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IN TUNE WITH CHANGING TIMES: RADIO'S ROLE IN COLONISATION AND DECOLONISATION IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA, 1935–1960

Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar

First introduced in West Africa by Europeans as an instrument of colonisation and western-modelled modernisation, radio later became a tool of decolonisation but also of surveillance and subversion. This article examines the role of radio in British West Africa, focusing mainly on Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana) and briefly on Sierra Leone. It draws on original archival research to illuminate the multifaceted functions of radio in colonisation and decolonisation processes, the struggle for its control, and the limits of its performance. It traces the convoluted journey of radio broadcasting and reception in the region, from wired to wireless broadcasting, and from communal listening to private reception. The article also looks at the decolonisation of broadcasting itself, unpacking the changes witnessed in its administrative structure, staffing, training and programming.

KEYWORDS: Colonisation; decolonisation; propaganda; subversion; surveillance; West Africa

Introduction and background

On 2 December 1935, British Colonial Secretary James Henry Thomas inaugurated the first radio broadcasting service in Nigeria, Britain's biggest colony in West Africa, with a speech that highlighted radio's role in providing 'entertainment and pleasure'.[1] He spoke directly from London to Lagos using

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the BBC Empire Service studio – a marvel for most of his Lagos audiences who were listening to him *via* the 400 loudspeakers installed across the city. Nigeria's colonial Governor Bernard Henry Bourdillon, who led the Lagos angle of the inauguration, talked about 'the miracle' and 'a service the full possibilities of which we cannot yet foresee'.[2] Four months earlier, on 31 July 1935, the Governor of the neighbouring Gold Coast (Britain's second largest colony in the region renamed Ghana at independence), Sir Arnold Hodson, had started a similar service in its capital Accra. He had previously opened Sierra Leone's (and West Africa's) first radio station in Freetown in 1934 while serving there as its colonial governor.[3] Of the four British West African colonies, only The Gambia (the smallest of them) was without a colonial broadcasting service by the end of 1935 (hers started in the 1940s). Those radio broadcasts were not the first to be received in the region; broadcasts from the BBC Empire Service, which began in December 1932 'to keep expatriates and loyal subjects of the King in constant touch with "the mother country"',[4] had been heard before by European audiences who owned shortwave receiving sets. In much of colonial Africa, broadcasting was first served to European settlers and Asians before it was extended to Africans.[5]

The introduction of colonial broadcasting in the 1930s was Britain's major attempt to use radio to advance its imperial interests in its numerous colonies scattered across the world. From Hong Kong to Kenya, from Malta to Malaya and Mauritius, and from Palestine to Fiji and Falkland Islands,[6] British officials saw the potential of using the new medium to mould the minds of colonial subjects and to 'modernise' the colonies.[7] The establishment of the radio infrastructure in West Africa was part of their wider colonisation project. But neither the officials in the colonies nor their metropolitan bosses in London had apparently envisaged that barely a decade later – after the devastating Second World War and the surge in liberation struggles it had inspired and/or enhanced – Britain would be compelled to embark on a process of decolonisation and resort to using the same radio instrument to control it. And lurking around were the Communist Soviet Union and rising regional power Egypt wielding the same tool to advance their causes in the continent. Amidst all this stood West African nationalist politicians, demanding the control of radio to pursue their own version of decolonisation, and the colonial subjects whose hearts and minds all the contending forces were battling to win. While scholarship has dealt extensively with radio and its use and misuse across the world, it hasn't provided deep insights into the intricacies of colonial radio in West Africa.

Radio has 'a profound' impact on the lives of Africans and a century after its introduction in the continent, it still 'retains its status as the most popular mass medium' – strengthening the need for constant scholarly interventions.[8] Brooke's research and a special issue he edited detail radio's 'enduring popularity' and the evolution of its influences in southern Africa.[9] Willems and Mano's edited collection devotes a substantial portion to African audiences' engagement with the medium,[10] adding to Larkin's[11] ethnographic work on radio in Nigeria and Spitulnik's[12] on Zambia. Other studies, such as Fardon and Furniss's *African broadcast cultures*,[13] Heinze's works on Zambia,[14] Head and Kugblenu's on wired

broadcasting,[15] Audrey Gadzekpo's on Ghana[16] and many more, do also offer important contributions. But the consensus among scholars is that scholarship in this field is still scanty[17] – a problem that is even more pronounced in the case of colonial radio in West Africa.[18]

This article attempts to address the gap by examining the role of radio broadcasting in British West Africa,[19] focusing on Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana) but also briefly touching on Sierra Leone. It draws on original archival research, using historical material sourced from the British National Archives, Nigerian newspapers, an unpublished radio memoir of the veteran Ghanaian broadcaster Bernard Senedzi Gadzekpo, and the BBC Written Archives Centre.[20] The National Archives in the UK provided the study with wide-ranging materials covering not only colonial broadcasting but also the broadcasts of other countries that Britain had monitored – mostly her adversaries. The preponderance of colonial sources in the study privileges imperialists' perspectives over Africans', but it also helps provide rare insights into the colonialists' underhand tactics of using radio for domination and the Africans' resilience in overcoming it to end their subjugation. Drawing on all these varied materials, the study highlights the multifaceted functions of radio in colonisation and decolonisation processes in West Africa, the struggle for its control, and the limits of its performance. It traces the journey of radio broadcasting and reception in the region, from wired to wireless broadcasting, and from communal listening *via* loudspeakers installed in public places to private reception on portable transistor radios. The article also looks at the decolonisation of radio broadcasting itself to unpack the changes witnessed in its administrative structure, training, staffing and programming.

Wired to advance colonial project

Long before the BBC Empire Service began transmitting its programmes in 1932, some British colonial officials had explored the potential of, or even experimented with, broadcasting in British colonies, mostly on their own initiatives. Arnold Hodson, who introduced broadcasting in both Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast while serving as their governor, had initiated a similar service in the Falkland Islands, on a smaller scale, in 1929 when he was a governor there.[21] And in London, the then Secretary of State of the Colonies, Sidney Webb, had expressed the need for colonial broadcasting on a wider scale. Speaking at the 1930 Colonial Conference, Webb talked about 'the possibility of creating a new and intimate bond of connection between the different British communities' and utilising broadcasting 'for the purposes of the natives'.[22] However, he left office a year later and there didn't seem to be any urgency in pursuing his vision, for around that period the British state was ambivalent towards broadcasting.[23] Broadcaster Hilda Matheson did urge Britain 'to consider the use of broadcasting as part of the machinery of civilisation and administration in Africa', but no immediate attention was given to her call.[24] It was left to individual colonies to take their own initiatives, as seen in the case of Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. It was not until 1936 that the British government decided to set up the Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies, drawing its members from the BBC, the

Colonial Office, Crown Agents for the Colonies, the General Post Office and Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies.[25] Headed by Lord Plymouth, the committee extensively examined the state of colonial broadcasting and offered recommendations for its development. Published in 1937, the Plymouth Report was a ground-breaking document on British colonial broadcasting, laying out its policy, its objectives, its scope and its future. It defined colonial broadcasting 'as an instrument of advanced administration, an instrument, not only and perhaps not even primarily for the entertainment but rather for the enlightenment and education of the more backward sections of the populations and for their instruction in public health, agriculture etc.'[26] It went on to say that 'even entertainment broadcasts from British sources and in particular the Empire Service may have, over a period, a considerable *beneficial influence*'.[27] The committee recommended the use of both wired and wireless broadcasting systems. Crucially, it stressed that broadcasting 'should be under the direct control of the colonial government' and be run as a public service. Where government was not in 'complete control of the broadcasting system,' the committee said, 'arrangements should be made for securing to the Government when desired, a proportion of the broadcasting time for Government broadcasting, and … the programmes generally should contain a substantial proportion of British material and especially British news'.[28] The intent of using radio for colonial control came out quite clearly from the document, and the subsequent actions taken by the British state and the colonies illustrated that commitment.

