

# Ethnic African Media in Western Europe: An exploratory analysis of *Metro Éireann* and *The African Bulletin* newspapers

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## Abstract

This study sets out to analyse the role of ethnic media in the lives of their audiences, with particular focus on news production, content and reception. In recent years there has been an increase in African ethnic media publications in Western Europe as an alternative platform for a distinct, ethnic and niche audience in a diaspora context. Yet relatively little is known about the way in which the media practitioners and audiences perceive the role of these ethnic media in the articulation and re-articulation of collective identities. Academic assertions in this regard remain by and large theoretical and at a surface level. Very few studies have empirically investigated the perceptions of the journalists, owners and audiences of these ethnic media. A number of issues have thus remained under-explored, such as the link between media consumption and the construction of individual identities. This study identifies and examines these issues through case study of two African ethnic newspapers, *Metro Éireann* in Ireland and *The African Bulletin* in Belgium. It explores the views of the newspaper owners and journalists, how they are translated into newspaper content, and how the content and goals of the newspapers are perceived by the audiences. The study has a multi-methodological design. A quantitative and qualitative content analysis is combined with in-depth interviews with owners and journalists, and surveys and focus-group interviews with audience members. This enables comparative analysis of the views of content producers, the translation of these into actual content, and the interpretation of this content by audiences. The main research findings concern issues around professional practice. Ownership in ethnic media in Ireland and Belgium is mostly restricted to individuals, unlike in the mainstream media. Immigration issues dominate the content of *Metro Éireann*, in Ireland while African-origin news dominates that of *The African Bulletin* in Belgium. However, all respondents use ethnic media as a supplement to mainstream media.

**Key words:** Journalism, Ethnic Media, Identity, Diaspora

## 1. Introduction

This study explores ethnic print media news production, content and reception. Given the global scale of migration in recent times, it is imperative to look at how ethnic media have affected the lives of immigrants who chose to migrate from their original homelands for various reasons and live in another community as minority groups. It further examines the ways in which ethnic media journalists practise journalism, and in particular investigates if there are any differences to mainstream journalism; whether or not ethnic and mainstream media use different sources; how the relationships between producers and sources in ethnic media differ from those in the mainstream media; and how ownership of ethnic media influences the work of journalists and ultimately the content of the two case-study newspapers.

It further examine the relationship between the media and immigrants within the diaspora community leads to an analysis of the role of media in the construction of diasporic and migrant identities, by aligning media consumption in relation to daily rituals as identified in the complexities of the present global media ecology, as it affects media audiences in diaspora who are both 'here' and 'there'. We acknowledge many influential studies in the field of media and diaspora, while making a claim that individual audiences in diaspora determine their 'media use pattern' based on the current intricacies in the global media ecology. We also examined the relationship between media, identity and culture, and then the increasing use of ethnic media in a multicultural

society. In conclusion, we explored the relationship between ethnic media and alternative media and concluded that ethnic media share similarities with alternative media, but in a real sense they are not the same.

### **1.1 Media and diaspora**

The global changing population, brought about by migration and the emergence of new communication technologies, present both opportunities and challenges for media organisations and individuals. Georgiou (2006) suggests understanding the relation between the media and identities as endless discourse. The present global media ecology, as argued by Cottle (2009), suggests that identities are shaped within the context of media culture, which raises the question of how these different types of media are relevant in terms of diaspora. Writing on global crisis reporting in the media, Cottle (2009) notes that the possibility of an issue or crisis taking up a global importance status depends on its “signalling and elaboration within the media, and news media particularly” (Cottle, 2009:17). Here, Cottle explains that in the present day, it a “Crisis” in order to register a global crisis in the media, due to complexities of the current journalism ecology. This means that people in diaspora may find it difficult to place their concerns in the world media agenda, as their concern may have to develop into a crisis before they can appear on the radar of global media players. Hence people in diaspora are faced with a choice of choosing between different media for their specific use.

Apart from the global dominance of the world’s corporate news media and news agencies in the dissemination of information, the diaspora cultures and media cultures have become “more interwoven, the boundaries of the local and the global, of the public and the private are challenged and the limits of the diasporic imagination expand across the globe and through international networks” (Georgiou, 2006:12). The global news ecology, with advancement in digital media technology capable of transmitting beyond international borders, together with mediated media messages, plays an important role in defining meanings, uses and deployment of social and cultural practices. However, the dominance of global news by the big news corporation and national mainstream media, without attention to the needs of the minority communities living in diaspora, makes it necessary for ethnic media to fill the niche – to meet the information needs of people in diaspora; for instance, lack of news about diaspora communities and the places of origin of immigrants in the local and national media of their host country.

The cost of developing and sustaining ethnic media as an alternative to the mainstream has decreased substantially, due to recent technological development in information technology. This has given rise to regional media such as Al-Jazeera, alternative media like Gay City News, diaspora media, like Chinese CCTV, to media that fulfil their legitimate function of entertaining, informing and educating. There are new possibilities for production and consumption of different media in a multisited and decentralized media culture, especially for the diaspora community who are under pressure to engage with more channels of information in their efforts to link back to their homeland.

To understand the relationship between diaspora and the media, we need to focus on consumption of ethnic media by people in diaspora and explore the effects of their exposure to these media on their identity.

Today, our society is confronted with several networks of news media, including those in the mainstream and the alternatives; audiences are being bombarded with much information daily. Of particular interest to this study is the impact of the media on the diaspora communities. Georgiou (2006) argues that the media saturate everyday life and that thus identities are learned and shaped in a highly mediated global environment. She states that people in diaspora belong to various communities in terms of relating with their host community and members of their ethnic groups, which compels them to shift their consumption between local and global products.

Members of the diasporic communities are consumers and at the same time members of multicultural societies. Thus, they may choose ITV in the United Kingdom to watch a popular Afro-Caribbean soap, *Desmond*, and the mainstream BBC News 24 for news, while they may also listen to NIGER-FM for a music programme and watch satellite television (Channels 24 or Vox Africa ) for news from Nigeria or Senegal. This routine in diaspora environment is corroborated by Georgiou's (2006) study on Greek Cypriots in London:

“... as participants' words indicate, they do not use particular media out of a sense of duty. Instead, the participants in the study turned to different media because they are sources of information and entertainment, in that they easily become part of everyday rituals and routines and tools for communicating and liaising with each other, just like they do with all media” (Georgiou, 2006:77).

In diaspora and other spheres of life, the media inform us about what is important to us and what is not; they also create awareness of fashion and trends to follow. Thus, the appropriation and adoption of lifestyles are adapted in everyday consumption of the media, and “the multilayered homology and the dynamic compatibility between the media and identities” are realized and structured (Georgiou, 2006:163).

The argument here is that the use of media by individuals in diaspora is important, as diaspora audiences are exposed to different media for their daily use. Audiences decide on their media use to reflect their lifestyle.

Karim (1998) asserts that “the role of ethnic media in global communication flows is steadily growing in importance; sociologists and communication scholars have viewed ethnic media as serving what may appear to be two contradictory purposes” (Karim, 1998:6) – first, to help in uniting and preserving the culture of immigrants in diaspora; second, to assist in the inclusion of minorities in the host community (Karim, 1998). Essentially, ethnic media provide ethnic minorities with opportunities that allow them to maintain some of their cultural heritage, most especially their language of communication. Other potential roles of diaspora media include: enhancement of cultural identity by communicating cultural pride, providing links back home, and ensuring a platform for collective communication and representation of interests (Arnold & Schneider, 2007).

Apart from the power of diaspora media in constructing reality that oppose the conventions and representations of the mainstream media, ethnic media serve immigrants by connecting them to news and events in the home country – the connective function – while also orienting the newcomers in their new community – the orientational function (Adoni, Caspi, & Cohen, 2006 in Matsaganis, 2011). In recent years, the development of

modern communication technologies has made the connective functions of diaspora media increasingly rapid and accessible.

