

The Mass Media and Regional Integration in Africa

by Ewumbue-Monono Churchill*

Abstract

Although studies in African integration have been mostly in the political and economic domains (Hazzlewood, 1977)¹, it has been argued that social integration is the pre-condition for either political or economic integration in Africa (Nye, 1966)². This paper focuses on the poorly-explored concept of social integration by analysing the continent's efforts in ensuring integration through the mass media. It examines the difficulties encountered in realising such objectives and offers some suggestions for policy-makers.

*Dr. Ewumbue-Monono Churchill is a researcher at the Advanced School of Mass Communications, Yaounde, Cameroon.

Masses Médias et Intégration Régionale en Afrique

Résumé

Bien que les études sur l'intégration africaine se sont surtout centrées sur les domaines économique et politique, il est souvent présumé que l'intégration sociale est la condition sine qua non pour la réalisation des deux premières sortes d'intégration.

Cet article étudie le concept d'intégration sociale en évaluant les efforts du continent dans ce domaine à travers les masses médias. Il passe en revue les difficultés rencontrées dans la réalisation de ces objectifs et propose quelques suggestions aux faiseurs de politiques.

Introduction

The concept of media integration has been subjected to many definitions. To the 1980 McBride Commission on the international flow of information it means:

The provision to all persons, groups, nations of access to the variety of messages which they need in order to know and understand each other, to appreciate other's living conditions, viewpoints and aspirations.³

To adopt Hoskyns' definition, an African regional media integration describes:

Any significant step towards co-operation, harmonisation of policy or joint action either in relation between the African states themselves or in their dealings with the outside world.⁴

Whatever the definition, this concept describes either the process of shifting national media loyalties to larger entities, establishing and maintaining an information community, or harmonising media policies among countries. At a theoretical level, studies in media integration have been confined to the institutional-behavioral approach (Jackson and Stern, 1971). This approach is further divided into three currents: the Federalist, Communication and Functionalist Currents.⁵

The federalist current regards media integration as creating new larger legal state-owned media organs from existing smaller units. This is the case with such organisations as the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) and the Union of African National Radio and TV Organizations (URTNA). These organs are mere conglomerations of state-owned news agencies and radios in Africa on federal basis. The communication current led by Karl Deutsch and Cantori and Spiegel regards regional integration as the sum-total of flows and transactions within a region.⁶ Such flows and transactions could be inter-personal (mails, telephones and telegraphs), mass media (newspaper, radio, tv and books), exchanges among the elites (intra-regional education, tourism, diplomatic visits) and transportation (roads, water, rail and air). The neo-functionalist current spearheaded by Joseph Nye regards regional integration as comprising four stages: institutional, policy-making, attitudinal integrations and security community.

Applied to Africa media integration, institutional integration results in creating regional media institutions such as PANA and URTNA. Policy-integration describes consultations and harmonisation of media policies while attitudinal integration describes the harmonisation of media contents and news values among African states to create a common media culture. Security community creates a psychologically-positive information community — negative news is down-played and positive news highlighted.

Joseph Nye holds that the mass media have been invaluable in integrating the East African Community. Radio broadcasts in Swahili and English

and the inter-territorial flow of Kenyan newspapers have been instrumental in creating an information community based on shared experiences, problems and common aspirations among the three African states.⁷

This paper tries to elevate the analysis of this concept to a continental level. Such an analysis has advantages over previous studies for many reasons. Unlike national media integration schemes whose main concern is nation-building, regional media integration is an aspect of international politics and diplomacy. In fact since the early 1960s, 'media diplomacy' has been a key factor in inter-African conferences for joint media policies like the Bamako Conference (1961), Brazzaville Conference (1962), Tunis (1963), Yaounde (1964), and Addis Ababa (1966). These conferences were usually under the aegis of the African Union of National News Agencies (UANA). The media diplomacy which has also been a key factor in Afro-Arab relations was further manifested by two Afro-Arab news agency conferences in Tunis (1975) and Tripoli (1977). More recently, media diplomacy in Africa has been under the auspices of UNESCO and the OAU.

