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JOURNALISM IN A SMALL PLACE: Making Caribbean News Relevant, Comprehensive, and Independent by Juliette Storr

ISBN 978-1-55238-850-1

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The Future of Caribbean Journalism

Although the future of journalism in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Australia is still in question, the debate continues to receive a lot of attention from academics, practitioners, media owners, and citizens in these countries. This has not been the case in the Caribbean. However, it is not that there is denial about the changes taking place in the media industries or in the practice, but rather that the changes are taking place in a different milieu. Caribbean journalism does not have the same academic or professional history. Caribbean media owners attribute the slow pace of change to cultural differences and lower internet penetration, which is changing rapidly in some countries and more slowly in others. In general, newspaper readership, television news consumption, and radio listenership is still relatively high. People in the Caribbean still love the news and integrate it into their everyday lived experience through oral storytelling. This factor lies at the heart of media consumption in the region, which, at the time of this research, was still mostly done offline.

The lack of debate on the future of journalism in the region does not mean practitioners and media owners are unaware of the global debate; a few attempts have been made to discuss the issues of change with the aid of international and regional organizations such as the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers.[1] The low level of professionalism, coupled with a lack of communication scholarship, also inhibits robust debate in the region. This has resulted in elongated silences, and consequently, the changes that are taking place in journalism within these countries

seem to be of little import. The global discussion centers on issues of the survival of a profit-making model of journalism, the need to innovate, the relevance of journalism in twenty-first-century democracies, and queries of who is a journalist in an era when anyone with the technology can gather and disseminate information whenever and however they choose. Media owners and practitioners in the Caribbean acknowledge the increase in citizen blogging and other social-media activity, and admit that these activities circumvent traditional channels of communication. They also believe bloggers serve a useful purpose in these secretive societies, where freedom of information is either ignore or does not exist. However, there has been little discourse on the impact of citizen journalism. Further, journalists in the region still believe they hold the public's trust in terms of the credibility of their information.

Beyond the increase in citizens' ability to gather and disseminate information, technology has also provided journalists with the opportunity to access information more efficiently and effectively from online sources. Media environments operate in a twenty-four-hour information cycle that has placed more demands on a journalist's time and skills. Investigative journalism, moreover, is constrained by the political, social, and economic environment, which makes it difficult to develop effective and consistent investigations. While citizens are demanding more investigative journalism, the current dictates of the media environment limits journalists' ability to meet this demand. Cultural constraints—a culture of secrecy and silence, limited sources in small societies, a lack of access to information, and fear of intimidation and victimization—have also disrupted the gathering of information. Other constraints include low levels of professionalization and inconsistent training. Until these are removed, investigative journalism will continue to be limited and sporadic.

The future of journalism in the small developing countries of the Caribbean may seem more certain than journalism as practiced in developed countries. In spite of this optimistic forecast, the future trajectory should be one that uses a variety of methods to produce not a single type of journalism but rather a hybrid approach to the practice. Multi-skilled journalists are the way of the future, in the Caribbean and globally. Currently, and even more so in the future, journalists must cultivate a variety of skills, as more will be expected of them. Editors and media owners stress this need, with some admitting they have trimmed their number

of employees and may do so again in the future as more of their activities move online. More engagement with the audience or consumers will also drive the demand for more highly trained and specialized journalists. Beyond the need to know how to write or speak effectively, journalists will be required to know all aspects of the production process and become effective interpreters in an era of information overload, misinformation, and disinformation. Their cartographic skills will be in high demand.

Journalists of the future will also have to form strategic partnerships with citizens in the process of gathering and disseminating information. More will be required of citizens, particularly those that have become involved in this process. In the current media environment, such people are not viewed as direct competitors, but as more of them become accurate and reliable sources of information, they will impact traditional news sources, syphoning audiences in the process. The blogosphere, along with Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and other platforms, may become more legitimate sources. For cultures that thrive on rumor and innuendo, that make small things significant and significant things small, this trend may represent a dangerous shift as more misinformation and disinformation enter the public sphere masquerading as the truth. Despite the litigious nature of Caribbean societies, these activities will grow unless regulations are applied to the online environment. Some Caribbean governments have already initiated new laws to monitor online activities, though many critics view the imposition of such laws as a threat to free speech and democracy.

Journalists are concerned about the increase in online activity and the use of social media. Erica Wells, editor of the *Nassau Guardian*, describes the impact of online information on the future of journalism and democracy as troubling. "It's these anonymous bloggers who I think … are doing a lot of damage [to journalism]. I think there is no level of responsibility or accountability and they are not held, obviously, to the same standards that we are being held to. I think most people dismiss it but I think some people take that stuff very seriously."[2] Wells believes there has to be a way to enforce some sort of standard for bloggers. "It's one thing if you have a blog name … [then] there is a certain level of responsibility. But if you don't identify yourself … you are being irresponsible … you are libeling people and damaging people's reputations and lives. That is a very serious thing. It needs to be addressed."[3]

This warning is echoed in the growing concerns over incivility, both on- and offline. In a recent essay on the future of journalism, Robert Picard affirms that "journalism belongs to society."[4] This claim has taken on new meaning in an audience-driven world where concern for feedback has grown significantly over the last twenty years. Digital technologies have broken down traditional barriers between journalists and their audience, as ordinary citizens invade cyberspace with their feedback, comments, analyses, reports, photographs and videos. While theorists like Robert Picard, Cass Sunstein, and John Merrill see this as a benefit for democracy others, like Nicholas Carr, Andrew Keen, Zizi Papacharissi, and Edward Shils, emphasize the costs of digital technology. In the midst of this avalanche of information, there is growing concern for privacy and the lack of civility in cyberspace as people become more obnoxious and uncivil in their responses to each other and present inaccurate, unfair, untruthful, and specious information.