As observed by many scholars,[29] the committee's report and implementation of its recommendations defined British colonial broadcasting and largely determined its successes and failings. Wired and wireless broadcasting systems were adopted in most colonies, with some combining the two systems simultaneously and others moving gradually from wired to wireless broadcasting. Colonies that already had existing broadcasting infrastructures developed them further while those without them, such as Uganda, Tanganyika (Tanzania), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), The Gambia and a few others, introduced them.[30] In Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone where wired broadcasting systems had already been established, they were developed rapidly. This was more pronounced in the Gold Coast, where Governor Hodson, supported by his radio engineer friend Frederick Augustus William Byron (popularly known as F.A.W. Byron), devoted material resources and energy to it.[31] It was a key broadcasting approach in the colony and used for some time even after independence.[32]

Wired broadcasting system – known in West Africa as radio diffusion or radio re-diffusion service – was a system of conveying radio programmes to listeners 'by means of wires connected to loudspeakers installed in the homes of subscribers' and at public places.[33] Developed in Britain and exported to other parts of the world by the communication firm Broadcast Relay Service (Overseas) Limited, wired broadcasting system, despite its apparent rudimentary nature, was popular in many places, including in Britain itself where over half-a-million homes were connected to it by the end of 1944.[34] In Nigeria, it served as a system of relaying BBC programmes to both the indigenous population and the expatriates and as a way of conveying local programmes to those listeners. Two stations were first

established in Lagos initially relaying only BBC programmes before one-hour local programming was added, featuring news, entertainment and local announcements.[35] Subscription guidelines were provided in *Gazette Notice* No. 1098 of 1935, and each subscriber was charged half shilling per month 'after an initial payment of three months rental in advance'. The number of subscribers rose from 500 in 1935 'to about a thousand before the beginning of the Second World War in 1939',[36] with many more waiting as the demand often outstripped the supply.[37] The service was expanded both in Lagos and beyond, with new stations opened in the densely populated cities of Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, Abeokuta, Jos, Zaria, Calabar and Port Harcourt, that were spread across the country. In the Gold Coast, 16 wired broadcasting stations were opened from 1935 to 1939 in 'thickly populated areas' and the subscribers' number jumped from 350 to 4,000 within that period.[38] In both countries, subscribers listened to the programmes from loudspeakers put in their homes while others listened to them in public places from loudspeakers that the government had installed at public libraries, post offices, chiefs' palaces and other meeting centres where people usually gathered at fixed times for communal listening.[39] The publicness of radio in British-controlled West Africa was noted by both Audrey Gadzekpo, who stresses 'the centrality of the technology to the communal lives' of people in the Gold Coast,[40] and Larkin, whose seminal work highlights such experience in Nigeria. 'Radio was not solely located inside domestic interiors where it created a listening community in the precise social locale of the family,' Larkin argues. 'Instead it was owned by the state and based in community listening centres or broadcast out of loudspeakers over the streets and open spaces … (and it was) intimately tied to the necessities of colonial rule.'[41]

Programming was intended to strengthen the colonial state and help mould people into becoming obedient colonial subjects. Majority of the programmes were relayed directly from the BBC in London. Some of them were meaningless to local audiences, who mostly didn't understand English language.[42] Many indigenous West African listeners didn't appreciate even the entertainment programmes. Former Head of the BBC Colonial Service Grenfell Williams gave an account of an incident when he visited the emir of the northern Nigerian city of Kano. He said he met a protesting crowd in front of the emir's palace where he heard a 'well-known' BBC variety programme 'Up the Pole', which was of great interest to him (Williams), blaring out of the public loudspeaker installed there, but no one in the crowd – and neither the emir nor his staff – showed any interest in it. 'It was, in fact, merely a noise added to the already appalling din of the afternoon.'[43] West African listeners' resistance to the English programmes they disliked was not an unusual situation. Heinze's studies[44] have detailed such experiences in both colonial and postcolonial Zambia, demonstrating audiences' power dynamics and the limitations of those who wield the power of radio. 'The minimum option listeners had was not to listen, which automatically gave them some limited influence on broadcast content,' he argues.[45] And even when listeners decided to listen, the power of interpreting the content lies with them, as Hall's seminal work and Willems and Mano's research show.[46]

West African audiences' lack of interest in the BBC English programmes wasn't the only challenge to colonial administrators. Access was another problem.

Wired broadcasting service was only available to people living in densely populated cities and towns where it was provided, leaving out the majority of the population who lived in rural areas.[47] Still, the advocates of the wired system insisted on retaining it, pointing to its economic, technical and political viabilities. Wired broadcasting was cheaper to run than the wireless option; offered better sound quality than the shortwave alternative; and allowed for a tighter control of content because audiences could only access the programmes/stations provided to them.[48] As the Plymouth Committee noted, in the wired system, messages to listeners were controlled by the colonial state and 'objectionable foreign propaganda excluded'.[49] Colonial officials in West Africa were conscious of this. So, they stuck to wired broadcasting, with many of them resisting moves to switch to wireless system.[50] And their reliance on relaying BBC's programmes to local audiences was also informed by the Plymouth Committee's exhortation that broadcasting should focus on 'repeated projection on the minds of listeners of British culture and ideas'.[51]

However, after noticing the futility of over-reliance on relayed BBC programmes, colonial officials began to encourage the development of local programming to grab the attention of local audiences. They did this with the support of BBC officers as at that time the BBC relied on the colonial administrators for audience reports. Ritter reported on the BBC's dependence on colonial governments for audience surveys in the region.[52] And although the region was not the broadcaster's main priority, Potter argues, generally 'many BBC producers and planners wanted programmes to have a constructive impact on audiences' and were keen to accept changes when lapses were noted.[53] Developing local programming in the region fitted into this. One of those entrusted with that role in the Gold Coast, broadcaster Gadzekpo, said although the local station 'was modelled on the BBC, it was not meant to be a carbon copy of it'; it was to 'satisfy its indigenous listeners'.[54] He detailed how they engaged in recruiting local musical talents, running educational and agricultural shows, and producing 'speech programmes with jokes and witty expressions in [local] languages – an organised variety entertainment to sustain' the interest of indigenous listeners.[55] His description challenges Ritter's assertion that 'in the colonial period almost all of [the Gold Coast's local radio] content came from the BBC'.[56] Audrey Gadzekpo's research also shows that a significant part of the programmes was locally produced.[57] And as the local programming increased in the colonies so did the public interest in radio. The quality of the programmes, too, became notable, as Williams observes:

> No one who has heard the paddlers' Mass of Brazzaville Cathedral booming and throbbing over the air from Lusaka … or the Yoruba carols … from the Lagos station, or the talking drums from Accra, or the wild exciting music sometimes heard from the Nairobi station … could fail to believe that Africa has something completely new to give to broadcasting.[58]

Colonial officials maintained a strong relationship with the BBC to ensure that it was playing a vital role in local programming in West Africa. Top managerial staff and senior engineers at the local stations were provided by the broadcaster, which equally trained local programming staff, technicians and administrators. It

also offered advice regularly to the colonial officials and started conducting its audience surveys. The BBC routinely seconded staff to local stations in the colonies, especially Nigeria, where demand was high, given the size of its population and territory.[59] But this still didn't address other local challenges, such as 'the multiplicity of languages', which made the selection of language for broadcast complicated, and technical problems, ranging from 'the difficulties of erecting a large station with untrained or partly trained workers to the strange and sometimes devastating effects of a tropical climate on delicate equipment'.[60] West African colonial administrators were struggling with those challenges when the Second World War started in September 1939, altering the course of history and of colonial broadcasting.

