



Africa Peace Journalism:

A Manual for Media Practitioners in East Africa

Editor
Fredrick Ogenga

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Rongo University's Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security

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and Security
(CMDPS)

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to victims of violent extremism, terrorism, and post-election violence in Africa.

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Foreword

The e-book is the second in a series of special publications offering guidance to media practitioners—editors and journalists—working in conflict-affected and post-conflict East African countries. It offers refreshing perspectives on peace journalism by exploring the core values of truthfulness, social justice, equity, African cultures of peace, and balanced news reporting. Contributors to the volume demonstrate how media practices that are supportive of peace can prevent the escalation of conflict and promote its non-violent resolution. The chapters cumulatively represent a rich repertoire of experiences and cases that skillfully tell the story of the connections between media and peacebuilding in East Africa.

Edited by Professor Fredrick Ogenga of Rongo University, Kenya, a committed media scholar and peacebuilder and an Alumnus of the Social Science Research Council’s African Peacebuilding Network (APN) program, the book captures the APN’s goal of supporting the production of evidence-based high quality knowledge and the integration of such knowledge into media practice and policies in Africa. It also provides useful information and data for scholars, students, journalists, and members of the public with a keen interest in exploring the ways transformative journalism can help expand the opportunities for sustainable peace in East Africa.

Cyril Obi
Program Director
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List of Acronyms

RTP: Research Training and Practice

AL: Action learning

PJ: Peace Journalism

CMDPS: Center for Media, Democracy, Peace, and Security

HPJ: Hybrid Peace Journalism

RU-HPJC: Rongo University Hybrid Peace Journalism Club

CCRFP: Campus Community Radio for Peacebuilding

CPA: Campus Peace Ambassadors

DFID: Department of International Development

LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

PSA: Public Service Announcements

ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

SLDF: Sabaot Land Defence Force

MF: Moorland Forces

KBC: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

CAK: Communications Authority of Kenya

ICC: International Criminal Court

IMPACS: Media Policy and Civil Society

IWPR: Institute for War and Peace Reporting

IMS: International Media Support

Contributors to the Volume

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Rongo University’s Center for Media, Democracy, Peace, and Security would therefore like to thank the African Peacebuilding Network (APN) program of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) for generously supporting the organization of the workshop and publication of this book. We also want to extend our thanks to the Center for Global Peace Journalism (CGPJ) at Park University (USA), the Peace Journalism Foundation of East Africa, the Media Council of Kenya, the University of Nairobi, and Moi University for their support. Special thanks go to the resource persons at the workshop and contributors to this book: Dr. Duncan Omanga, Dr. Jacinta Mwendu, John Oluoch, and Prof. Stephen Youngblood. Similar thanks also go to the participants and colleagues from Rongo University and across the region. We are also grateful to the Great Lakes Hotel, Rongo University management, and Lake Travels Limited for the logistical support during the workshop. Finally, we also acknowledge the graphic designer, Rongo University Merab Shitemi.

Introduction

By Fredrick Ogenga

This publication is the outcome of the “East Africa Regional Peace Journalism Training Workshop” for journalists covering conflict and peacebuilding in East Africa. Organized by Rongo University’s Center for Media, Democracy, Peace, and Security (CMDPS) in partnership with the African Peacebuilding Network (APN) of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the two-day event brought together journalists from five East African countries—Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda—to develop their capacity for reporting on conflict-related issues in an objective manner based on the tenets of the theory and practice of peace journalism.

The workshop also served as a forum for facilitating discussions and networking between journalists and scholars from diverse East African countries working on peace and conflict at local, national, and regional levels. Participants also learned more about the APN-SSRC, including the opportunities it provides to support research and networking activities between scholars and practitioners across Africa. They also learned about how to effectively use peace-promoting approaches, tools, and platforms for covering and reporting stories on conflict and peacebuilding.

This book brings together and captures the presentations, discussions, and outcomes of the workshop. The chapters that follow are based on the presentations by the lead speakers at the workshop. They explore the various dimensions of violent conflict, particularly the way it is reported in the media and how such reports affect society. This analysis comes against the background of the role some media reports have played in the outbreak of violence across East Africa, particularly in fanning the embers of election-related violence or mass anxiety and fear following terrorist attacks. For example, media coverage of Kenya’s disputed 2007 elections contributed to the escalation of the conflict resulting in loss of

lives, displacement, and destruction of property. Apart from the adverse impact on the image of Kenya as a peaceful and prosperous nation, reports of communal and political conflict or the threat of violence in other East African states have undermined local, national, and regional efforts at peacebuilding. It is against this background that some media scholars and practitioners underscore the importance of paying more attention to the need for “peace journalism” as a strategy for peacemaking and peacebuilding.

These experts are of the view that sensitivity to peace and the non-violent prevention and resolution of conflict is best captured within the conceptual framework of “peace journalism” which, in addition to its emphasis on accurate reporting on matters of public interest, employs a variety of techniques to de-escalate social tensions. Peace journalism is not reporting that is wholly or even primarily oriented toward peace at all costs; it does not sacrifice truth and justice for a “law and order” type of peace as defined by the state. Peace journalism brings together certain elements that are essential to promoting peace in East African countries. The enabling elements of this form of journalism include sensitivity, agility, caution, factual information, and self-reflectivity in relation to what media practitioners put into the content of news reports and editorials.

Due to the reality that East African countries vary with respect to both the nature of conflicts and the degree of media freedom, these elements may not be practically applicable across the board but will depend on the relevant circumstances. For instance, covering a civil war will differ from reporting on terrorism or political or election-related conflict. However, these elements and the values embedded in peace journalism will help foster a culture of peace and non-violent conflict resolution across the region. It will also facilitate the creation a media space within which practitioners, scholars, and other stakeholders can learn from and support one another. This approach to information and knowledge dissemination will foster new insights and help develop innovative journalism.

This publication provides insights and knowledge aimed at strengthening the capacity of media practitioners for improved and ethically-sound coverage of conflict and peacebuilding in East Africa, with the goal of improving the prospects for peace and development. It is expected that it will become a manual for those seeking to understand and imbibe the values of peace journalism and reflect them in their day-to-day activities and conflict reporting in ways that bring the fourth estate — journalism — into the mainstream of peacebuilding in East Africa.

In the first chapter, “The Peace Journalism Approach,” Stephen Youngblood provides an overview and operational definition of peace journalism, outlining its evolution, principles, and giving examples of peace journalism in print media. Making the case for peace journalism, the chapter urges media practitioners to avoid the use of inflammatory language when covering elections and conflicts. To better prepare journalists for peace-centered reporting during conflict situations, the author encourages them to hold in-house peace and election reporting training for reporters covering upcoming elections in Africa. The chapter explores the importance of word choice and news framing as important aspects in the promotion of peace journalism in Africa.

The second chapter on “Peace Journalism in the LRA conflict” by Gloria Laker explores the role of peace journalism in ending the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency (1988-2006) in Northern Uganda, drawing upon Laker’s own experience as a war reporter. She provides a compelling case study about how a radio station founded by the Ugandan military called “Radio Freedom” morphed into the much larger and more impactful Mega FM radio station, helping to end the LRA conflict by directly reaching out to enemy combatants and persuading them to surrender with an assurance of amnesty. The chapter shows in practical terms how a radio station used its broadcasts to help sow the seeds of peace in Northern Uganda, for which it has been widely credited.

Duncan Omanga’s chapter, “Effective Strategies for Reporting Terrorism in Kenya’s Fight with Al-Shabaab,” approaches the concept of ter-

rorism as a form of political communication through public spectacle (and mass hysteria) and warns of the dangers of inappropriate labels in news coverage and reportage. He critically examines what constitutes terrorism and raises questions as to whether journalists should use terms like “separatist” or “gunman” in reports, underscoring the implications of using certain words and cautioning that “labels have consequences.” The chapter argues that the emerging threats and new conflict trends require a rethinking of the methods of peace journalism. In this regard, Omanga analyzes the distinct challenges involved in covering acts of terrorism, particularly in Kenya. He draws attention to the political function of gruesome public spectacles by inviting journalists to carefully consider whether reports using the “wrong words” may inadvertently aid the cause of the terrorists.

The point of departure for the fourth chapter by Fredrick Ogenga titled “Hybrid Peace Journalism: Institutional Philosophical Approaches to Peace and Security in Africa” is a conceptual overview of a Hybrid (African) Peace Journalism (HPJ) in the context of emerging terrorist threats in Kenya. He explains how his unique approach to peace journalism eclectically combines elements from Western peace journalism and African gnosis (lenses) in conflict-sensitive reporting. HPJ is based on development journalism that portrays Africa in a positive light. Hinged upon *Utu*, *Umoja*, and *Harambee* as core African values, this approach also offers a counter-narrative to Western-style journalism that tends to focus on sensationalized and largely negative versions of Africa-related news. The chapter also includes information on the several HPJ-related programs at Rongo University, including a master’s degree in media, democracy, peace, and security; the Salah Farah Visiting Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship on Media and Terrorism; and the Campus Peace Ambassadors club run by undergraduates studying journalism.

Chapter five, “Re-Situating Vernacular Media: A Tool for Peace Building among the Abakuria in Kenya,” by John Oluoch examines the place of indigenous languages in media outlets located in rural areas. Focusing on the Abakuria community, the chapter calls for deeper analyses of the suitability of local languages for broadcasts aimed at resolving in-

ter-ethnic conflicts in rural settings. The author is critical of the use of local languages on media platforms for resolving ethnic conflict. It concludes that even though community-based radio stations broadcasting in such languages appear to be the most reliable sources of news and information among the Abakuria, like in many other parts of Kenya, their potential as tools for intra-ethnic conflict mitigation cannot be taken for granted.

Victor Bwire's chapter, "Media and Peace in Kenya: Do Journalists Need Different Skills?" interrogates the crisis of credibility facing the Kenyan media. Arguing that the media has lost public trust due to its partisanship, bias, and poor ethical practices, Bwire claims that public trust can be regained if journalists are given better training so that they adhere to objectivity, ethics, and high professional standards in their reporting, and gain a greater awareness of their role and influence in society. Like other chapters in this book, he calls for conflict-sensitive in-house training on how to cover controversial or highly contested issues without using language or content that is likely to incite the other side or vice versa.

In chapter 7, Jacinta Mwende Maweu argues that the media's subordination to the interests of political and economic elites prevents it from practicing a "peace and human rights approach" to journalism. These elites, who are the main perpetrators of human rights violations, undermine media freedom to avoid scrutiny and accountability at the expense of more vulnerable citizens. She claims that the media's power is in its ability to set the news agenda and frame issues objectively. Such a role enables it to promote human rights by keeping the public informed and engaged. This, however, requires a credible and independent press committed to the truth.

Chapter One

The Peace Journalism Approach

By Steve Youngblood

Any discussion of peace journalism must begin with a conceptual examination of the term's constitutive parts. Although peace has often been defined simply as the absence of conflict or violence, Norwegian scholar Dr. Johan Galtung, one of the fathers of peace studies (and peace journalism), has written extensively about "positive" and "negative" peace. In this regard, Galtung defines negative peace as the absence of conflict, whereas positive peace consists of conditions where justice, equity, harmony, and so on can flourish.

For the purposes of peace journalism, Galtung's notion of positive peace is particularly useful since peace journalists strive to highlight individuals and initiatives that contribute toward harmonious conditions, and to lead constructive public dialogues about issues that pertain to justice and equity.

The American Press Institute defines journalism as "the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information." According to the Oxford Dictionary, it is "the activity or profession of writing for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or preparing news to be broadcast." However, this traditional definition has become problematic in the digital age. Do bloggers practice journalism? Are tweets, Facebook posts, and photos shared on Instagram aspects of journalism in the digital age? Who then is a peace journalist?

A peace journalist is a communicator who considers the consequences of his or her reporting when making reportorial and editorial decisions. In peace journalism, one would be less concerned with the nuances of

who is technically a journalist and more worried about the content and impact of the reports/messages disseminated by anyone, be they professional journalists, citizen-journalists, or social media commentators.

Defining Peace Journalism

In their groundbreaking book, *Peace Journalism*, Jake Lynch and Anabel McGoldrick observe that peace journalism occurs “when editors and reporters make choices—about what to report, and how to report it—that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict.” Peace journalism “uses the insights of conflict analysis and transformation to update the concepts of balance, fairness, and accuracy in reporting. It also provides a new road map tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover, and the consequences of their journalism, and builds an awareness of nonviolence and creativity into the practical job of everyday editing and reporting.”

The Center for Global Peace Journalism (CGPJ) at Park University (USA) adapts and expands on Lynch and McGoldrick’s definition. The CGPJ notes that peace journalism is a practice in which “editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choosing which words are used, create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good journalism. Peace journalism gives peacemakers a voice while making peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable.”

Equally important is a consideration of what peace journalism is not. It is not, according to the CGPJ and Lynch, open advocacy for peace. Instead, in Lynch’s words, peace journalism is to “give peace a chance.”

