



Conflict-Sensitive Coverage: A Manual for Journalists Reporting Conflict in West Africa

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Audrey S. Gadzekpo

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School of Information and Communication Studies,
University of Ghana, Legon

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Foreword

This e-book offers a guide to practicing editors and journalists working in conflict-affected and post-conflict West African countries. It focusses on promoting the core values and practice of peace journalism in the sub-region. Drawing upon a deep experience of the strong connection between media and peacebuilding, it offers a sound basis for practitioners reporting conflict to transcend the dichotomies that characterize reports on conflict by prioritizing the virtues of balance, equity, accuracy and constructive conflict transformation in telling the “whole story” at all times.

Edited by Professor Audrey Gadzekpo, one of West Africa’s leading media scholar-practitioners and an Alumna of the Social Science Research Council’s African Peacebuilding Network (APN) program, the book captures both the APN’s goals of supporting the production of high quality knowledge and the integration of knowledge-based activities and actions into the implementation of social and public policies. It also demonstrates how the APN supports the promotion of transformative journalism in ways that nurture and expand opportunities for peace in West Africa.

Cyril Obi

Program Director

African Peacebuilding Network (APN)

Social Science Research Network (SSRC)

New York

Preface

This publication is based on presentations delivered at a media practitioner training workshop aimed at building the capacity of African journalists to cover conflict and peacebuilding in West Africa. The two-day workshop on “Improving Media Coverage of Conflict and Peacebuilding in West Africa” brought together eighteen print, radio, television, and online journalists who report on conflict and peacebuilding in the sub-region. The journalists came from seven West African countries—Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

It was organized in March 2016 by the School of Information and Communication Studies in collaboration with the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, both located at the University of Ghana and supported by the African Peacebuilding Network (APN).

The workshop adopted a combination of theoretical and practical sessions with critique and interactive exercises and was facilitated by experienced academics and practitioners who combined the fundamental theories in the field with the rich experiences of their practice to engender a holistic understanding of issues.

Journalists were introduced to concepts and key issues in conflict and peacebuilding, given an understanding of the link between development, peace, and conflict, as well as led to reflect on the roles, ideologies, and practices of the media in conflict and peacebuilding. They were also reminded on how to adopt a peace journalism approach in their work and to produce content that is ethically sound.

Importantly the workshop provided an opportunity to link together West African journalists and scholars whose work focuses on conflict and peacebuilding to share experiences and learn new ways to approach their writing in the belief that this would help mitigate the risks of the media contributing to conflict.

Note on Presenters

Dr. Margaret Amoakohene is Head of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana.

Mr. Vincent Azumah is the Regional Coordinator in charge of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation for the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

Mr. Sulemana Braimah is the Executive Director of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA).

Mr. Chukwuemeka B. Eze is the Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo is Dean of the School of Information and Communication Studies, University of Ghana.

Brigadier General Emmanuel Kotia, PhD, is Course Director and Academic Programmes Coordinator at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC).

Dr. Admire Mare is a Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg South Africa.

Dr. Peace Medie is a Lecturer at the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD).

1

INTRODUCTION: WHY MEDIA MUST IMPROVE COVERAGE ON CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

Audrey Gadzekpo

The end of civil war in Sierra Leone and Liberia in the early 2000s brought renewed hope that West Africa would enjoy relative peace and stability. Unfortunately, the sub-region remains prone to violence largely because of low level insurgencies and political violence in countries such as Nigeria and Niger, which are battling Boko Haram, al-Qaeda affiliated groups like Ansar al-Din and other terrorist organizations.

At the same time, West Africa has done relatively well in deepening democracy through the ballot box, with several countries conducting elections considered generally free and fair and in some cases (e.g., Benin, Ghana, and Nigeria) alternating power peacefully from one administration to another. Côte d'Ivoire, which was virtually split into two following armed rebellion triggered by contested elections in 2011, has since had successful elections and enjoys relative peace. Similarly, in November 2015, Burkina Faso held what was widely perceived as the freest and most competitive elections in that country following an uprising in 2014 that ousted long serving President Blaise Compaoré, who was attempting to change the constitution in order to remain in power. Still the scepter of electoral violence continues to present a clear and present danger even in some of the most stable countries in the sub-region.

More insidious and intractable are the numerous protracted inter-ethnic and religious conflicts and low-level insurgencies that breed insecurity and

instability in many communities in West Africa, demanding more effective interventions from state and non-state actors alike.

The media constitute one of the key non-state actors whose work can contribute to peacebuilding in the region, although the perception persists that they are often disruptive rather than helpful in promoting and sustaining peace. Indeed conflicts are partly what the media make them to be. Thus how journalists mediate information and debate on conflict influences perceptions of it and the peacebuilding process.