Despite these dire warnings, libertarian proponents believe the increase in citizen participation in the dissemination of information can aid in advancing Caribbean democracies from autocratic systems with power centralized in the hands of a few, to a more open and direct participatory system. Encouraging more citizen participation in the gathering and disseminating of news could also improve one of the fundamental principles of journalism—that of giving voice to the voiceless. Many global media organizations understand the importance of this new dynamic in the flow of information and are embracing and encouraging citizens' participation. Richard Sambrook, director of the news division at the BBC, acknowledged the crucial role of citizen participation during the 2005 London subway bombing when he claimed that "the quantity and quality of the public's contributions moved them beyond novelty, tokenism or the exceptional and raises major implications that we are still working through."[5] Citizen participation also played an important role in the gathering and dissemination of information in the 2013 Boston Marathon attack, and the mass migration of people fleeing war-torn Syria for refuge in Europe in 2015.

In this new environment, Caribbean news organizations should follow the path of their global counterparts and develop partnerships with citizens to cover and present issues and events. These partnerships could be more fruitful and helpful in small societies where resources are limited,

especially in rural areas where the use of digital technology is low and the needs of local populations are underserved by traditional media. This revised version of community or public journalism would extend the global journalist-citizen partnership model, not only during times of crisis, but also during regular news cycles. Consequently, rural or underserved areas of society would receive more coverage that specifically addresses their social, economic, and political needs. News organizations would have to develop special initiatives or projects to drive this activity, but such an approach would provide journalism with an opportunity to explore ways it could better serve local and global communities while simultaneously involving the public in the production of news.

Public involvement would result in more citizens producing news without the aid of traditional media, which in turn would change the dynamics of the production and distribution of information. Such a shift could result in a change of news values as citizens determine what information is important to them. This could be good for democracy, as more community issues and concerns would be covered from the audience's perspective. On the negative side, this increase could lead to more misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda. However, these concerns could be addressed through media literacy programs.

Journalism's traditional reliance on advertising for economic stability is no longer viable, but a new economic model has yet to emerge. According to the Pew Center, the best online news sites have limited ability to produce content; their future reportorial capacity will depend on finding a revenue model that could sustain it. The projections for online advertising do not look promising. The 2013 Pew Report indicated old and new media would face the same dilemma—finding a revenue source to sustain their future. The report also predicted more alliances between old and new media and the spread of citizen journalism, but many practitioners, media owners, and citizens are unclear about how these new partnerships would work.

These issues remain undefined; there are no rules for what is acceptable and what is not. However, the new approaches that have emerged in the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world provide lessons for the Caribbean, where the diffusion of technology still lags behind other regions. Caribbean countries should identify global best practices and adapt them to fit the needs of their markets. One of the latest shifts to

occur is the collapse of the dichotomy between old and new media, with many industry experts now using the broad term "media" to characterize all mediated communication. The collapse of this false dichotomy is producing renewed optimism for the future.

At the time of this research, the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean were adapting their economic model to stay viable. However, the Gleaner Company was perhaps the most aggressive in its marketing approach. Like the *New York Times*, the *Gleaner* instituted a partial pay wall, limiting unsubscribed readers to fifteen free articles. The Gleaner Company and other news organizations in the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago also continue to use a number of strategies that integrate an older advertising model with new marketing strategies to capitalize on the most profitable target audience—the middle class and the diaspora.

The Role of Journalism in Twenty-First-Century Caribbean Societies

Journalism in the twenty-first century should be executed with the values of accuracy, fairness, balance, objectivity, sense-making, independence, providing a public forum, monitoring the powerful, relevance, comprehensiveness, proportionality, and engagement while being loyal to both citizens and the truth. News partnerships with citizens would increase the diversity of opinion in the public sphere. As Kovach and Rosenstiel argue,

> where once the [journalist's] role was simply providing information as a tool of self-governance, it now becomes a role to provide citizens with the tools they need to extract knowledge for themselves from the undifferentiated flood of rumor, propaganda, gossip, fact, assertion, and allegation the communications system now produces. Thus the journalist must not only make sense of the world but also make sense of the flood of information as it is being delivered to citizens.[6]

Both authors believe this new role should be driven by the need for verification, transparency, and accountability. This approach could create a

new type of citizen journalist, one who, like the traditional journalist, has a responsibility to uphold the fundamental principles of journalism. Based on the emerging role of citizen journalists, Kovach and Rosenstiel outlined the rights and responsibilities of citizens in an information-driven world.