Reese (2001) argues that a good balance of connective and orientation stories contributes to the creation of a dual frame of reference whereby immigrants know the norms of their host society and those of their origin; such knowledge would enable them to fit into either of the two communities. As a result, ethnic media have the potential to serve as resources for immigrants by serving both connective and orientational functions. Ethnic media are produced by and for people of ethnic and immigrant origin. Potentially they can perform several functions in a country characterized by immigration. On one hand they can become a powerful mouthpiece for the community they represent, by creating a powerful image of self-representation for the group, and with their own communal consumption, they can also sustain a sense of ethnic communality (Georgiou 2001; Husband, 1994; Riggins 1992). At the same time, they can be forces of integration.

However, despite the contribution of these minority media in diasporic communities, reactions to these small scale media are extremely mixed. The question is: if diaspora is a contested and challenged concept, why is it still relevant in the present-day debate? In spite of these developing interests and activities on the subject of the media of diaspora, very little has been done, to date, to engage with the prospect of an emerging practice that could be correctly described as *ethnic journalism*. Ethnic media refer to media like periodicals and newspapers, grouped as print journalism. Television and radio stations come under broadcast media, while internet news websites and other receivers like mobile phones are classified under social media. Interestingly these media are owned and controlled by members of a particular ethnic group and are consciously intended for members of the same ethnic group. Though, for clarity some of these medium could be transnational in nature, but the most important and distinct characteristics of ethnic media is that – it is set up primarily to serve the interest of a particular group of people within the same ethnic classification. This definition clearly shows that diaspora media are identified with the ethnic identity of the media owners, and the audience are fundamental to the purpose and the content of the media. Therefore, a community or local news radio or union newspaper do not qualify as ethnic media, regardless of the race or ethnicity of the owners and audience, since ethnic or racial issues are not fundamental to the purpose and content of these media.

## **2. Literature Review**

Production in ethnic media to a considerable extent is not as extensive and complicated as in the mainstream media. The reason for this could be linked to the ideological position and nature of ethnic media which is not to maximise profit, but rather to meet the information needs of their audiences in diaspora. Since the main objective of the ethnic media is not profit-driven, the sustainability of ethnic media organisations becomes a challenge.

The tiny representation of ethnic minorities in the mainstream media does not mean they are not practising journalism in Western Europe. Most of these people, who were journalists back home before migrating to Europe, engage in volunteer networks, which support ethnic media; as such, most ethnic media rely heavily on the work of volunteers and low-paid staff who are willing to put in long hours. In United States, the Centre for

Community and Ethnic Media (CEM) is helping to professionalise ethnic media journalists by running editorials and new media training programmes (Bartlett, 2013). Some of these ethnic media journalists offer their services free, which reflects their determination to create alternative means of expression (Matsaganis, 2011). The contributions of these journalists are important, as the overwhelming majority of ethnic media organisations are relatively small in size. How do their journalism skills compare to those in the mainstream media? Another key question is: what is the relationship between news producers and sources in the ethnic media, and does it differ from that in the mainstream media?

According to Ojo (2006), “experience at ethnic media is generally not considered to be real reporting and editing experience by many managing editors at the big media outlets in Canada” (Ojo 2006:350), because they do not feel ethnic journalists are practising real journalism. Ethnic media have been described as a failure, given failure “to attract advertisers, failure to operate in a businesslike manner and failure to reach significant audiences” (Comedia, 1984:100). What about their journalism? Does journalism in ethnic media differ from that in mainstream journalism? Is there a difference (in terms of practice) in the ways ethnic and mainstream media source their news? The issues identified here will be explored by examining *The African Bulletin* in Belgium and *Metro Éireann* in Ireland.

## 2.1 Ownership effect

A study in the United States on ethnic media in 2008 by the Centre for Integration and Improvement of Journalism (CIJ) concludes that ethnic media act as the voice of the community in relation to public debate, collective image and representing the image of the community as opposed to the mainstream view (CIJ report, 2008:8). Similarly, Ogunyemi (2007) examined the “historical development and editorial philosophy” of the *African Voice* newspaper and concluded that the newspaper goal “is to act as a voice to the salient majority of black Africans” (Ogunyemi, 2007:218), in the United Kingdom. The newspaper editor’s argument was based on the philosophy upon which the newspaper was set up, and had nothing to do with economic gain. In essence, this philosophy suggests a strategy aimed at meeting the information needs of the Black African community in the United Kingdom. Mike Abiola, the newspaper editor, stressed the role of his newspaper by stating that: “the *African Voice* represents their interests and represents them to the mainstream and to the government. Moreover, it gets government messages across to them. That’s the way we’ve been doing it. It is still a question that challenges us as a medium” (Ogunyemi, 2007:218).

Catherine Murray et al (2007), in a study on cultural identity and ethnic media in British Columbia, Canada suggests that most ethnic media mainly used community leaders as sources, particularly male actors, followed by experts and then members of the general public. She notes that male actors dominated at 38 per cent compared to 6 per cent of females. A total of 28 per cent of items in the ethnic media were classified as having home (or local) content, while the rest portrayed the country of origin as home. Most of the ethnic media exhibited traits of belonging to the ethnic community, and a minority framed a sense of belonging to the dominant culture. Murray further found that 20 per cent of the articles lacked a by-line, stating that “interviews with media stakeholders

suggest that the omission of by-lines could be an indication of translating or paraphrasing one or several sources from other printed or online material” (Murray et al, 2007:83). Unprofessional practices may indicate that the newspapers lacked adequate financial resources to hire qualified journalists.

In a panel discussion with ethnic media editors and reporters, Matsaganis (2008) notes that gaining the respect of mainstream journalists had been a reoccurring theme in the daily news-gathering experience of ethnic journalists. “Local government officials prefer to talk to the mainstream reporters,” said a news manager with the Southern California branch of a large Chinese-language newspaper, “and if you want to take the initiative and call on them at a press conference, you get nothing in response. That is sad!” (Matsaganis, 2008 in Matsaganis et al, 2011:232).

## **2.2 Professionalism and objectivity**

In ethnic media organisations, “most owners and editors have learnt to live with the organizational instability caused by high turnover of editorial staff” as the ethnic media newsroom often has to cope with ‘manpower’ shortages (Matsaganis, 2011:231).

Objectivity has been touted as the hallmark of the journalism profession for over a century (McNair, 1998). The literature on journalism practice suggests that journalists need to recognise their responsibility to offer informed analysis, comments and editorial opinion on public events and issues. However, the antidote to the discrimination that ethnic media journalists often are subjected to when they try to cover stories that demand access to certain authorities points to the need for them to subscribe to a higher level of professionalisation. For instance, journalism education can take various shapes; it involves a combination of practical training and broader understanding of journalism conventions. In the United Kingdom, journalism education developed relatively late because of the strongly traditional apprenticeship-type training that was in place, where the emphasis was on journalism as a ‘craft’ rather than as a ‘profession’. For Zelizer and Allan (2010), “... it was only when a burgeoning interest in journalism came from the social sciences during the late 1960s that journalism began to occupy a core position in the new field of media studies” (Zelizer & Allan:2010:63). At present there is no widely acceptable minimum qualification for journalists. The general practice in the industry suggests that media organisations independently set their entry qualification level and standard. Little research has been carried out into ethnic minority media and ethnic journalists, but considering that ethnic minority media have different goals and target audiences from mainstream media should not beclouds us to conclude that ethnic journalists are amateur or less professional than mainstream journalists. The question arises:, are ethnic journalists in general professional journalists?

## **2.3 Content in ethnic media**

To date very few studies have been conducted into the contents of ethnic minority media, when compared to other types of media, including mainstream; however, awareness of the need for further research into the content of ethnic minority media is growing among scholars. Ojo (2006) explores the roles of ethnic media in the multicultural society of Canada, by examining the framing of ethnic groups in mainstream newspapers in Canada, but also carried out a study of how ethnic media are constructing their identities by examining three Black community newspapers. Ojo concludes that the “news orientation and philosophy of both the *Ghanaian*

*News and Caribbean Camera* are significantly different from the *Montreal Community Contact*” (Ojo 2006:353). The *Ghanaian News* concentrated on the information needs of Ghanaian immigrants (home and diaspora news) based in Canada. According to Ojo (2006), in the area of news focus, *Caribbean Camera* shared the same approach, but rarely published news on Black on Black violence, while *Montreal Community Contact* acted as a kind of bridge between these two newspapers as it focused on in-depth stories within the black communities. Ojo notes that:

“the *Montreal Community Contact* as an ethnic newspaper performs what Subervi-Velez (1986) termed the ‘dual role’ of the ethnic media. The dual role refers to the fact that ethnic media are tools of cultural preservation, and also at the same time agents of assimilation of ethnic minority audiences to the dominant mainstream culture and values” (Ojo 2006:353).