In 1980, UNESCO organised the inter-governmental Conference on Communication Policies in Africa, AFRICOM '80, in Yaounde for more than 30 African states while the OAU has been organising conferences for African ministers of information after every two years since 1977. These conferences, which include Kampala 77, Addis Ababa 79, Egypt 85 and Harare 86, have shown that media integration in Africa cannot be easily devoid of politics. Although the main issues during such conferences have centred on media co-operation, political issues such as neo-colonialism, apartheid, and the influence of TNCs have usually been discussed.

Apart from this, regional media integration studies are important because they show how African states are trying to harness their scarce human and material resources (journalists, photographers, TV stations, telecommunication networks, etc) to provide their peoples with one of the fundamental rights of man: the right to be informed.

Studies in regional media integration are important in showing the specific historical and philosophical influences the concept of regional integration has gone through in Africa. These influences which include colonialism, Pan-Africanism, functionalism and the new international order have been identified in studies of political and economic integration.⁸

In discussing the concept of regional media integration in Africa, this paper argues that the present continental media integration trends are too broad to be effective. It holds that information communities should be created gradually at sub-regional levels in the same way as there have been trends in creating sub-regional economic communities like EAC, UDEAC, ECOWAS and ECCAS. This thesis is largely based on the well-

known mass communication theory which argues that, the further people are from the place of events, the less interesting the news becomes. It is thus logical that people within a sub-region would be more interested in information from their sub-region than that from other regions.⁹ To have a comprehensive grasp of the matter, the paper first surveys factors influencing media integration in Africa. Then it analyses the continental trends and their shortcomings. The last part discusses the foundations and advantages of a sub-regional approach.

General Factors Influencing Media Integration in Africa

The creation of information communities in Africa has been a function of colonial legacy, language, education, technical capabilities and trans-national business. The impact of colonial legacy has been considerable in African regional media integration. Barton (1979) has identified six information communities based on the colonial legacy: South Africa, Portuguese Africa, British East Africa, British West Africa, French West Africa and Maghreb regions.¹⁰

The South African media region with its centre in the Republic of South Africa embraced North and South Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Botswana and Swaziland as peripheries. Newspaper circulation in the region was controlled by the *Argus* newspaper group which owned *The Rand Daily Mail*, *Rhodesia Herald*, and *Swaziland Times*. News gathering and dissemination in the region was monopolised by the *South African Press Agency (SAPA)*. The main objective of the mass media in this region during the colonial period was to perpetuate a security community of white minority settlers and impose their value system in a region threatened by black, Indian and coloured communities. Like the South African region, the Portuguese media region which incorporated all the Lusophone Africa countries was intended to create a security community. But unlike the South African region, security community in the region was projected by the coloured population who wanted to defend their rights and articulate their political and economic interests. With its centre in Mozambique, this region was integrated mainly by the circulation of *O Brado Africano* and *Diario de Mozambique*.

The East African media region comprising Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda has been one of the most homogenous media regions. With its centre in Kenya, the region was supported by the *Standard* group of newspapers introduced in 1910 by an Asian businessman, A.M. Jeevanjee. The group's *East African Standard* created in 1910 was a cushion to the British colonial policy of integration in the area — a policy which witnessed the successive setting up of structures like the British East African Company, the British High Commission and the British East African Common Services. The *Standard* group later created a chain of newspapers including the *Kenyan Standard*, *Tanzanian Standard* (1930)

and the *Uganda Argus* (1953) to give effective coverage to the region. Apart from newspaper circulation, the radio also helped in integrating the East African region. Thus the British East African Broadcasting Company created in August 1928 in Nairobi was used in mobilising both white settlers in the region and the African population through its broadcasts in English and Swahili. Like the South African region, the role of the press in British East Africa was mainly that of consolidating the values of the white settlers and middle-class Indian businessmen by creating a security community through information.

On the other hand, the British West African region comprising Nigeria, British Cameroon, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia was integrated along the lines of a nationalist indigenous press. With its centre in Sierra Leone and Ghana, the West African region was integrated by the circulation of such newspapers as *The West African Herald*, *The West African Pilot* and *The African Morning Post*.