Although valuable, Kovach and Rosenstiel's thesis refers to the United States, a large country rich in resources. In the small countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, where the dynamics of producing news are different, the journalist's role must also include advocacy and radicalism. While many of the ideals of the profession extolled by American and European scholars are relevant to the standards and values of news, the role of Caribbean journalists must be more dynamic; not only should they embrace and encourage citizen participation, but they should also advocate on behalf of citizens and embrace journalism's ability to affect radical change in these "authoritarian-leaning systems." In a region where internet penetration is still moderate to low and a cultural history of secrecy and silence prevails, journalists should push citizens to become more responsible political participants, nationally, regionally and globally. Journalists will have to become both educators and activists.

Keith Mitchell believes the role of the press is different in smaller states than in larger ones since it plays an important part in regional development. Owen Arthur, former prime minister of Barbados, reaffirmed this role in June 2013 during a public lecture at The Bahamas at 40 Conference. Both Mitchell and Arthur believed regional integration was intrinsically connected to regional development, which they claimed would only become a reality if journalists and media played an active role. Mitchell explained "that the successful attainment of both depends, to a large extent, on how effectively the free press functions."[7]

Mitchell acknowledged the internet and information communication technologies (ICTs) were changing the way media practitioners operated, but he warned that journalists should not let these changes diminish their responsibility with respect to presenting correct and reliable reports and images to the public. Mitchell, like Erica Wells, believed "the plethora of information or, in some cases disinformation, on the internet, and the ease with which anyone can establish a website for whatever purpose, places even greater pressures on the mainstream media houses to ensure accuracy and responsibility in carrying out reporting duties and structuring program memes and special features."[8] In this new environment, he

explained, the press must play a strong role in educating and informing people about the information available on the internet.

Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that the new form of citizen journalism leads to the dissemination of good public information that helps create an informed democracy. This goal requires Caribbean journalists to understand their role in democracy and teach it to the citizens with whom they will partner to produce the news of the future. This type of citizen journalism requires an understanding of market-driven demands and the centralized position of governments, the two most powerful forces in these societies. As such, journalists and citizens must understand their responsibilities as participants in a monitorial democracy.

In addition to the changing role of journalism, one of the most daunting challenges in the region is the need for freedom of information laws that work. The history of secret deals, covert decision-making, and hidden records of the public's business hinders the effective practice of journalism in the Caribbean. How can journalists monitor powerful political elites if they cannot gain access to public records? How can they provide citizens with the truth about their government's decision-making if they do not have access to meetings where national affairs are decided? How can they advance democracy if they are sued or threatened for exposing corruption and wrongful behavior?

The hierarchal structures in these countries allow prime ministers or presidents to have so much power. It is therefore a daunting task for journalists to criticize their leaders publicly for their decisions or behavior. Societal structures make it difficult for journalists in the Caribbean to uphold Western ideals of journalism, such as building democracy and being a strong advocate, making sure that information is disseminated accurately and fairly, and ensuring that government and business functions without exploiting the masses. And yet these ideals often elude Caribbean journalists.

Journalism should evolve in the Caribbean so that it becomes a more effective pillar of society. Currently, the profession is subject to too many constraints. This has impelled Harold Hoyte to forecast a pessimistic future for journalism and democracy in the region. "I don't want to sound despairing … [but I fear that] that what we have could get worse, that democracy could be very seriously challenged. That governments resort to strong-arm tactics that people's views are suppressed, that people rebel

and that that cycle starts all over again."[9] He advocates for a free, vibrant, and independent media to build a thriving democracy.

Hoyte believes the dreamlike transitions that took place in the region during the independence movements of the 1960s and 1970s provided a false sense of security for Caribbean countries because they did not experience the rampant corruption and greed that assailed many of the countries in Africa and South America, plunging them into years of turmoil and exploitation. He wonders if the region is on the cusp of this type of experience. "Are we opening [the same] opportunities for opportunistic leaders?" he asks.[10] He believes that the only way to abort this path is to train journalists throughout the region so that they are equipped to report on corruption and injustice. To accomplish this goal requires a training model that helps journalists to advance their role in safeguarding democracy. As Byron Buckley explained, "we have a university here, in Jamaica and elsewhere … [but while] they teach the tools of journalism, they do not sensitize journalists enough to their role. So we have people here who have gone through tertiary education but who do not have a refined perspective of our social history, who are unable to tie the freedoms that we want with the rights that the media must have."[11]

Wendall Jones, owner of Jones Communications in the Bahamas, has a similar perspective. "There are people practicing today who do not know their own history, who do not know world history. For example, reporters in my newsroom did not know what the Basilica is or their own type of government. They should know these things but they don't read and they are not interested."[12] Hoyte believes the problem is also systemic, as this phenomenon is not only prevalent among journalists but also among young people in media management who, he claims, understand neither the social history of the media nor its traditional role. Nonetheless, as he points out

They are running media companies, they are running news departments, they are running advertising departments and they could be running it so badly with these same attitudes because they don't bring that understanding, that grasp of the essentials that make us who we are as a pillar of democracy, they do not have it. … And when I talk to young people out there they're like, What does this have to do with me getting my next story?

