Therefore, the change of home entertainment from the VCR to satellite/cable TV is one of the observed consumer effects that this new information technology has had in Cameroon.
6.2 USES AND GRATIFICATION FROM SATELLITE BROADCAST CONSUMPTION.

It is necessary at this juncture to analyze the satellite broadcasting consumer revolution within the context of findings from other media studies. The rationale here is to show that the satellite broadcasting consumer revolution in Cameroon is not something new. It is simply a response to the failure of the local government-controlled electronic media channel to meet audience needs. The evidence shows that people have turned to satellite broadcasts to satisfy several needs not satisfied by the local TV channel. Another reason seems to lie in the innovation itself, which permeated the Cameroon society after political liberalization in the early 1990s.

The theoretical foundations of uses and gratification study were laid down by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevich (1974). They state that compared with classical effects studies, the uses and gratification approach takes the media consumer rather than the media message as the starting point. It goes ahead to explore the audience communication behavior in terms of their direct experience with the media. This is the reason why in this thesis the emphasis lies on the consumer end of the satellite broadcasting revolution in Cameroon rather than the satellite dishes themselves.

According to Livingstone (1997) uses and gratification study is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the media drawing from social psychology and sociology. Here needs are seen as having socio-structural rather than individual psychological origins and are subject to social, cultural and historical influences. Quoting Swanson (1992) she argues that seeking of gratification is one of the influences that shape people’s exposure to mass media.
Dominick (1994) in the same light, defines the uses and gratification model as one which proposes that audience members have certain needs and drives that are satisfied by using both non-media and media sources. According to him, this functional approach of the media at the individual level (i.e. which studies how the individual uses the media) is usually done by researchers asking questions to audience members ending up with a classification. The classification that is done by Dominick includes the following categories: cognition (learning and knowledge), diversion (stimulation, relaxation, emotional release of pent-up emotions and energy) social utility and withdrawal.

The CRETES 1995 study shows the different reasons that define the consumer patterns of the Cameroon electronic media audience. The observed pattern on the Cameroon media landscape shows evidence that the audience uses cable or satellite television mainly for diversion. These cable channels are used as an escape from the monotony and boredom in CRTV products. The lack of competition for the CRTV in the Cameroon electronic media market could be seen as one of the reasons for the diversion to cable/satellite TV channels.

One attraction for the Cameroon audience on these satellite channels is soccer. Due to the deep importance of soccer in the Cameroon society, the audience for soccer is very big. The local TV channel cannot satisfy the demand by a majority of the male audience as well as a large proportion of the female audience. Therefore this audience turns to the foreign-owned cable channels. This is evidence of a penchant for entertainment in Cameroon audience attraction to soccer in the satellite TV channels.

This behavior of the Cameroon audience has in turn effected the advertising industry in the country. Tayo Clement, executive manager at Nelson McCann
Cameroon states that local advertisers are advised to advertise on foreign channels like Canal Horizon and Canal France International, since they are the staples of the Cameroon audience these days. Advertising space on these channels is less expensive than on the monopoly CRTV channel.

In the CRETES 1995 study on the media in Cameroon, the following reasons were advanced for the purchase or subscription to satellite or cable television services:-

- 22.6% of the respondents subscribed to the new information technology in the quest for accurate information. This implies a cognitive reason behind the use of cable/satellite television.
- 18.9% subscribed because of the mediocrity of CRTV programming. This means CRTV’s audience wants higher quality entertainment products, for its diversion.
- 18.9% subscribed in the quest for varied information. This is a similar cognitive need as the one in the highest variable category that is satisfied by cable/satellite TV.
- 13.2% subscribed due to the bad quality of the programs shown on CRTV.
- 11.3% subscribed for exposure to the world beyond Cameroon.

These reasons all point back to the shortcomings of the CRTV, which has been taken advantage of by the local satellite/cable TV providers. Those weaknesses created an information and entertainment vacuum which sooner or later had to be filled. More figures show that while 54% of the owners of satellite dishes never watch the local CRTV channel, 38.4% of satellite dish owners watch the local TV sparingly only to keep abreast with news on the local scene.
These figures show that the needs of the local Cameroon audience are hardly met by the Cameroon Radio Television corporation. This is the main reason people turn to international mass media is to satisfy those needs that are not satisfied by the local media. The uses of the media by the Cameroon audience are very much similar to those identified by Katz, Blumler and Doninick in their initial study of uses and gratification. The proliferation of the satellite dish and cable TV in Cameroon, the figures show, is a direct response of the audience to local media messages, which did not satisfy their needs.