More than eighty years ago General Douglas MacArthur, the five-star American General and chief of staff of the US army, was famously quoted as stating, “one cannot wage war under present circumstances without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press and other forms of propaganda” (Gallup, 1942, 429). Eight decades on journalists have become even more implicated in conflict and peacebuilding because of the proliferation of traditional (print, radio, and TV) as well as new media enabled by the Internet and smart phones.

Journalists have played ignoble roles in conflicts in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Nigeria but have also been unsung heroes in some of these same conflicts and in countless others when they have reported on them sensitively and in a manner that helps bring about peace. Sorious Samura’s documentary *Cry Freetown* in 2000 is but one example of courageous journalism that can turn the tide in helping to bring about the end of war.

The presentations at the Accra Workshop and compiled in this book are aimed at engaging journalists on reporting conflict in ways that can similarly lead to positive outcomes and encouraging them to expand coverage on peacebuilding. The presentations of Chukwuemeka Eze and Emmanuel Kotia taken together paint a global picture of international and regional conflict, providing both historical and contemporary perspectives on conflicts in West Africa and efforts at peacebuilding by international and regional organizations. Kotia further deepens understanding on the subject by mapping out the types of conflicts that occur and their effect, clarifying definitions and concepts, and identifying the key actors in conflict and peacebuilding. Peace Medie’s presentation introduces another important dimension to the conversation by discussing how women and men are affected differently, positing that conflict, like other aspects

of societal life, is gendered. She discusses also how media reports on conflict and peacebuilding are gendered and suggests ways that coverage can be more gender-sensitive. Margaret Amoakohene explicates on the various roles the media play in reporting conflict while at the same time acknowledging the constraints they are under, adding further perspective on Eze’s characterization of the “good, the bad, and the ugly” aspects of media coverage.

Admire Mare’s detailed exposition on the theory and practice of peace journalism furthers the agenda hinted at in most of the presentations advocating for journalists to practice the tenets of peace journalism. Mare draws comparisons between traditional journalistic practices in covering conflict (war journalism) and new paradigms as advocated by such peace journalism scholars as Galtung, Lynch, McGoldrick, Tehranian, and Howard.

The thorny issue of elections as triggers for violence is the focus of Sulemana Braimah’s presentation. Braimah reminds journalists of the crucial role they play in elections and democratic consolidation and challenges them to “cover elections in ways that contribute to healthy democratic outcomes.” In a second presentation Braimah raises a very important issue often glossed over in training programs—safety for journalists covering conflict—and identifies various roles stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, academia, and media actors themselves, must play in ensuring journalists’ safety is protected.

Finally Vincent Azumah points out the kinds of collaboration journalists can have with other civil society actors by explaining how WANEP engages and trains journalists. The expectation is that journalists in West Africa, who may or may not have been at the workshop, will find these papers useful in guiding them on how to improve their coverage on conflict and peacebuilding.

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2 | CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN WEST AFRICA—THE MEDIA AS FOES OR FRIENDS

Chukwuemeka B. Eze

In nearly three decades of political pluralism in Africa, the assessment of democratic achievements remains ambivalent. Democratic processes in the West African region are fraught with constraints and challenges, especially with regard to the conduct of elections, constitutional coup d'états, functional state institutions, and the institutionalization of term limits for presidents. In spite of the notable improvement in the cessation of hostilities in countries that had civil wars, the aforementioned challenges prevent wide participation of citizens in the exercise of their franchise, self-expression, and self-determination. The notion of democratic transition, which is an essential ingredient of democracy, has therefore gradually declined in the last few years in many countries despite the enormous efforts to promote democratic principles across the continent.

Democratic transitions remain a challenge to peace and stability across West Africa. It is estimated that more than 10,000 citizens have lost their lives in political crises in the last decade. Elections have been marred by spates of violence, with electoral periods often occasioning great fear of life and property among the populace. Regrettably, a few leaders in the region continue to nurture the possibility of long-term rule even if that means manipulating and influencing constitutional changes to extend their stay in power beyond the limited term mandates in constitutions. This is exacerbating the crisis of political stability, undermining good governance and breeding extremist groups.

Extremist jihadists are exploiting the security vacuum created by poorly governed states and recruiting vulnerable youths, mostly the unemployed and former combatants. The attempts by extremist insurgent groups to expand southward and take hold of the whole of Mali with clear intentions to spread across the entire Sahel belt from the West in Mauritania and to link up with Al Shabaab in the Horn of Africa, for example, has exposed a real security nightmare and the emerging threat confronting West Africa (WANEP 2014). Interconnected with the spread of violent extremism is the increase in the trade and trafficking of illicit drugs and money laundering. Across the region, the impact of climate change and the management and exploitation of natural resources is also a strain on the peace and security of the region, raising questions about the capacities of states to protect their citizens against mass atrocities.