… Their appreciation of their role is eschewed, completely eschewed. So we have some work to do.[13]

Younger journalists recognize the need for training, but they have a different perspective. For example, Juan McCartney believes the errors or mistakes that young journalists make are not new; he advocates that younger journalists should learn from their older colleagues through mentoring programs. He also believes older journalists could learn from younger ones, many of whom have more experience with new technology. McCartney agrees there is a need for training. "I think we are kind of behind the times as far as what a lot of journalists actually do out there in the wider world, as opposed to what happens in the Bahamas. I think the Caribbean world is about ten years behind as to what happens in the rest of the world so there is a lot of catching up."[14]

Veteran radio broadcaster Peter Ames believes competitive media markets challenge the journalist's role. He views Trinidad and Tobago's marketplace as oversaturated, with thirty-seven radio stations, and predicts more acquisitions and mergers. The 2015 merger of the Gleaner Company and RJR in Jamaica has created another media conglomerate. This trend raises more questions about the role and responsibility of media in democracy.

According to Ken Gordon, if this trend continues Caribbean media will come under more pressure as the economic pie is divided and some people are forced out of the media industry altogether. However, he also predicts that global changes will have less economic impact than some predict. "Within the next five to ten years, I don't see too much change. I think the direction has been relatively settled. I do accept there is a threat, but it's potentially there from the internet. How far that will go, we'd have to see. As of now, I would tend to feel that we may well find the cultural wars here may continue."[15] But, he explained, "we may well find that we won't have the same extensive impact on circulation that you've had abroad, but that is in the hands of the gods."[16]

Despite global predictions of journalism's demise, journalists, editors, and media owners throughout the Caribbean feel that the profession will continue to exist. But the future of journalism in the Caribbean is far from secure. To change this trajectory, there has to be a shift in how journalism is practiced and how journalists are trained and educated. Colonial

ideologies should no longer be used to advance democratic societies that serve the needs of hybrid cultures; rather journalism and communication should be used to fulfill the needs of these hybrid societies. Yet while the influence of American culture is pervasive throughout the region, American models, ideas, or theories of how journalism and communication should function in democratic societies must be adapted to a Caribbean context. These are hybrid societies that need a hybrid model to guide the understanding and practice of journalism. Hopeton Dunn believes hybridization is the way forward in terms of increasing local production at all levels. As he puts it, "while hybridization is not unique to the Caribbean, the Caribbean provides a whole new way of refashioning it to our benefit."[17] It is this refashioning that journalism must do for the benefit of these societies.

Keith Mitchell believes media houses in small island states like those of the Caribbean are often closer to the community than media in developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. As a result, Mitchell believes, people in the Caribbean generally feel more connected to their local media than their counterparts in the metropolitan centers of larger countries. "This is evident in the letters to the editors, the response to radio and television talk shows, as well as the instances of people who feel comfortable walking into a local media house with information, a complaint or, in some cases, gossip and slander, and expect this to be published or aired."[18]

For Mitchell, this close relationship should lead to more community journalism, since "there is great scope for the media to take advantage of this sense of closeness that Caribbean people feel towards their local media outlets."[19] Mitchell's perspective aligns with ancient Greek philosophers Plato's, Aristotle's, and eighteenth-century philosopher Rousseau's belief that smaller states have more effective democracies, as citizens know each other and are therefore more likely to support and protect each other. These philosophers believed the governance of small populations is more likely to be effective because policies and programs can be more easily adjusted to work effectively. When applied to the field of journalism and communication, this philosophical perspective is prescient. It also aligns with my previous recommendations for a new type of community journalism, one that not only takes advantage of Mitchell's ideas, but that also

uses new technology to develop new perspectives on the role of communication and journalism in the advancement of the region's democracies.

This perspective aligns with the participatory model of communication as advanced by communication and development scholars and practitioners. The participatory paradigm has been promoted by Jan Servaes, Paolo Freire, John Friedmann, Srinivas Melkote, Thomas Jacobson, and Paolo Mefalopulos,[20] as the best model for development since it embraces multiple perspectives and advocates for community involvement in identifying and solving social problems. This model presents Caribbean journalism with an opportunity to embrace a new way to practice journalism in the region and advance professional development and democratic ideals.

Paradigm Shift: Advocates, Radicals, and Citizens

Journalism in the Caribbean must embrace a hybrid model by taking various elements from global practices and melding them with local ones to create a model that helps to refashion these societies. A hybrid model of journalism that is open and flexible, objective and subjective, participatory and cartographic would provide a framework for the further development of the practice and profession. It should include the best elements of the American and British models, as these two systems have had the greatest influence on world systems. The hybrid model, or models, should take account of the cultural context of each country, as these values will play a significant role in future practice.