This suggests that ethnic communities appreciate the ethnic media for their cultural-specific use. However, academic assertions on minority ethnic media suggest “such sites of media production as shaping a vigorous public sphere” (Husband, 2005: 461 in Dueze, 2006).

In another study on three ethnic media in the United States, Lin and Song (2006) concluded that ethnic media in the Latino, Korean and Chinese communities shared many things in common, but were different in the area of geo-ethnic storytelling. Lin and Song (2006) found that Chinese newspapers included the fewest geo-ethnic stories, but had the largest percentage of home country news coverage. The Korean press featured more geo-ethnic stories than the Chinese press (Lin and Song, 2006). This reflects the fact that members of the same ethnic group are also an audience of the same ethnic media, since most ethnic media are locally produced for the local community; small local productions that serve a particular neighbourhood and media can operate relatively cheaply compared to mainstream media since their reach is limited, and they can also provide their audience with information about their immediate area (Viswanath & Lee, 2007).

Previous research on ethnic media have helped in our understanding of the roles played by ethnic media in various societies in Europe and America, especially their role in maintaining and promoting cultural heritage and helping immigrants to link back to their country of origin. In Ireland and Belgium, few studies have been carried out on ethnic African media; this study aims to understand how the contents of ethnic African media relate to the everyday life of ethnic Africans in the two countries, particularly how they get involved in the construction of images of ‘us’ and ‘others’.

## **2.4 Media reception**

Ruggiero’s (2000) study of consumption of ethnic media found that ethnic audiences use ethnic media for cultural support and local information; Subervi-Velez (1986) found that they use them to strengthen ethnic identification, and Georgiou (2006) found that generations born in diaspora tend to have a preference for mainstream media, while the older generation have a preference for diaspora media. She argues that younger people are at ease in consuming the mainstream media, and that participation in the mainstream media cultures is taken for granted. Yet many of the anecdotal materials (see Georgiou, 2006:80), suggest that media consumption is more of a matter of combined and diverse media practices, rather than exclusive participation in one media

culture. Certain media, however, remain relevant across subgroups of different generations, and in most cases grow to be more important than in the past, even if their permanence and dominance in the domestic and across the public space is increasingly contested. For one of the respondents in the study:

“My husband always watches Hellenic TV. But I do get bored sometimes and I ask him to switch over an English channel for a while. He gets angry and tells me: That’s my language. That’s what I want to watch and listen to.” (Georgiou, 2006: 80)

The above quote indicates that it is important to explore how negotiation is needed because of hybridisation in media cultures. Both mainstream and minority media consumption patterns and interpretations of representations are increasingly informed by each other and they interweave in new dimensions. The pattern of consumption of minority and mainstream media is equally hybrid within the student age group. A discussion by Georgiou (2006) revealed this hybridity in the contradictory narrative of a Greek Cypriot family. When asked what they usually watched on television, they mentioned a long list of mainstream British and American soaps and sitcoms. Yet, this reality was complicated by shades of diasporic media consumption revealed in a process of confrontation.

Gillespie (1995), Drucker and Gumpert (1997), Aksoy and Robins (2003) suggest that people always use a combination of different media: mainstream and minority; print and electronic; digital and analogue; local and global, old and new. However, all of them were exposed to the particular media, either because they chose to use them, or other members of the household and work environment used and talked about their content. The apparent variety observed in media consumption within most diasporic groups (Sreberny, 2002; Naficy; 1993; Karim, 2003; Georgiou, 2001, 2003) confirms and reflects the richness of everyday life and the inherent diversity within diasporic communities.

### **2.5 Bonding and bridging**

Further research concerning the use of media by ethnic minorities and particularly to determine the impact of ethnicity compared to other social distinctions raises the concept of ‘social capital’, which has been discussed within the context of media use, political participation and the integration of migrants (Jacob & Tillie 2004). According to Bonfadelli (2009), it is assumed that immigrants’ embodiment in the social network, which is an indicator of social capital, enhances the level of media use and the level of trust in the overall political system. For example, Bonfadelli (2004), in focusing on media use, notes that media perform unplanned and long-term socialisation and integration functions for a society by bridging different social and ethnic groups and assimilating different people into a common civil culture (Peeters/d’Haenens 2005).

Bonfadelli (2004) suggests that the use of majority host country media by ethnic minorities will result in better social and cultural integration. According to him, persistent use of media from the homeland and in the language of origin will help maintain individuals’ old cultural identity and thus have detrimental effects on integration. One normative consequence would be that the ethnic minority groups should use the majority media available in the new host country in its language in order to fully integrate into the new socio-cultural context. However, immigrants who are still using their homeland media in their language of origin are regarded as not integrated and labelled as separatists in the typology of Caspi et al, (2002) and are still considered bonded to the culture of origin. However, the general assumption of the mass media’s positive integration function for migrants has been further differentiated or rather put into question by various theories that attempt to explain the possible effects of



mass communication in general and in the migration context in particular, and have been tested empirically (Bonfadelli, 2004 in Bonfadelli, 2009:50).

Hall focuses on media user and media use as purposeful selection of media, based on the notion that the reception process involves active construction of meaning. This perspective, according to Bonfadelli (2009), does not simply assume an alternative between adapting to a new country's culture through consuming host media on one hand and bonding to the old country of origin and remaining culturally isolated by using homeland media on the other hand; rather a third possibility is also taken into consideration. In this sense, members of ethnic minorities are seen to be able to use various kinds of media, including their homeland media and the media of their new host country. This dualistic position is not regarded as deficient or as a danger for the development of a cultural identity. However, being able to participate in both cultures and using media from both countries and both languages enables members of ethnic minority groups to bridge the norms and values of different cultures and to actively develop new forms of identity – a hybrid identity – which could help in promoting mutual respect, social participation and cultural integration, as today's pluralistic societies seem to require that everyone attain an “understanding of everyday life including norms and values of other cultural groups” (Bonfadelli, 2009:51). In this way, the mass media play a significant role by providing not only homogeneous images of the ‘home country’ in a national perspective, but by disseminating information and knowledge about the different minority groups and their everyday culture (Baker, 1997 in Bonfadelli, 2009).

According to Gibson (2001), when immigrants move from their native culture to another culture, their prior acquired culture may be a hindrance in the new culture (Gibson, 2001). As a result, the new immigrant's behaviour will change, since people's social cognition and perception tend to be modified as a result of dwelling in the new culture. In relation to the current study, both the Irish mainstream media and the African ethnic media in Ireland have an important role to play in the immigrant's acculturation process, especially when interpersonal contact with the Irish public seldom occurs.