Examples abound of past and ongoing conflicts in Africa, including the protracted secessionist conflict in the Casamance region of southern Senegal from 1982 to date, the prolonged civil wars in Liberia (1989–2003) and Sierra Leone (1990–2001), the armed violence and political instability in Guinea Bissau (1997–98, 2004–05, and currently), the armed rebellion in Cote d’Ivoire (2002–06 and 2011–12), the militant unrest in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta and Jos Plateau, as well as the recent cases of violent extremism by members of the Islamic sect Boko Haram. These conflicts have catapulted the media and other CSOs in West Africa into the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in order to support state efforts toward the protection of citizens from mass atrocities. Our countries and communities are now under siege, such as has never been witnessed before. Bombs targeting innocent citizens, political assassinations, armed robbery, pipeline explosions, ritual killings, kidnapping, cultism, and grand corruption are making life meaningless in some West African countries. Life is now on the Hobbesian path—“Nasty, brutish and short.”

In the last two decades, the ECOWAS Commission and its member states have grappled with a plethora of violent conflicts, which have sapped enormous energy and resources meant for economic development and regional integration and undermined the overall economic potential of the region. Member States of ECOWAS have come to the realization that economic prosperity, cooperation, and integration can only be achieved in an environment that is peaceful, stable, and secure (Diarra 2002). Peace

and security are prerequisites for sustainable economic development and human security advancement in the short-term, whereas in the long-term, human-centered economic development that will eradicate extreme poverty must be in place for durable peace.

To this end, ECOWAS has made a paradigm shift from unilateral and state-centric action, to a multi-stakeholder approach, which is inclusive of the media and other civil society. The role of the media therefore in promoting human protection in conflict areas has become increasingly important as ECOWAS and governments seek integrative approaches to address insecurity and instability under Vision 2020: Transitioning from ECOWAS of the States to ECOWAS of the People.

The Media: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

The media as the “Fourth Estate” play a crucial role in building an accountable state and society, whether at the national or local level. They are a critical part of the triangular relationship between state, citizens, and information, which helps to ensure responsiveness of government to the people. Free media can act as an echo chamber for discontent within society as citizens express their priorities and concerns. Without this pressure valve, discontents are more likely to be expressed through explosive public protests or acts of violence.

The media also contribute to nation-building by disseminating information on laws, policy, service delivery programs, and priorities from the government and politicians to the people and by reporting on the opinions and reactions of the people to policies and issues (e.g., through letters to the editor). In many fragile and conflict-affected countries, the media have been harnessed by peacebuilding actors to disseminate messages and programming that promote peaceful coexistence and development, or raise awareness of solutions to divisive issues. Such media interventions may be in the form of newspaper advertisements or radio jingles on specific themes, such as reducing domestic violence, or constitute entire production and broadcasting networks devoted to peace-positive broadcasting, such as Search for Common Ground’s Talking Drum Studios in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Often media programming can be syndicated, translated,

or reproduced to provide cost-effective, attitude- and behavior-changing programming for local media on security issues. Radio listeners' groups can also be useful to discuss, reinforce, and provide feedback on the impact of messages. In a nutshell, a free and independent media's contribution to peacebuilding is the restoration of the free flow of information, opinions, and feedback.

In the best of times, journalism in Africa is a difficult way to earn a living. Even in relatively peaceful times, it can be a downright dangerous profession. In the traditional view of journalism, practitioners are expected to report events as neutrally and accurately as possible and not to take sides. But this orthodox view fails to accommodate reality: there is no dividing wall between African journalists and the sometimes cataclysmic events swirling around them that they attempt to make sense of in their reports. Consequently, they invariably get caught up in the eye of the storm (Onadipe 2001).

History has shown that the media can incite people toward violence as well as peace. The common assertion in America that "CNN took us to Somalia, CNN brought us out of Somalia" makes the point. It is also argued that Hitler used the media to create an entire worldview of hatred for Jews, homosexuals, and other minority groups. Rwanda's radio RTLM urged listeners to pick up machetes and kill what they called "the cockroaches," while broadcasters in the Balkans polarized local communities to the point where violence became an acceptable tool for addressing grievances.

The media mostly covers conflict, not peacebuilding. Its impact on the escalation of conflict is more widely recognized than its impact on peacebuilding. Yet it is not uncommon to hear experts say that the media's impact on peacebuilding must be significant given its powerful influence on conflict. The common journalistic maxim that "If it bleeds, it leads" means violent conflicts make headline news, rather than cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. This tendency to cover conflict and violence distorts reality and leads many people to think that conflict is pervasive and peace is abnormal.