News gathering and dissemination was by the Africa and Colonial Press Agency in London which supplied all the papers with news. Apart from newspapers, the radio, especially Radio Freetown (1931) and Ghana (1935) were invaluable integrating factors for the African elite.

The French African region was divided into two: French Equatorial Africa with Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, the Central African Republic, Gabon, and French West Africa: Senegal, Mali, Niger, Benin, Guinea, and Mauritania. Congo Brazzaville was French Equatorial Africa's engine. With a radio station installed in 1936 and reinforced in 1941, Congo Brazzaville remained the main centre in the region. On the other hand, Senegal and Benin were the main centres in French West Africa where regional newspapers like *L'AOF* (1907), *Paris-Dakar* (1933) and *Le Cri Nègre* were published.

The Maghreb region — Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Egypt — has also constituted an information community. The main *chef d'orchestre* for this region was Egypt which had created a radio in 1922 and the Middle East News Agency (MENA). These media organs fed the region with news based on such Maghrebian values as Islamism and Pan-Arabism.

Although these regional integration tendencies slowed with the advent of independence and the subsequent bulkanisation, the greatest factor in media integration from colonial legacy remains the press law. In effect, colonialism had the effect of leaving African states with identical press laws since they had similar colonial sources. In French Africa, for instance, the press law governing the more than 20 countries is the French July 29, 1881 law introduced in her colonies in 1921-1923. In British West Africa, the main source of press law is the Sierra Leonean law of 1857 which was introduced in Ghana and later in Nigeria in 1917. Although most countries have modified these laws, the fact that they still have the same sources makes media co-ordination easier.

Language too has been an important factor in Africa's regional media integration. As a matter of principle, most media integration groupings are centred around four languages: English, French, Portuguese and Arab. Moreover, there are about ten transnational African languages including Kiswahili, Hausa, Somali, Yoruba and Madinke. Kiswahili, for instance, is spoken by an estimated 40 million people in six African countries — Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Malawi and Mozambique. Hausa is also spoken by an estimated 30 million in over ten countries. The following table shows the influence of language in the integration of the East African community through newspapers.

Table 1: Percentage of Newspaper Circulation in Various Languages in 1962.

Country	Newspaper	Swahili	English	Vernacular
Tanganyika	Daily	70	30	—
	Weekly	72	27	2
Kenya	Daily	36	64	—
	Weekly	46	41	13
Uganda	Daily	—	49	51
	Weekly	—	7	93

Source: Nye, Joseph, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

The table shows English as the main integrative language used in the mass media of the three countries in the defunct East African Community.

Like language, religion is also an integrative factor in the African mass media. The impact of Christianity, for instance, could be judged from the activities of the Nairobi-based communication department of the World Council of Churches in Africa which sends radio programmes and newspaper features to many African media organs. Moreover, the Catholic Church has owned more than 50 newspapers in Africa with such household names as *Afrique Nouvelles* (Senegal) *L'Effort du Cameroun* (Cameroon), *La Croix du Benin* (Benin), *La Semaine Africaine* (Congo) and *Dialogue* (Rwanda). This transnational ownership of newspapers by the Catholic Church has been a very serious integrative factor since co-ordination in management, professional ethics and news exchanges are facilitated.

For media integration to be effective, countries must have the technical capabilities. For instance, in spite of the high-sounding principles, co-operation in the domain of news gathering through PANA has been limited because only 15 of the 50-member states have operational national news agencies. URTNA's attempt to integrate Africa through exchange of radio and TV programmes has been limited by the monitoring facilities of most African countries. Lack of modern technical

facilities, such as satellite which retransmits photos and features, have punctured some of Africa's attempts to use the media for integration.

Transnational news enterprises too have been contributing factors in media integration. In the Southern African region the *Argus* group owned newspapers in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Mozambique. In Francophone Africa, integration through media business was handled by the De Breteuil newspaper group which owned papers in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Morocco, Algeria and Cameroon. British East Africa was effectively integrated by the *Standard* group while West Africa was integrated by the *Mirror* and Thomson groups. After independence, these media transnational companies became established in the colonial metropolitan centres. Thus the IC group, which publishes *New African*, *African Business*, *Africa* and *Afrique* magazines, operates from London though the publications circulate in about 30 African countries. The integrative role of these media companies stems from the fact that they offer an opportunity through which Africans know in detail what is happening in different parts of the continent. This unifies their experiences and helps cultivate a common conscience and aspiration. In this way, they help in creating an information community-based on their sales of magazines.