The Origins of Peace Journalism

As mentioned earlier, peace journalism is a concept developed by Johan Galtung in the early 1960’s. In a recent interview, Dr. Galtung said he coined the term because he believed “journalists have to learn to write about peace and core structural issues and to focus on common people.”

He noted he was encouraged to develop the concept, in part, due to a 1960's study that showed that foreign news was largely negative; often featuring an actor (bad guy), elite people, and centered on elite countries (Interview, Rongo University, November 20, 2015).

Dr. Galtung's original concept was further developed at the Taplow Court estate in southern England in August 1997 when the estate, which serves as the UK headquarters of Soka Gakkai International, an international Buddhist organization, hosted a meeting with Dr. Galtung, Jake Lynch, and other journalists. At the meeting, participants discussed a plan for merging journalism and peace and conflict studies to work synchronously.

Lynch, spurred by the Taplow meeting, went on to direct a project and website called *Reporting the World*. It was described as "a practical checklist for the ethical reporting of conflicts in the 21st century produced by journalists for journalists." The project, which ran from 2001 to 2005, facilitated a discussion among London journalists about conflict reporting and journalists' role in mitigating, alleviating, and transforming conflicts. *Reporting the World* provided a foundation for the seventeen points articulated by Lynch and McGoldrick in *Peace Journalism* in 2005. This first book on peace journalism inspired a number of related titles, including *Peace Journalism, War and Conflict Resolution* by Richard Lance Keeble, John Tulloch, and Florian Zollman in 2010; *Conflict Sensitive Reporting: State of the Art* by Howard Ross in 2009; and Steve Sharp's *Journalism and Conflict in Indonesia: From Reporting Violence to Promoting Peace* in 2013. Other contributions to the literature include, *Peace Journalism: The State of the Art* by Dov Shinar and Wilhelm Kempf in 2007; Wilhelm Kempf's *Readings in Peace Journalism: Foundations, Studies, Perspectives* in 2010; and Stephen Youngblood's *Professor Komagum: Teaching Peace Journalism and Battling Insanity in Uganda* in 2012.

A semi-annual magazine, *The Peace Journalist*, was launched in 2012 by Park University's Center for Global Peace Journalism (CGPJ). *Peace Journalism Insights*, is a blog run by the director of CGPJ. Dr. Galtung also writes a weekly editorial for the online outlet known as Transcend.

Key principles of Peace Journalism

Lynch and McGoldrick lay out a number of principles, including a widely distributed chart comparing peace journalism to “war/violence journalism” and a seventeen-point checklist of “what a peace journalist would try to do.” In the chart, war/violence journalism is reporting characterized by the spreading of propaganda and “us” vs. “them” narratives that demonize “them.” It is dominated by reporting that is victory-oriented, reactive, and elite-oriented, and focuses only on the visible effects of violence. Peace journalism is the opposite. It is reporting that is proactive, humanizes the other side, gives voice to everyday people, and discusses solutions.

Four items on Lynch and McGoldrick’s seventeen-point plan for peace journalism focus on the importance of language, and particularly the need to avoid language that victimizes (“devastated,” “destitute,” “defenseless”), is imprecise and emotive (“tragedy,” “massacre,” “systematic”), demonizes (“vicious,” “cruel,” “barbaric”), and imprecisely labels (“terrorist,” “extremist,” “fanatic,” “fundamentalist”). Other key points include avoiding reporting about conflict as if it is a zero-sum game (one winner, one loser), reporting about common ground shared by parties involved in the conflict, avoiding reporting only the violent acts and “the horror,” and not reporting claims as though they are facts.

However, during the more than ten years since Peace Journalism, theorists and practitioners (including the Center for Global Peace Journalism) have expanded this original war reporting orientation into other fields of journalistic endeavor, discovering along the way the utility of peace journalism principles to inform and improve practices in reporting politics and elections, terrorism, crime, and human rights. In fact, the peace journalism approach can be used to guide reporting about any type of conflict (political, ethnic, resource disputes, civil unrest, religious) and not just those involving violence.

Keeping in mind peace journalism’s applicability to many domains, the Center for Global Peace Journalism has devised a ten-point list that de-

scribes the elements of peace journalism.

Peace Journalism Elements

- PJ is proactive; it examines the causes of conflict and leads discussions about solutions.
- PJ looks to unite parties rather than divide them and eschews oversimplified “us vs. them” and “good guy vs. bad guy” reporting.
- Peace reporters reject official propaganda and instead seek facts from all sources.
- PJ is balanced, covering issues/suffering/peace proposals from all sides of a conflict.
- PJ gives voice to the voiceless, instead of just reporting for and about elites and those in power.
- Peace journalists provide depth and context rather than just superficial and sensational “blow by blow” accounts of violence and conflict.
- Peace journalists consider the consequences of their reporting.
- Peace journalists carefully choose and analyze the words they use; they that carelessly selected words are often inflammatory.
- Peace journalists thoughtfully select the images they use understanding that they can misrepresent an event, exacerbate an already dire situation, and re-victimize those who have suffered.
- Peace Journalists offer counter-narratives that debunk media created or otherwise perpetuated stereotypes, myths, and misperceptions

Source: Center for Global Peace Journalism

These ten peace journalism principles and those laid out by Lynch/McGoldrick were created in response to sensational and irresponsible reporting that ignored or devalued peaceful responses to conflict, while exacerbating already tense, contentious, and difficult situations.

Example of peace journalism

Let us begin with a comparison between “traditional” journalism and peace journalism. An example of a news story framed according to traditional reporting is as follows:

Gatu City, Republic of Gatu – Green Party Presidential Candidate Moses Akena said yesterday that Blue Party nominee Steven Oguti has been stealing money from the state treasury for many years, and that’s why Oguti has been able to afford nice cars and fancy vacations.

“This kind of thievery is typical of people from his tribe,” Akena observed. “It is clear that Oguti and those like him are no-good snakes.”

Further, Akena said that Oguti’s corruption will extend to the upcoming election. “We know if he wins, that he will be cheating. Now the question is, what will we do about this? Will we stand by and let him steal from us?”

Akena went on to compare his manifesto to that of his opponent. Akena said the Green Party promises to tarmac (pave) 1,000 km of roads per year if elected. He also said that they will hire 2,000 more primary school teachers when they come to power.

Source: Center for Global Peace Journalism

This traditional style of reporting is unbalanced and one-sided with the accused given no opportunity to respond. It depends on only one source and reports his words as the truth. It is clear that the reporter is being used to spread political propaganda and rumors. The story widens divisions within this society and could even possibly incite violence (“will we let him steal from us?”). Also, Akena is not held accountable for his statements. How will he pay for the new roads and teachers? How much will these things cost?

In contrast, see below the same story, this time framed using a peace journalism approach:

Gatu City, Republic of Gatu – Two of Gatu’s presidential candidates continue to engage in a campaign of mudslinging while two other candidates yesterday pledged to stick to issues.

At a press conference yesterday, Green Party Presidential Candidate Moses Akena made unsubstantiated charges against one of his opponents, Blue Party nominee Steven Oguti. Akena did briefly discuss his platform, including promises to tarmac 1,000 km of roads and hire 2,000 more primary teachers, but did not explain how or if these projects could be financially realized. Meanwhile, Oguti responded with similar personal attacks against Akena. When pressed about roads and schools, he promised to issue a manifesto on these issues tomorrow.

Several voters interviewed are tired of the mudslinging. Gatu City resident Stephanie Mulumba said, “I wish they’d talk about things that really matter. How can I afford to send my son to school? That’s what I really care about.”

As Oguti finished meeting the press, Purple Party candidate Alex Busiga and Orange Party candidate Betty Aciro held their own joint press conference where they pledged to discuss issues in this election. “The people want to know about roads and hospitals, and that’s what I’m going to talk about,” Aciro said. However, neither candidate was ready to discuss their positions on these issues in detail.

Source: Center for Global Peace Journalism

This version of the story is better because it is balanced among many parties and uses multiple sources. In this version, personal attacks are not aired, only referenced (and discredited). There is neither ethnic

name-calling nor potentially provocative content. Claims are not presented as facts. More prominent play is given to real issues that affect average people, who are quoted in the story. Also, political promises are exposed – what is their cost and feasibility?

Framing and Word Choice

Two key elements of peace journalism involve framing and word choice. The simplest definition of framing in journalism is the way journalists organize and present news. This includes which aspects of stories to emphasize, what to minimize, and what to ignore. According to framing theory, the media serves as a mediator between individuals and society and between the audience and the world around them. Sociologist and media scholar Gaye Tuchman argued that “the meaning of the events is given by the journalist through the news, because taken itself an event has no significance. It is the imposition of a frame of other ordered events that allows recognition of facts and the attribution of significance.” It is important for peace journalists to recognize the power of the media to create meaning and, thus, structure societal discourses. Unfortunately, this power has often been used by some journalists to create narratives which are superficial, lacking in context, and which tend to reinforce stereotypes. Peace journalism, conversely, seeks to offer counter-narratives, and to frame stories in such a way as to encourage a more nuanced, thorough, and constructive societal conversation.

The importance of responsible framing is matched only by the importance of word choice. As Lynch and McGoldrick have stated, peace journalists must take care not to use words that are demonizing, victimizing, and inflammatory. They understand that carelessly selected words can be anger-inducing, misleading, or divisive.

There are many words that journalists regularly and carelessly use that add only emotion and no substance to a story. For example, how many people have to die for an event to become a “massacre”? Or how about the adjectives “brutal,” “callous,” “slaughter,” “grim,” “monstrous”? What exactly constitutes a tragedy? And who is a martyr? The fact is that all of these words and their synonyms are subjective and imprecise. If a journalist (or peace journalist) is to adhere to the principle of objec-

tivity and impartiality, and if these emotive words are inherently subjective, this alone should be sufficient reason to omit such language. Peace journalism teaches that if one hundred people were killed, we simply write that one hundred people were killed. Peace journalists write the facts and let the reader or listener make their own subjective decisions as to whether the event is a tragedy or a massacre.

Peace and Conflict Theory and Peace Journalism

Peace journalists need also be aware of their responsibility in mitigating two seldom-considered non-physical types of violence distinguished by Galtung: structural and cultural. “Structural violence” refers to institutionalized societal conditions that may harm citizens and prevent them from meeting their basic needs. These conditions include social oppression, discrimination, marginalization, sexism, racism, and economic injustice. Specifically, Galtung first defines violence as “avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible.” The first aspect of this definition to note is the inclusion of the word, “avoidable.”

By “cultural violence,” Galtung means “those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence, exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence.” Put another way, “cultural violence is any aspect (often symbolic) of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence.” Rather than thinking of cultural and structural violence as separate entities, a peace journalist would consider them two branches of the same tree, since they are both “indirect and insidious.” Both are “built into the very nature of social, cultural, and economic institutions. For example, both ancient Egypt and imperial Rome were highly despotic, although they were technically in states of negative peace for long periods of time.”

The connections between these theories and the practice of peace journalism are clear. Peace journalists, and indeed all responsible journalists,

must discuss and expose conditions like sexism, racism, and economic discrimination that comprise structural violence, instead of merely reporting on the direct violence (like riots) that results from these conditions. Structural violence reporting requires the kind of nuance and context that is a bedrock principle of peace reporting – reporting that seeks, after all, to enable Galtung’s notion of “positive peace.”

Thus, peace journalists should lead community dialogues about the elements of and solutions for mitigating cultural violence. Again, traditional journalism might typically report about these issues only when they foment direct violence (e.g. Christian attacks on Muslims) or sensational confrontation (e.g. creationists vs. biologists at a school board meeting). By reporting contextually, peace journalists can move beyond these superficial narratives by analyzing how religion, science, language, and art are used to explain or legitimize direct or structural violence.

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Chapter Two

Peace Journalism in the LRA Conflict

By Gloria Laker

The LRA Conflict

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency began in 1988 with the goal of overthrowing President Yoweri Museveni's government. Its origins can be traced to the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), a cult-like rebel group led by the late Alice Auma Lakwena who claimed the Holy Spirit had ordered her to overthrow President Museveni's government due to its alleged unfair treatment of the Acholi, a Luo Nilotic tribe in northern Uganda. The HSM was defeated near Jinja in eastern Uganda and fled to Ifo refugee camp near Dadaab in Kenya where she lived for over ten years and later died. In 1988, Shortly after Lakwena's defeat, Joseph Kony, believed to be her cousin, turned the remnants of HSM into the LRA. Kony and his LRA planned to rule Uganda based on the Ten Commandments, which was quickly rejected. When they lost support, he turned his anger on innocent civilians, especially his own Acholi ethnic group. In frustration, Kony began abducting children as a form of recruitment to enlarge his ranks and gain publicity across the world. Together with his commanders, he looted, raped, raided homes, and planted landmines. The LRA also went as far as maiming civilians – cutting off ears, noses, and lips – as a punishment for reporting on LRA activities to government soldiers.