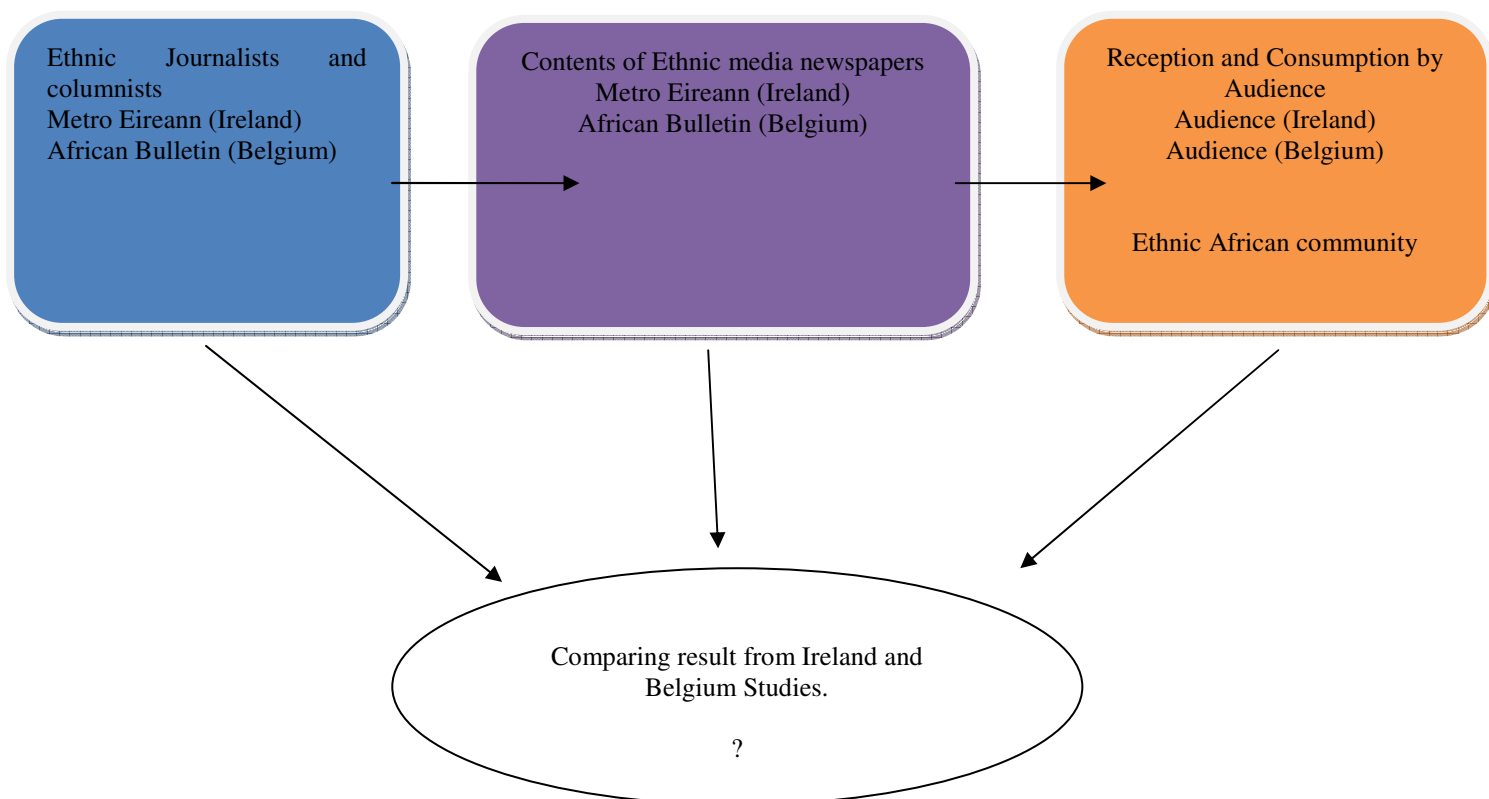
### **3. Methodology**

The methodological decisions in this study need to reflect the specific nature of diaspora communities and as such allow for an understanding of everyday life experience and culturally specific ways of communication, including information sharing. Georgiou (2007) suggests multi-method approaches as these are proven to be more productive in the study of media practice, particularly in exploring issues relating to migration and diaspora (Georgiou, 2007). According to Yin (1984), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; where the boundaries between phenomenon and content are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984:23). Case studies also provide researchers and scholars with the advantage of collecting a wealth of information regarding their subjects, and deal with a wide range of evidence (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006), using both quantitative and qualitative data to help explain both the process and the outcome of an observed phenomenon (Tellis, 1997).

This study explores the Production, Content and Audience aspects of the case-study newspapers. To achieve a richness of analysis and research findings, the study uses a mixed-method approach, with qualitative and quantitative content analysis, audience surveys, focus-group interview and interviews with ethnic African

journalists, in order to identify and understand how ethnic journalists practise their journalism, how they represent their community, the impact of ethnic media on the cultural identity of their audiences, and what motivates the audience of ethnic media.

**Fig. 1: Research design plan for ethnic media studies in Ireland and Belgium**



### 3.1 Research questions

In an effort to address the above research problems, this study poses the following research questions, based on the study of the literature.

#### Production:

1. How is ownership organised in the ethnic media? How does this influence the work of journalists and the content choices of the newspaper, and how does this differ from mainstream media?
2. How are objectivity and professionalism applied in ethnic media journalism practice and how do these standards differ from those in mainstream journalism?
3. What are the journalist-sources relations in ethnic media journalism and how do these sourcing patterns differ from those of mainstream media and journalists?

#### Content:

4. How do ethnic media represent African ethnic minorities and how do these representations differ from those of mainstream media?

**Audience:**

5. What are the motivating factors for the use of ethnic media?
6. Does exposure to ethnic media enhance cultural identity?

### **3.2 Production analysis**

#### **In-depth interview**

The first part of our study focuses on the news production process in the chosen ethnic media. To this end, we decided to conduct in-depth interviews with owners and journalists.

In this study, the in-depth interview plays a key role in collecting data during visits to the offices of the two case-study newspapers, where questions were asked of ethnic media journalists regarding their journalism practice and, most especially, the principles and values behind such practice.

In-depth interviews typically rely on multiple sources of information and, since it is a more intensive type of interview, they are conducted on a one-to-one basis, and are often lengthier than an ordinary interview, running for more than an hour. Such interviews are good for uncovering hidden issues (Jugenheimer et al, 2010). For instance, we might ask journalists and others associated with a particular type of media practice about their experiences and expectations in relation to a newspaper, and the thoughts they have concerning the newspaper, how they operate and practise their journalism, and about any changes they perceive in themselves as a result of their involvement in the production of the publication.

#### **3.3 Data transcription and analysis**

In this study, data collected through the qualitative method (interviews) from selected ethnic African journalists were transcribed and reviewed as follows. The transcription was in two phases. The first phase took over four weeks. I transcribed the notes from the interview carried out with journalists and staff of the two newspapers more clearly on A4 paper, then started sorting through the transcribed materials to pick up the main points by arranging them according to themes (media ownership, professionalism, etc); reread relevant studies relating to these themes, and thus linked up how the material related to these studies and sometimes how it departed from them. At this point, I also made some phone calls to the editors of the two newspapers in order to clarify a few issues. Finally, I decided on the core issues, evidence and ideas that form the main theme of my discussion, while also identifying any areas that would play a more subsidiary role in the discussion. The core issues involved discussions on production and how the practice translates to contents in the newspaper.

The second phase was to write up. At this stage I continued the analytical process as I had to revisit sources and sometimes struggle with the organisation of thoughts, which is time-consuming. Over four weeks, I had three different drafts in the process of organising my materials into a theoretically meaningful document. At last, I was able to produce a presentation that followed the principal themes and organised them into results on the theme of production. The presentation was arranged in such a way that it followed the temporal flow of news processing

from source to what the journalists in the two case-study newspapers considered to be their news values. No computer-assisted method was used in analysing this section on news production.

### **3.4 Analysing content of selected newspapers**

To complement and verify insights from the production side of ethnic media through in-depth interviews with newsroom workers with an understanding of the actual content of the chosen newspapers, we opt for a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Content analysis provides insights into the pattern of coverage of a newspaper, indicating whether this coverage contradicts its stated mission and purpose.

A major advantage of content analysis over, for example, semiotic analysis is that it allows for analysis of a large body of texts (Hansen et al., 1998). It is not possible to analyse absolutely all media coverage of a subject, area or issue at the same time. Hence, I defined clearly the body of media I intended to analyse. The selection started from a purposive sample. The scope of the content analysis of *Metro Éireann* is limited to the “Africans in Ireland news pages” and “front pages” (news articles only, excluding personal opinion and advertorials) of the newspaper. The justification for this was based on the nature of the newspaper which devotes other pages to other ethnic minorities such as “The Polish in Ireland”, “The Indians in Ireland” and “The Filipinos” in Ireland, among other minorities, which also include “Native Irish speakers in Ireland” (published in the Irish language).