Broadcasting for war

Radio propaganda for the war began long before the commencement of the Second World War itself.[61] Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy had already engaged in it by the mid-1930s when Britain was discreetly planning hers.[62] Cecil Graves, the Director of the BBC Empire Service, worried about the rivals' broadcasts, had been consulting government officials 'before constructing any Empire programmes'.[63] And in 1936, Rex Leeper, the head of the Foreign Office News Department, talked about political and cultural 'projection' of Britain abroad. 'We must concentrate not only on our own rearmament, but on bringing other nations by our side,' he declared.[64] But Britain was lagging far behind its rivals. 'Although planning for the conduct of propaganda in the Second World War began as early as 1935, by the time of the Munich crisis the preparations were found to be hopelessly inadequate,' Taylor argues. Mobilisation was done 'amidst chaos and confusion' and only few officials 'were confident of the [Ministry of Information's] ability to combat effectively the already tried and tested machinery of [Germany's propaganda chief] Dr [Joseph] Goebbels if war did break out'.[65] So, Britain, whose propaganda during the First World War was believed to have shaped the outcome of that conflict (a feat Hitler sought to re-enact)[66] was caught napping in this one. To catch up quickly, it turned to both the BBC and the colonial broadcasting infrastructures across the empire. The BBC Empire Service was expanded, with foreign language services introduced, starting first with the Arabic Service in January 1938 (partly in response to Italy's Radio Bari's Arabic broadcasts) and then the Spanish and Portuguese programmes for Latin America two months later.[67] The expansion continued so rapidly and extensively that by the end of the war in 1945 the BBC had become the biggest international broadcaster in the world, broadcasting in 45 languages.[68]

Britain also focused on deploying the broadcasting services of its colonies for the war propaganda.[69] It increased the number of transmitters and relay stations in the colonies, 'including a powerful relay station in Singapore (although this soon fell to Japan)'.[70] It equally erected additional medium-wave stations 'to project a voice for Britain to key foreign countries or regions: *Sharq al-Adna* (the Near East Broadcasting Station) in Cyprus, broadcasting in Arabic across the Middle East, was the best example of this'.[71] The expansion programme was extended to West Africa where Nigeria and the Gold Coast were given considerable attention. The

Gold Coast in particular, with its radio enthusiast Governor Hodson and surrounded by French West African colonies and 'administering the British mandated section of the former German colony of Togoland', played a pivotal role in Britain's and Allies' war propaganda.[72] Wireless transmitters were installed, a new broadcasting house was built, and more re-diffusion centres (for audiences who received broadcasts *via* loudspeakers) were erected throughout the colony as both wired- and wireless broadcasting systems were deployed for the propaganda. Receivers and loudspeakers were also installed in the markets, stores, lorry parks and other gathering places for free communal listening. 'Propagandists estimated that the rediffusion system's successful subscription campaign and free group listening centres expanded wartime listening audiences to "tens of thousands".'[73] As one of the broadcasters, Gadzekpo, stated: 'The exiting news of the war … whetted listeners' appetite for listening.'[74]

Through both the wired and wireless systems, programmes were delivered in English and the local languages of Dagbani, Ewe, Fante, Ga, Hausa and Twi as well as in French.[75] 'African announcers enlivened the presentation of news bulletins and simple propaganda talks by adding colourful stories, gossip, and local jokes.'[76] Programmes were mostly constructed to suit wartime themes, with influential personalities regularly given air time to talk about it and school programmes featuring news items of global and British importance.[77] Governor Hodson had earlier told the Colonial Office that the school programmes would be 'of great value as a means of conveying information or urgent propaganda'.[78] An ardent believer in the efficacy of radio, Hodson leveraged every opportunity to use the medium to enhance the war propaganda. At a ceremony organised to install the first wireless radio transmitter in Accra, on 24 October 1940, he invited British military officer Brigadier S.S. Butler, who had just served at the war front in East Africa, to speak. The officer 'broadcast a first-hand account of the conduct of the Gold Coast Brigade, mentioning individual acts of bravery by Gold Coast soldiers'.[79] Governor Arnold and his staff also pushed for improvement in using radio broadcasts to get Africans to buy into the war. In a series of correspondences between them and officials of the Colonial Office and the BBC in London, they advised against including insensitive material in broadcasts and encouraged the BBC to run programmes that acknowledged the contributions of Africans to the war efforts. In one such letters, Gold Coast Assistant Colonial Secretary Harold Cooper told the Under Secretary of State in the Colonial Office that 'nothing delighted the Gold Coast listener so much (or so strengthened his feeling of kinship with the Mother Country) as to hear some reference made to his country in the wireless news broadcast from London'.[80] He then suggested the sort of African friendly programmes that the BBC should run – and outlined its benefits. Among others, 'it would impress upon home listeners the strength and solidarity of the Empire,' he argues, 'it would directly counteract that aspect of Nazi propaganda which claims that the British dependencies have been dragged into this war against their will … [and] it would demonstrate to the Colonies themselves the gratitude of the British people for [their] help'.[81]

Colonial officials in West Africa focused on the propaganda work because they were worried that the people in the region largely saw the war as a 'white man's

war'.[82] Prior to the conflict, agitation against colonial rule had started gathering momentum, especially in Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and the local press was becoming increasingly combative.[83] With the war throwing the empire into an even bigger danger, the colonial officers felt that they needed to do a considerable work not only to re-orient people's attitude towards the war, but also to mobilise them for it, to recruit soldiers, and to redirect the economy to support the war. 'Explanations of war events, excoriations of the Axis powers, reminders of the peril that threatened the colony, and appeals for contributions to the imperial war effort were made through radio broadcasts' and other channels.[84] As in the Gold Coast, local radio programming in Nigeria was redesigned for this. Broadcasts in local languages and the use of local music and traditional rulers to mobilise support became common features of the programmes. And as the war progressed, broadcasts of greetings from Nigerian soldiers serving in different places were added, making radio more appealing to local audiences.[85]

But it was in the Gold Coast that colonial officials devoted more attention. 'The spirited challenges to colonial rule of the 1930s,' Holbrook argues, 'the clear-cut value of the colony to any imperial war effort … and a perceived apathy towards the war [convinced] wartime planners that a massive propaganda campaign would be needed to ensure a maximum war effort in the Gold Coast.'[86] The colony's broadcasting service was transformed into a strong propaganda tool targeting not only colonial subjects in the territory but also other audiences in Africa, which helped both the British and the Allies' war efforts, especially between 1940 and 1942. 'The colony was surrounded on three sides by French territories hostile to the Allied cause, all of which were being bombarded by pro-Vichy broadcasts from Dakar (in present-day Senegal).'[87] Britain clearly saw a potential in African counter-propaganda against the Vichy-controlled French West Africa and invested resources in the Gold Coast broadcasting services to pursue it. Propaganda material, prepared and sent from London, were regularly re-purposed and broadcast from Radio Accra. They also hired an expatriate French refugee from the neighbouring Ivory Coast to run a nightly counter-propaganda programme in French.[88] Other programmes, designed for the same purpose, continued to be broadcast to those territories until Dakar capitulated to the pro-Allied Free French in 1942.[89] Earlier, Governor Hodson had highlighted the significance of the Gold Coast broadcasting service when, in 1941, he told the Legislative Assembly the extent of its reach:

> Broadcasting has had a most notable year and our service is actually of the greatest imperial and even international importance … Our transmissions are clearly received in our sister colonies of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and a report of reception has even been made as far afield as Cape Town. In addition, we have had a report that our transmissions have been heard by our soldiers in East Africa.[90]