Compared to CRTV, which provides stale western programs like “Beverly Hills 90210” and “Melrose Place” to its audience, the Spectrum Media digital satellite TV package which provides 19 TV channels and 2 audio channels is a marvel to the consumer. Due to Spectrum Media’s prohibitive costs, customers settle for cable TV. This last option still keeps the CRTV in a very uncomfortable spot.

6.3 DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION IN THE SATELLITE BROADCASTING REVOLUTION IN CAMEROON.

Despite the emphasis of diffusion studies on rural areas for almost two decades, it first came to prominence as a mass communication theory with the works of scholars like Everett Rogers and Elihu Katz in the early 1960s. Rogers (1962) defines diffusion of innovations as the process by which a new idea is spread from its source of invention or creation to its ultimate users or adopters. He lists four elements in the analysis of the diffusion of innovations: the innovation, its communication from one individual to another in a social system, time, and the eventual adoption of the innovation by the individual.
Diffusion of innovation may sound distant as a theoretical framework for analyzing the proliferation of satellite/cable TV in the Cameroon society. However, this segment of the study deserves the use of diffusion of innovation, to describe the satellite/cable TV phenomenon in Cameroon along lines relating to media theory.

The innovation is usually an idea perceived as new by an individual or groups of individuals. After the liberalization of the Cameroon society in the early 1990s, satellite dishes, which had hitherto been the preserve of diplomatic missions and government offices became a commercial product. This period coincides with the appearance of the first satellite/cable TV providers in Cameroon.

Therefore, at this stage, satellite/cable TV is viewed as an innovation for media needs of the general Cameroon audience. The limited circle of diplomatic and government services had been expanded to the general audience. It is an innovation that came in to compete with the monopoly state-owned and controlled CRTV.

From the innovation, the essence of the diffusion process is the human interaction in which one person communicates a new idea to another person. At its most elemental level of conceptualization, the diffusion process consists of a new idea, an individual X who knows about the innovation, and an individual Y who does not yet know about the innovation.

Rogers (1962) goes ahead to state that these individuals operate within a social system which is a population of individuals who are functionally differentiated and engaged in collective problem solving behavior. The social system under analysis in a diffusion study could consist of all the farmers in one country, or the physicians in a given community. It is important to note that the norms of the social system and the status of the individuals involved affect the diffusion of ideas. A norm could be
defined as the most frequently occurring pattern of overt behavior for the members of a particular social system.

Within the Cameroonian case, there is the diffusion of satellite/cable TV in response to the communication vacuum that was created by the mediocre programming form CRTV and the liberalization of the Cameroonian society. The human interaction process in this case is not at the level of interpersonal communication, but on a level of symbolic interaction between individuals. This symbolic interaction within the entire social system assigned attributes of status conference to satellite/cable TV ownership.

It is extremely difficult to assume the importance of interpersonal communication in the proliferation of satellite/cable TV in Cameroon. However, it should be noted that the authoritarian state that had reigned in Cameroon between 1960 and 1990 had led to the creation of strong alternative media. One of the fall-outs of this system was the development of a strong network of interpersonal communication which government officials were always quick to brand as rumor mills. This hypothesis has been supported by Tanjong (1993). He gives examples of interpersonal communication areas such as:- beer parlors, hair dressing saloons and Parent’s Teachers Association meetings as the best venues at which to measure the pulse of Cameroon public opinion. Upon this proof, lies the inference that these same interpersonal roots would have supported the diffusion of satellite/cable TV within the Cameroon society.

Rogers (1962) goes ahead to note that the adoption stage differs from the diffusion process in that it deals with the adoption of a new idea by one individual, while the diffusion process deals with the spread of innovations between social systems or societies. This research project does not extend into the adoption process.
since its main focus has been the revolutionary proliferation of satellite/cable TV in Cameroon.

There is evidence to the fact that diffusion of innovation studies present and appropriate framework for studying the spread of satellite/cable TV in Cameroon. There is the introduction of an innovation as a result of politico-social transformation taking place in the social system. This innovation comes as a solution to the problem of monopoly control of the electronic media in Cameroon which had led to mediocre and low quality programming.
CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 THEORETICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Africa stands as the poorest continent on the globe; nevertheless, it is has cultural diversity that is unique. From the heritage of the ancient Egyptian civilization of the North to the Bantu civilization of the South, there is a gulf of differences among countries on the continent. This has been interpreted by some scholars, like Ali A. Mazrui, as a wealth in itself. However, many African states were creations of the 1884-85 Berlin Conference, and the post-colonialist, autocratic leader, continued the pattern of centralized government control. These independence governments prescribed the role of the media within the parameters of aiding government to achieve the dual goals of “national development” and “national unity.” Hachten (1993) argues that those concepts of national development and national unity set the ground for the muzzling of the African press. With the media at home muzzled, independent African states, which were part of the Non-Aligned Movement, adopted the concept of the NWICO as propounded by Tunisian diplomat Mustapha Masmoudi in 1976. Many in the Western media interpreted this as an attempt to muzzle the international press, as these African and Third World leaders had done in their home countries.