As the war intensified, Kony's reliance on child soldiers drastically increased. According to estimates, over eighty percent of Kony's fighters were believed to be children. These under-aged fighters were often given ranks to boost their morale to carry out more killings, abductions, and destruction. They were also promised top positions in government if the LRA took over power from Museveni. Such promises emboldened the child soldiers and turned them into cold-blooded killers that participated directly in most of these atrocities committed during the war that

resulted in the deaths of over one hundred thousand people.

This was the conflict I had to report about. My colleagues and I did our best to inform the world about the atrocities committed in northern Uganda. At the time, it was difficult to provide a balanced report because we had no access to the rebels, which meant that we frequently gave one-sided reports. The few LRA collaborators we knew gave us contradictory and diversionary information, so we could not trust them. There was also some bias in the coverage of the conflict, with varying levels of exaggeration and misreporting. Some newspapers took advantage of the situation and would run very alarming headlines with the intention of increasing their sales, which had the effect of further traumatizing the beleaguered local population. For example, it was reported ahead of planned negotiations in the early days of the peace efforts that some elders had received money from the government side. It is believed that this particular report resulted in LRA rebels killing the elders, which disrupted peace efforts. In another case, reports of rotten relief food being supplied to IDP camps negatively impacted food distribution. Rather than reporting that only two bags of maize flour were found to be rotten, media reports gave the alarming impression that all the relief food being sent to IDPs was unfit for human consumption, forcing authorities to stop food distribution for a period of time which adversely affected the IDPs.

Frequent media reports of President Museveni's ultimatums to LRA rebels negatively impacted the peace process and may have contributed to the committing of more atrocities. Each time the media reported that the president had given the rebels an ultimatum of two weeks to either sign a peace agreement or else he would finish them, the rebels would raid even more villages. If the media had avoided sensationalism and reported such statements according to the tenets of peace journalism, it would have likely had a less negative impact.

The Evolution of Peace Journalism in Northern Uganda

Despite the numerous challenges faced by the media, we collectively reported on the conflict. Doing so became easier through networking and the initiation of a collaboration mechanism among reporters. This en-

abled journalists to share tips, which increased coverage of the war and as a result turned international attention toward the LRA conflict.

After years of failed military interventions and a series of futile peace talks, the Ugandan army opted to invest in “peace media” in addition to military operations and, in 1998, established the first peace radio station in Gulu town called Radio Freedom. This medium was used to communicate to displaced persons and rebels, allowing the government to give child soldiers an assurance of safety should they escape from and denounce the rebel LRA group. As a result, a number of fighters slowly began escaping from the LRA camps – a positive step in the search for peace.

Successful Peace Journalism Strategies in Ending the LRA Conflict

On realizing the contribution made by Radio Freedom, the first community peace radio in Uganda, donors then started looking to well-trained media practitioners and radio programming as a way to promote peace during the civil war and later in the post-conflict period. Between 1999 and 2002, Britain’s Department for International Development (DFID) strongly supported the use of radio programs to persuade rebels to abandon fighting the government. DFID funded the establishment of Mega FM radio station in Gulu, which the government merged with Radio Freedom to become one of the major radio stations that broadcasted peace media programs in northern Uganda. With improved signal strength, Mega FM went on the air in August 2002 covering parts of southern Sudan, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and the wider northern Uganda region. The station broadcasted information about conflict and development and was geared toward conflict resolution by promoting the peace process. Ogena Lacambel, the host of Mega FM’s flagship Luo language program, *Dwog Pacho* (Come Back Home), would invite former child soldiers to share their stories on radio.

Today, Mega FM still has several peacebuilding programs including *Kabake* (community dialogue) and *Teyat* (stakeholders’ dialogue), open dialogue, and call-in live shows. Community members and LRA returnees are often featured in these programs appealing to those still fighting in the bush to return home. Lacambel has continued his *Come Back*

Home program to boost anti-LRA efforts in the Central African Republic (CAR), where he travels to interview displaced persons, refugees, and potential returnees for his program, thus making radio an effective medium and tool for peace journalism in the current peace process in northern Uganda.

To reinforce the peace journalism approach, hundreds of local journalists were trained in peace and conflict-sensitive journalism by international media development agencies like Internews, Center for Global Peace Journalism, Human Rights Focus, Conciliation Resources, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, and Germany's DW Akademie. Trainees were assessed on the potential impact of their reporting about the peace process. A number of community radio stations dedicated to peace journalism were set up and are still active today.

One unique media training initiative carried out by Internews that hundreds of peace journalists benefited from was themed: "From the Juba peace conference to the community." It was aimed at boosting the Juba peace process by allowing peace journalism to play a key role in the peace talks which contributed to a cessation of hostilities agreement in the form of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan in 2005.

Peace Reporting Awards

Peace reporting awards—in the form of equipment, cash, or scholarships—for excellence in conflict coverage have been created. This has motivated many reporters to report on conflicts from peace journalism perspectives.

Media/NGO partnerships

A number of NGO's have partnered with peace journalists in the region to produce messages about peaceful reconciliation, many of which still play on some radio stations today. The evidence suggests that the peace journalism approach was useful in mobilizing people and reaching out to rebels. Over 22,000 child soldiers and commanders responded to the appeal to abandon the war, significantly weakening the LRA. Ending

the LRA conflict would have been more difficult without the application of various peace journalism tools, including well-researched and balanced news reports, public service announcements (PSAs), talk-shows, focus group discussions, drama and songs, and school debates.

Conclusion

The northern Uganda experience teaches us that well-designed peace journalism programs involving trained reporters can contribute greatly towards ending violent conflict, and can potentially help in ending other conflicts in the Great Lakes region. One thing to bear in mind is that an effective peace journalism approach goes beyond merely reporting the news to engage the community by promoting peace initiative.

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Chapter Three

Effective Strategies for Reporting on Terrorism in Kenya's Fight against Al-Shabaab

By Duncan Omanga

Media and the Psychological War

The father of urban guerrilla warfare, Carlos Marighella, urged “terrorists” to consider the widest possible range of options for violence so as to orchestrate the violence for maximum psychological effect. According to him, the choice of target should be arrived at with consideration to how it will be portrayed in the mass media. He argued that “the war of nerves, or the psychological war, is a fighting technique based on the direct or indirect use of the mass media” and that “its purpose is to demoralize the government” in order to “sow anxiety, doubt, and uncertainty among the agents of the regime.”

Use of the media was also extremely important for al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Before his death, Osama bin Laden was “obsessed” with media coverage about himself and his organization, at one point being described as “a publicity hound” who had “caught the disease of screens, flashes, fans, and applause.” His successor Al-Zawahiri, was once quoted saying that “more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.”

Terror and the Politics of Spectacle

In light of the challenges Kenya has faced in the recent past with al-Shabaab – the Somalia-based al-Qaeda-linked militant group – Kenyan journalists must be thoroughly equipped to effectively report on terrorism. It seems prudent at this point to interrogate how al-Shabaab is increasingly using “spectacle” to gain media coverage, and how several stakeholders may be inadvertently supporting this process.

First, it is important to understand that terrorism is a form of theater and cannot exist without an audience. A terrorist without an audience is inconceivable. It is not only the magnitude of a terror attack that counts but rather the negative publicity and fear that it is capable of generating. When a few Kenyans are killed in an attack, it is a form of communication to a wider Kenyan public, and possibly beyond. In this sense therefore, the media becomes a critical platform through which the message of terror is communicated to its audience. These attacks are political: purposely aimed at influencing public opinion and re-organizing the government and its policy.

Second, the clearest sign that terrorists are beginning to “mediatize” their attacks on various targets is the aspect of contagion. Recent copycat terrorist attacks by other groups – in which people were lined up and shot in the head – were choreographed to fit within a previously used media frame after an attack on a bus successfully gained wide coverage. In both the print and electronic media, audiences were treated to images of the dead rarely shown or published by the Kenyan press. Such gory images help give the terrorists publicity and suffuse the nation with fear.

Apart from the publicity of bloody attacks, terrorist groups like al-Shabaab hope to gain other media-dependent goals. These goals include recognition of the group and their demands and the possibility, through extended publicity and attention, of gaining a quasi-legitimate status. When members of the opposition and civil society groups convene press conferences soon after an attack calling for the withdrawal of Kenyan troops from Somalia, they are not only playing into the hands of terrorists intent on fracturing the national psyche but also inadvertently giving recognition to al-Shabaab by implying that the terror group has legitimate grievances against the Kenyan state.

Media and Labels in Terrorism Coverage

Usually, when covering acts of terror the media contributes to public discourse by appropriating and fixing labels on people and events. Labels often imply a moral evaluation and also embed a response option. Some years ago, the Somali government instructed media houses in Somalia to stop referring to the militant group al-Shabaab by its name.

Instead, they wanted the group to be called “Ugus,” an acronym for the Somali phrase *Ururka Gumaadka Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*, which means “the group that massacres the Somali people.” As the rest of the world marked World Press Freedom Day, the head of Somalia’s Intelligence Services, General Abdirahman Turyare, told journalists that al-Shabaab, which means “the youth” in Arabic, was “a good name,” and that journalists should instead use “Ugus” to refer to the group.

While for a majority of Kenyans the name al-Shabaab remains pejorative, there is need to interrogate some of the labels that have been used to characterize the group in both the local and international media. This is important because in the event of any terror attack, anxious audiences rely on the media not only to get information, but also to construct meaning out of the prevailing circumstances.

For instance, several news reports in Kenyan dailies have used the label “fighters” in reference to al-Shabaab. Underlying this label is the assumption of a conventional eyeball to eyeball confrontation with combatants. This label creates a false equivalence between al-Shabaab terrorists and other conventional forces, such as the KDF (Kenya Defense Forces), in both fighting capacity and combat tactics. The truth is that al-Shabaab mostly avoids military combatants and security personnel and instead seeks out soft targets, usually non-combatants such as shoppers, passengers, and students. Their terror tactics do not in any way suggest they are fighters in the conventional sense of the word.

Before the attack on the Westgate shopping mall, most media reports used the label “rebels” to refer to the terror group. The term typically refers to those who rise in armed resistance against an established government to effect political change. But the recent announcement by the terror group that they seek to establish a “caliphate,” as well as the earlier decision to merge with al-Qaeda means that those labeling the group as “rebels” are doing them a favor. Occasionally, the mass media has also used the label “criminals” to refer to members of al-Shabaab. Unlike terrorists, criminals are not driven by political goals. They seek to benefit from proceeds of crime and would avoid death even if it means sur-

rendering to authorities. Labeling acts of terror as crime reduces some of the most heinous acts to the level of common misdemeanors. Worse, equating terror outfits with criminal gangs and referring to their bloody exploits as crimes could misinform the public. In some cases, it may also lead to confusion among the various judicial mechanisms for dealing with terrorists.

More recently, large media houses, such as Reuters, BBC, and CNN, decided to use “attackers,” “bombers,” or “militants” as labels to refer to the activities of terrorist groups. These labels are considered more neutral as they suggest objectivity and journalistic distance. However, for the global media, the choice of labels considered neutral may not be driven by the need to share truth objectively but by a profit motive that is cautious of offending sections of its global audience. If journalism is to remain true to its ideals, labels should make reference to individuals and groups for what they truly represent.

Good versus Evil

Groups such as Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and ISIS are clearly terrorist groups and should be referred to as terrorists. Such a label means that the group uses terror tactics to seek quasi-political ends that are too ideal to be the basis of a negotiated settlement. Violence by guerrilla and nationalist groups, such as the Mau Mau or African National Congress, was more often deployed discriminately to compel a powerful enemy to come to the negotiating table. In contrast, terrorist groups do not want a seat at the table but rather to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it. They articulate their struggle as one between good and evil, thus dehumanizing their victims and making indiscriminate violence morally acceptable. It is therefore prudent that public communicators, the media, and other stakeholders label al-Shabaab for what they really are – terrorists – and take care to avoid falling into the trap of enabling the group to spread fear and mass hysteria.

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Chapter Four

Hybrid Peace Journalism: Institutional Philosophical Approaches to Peace and Security in Africa

By Fredrick Ogenga

This chapter argues that the way in which the media represents terrorism could be a contributing factor to the rising number of cases of violent extremism in the country. Media scholars are faced with the burden of assessing the potential impacts of providing wide coverage to acts of terrorism, which is arguably a way that the media could be aiding terror through the publicity it affords terrorist attacks based on its the breaking news approach. This approach can be contrasted with other methods that give terrorism a media blackout, although this could inadvertently lead to more violent attacks by terrorists to make the point that media boycotts cannot deter them.

Kenya has experienced a surge of terrorism, with the main attacks occurring at the Westgate Mall, Garissa University, Mpeketoni, and Mandera. These major attacks were often interspersed with smaller attacks that had similarly devastating consequences. The main question this chapter poses is: To what extent should the Kenyan media cover terrorist attacks and what are the likely consequences of providing little or no coverage of terrorist attacks? This chapter argues that peace journalism provides an appropriate frame for determining the extent to which terrorism should be covered by the media in Kenya. Peace journalism strives to tell the truth about conflicting parties in a fair and objective manner with the overall aim of resolving the conflict by balancing the perspectives of all the parties involved. However, due to contextual factors, peace journalism should be applied in Africa in a manner that responds to local dynamics.