The colony provided over 65,000 soldiers who served in East Africa and Burma. But, although many of them volunteered for the military service for socio-economic and other factors, 'only a very small minority appear to have been directly stimulated to join the forces as a response to propaganda'.[91] Many were

actually conscripted as colonial officials implemented conscription programmes in all regions of the Gold Coast and in other colonies across Africa.[92] And, although the extensive radio propaganda did play a role in various aspects of the war, ranging from the military recruitment appeals and encouragement for production of raw materials that oiled war machines to shaping public opinions on the conflict, its overall impact was not as favourable to the colonial propagandists and their paymasters as they had wanted. It enabled the struggle for independence in the region. Anti-colonial agitation that followed the war in the colonies was partly informed by cries for freedom and liberty inserted in the war propaganda, even though the colonialists were careful in their selection of propaganda materials. As Holbrook observes, 'those who led anti-colonialist mass political action of the post-war period added strength to their movement by carefully selecting and adapting to their own efforts publicity methods first used by the colonial administration'.[93]

Decolonisation, surveillance and subversion

After the war, Britain moved to salvage the crumbling empire, but it soon became clear to its officials that the old order, as they knew it, had gone for good. Anti-colonial struggles and the fight for independence that had begun in many colonies before the war were now accelerating, with key countries such as India and Burma gaining their independence in 1947 and 1948 respectively. Emboldened by this and the experience they gained during the war, nationalist politicians in Africa and some returning African soldiers, especially those who fought in the Burma campaign, intensified their anti-colonial activities in the continent.[94] Britain first resisted the liberation moves fiercely and then when it was forced to embark on a decolonisation process, it controlled it tightly.[95] Colonial officials once again turned to radio to help them on this. Britain was still in control of 38 colonies across the world,[96] many with slightly varying broadcasting systems.[97] Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones, an advocate of the use of radio for empire reforms, launched a new colonial broadcasting development initiative involving both the BBC and the colonies.[98] He sent a circular to all the colonial governors expressing the need for developing colonial broadcasting services for social, economic and political development in the colonies.[99] West African colonial governors responded positively, and a committee, set up by the Colonial Office and led by BBC engineer L.W. Turner and F.A.W. Byron, surveyed broadcasting in the region and offered recommendation for its development.

The Gold Coast, whose broadcasting system had benefitted immensely from war propaganda investments, went on to develop it further (see Figure 1), even as nationalist politicians and educated elites led by, among others, Kwame Nkrumah, a pan-Africanist, mounted intense pressure against the colonial regime.[100] Local programming was prioritised to entice African audiences and the work of local broadcasters increased rapidly even before they were given adequate training. 'We were in our own way journalists, playwrights, producers at one time, and artistes at another,' veteran broadcaster Gadzekpo disclosed as colonial officials encouraged them to fill the programmes with items that could attract local listeners.[101]

Figure 1. Inside the Record Library at Broadcasting House, Accra (December 1955) (Source: The National Archives: INF10/122).

'Without any template to guide them, Gadzekpo and his colleagues ad-libbed their way into the station's programming as circumstances and the needs of their ever-growing African audiences dictated.'[102] Pitter observes that 'Britain did not prioritise African listeners until it was on the verge of losing them'.[103] And colonial officials were aware that 'it was local broadcasters who held listeners' attention by inflecting their programmes with culturally relevant anecdotes, jokes and analogies'.[104] What they didn't envisage, however, was that local broadcasters were also using that opportunity to encourage listeners to resist colonialism.[105]

The encouragement for local broadcasting was extended to Sierra Leone, which although was the first to start colonial broadcasting in the region had not received as much funding as the two bigger colonies. With a renewed attention it now got, it added a wireless service to the existing rediffusion system. Later, when the colony received a grant of £37,120 – out of the £65,000 earmarked for it – from the UK government's Colonial Development and Welfare (CD&W) Funds, it expanded the service quite rapidly.[106] Director of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service Leslie Perowne, who was seconded from the BBC, oversaw the reorganisation of its studios and installation of new equipment, sent staff to Lagos and London for training (see Figure 2), and appealed for the release of the remaining CD&W grant to improve the service.[107] The Colonial Office had

resorted to using CD&W grants to fund colonial broadcasting because the UK Treasury was restraining expenditures due to post-war financial constraints Britain was contending with.[108]

In Nigeria, too, local broadcasting began to receive renewed interest from the colonial regime immediately after the war – and here, too, amid rising anti-colonial agitation among the educated elite and nationalist politicians. Local content production grew along with radio's popularity. 'By 1948 there were 12,000 radio sets in Nigeria, in addition to 8,000 wired boxes.'[109] The numbers increased rapidly when government made more investments and wireless broadcasting system was introduced and expanded. Nigeria was, at that time, receiving significant attention from the Colonial Office. Assistant Under Secretary of State Andrew Cohen, concerned with the rapid pace of movement towards independence, told Sir John Macpherson, the colony's governor, that 'we cannot delay much longer the development of broadcasting services in Africa'.[110] In fact, Nigeria's broadcasting expansion project turned out to be the largest in British colonies in 1951, with capital costs estimated at £300,000 and requiring six new transmitters.[111] The Colonial Office provided much of the money from the CD&W Funds and the Colonial Government in Nigeria covered the rest, building a bigger broadcasting infrastructure and reaching wider audiences. By 1956 there were more than 120,000 radio sets and 30,550 subscribers to the box systems in the country, which translates to nearly a million listeners at the estimated 'five listeners per radio and ten per box'.[112]

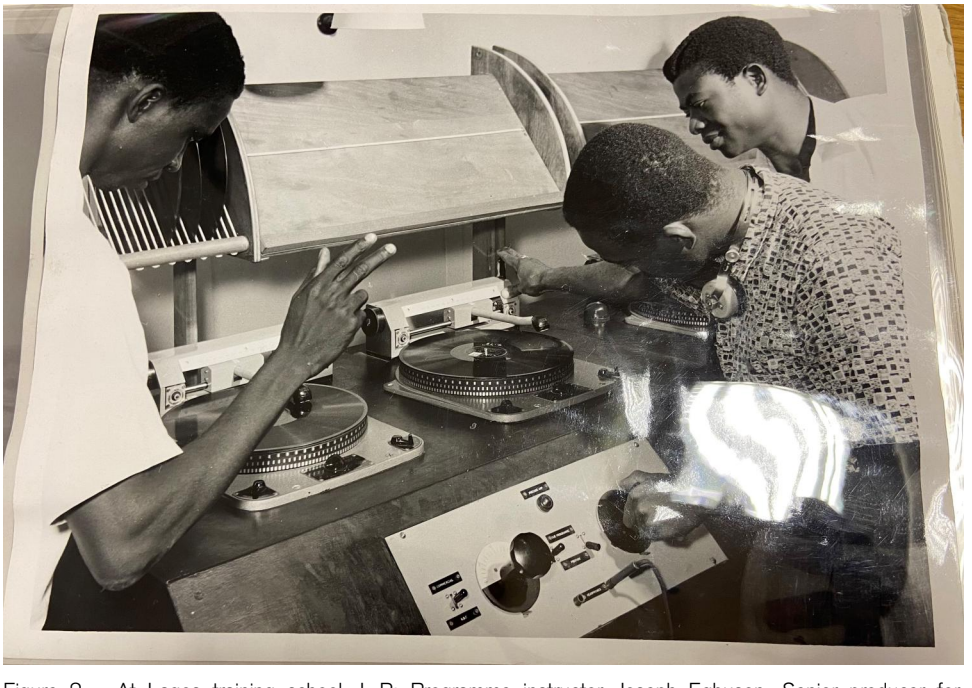

Figure 2. At Lagos training school, L-R: Programme instructor Joseph Egbuson, Senior producer for Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service George Williamson, and Programme operator from Jos Studio Centre Anthony Usuagwu (January 1959) (Source: The National Archives: INF10/245).