Education and exchanges among media elite have also contributed in cementing regional integration. The creation of regional schools of journalism has helped in training African journalists to perceive news in the same manner and appreciate the continent's predicaments. Such regional schools include the International High School of Journalism (ESIJY) for the Central African region, the centre for Rural Journalism for French West Africa, the Institute of Journalism for the Entente countries (IPSE) and the regional institute of journalism for the Southern African region in Harare. Moreover, research seminars on specific media problems in Africa such as development, women and the media, scientific journalism are constantly being organised among these institutes to help integrate African media policies.

Socio-professional media unions have also been useful grounds for media elites to exchange ideas and harmonise their practices. Africa has more than 15 of such unions for journalists, photographers, broadcasters and film-makers. These include the Cairo-based African Union of Journalists (UJA), the Nairobi-based Association of African Journalists (AAJ), the Association of African Sports Journalists (AASJ) and the Association of African Sports Photographers (APSA).

Exchanges among media elite could concern government officials, like the directors of news agencies, who represent their countries in URTNA and Ministers of Information who represent their countries during the OAU Conference of Ministers of Information. Such exchanges provide avenues for a deeper harmonisation of media policies based on concrete

African socio-political realities.

So far, we have seen the factors which could influence regional integration in Africa through the mass media. It would be necessary now to examine how Africans have tried to exploit these elements to accomplish regional integration at a continental level and what has been their obstacles in creating a conspicuous information community.

Continental Manifestations of Media Integration in Africa.

The attempt to use the mass media to realise regional integration in Africa has resulted in many organisations. Kouassi (1982) in his analysis of 250 inter-African organisations identified about 30 regional media organisations.¹¹

For purposes of analysis, these organisations could be classified into inter-governmental organisations (IGO), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and business non-governmental organisations (BINGOs).¹²

At the continental level, the governmental organisations include the Union of African National News Agencies (UANA), the Pan-African News Agency (PANA), the Union of African National Radio and TV organizations (URTNA), the Pan-African Postal Union (PAPU) and the Pan-African Telecommunications Union (PATU).

Created in Tunis in 1963, UANA which grouped 25 countries aimed at promoting media integration by exchanging news and developing news agencies in those countries which don't have news agencies. The organization had a loose federal structure with three regional centres in Ghana for West Africa, Cameroon for Central Africa and Libya for East and North Africa. Between 1963 and 1967 UANA was the main advocate for a continental media integration through a Pan-African news agency.

When it was finally created in 1979 by 30 countries, the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) had as a main objective to:

Work for the regional and sub-regional integration of African countries, encourage bilateral and multilateral permanent circulation of objective and responsible news among them.¹³

To achieve this goal, PANA is supposed to transmit 25,000 words a day in English, French and Arabic to member states and international organisations. Article 5(2) of the Convention also stipulates that 'the agency must cover events which could promote continental integration.' Since its inception, PANA has promoted media integration through news exchanges among 15 countries, and deliberations of media elite through its council, conference and committee of experts.¹⁴

The Union of African National Radio and TV organizations (URTNA) created in 1962 has also been in the forefront of continental media integration in Africa. With an exchange centre in Nairobi, URTNA registered an increase of 180-480 radio programmes exchanged

among African countries between 1979-1981. The centre also initiated weekly exchanges of TV programmes among English-speaking African countries in the South, East, and West African regions in 1981.

The Pan-African Postal Union (PAPU) was created in 1980 by the OAU as a specialised agency in postal matters. With about 30 member-states, PAPU has been active in co-ordinating African policies in matters of inter-personal communication. In the same light, the Pan-African Telecommunications Union (PATU), created by some 29 OAU countries has been active in improving the technical possibilities of media integration in Africa. To improve inter-African communication and break the vicious 'colonial triangle of telecommunications', PATU has elaborated many regional networks. As an instrument of regional integration, PATU offers a forum where African media elite meet through its conference of ministers.