The media shape what we see and hear about conflict. Journalists' opinions and beliefs are mostly based on their experiences in the field. Media owners have economic interests; they want to sell their stories and programs

to a public who will buy their newspapers or watch their broadcasts. Increasing corporate control over media in some countries also plays a role in determining the type of stories that are covered and the way they are framed.

Conclusions

Society is shaped, reshaped, and unshaped by the media and this is why I chose to call them the good, the bad, and the ugly or what some scholars have termed the necessary evil. The media are key stakeholders in all the various pillars of peacebuilding. They can be reliable sources of information and provide channels for early warning signals to communities under threat. They also play a critical role in conflict data collation processes, are good data analysts, and through their interactions with communities, make informed analysis and judgments. Above all, good practice in conflict prevention includes having strong inter-linkages and effective communication channels between early warnings and response structures and the media is just the right vehicle for that.

It is therefore right to conclude that the media, whether electronic or print, private or public, wields enormous influence in peace and security. The choice of making the media friend or foe is a function of our actions. Meetings and training provide opportunities for discussions on how to address the challenges that the media presents in conflict management and help us to strengthen journalists' ability to report in ways that make them friends and partners in progress and not foes.

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3 | INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPTS AND KEY ISSUES IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

Emmanuel Kotia

The nature of conflicts has changed dramatically since the latter part of the 20th century, from interstate to intrastate conflicts. In the early 1990s, most of the world's conflicts occurred between states and were usually over land, natural resources, political power, and ideology. Interstate conflicts were generally heightened by the Cold War super-power rivalry between the USA and former Soviet Union (Miodownik & Barak, 2013). Examples of such interstate wars include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the India and Pakistan conflict, the Ethiopia-Somalia war (1964/1974), and the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflicts (1998–2000).

Today most contemporary conflicts take place within the state and are thus termed intrastate conflicts. Forms of intrastate conflicts include civil wars, armed insurrections, and violent secessionist movements. Intrastate conflicts are characterized by a multiplicity of state and non-state actors who are sometimes very difficult to identify. The main key actors in conflicts can be categorized according to Miodownik and Barak's (2013) classification as follows:

- **Primary Actors:** state (government) and non-state parties such as rebel groups, terrorists groups, paramilitary units, warlords, and separatist groups.
- **Secondary Actors:** usually international governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations (UN), regional bodies like the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), development partners, and international non-governmental organizations.

- **Shadow Parties:** groups or individuals that support the primary actors covertly and are very difficult to identify, especially because there is an outbreak of conflict.

The root causes of internal conflicts are varied and may include governance, ethnicity, resources, and religious factors. There are also growing intersections of organized crime, such as arms trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, piracy, and terrorism, in some recent conflicts, particularly in Africa. The Boko Haram terrorist attacks in northeast Nigeria, for example, have facilitated the emergence of arms trafficking there and in neighboring states.

Definition of Conflict

Generally, conflicts occur when two or more people/groups pursue goals that clash or are incompatible. Examples include unequal access to resources and wealth, unemployment, discrimination, poverty, oppression, bad governance, etc. Conflict can also be described as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Conflict is characteristic of human existence. The outcome can either be negative, when associated with violence and destruction of life and property, or positive, when it leads to the resolution of structural problems such as inequalities, cultural or moral differences, and the distribution of power in society (Brahm, 2003).

War is an organized and often prolonged armed conflict that is carried out by states or non-state actors and is characterized by extreme violence, social disruption, and economic destruction (O’Connell, 2012). War should be understood as an actual, intentional, and widespread armed conflict between political communities and therefore is defined as a form of political violence or intervention (O’Connell, 2012). The set of techniques used by a group to carry out war is known as warfare and an absence of war is usually peace (O’Connell, 2012).

Types of Conflicts

There are different types of conflict at the individual, group, and state level. At the individual and group level, there are four main kinds of conflict:

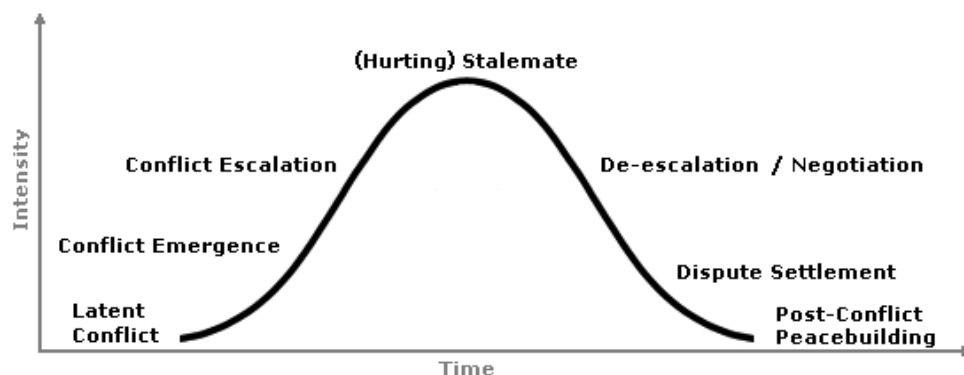
1. Intra-personal conflict occurs within an individual and is usually psychological. It takes place in the person's mind and involves the individual's thoughts, values, principles, and emotions.
2. Interpersonal conflict occurs between two individuals and arises as a result of varied personalities, incompatible choices, and opinions.
3. Intra-group conflict happens among individuals within a group and arises due to incompatibilities and misunderstandings.
4. Inter-group conflict takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different groups within an organization. (Jaye & Amadi, 2009)

At the state level, three different types of conflict can be identified:

1. Inter-State Conflict/International Armed Conflict occurs between two different states, usually involving their armed forces.
2. Intra-State Conflict/Non-International Armed Conflict occurs between a state and a rebel or insurgent groups within a state.
3. Internationalized Armed Conflict is two different factions fighting internally within a state but supported by two or more different states.

Phases of Conflict

Delineating the different stages of conflicts helps in efforts to resolve them. Every conflict passes through a series of phases/stages and scholars describe them differently. However, most include: no conflict, latent conflict, emergence, escalation, (hurting) stalemate, de-escalation, settlement/resolution, post-conflict peacebuilding, and reconciliation (See Figure 1).



Source: Brahm 2003.

Figure 1: Phases of Conflict.

From Figure 1, latent conflict is whenever people have different needs, values, or interests. Conflict may not become apparent until a “triggering event” leads to its emergence. Depending on how the conflict is handled, it may either be resolved or escalate, thereby becoming very destructive. However, escalation cannot continue indefinitely. The conflict can be de-escalated or may lead to a stalemate, a situation in which neither party can win. This stage presents an ideal opportunity for negotiation and a potential settlement of the conflict. When an agreement is reached, peacebuilding efforts work to repair damaged relationships with the long-term goal of reconciling former opponents.

Typologies of African Conflicts

Scholars identify different typologies of conflicts in Africa, the most common of which are:

- *Colonial Armed Conflicts*: national liberations to end colonial rule (whereby white rule was replaced with black rule without radically departing from the status quo).
- *Cold War Armed Conflicts*: proxy wars for the “West” or the “East” that were internal but ideological. Examples include the conflict in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and others fought along left wing and right wing ideologies.

- *Post-Cold War Armed Conflicts*: usually intra-state conflicts, with the exception of Eritrea and Ethiopia, fought by state troops, rebels, and sometimes mercenaries, e.g., Liberia, Sierra Leone, DRC, CAR, Mali, Angola, Sudan, Rwanda etc.
- *Postcolonial Secessionist Wars*: examples include the Biafra war in Nigeria, Saharawi (Morocco), Katanga (DR Congo), Tuaregs (Mali), and Cassamance (Senegal).

Causes of Intrastate Conflicts in Africa

There are several underlying causes and motivations for intrastate conflicts in Africa, including ethnic, political, and religious struggles as well as bad governance. Ethnicity has been a major cause of African conflicts primarily because the European concept of a nation was exported to Africa, which is why the creation of new nation-states at the time of independence was accompanied by urgent calls for nation-building by new African leaders, who were well aware of the difficulty in transcending ethnic and regional loyalties.

Politically motivated conflicts arise from power struggles among hostile groups and can be triggered by such problems as over-population, youth explosion, unemployment, economic or religious disparities, oppression and demands for democracy, and communal or ethnic violence related to economic, social, religious, cultural, or ethnic issues.

Religion is also a flashpoint for conflict in Africa. There are Christian versus Islamic conflicts over dominance and who controls the political elite, such as in the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria and the conflict in the Central African Republic. There are also Muslim versus government conflicts, as seen in Mali where Tuaregs and Nomads have been fighting against the government since 1990. Other examples include Muslim versus native religious conflicts in Sudan in 1983 and the Muslim versus Coptic Christian conflict in Egypt (the Muslim Brotherhood).