Since then, political changes have taken place around the globe that have had sweeping effects on the political orientation of many African states and their media systems. Africa is at the stage of transition today, a transition which Clinton (1998) sees as the ultimate renaissance of the African continent. Away from the political rhetoric, new information technologies have succeeded in circumventing government
censorship and the sword of the censor is slowly and surely being sheathed. The on-
gong development of a new level of debate within the marketplace of ideas in many African states today is evidence of this.

One example of this is Nigeria’s private 24-hour news and infotainment service (Reuters, 1997). This is similar to the Cable News Network, but more dedicated to the needs of the African audience in the Diaspora around the globe. Schechter (1992: 247) also notes the success that South Africa Now, a TV program produced by Globalvision Incorporated was broadcast on several American networks between 1989 and 1992.

Meanwhile, many other indigenous African newspapers have started pasting their news and information on the Internet. That is the case of Isah ’a Boh Cameroon, The Guardian newspaper of Uganda and many others. The Pan-African News Agency also has a web site containing news about Africa.

While the continent continues its crawl out of economic crisis and civil strife, the Republic of South Africa has emerged since the end of apartheid in 1992 as the major player in the international communication in the African region. A private company in South Africa, Multichoice, is the major provider of satellite communication services on the continent. Multichoice emerged out of the Policy of Cooperation between African media channels and their foreign counterparts. With the advent of digital satellite TV, there arose a need among multinational corporation to reach their consumer audience around the world; international mass media channels provided that reach.

Multichoice works together with indigenous providers of satellite services in different African countries. In Egypt, they work with the Cable Network Egypt, and in Cameroon, they work with Spectrum Media, to provide satellite services. The question
is whether this is evidence of multi-polarism and whether it protects different cultural identity.

The Multichoice package provides satellite channels which span different cultures, depending on which audience they are serving. However, they principally provide South African channels like Discovery Africa, M-Net, Supersport, and Bop TV. Their secondary channels are those like CNN and other indigenously cultural channels, like Arabsat channels, when operating in Egypt.

Thus CNN has to pass through an African corporation to ensure itself some profits from its distribution on the continent, and there is a good distribution of South African channels. So there is news out there about Africa narrated by an African for anyone who wants to hear it. Therefore, South Africa stands out as the emerging African communication giant, providing the African movie and African side of the story in international communication.

For African media houses to be more competitive in the international media setting, African governments need to relinquish control of media institutions. This for of disengagement should place the government within a regulatory position. This calls for the setting up on national communications commissions in African states. These organizations should primarily serve a regulatory function, and should be composed of members of government and media owners and practitioners. This would reduce the direct engagement of the government in issue of censorship and the management of media institutions. There are other recommendations, that seek to make African media institutions more competitive within the global market place.
7.1.1 The Politics of Accommodation.

This study recommends accommodation as one of the theoretical principles that should guide the relationship between multinational news agencies and their audiences. This recommendation, proposed by Amin and Napoli (1997) and Galtung and Vincent (1992) states the importance of taking cultural values into consideration in reporting international news and events. Since the issue here is the satellite broadcasting revolution in Africa, this recommendation is appropriate. Due to the rising popularity of western TV news sources within the African media landscape, there is a need to allow African views of political, cultural, and economic news as it comes out of Africa.

A program like CNN World Report is an example of this initiative. It allows local journalists around the world to present the news from within their countries. The theory of accommodation supposes the setting up of regional offices of the various satellite TV news agencies around the globe. Cultural issues have been the biggest bone of contention in the reporting of international issues. CNN’s report on Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt during the 1994 World Population Summit in Cairo is a contemporary examples.

Due to the commercial nature of international communication, neither Africa’s 700 million population nor the 80 percent of the global population which inhabit the Third World can be ignored. The Third World today is an emerging market. This has its own implications on the commercial orientation of the multinational media corporations. With globalization, advertisers try to make the best out of the technology that they have to reach the maximum audience. Today in Africa, there is an accord between francophone African media networks, and the Canal France International
DBS channel, for the direct transmission of some soccer games. This agreement puts a potential audience of 200 million people on the African continent alone in the hands of the many advertisers who sponsor the satellite transmission of the soccer games. Therefore, despite its Third World stature, there is interdependence between these Francophone African countries and the CFI DBS channel. That in itself epitomizes the importance of the politics of accommodation in the multi-polar world that is emerging out of globalization.