As Dick Hebdige purports,[21] Caribbean journalism has to "cut 'n' mix"—that is, take the elements of journalism as they are currently practiced, reshape it within a Caribbean milieu, and advocate on behalf of citizens and communities to force social, political, and economic change. As with the musical heritage of soca, calypso, reggae, and junkanoo, journalism in the region must "cut 'n' mix" to find solutions for current realities like crime, corruption, poverty, illiteracy, domestic violence, incest, and rape.

Hybrid Journalism: The Backyard Approach

Hybridity is neither new nor unique to the region; all Caribbean cultures or societies are hybrid. However, the region has emerged with a complex set of worldviews, values, and practices that sustain the ambivalence and contradictions that permeate these societies. The Caribbean is a third space, fashioned out of Old- and New-World ideologies. In such a space, old ideas have been refashioned into cultural artifacts to create an identity called "Caribbean." These artifacts include calypso, soca, reggae, junkanoo, and oral storytelling. Other cultural symbols can be found in food, language, and physicality.

In this fusion of ideas, Caribbean people should use a multiplicity of approaches to solve their problems and pursue opportunities; they should not hold fast to colonial legacies and ideologies that are no longer useful in these societies. Does it really matter if it is British or American spelling or grammar as long as it is correct spelling or grammar? The correct form should be the barometer, not British versus American. That should never have been the battle. Do we dare to accept a paper from a student that mixes British and American grammar or spelling? These cultures have been transformed, but traditional ideas and archaic institutions have them clinging to standards and values that were never fashioned for them in the first place.

Caribbean countries are experiencing a paradigm shift. Globalization is transforming these societies and their cultures. New opportunities and challenges are emerging from new technologies. As these societies shift their focus to the global marketplace, they are creating goods and services for world consumers. Through these transactions, Caribbean ideologies are changing as globalization replaces the dogma of cultural imperialism. These global interactions are creating new hybrid entities that are evolving into something different than their postcolonial identities. Caribbean storytelling, the storytelling of journalism with a purpose, must lead the way, identifying these stories and refashioning new identities that help Caribbean societies to reposition themselves from their ambiguous, invisible space and deconstruct their cultural subordination.

To do this effectively, journalism must create a framework (or frameworks) to guide the profession and practice. If not, these transitions may happen chaotically and the economic windfall brought about by current

development in the cultural industries, and from which Caribbean countries hope to benefit, may come at a great cost. In his book *Hybridity: The Cultural Logic of Globalization*,[22] Marwan Kraidy offers a critical, wide-ranging analysis of the extensive reach of hybridity across the globe and explores new concepts such as "critical transculturalism" and its role in the formation of cultural identity. Kraidy examines the intermingling of people and media from different cultures through hybridity. In so doing, he builds an argument for understanding the importance of the dynamics of communication, uneven power relationships, political economy, and cultural hybridity. Kraidy develops the framework of transculturalism to study global cultural mixture; "transculturalism uses hybridity as its core concept and also provides a practical method for examining how media and communication work in international contexts."[23] This is the proposition of this book.

Kraidy acknowledges that hybridity is a risky concept. "It comes without guarantees. Rather than a single idea or unitary concept, hybridity is an association of ideas, concepts, and themes that at once reinforce and contradict each other."[24] Contradictions are a core part of Caribbean identities. Kraidy believes hybridity "challenges fixed categories and the reliance of empirical research on stable classifications."[25] It is for these reasons that journalism in the region cannot strictly follow the normative classifications of American or British journalism. There should be no fixed categories for practicing journalism—only the appropriate categories for current societal needs. Hence, I recommend a hybrid form of journalism that practices and embraces both objective and subjective forms of journalism, utilizes the monitorial, radical, and advocacy roles, and has at its core community journalism.

Journalists in the Caribbean should combine the radical, advocacy, and monitorial roles and advance community journalism by producing coverage that emphasizes localized practices. That is, journalists should produce not a single type of journalism but multiple types: journalism that incorporates the local and the global in new formations of glocalism.

Radical Journalism

Christians et al. contend that "the radical role of media and journalism insists on the absolute equality and freedom of all members of a democratic

society in a completely uncompromising way. It ensures that no form of injustice is tolerated. The radical democratic commitment works for the continual elimination of concentrations of social power to enable every person to participate equally in all societal decisions."[26] These ideals are also extolled by philosophers who point to small states' ability to achieve direct democracy. Caribbean journalists would be required to instigate changes such as new voting procedures, constitutional reforms, and changes in the structure of social institutions. This relates to Nicolette Bethel's proposition concerning the need to change government institutions and agencies throughout the region.

The radical role goes beyond the monitorial role, which "takes a given power structure for granted and provides the systematic information needed to make such social configurations work. In other words, maintain the status quo."[27] The radical role, by contrast, "recognizes that power holders impede the flow of information and that it is necessary to change the system of public communication so that less powerful groups can get the information they need."[28] Further, because citizens are now disseminating information via internet and social media, they could assume many of the monitorial duties of journalism, leaving professional journalists to provide depth and understanding through investigation and analysis.