A final underlying cause of conflict is bad governance, which can take the form of the lack of inclusion and consensus. Violations of human rights, such as arbitrary arrests and freedom of association and movement, can also trigger conflict as can the lack of a free, vibrant, and open press

and independence of the judiciary. Poverty or instability caused by the mismanagement or ineptitude of government, including evidence of corruption, and the mass movements of refugees have also led to creation of conflict.

Effects of Conflicts in Africa

Conflicts have led to the destruction of physical capital and infrastructure, such as transportation, energy, telecommunications, and hospitals, and have reduced levels of human capital due to death, disease, and displacement. They also cause changes in the structure of the economy of the state and lead to lost employment opportunities, a breakdown of government structures, weakened institutions, and a decline of social capital. Other consequences of conflict include human rights violations, internally displaced persons, and refugees, all of which have negative effects on women and children especially (Kotia, 2015).

Conflict Management Initiatives and Peace Operations

One of the tools used by the international community to prevent, manage, and resolve complex crises that threaten international peace and security are peace operations, which are deployed by the UN as a stand-alone operation. Regional organizations such as the AU, ECOWAS, SADC (Southern African Development Community), EU, and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) also engage in peace operations under UN Security Council authorization or in partnership with the UN (Kotia, 2015).

The functions of peace operations have grown in size and have become increasingly complex and wide-ranging. Contemporary peace operations facilitate the political process in the following ways:

- The promotion of national dialogue and reconciliation;
- Protecting civilians, assisting in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants;
- Supporting the organization of elections; and
- Protecting and promoting human rights and assisting in restoring the rule of law.

A growing number of peace operations have also become multidimensional in nature, comprising a range of components, including the military, police, and civilians. Collectively, these different components work to deliver security and political and early peacebuilding support to conflict and post-conflict countries around the world (Bellamy, Williams, & Griffin, 2010).

Definitions and Concepts in Peace Operations

- *Peace Operations*

The term peace operation is used by the DPKO/DFS to refer to the broad range of procedures that encompass conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding.

- i. Conflict Prevention/Preventive diplomacy includes actions to prevent disputes from developing between parties, preventing existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and limiting their spread when they occur. It may take the form of mediation, conciliation, or negotiation.
- ii. Peacemaking is a diplomatic action whereby hostile parties reach negotiated agreements through peaceful means such as those set out in Chapter VI of the UN Charter. The Security Council may recommend ways to resolve a dispute or request the Secretary-General's mediation, who may take diplomatic initiatives to encourage and maintain the momentum of negotiations.
- iii. Peacekeeping is a UN presence in the field (normally involving military, UN police, and civilian personnel), with the consent of the parties involved, to implement or monitor the implementation of arrangements relating to the control of conflicts (cease-fire, separation of forces, etc.) and their resolution (partial or comprehensive settlements) or to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian relief.
- iv. Peace-Enforcement includes the use of armed force to maintain or restore international peace and security in situations in which the Security Council has determined the existence of a threat to peace, breach of the peace, or an act of aggression, which may be needed when all other efforts fail. The authority for enforcement is provided by Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

- v. Peace-Building includes the identification and support of measures and structures that will promote peace and build trust and interaction among former enemies in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. UN assistance helps in building systems, structures, and consolidating democracy.

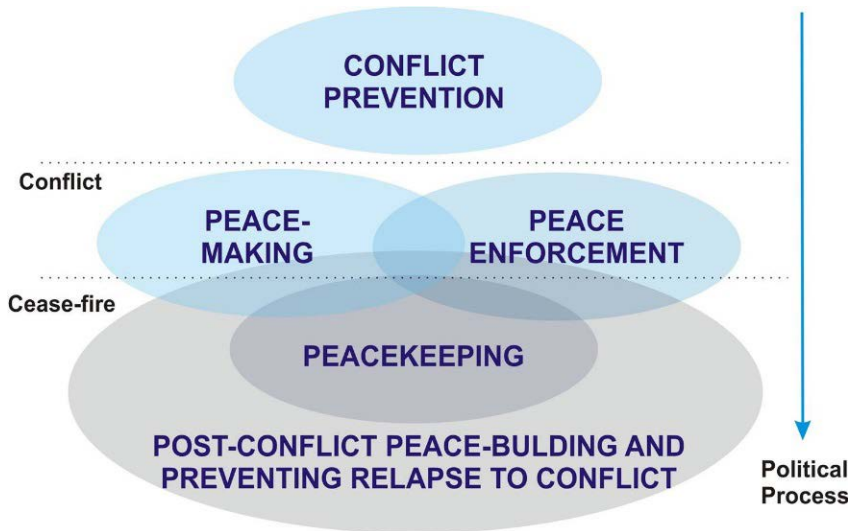


Figure 2. Range of Peace and Security Activities of a UN Peace Operation

- A peace operation is rarely limited to one type of activity, as illustrated in Figure 2. In principle, while peacekeepers are deployed to support the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements, they are often required to play an active role in peacemaking efforts and peacebuilding activities. The use of force is also allowed at the tactical level, with the authorization of the UNSC, to defend themselves and their mandate, usually in situations where the state is unable to provide security and maintain public order. As Figure 2 shows, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing and cannot be used in isolation.
- The recognition of these linkages led to the development of the concepts of “integrated missions” and “multidimensional operations” where all actors, including the military, police, humanitarian agencies, civil administration, correctional and

justice officers, political officers, electoral officers, and human rights officials, work together with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) who serves as the overall head of the mission.