The final inter-governmental integration scheme was the 1980 UNESCO-sponsored inter-governmental conference on communication policies in Africa. Grouping most of the OAU countries, the conference which was held in Yaounde resolved to:

Promote a new concept of the press that would promote education, economic development, national integration and independence of all forms.

Apart from these inter-governmental organisations, media integration usually takes place through NGOs. Prominent among these are continental socio-professional unions like UJA, AAJ, UASJ and APSA. Most of these unions which have more than 400 members have media integration as a cardinal objective in their constitutions. They try to harmonise the practice of their professions and fight to protect their interests in the continent. Through conferences, publications, and research seminars, these unions, most of which have observer status within the OAU, have been instrumental in promoting media integration in Africa. For instance, the creation of UANA in 1963 owed a lot to the groundwork of the Bamako Conference of UJA Journalists in 1961 which advocated for a continental news agency to:

Encourage economic, social and cultural information exchanges in order to help Africans understand themselves better and consolidate African unity.

Moreover, the creation of PANA in 1977-79 was due to the groundwork of the UJA conference in Zaire in April 1975 which advocated for a Pan-African news agency to run simultaneously with a Pan-Arab news agency.¹⁵

Continental media integration by modern business non-governmental organisations too has been realised. Such has been the case with media companies which publish magazines with continental vocations. The most prominent being *Africa*, *Jeune Afrique*, *New African*, *African Business*, *African Economic Digest*, *African Report* and *Africa Confidential*. As already pointed out, the integrative function of these media companies is a result of their market circulation. An analysis of IC

publication's circulation in 1985 showed that 73 percent of their magazines circulate in eight African countries which form the primary market — Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Malawi, Cameroon and Botswana. About 10.5 percent circulate in the rest of African countries which make up the secondary market. The IC publication's primary market is an information community based on market sales. People within this market would know more about events in other countries within the market since the magazines also devote about 60 percent of their coverage to the primary market countries.

This indicates that much has been done to promote regional media integration in Africa. However, the existence of problems has vitiated these efforts, leaving the impression that a continental information community is a nightmare. But what are these problems?

Problems in Continental Media Integration

The hurdles working against the attainment of a continental media integration could be broadly classified into two. First are those which contradict the very foundations of functional integration as emanating from the needs and desires of the people at the base to co-operate. The second category relates to the power structure in world politics.

Regarding the first category, media integration could have been a direct function of the socio-cultural needs of the African people. Unfortunately, it has been difficult to find a common socio-cultural denominator running through Africa. Moreover, the continent has been subjected to foreign cultures of all shades which have left long-lasting stamps on the average African's identity. These foreign cultures include the Arab, Asian, French, English and Portuguese. These foreign cultures have not only mapped out cultural boundaries but have been great obstacles to continental African media integration schemes.

The Arab community in Africa, for instance, has divided loyalties in their choice of media organisations. Africa has two-thirds of the world's Arab territory and harbours 70 percent of world Arab population. These simple facts have conditioned the participation of about 10 African countries in Pan-Arab media organisations such as the Federation of Arab News Agency (FANA), the Islamic News Agency (INA), the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), the Pan-Arab Telecommunications Union (ATU) and the Islamic States Broadcasting Organisation (ISBO). Through such Pan-Arab Media Organisations, the North African countries are integrated more within the Arab world through news and programmes exchanges, media research and policy-making. These Pan-Arab integration schemes are more meaningful to these states since they emanate from such popular needs as common language, culture, history and religion.

Asian-oriented media integration schemes in Africa are found in

countries like the Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar which have large Asian communities. These African countries belong to major Pan-Asian media organisations like the Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU), the Asian Pacific News Network (ANN), the Far-East Broadcasting Union (FEBA) and the Organisation of Asian News Agencies (OANA). Like the Arab integration schemes, these Asian-oriented media organisations are based on language and cultural solidarity.

Media integration in the Francophone world (*Espace Francophone*) which includes about 26 African countries has also been a great disintegrative factor to African continental integration schemes. With such organs as the conference of Francophone Ministers of Information, International Council of French Radio and TV stations (CIRTEF) and the Media-France Inter-Continental (MFI), there is a tendency for African countries to be integrated more in the Francophone world than in the African world.