The goal of radical journalism is to undermine and disrupt or dismantle the underlying political-economic power structure in society that reproduces the hegemony that "privileges the interests of a few over those of the majority."[29] This role seems most appropriate for Caribbean societies caught between an authoritarian worldview and global influences. These "authoritarian-leaning" systems, mostly present in government, politics, religion, economics, and culture, leave democracy stranded between the forces of colonial tradition and globalization. There are too many important and significant issues that go unaddressed or unchallenged in these societies. According to the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, and other international organizations, there are too many social crises in these countries that impede the development of human capital, from escalating levels of crime, corruption, incest, rape, sexual and domestic violence, to illiteracy and poverty.

Caribbean journalists have a more urgent responsibility than their Western counterparts, and they should not claim that the radical and advocacy roles go against standards of objectivity and neutrality. The

Caribbean context demands a different approach, one that radically empowers citizens through the practice of alternative forms of journalism. These include: community journalism, community media, alternative media, and citizen journalism, which collectively could be called hybrid journalism, or what I refer to colloquially as "backyard journalism." The backyard is an intimate cultural space in Caribbean communities where cultures blend and innovations emerge through storytelling and play. It is a hybrid space, a third space that has the power to relocate relationships of power.

Caribbean journalists should use this space to empower ordinary people to expose the concentration of power—political, economic, and social—to public opinion, especially undemocratic practices in the region. Yes, this means journalists in the Caribbean will have to persuade and mobilize public opinion to elicit "public action toward the redistribution of power. Such consciousness-raising regarding power structures requires media that are more participatory and dialogical than the conventional media."[30] The backyards of Caribbean communities would become alternative spaces for storytelling with a purpose. In a region with high levels of corruption, backyard journalism could expose not only abuses of power but also the causes and consequences of power's concentration, and help the public to seek avenues of action for its redistribution. It is through backyard journalism that Caribbean societies could close the gap between the privileged and the unprivileged, the rich and the poor. Backyard journalism, a combination of radical, advocacy, and community journalism, moves beyond the paradigm of improving the system; it is revolutionary and requires active participation on the part of journalists and citizens alike.

The digital age could propel backyard journalism to new heights as alternative media organizations and independent citizens make more use of technology to disseminate their ideas and opinions. But there are no standards for citizen journalism; this is especially troubling for a profession founded on the principal of truth-telling. While the world has seen, and will continue to see, technology aid social movements like the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and various anti-globalization movements, there are some limitations to this type of activity. Mainly, the power to inform mass audiences is limited, so far. However, the potential power of independent voices in the form of weblogs, video blogs, and independent

media provides exciting opportunities for the bettering of democracy. From YouTube, Wikipedia, Wikileaks, Khan Academy, and other open-source technologies, to online magazines and blogs, alternative forms of communication are creating a paradigm shift not only in journalism but also in education and literacy, and they are providing new channels for radical thought and action. Journalists in the Caribbean should integrate this digital activity into all forms of journalism but especially radical, advocacy, and community journalism. These three types of journalism should work together to reposition the region away from rigid colonial traditions and overconsumption of American and European ideas and products.

Of course, radical journalism has a lot of critics. Key issues for those who object to the use of the radical role include legitimacy and accountability. Many critics view it as "unsettling and subversive."[31] As Christians et al. note, "radical journalists oppose this description; they consider their approach to be highly legitimate. While there are times when the radical role accepts no accountability to society at large or the state, this only happens when radical journalism is reacting to extreme abuses of power."[32] Christians et al. point out that, "conceptually, the radical role is a reaction to hegemonic power." Indeed, "such radicalism is unthinkable in the absence of the dominant power structures at which it is directed. Therefore, radical actors cannot totally delink themselves from the rest of society; an accountability relationship between the source and the target of radicalism always remains."[33] This type of journalism may be problematic for Caribbean leaders who believe journalists are too judgmental of public figures. But journalists are supposed to judge public officials, as long as it is without malice and in the public interest. Radical journalism is appropriate when it fulfills its obligation to society fairly, accurately, and responsibly.

Elites will challenge this type of journalism. However, journalists can counter with professional organizations and institutions. Further, the radical role will not always be dominant. There will be times when the radical role must give way to the advocacy and community roles.

Advocacy Journalism

Advocacy journalism has a bad rap. Some of its staunchest critics, such as David Lyon and Thomas Hanitzsch,[34] are concerned with its seeming disregard for values like objectivity, neutrality, and detachment. David

Loyn, one of the strongest defenders of objective and impartial journalism, boots advocacy journalism to the domain of public relations.[35] But journalism as practiced in the United States and Europe is not objective or impartial; indeed, all journalism advocates for something in the name of truth. The type of journalism that advocates for change is no different than that which exposes corruption or monitors the powerful, and it too must follow the principles of accurate and impartial news coverage. "Good journalism is responsible journalism."[36] Good reporting that gets rid of or reduces illiteracy, corruption, domestic violence, incest, and disease is responsible journalism. Wilhelm Kempf argues that advocacy journalism should answer the questions "What is the problem?" and "How can it be resolved?"[37] Some time ago, Johan Galtung demanded that journalists become active participants by "playing a part in the complex 'cat's cradle' that makes up a conflict."[38] Kempf writes that peace journalism's (a form of advocacy journalism) role is not to be at the table negotiating, say, a peace treaty, but rather bringing the participants to the table in the first place. Advocacy journalists play an active role in identifying problems and solutions. Thus it should be approached as a two-step process of identification and solution. For identification, there is a need for objective, accurate, balanced, and distanced coverage.[39] The purpose is to make the public aware of the problems and how they impact them individually and collectively. For solution, "advocacy journalism seeks ways to bring all participants of the problems together to actively find ways to solve the problems."[40] Using this approach, advocacy journalism could be balanced, accurate, fair, and independent, "thus avoiding the trap of propaganda and public relations."[41] But to practice this approach effectively, journalists need knowledge, competency, and skills that go beyond traditional journalistic training and enable them to avoid factual inaccuracies.[42]