In the same way, the scope of content analysis of *The African Bulletin* is limited to the “Belgian pages” and “front pages” (editorial only), and the justification was based on the newspaper devoting different pages to “Belgium news”, “Dutch news”, “Spanish news” and a “French page” aimed at French speakers in Brussels and France, among other language segments that feature regularly in the newspaper. The next step was to choose a representative sample - unbiased sample reflecting the population - from the content the newspapers, as suggested by Berelson (1952 in Hansen et al, 1998).

#### **Content analysis coding schedule**

Once chosen, the text must be coded into manageable content categories. The process of coding can be seen as one of selective reduction, which is the central idea in content analysis. The news content of *Metro Éireann* and *The African Bulletin* was examined, coded into manageable theme-based categories and analysed using a specially developed coding schedule, which was modified after carefully considering Atton and Wickenden (2005) concerning content analysis carried out on “sourcing routines and representation in alternative journalism” and Ogunyemi (2007) who based his work on “the news agenda of the black African press in the United Kingdom” (examining the content of *The African Voice*). For this study, breaking down the contents of the newspaper samples into different categories relating to dominating issues as reported by the newspapers made it easier to put the information into a manageable coding scheme and thus provided for a more precise form of data analysis.

The list of 13 categories of subject matter in analysing the content of *Metro Éireann* and *The African Bulletin* in order to determine the central defining themes of the two case-study newspapers, as modified after Hartmann et al (1974), is as follows: Immigration, Crime, Politics/Policy, Social Trends, Transport, Foreign Aid,

Employment, Health, Education, Integration, Discrimination, Others, Home News (African origin news - News from Africa).

Efforts were made to ensure validity and reliability. Validity concerns “the degree to which a test measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring” (Brown, 1996:231). Reliability refers to the collection of data in a consistent and accurate way (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Reliability in content analysis has to do with consistency. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) suggest the use of Holsti (1969) formula:  $\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$  (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006: 157).

In calculating the intercoder reliability, a colleague was asked to randomly check my consistency in the coding of samples of 10%, with set acceptable reliability of 91% and 94% reliability was achieved, using an already prepared coding schedule;  $\frac{2(211)}{450} = .94$ . According to Hansen et al (1998), it is quite normal to “check for consistency between different coders – inter-coder reliability – and consistency of the individual coder’s coding practice over time – intra-coder reliability” (Hansen et al, 1998:120). Reliability in content analysis in most cases may also be linked to stability, which allows other coders to consistently record the same data in the same way over a period of time.

### **3.5 Data transcription and analysis**

A combination of manual count and the Excel Statistical Package (ESP) was used for the quantitative content analysis. Initially, I manually counted the number of official and ordinary sources; a further count of majority and minority sources followed, after a coding exercise relating to *Metro Éireann* and *The African Bulletin*. As reflected in the field study and taking into consideration that computer programs for data analysis deal only with numbers and not statements, opinions or verbal answers, researchers need to convert such responses into numbers and these numbers have to be entered into a chosen computer program for analysis. Therefore, these answers have to be coded into appropriate groupings in order to cope with complex questions (Hansen et al, 1998:253).

### **3.6 Analysing ethnic newspaper audiences**

#### **Combined survey and focus-group research**

Since this study focuses on the use of ethnic media, the cultural use of the media by the audience becomes relevant; this involves surveys as well as focus-group interviews with individuals in order to ascertain the impact of different forms of media on them. This method relies on self-reporting of influence and motivations concerning these cultural products, whether it’s a matter of meeting information needs, entertainment or longer-term educational functions, which according to Hodkinson (2011) relate to lasting forms of knowledge and understanding (ibid, 2011).

Survey research according to Babbie (2013) “is perhaps the most frequently used mode of observation in the social sciences and one of the frequently used methods available to social scientists interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly” (Babbie, 2013:208). Hansen et al (1998) note that survey research “usually seeks to provide empirical data collected from a population of respondents on a whole number of topics or issues” (Hansen et al, 1983:225). On one hand, the data collected is used to lend

support to or negate a hypothesis. On the other hand it can simply provide basic information on existing or changing patterns of behaviour.

### **3.7 Questionnaire design**

Following on from the content analysis and the data that emerged from it, the next step was to design questionnaires for data collection. The questionnaire was originally designed in the English language for the Irish respondents, and translated into French for the Belgian respondents. Lance and Johnson (1996) recommend four important components to consider when designing a questionnaire: (a) page format should be brief and not crowded; (b) items used for responses (for example, yes or no, Likert Scale, true or false, etc) ought to be standardised, comprehensive and mutually exclusive; (c) wording should be neutral, clear and simple with brief and no redundant questions, and no direction of the respondent towards one particular response; and, (d) items should be arranged in a logical or chronological sequence. Babbie (2013), states that randomising the order of the items will confuse the respondent. Furthermore, the questionnaire should also include instructions to help the respondent understand what is required.

### **3.8 Survey data analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaires was measured in ordinal and nominal scales. Descriptive statistics were used to measure the mean, the median and the mode, and to measure the variability, range, variance and standard deviation. A five-point Likert Scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Don't Know, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) was used to measure the statements in the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics method was used for the statements in the Likert Scale to obtain the means and response percentages, to compare these values with each other and to compare them with other questions and variables. Excel was used to facilitate the percentage calculations of the variables. In all, 290 questionnaires were distributed and 200 completed questionnaires were returned.

### **3.9 Focus group**

Focus-group interviews were carried out after the initial analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire, and after conducting content analysis of the two sample newspapers in the early part of the study. A focus-group interview is a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data. However, group interviews are often used simply as a quick and convenient way to collect data from several people simultaneously; group interaction is an intrinsic part of the method (Glasgow Media Group, 1995).

In conclusion, the combination of methodological strategies applied in this study is not only necessary for media research, but also to approach the complex phenomenon of media reception in diaspora. The new geography of African diaspora media in Western Europe requires the creative formulation of new methodological and theoretical proposals. The analysis of audience in this study will bring to the fore, revelations about how media use affect the identity of ethnic Africans, particularly in a diaspora situation, and further explore communal practices and the communication of meanings as a result of engagement with the media (Georgiou, 2006). For a long time, audience research has addressed the formation of communities around the media, before the development of migrant and diasporic audiences.

## 4.0 Conclusions

### The two newspapers compared

These focus groups present a picture of ethnic African interactions with diaspora media in Ireland and Belgium by showing individual practices, and the use of a combination of various ethnic print media and mainstream media that is intimately shaped by personal experiences; they also reveal the feelings of participants about their experience and identity at a particular moment in time and in varying domestic and social contexts. The print media play many roles in the participants' lives, yet there is an important focus on how media practices act as a locus for wider questions of orientation and belonging. Of course, this in part informed the fluency and thoughtfulness of the participants' discussants reflections; everyday media choices remind them strongly of their diaspora lives, and these choices are important in the ways in which they navigate and reshape their experiences. Titley et al (2010) arrived at a similar conclusion in a study on the media use experience of Nigerians in Ireland (Titley, Kerr, O'Riain, 2010).

Despite the diversity of media engagements as discussed by the focus groups, it is possible to make some general statements about the media use of ethnic Africans in Ireland and Belgium, particularly the ways in which the participants navigate their way through a thicket of media choices, which has implications for mainstream assumptions about catering for minorities. By implication, the ethnic Africans believe consciously or unconsciously in the concerted efforts of the mainstream media in Ireland and Belgium to deliberately neglect the coverage of positive issues concerning them, and feel they concentrate on negative and irrelevant ones, particularly news that tends to denigrate their collective identity and representation in the public sphere. The measured negotiation of ethnic media by ethnic Africans in these two countries demonstrates how the diasporic audience lives with multiple attachments and affective connections. The categories of Africans who occasionally read ethnic media as a supplement to mainstream media are well integrated into the Irish and Belgian societies, based on their statements in the focus groups.

In comparing the two newspapers, we observed that the level of access to ethnic print media in Ireland is lower than in Belgium. In Ireland 88% of respondents are aware, while 12% are not, of the existence of the ethnic African print media. In Belgium 93% of ethnic African respondents are aware of the newspapers and magazines, while 7% are not. However, on the frequency of use of ethnic African print media in Ireland, 21% of respondents regularly read ethnic print media as against 10% in Belgium. Interestingly, 17% do not read ethnic African print media in Ireland, even though they are aware it exists, as against 16% in Belgium. However, 62% in Ireland see themselves as occasional consumers who will read the newspaper whenever they come across it, but will not go out of their way to buy or look for it, as against 74% in Belgium.