The Commonwealth has integrated about 12 African states through the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA), and the Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) into the greater Commonwealth Information Community. The disintegrative effects of these rival media integration schemes are apparent. It is more logical and pragmatic for many African countries to give more allegiance to these more efficient organisations than continental African schemes bedeviled by over-politicisation and lack of financial, material and human resources.

Notwithstanding, the last blow to any rays of optimism for a continental media integration has been Africa's weak position in world politics. This relative weakness has subjugated her media system to the pressures and objectives of powerful nations and media transnational corporations. These pressures, expressed generally as media imperialism, have characterised the activities of countries such as the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, China and the U.S.S.R. It has also characterised the activities of large media multinationals like AFP, UP, Reuters and AP. Media imperialism by powerful nations has been in four ways: institutional control, ideological control, policy-making control and local colour manipulation.

Institutional control refers to the erection of identical satellite media institutions in Africa closely modelled after metropolitan structures. In the 1950s, for instance, Africa inherited a mosaic of media organisation models. The BBC model picked currency in Anglophone Africa under such names as NBC (Nigeria), GBC (Ghana), MBC (Mauritius), and KBC (Kenya). In Francophone Africa, the Office de Radio-Télévision Française, ORTF-model, was inherited and widely imitated. Although this imitation was a strategy to win international recognition, the reproduction of these media structures has facilitated control by the imperial countries. Moreover, most African countries have been co-opted as associate members into such organisations as the European

Broadcasting Union (EBU) which facilitates harmonisation of their media policies with those of the imperial countries.

Ideological control is perpetuated by training African media elites in foreign institutions like the BBC, VOA, Institute of Journalism in Berlin to mention but a few. It has also been perpetuated by modelling African schools after those in imperialist countries. This is the case with the Nigerian School of Journalism, created in 1961 after the American Jackson College of Journalism, ESJY after ESJ de Lille, and CESTI of Dakar after the French-Canadian Schools of Mass Communications. Such imitations usually introduce heavy doses of courses like advertisements and public relations which are irrelevant to African realities. They also have the effects of imbibing Western values into the minds of the modern African journalists. In this way, African journalists perceive their roles mostly as part of a global western network with harmonised values and professional ethics. The same applies to journalists trained in socialist-streamed schools of journalism.

What remains the most direct media imperialism strategy is policy-making control. France is a fore-runner in this domain. Since 1968, the country instituted annual meetings of Francophone African Ministers of Information in Paris. Co-ordinated by the French Foreign Secretary, Minister of Co-operation and Culture and the Director of Institute France Presse (IFP), these meetings were aimed at harmonising the media policies in Francophone Africa within a general framework of French global media strategy. As could have been evident, such media integration schemes only widened the rift between Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone countries, thus narrowing the prospects for a continental front.

Local colour manipulation as a technique of media imperialism helps foreign radio stations such as BBC, VOA and RFI to capture the African audience and integrating them within their own information communities. This is usually done in three ways: employing efficient African newsmen to control their African services, using African journalists as local correspondents and using African languages for broadcasting.

Continental media integration schemes have further been punctured by the activities of media transnational corporations which have the human, financial and material resources to put information at everyone's disposal any time, anywhere in Africa. Moreover, through a series of news exchange agreements, they could obtain African news at no cost in exchange for international news. Like the other business companies, they try to integrate African states into their global markets. The following table illustrates how the media TNCs are trying to integrate Africa within their global market strategies.

The table shows the extent to which Africa has been integrated into the world capitalist media system. Reuters and AFP have a stronger

Table 2: Media TNCs and African Integration.