According to Robert Niles, a former editor of the *Online Journalism Review* (published by the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Journalism), "when 'objective' journalism decays into a cowardly neutrality between truth and lies, we need advocacy journalism to lift our profession—and the community leaders we cover—back to credibility."[43] Niles thinks too many critics see advocacy as an "antonym for objectivity," when it is not. He explains that "objectivity is the goal of accounting for our own biases when observing external reality so that our report accurately reflects that reality. By reporting objectively, the goal is that you be

able to produce an observation that others, observing the same reality, can reproduce."[44]

Niles strongly believes there is nothing about objectivity that prohibits journalists from advocating on behalf of their communities; "in reality, journalists advocate for their stories every day."[45] For Niles, the problem some journalists have with advocacy is not the concept itself, but rather "those who put advocacy ahead of the truth instead of behind it, where it belongs. Objectivity is a means to an end—that end being truthful reporting. And if truthful reporting leads to an obvious conclusion, a reporter and publication cheat their readers if they pull back and don't follow their reporting to that conclusion, and fail to advocate for their community reading it—and acting on it."[46] For Niles, "our disdain for propagandists should not turn us against advocacy, but instead embolden us to be more aggressive advocates for the truth."[47]

Practicing radical and advocacy journalism does not mean journalism falls prey to propaganda, and nor am I proposing that traditional roles and news values be abandoned. What I am recommending for journalists in the Caribbean is a hybrid approach to journalism, one that uses all of the tools to create new ways of doing and being. Radical and advocacy journalism should be practiced with the principles espoused in the previous chapters. However, if journalism is to remain relevant in these small countries, radical and advocacy journalism must move to the forefront of the practice and journalism must embrace the participative communication paradigm, one that involves community journalism.

Community Journalism

Taken literally, community journalism, also known as civic or public journalism, is often defined as journalism about communities, for communities, by communities, whether local, national, global, or digital. The main goals of community journalism are "increased diversity, greater depth and context of news coverage,"[48] and increased understanding of the communities that media serves. Christians et al. believe community is "a very receptive site" for journalism's radical and advocacy roles, as "most radical media are created or supported by a community—geographic or interest-based."[49] Community is also at the heart of the participatory model of communication and development. Media scholars Nico Carpentier, Rico

Lie, and Jan Servaes identify four approaches to community media that provide a framework for understanding how community media should work to advance the interests of community members: "1) media serving community, 2) community media as alternative to mainstream media, 3) community media as part of civil society, and 4) community media as 'rhizome' embedded in flexible social movements."[50]

In the first approach, media is used to serve the community. The relationship between media and community is symmetrical and topics should be chosen by the community to meet their needs and interests. This approach aligns with participatory models of communication and development where two-way communication defines the relationship between media and community through participation of community members in the production and dissemination process. "Members of the community have access to media when they want to for whatever purpose—education, information, or entertainment."[51] In this way community media validates and empowers the community.

The second approach, "community media as alternative to mainstream media, is based on a distinction between mainstream and alternative media. Alternative media are seen as a supplement to mainstream media."[52] Carpentier, Lie, and Servaes caution against interpreting alternative media as being in a negative relationship with mainstream media as, "the contingency of this concept should be emphasized: what is considered 'alternative' at a certain point in time could be defined as mainstream at another point in time."[53] From the community perspective, alternative media could take several forms: "small-scale and oriented towards specific communities (e.g. disadvantaged groups); independent from state and market; horizontally structured, allowing for the facilitation of audience access and participation within the frame of democratization and multiplicity; and carriers of non-dominant (possibly counter-hegemonic) discourses and representations, stressing the importance of self-representation."[54] Consequently, community media as alternative media can show that a third way of media organization is possible.

Carpentier, Lie, and Servaes believe that "by defining community media in this way, it can be considered the "third voice" between state media and private commercial media." This approach underscores the important role civil society plays in the "democratic imagination."[55]

In the fourth approach, community media as rhizome, Carpentier, Lie, and Servaes propose a more radical use for media. By combining Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theory of the rhizome[56] with the relational approach of community media as alternative media, these scholars see community media as a practice which "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles."[57] Further, "in the case of community media, these connections apply not only to the pivotal role community media (can) play in civil society, but also to the linkages community media (and other civil organizations) can establish with (segments of) the state and the market, without losing their proper identity."[58]

The rhizome approach also emphasizes the importance of civil society. In this sense it contrasts with the third approach in that "the main emphasis for describing the importance of community media is not their role as part of the public sphere but the catalyzing role they can play by functioning as the crossroads where people from different types of movements and struggles meet and collaborate."[59] As a result, "community media not only functions as an instrument that gives voice to a group of people for a specific issue; it is also a catalyzator."[60] Community media, therefore, can function as the core of the backyard paradigm as it integrates communication and culture for storytelling with a purpose.