- The ultimate objective of these integrated missions is to foster coherence among the political, peacekeeping, humanitarian, and development branches to help countries in the transition from war to lasting peace and sustainable development. It was initially developed for Kosovo and has since been revised, refined, and adapted to UN missions in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Liberia, DRC, Burundi, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, and Mali.

What Is Peacebuilding?

Peacebuilding is a complex system consisting of multiple short-, medium-, and long-term programs that simultaneously address both the causes and consequences of a conflict (stabilization, transitional, consolidation phases). In the short term, peacebuilding programs assist in stabilizing the peace process and prevent a relapse into violent conflict. In the long term, peace building programs, collectively and cumulatively, address the root causes of a conflict and lay the foundation for social justice and sustainable peace (Bellamy, Williams, & Griffin, 2010).

Core Functions of Peace Operations

United Nations multidimensional peace operations are part of much broader international efforts to help countries emerging from conflict make the transition to a sustainable peace, which consist of several phases and may involve an array of actors with separate, albeit overlapping, mandates and areas of expertise. Within this broader context, the core functions of multidimensional peace operations are to:

- Create a secure and stable environment while strengthening the state's ability to provide security, with full respect for the rule of law and human rights;

- Facilitate the political process by promoting dialogue and reconciliation and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance; and
- Provide a framework for ensuring that all United Nations and other international actors pursue their activities at the country-level in a coherent and coordinated manner.

Merits of Peace Operations

Various studies have shown that peace operations have made vital contributions to reducing the frequency and lethality of war in the world and helped to build stable democratic peace in the medium to long term. Statistics from the Uppsala Conflict Data program indicate that peace operations have helped to reduce the intensity of armed conflicts since early 1990s by 40%, and traditional peacekeeping operations have reduced the likelihood of war reigniting by 86%. Where military peacekeepers have been deployed, the likelihood of war reigniting has fallen by 75% to 85% compared to cases where no peacekeepers are deployed (Fortna, 2008). The number of deaths in conflicts has also fallen since the introduction of peace operations (Humans Security Centre, 2005; Mack, 2007), which have prevented or ended genocide and mass killing by directly challenging perpetrators (Krain, 2005).

The Media and Peacebuilding

The news media play a significant role in the success of multidimensional peace missions. In all peace building, an effective communications strategy, which includes good relations with both local and international media, is a political and operational necessity. The mission needs to explain to the local population why the mission is in its country and what they can expect from the peace process. The peace mission must also inform the international community about its work, and one way of doing this is through the media. Generally, the media is interested in conflicts because they are the basis of news and what they report about a peace operation can have a positive or negative impact on the mission, the implementation of its mandate, and the peace process.

Some journalists report the news impartially and are sympathetic to the UN and what it stands for, but others are not. In addition, some journalists, especially local ones, might be controlled or paid by one side or the other in the conflict to manipulate the population through false information or hostile propaganda, as happened in the case of Rwanda, for example. UN missions have public information components that deal with the local, regional, and international media and are equipped to handle most situations (UN DPI Police for Public Information in UN Peacekeeping Operations, 2006). Internally, all components of missions—military, police, and civilians—have a public information office.

At the political level, public relations (PR) can be generated to maintain public support through effective relationships with the media to help, for example, explain mandates, provide updates on progress and obstacles, and to build consensus for the peace process. Peacekeepers are also sources of information for the media regarding their individual actions and interactions with the local population.

Conclusions

The key concepts and issues in conflict and peacebuilding are relevant to all stakeholders in peace and security. As key actors in conflict and peacebuilding the media help to disseminate underlying causes and effects of conflicts and serve as platforms for relaying the merits of peace operations, and in particular peacebuilding, in post-conflict environments. It is therefore important for the media to be conversant with these concepts and to understand the dynamics of conflicts, peacebuilding, and its relations with peacekeepers in mission areas in peace operations.