Agency	Number of Bureaus		Number of Correspondents		Number of Exchange Agreements		
	Global	Africa	Global	Africa	Global	Africa	Wordage a day
Reuters	60	39	250	22	110	39	20,000
AFP	82	33	74	26	104	33	18,426
UPI	110	19	100	5	—	1	10,000
AP	57	14	1,200	6	—	—	5,172
PANA	3	3	0	0	1	1	25,000

Source: Ebokem Fomenky, *The Pan-African News Agency*, p. 69 and Ewumbue-Monono, p. 104.

influence than AP and UPI because of the agreements with the national news agencies of their former colonies. PANA, which is the news agency created by Africans for African media integration, is still in a poor position to promote regional media integration. Although 41 African countries have adhered to the PANA Convention, the fact that most African states have entered into bilateral agreements with these media TNCs such as Reuters (39) and AFP (33) has weakened her capacity to integrate since these foreign agencies also have news from the same sources. In most cases, African national news agencies even send some of the news faster to these western agencies than PANA because of the credibility they have acquired internationally. Because of their adequate means, these media TNCs have many bureaus, recruit many correspondents who render on the spot reports on fast-breaking issues. Such strategies help keep their audience and African information communities intact. This explains why in most African newsrooms, more than 80 percent of the sources of news about other African countries comes from AFP, Reuters, or AP.

Our analysis of the problems in continental media integration indicates that persistent efforts to use this approach would only be futile. This leads to the inevitable question. What then must be done?

Towards a New Approach in Media Integration based on Sub-Regional Organisations.

The need to adjust media integration to smaller regional entities is based on an assumption that information is more meaningful to people within a certain geographical, historical, political and cultural matrix. In Africa, these sub-regional boundaries based on common language, history, and economic destiny have been demarcated and institutionalised through political and economic regional integration organisations.

The OAU and ECA have divided the continent into five sub-regions:

the North, West, Central, East, and South. Studies have shown that most African integrations follows these paths mapped out by the OAU and ECA. The attempt to promote regional integration along the contours of these OAU-ECA sub-regional boundaries is common among Pan-African media organisations like URTNA, PANA, and PAPU. PANA, for instance, has five regional pools in Lagos (West Africa), Kinshasa (Central Africa), Khartoum (East Africa), Tripoli (North Africa) and Lusaka (South Africa).

The advantages of such narrow-casting in media integration schemes are many. First of all, intra-regional flow of information is higher than the flow to countries outside the region. The table on p. 32 shows the regional flow of news among 10 African elite papers between December 1985 and February 1986.

The table shows that newspapers give more attention to sub-regional news than continental issues such as Africa's debt crisis, desertification, food crisis and OAU conferences. Total intra-regional flow of news stands at 95 articles, more than twice the continental news coverage (43). The Southern African paper *Diaro* of Mozambique, like the West African papers *Soleil* and *Fraternite Matin*, devotes three times more news to her region than to continental issues. *El Mouhadji* (North) devotes four times more news to her region than to continental issues.

This high level intra-regional flow of information necessarily creates information communities along the OAU-ECA demarcations. More important, it defines boundaries for effective technical co-operation. Prominent areas of such media co-operation have been in professional training and technical infrastructure. The creation of regional schools of journalism such as ESIJY for Central Africa, IPSE for the grand Entente countries, and the Regional Institute of Journalism for the South African region in Harare has been in this direction. Moreover, the creation of a regional association of West African Journalists (AWAJ) in 1986 has been a milestone in media elite co-operation in the region. Such co-operation among professionals has enabled newsmen to be sensitive to the political, economic and social problems peculiar to their immediate sub-regions.

Co-operation in technical infrastructure has also been important. PATU, for instance, has mapped out her regional networks on the contours of these OAU-ECA regions. More important, regional media integration schemes will give certain regional powers a sense of duty and responsibility. In West Africa, for instance, regional powers such as Senegal and Nigeria have been disposing resources to sponsor media integration. Tele-Senegal, for instance, enables the coverage of PANA's HF programmes in Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Mauritania. Moreover, Nigeria has sacrificed enormous human, material and financial resources for the creation of

Table 3: Regional Flow of News in Africa (In Number of Articles)

Newspaper	Country	Central	West	East	South	North	Continental
<i>Cameroon Tribune</i> (E)	Cameroon	3	11	17	13	5	8
<i>Cameroon Tribune</i> (F)	Cameroon	8	11	8	10	6	8
<i>El Mouhadji</i>	Algeria	1	7	7	13	17	4
<i>L'Action</i>	Tunisia	1	2	1	0	7	5
<i>L'Union</i>	Gabon	9	9	10	13	7	6
<i>Le Soleil</i>	Senegal	6	13	5	13	5	5
<i>Fraternite-Matin</i>	Cote d'Ivoire	7	18	11	14	6	7
<i>Diario</i>	Mozambique	10	7	17	20	17	6
Total		45	78	76	102	53	43