Using these four approaches, community media can accommodate radical, advocacy, and other types of journalism. The main goals of this blended approach are greater civic participation, wider access, and more media diversity. When these goals are accomplished, community journalism fulfills its radical and advocacy role and moves us closer to the ideals of the democratic process.

Keith Mitchell's idea of community journalism also aligns with Carpentier, Lie, and Servaes's concept of community media. Mitchell believes community journalism provides an opportunity for Caribbean media to participate in the improvement of society by forcing communities or citizens to be active participants in solving their own problems. For, as Mitchell explains, community journalism "provides an opportunity for social workers, teachers, police officers, parents, politicians and others in the community to express their views and make suggestions as to how the problem can be overcome."[61] The shift to community journalism, says Mitchell, "challenges the traditional role of the media as impartial observer.

… By investigating and reporting on an issue such as truancy, the media is actually facilitating the search for a solution. In other words … you, as members of the media, become participants in the improvement of the education system."[62] He believes "such coverage provides the balance that the public needs on an important and very real issue in their lives, and one that has enormous impact on societal development as a whole."[63]

Community journalism should be placed at the core of the backyard paradigm, as it would complement the close relationship that already exists between citizens and the media and assist Caribbean societies in transforming themselves into independent democratic states.

The Future

This final chapter attempts to advance theories of hybridity. Melding radical journalism, advocacy journalism, and community journalism under the umbrella of glocal journalism provides a local perspective for global practices. The proposal for a hybrid practice of journalism, one that places community journalism, radical journalism, and advocacy journalism at the core of the practice allows for the continued practice of monitorial or watchdog journalism.

There are many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists throughout the region (and the world): "pressure of deadlines, a chronic lack of space, limited budgets, censorship and disinformation, editorial expectations, the needs of the public, the laws of the market, and cultural expectations."[64] These constraints play a significant role in the practice and profession and can only be reduced through the collective will of media owners, media practitioners, and citizens.

The lack of professionalization in Caribbean journalism is still prevalent despite the fact that there are more journalists with degrees working both independently and as part of established media institutions. This remains one of the biggest challenges in the region.

While the lack of professionalization, especially in small states, is nothing new, Caribbean journalists will have to become more professional if they want to see journalism play a more meaningful role in their societies. Journalists throughout the region will have to police themselves in order to raise the standards of the practice. This must become a priority as global advances and new technology encroach on issues of sovereignty and

the proper dissemination of good public information. Criticism from both the public and political elites, could be diminished through media literacy campaigns designed to educate the public and politicians on media's role in democratic societies. Journalism and media institutes should create and advance these programs and partner with various stakeholders to implement them.

Caribbean journalists have an opportunity to create a more sustainable form of journalism for the twenty-first century, one that meets the evolving needs of their societies. It is my hope that they will follow-through on these recommended actions. But beyond the limitations outlined in this book, journalists in the Caribbean also have an opportunity to rethink how journalism is practiced. Journalism in the region has to explore and advance new ways of producing content and distributing it. Journalists should take advantage of the region's love of oral storytelling and its close relationship with media houses to create new styles of storytelling. Websites could be used more engagingly to include video stories from the community, thereby creating new forums for oral storytelling and advancing the story function of news. This approach will require journalists to create new, innovative work cultures. They could work in conjunction with history departments and historical societies to preserve many of the region's stories and drive more engagement with the audience. This approach would also provide an opportunity for journalism to be more relevant to the communities it serves, providing more comprehensive and proportional coverage of local issues.

Educational programs and institutes should play a pivotal role in this process. Journalism educators will have to rethink how they teach their craft. They will have to equip students, journalists, and citizens with the right skills and mindsets for the evolving media landscape. We are in the midst of a renaissance in information production and distribution, and the next ten years will bring more changes than any of us could anticipate. These changes will happen more quickly. They will bring more disruptions and we must be prepared to respond to them. The need for credible journalistic knowledge and wisdom is greater than ever, but we must keep in mind that with great opportunity comes great responsibility. As exciting as the future seems for innovative storytelling, journalists must rebuild society's trust in their profession and restore rational thinking at a

time when information flows twenty-four-seven—from public and private organizations, to governments and individuals.

Having more opinions and ideas in the public forum does not necessarily mean a better democracy. Better democracy comes about through active involvement and engagement of all citizens in the pursuit of liberty, equality, justice, and truth. Everyone must understand the need to adhere to the principles of truth telling, fact checking, and using credible sources. Democracy requires all citizens to be responsible, accountable, and transparent when introducing information into the public sphere. The future of journalism in the region and the world could be better than the past, but everyone must ensure that journalism continues to play a significant role in the democratic project.