The introduction of a wireless local broadcasting system in Nigeria in 1951,[113] after 16 years of wired broadcasting, followed intense debates and resistance from many colonial officials, who pointed to potential exposure of the indigenous population to what they called communist propaganda targeted at the region.[114] The decision was informed by both the Colonial Office's desire to expand broadcasting as recommended by the Turner-Byron committee and the technological advances that made cheap wireless radio sets available and affordable to low-income earners.[115] The Saucepan Special designed for Africans, which was often associated with the success of radio broadcasting in British Central Africa,[116] had made its way into Nigeria, too. The Radio Diffusion Service was replaced by the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) in 1952, with the Lagos station upgraded to serve as the headquarters of the national broadcaster, and the stations in Ibadan (West), Kaduna (North) and Enugu (East) upgraded to become regional stations, while Marconi transmitters were installed in those cities to replace the old system.[117]

The new wireless system and the changes made in its management and programming transformed the nature, content and structure of broadcasting in colonial Nigeria. Broadcast materials were now coming from the national headquarters in Lagos (not from London) and from the regional stations in Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu. The direct international broadcasts from the BBC were no longer getting the highest attention; local content was. And with the gradual decolonisation of the content came incremental decolonisation of staffing. Top managerial and technical staff were still being provided by the BBC. Tom Chalmers, former Controller of the BBC Light Programme, was the first director of the new Nigerian Broadcasting Service but he was actively recruiting Nigerians to occupy important posts and 'bombarding the BBC in London with requests' to put them 'on training courses'.[118] He said the aim of the NBS 'was to train Nigerians to run the Service with the same standards as those set by the BBC; "Nothing less is worthy of this country".'[119] Nigerian renowned writers Chinua Achebe and Cyprian Ekwensi were among those trained in broadcasting under this scheme. Others included Victor Badejo (who became the first Nigerian director general of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), NBS's successor), Muhammadu Ladan, Sam Nwaneri, 'the cousins 'Yinka and Michael Olumide' and Joe Atuona, who became the head of presentation at NBC (see Figures 3 and 4).[120] In the Gold Coast, too, training of local broadcasters was encouraged. One of the beneficiaries, B.S. Gadzekpo, detailed various training programmes provided to them and explained how he and his colleague, Joseph Ghartey, were sent to London to train at the BBC and the School of Oriental and African Studies: 'Our performances encouraged our bosses to send other members of staff in small batches at intervals to the BBC.'[121] The trained indigenous staff gradually replaced those seconded to the colonies by the BBC.

However, while gradual decolonisation of broadcasting itself was going on unhindered, agitation for political independence was being supressed with the use of radio and other tools. First, colonial officials deployed censorship techniques to deny nationalist politicians and their supporters an opportunity to broadcast their messages on radio, which was tightly controlled by the colonial regime. Secondly, the colonial administration actively used radio against pro-independence

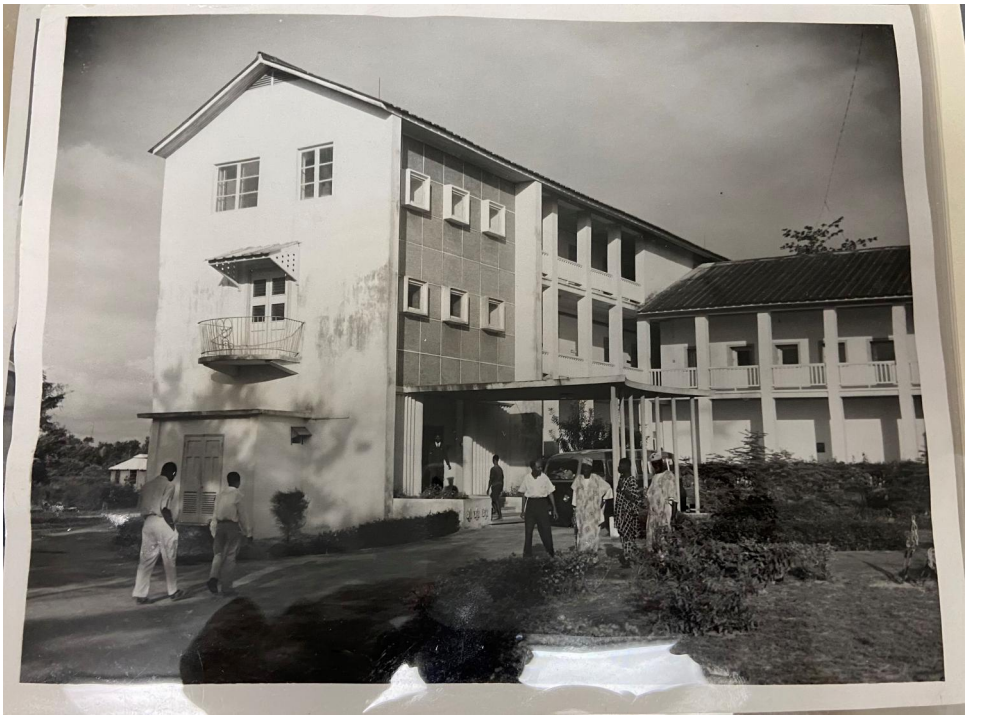

Figure 3. NBC Building in Lagos (Source: The National Archives: INF10/255).

Figure 4. Head of presentation at NBC Joe Atuona (January 1959) (Source: The National Archives: INF10/245).

campaigners, portraying them in a negative light and promoting their adversaries. The nationalist press, largely controlled by two of the leading Nigerian politicians, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (with his chain of newspapers including the *West African Pilot*) and Chief Obafemi Awolowo (with his *Tribune*), fought back with anti-colonial

articles and critical reporting of events. For instance, in its editorial on 16 April 1953, the *Daily Service* threatened a Mau Mau-style uprising in Nigeria if independence was not granted by 1956.[122] The lead story of the *West African Pilot* of 3 June 1953 reported how youths in Lagos violently destroyed decorations put up for the coronation ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II on 2 June 1952.[123] And the *Daily Service* of 6 June 1953 published a story of Chief Awolowo accusing Governor Macpherson of deception.[124] This prompted the colonial administration to initiate a more organised radio campaign to rein in the anti-colonial activities.

To do this effectively, the colonial officials needed a better staffing of the broadcasting service. Crucially, they particularly needed to recruit more broadcasting staff from London. But this was beyond their existing broadcasting budget. So, they devised a way of applying for funding of phantom administrative roles, which they then diverted for radio staffing. Specifically, they requested for funding and recruitment of 'administrative' staff 'on contract for special duties', which they would later use to recruit actual broadcasting staff – effectively deceiving the Colonial Office. Working with the NBS Director Tom Chalmers, who one official said had described the plan as 'Operation Lucifer', the colonial officials carried out their plans successfully.[125] Some of the views they expressed in their discussions and correspondences were sexist. For instance, in describing the broadcasting staff that should be recruited, the Governor's deputy wrote among others that:

> ... in view of the political implications, as well as the fact that female voices are believed not to be so acceptable to the Nigerian listening public as male voices, I should be grateful if every attempt, which does not involve heavy delay, may be made to find men before any woman candidate is accepted.[126]

This was probably the view of the colonial officials rather than that of 'the Nigerian listening public' as they did not provide any evidence (such as an audience survey report) to support their claim.

The radio campaigns did not quell the growing agitation for independence. More confrontations between the colonial administrators and nationalist politicians ensued as the latter increasingly demanded for access to radio and the former continued to deprive them of it. A parliamentary motion introduced by one of the nationalist politicians, Anthony Enahoro, calling for self-government in 1956 enraged the colonial officials. They used the national broadcaster, NBS, to promote their position but refused to allow the nationalists to use the same medium to present their own side of the story. This prompted the politicians to demand for NBS's transformation into a public corporation and succeeded in getting it turned into the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on 1 April 1957 'as the first public broadcasting corporation so established in any British colonial territory'.[127] By this time, regional governments (for Northern, Western and Eastern Regions) were already being run by elected Nigerian politicians as part of the gradual move towards independence. The colonial administration retained the overall control of the country, including overseeing the regional governments, and maintained a firm grip of its broadcasting system. The conversion of NBS into NBC didn't alter that – nor did it end the broadcaster's bias against pro-independence politicians and their supporters. Ironically, it was this situation that led to the establishment of

the Western Region's radio/television station, the first television station in Africa.[128] Colonial officials in the Western Region had used the NBC to criticise Chief Awolowo's Action Group, the dominant political party in the region, and when Awolowo demanded the right of reply, he was denied. Then, Awolowo, as premier of the Western Region's government, entered into an agreement with a UK firm, Overseas Rediffusion Limited, and established a radio and television station in 1959.[129] It became the first local broadcast station to be openly critical of the colonial regime in the country.