This chapter proposes a departure from the Western sensationalism

that currently characterizes terrorism news coverage in Africa. This approach, based on core Pan-African principles, is conceptualized as Hybrid Peace Journalism (HPJ). HPJ urges journalists to deliberately mention the word “peace” when reporting on terrorism and to avoid stereotyping and inflammatory labels such as “Islamic terrorist,” “Muslim terrorist,” “Islamic jihadist,” and “Somali terrorist” in their news coverage. However, the media uses such words partly because the local educational institutions that train journalists rely on mainstream traditional Western conceptualizations of news and news values. This approach demands that news has to be sensational such that “if it bleeds, it leads.” It is therefore useful for African institutions and scholars to re-conceptualize the approach towards the training of journalists and practice of journalism in Africa. Such a new approach should be context-sensitive and rich in African values, particularly those relating to peace, for journalists to integrate African peace-centered perspectives when covering acts of terrorism.

Thinking about an African-Centered Media

The media in Africa is heavily influenced by Western values and paradigms. Kenya media, for example, has been commercially structured, often serving the interest of audiences, owners, and advertisers. Historically, the Kenyan media has not occupied a comfortable space regarding the political, economic, technological, and social environment. They have simply acted as the mouthpiece of the government. Therefore, before we think of an African-centered media and how Africa is represented by media reports on terrorism, we must first explore a number of works that have made significant contributions to the literature about the Western media representation of Africa. Examples include the works of VY Mudimbe, Ali Mazrui, Francis B. Nyamnjoh, and Milton Allimadi. Mudimbe’s compelling works, *The Invention of Africa* and *The Idea of Africa*, have made significant contributions to the critique of the construction of otherness in Western discourses and the assumption that Western epistemology about ideas of Africa and its people is an authoritative blueprint. In *The Invention of Africa*, Mudimbe hypothesizes the possibility of authentic African systems of knowledge that are not necessarily bound by the normative conventions of Western science

defined through a certain episteme. Mudimbe brings about the idea of “gnosis,” derived from the Greek word *gnosko*, which means seeking to know, inquiry, methods of knowing, investigations, or acquaintance with someone. He describes gnosis that is bound by African traditionalism and ways of reasoning, which are different and unique from the Western episteme. He argues that:

Often the word [gnosis] is used in a more specialized sense, that of higher and esoteric knowledge, but one strictly under the control of specific procedures for its use as well as transmission. Gnosis is, consequently, different from *doxa* or opinion, and, on the other hand, cannot be confused by episteme understood as both science and general intellectual configuration.

Mudimbe’s title, *The Invention of Africa*, is therefore “a methodological tool that it embraces the question of what is and what is not African philosophy, and orients the debate in another direction by focusing on the possibility of philosophy as part of the larger body of knowledge of Africa called ‘Africanism.’” In conceptualizing such a possibility, Mudimbe questions the authenticity of the subjects of such discourses that can be regarded as “real African” and are informed by African gnosis. Who has the moral authority to represent or talk about an African discourse? Who has the right and credentials to produce it, describe it, or comment about it? Is it African scholars of philosophy or scholars of African philosophy? And what does their contribution mean to African philosophy? The former have been instrumental in the rejection of the Hobbesian “man in the bush” myth by separating the “real” African from the Westernized African and solely relying upon the first. However, their efforts have often been insufficient because they have failed to explain African philosophy beyond the parameters of conventional Western epistemology and normative conventions. Consequently, Mudimbe looks upstream with caution for answers to precisely what makes such an objective African reality possible, while regarding “discourses on African societies, cultures, and peoples as signs of something else.”

So, if the media is reporting on terrorism in Africa, what kind of discourses, angles, and frames should they use? Mudimbe’s approach re-

veals the level of caution required by journalists reporting on terrorism in Africa. Arguably, the Western media has been responsible for setting the pattern for how global media frames and covers terrorism. Domestic politics in Western countries had an outsized impact on the discourse around what constitutes terrorism and who is a terrorist, leading to some nations being branded the “axis of evil” by George W. Bush’s administration. This approach labelled certain countries exporters of radical Islamism, primarily Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan.

These countries are at the core of US President Donald Trump’s controversial new immigration executive order which attempts to suspend immigration from these nations to the US for up to 90 days. This policy has been viewed by many observers as a blanket ban on certain Muslim countries, which frames immigrant Muslims from Africa and the Middle East as potential terrorists. Such policies are informed by the Western empirical episteme. Trump’s executive order, though successfully challenged in court, partly explains how easily local parochial politics can shape wider global public opinion. It also raises questions as to the place of African voices and engagement in this ideological struggle revolving around the power to define threats posed by terrorism (and to whom).

Paulin J. Hountondji’s 1996 book, *African Philosophy, Myth and Reality*, seems to echo the weakness of African philosophy, a term which she boldly refers to as a myth. After mentioning several scholars of African philosophy on the continent, including those inspired by Christianity – such as Placide Tempels, Alexis Kagame, Mgr Makarakiza, and Antoine Mabona – and several other authors, such as Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, Adebayo Adesanya, and William Abraham, Hountondji concludes that these scholars have “projected onto [African traditions and oral literature] their own philosophical beliefs hoping to enhance their credibility.” Hountondji is convinced that the brand of philosophy masquerading as authentic, collective, and homogeneous African philosophy is actually a personal philosophy. She argues:

That is how the functioning of this thesis of a collective African philosophy works: It is a smoke screen behind which each author

is able to manipulate his own philosophical views. It has nothing beyond this ideological function: It is indeterminate discourse with no object...it is therefore clear [for example] that the Bantu philosophy of the one is not the philosophy of the Bantu but that of Tempels, that the Bantu-Rwandais philosophy of the other is not that of the Rwandais but that of Kagame.

Nevertheless, the most interesting issue is how Hountondji conceptualizes African philosophy. She introduces the idea of speaking of African philosophy in a new sense arguing that:

We must draw a line between African and non-African writers [journalists], not because one category is better than the other, or because both might not, in the last analysis say the same thing, but because the subject being African philosophy, we cannot exclude a geographical variable taken here as empirical, contingent, extrinsic to the content or significance to the discourse and as quite apart from any questions of theoretical connections.

From the above perspective, although the works of authors such as Placide Tempels (mentioned earlier) deal with an African subject and have played a significant or “decisive role in African ethnophilosophy,” they belong to European scientific literature “in the same way as anthropology in general, although it deals with non-Western societies, is an embodiment of Western science, no more and no less.” Therefore, according to Hountondji, what makes the works of authors like Mudimbe critical is that they have emanated from the perspective of an African writer. However, they have also been criticized for assuming that there is an “inherent centrism of the Western episteme in all representations of Africa (even African ones).” However, these works have often been credited for carving out possible pathways for African philosophy “beyond the impasse between ethnophilosophy and adaptation of Western philosophy to Africa.” Mudimbe’s works are important because they analyze the representation of Africa in the Western discourse and by African scholars. What narratives do media in Africa construct when reporting on terrorism on the continent and what intellectual positions

do African scholars assume when researching terrorism, including how terrorism is reported by the media in Africa and African media?

The most interesting point in the debate is how Africa is conceptualized in the West as the weaker partner in the war on terrorism, compelling countries like Kenya to “copy and paste” an American-style anti-terrorism approach in dealing with al-Shabaab in spite of the fact that it falls short on some aspects of the human rights compliancy test. As a result, sensational reports on terrorist attacks in Kenya have fed mass anxiety and undermined the security situation in the country.

Francis B. Nyamnjoh argues that the assumptions underpinning African journalistic practices are not informed by the fact that Africans should be involved in Africanizing their modernity and modernizing their Africanity. Therefore, a complex narrative that goes far beyond the simplistic Western one regarding Africa is necessary. This is not to assume that there is a homogeneity about the best ways of being and doing to which all Africans should aspire as they walk into modernity and civilization. The confusion about what is African and what is Western is at the heart of the dilemma currently facing journalism in Africa, which should strive toward creatively approaching African affairs with great sensitivity and nuance.

Therefore, African journalists operate in a world where everything has been pre-described for them by others and their only duty is to put these into practice without the opportunity to rethink and reinvent them. Nyamnjoh claims that if journalism privileges a hierarchy of humanity and human creativity and that the latter in Africa is presumed to be in abyss, then such journalism is bound to be prescriptive, condescending, contrived, caricatured, and hardly in tune with the quest by Africa for equality, recognition and representation.

The same argument can be applied to the “War on Terror” in Africa, where a closer inspection shows how journalism has been comprehending and articulating reality through the lenses of those who are convinced that their superior ideas should be uncritically adopted by those from developing contexts.

Mudimbe quotes the French Anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle in an interesting analysis that brings forth the possibility of unity among varying discourses, a central premise of the HPJ conceptualization. Amselle's work, written in French, includes a collection of nine essays that introduce another form of "reason" founded on the basis of the quest for truth in multicultural societies. This kind of reason is less concerned with differences (distinction) and questions of what concepts existed first. Rather, it establishes the manner in which differences are integrated to form a totality that is universal. Amselle undermines the tension related to questions about the universality of democracy by expressing views sympathetic to cultural relativism (cultural empathy) and questioning ethno-philosophy and ethnocentrism.

Amselle presents a rationality that "refuses to reduce African culture and the body of its social practices and negotiations to an immobile essence" and, at the same time, gives a critical appraisal of the politics of universality. Mudimbe quotes Melville Herskovits who states "when one pays attention to the declension of the concept of civilization and culture in the singular and the plural; the singular always postulates the unity of humankind, the plural its diversity and cultural variation." Tensions that often manifest themselves in brutal acts of terrorism are as a result of the global clash of identity and tension between cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Herskovits quotes Foucault to illustrate how "Western culture has contributed to the name of man, a being who, by one and the same interplay of reasons, must be a positive domain of knowledge and cannot be an object of science." Such views are central in questioning ethnocentrism in order to give room for cultural diversity. Culture approached in its diversity presents humanity with perhaps the best possibility of finding closure to the ever-present question of "objective truth" that would speak well to the collective predicament of mankind and bury terrorism in the dump of history.

The argument by Herskovits captures the discourse guiding the HPJ philosophical approach discussed in the next sub-section. Herskovits argues that:

The very core of cultural relativism is the social discipline that comes out of respect for differences—of mutual respect. Emphasis of the worth of many ways of life not one, is the affirmation of values in each culture. Such values seek to understand and to harmonize goals, not to judge and destroy those that do not dovetail with our own. Cultural history teaches that, important as it is to discern and study the parallelism in human civilizations, it is no less important to discern and study the different ways man has devised to fulfill his needs.

Hybrid Peace Journalism

HPJ is an Africanized version of Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge’s concept of peace journalism (good journalism) that seeks to look at conflicts in Africa with African lenses and wisdom or “gnosis” for peace and security to avoid the escalation of violent conflicts. Peace journalism enables editors and reporters to make good choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choose which words are used to create an atmosphere conducive for peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good or ethical journalism.

The core elements of HPJ are research, training, and practice (RTP). The research component entails focusing on Pan-African methodologies and concepts that reflect both contextual differentiation and conceptual precision. This involves answering questions about how we should apply peace journalism in Africa given the contextual realities, and whether or not journalistic values such as “if it bleeds it leads” are precisely applied in conflict reporting and reports on terrorism in Africa. The training component addresses the challenge of transforming mainstream media institutions from within due to their long tradition of commercializing news content. News, to many media houses are stories that must “sell” in order them to sustain their operations and make a profit. This implies that a younger generation of journalists needs to be trained so they can master the newly formulated Pan-African HPJ approach to news reporting that incorporates the African values of Utu, Umoja, and Harambee into conflict reporting. Further, trained journalists and media practitioners are expected to practically apply these principles, which leads to the third component: practice.

The approach calls for the use of “Campus Community Radio for Peacebuilding” managed by students or “Campus Peace Ambassadors.” These community radio stations will play two roles: first, they will act as a training facilities for upcoming journalists. Second, they will be used as peacebuilding spaces for addressing peace and security issues such as conflict, youth radicalization, and violent extremism. This will enable young people to exit violence, learn to explore various types of peacebuilding, and nurture resilient communities through action learning. This underscores the salience of institutional training in universities on news reporting and peace-centered news coverage in Africa.

Figure 1. Hybrid Peace Journalism Institutional Model for Peace and Security in Africa



Media, Terrorism and Peace-building in Africa

Terrorism has been defined differently by different scholars but the master narrative of what constitutes terrorism has been constructed by the media. Much of what the media has relied upon is the idea of negativity and sensationalism, a representation strategy that has been exported to

Africa for covering incidences of terrorism. This is reminiscent of the manner in which Africa has generally been negatively represented by the Western media. The narrative about the continent has been dominated by references to disease, failed states, poverty, and conflicts. However, the question is: who is responsible for the invention of this negative narrative about Africa?