On motivating factors in reading ethnic print media, in Ireland African home news dominates the demand for ethnic media, followed by cultural attachment and online access. In Belgium African home news also dominates, again followed by cultural attachment. The summation of ethnic African media use in the two countries suggests the audiences are united by certain orientations and fragmented by others, from the impact of personal diaspora experiences to news consumption based on their engagement with their wider community.

#### 4.1 Ownership and media content

Media ownership in whatever shape is taken seriously in media studies, as it has strong implications for media content. In general, ownership in ethnic media is mostly restricted to individuals, based on the findings of this study. These individuals sometimes rely on other private businesses to fund their ethnic media business, until the media business is able to stand on its own. Unlike mainstream media, ethnic media are organised on a non-profit basis with the aim of serving the needs and interests of the ethnic community; hence they are run on a small budget, unlike mainstream media. In the mainstream media, ownership is concentrated in the hands of a small number of transnational multimedia conglomerates (Devereux, 2003). In the case of *Metro Éireann*, it was formed on a non-profit basis and the same applied to *The African Bulletin*, their initial aim of the founders were to serve the needs and interest of their ethnic community.

The content of these newspapers is greatly influenced by the ideology of the publishers, as there are indications that the owners are clear in their views about what the paper should be talking about as shown in the interviews with the owners of the case-study newspapers. In the case of *Metro Éireann*, the publisher, who is also the editor, wanted to use the newspaper to contribute to the development of Ireland and at the same time correct the image of immigrants as represented by the mainstream media in Ireland. We found in the interviews and in the content analysis that the newspaper focused especially on issues confronting immigrants in society, particularly on pronouncements by major politicians regarding immigration, as well as major pronouncements by international organisations concerning immigrants in Irish society. The ethnic journalists were strongly encouraged to focus on coverage of issues confronting ethnic minorities, as directed by the editor. One of the contributors to *Metro Éireann* said that articles which failed to conform to the views of his editor were not published.

In *The African Bulletin*, again the content is determined by the publisher, as revealed in the interviews. The newspaper's focus is on news from the "African perspective", as expressed by the editor who maintained that the newspaper sought to reconstruct the identity of the ethnic African community in Belgium by painting the true picture, rather than the one being painted by the mainstream media. Various studies on the representation of ethnic minorities in the media have consistently shown that they are often presented in distorted forms, associating them with crime, terrorism and violence (Van den Bulck and Broos, 2011). Cottle (2000) notes, "Under-representation and stereotypical characterization within entertainment genres and negative problem-oriented portrayal within factuality and news forms ... and lived racism experienced by ethnic minorities in both, are recurring research findings" (Cottle, 2000:7-8). The ethnic journalists working for *The African Bulletin* tend to reflect the ideological positioning of the publisher in their coverage of news, and this in turn is reflected in the content of the newspaper, in that it focuses in particular on major pronouncements by politicians and international organisations on African immigrants in Belgium.

The overall analysis of the content of the two newspapers shows the differences in their coverage based on the influence of ownership. In Ireland's *Metro Éireann* newspaper, immigration issues emerged as the dominating theme, closely followed by integration and discrimination in Irish society. Employment, crime and education featured prominently, while issues like African-origin news, health, transport, social trends, politics/policy and foreign aid are less featured. Regarding immigration issues, the newspaper communicates new immigration



policies and how they affect the immigrant community. This is a reflection of the publisher's agenda on contributing to the development of Ireland and working towards correcting the image of immigrants as he feels they are being misrepresented by the mainstream media.

In Belgium, *The African Bulletin* analysis identified African-origin news as the dominating theme, closely followed by politics/policy and social trends in Belgian society. Immigration, crime and employment feature prominently while education, health, integration, discrimination, transportation and foreign aid are not prominent. The agenda of the publisher of *The African Bulletin* is to focus on news from the African perspective and this is reflected in the content of the newspaper, with African-origin news dominating the content of the newspaper. While the two publishers focus on immigrants, *The African Bulletin* focuses on the African perspective and thus African-origin news dominates, and not immigration news as in *Metro Éireann*.

The importance of immigration issues in *Metro Éireann* suggests that immigration has become a major concern within the ethnic African community in Ireland. This may indicate that the economic downturn has triggered an increase in discrimination and racism; hence the need for societal discussion on integrating minorities into the wider society. In Belgium, African-origin news dominates *The African Bulletin*, which indicates that ethnic Africans crave for more information from back home, which would then inform the debate within the African community on trends emerging from Africa, and again new political debate culminating into new government policies are being debated by the ethnic African community. Employment issues amount to 7% in the overall content of the case-study newspaper in Ireland compared to 3% in Belgium. African-origin news in *Metro Éireann* accounts for 6% of its content, whereas in *The African Bulletin* it accounts for 22% of its content.

#### 4.2 Journalist-source relations in ethnic media

On the one hand, our study of sourcing and newsgathering in *Metro Éireann*, as suggested by the sources book and a follow-up interview with the editor, indicates that the newspaper relies heavily on elite sources in its sourcing routines. On the other hand, the sourcing pattern of *The African Bulletin* as reflected in the sources book and interview with the managing editor revealed counter-elite sourcing practices in the newspaper's newsgathering operations.

In the content analysis, it was confirmed that *Metro Éireann* relies heavily on elite sources, at 69.78% as against 38.67% for 'ordinary' sources which translates into a ratio of 2.3:1. There is a significant level of usage of elite sources by *Metro Éireann*; mainstream politicians, international institutions, public institutions and policing are of particular interest to the newspaper, and the people in these categories are given significant access in the newspaper. For *The African Bulletin*, the content analysis suggests the newspaper relies slightly more on elite sources than was indicated by the sources book and the interview, with 51.25% as against 48.75%, which translates into a ratio of 1.06: 1.

Murray et al (2007:83) suggest that most ethnic media use community leaders as a major source since a majority of the ethnic media exhibits traits of belonging to the ethnic community, and a minority to the dominant culture. Hence, in contrast to the mainstream sourcing routine, ethnic media generally tend to privilege non-elite sources for their news. However, it is important to note that, in Ireland, ethnic journalists have more access to key elite

sources than their counterparts in Belgium. For instance, *Metro Éireann* journalists have access to 40% of the politicians and 24% of international institutions, whereas *The African Bulletin* journalists have access to 18% of the politicians and 18% of international institutions. In Belgium, *The African Bulletin* has access to 13% of academia, while in Ireland *Metro Éireann* has access to 5% of the academia. *The African Bulletin* also recorded 13% access to mainstream media, by relying on them for information, while in Ireland *Metro Éireann* recorded 4% access to the mainstream media.

For a long time, the sourcing patterns in mainstream media, which privilege elites, has been a source of concern, but this study also indicates a dominance of elite sources not only in the mainstream, but also in ethnic media.

### 4.3 Objectivity and professionalism

Professional practice becomes a reference point in this study based on the issue of access to information for ethnic journalists at *The African Bulletin*. The editor-in-chief refers to his organisation's difficulties in getting recognition from various news sources as an ethnic media news media. The newspaper has limited access to information from the main authorities, whereas mainstream media are privileged with such access. It is therefore not surprising to see the newspaper reproducing content from mainstream media at the rate of (13%) of the content analysed as against its counterpart in Ireland *Metro Éireann* with just (4%) of analysed content. The main reason, of access denial as a result of not being seen as professional in its operation, will mean a new approach, retraining and embracement of professional values by ethnic journalists at *The African Bulletin* for access to be granted. This is in contrast to his counterpart in Ireland, which enjoys patronage from various high-level sources within the Irish community. It is noteworthy that the editor of *Metro Éireann* is a qualified journalist with a Master's degree and an executive member of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ). Hence, the editor of *Metro Éireann* is regarded as a professional journalist and the label of 'amateur', will not and could not stand the test of time based on the operations and professional conduct from members of its editorial crew.