There are some reporting strategies required of the theory of accommodation. In the reporting of these issues, it would be preferable to use persuasion rather than attacking the cultural values of the people. Another preference would be in using either a journalist from the local TV or a member of that social setting with whom the targeted audience can identify. Finally, there should be a follow-up by the channel or a relatively long (15 minutes) report, at least, which would make the issue being reported, more than just a sound bite. The theory of accommodation in international journalism would create more confluence than conflict of cultures around the globe.

7.1.2 The Politics of Cooperation.

African states need both internal and external reform of their communications infrastructure in order to meet the challenges of communication in the 21st century. Internally, they need to liberalize the media sector to accommodate private investors. The private sector has shown evidence of more ingenuity and creativity than the government sector in Africa. The expansion of the African newspaper industry since political liberalization in the early 1990s forecasts the same trend in the liberalization of the electronic media. Therefore, there needs to be the effective guarantees of free
speech in the constitutions of different African states if they wish to compete favorably in the promotion of their cultural identity.

The historical and cultural trends in African states are very similar. The financial handicap is one of the biggest deterrents to the emancipation of the African media. Finances were a major reason the Union of National Television and Radio Services in Africa (URTNA) and PANA have failed. These are examples of attempts at inter-African cooperation in the area of the media, which failed partly because of the preponderant role that the national media institutions played in these institutions. Therefore, there is the need for the government to serve a benevolent regulatory function. They should make the democratic rules within which a marketplace of ideas is created and sustained, and that is where their influence on the media should end. Within this environment, there is the supposition that the government and private media institutions would develop survival skills to sustain themselves in competition. This is one of the ways in which the African media can develop themselves into viable competitors on the international scene.

### 7.1.3 Politics of Comparative Advantage.

Comparative advantage is an economic concept enunciated by David Ricardo to help countries benefit from their areas of strength in international trade (Rochester and Pearson, 1988). This theory posits that countries should specialize in producing those goods that they can produce most efficiently and trade these for needed goods from other countries. This concept can equally be adapted to the African media landscape in order to develop the media in Africa. There are many areas that account for the strength of a media institution. Some of these include journalism education,
media management, program conception and marketing. Africa still has a gaping
deficiency of specialists in these areas, because the schools do not emphasize
specialization. They train all-round media men who lack excellence in the different
specialization that lubricate the media wheel.

This politics of comparative advantage in the media sector, recommends that
media institutions in different African states develop specialization options. Then they
could construct exchange programs, which would end up churning out not just
journalists, but media practitioners who would be specialists in different areas.

In addition, the politics of comparative advantage could be used in the
exchange of technological resources. Egypt and the Republic of South Africa are the
only two African states that have communication satellites in orbit. Meanwhile, a
majority of African states cannot afford to rent transponder space on satellites.
Therefore, the policy of comparative advantage could spring some kind of program
exchange, which would give the satellite the power to commercialize imagery from
other African states. This kind of exchange would be regulated by media management
under financial agreements.

7.4 CONCLUSION.

The Cameroon media landscape has expanded since the early 1990s. These
have been consequent to the wind of political change the swept through the entire
country. These changes have been followed by a satellite broadcasting consumer
revolution, which has had effects on both the media sector and the entire society. It
has brought competition to the monopoly of the state-owned CRTV. This competition
has shown the low quality and lack of creativity in CRTV’s programs.
There are different levels of providers in the satellite/cable industry in Cameroon. It is fair to note that this new information technology has created a new entrepreneurial class in Cameroon. The diversity in the nature of satellite/cable TV services provided shows evidence of the ingenuity in private sector investment. They try to make as much profit as they can before the promulgation of a “texte d’application” (a regulatory instrument for the provision of satellite/cable TV services) by the government.

The spread of these satellite broadcast TV services in Cameroon is defined according to the uses and gratification theory and the diffusion of innovation theory of the media. This shows the evolution in the consumer trends on the Cameroon audience in the face of new information technologies. Therefore, there is a sociological pattern in the media use patterns of the Cameroon audience. This media use pattern in Cameroon is hinged on the political controls that are inherent within the Cameroon media landscape itself. The audience turns to international mass media for entertainment and as a relief against boredom that pervades the monopoly local channel.

From this study of the satellite/cable TV consumer revolution in Cameroon, there is evidence to the effect that government control of the media suffocates their growth. This leaves audiences vulnerable to foreign influences. Within this age of globalization, the private sector becomes the prime mover in the economic sphere and the non-governmental organization is a prime source of information. Thus, it becomes increasingly difficult for the government to control the press. This implies that the African governments adopt a more liberal regulatory function in relation to the press. This kind of environment fosters the exchange of ideas which is important to development.
REFERENCES