While poverty and disease are largely perceived as an African problem, the case of terrorism is more complicated. This is because while the historical trajectory of the African continent reminds us of colonialism and slavery, which are arguably forms of terrorism, Africa is historically littered with narratives about Africans terrorizing their own during territorial expansions and inter-ethnic conflicts. More recently, identity conflicts sanctioned by the state and civilians have taken place, such as the 2007 and 2017 post-election violence in Kenya and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. However, the notion of terrorism in Africa is largely “foreign” and can be quickly traced from colonial struggles that gave birth to nationalist movements and nationalist media agitating for freedom. It was also not unusual for colonial authorities to label nationalist/liberation movements such as Mau Mau of Kenya, Maji Maji of Tanzania, and Umkhonto we Sizwe in South Africa as “terrorist.” Is there a way Africa can reclaim its historicity in the context of such dominant negative representations? Scholars would premise their arguments on the role of colonialism and slavery; colonialism contributed largely to the negative discourse and the idea of the “dark continent” as explorers and missionaries scrambled for a piece of Africa under the guise of “enlightening” the natives. It is the extension of this narrative, as advanced by the local and foreign media, which would compel keen observers to have quick answers and conclusions to the reasons behind the negative representation of Africa.

The Kenyan press has often presented news about terrorism in an alarming manner, often using bold headlines, red colors to indicate terror hot spots, and graphic images of the extent of damage immediately after terrorist attacks. This is well illustrated by the Daily Nation of July 9, 2015 where the statistics on casualties of terrorism in Kenya are displayed prominently using bold front-page headlines and graphic images of vic-

tims carried in body bags by the Red Cross rescue teams. The chapter uses a map of Kenya to illustrate ungovernable spaces between Kenya and Somalia—apparently due to al-Shabaab attacks—in red, symbolic of the chaotic situation there. Kenyans largely rely on mainstream newspapers for accurate information to help them come to terms with serious events affecting the country, such as terrorism. This is not to argue that if the media publicizes terrorism terrorists will not attack. Terrorists may still attack even with limited or no media coverage. It may be argued that media blackouts could potentially incite them to unleash even more sophisticated, organized, and devastating attacks just to prove a point.

When covering terrorism, it is important for journalists to exercise caution in deciding, for example, what pictures to use and how to frame stories to avoid spreading fear among the public, who should otherwise be encouraged to remain resilient in order to overcome terror. The media plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards terrorism and security. In his essay titled “Reporting Terrorism among Kenyan Media: Should Journalists be Cautious?” Abraham Kisang argues that the media should deny terrorists the opportunity to access publicity. By framing dramatic events of terror to attract large audiences and failing to detach themselves from terrorism stories, journalists actually praise people known or suspected to be al-Shabaab members while giving relatively little media coverage to counter-terrorism measures.

CMDPS Hybrid Peace Journalism Institutional Approach

It is in the context of the foregoing that the Center for Media, Democracy, Peace, and Security (CMDPS) at Rongo University launched a new graduate program in Media, Democracy, Peace, and Security and a Visiting Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program based on peace journalism (as conceptualized by its proponents). In addition, CMDPS has institutionalized a new philosophical approach to peace journalism research in Africa by developing Hybrid Peace Journalism (HPJ) based on news values inspired by *Utu*, *Umoja*, and *Harambee*. The basic tenets of HPJ can be gleaned from Fredrick Ogenga’s 2015 article in the African Journal of Democracy and Governance. It is developmentally driven by African ideals of community belonging (*Ujamaa*), unity (*Harambee/Umoja*),

and Humanity (*Utu/Ubuntu*). The media has a moral obligation to be true to the local context and nuance, and to participate and stand up for peace. The HPJ approach has also been integrated in an ongoing global project on exiting violence.

This kind of journalism calls for peace, love, and unity, imbibing the character of the great African forefathers and their dreams about the future of the continent. A future blessed by positive peace, tranquillity, and prosperity for all. The focus is on peace because it is a prerequisite for development, something that Africa direly needs. To practically introduce HPJ, the Center conducted a “Peace and Reconciliation Journalism Project” in partnership with the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University (USA) and Ugwe FM (now Radio Rameny) to train practicing radio journalists in the region on peace reporting. It is important to educate practicing journalists in regions of Africa where terror is rife on how to report terrorism using HPJ principles that take into account the complexities of local socio-cultural, political, and economic dynamics.

HPJ Methodology and Practice

The CMDPS is working with other partners, including the Peacemaker Association (USA) and its Kenyan chapter, the Peacemaker Corps Foundation Kenya to invest in the power of radio (Campus Community Radio for Peacebuilding). The latter is to be run by CMDPS Hybrid Peace Journalism Club members. The members are undergraduate students pursuing communication, journalism, and media studies. The Peacemaker Foundation Kenya and Peacemakers Association, USA are currently working on developing a film, TV and radio (internet) academy for peacebuilding in Kisumu, Kenya where students will be trained various skills on how to use technology for peacebuilding and to support our on-going annual event called “The Global Peace in the Streets Film Festival” that takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York as part of our Economic and Social Council Status (ECOSOC) status responsibility with the UN.

What is terrorism?

There is no single definition for terrorism. The problem of defining terrorism has hindered its analysis since the inception of terrorism studies in the early 1970s. In his definition of terrorism, Max Abrahms takes the “strategic model” view, the dominant paradigm in terrorism studies which posits that terrorists are rational actors who attack civilians for political ends. However, there is no denying that the media has often played a role in constructing what appears to be the definition of terrorism. Today’s freedom fighters are tomorrow’s terrorists; examples include, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the anticolonial Mau Mau movement in Kenya, Umkhonto We Sizwe (the armed wing of the Africa National Congress), the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), and the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah). Traditional case studies on media and terrorism, though few, have focused on the symbiotic relationship between media and terrorism based on the assumption that media often increases the risk of terrorism because terrorism is used as a communication mechanism by political extremists.

Citizens’ Risk Perception and attitudes Towards Terrorism and Insecurity

In a study on the perception of terrorism and security and the role of the media Petra Guatsi and Zdenka Mansfeldova pose three very important questions that can help us understand the centrality of the media in understanding terrorism: How does the media frame terrorism and organized crime? Has the media coverage of terrorism and organized crime made the public more sensitive to the issue of security? And if so, how are the (security) threats perceived and discussed by the media? The widespread publication of information about threats to national security, the reactions of governments, and steps taken to prosecute offenders clearly demonstrates that more security does not necessarily make society happier. Happiness is not only connected to the feeling of safety and absence of fear but also the absence of far reaching security mechanisms that infringe on the privacy and freedom of citizens. This helps in explaining the tensions between security and freedom and the moral cost of security in terms of sacrificing individual privacy. The media, being at the forefront of shaping perceptions and attitudes can provide outlets for whistleblowers and act as a watchdog for civil liberties and privacy

in this era of the global war on terrorism. The question citizens must ask is how much security do they want and at what price. The media therefore plays a critical role as an arena where information is made available and negotiated and where opinions, including those of terrorists, are formed. The media therefore has a role to play when it comes to risk perception, political communication, and the tensions between freedom and security which would affect terrorism and responses to it in one way or the other.

Guatsi and Mansfeldova argue that higher risk perception increases political intolerance, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and prejudice. One can point to the increasingly common belief in Kenya that Somalis and Muslims are terrorists. Similar considerations have informed new immigration laws in the United States and Europe concerning refugees and foreigners. It should be noted that threat perception reduces cognitive abilities, leads to closed-mindedness, and intolerance to difference, or those considered as the “other.”

The primary focus of terrorism is political communication intended to persuade the target audience to pursue some form of action intended to achieve some political ends. This is why audiences are critical in terrorism. How effectively audiences will be influenced through terrorism as a means of political communication will therefore depend to some extent on how the media frames that communication and how this matches with their level of security risk perception (both individual and collective/national) or fear vis-à-vis individual citizens’ willingness to surrender their freedom as the price for security. This is why some have argued that the global war on terror is just another excuse for espionage, allowing elites to control the masses who surrender their own liberty and privacy at the altar of security surveillance, which will never make a society happy and peaceful.

There have been studies, such as Dominic Rohner and Bruno Frey’s, which have focused on testing whether or not media coverage increases the risk of terrorism. Others have focused on the relationship between terrorism, religion, and ethnicity; the economics of terrorism and the “common interest game”; and the psychological impacts of terrorism.

In addition, most studies focusing on terrorism in Africa, such as Wanjiru Kamau's "Kenya and the War on Terrorism" and Jeremy Presdtholt's "Kenya, the United States, and Counterterrorism" have emphasized the socio-cultural and political implications of counterterrorism with minimal reference to literature on media and terrorism. Ogenga's 2012 study goes further to interrogate media approaches to news that sanction representation of terrorist attacks, and therein terrorism. This chapter explores the study of media and terrorism by not only inspecting Western ideologies of journalism but also presenting an opportunity to reinvent journalism in Africa inspired by Africanism in the context of the new threat of terror in Africa.

Conclusion

The media in Kenya and African need to go beyond the superficial representation of terrorism. The ways in which Kenya's public discourse and mainstream print media have been representing terrorism could be partly responsible for the surge of violent extremism in the country. This chapter argues that such media representations are motivated by the absence of Africa-centric frameworks that can guide journalists working in the continent, especially those in conflict regions, on how to cover news in a manner that would cultivate dialogue and peace, rather than fuel conflict. Unfortunately, news about terrorism is usually sensationalized making governments, policymakers, and audiences susceptible to mass anxiety or fear occasioned by such attacks.

In the spirit of the necessity of a more context-specific and peace-oriented framing, HPJ borrows from peace journalism as an ideological seedbed and fuses it with African traditions (gnosis) when covering news about terrorism or conflict. The argument is that since media is central in political communication and is often used by terrorists for propaganda purposes, the same media can be used to forestall terrorism by spreading messages of hope, peace, love, and unity. HPJ is inspired by the latter and also assumes that conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa are pre-conditions for economic development, good governance, job creation, poverty alleviation, and investment in better health and education systems. As has been noted, these are the hallmarks of the "Africa Rising" narrative and Kenya's Vision 2030.

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Chapter Five

Re-Situating Local Mass Media: A Tool for Peacebuilding among the Abakuria in Kenya

By John Oluoch

Conflict as questioning, dialogue, struggle, or debate is universal and found within families, communities, and nations. The number of major conflicts around the world today is considerable—Kenya is not an exception. Most conflicts are characterized by violence; many are still unresolved and have created deadlocks in international, regional, and local relations. The understanding of the root causes of conflicts and their management has increasingly become very dynamic. However, it is the conflicts that are linked to ethnicity that are more significant, despite attracting less attention worldwide.

More often than not, the focus has been on inter-ethnic conflicts in Africa at the expense of intra-ethnic conflict. Conflict can emerge among members of the same ethnic group as a result of scarce natural resources, as is the case among the Abakuria of Kenya. Several intra-ethnic conflicts of varying scale and intensity have occurred this century. Many of those involved in intra-ethnic conflicts are driven by grievances against perceived socioeconomic and political exclusion. Researchers have identified intra-ethnic conflict as having its origin in a contest for political power and scarce resources rather than diverging cultural affiliations involving ethnic markers.

According to A.K. Sikuku, there have been multiple cases of intra-ethnic clashes in Kenya, the major one being the conflict among Sabaots residing in and around the Mt. Elgon region, which has pitted the Sabaot Land Defence Force of the Soy clan against the Moorland Forces of the Mosop clan, resulting in massive loss of lives and destruction of property.

The Abakuria Conflict

No intra-ethnic conflict in Kenya has been so profound yet unnoticed as the one among the Abakuria community. This ethnic group occupies the south-western tip of Kenya along the Kenya-Tanzania boarder, falling largely in Migori County. The county is multi-ethnic, also home to Luos, Luhyas, and some pockets of Somalis. The Kuria community is made up of four clans: the Bakira, Bagumbe, Banyabasi, and Bairege. All four clans speak exactly the same tongue (with minor differences) and are similar in most respects. The Abakuria are both pastoralists and agriculturalists, though in recent years they have become predominantly agriculturalist.

Like many other instances of intra-ethnic conflict in Kenya, this one is based on clan differences and has led to extensive destruction and death without regard to gender and age. The construction of clan identity in the Abakuria ethnic community has increasingly been used as the basis for the allocation of political offices. Scholars have argued that the Abakuria conflict has become perpetual. The conflict between the clans escalated to its most intense between 1986 and 1996. More recently, between July and September 2009, clashes between the two main clans – Nyabasi and Bwirege – resulted in the displacement of over 20,000 people and left up to 200 people dead and much property destroyed.