Based on the interview with Chinedu, *Metro Éireann* deliberately selects stories and events affecting the ethnic minority community which are ignored or marginalised by the mainstream press. It is explicitly stated in the literature that news value is not an objective entity, since stories are selected, treated, and given prominence according to the orientation of the news organisation. Research suggests that potential items must generally fall into one or more of the categories listed in Galtung and Ruge's (1965) study of news values as revised by Harcup and O'Neill (2001:279): "reference to the power elite; celebrity; entertainment; surprise; good news; bad news; magnitude; relevance; follow-up stories; and the newspaper's agenda" (Harcup, 2009:39). Therefore, *Metro Éireann* aligns with the alternative media in its perception of news values which, according to the editor, is mainly about finding answers to the challenges facing ethnic minorities in Ireland. Hence, what is selected as news in the mainstream media will not necessarily make it as news in the ethnic media.

On news sourcing and professionalism, at *The African Bulletin*, the fact that there has been an environment of suspicion between the two communities for a long time, and the ethnic newspaper must aim to build bridges and promote confidence. Though, for now the trust issue makes it tougher for *The African Bulletin* journalists to practise journalism according to the norms of the profession.

Apparently, one of the main problems facing ethnic media is an inability to gain the confidence of elite sources; by implication these elite sources, who are prominent people in society, deliberately marginalise ethnic journalists and give preference to their mainstream counterparts. Keeble (2006) argues, “Journalists’ sourcing routines tend to reflect the distribution of power in society” (Keeble, 2006:52). As a result of this fundamental problem, ethnic journalists are often forced to explore alternative sourcing routines.

On the technology front, the two newspapers have a presence on the World Wide Web in order to reach a wider audience and the two editors said they had embraced new Internet technologies in order to serve their ethnic communities better. Both the editor of *Metro Éireann* and the managing editor of *The African Bulletin* said their newspapers were an agent of integration based on the role they played in communicating host government information to their audiences responsibly, by effectively managing the flow of information from government to the ethnic minority, without reporting such information in a provocative way, even though it might be controversial.

#### **4.4 Use of ethnic media**

In Ireland (39%) of respondents were aware of and had access to *Metro Éireann*, while other competing ethnic media together have the rest (61%), while in Belgium *The African Bulletin* has access to (43%) of the ethnic media market share. Interestingly, the two newspapers dominate the ethnic African media in their communities, but despite the dominance, they are still struggling to survive as a business. This is common with ethnic media as the literature suggests, their goal is not to make profit, but to act as the voice of their community. However, the use of ethnic media varies amongst ethnic Africans in the two countries, for instance in Ireland (21%) of respondents read ethnic media regularly as against (10%) in Belgium. Obviously there is a wide gap between ethnic media readership in the two countries.

Again, (17%) do not read ethnic newspaper at all in Ireland as against (16%) in Belgium, though, the average amount of people who do not read ethnic newspapers are so close in the two countries despite, the wider gap recorded in the number of those who read ethnic newspapers regularly. A close look at occasional readers in the two countries revealed that In Ireland, (62%) are occasional readers as against (74%) in Belgium. Again, the variation in the percentage of occasional readers is slightly higher and this could be as a result of difference in cultural orientation of the two environments, particularly the way of life in the two countries could be responsible.

Interestingly, in Ireland all respondents in the survey said that they read ethnic media as a supplement to mainstream print and broadcast media. The use of mainstream media like the *Irish Independent*, *Herald*, *Irish Examiner*, *Irish Times* newspapers and RTE1, RTE2, Sky News, BBC channels and Aljazeera television channels dominate the media use of ethnic Africans in Ireland. Respondents who regularly read ethnic media in Ireland are strongly linked to African culture, as revealed in the focus-group discussions.

Our study in Belgium further revealed that respondents who regularly read ethnic media are strongly linked to life dominated by African culture. A total of 16% of our respondents who do not read ethnic media in Belgium say they use a combination of transnational mainstream English-language, French-language or Dutch media, like

BBC World, France 24, RTLZ, and Belgian mainstream media, and feel significantly closer to Belgium in culture than respondents who mainly rely on ethnic media in Belgium. The last set of respondents, who read ethnic media whenever they come across them, are regarded as consumers of mixed media, and amount to 74% of our surveyed audience; they consume Belgian mainstream media, African ethnic media and African transnational media like OBE, AIT and Vox Afrique, while also maintaining a close emotional relationship with and high cultural attachment to Africa. The use of mainstream media like *Le Soir*, *La Capital*, *DH*, *Gazet van Antwerpen* and *Metro* newspapers, France 24, BBC channels and RTLZ, among other mainstream media available in Belgium, dominate the media use for public knowledge of ethnic Africans in Belgium; all our survey respondents said that they used ethnic print media as a supplement to mainstream media.

The combination of focus group interview and the use of survey interview together with the content analysis of the two case study newspapers revealed that consumption of ethnic media in the two countries by ethnic Africans in various ways has influenced individual identities. Consumption has created a shift in identities of audiences of the two newspapers as revealed in the focus group interviews in Ireland and Belgium. According to Georgiou (2006), understanding the relation between media and identities is endless discourse and Cottle (2009) suggests identities are shaped within the context of media culture. Hence, the change in media consumption of these members of the ethnic African community who used mainstream media to learn about the wider society and the ethnic media to link back to homeland and learn about the local community, leading to shifting collective identities of the members of these group in diaspora, as a form of hybridity.

#### **4.5 Representation in ethnic media**

The two case-study newspapers present ethnic Africans in Ireland and Belgium positively. Hall (1990) suggests that representation not only affects the understanding of ethnic minority groups within society as a whole, but also how ethnic minority groups come to perceive their own identities (Hall, 1990:51). *Metro Éireann* represents the black African community positively, though the study found that there is a danger of misrepresentation or over-representation on the part of the ethnic media in the process of trying to project issues from a personal angle without due consideration for professionalism, as identified in *The African Bulletin* story on the sale of Gatwick airport. The study also confirms that the two newspapers represent the minority differently from the mainstream media. On this issue we must consider that identity is constructed within a cultural framework; as Kathryn Woodward (1997) says, “Identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation about the identity positions which we might adopt” (Woodward,1997:2). We must also consider Hall’s (1990) notion that identity is not necessarily ‘fixed’, but is a fluid phenomena: “Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (Hall, 1990:51). Examples are the different coverage of the Emeka Onwubiko nationalisation issue by *Metro Éireann* (ethnic media) and *The Irish Examiner* (mainstream newspaper) in Ireland.

Paradoxically, the majority whites in Ireland are portrayed positively in *Metro Éireann*, as accommodating and willing to accept new arrivals, as reflected in the story in the 2 to 8 July 2009 issue headlined ‘Dundalk school is

‘open to all’ as well as other positive stories portraying the majority whites as caring, except in a few cases where issues such as racism and hatred are reported. An example of this in *The African Bulletin* is the report headlined ‘The neo-Nazi threat against Africans’. We looked at the statements of the two case-study editors that their newspapers strive to represent the ethnic black African community truly as against misrepresentation by the mainstream media. Hall’s (1990) conceptualisation of identity as an “articulated positioning” is useful in gaining a theoretical understanding of this. The term articulation, as defined by Hall, has a dual meaning: articulation as the process of making a collective identity, position, or set of interests explicit and comprehensible to an audience; and the process of linking that position towards achieving definite political ends (Hall 1990, 1996). “A theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects” (Hall 1996: 141). Hall argues that collective identities can be forged to work towards a political end, and then re-articulated in a different conjuncture. Identities are thus “unstable points of identification or suture [...] Not an essence but a positioning” (Hall 1990: 226).