But that was not the only concern of the colonial administrators in Nigeria. Wireless broadcasting had allowed Nigerians to access radio stations from other parts of the world, which worried them. They mounted surveillance on this and the BBC monitoring service supplied them the details of communist broadcasts from Moscow and Peking (China) and radical broadcasts from Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser to West Africa. A firm believer in the power of radio, Nasser had expanded Cairo Radio and extended its reach to many territories.[130] The station had tripled its output in the 1950s and 'added broadcasts in Swahili, Somali, and Amharic'.[131] The Egyptian president, who had emerged victorious against Britain in the Suez Crisis and had been spreading anti-colonial messages in the Arab World and East Africa, was popular among Nigerian Muslims. The then influential emir of Kano was, for instance, said to have been going out to Dala Hill in his Rolls-Royce with his radio set to listen to Nasser's broadcasts. And the emir of Gusau (another important Northern Nigerian figure) requested for the inclusion of radio frequencies of 'Egypt, the Gold Coast, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan' in the *Nigerian Radio Times*.[132] This exposure to alternative broadcasts was what some colonial officials had sought to prevent by opposing wireless broadcasting as it had the tendency to allow what the Resident of Adamawa Province in Northern Nigeria referred to as 'subversive activities'.[133] Unknown to them, however, 'subversive uses of radio—and media more generally—have always been part of media reception'.[134] This occurred even in the consumption of colonial radio broadcasts, as Heinze's work in the area demonstrates.[135] So, it became quite challenging for colonial administrators when African audiences were also able to access anti-colonial broadcasts from Britain's adversaries.

As they increased their surveillance, colonial officials were alarmed to discover that West Africans were indeed listening to Moscow and Cairo. An extract from Northern Region of Nigeria Intelligence Committee Report of November 1958 said transmissions from Moscow 'have mainly been directed against western way of life and the evils of "imperialism".'[136] Additional documents show that the broadcasts were heard in many Northern Nigerian towns and cities and that people were paying attention to them. They said students in Nigeria 'have heard the broadcasts without apparent interest, but in Jos a number of Africans, especially Ibos, pay more attention to them'.[137] Reports from the Governors of Sierra Leone and The Gambia said there, too, people could hear the transmissions, but they were not showing any interest. 'Reception is fair, but it is believed that very few tune in or listen to Moscow by design,' the Gambian Governor wrote. 'The Moscow broadcast does not come at a time convenient for local listeners. It would

appear that … Moscow is used at present, if at all, only as a source of background music.'[138] Two years earlier the Governor of Sierra Leone had reported no effective reception in Freetown of transmissions from Peking.[139]

But if the reports of the lack of interests in communist broadcasts by Sierra Leoneans and Gambians provided some consolation, a report that Nasser's Cairo Radio would soon be broadcasting in Hausa Language, which had the largest number of speakers in West Africa, unsettled colonial officials. They were so worried about this that they talked about jamming the station. 'I think we can safely anticipate the answer which must be jamming,' one official said.[140] It was unclear whether they eventually did so. What was clear, however, was that they devised counter-propaganda operations against both Moscow and Cairo, using both colonial radio programmes and pamphlets to target Nigerian audiences. The secret propaganda arm of the UK Foreign Office – the Information Research Department (IRD)[141] – was actively involved in the project. Working with colonial officials in Nigeria, they designed and delivered the propaganda programme. A key part of it was the production and discreet distribution of pamphlets to selected opinion leaders in the Muslim-dominated Northern Nigeria, highlighting 'The incompatibility of Communism with Islam', 'Egypt's failure to uphold Islamic standards', 'Disputes of Egypt with her Islamic neighbours' and so on.[142]

Britain also took an initiative to establish a Hausa language radio service to target West African audiences directly from London. On 13 March 1957, the BBC launched the Hausa Service, which went on to become one of the most successful foreign language services of the broadcaster.[143] Its initial role was as much to counteract communist and Cairo broadcasts and control decolonisation as it was to play a long-term public diplomacy role for Britain in postcolonial West Africa.[144] A week before the launching of the BBC Hausa Service, the Gold Coast (Ghana) had secured her independence. And in Nigeria, nationalist politicians, with a groundswell of public support across the country, were demanding immediate independence. Colonial control of local broadcasting had largely remained, but after the Western Region's success in establishing their own broadcaster under Chief Awolowo's firm grip in 1959 that too was now seriously challenged. Nigeria's independence came a year later, on 1 October 1960, ending the colonial control of radio in the country.

Conclusion

In seeking to enhance its control over the population of its colonies in West Africa and facilitate greater links between the metropolitan centre and peripheral entities, imperial Britain erected radio infrastructure and deployed it in diverse ways. Radio also became handy in war propaganda and mobilisation of colonial subjects to support the empire in its hours of greatest need. But in doing so, Britain also unwittingly empowered those who would later challenge its authority and seek to use the same instrument to end their subjugation. The Second World War that imperilled the empire also inspired and enhanced the liberation struggles that Britain tried to suppress, partly using radio, to allow for UK-controlled decolonisation. British communist rivals and a rising power Nasser's Egypt had their own agenda

and wielded radio power to advance their causes. At the same time, West African nationalist politicians mounted their pressure to gain control of radio to execute their own version of decolonisation.

This study highlights radio's multi-facetted functions in colonisation and decolonisation processes, and in surveillance and subversion. It shows how the medium played an inherently contradictory role of advancing colonisation and of subverting it to enhance decolonisation. As an instrument of surveillance, radio was used by colonial forces to undermine the decolonisation effort of the indigenous population and protect their imperial interests. But as a tool of subversion, radio helped accelerate the agitation for independence and promote its prospects. Radio, of course, has its limitations, as audience scholars always stress and as those who try to overuse it often discover.[145] But it is a unique medium that, 'through the sublime nature of its technology and the authoritative nature of its content', aids the mobility and circulation of ideas beyond the realm of the source.[146]

This article does not only illuminate such uniqueness, but it also traces the complex journey of radio broadcasting and reception in British West Africa, showing how they began with wired broadcasting and communal listening before transforming into wireless broadcasting and private reception respectively. Decolonisation of broadcasting in the region formed an integral part of the journey, which was characterised by changes in administrative structure, programming, training and replacement of expatriate staff with local broadcasters. The predominance of colonial archival sources in the study provides prominence to colonialists' perspectives, but it also helps shed light on the imperialists' tactics of using radio for subjugation and the Africans' resilience in withstanding them to liberate themselves. The study enhances our understanding of the complexity of radio's multiple roles in colonial West Africa and the political intricacies that underpinned them. Future research could explore the soundscapes and other elements of radio production and reception in the region – and its influences on West Africans.

Disclosure statement

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Notes

1. Broadcasting & Radio Distribution – Nigeria: Speech of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, J.H. Thomas, during the inauguration of the Radio Distribution Service in Nigeria, 2 December 1935, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1337/7. It was a wired broadcasting system, hence the name Radio Distribution Service, later renamed Radio Diffusion Service (RDS).