The clashes in Kuria East District that began in 2009 were rooted in disagreements caused by cattle rustling, political differences over the division of the former Kuria District, and disputes over the location of the current headquarters in Kegonga Division – where the Nyabasi clan resides. The Bwirege clan demanded that the district headquarters be located in Ntimaru Division while the Nyabasi clan wanted the headquarters to remain in Kegonga. Due to these divergences of opinion, the clans viewed themselves as being involved in direct competition. In 2009 alone, more than 100 houses were burned down, more than 1,500 animals were driven away, crops in the fields were destroyed, granaries were burned down, and more than 180 deaths were recorded, with over 1,500 families becoming internally displaced. Others were forced to camp out in various market centers, churches, police stations, and with their relatives in what they called “safe homes.” Publicly voiced

opinions reportedly incited divisions between the two clans. Historically, the Nyabasi and Bwirege clans have clashed over their competition for scarce resources, such as farmland, livestock, and grazing lands. In addition, the conflict cycle patterns in Kuria East District have involved cattle raids, which can be partially attributed to cultural practices relating to the use of cattle for paying dowry for marriage following the initiation rites of passage.

The conflict has led to significant problems, such as youth from both clans being forced to suspend schooling or drop out altogether to seek safety among their respective clans during periods of conflict, which seriously interrupts their learning. Schools situated along the border between the clans are forced to close down, if they are not destroyed altogether. Inter-clan marriages have also suffered as women from the opposing clans have been forced to flee to their respective homes as they are threatened with death, with some being killed in the process of attempting to flee. This is often followed by the emergence of armed militias among the clans in the name of self-defense, which leads to more violence and destruction. A solution to these problems is therefore an urgent necessity. To foster long lasting peace, these conflicts among the Abakuria need to be resolved decisively and the media, through peace journalism, should lead such efforts.

Community-based or ethnic-oriented mass media offers content that commercial and public outlets cannot provide and can therefore serve remote geographic communities and their interests. The content of these broadcasts is largely popular and relevant to a specific and/or local audience but may often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. Indigenous language mass media serves listeners by offering a wider variety of local content that is not necessarily provided by the larger commercial media companies who have to place more emphasis on profit and audience. In exploring the importance of sharing information locally and opening up wider information networks, rural mass media is effective in improving the sharing of vital information within remote rural communities. Mass media in this regard provides a set of participatory communication techniques that support community dialogue by using local languages to communicate directly with

community members, including youth and women, regarding issues of importance to that specific community.

Broadcast Media in Kenya

The use of mass broadcast media in Kenya started with the launch of the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) radio and TV channels in Nairobi which broadcast to the entire nation. The programs were aired in English, Kiswahili, Hindi, and eleven other local languages. By 1964, KBC had established three national broadcasting services and two regional stations in Mombasa and Kisumu. It was not until 1953 when the first broadcasting service was created for Africans – appropriately named African Broadcasting Services (ABC). It carried programs in Kiswahili, Dholuo, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Kiluhya, Kikamba, and Arabic. It is worth noting that the Kuria language was not among those that found their way onto the airwaves during this period.

Following the liberalization of the airwaves in Kenya from 2003, major media houses started radio stations with a view to targeting specific demographic groups by playing certain musical genres and speaking various local languages. The Voice of Kenya (VOK), the only mass media broadcaster in the country by then went on to establish nineteen radio stations which were broadcast in different parts of the country. The state agency offered three domestic services: the national service in Kiswahili, the general service in English, and vernacular service in fourteen local languages. The vernacular/indigenous language services offered 184 hours every week for each language. Among the local languages which had been given a slot by the national broadcaster KBC, Kikuria only had two hours of airtime from 11 am to 1 pm. These broadcasts were also only allowed from Monday to Friday, excluding weekends when the majority of listeners were at home and more likely to listen to their radios. It should also be noted that the hours allocated for Kikuria broadcasts are not prime, invariably resulting in very low listenership and, therefore, a missed opportunity to use local radio among the Kuria for peacebuilding.

Local Media and Violence in Kenya

The indigenous language mass media broadcasting landscape in Kenya has changed over the last decade under the management of the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) which licenses stations that broadcast in vernacular languages. Kameme FM, which broadcasts in the Kikuyu language, was the first purely vernacular station to be set up in 2000, eventually leading to a proliferation of commercial, state-run, and community-based vernacular stations. Native language radio stations in particular have exploded with the latest data showing that they have increased tenfold over the last decade from 10 in the 1999 to over 120 in 2015. In total, there are more than 100 active FM radio stations in Kenya, some of which are: Kass FM and Changei FM (Kalenjin); Coro FM, Kameme FM, and Inooro FM (Kikuyu); Ramogi FM, Radio Lake Victoria, Lolwe FM, and Radio Mayienga (Luo); Mulembe FM and Sulwe FM (Luhya); Musyi FM (Kamba); and Egesa FM (Kisii). As stated earlier, none of the stations broadcast in the Abakuria language.

Local broadcasting is instrumental in helping developing countries like Kenya combat economic, political, educational, health, and social-cultural challenges. Ethnic tensions, human rights abuses, and corruption in government can be addressed through vernacular radio programs. Low literacy levels in rural areas and health issues, such as infant mortality, maternal deaths, and communicable diseases, are best addressed through tailor-made radio programs broadcast in various vernacular languages through the radio – since radio is cheap and accessible through ordinary internet-enabled cell phones. Considering that cell phone penetration in rural Kenya is high, indigenous language radio that speaks to the local context has the potential to work wonders in conflict resolution due to the large audience reach.

The media, whether traditional (e.g. radio, television and newspapers) or contemporary (21st century) media (e.g. internet and mobile telephones), can be a potent tool either for fomenting and escalating conflict or for ameliorating and resolving it. This idea is fortified by the example of the Rwandan genocide of 1994 where a private radio establishment, Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, was used to rally one eth-

nic group to commit massacres and try to wipe out another group. The use of mass media to mitigate inter-ethnic tensions during the Kenyan post-election violence in late 2007 and early 2008 is a well-documented example of media use for conflict de-escalation and resolution.

Kenya's vibrant media has been accused of having been ill-prepared for the 2007-08 post-election violence that rocked the country following the disputed presidential results of the 2007 general election. The Kenyan media has been variously accused of failing to communicate the election results and news about the subsequent violence without partisan flavor. Various media houses, especially local language radio stations, stood accused of stirring tensions by taking sides and providing politicians with avenues to disseminate hate speech. A radio journalist with one of the local radio stations in Kenya, Joshua Arap Sang, was indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of crimes against humanity. The ICC prosecutor alleged that Sang used his Kalenjin-language radio program during the post-election violence to incite one community against another.

During the 2013 general elections, some members of the Kenyan media played a crucial role in informing, educating, and providing space for dialogue and a spirit of peace, tranquility, and restraint from acts of violence. These media stations practiced a considerably high degree of self-censorship by adopting the prevailing peace discourse. They were accused of failing to fulfill their role as a watchdog and neglecting to act in the best interest of the public. The media was accused of imposing self-censorship before, during, and immediately after the 2013 elections with respect to broadcasting sensitive issues and topics that might incite or ignite violence. The media was said to be highly cautious, restrained, and invariably hesitant. Critics said they lacked courage and objectivity and did not delve deep enough into the issues as they should have done.

Critics have also argued that the prevailing peace discourse at the time of the election was the fundamental reason why the media resorted to self-censorship. The general feeling was that the 2007-08 violence was to be avoided in 2013 at all costs. The barrage of peace messages from both the government and civil society via the mass media urged Kenyans to maintain peace and accept the results of the election whichever way

they went. The media was keen to salvage its image after accepting culpability for the violence that took place in 2007–08 and was determined not to be blamed for another round of violence.

It is worth observing, however, that researchers and practitioners have tended to give more attention to the negative role of media in conflicts rather than its ameliorating effect. Etyan Giboa has observed that:

Despite the critical significance of the roles played by media in conflict and conflict resolution, this area has been relatively neglected by both scholars and practitioners. Most existing studies focus on the often negative contributions of the media to the escalation and violence phases of conflict. Very few studies deal with the actual or potential media contributions to conflict resolution and reconciliation.

A well-grounded approach to the exposition of the actual and potential benefits of media in conflict resolution and reconciliation lies in understanding the broad range of media effects. There are limitations inherent in focusing on the media as prime movers or cause of particular events. Elizabeth Perse has suggested that the reason why many studies on media effects have produced minimal evidence of such effect could be that “media effects might be obscured by methodological imprecision, theoretical forces, and many personal, social, and situational constraints.” To Perse, “the probe for media effects demands continued efforts, refined theories and methods, and the integration of a wide range of intervening variables into research designs.” It is therefore arguable that there is need for more investigation of media effects using refined approaches and based on sound theory to establish the actual effects of the media on society rather than (like the proverbial desert ostrich) avoid confronting the problem and assuming that media effects do not exist in any significant way. It is in this regard that this chapter interrogates the potency of local radio in resolving a long-lasting intra-ethnic conflict among the Abakuria people of South Western Kenya.

Local Media Potential for Peace Building in Kenya

A majority of Kenya's rural population depends on the radio as the most readily available source of important information and news. The information and broadcasting industry has exponentially developed and has great potential to provide rural populations with many benefits, including access to information and educational materials in different languages and forms. Broadcasting in indigenous languages has provided opportunities to rural populations who are more proficient in their mother tongue than in Kiswahili and English, the languages largely used on major radio stations. This model of local broadcasting targets rural audiences who are mostly concentrated in particular regions and speak a given language. This makes rural areas the focal points for vernacular broadcasting, which means that the radio broadcasts are regional and ethnic but not national.

Rural audiences are not highly regarded by traditional media (who need to sell airtime to advertisers) because of their low purchasing power and higher poverty rates. Therefore, the uptake of television and traditional media is still low and slow in rural areas compared to urban areas. The role played by local radio in influencing development in these rural areas cannot be overstated. It addresses a large section of the rural population due to their familiarity with the language and content of its broadcasts. The centrality of the rural population to government policy formulation and activities of non-governmental organizations that are concerned with improving the living conditions and standards of the underprivileged communities can become spin-offs from the creative use of local broadcasting.

Curiously, the real scale and magnitude of the Abakuria conflict does not get prominent coverage in the mainstream national media. What is normally reported is cattle theft among the Abakuria, with hardly any indication about the magnitude or impact of the so-called cattle theft. It is therefore not clear how the mass media has assisted in the resolution of the intra-ethnic conflicts in Abakuria. It is also worth examining whether cattle theft alone would qualify as intra-ethnic conflict or simply theft, which would demand a different response mechanism.

However, if cattle theft escalates in number and transforms into large-scale cattle rustling by armed non-state actors, then intra-ethnic conflict is alive and kicking. In the latter, local radio could play a key role in conflict resolution.

This chapter brings to the fore two important arguments: first, intra-ethnic conflict is an important phenomenon in its own right, leading to thousands of deaths and population displacements throughout the world. Second, conflict within homogeneous groups is intimately connected to conflict between heterogeneous groups. A complete understanding of ethnic conflict processes will be impossible without a better grasp of the forces responsible for generating intra-ethnic cohesion and fragmentation. Finally, the study of intra-ethnic conflict provides a useful perspective on the nature of group identities, highlighting the mutable characters of group boundaries and the need for response theories that transcend assumptions of fixed cleavages.

This chapter argues for a “ready to go” prescription for the use of local broadcast media in resolving or ameliorating a long-standing ethnic conflict in Kenya. Ethnic harmony is priceless as it forms the very foundation upon which other development projects—in education, health, and infrastructure—are based. No society can develop amid incessant violent conflict, as witnessed among the Abakuria. A close analysis reveals that rural-based media is a strategic communication initiative appropriate for a specific audience in a specific manner—whether written, printed, broadcast, or spoken—and it is intended to reach and impact a large and homogenous audience in a manner that can be predetermined. This includes television, radio, advertising, movies, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, and so forth.

If this is the case, it therefore means that mass media delivered via indigenous languages is a significant factor in the culture of those who share in that language, particularly in terms of their social interactions and collective aspirations as a people. Sociologists refer to this as a mediated culture, where media continuously reflects and re-creates the culture. Communities and individuals are constantly bombarded with mass media messages that promote not only products but moods, attitudes, be-

iefs, behaviour, and a sense of what is and is not important to them as a people. In the same vein, the message of peace can be broadcast with similar energy for peacebuilding.

The Role of Media in the Resolution of Intra-Ethnic Violence

In order to objectively understand the nature and the role of media in peace and conflict management, it is important to understand the various ways through which local media influences conflict and conflict management. The growing recognition of the crucial role the media can play in helping provoke conflict has led many to examine how the media can play a constructive role in resolving conflict. One limitation of the discussion about peace journalism is that it speaks to only part of the reality of the modern media where the media is an actor in its own right. Part of the problem with the debate about “peace journalism” is confusion about the different roles of the media. The media is a place in which journalists convey ideas, information, and stories to the listener, viewer, or reader—in this way they project a version of reality. It is sometimes said that the journalist acts as a vehicle that conveys the different views, outlooks, and perspectives in a society. In this capacity, there is fierce resistance to any attempt to encroach on the independence of journalists carrying out this function or any attempt to impose an ideological purpose on them, however worthy. The media understood in this way is a structure that reflects the debates of a society.