With respect to identity and based on the high numbers of immigrants who access and consume ethnic African media in Ireland and Belgium, as evident in this study, ethnic media help to build up cultural identity as they communicate cultural pride, provide a link to home, and provide a platform for collective communication and representation of interests, including passing on messages that will enhance integration. By engaging in these integrative acts, the newspapers provide the basis for a symbolic community for the members of an ethnic group in the host community, and in most cases support integration into the wider society by providing information on local policies and events, as argued in Arnold & Schneider (2007). In this way, ethnic media are crucial for developing and sustaining cultural identity. The combined usage of mainstream media allows ethnic African migrants in Ireland and Belgium to construct their sense of belonging to the two communities of the nation-state and to a global community of audiences that surpasses ethnic particularity (Gillespie, 1995). At the same time, ethnic African media allow them to construct and reconstruct a sense of diasporic particularity. Ethnic media are often considered to be crucial for minorities’ empowerment and for the sustaining of cultural particularity, while challenging the domination of mainstream culture (Riggins, 1992; Husband, 1994). As minorities consume different media – media that represent alternative media cultures and different ethnic cultures and subcultures – they become more critical audiences. Mainstream and ethnic media are in continuous co-existence and competition for diasporic audiences.

#### **4.6 Exposure to ethnic media and cultural identity**

Judging by the high percentage of access to ethnic print media by ethnic Africans in Ireland and Belgium, ethnic newspapers have considerable influence on such migrants who live in a state between integration into a new socio-cultural environment, maintaining relations with their old diaspora communities, and the conflicting demands of bridging these different cultures. In integrating into the community under these circumstances, the concept of hybrid identity, which integrates ‘here’ and ‘there’ in the construction of identities, and in synergy with ethnic media bring about a strong urge to act for immigrants’ integration into a wider community in diaspora. For instance, In Ireland audiences of Metro Éireann have access to contents with about (22%) on

immigration, (6%) on African Origin news and (17%) on integration, such content will allow immigrants to know what is happening back in their place of origin, again the high volume of information on immigration and integration will help immigrants to know more and perfect their immigration documents and enable them to integrate into the wider society. Likewise in Belgium, The audiences of The African Bulletin have access to news contents of (14%) on immigration, (7%) on integration and (22%) on African Origin news, when compared to that of Metro Éireann, The African Bulletin contents are richer in African Origin news, which implies the possibility of its audience knowing more about origin news than those of Metro Éireann in Ireland. However, The Irish content is richer in immigration and integration, which means readers of Metro Éireann would be more knowledgeable about issues concerning immigration and integration. Again, access to mainstream media by ethnic African immigrants in the two countries, will expose them to the two cultures and indeed help in navigating their ways in the two communities in which they live.

Integration is not a process of fundamental change of identity, which could lead to a process of alienation. Hybrid identity should be interpreted as a positive resource for the development or articulation of a particular position in a multicultural society, as demonstrated in the focus-group discussion in Ireland, in which a 27-year-old administrative officer care worker from Cameroon said he relies a lot on *Metro Éireann* and *Xclusive Magazine* for understanding what is going on back home and within the African community in Ireland, particularly on immigration and cultural issues affecting Africans, but that for news on what is going on in the wider Irish society, he relies on the *Irish Independent* mainstream daily newspaper and also listens to RTE News. In Belgium, a 32-year-old sales executive from Mali, living in Brussels, relies on *Amina Magazine* and *The African Bulletin* every month, but also reads *La Libre Belgique* - a mainstream national daily newspaper. He said he reads the mainstream media to get news about the wider Belgian society, while using the ethnic African media to know what is happening in the African community in Belgium and back home in Africa. In this context, communication is deeply embedded in the process of hybridity (Friedman, 1994 in Georgiou, 2003:14).

The media experience of these Africans in diaspora brings to the fore the complexity of their everyday interactions. Georgiou (2006) describes the interactions between immigrants and media as being contested and further notes that in everyday life they are continuously challenged. However, ethnic media play an intermediary role by connecting a community with the wider society, providing a strong migrant identity to help with the transition 'from there to here' and fostering a more multi-local sense of belonging (Cheng, 2005). In linking the bonding with the bridging, we can argue that there is a natural connection linking media consumption to the construction of individual identities. Naficy (1993) further argues that the media assist people to construct hybrid identities, not by producing absences, but by producing "multiplying presences of the home and the past and of the here and the now" (Naficy, 1993 in Georgiou, 2003:14).

#### **4.7 Impact of data on theory**

On professionalism, the findings in our study are in line with the views of Matsaganis (2011). While this study has not provided any new theoretical insight into professionalism in the field of ethnic media, the results reinforce the existing theoretical understanding of the concept. Hence, the antidote to the discrimination that ethnic media journalists often are subjected to when they try to cover events that demand access to certain

authorities is, as suggested in (Matsaganis, 2011:236), for them to subscribe to a higher level of professionalisation. Aldridge and Evetts (2004) see professionalisation as a social process through which individuals develop common values and norms, establish a code of conduct and agree on a set of qualifications that everyone practising a particular occupation or trade is expected to possess; the conformity with these occupation or trade-specific criteria distinguishes professionals from amateurs. However, the social bases of professionalism and the specific content of journalists' values may differ (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:34 in Shudson & Anderson, 2009).

Objectivity should be aimed at, as an ideal if not a full reality. There is no excuse for inaccuracies or lack of thoroughness. Newspapers headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany. Photographs and telecasts should give an accurate picture of an event and not highlight a minor incident out of context. There is a need to ensure a clear distinction between news reports and expression of opinion. News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue. Partisanship in editorial comments, which knowingly departs from the truth, violates the spirit of journalism.

One area of routines of particular interest to our study is that of news sources. The study of reporters and sources is very important, as sources are the origin of news stories (Harcup, 2009). Pioneering studies conducted by Sigal (1973) and Gans (1979) in the United States found that the majority of news sources were high-ranking officials and members of elites. Little appears to have changed in the years since then. The main point of concern for the relationship between reporters and sources is that, if the journalistic paradigm calls for turning to authoritative news sources, then those believed to be in authority will have a better chance of getting a voice in the news. Therefore, when high-prestige elite sources appear in the news, the reporter-source relationship tends to legitimise or perhaps reify the power structure of the society (Sigal, 1973; Gans, 1979). According to Ericson (1999), to journalists, this is a daily occurrence, since journalism ethics requires journalists to produce factual news content, and the use of credible sources legitimises the news without the need to crosscheck the validity of the information. Hertog and McLeod (2001) suggest that, in most cases, fact-bearers live in the ideologically dominant mainstream, representing that mainstream's dominant ideological institutions and presenting their dominant frame; most often, sources tend to be male authority figures and do not belong to one of their society's minority groups (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Ericson, 1999 in Berkowitz, 2009).

In terms of content, this study found that both case-study newspapers heavily rely on elite sources. However, the high number of elite sources does not necessarily mean that ordinary citizens are not well represented or not given prominence by the newspapers, since they are consulted when issues neglected by the mainstream media are given prominence. With respect to the audience of ethnic newspapers, there is no theoretical contribution, but our findings reinforce the existing theoretical assertions that ethnic media do help to establish cultural identity as they communicate cultural pride, provide a link to home, and provide a platform for collective communication and representation of interests. They provide the basis for a symbolic community for the members of an ethnic group in the host community and in most cases support integration into the wider society by providing information on local policies and events, as argued in Arnold & Schneider (2007). In this way, ethnic media are crucial for developing and sustaining cultural identity. The combination of mainstream media and ethnic media allows ethnic African migrants in Ireland and Belgium the opportunity to construct their sense of belonging in

the two communities of the nation-state and in the global community of audiences that surpasses ethnic particularity (Gillespie, 1995).

#### 4.8 Issues for future study

This study involved challenges that limited the researcher in his ability to achieve the targeted goals of the study. We could have examined the gender aspect of sourcing in ethnic media in Ireland and Belgium, looked more into other types of media such as television, radio and the Internet, or probed deeply into bridging and bonding in both countries. Some of these issues were beyond the scope of this study but they are also relevant in the sense that they can throw more light on the relationship between ethnic African communities and their media. Future research could look into these areas. However, the findings in this study may be of significance for both ethnic and mainstream media professionals, as they demonstrate the importance of print media for ethnic African immigrants and how they meet their needs in multiple ways. These include counter-balancing the inadequate, sometimes stereotypical coverage of minority matters by the mainstream media, and helping ethnic Africans to settle, to maintain links with their place of origin, to negotiate new identities, to keep informed about issues that concern them, to sustain their sense of justified pride in themselves and their various cultures, and in general to integrate into the wider society from a position of strength.

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