2. Governor B.H. Bourdillon's speech in Lagos, 2 December 1935, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1337/7.
3. See Sydney Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies: The case of the Gold Coast", *African Studies Review*, 22/2 (1979), 39-47.
4. Asa Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford, 1985), p.138.
5. See Grenfell Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 103/4942 (1955), 113-121. Kenya, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) were examples of places where broadcasting was first introduced to serve Europeans and Asians before extending it to Africans.
6. These were among several colonies listed by the Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies as having started broadcasting before 1936, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
7. Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, 2008).
8. Peter Brooke, "Radio in Africa: Past and present", *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 36/1 (2024), 1-5, p.1.
9. Ibid. The special issue is the *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 36/1 (2024).
10. Wendy Willems and Winston Mano (eds.), *Everyday Media Culture in Africa: Audiences and Users* (London: 2017).
11. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*.
12. Debra Spitulnik, "Mobile machines and fluid audiences: Rethinking reception through Zambian radio culture", in Faye Ginsburg *et.al*. (eds.), *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, (Los Angeles: 2002).
13. Richard Fardon and Graham Furniss (eds.), *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition* (Oxford: 2000).
14. Robert Heinze, "'Men between': The role of Zambian broadcasters in decolonisation", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40/3 (2014), 623–640.
15. Sydney Head and John Kugblenu, "GBC-1: A Survival of wired radio in tropical Africa", *Gazette, International Journal of Mass Communication Studies*, 24/2 (1978), 121-129.
16. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Glocalising radio during empire", *Obsidian*, 44/2 (2018), 164–181; Audrey Gadzekpo, "Tuning in to his-story: An account of radio in Ghana through the experience of B.S. Gadzekpo", *Africa*, 91/2 (2021), 177-194.
17. Brooke, "Radio in Africa".
18. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Tuning in to his-story".
19. The term 'British West Africa' is used here to refer to four British colonies of Nigeria, the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), Sierra Leone and The Gambia.
20. Most of original archival materials were sourced from The National Archives, Kew, covering the designated period of 1935-1960, while the rest came from Nigerian newspapers, the BBC Written Archives Centre in Caversham and Bernard Senedzi Gadzekpo's unpublished radio memoir, *Ghana Muntie: From Station ZOY to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation* (1972). Gadzekpo spent 22 years working for Ghana's first radio station during colonial and postcolonial periods, and five years on contract training its staff. The memoir was accessed online where it was uploaded by his

grandniece, Ghanaian academic Audrey Gadzekpo. Extensive secondary sources were also used for the study, with each cited at the point of reference.

21. Sir Arnold, as he was later known, was an influential figure in British colonial broadcasting, especially wired broadcasting, for his pioneering role in introducing it in three colonies (see Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies"; and Head and Kugblenu, "GBC-1: A Survival of wired radio".
22. Cited in Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies", p.39.
23. David Clayton, "British colonial broadcasting in the 1940s", in Potter, S., Clayton, D., Kind-Kovacs, F., Kuitenbrouwer, V., Ribeiro, N., Scales, R. and Stanton, A. (eds.) *The Wireless World: Global Histories of International Radio Broadcasting* (Oxford, 2022), pp. 93-97.
24. Hilda Matheson, "Broadcasting in Africa", *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 34/137 (1935), 387-390, p.387.
25. Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies (1936), The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
26. Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies: Interim Report (1937), pp.8-9, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
27. Emphasis added because the words originally written in the text were "propaganda value", but they were crossed out with a pen and replaced with "beneficial influence". This was possibly to avoid associating Britain with propaganda, given the pejorative connotation of the term. The quote was taken directly from the Draft Interim Report (1937), p.11, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
28. Draft Interim Report (1937), p.18, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
29. See, for instance, Larkin, *Signal and Noise*; Olu Ladele, Olufemi Adefela and Olu Lasekan, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation* (Ibadan, 1979); and Clayton, "British colonial broadcasting in the 1940s".
30. Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa".
31. See Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies"; Head and Kugblenu, "GBC-1: A Survival of wired radio"; and Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa".
32. Head and Kugblenu, "GBC-1: A Survival of wired radio".
33. Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation*, p.8.
34. Paul Ardojan, "Wire-broadcasting", *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 93/4699 (1945), 511-522, p.516.
35. Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.*
36. Ibid, p.8.
37. Larkin, *Signal and Noise.*
38. Gadzekpo, *Ghana Muntie,* p.14.
39. Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation;* and Gadzekpo, *Ghana Muntie*.
40. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Tuning in to his-story"; Audrey Gadzekpo, "Glocalising Radio during Empire".
41. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, p.71.
42. Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.*

43. Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa", p.120.
44. Robert Heinze, "'The African Listener': State-Controlled Radio, Subjectivity, and Agency in Colonial and Post-Colonial Zambia", in W. Willems and W. Mano (eds.) *Everyday Media Culture in Africa: Audiences and Users* (London: 2017); Heinze, "'Men between'".
45. Heinze, "'Men between'", pp.623-624.
46. Stuart Hall, "Encoding and decoding in the television discourse", in Stuart Hall *et al*. (eds.) *Culture, media, language* (London: 1980), pp.128-138; Willems and Mano (eds.), *Everyday Media Culture in Africa*.
47. See Charles Armour, "The BBC and the development of broadcasting in British colonial Africa 1946-1956", *African Affairs*, 83/332 (1984), 359-402.
48. See Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies"; and Head and Kugblenu, "GBC-1: A Survival of wired radio".
49. Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies (1936), The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
50. Head and Kugblenu, "GBC-1: A Survival of wired radio"; Larkin, *Signal and Noise*.
51. Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies: Interim Report (1937), p. 3, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1390/9.
52. Caroline Ritter, *Imperial Encore: The Cultural Project of the Late British Empire* (Oakland: 2021), p.86.
53. Simon Potter, '*Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922-1970* (Oxford: 2012), p.16.
54. Gadzekpo, *Ghana Muntie*, p.46.
55. Ibid. p.36.
56. Ritter, *Imperial Encore*, p.77.
57. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Glocalising radio during empire".
58. Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa," p.118.
59. Armour, "The BBC and the development of broadcasting".
60. Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa," p.117.
61. There is vast literature on this. See, for instance, Simon Potter *et al.*, *The Wireless World: Global Histories of International Radio Broadcasting* (Oxford, 2022), especially Vincent Kuitenbrouwer's chapter, "Radio wars: Histories of cross-border radio propaganda", pp.104-122. For some insights into France's angle, see Rebecca Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921-1939* (Cambridge, 2016). And for the British side, see Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*: *Volume II: The Golden Age of Wireless,* and *Volume III: The War of Words, 1939-1945* (Oxford, 1995).
62. Kuitenbrouwer, "Radio wars".
63. Briggs, *The BBC,* p.140.
64. Leeper was cited in Briggs, *The BBC,* p.140.
65. Philip Taylor, "Technique and persuasion: Basic ground rules of British propaganda during the Second World War", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1/1 (1981), 57-66, p.57.
66. See Philip Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day* (Manchester, 1995); and Kuitenbrouwer, "Radio wars".