However, in addition to the representation of the groups they are reporting on—in this case parties to a conflict—journalists also present their own views and interests. In this respect, the media itself becomes an actor in the conflict, for example, when it takes an editorial position or focuses on certain issues or aspects of the conflict to the exclusion of others. The idea that the journalist sits outside of the events they are covering, whatever their perspective on “peace journalism,” could be misleading. The media, in this sense, are themselves actors and agents in the conflict and their behaviour will inevitably have an effect on the way the conflict develops.

To use more abstract terms, the media constitute a space in which the conflicts of a society can be articulated and are inevitably themselves ac-

tors in that conflict. Moreover, the combatants in a conflict will usually relate to each other either on the battlefield or in the way they are represented in the media (the latter, as is evident in many recent conflicts, may often be more important to them than the battlefield). To use sociological terms, the media is both a structure and an agency. The idea that they can be simple instruments of any point of view – state or non-state – could be profoundly misleading and policy toward the media in the context of conflict has to take into account the sense in which they play both of these interweaving roles.

Policymakers need to focus on the media's role in (re)constituting the public sphere: how it can be fostered and nurtured in such a way as to allow non-violent resolution of conflict. The “public sphere” refers to the range of communication outlets and media which enable a society to view the representations of itself. To function properly, a public sphere must have free flowing access to information and enable the views of ordinary citizens to be heard. It should not be assumed that conflict itself is wrong or can be avoided in any society. The clash of interests, needs, and desires balanced against the allocation of scarce resources means that conflict is inevitable in any given society. Where the media can play a vital role in allowing a peace process to develop is by enabling the underlying conflicts in a society to be expressed and argued in a non-violent manner. This requires the creation of a suitable media space in which this can happen.

A number of organizations have begun considering how to create situations in conflict and post-conflict environments that allow the media to play a constructive role in tackling conflict. It has been increasingly recognized that an effective media is essential to preventing violent conflict from breaking out and an important element in its resolution should it break out. There are an increasing number of attempts to produce a more comprehensive and coherent policy approach to this problem.

On October 5–6, 2003, International Media Support (IMS) convened a roundtable in Copenhagen to examine conflict reporting. It acknowledged that there was no consensus on the best approach to conflict reporting among media professionals. The roundtable considered how

conflict reporting impacted on war and how such reporting could be improved. The focus was on recent conflicts and participants sought to explore the distinction between peace journalism and conflict sensitive journalism through analyzing specific interventions on conflict reporting.

Some participants suggested that the best approach might be to examine what the professional responsibilities of journalists should be in a conflict arena. This would include avoiding portraying conflicts as a zero-sum game contested by two combatants but rather disaggregating the various interests that clash. It also would involve seeking to humanize both parties – making it clear that sometimes (though not always) there are no simple villains and victims.

In recent years, there has been a profusion of projects and initiatives designed to support and promote peace journalism of one kind or another. Most focus on professional training initiatives to promote better coverage of issues related to diverse identities or differences and encourage reports on peace initiatives. The Canadian based Institute for Media Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS) suggests five kinds of peace interventions, including training, promoting positive images, and providing fictional storylines that have a positive peace message. Some of these approaches are little more than applying the best techniques of professional journalism to conflict reporting. However, the very term “peace journalism” causes many journalists real concern. They argue that society needs information and the exchange of ideas and opinions in the public sphere. The media, they say, must be free to play its role in fulfilling that obligation. Arguing that the media promotes peace suggests to them the sense of an ideologically committed journalism.

Some media organizations have argued that the very practice of good professional journalism is itself a form of conflict resolution. In conflict-affected settings, the provision of reliable information is crucial and is often difficult to provide. The provision of accurate information about a conflict is therefore a priority for all agencies and developing and maintaining a culture of professional journalism is important.

As has been noted, the media can be a crucial weapon in stoking and fanning conflicts and wars. On the other hand, the media can be a constructive tool in helping resolve conflicts and bringing about peace. The quest for the media to be involved in conflict resolution has developed a tension between the need for the media to remain objective without taking sides and the need to be passionate about the cause of peace. Many have called on the media to assume the mantle of championing the cause of peace by delving into the underlying causes of conflicts. Taking such a path will lead to better analyses of the objectives of all the actors in a conflict and finding ways to resolve the conflict. Whereas conflict is an extreme form of communication, the media can play a vital role in allowing a peace process to develop and thereafter flourish by enabling underlying conflicts to be expressed and argued in a non-violent manner.

To achieve this requires the creation of a suitable media space within society through the establishment of an appropriate media framework and practices landscape. In light of the proliferation of mass media technology, a responsive media policy is needed. This will allow the media to play a constructive role in tackling conflict without losing its primary role. Any attempt to prevent violent conflict from breaking out requires the presence of an effective and responsive media that is within reach of community members. This is where the importance of local radio stations in rural communities, as in the case of the Abakuria, becomes clear.

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Chapter Six

Media and Peace in Kenya: Do Journalists Need Different Skills?

By Victor Bwire

Since the 2017 general election in Kenya and the ensuing post-election violence, the role of the media in peacebuilding has come under scrutiny. Elections in Kenya have often been marred by political, ethnic, and other forms of conflict before and after the voting process. Over the past three decades the country has experienced multiple conflicts linked to politically motivated violence. The ways that the Kenyan media have often reported on such incidents of political violence have also heightened tensions during such periods.

High Stakes in General Elections

Given the high stakes in the 2017 general election and the atmosphere of general insecurity (heightened by the threat of terrorist attacks) and polarization along political and ethnic lines, the media is seen as a key player in the country's peacebuilding efforts. Several interventions aimed at educating journalists and members of the public on the need for national cohesion and peaceful coexistence ahead of the 2017 general elections have been implemented.

The decision to place media at the core of peacebuilding in Kenya was premised on case studies, including the tragedy of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the post-election violence of 2007-8 in Kenya, and the spate of terror-related attacks. A commission of inquiry concluded that the media was as much to blame for the mayhem as the political class – not in initiating the violence, but by amplifying the messages of hate mainly through the local radio stations.

Media Law and Regulation

Media support groups in Kenya are aware of the limitations journalists face. Several measures were put in place ahead of the 2017 general

election to strengthen existing laws regulating media coverage of political and ethnic violence and terrorism. These include the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the National Intelligence Service Act in 2012, the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act (POCAMLA) in 2009, and the Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) in 2010. In addition, a number of administrative pronouncements and policy statements have been made by the authorities targeted at the media, clearly indicating that the media must change the way it covers matters of national security.

The Constitution provides for the right to information for the media and other Kenyans, particularly in matters of national importance, as the media has a responsibility to inform the public on matters that affect their lives. The information flow from the policymakers and the government has been problematic for the media, sometimes frustrating their work. The increased control of media coverage of terrorism, including the harassment of the media in the war on terrorism and violent extremism, is usually justified by the government on grounds of national security. In some cases, the government has expressed concern about poor quality work and lack of ethics on the part of some journalists whose reports end up supporting terrorism by giving publicity to acts of terrorism, thereby helping to spreading fear and anxiety among members of the public.

A major challenge facing journalists covering terrorism and security-related events is increased conflict with Kenya's security institutions. Journalists have experienced intimidation, physical attacks, trauma, loss of equipment, and some have also been coopted by the government. Counterterrorism experts argue that the emergence of the information revolution has led to the development of new and expansive communication technologies with instant worldwide reach that fuels the phenomenon of "mega-terrorism." The question then is, how do we balance national security with the public's right to information? Should we allow everyone – terrorists included – to compete in the marketplace of ideas and hope the public will make the right choices?

There is need to strengthen the professionalism underpinning media coverage of elections, terrorism, violent extremism, and counterterrorism as an important step toward enhancing mutual understanding between media and security institutions. Journalists must be aware of the consequences their reporting may have on society despite the pressures of accuracy, deadlines, objectivity, and even patriotism. They must also ensure that every story is based on facts rather than emotions. There are several policies and laws in Kenya that exist to guide the practice of journalism; some of the most important include the following:

- Article 33 of the Constitution provides for freedom of expression but adds a rider that the right to freedom of expression does not extend to propaganda for war, incitement to violence, or hate speech—which includes advocacy of hatred that constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others, incitement to cause harm, or speech based on any type of discrimination specified or contemplated in Article 27.
- The Media Council Act 2013, through the Code of Ethics for the practice of journalism in Kenya, has specific provisions that require journalists to guard against stories that could be seen to incite people to violence including Article 23, which concerns acts of violence, provides that the media shall avoid presenting acts of violence, armed robberies, banditry, and terrorist activities in a manner that glorifies such anti-social conduct. Newspapers shall not allow their columns to be used for writings which tend to encourage or glorify social evils, warlike activities, and ethnic, racial, or religious hostilities.
- Article 4 on Integrity provides that journalists shall present news with integrity and common decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest and respecting the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subjects of news.
- Article 12—covering ethnic, religious, and sectarian conflict—requires that news, views, or comments on ethnic, religious, or sectarian disputes shall be published or broadcast after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, unity, and peace.
- Article 15 on intrusion into grief and shock provides that in cases

involving personal grief or shock, inquiries shall be made with sensitivity and discretion.

- On the use of pictures and names, Article 21 provides that as a general rule the media shall apply caution in the use of pictures and names and shall avoid publication when there is a possibility of harming the persons concerned. The manipulation of pictures in a manner that distorts reality and accuracy of news shall be avoided. Pictures of grief, disaster, those that embarrass, and those that promote sexism shall be discouraged.
- Article 25 on hate speech provides that quoting persons making derogatory remarks based on ethnicity, race, creed, color, and sex shall not be allowed.
- The Kenya Information and Communications Act (KICA) 2013 has specific rules and regulations for the media through the “Programming Code” for free-to-air television and radio broadcasters. The guidelines are as follows:
 - a) The coverage of crimes in progress or crisis situations shall not put lives in greater danger than is already inherent in the situation.
 - b) Coverage should avoid inflicting undue shock and pain to families and loved ones of victims of crimes, crisis situations, disasters, accidents, and other tragedies.
 - c) The identity of victims of crimes or crisis situations in progress shall not be announced until the situation has been resolved or their names have been released by the authorities.
 - d) Coverage of crime or crisis situations shall not provide vital information or offer comfort or support to the perpetrators.
- Section 66 of the Kenyan Penal Code provides that any person who publishes any false statement, rumour, or report which is likely to cause fear and alarm to the public or to disturb the public peace is guilty of a misdemeanor. However, the publisher can be absolved if prior to publication, they took measures to verify the accuracy of the statement, rumor, or report as to lead them to reasonably believe that it was true.
- Section 52 on the “power to prohibit publications” empowers the government to, on “reasonable grounds,” prohibit the importation of

- any publication or declare any publication to be a prohibited in the interests of public order, health or morals, and the security of Kenya.
- Section 67, relating to the Defamation Act, makes it an offense for anyone to publish anything that threatens to degrade any foreign dignitary “with the intent to disturb peace and friendship” between Kenya and the country to which the dignitary belongs.
 - The Official Secrets Act provides that any person who “obtains, collects, records, publishes or communicates in whatever manner to any other person” any “information which is calculated to be or might be or is intended to be directly or indirectly useful to a foreign power or disaffected person,” commits an offense. “Any person who takes a photograph of a prohibited place or who takes a photograph in a prohibited place, without having first obtained the authority of the officer in charge of the prohibited place, shall be guilty of an offence.” A person found guilty can be jailed for up to five years.
 - Section 9A of the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2012 provides that anyone who “advocates, promotes, advises, or facilitates” the commission of a terrorist act or any act preparatory to a terrorist act is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twenty years. Section 12D on radicalization criminalizes anyone who “adopts or promotes an extreme belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious or social change.” This offence is punishable by a maximum of thirty years.

The Media Council of Kenya captured the importance of sensitive news coverage in times of conflict in a 2016 publication called *The Anatomy of Conflict: A Conflict Analysis Handbook for Journalists; Towards Conflict Sensitive Reporting*. The book features emerging discourses on how the media is expected to carefully balance media freedom and responsible reporting of sensitive national issues as outlined in the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism and the Constitution. Apart from guaranteeing the freedom of expression, the Constitution also calls on practitioners to understand that the right to freedom of expression does not extend to propaganda for war; incitement to violence; hate speech; or advocacy of hatred that constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others, or incitement to cause harm.

Creating Awareness

The media can help people to identify and understand the dimensions and root causes of a conflict. Journalists can raise awareness about what needs to happen in order for a conflict to be effectively resolved. By anticipating how a conflict might develop, journalists can ask questions that raise awareness about the potentially harmful effects of allowing a conflict to escalate. By identifying the ways in which parties are approaching conflicts, journalists can pose questions that highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the competitive and collaborative approaches that parties adopt in pursuing the conflict.