Source: Ewumbue-Monono C. *op.cit.*, p. 87.

national news agencies and a school of journalism for the Lusophone West African countries. Cantori and Spiegel (1970) have argued that for a region to be integrated, there must be a regional power to stand as a guarantor.¹⁷

At a continental level, it is difficult to have one African country to play this role but at regional levels one can identify many regional powers: Egypt and Libya in the North, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia in the East, Nigeria, Senegal in the West, Zambia, Zimbabwe in the South and Zaire, Cameroon, Gabon in the Central regions. In fact, media diplomacy has been one of the strategies which these regional powers use to ascertain their leadership in their regions. The creation of an integrated information community in Central Africa from Libreville has been a key strategy in Gabon's quest for leadership in the region. Through its powerful radio station *Africa No. 1*, Gabon has succeeded in instilling a community spirit in the peoples of Central Africa. The radio's regular coverage of regional political, sports and economic issues, its use of local correspondents and play of local music from all the countries in the region have forced most listeners in the region to abandon loyalties to their national stations to that of a regional station¹⁸, *Africa No. 1*. This is the essence of media integration!

The sub-regional approach to media integration could have more meaning because it embodies language, culture, and colonial history which influence news values considerably.

What even makes this approach the most feasible is the existence of sub-regional economic groupings such as ECOWAS, CEDEAO (West Africa), UDEAC, ECCAS (Central Africa), and SADCC (South Africa). The constitutive conventions of these organisations endorsed the idea of media integration. The creation of regional media organisations to feed these economic groupings is only too logical. This role of media organisations in promoting economic integration was spelt out in 1985 when the acting Secretary-General of OAU advocated that PANA should help in promoting the ideas of the Lagos Plan of Action and help in preparing people psychologically for the African Economic Community.

This analysis has tried to show that media integration is more meaningful at regional level than at a continental level. The simplest illustration of this argument is the news coverage by Pan-African and regional magazines. Generally speaking, Pan-African magazines such as *Africa*, *Jeune Afrique* and *New African* are of lower appeal than those with regional publics such as *West Africa* (West Africa) *Africa Events* (East Africa) and *Bingo* (Central Africa). As a bi-weekly, *West Africa* is a good example of an advocate for an information community. The paper which concentrates solely in the West African states — Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone — makes the West Africans permanently informed about the social, economic and political problems in the

different states of the region. This permanent coverage of issues in the region has created a feeling of interdependence among the West Africans which makes political and economic integration more appreciable. *West Africa's* success has been largely due to her specific audience. Created since 1917, the paper's regularity and periodicity when compared with the mushrooming continental irregular papers like *Africa Now*, *Africa* seem to indicate that regional news organs are better than the broad continental projects.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to examine the situation of media integration in Africa, the problems involved and their remedies. It has shown that the present Pan-African trends to media integration are too broad to effectively create an information community. Problems of administrative centralisation and policy co-ordination for the 50 states aside, continental projects are often paralysed by language, cultural, historical and economic differences among regions.

This Pan-African approach to media integration is surely a new wave of Pan-Africanism which stresses technical integration than political integration. Moreover, it is a by-product of the clamour for a new information order which divided the Third World in poles such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America. To participate effectively in the new international information order, Africa had to come in as one bloc and not in parts. However, Pan-Africanism and the new information order are not sufficient motivations for media integration. It must stem from the specific socio-economic, cultural and political needs of people. Because the media are the rear mirror which reflect any region's specific problems, it has become necessary that media integration should serve as a cushion for other integrations. A regional media integration would create a common media culture which will harmonise the attitudes of Africans on such continental or regional issues like desertification, famine and debt problems.

A regional approach to this problem of media integration is the most logical, considering the problems involved at a continental level. This regional trend to integration has been seen with political and economic groupings. Economic communities such as EAC, ECCAS and ECOWAS have been the first steps to a continental economic community.

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