67. Briggs, *The BBC,* p.143.
68. BBC, "75 Years BBC World Service: A History", BBC World Service (2007), http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/history/timeline.shtml (accessed June 11, 2011).
69. See Wendell Holbrook, "British propaganda and the mobilization of the Gold Coast war effort, 1939-1945", *Journal of African History*, 26 (1985), 347-361, p.358; Kuitenbrouwer, "Radio wars"; and Clayton, "British colonial broadcasting in the 1940s".
70. Kuitenbrouwer, "Radio wars", p.112.
71. Clayton, "British colonial broadcasting in the 1940s", p.94.
72. Holbrook, "British propaganda", p.348. See also Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies"; and Williams, "The development of broadcasting in British Africa".
73. Holbrook, "British propaganda", p.352.
74. Gadzekpo, *Ghana Muntie*, p.18. Gadzekpo 'rose through the ranks to become Controller of Programmes' at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation before he retired in 1965 (see Audrey Gadzekpo, "Tuning in to his-story", p.181).
75. Holbrook, "British propaganda".
76. Ibid., p.352.
77. Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies".
78. Cited in Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies", p.44.
79. Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies", p.44.
80. Harold Cooper's letter to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 30 January 1940, BBC programmes: Colonial reactions, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1744/9.
81. Cooper's letter, The National Archives, Kew: CO323/1744/9.
82. Holbrook, "British propaganda", p.349.
83. For further detail on the nationalist press see Fred Omu, "Journalism and the rise of Nigerian nationalism: John Payne Jackson, 1848-1915", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 7/3 (1974), 521-539.
84. Holbrook, "British propaganda", p.349.
85. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*.
86. Holbrook, "British propaganda", p.351.
87. Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies", p.45.
88. Head, "British colonial broadcasting policies".
89. Ibid.
90. Governor Arnold's report to Gold Coast Legislative Council, 1941: 13, cited in Amin Alhassan, "Market valorization in broadcasting policy in Ghana: Abandoning the quest for media democratization", *Media Culture & Society*, 27/2 (2005), 211-228, p.212.
91. The study was cited in Holbrook, "British propaganda", p.358.
92. Studies showing a widespread use of conscription by British in Africa were cited in Holbrook, "British propaganda", pp.358-9.
93. Holbrook, "British propaganda", pp.359-60.
94. Cheikh Anta Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation: Debating the end of British colonial rule in Africa", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and*

Social Science, 632 (2010), 41-54. The contributions of the returning African soldiers in anti-colonial struggles in Nigeria have been questioned by some scholars (see, for instance, Waliu Ismaila, "Reluctant nationalists: World War II veterans and postwar nationalism in Nigeria, 1945-1960", *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 15/3 (2024), 249-268).

95. See John Flint, "Decolonization and its failure in British Africa", *African Affairs*, 82/328 (1983), 389-411; and Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation".
96. Clayton, "British colonial broadcasting in the 1940s".
97. The development of broadcasting services in the colonies: Memorandum from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, A. Creech Jones, 12 August 1948, The National Archives, Kew: PREM8/1341.
98. Clayton, "British colonial broadcasting in the 1940s".
99. Broadcasting in the Colonies, Confidential Circular, 14 May 1948, 96840/48: BBC Written Archives Centre, E2/92/5 Colonial Broadcasting File (4), 1948.
100. Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation"; Alhassan, "Market valorization in broadcasting policy in Ghana".
101. Gadzekpo, *Ghana Muntie*, p.44.
102. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Glocalising Radio during Empire", p.174.
103. Ritter, *Imperial Encore*, p.73.
104. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Tuning in to his-story", p.189.
105. Heinze, "'Men between'"; Audrey Gadzekpo, "Glocalising Radio during Empire".
106. Sierra Leone: Development of Broadcasting Service, The National Archives, Kew: CO1027/255. The Colonial Secretary approved the grant on 13 May 1958 after repeated requests from the Colonial Governor.
107. Ibid.
108. In a series of correspondences between officials of the Treasury, the Colonial Office and the Cabinet Office, the Chancellor of the Exchequer resisted moves to allocate more funds for broadcasting. The development of broadcasting services in the colonies, The National Archives, Kew: PREM8/1341.
109. Elihu Katz and G. Wedell, *Broadcasting in the Third World: Promises and Performance* (London, 1977), p.79.
110. Cited in Armour, "The BBC and the development of broadcasting", p.346.
111. Deputy Under-Secretary of State Sir Charles Jeffries's letter of 15 January 1951 (96840/11/51), Colonial Development Corporation: Broadcasting, The National Archives, Kew: CO875/70/7.
112. These figures were quoted from the 'Extract of Chief Anthony Enaharo speech' published in the *Western News* newspaper on 2 May 1956.
113. See Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation*; and Larkin, *Signal and Noise*. The wired system was not dismantled; it was retained in many places for some time.
114. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*.
115. Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation*; Larkin, *Signal and Noise*.
116. Debra Spitulnik, "Mediated modernities: encounters with the electronics in Zambia," *Visual Anthropology Review*, 14/2 (1998), 63-84.

117. Ladele *et al.*, *History of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.*
118. Armour, "The BBC and the development of broadcasting", p.381.
119. Ibid., p.382.
120. Ibid., p.395.
121. Gadzekpo, *Ghana Muntie*, p.45.
122. *Daily Service,* "Editorial: Mau Mau or no Mau Mau?", 16 April 1953. The Mau Mau uprising was mainly a revolt against British colonial rule in Kenya that was brutally supressed by Britain (see Mwangi Wa-Githumo, "The truth about the Mau Mau movement: The most popular uprising in Kenya", *Transafrican Journal of History*, 20/1991 (1991), 1-18.
123. *West African Pilot*, "Furious crowds raid & destroy local coronation decorations: Office windows & cars smashed", Wednesday, 3 June 1953, XVI/4,677.
124. *Daily Service*, "'Sir John deceives the public': Awolowo challenges Macpherson", Saturday, 6 June 1953, XIII/55766.
125. Full details of the plans are contained in a series of correspondences and memos in "Press and radio propaganda campaign", The National Archives, Kew: CO554/604.
126. From the Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for the Colonies: Administrative recruitment, 23 July 1953, Press and radio propaganda campaign, The National Archives, Kew: CO554/604.
127. J.A. Sambe, *Introduction to Mass Communication Practice in Nigeria*. (Ibadan, 2005), p.84.
128. See Luke Uche, "The politics of Nigeria's radio broadcast industry: 1932-1983", *Gazette*, 35 (1983), 19-29; and Graham Mytton, *Mass Communication in Africa* (London, 1983).
129. Uche, "The politics of Nigeria's radio broadcast industry".
130. Ritter, *Imperial Encore*; Gamal Abdul Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington, D.C., 1955).
131. Ritter, *Imperial Encore*, p.98.
132. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, p.68. See also Matthew Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan, 1993).
133. He was quoted in Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, p.66.
134. Robert Heinze, "Radio in Africa," *African Studies Review* 66/2 (2023), 531-543, p.532.
135. Robert Heinze, "'The African Listener'".
136. Extract from Northern Region of Nigeria Intelligence Committee Report for November 1958: Radio Moscow, The National Archives, Kew: CO1027/238.
137. Quoted from the Extract from Northern Region of Nigeria Intelligence Committee Report for November 1958: Radio Moscow, The National Archives, Kew: CO1027/238.
138. Gambian Governor's letter to Secretary of State to the Colonies, 30 October 1958, Moscow Broadcast in English and French to Africa, The National Archives, Kew: CO1027/238.

139. Sierra Leone Governor's letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 April 1956, Hostile and Subversive Broadcasting: Other Propaganda, The National Archives, Kew: FCO141/14299.
140. Cairo Radio: Measures to Deal With (1957-1959), The National Archives, Kew: CO1027/237.
141. See Lyn Smith, "Covert British propaganda: The Information Research Department: 1947-77", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 9/1 (1980), 67-83; and Paul Lashmar and James Oliver, *Britain's Secret Propaganda War, 1948-1977* (Stroud, 1998).
142. Memo marked 'Secret and Private', Governor's Office, 15 November 1957, The National Archives, Kew: FCO141/13703.
143. Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, "British public diplomacy: A case study of the BBC Hausa Service", in R. Mirchandani and A.T. Abubakar (eds.), *British International Broadcasting* (Los Angeles, 2014).
144. Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, "Audience participation and BBC's digital quest in Nigeria", in W. Willems and W. Mano (eds.) *Everyday Media Culture in Africa: Audiences and Users* (London, 2017); Abubakar, "British public diplomacy".
145. Audience scholarship has dealt with the limits of radio's influence (for Africa, see Willems and Mano (eds.), *Everyday Media Culture in Africa*).
146. Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, p.50.

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