The Kenyan media has for the last decade played a crucial role in advancing democratic governance, reforms, and accountability in the country. It continues to play a central part in the ongoing political, legal and constitutional reforms in the country. It is now evident, therefore, that a strong, independent, and professional media can make a positive contribution to national cohesion and peacebuilding by presenting diverse opinions and ideas on issues of public interest that inform people in their choice of leaders both at the national and county government levels. Thus, improving professionalism and effectiveness of media practitioners and strengthening the existing media landscape are crucial pre-election preparatory processes and appropriate responses to terrorism.

The 2007 post-election violence saw many people accusing the media of irresponsible reporting that led to electoral violence. The tendency to focus on side issues instead of sharing information that would empower, educate, and sensitize the public was one of the shortcomings of media coverage at the time. One of the lessons learned was the need for the media to pay greater attention to the task of creating a public sphere: the “space” within which ideas, opinions, and views freely circulate. It is imperative that the media is prepared to take this central role.

Training Journalists

Based on the foregoing, many experts have argued that media practitioners, if properly trained and equipped, can play a critical role in help-

ing communities understand historical injustices and how to address them, learn about the laws that exist to address conflicts, and promote peaceful co-existence.

As Howard Ross's maintains in his handbook, "My Tribe is Journalism," it is very important that journalists are well trained and equipped with skills that enable them analyze conflict professionally and report from an informed stand point. It is not the business of professional journalists to seek to alter, lessen, or disrupt the course of conflict. However, they have the duty to present accurate, objective, and impartial news about conflicts to their publics. While the constraints of time and space are limiting factors in news production, journalists must learn to package their stories without eliminating the essential elements they have learned through their analysis of conflict. It should be noted that:

Conflict exists in a relationship when parties believe their aspirations cannot be achieved at the same time. They also perceive a divergence in their values, needs or interests (latent). They therefore mobilize the power that is available to them in an effort to eliminate, neutralize, influence, or change each other. The sole desire being to protect or further their interests in the interaction (manifest conflict). From this definition, several things are evident in relations to the nature of conflict.

Accordingly, accurate, objective, and reliable reporting on conflict by journalists is very important. It can assist in reducing tensions by bringing out facts, correcting misperceptions, and presenting realities which would otherwise be ignored by conflicting parties. Quality reporting on conflict helps avoid stereotypes and narrow views about the causes and process of conflict. The media can explore and provide information about opportunities for resolution and help the parties into dialogue by accurately reporting on the issues. This can only happen if journalists have a good understanding of conflict situations. Journalists have the potential to contribute to conflict escalation, interfere with peace processes, derail negotiations, and misinform the public through inaccurate, insensitive, and sensational reporting. Conflict analysis helps to create a broader, deeper, and objective understanding of the conflict situation in a way

that enhances quality reporting.

Scholars like Gary Furlong argue that “conflict can be viewed through a cultural lens, communications lens, personality lens, structural lens, type of conflict lens, dynamics of conflict lens, and many more.” Professional requirements set by the Media Council of Kenya dictate that journalists must look at conflict holistically with the aim of objective, accurate, and reliable reporting. When journalists are equipped with such a wide understanding and approach they are likely to “avoid repeating shallow, thoughtless rhetoric about the conflict to achieve sensationalism and targets for their media houses.” Journalism that is conflict-sensitive equips media practitioners with the capacity to recognize that their role is to serve audiences and not to serve as a megaphone for any actor in a propaganda war.

For preventive action, training in conflict-sensitive journalism should be aimed at building journalists’ awareness about the potentially pivotal role they can play in mediating or exacerbating conflict. Such initiatives entail working with the media to find a means of reporting that balances between two disparate positions and emphasizes peace promotion. Similarly, the media promotes peace by serving as an information conduit between dissenting groups and voices, thus reducing prejudice and stereotypes. In targeting the political elite, media interventions promote peace by placing pressure to move toward a resolution.

The conflict sensitive journalism trainings and media stakeholder engagements implemented by the Media Council of Kenya and other media support groups are aimed at building journalists’ awareness of their role. The power of the media to influence policy and stimulate intervention, thereby changing the course of a conflict, has been dubbed the “CNN Effect.” This effect creates a triangular relationship between media, government, and the public and underscores the role of journalists as enablers of peace in conflict-affected settings.

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Chapter Seven

Toward a Peace and Human Rights Approach to Journalism: In Search of Social Justice in Post-Conflict Situations in Africa

By Jacinta Mwendu Maweu

Introduction

The main argument of this chapter is that the major impediment to a peace and human rights approach to journalism lies in the media's structural subordination to the interests of political and economic elites. Both peace journalism and human rights journalism are relatively new modes of socially responsible journalism aimed at contributing to the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick define peace journalism as “when editors and reporters make choices—of what stories to report and about how to report them—that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict.” Human rights journalism on the other hand is journalism “with a human face; one that cares for people, that prioritizes people over capitalistic interests and above all the one that shields the public from the manipulations of the political and economic elite.” A human rights approach to journalism is anchored on the premise that “all people matter” (Ubuntu or Utu), which is a moral commitment to overcome practice of “othering” when reporting on contentious issues, especially during times of war and conflict.

Johan Galtung, one of the earliest proponents of peace journalism makes a distinction between “peace journalism” and “war journalism.” He argues that peace journalism is a “journalism of attachment” to all actual and potential victims whereas war journalism attaches only to “our” side. War journalism, according to Galtung's peace journalism, model is “propaganda-orientated” whereas peace journalism is “truth-orientat-

ed.” Galtung criticizes the media for generally following the “low road” in reporting conflict by chasing wars and focusing on the elites that run them, as well as “win-lose” outcomes. Both peace and human rights journalism, as alternative forms of journalism, emphasize not only reporting the acts of political, social, or cultural violence but also asking questions about the reasons behind these acts and how they can be prevented or managed to minimize suffering.

A human rights approach to journalism holds that the media should highlight the indirect structural and cultural violence—abuses of economic and sociocultural rights—prevalent in most conflict situations. Human rights are fundamental freedoms to which all people are entitled; they are about being treated with dignity and respect. They are especially important to vulnerable and less powerful people such as children, women, and people living with disabilities whose rights are most at risk of violation in times of war and conflict.

Mass Media and the Protection of Human Rights

Independent journalism and a free media are the bedrock of democratic consolidation and respect for human rights. During times of conflict, truth and justice are the first casualties, especially if the media have been co-opted by the powers that be to play a propaganda role on their behalf, masking the reality that the same elites are also the main perpetrators of human rights violations during such times. Attempts by the media to make the facts known to the public are often the first essential step in redressing human rights violations and holding those in power accountable. The media should work with public authorities, civil society, and the international community to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights.

By exposing violations of rights, the media can improve the climate for democratic debate and reduce corruption and acts of impunity, which are major sources of human rights violations in public life. At the same time, media sensitivity to the importance of human rights provides reliable sources of information through which citizens, human rights groups, private organizations, and public authorities can work together to promote development and eliminate abuse.

As the people's watchdogs, agenda setters, public informers/educators, and the fourth estate, the media plays an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights. They have a moral obligation to expose human rights violations and offer an arena for different voices to be heard in public discourse. The media has the power to highlight human rights issues and the moral obligation to monitor, investigate, and report all human rights violations against anyone regardless of their socioeconomic status. To ensure social justice for the poor, human rights and peace journalists must endeavor to deconstruct the underlying causes of, for instance, the political violence prevalent in many Africa societies today, as opposed to only reporting about outbreaks of violence. Some of these causes are ethnicity, poverty, youth unemployment, and denial of minority rights.

Media Manipulated by Consent?

Although the media wields a lot of power which can be harnessed to achieve the goals of a just peace and human rights protection, this power is often abused or misused to provide a conducive environment for violations of such rights. Although the media are not simply agents of the powerful, there is a vast body of scholarly literature that suggests that news media focuses on powerful people and institutions and generally reflects established interests. The way the media uses language to represent different social and political groups and to describe what events and issues are newsworthy, tends to establish the dominant ways the rest of us to talk about those groups and events.

During times of conflict, there are many factors that impact the rights of people, such as the international and national legal frameworks for rights, the cultural context in which the journalist is reporting, the socioeconomic situation of the country or region, and the political situation—all of which journalist should strive to contextualize and deconstruct. Many people in our society do not know their rights. The media can help them better understand their own lives, thereby strengthening their ability to stand up for their rights. By increasing public understanding, journalists increase opportunities for friendly coexistence and reduce the likelihood of conflicts based on misunderstanding, rumor,

and misinformation. For most people, information filtered through the media is their main source of knowledge of various issues: “if the media didn’t say or show it, then it didn’t happen.”

The media does set the agenda for the public through the way it frames issues and determines what issues are considered important. By omitting certain events and issues from the day’s agenda and overemphasizing of others, the media establishes a particular way for its audience to think about reality. More often, the media aligns itself with political and economic elites and their propaganda, sometimes even State propaganda, especially in times of war. Peace and human rights journalism, unlike war journalism, assesses the often deliberate and systematic attempts by mainstream media to represent political and economic elites as “worthy victims” and ordinary citizens as “unworthy victims” in cases of political violence. Peace and human rights journalism is supported by framing theory because it critically examines how journalists choose what to report on and how they report what they choose. Framing and agenda setting is critical in peace and human rights journalism because any meaningful debate about journalism must include some effort to set out the basis on which some forms of representation should be preferred to others.

Case Studies

In Kenya, there are many occasions on which the mainstream media has largely succeeded in making the public “forget” about critical post-conflict issues by either downplaying them in their coverage or ignoring them altogether. Examples of this are media coverage of the 2007–2008 post-election violence, the subsequent cases at the International Criminal Court (ICC), the 2013 general election, and the just-concluded 2017 general election.

During the 2007–2008 post-election violence, the media were accused of taking the “low road” of war reporting by taking explicit political stands, thus fueling the conflict. In regard to the coverage of the ICC cases, the media was accused of downplaying and ignoring the plight

of the helpless internally displaced persons (IDPs) by presenting them as the “unworthy victims” while portraying the minority political elite who stood accused of crimes as the “worthy victims” of the conflict. Human rights journalism calls on the media to objectively and impartially represent all parties involved in human rights violation and not portray elite victims as more worthy of rights (mainly the political and economic elites) and non-elites as being less worthy.

In the coverage of the 2013 general election, the media was accused of going overboard in promoting “peace at all costs,” what can loosely be described as “peaceocracy,” at the expense of justice and democracy and in the name of “peace journalism.” Media coverage of the 2017 election appeared to repeat the mistakes of 2013. Although there were numerous alleged electoral malpractices, the media tended to give a lot of prominence to announcements by official sources, especially the Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), police, and President Uhuru Kenyatta. Within the framework of human rights and peace journalism, the mainstream media in Kenya can be faulted for not engaging in critical reporting that investigates and interrogates claims by officials to explain and offer context and perspective on the issues raised. Journalists and the media have a moral obligation to connect the dots for the public.

There was also a deliberate move by the media to enforce a blackout on reports of post-election killings – mostly in the opposition strongholds of Kisumu, Siaya, Homa Bay, and Nairobi – and the use of excessive force against protesters by the Kenya Police after IEBC officially declared Kenyatta the president-elect. Journalism that steers clear of controversial claims by legitimate actors in the name of peace contributes to injustice and proves counterproductive in the long run. This is because it not only undermines the integrity and credibility of journalism but also undercuts the strengthening of state institutions such as the IBEC.

There was also a subsequent crackdown on vocal civil society organizations, such as the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and the Africa Center for Open Governance (AFRICOG). Although the media

did highlight such crackdowns, there was a deliberate and rather worrying attempt not to ask the hard questions regarding the government's motives behind the crackdown, especially with a looming election petition by the opposition. One would have expected questions as to whether these organizations were paying the price for their election-related activism or if the crackdown's timing was just a coincidence. These are legitimate questions that journalists ought to have asked but failed to.

Conclusion

Journalists and the media hold the power to determine what is newsworthy and to construct stories and select words in ways that influence people's understanding of issues. The media has the capacity to inform the public, to connect remote worlds, and to shape an individual's knowledge and understanding of the world we live in. Journalists and the media have a professional and moral obligation to increase public awareness, educate the public on their rights, and most importantly, to help monitor human rights.

Journalists should not only report events; they should also provide in-depth analysis to put issues into context. Through in-depth analysis and the bringing together of multiple perspectives, journalists create the potential for a more knowledgeable, well-rounded, and aware public. This increased awareness could lead to a stronger civil society and a more active population that can stand up for its civil, political, and socioeconomic rights, which are grossly violated during times of conflict. Good journalism grounded on a peace and human rights framework should not avoid the ugly facts. It should instead accurately report on what is going on, interrogate the claims, and report them in a manner that helps the reader, listener, or viewer understand what is happening. Such reporting would also help in holding perpetrators to account.

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