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4

MEDIA COVERAGE ON GENDER DURING CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

Peace A. Medie

Introduction

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and characteristics that a given society considers appropriate and imposes on women and men (World Health Organizations 2016). Therefore, while most people are born either male or female, they are all taught appropriate norms and behaviors, including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities, work places, during conflict, and in the peacebuilding process.

The United Nations (2010, 5) defines peacebuilding as “a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.”

Why Conflict is Gendered

Conflict is gendered because gender determines who participates in conflicts, the roles they play, and who is targeted and how. Most societies have traditionally assigned the role of fighter or soldier to men (Sjoberg 2006). Men have, therefore, been given the responsibility to wage war in defense of territory, women, and children. Similarly, gender has played a role in the targeting of girls and women for sexual violence during wars. This targeting of women has occurred throughout history, including the

civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Although combatants have also subjected men to sexual violence, they have disproportionately victimized girls and women. Nonetheless, girls and women play varied roles during wars. Some of them have joined fighting forces, sometimes under duress, and have also fed and ensured the survival of relatives and friends (Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998). Women have also worked, sometimes collectively, to resolve conflict and to build sustainable peace.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which was adopted in 2000, reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and in post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, urges all actors to increase the participation of women in peacebuilding, and to incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

Trends in Reporting on Gender and Conflict

Media representations of warfare and peacebuilding, however, do not always reflect the aims of UN Resolution 1325 and do not always support the advancement of gender equality. Media coverage is often characterized by weaknesses such as the following:

- The causes of conflict are simplified
- There is a focus on male actors
- Women are portrayed only as victims
- There is a focus on (extraordinary) violence
- There is a focus on the visible effects of violence. (Isis International-Manila and Mindanaw Women Writers 2007)

It is important for journalists to avoid these practices when reporting on conflicts. This can be done by adopting a gender-sensitive peace journalism approach. According to Lynch and McGoldrick, peace journalism has

been conceptualized as taking place whenever “editors and reporters make choices—about what stories to report, and how to report them—which create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value nonviolent responses to conflict” (quoted in Yiping 2012). Peace journalism is a broader, fairer, and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation. The most fundamental question that every peace journalist should ask before crafting a story is “what can I do with my intervention to enhance the prospects for peace?” (Yiping 2012).

Gender-sensitive peace journalism demands that journalists explore conflict transformation options, include the voices of all parties, portray women in a diversity of roles, investigate and report on less visible forms of violence, recognize trauma, and take precautions to avoid re-traumatizing survivors. Journalists must provide a sensitive representation of victims, including girls and women, examine their needs and participation in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and reconstruction, and focus on the gendered structure and culture of society in their coverage (Yiping 2012). They should be aware of bias and prejudices and guard against them. Journalists should ask the following questions when crafting a story:

- Where is the woman in the story?
- How can gender information strengthen the story?
- What are the power relationships between men and women in the leadership of the conflict parties, on the negotiation panels, in community structures, and in family structures? How do these roles and power relations further explain the issue being investigated?
- How are the impacts of events and processes written about in a specific story different for women and for men?
- Where are the points of collaboration between genders? What are the common grounds and shared interests and needs? (Isis International-Manila and Mindanaw Women Writers 2007)

Finally, journalists should also explore more deeply the causes of violence against women during conflicts as well as the effects of women’s participation in peace negotiations in the security sector and in the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. They should also investigate how states are implementing UN Resolution 1325 and how women and

men are being impacted by the resolution. This gender-sensitive approach to peace journalism is necessary for sustainable peacebuilding and for advancing women's rights and equality.

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5 | THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT AND PEACE- BUILDING

Margaret Amoakohene

Introduction

Despite the fact that Ghana has often been touted as a stable and peaceful country in West Africa, it still experiences pockets of violence and conflicts, particularly in its northern parts, which are mostly inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic and often caused by disputes over chieftaincy, land, identity, and resources (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011; Sulemana 2009). More recently, these incidents of violence and conflict have additionally been caused by political and economic factors (Kendie and Akudugu 2010; Tsikata and Seini 2004). While northern Ghana is one of the most conflict-prone regions, other parts of the country are also susceptible to violence. A conflict mapping study conducted by Ghana's National Peace Council in 2014, for instance, identified the Brong Ahafo region as the most conflict prone region in the country.

Vibrant media play an important role in either promoting conflict or peace (Parischa 2015; Coronel 2003; Hamelink 2008). They are also crucial in safeguarding human rights and building a national identity in political discourse and deepening democracy, etc. (Amoakohene 2012; Asare 2009; Ampaw 2004). The media are, therefore, instrumental in governance, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, security, and respect for human rights, among others.

Conflict

Conflict has been defined as “a relationship between two or more parties that centres on differences, disagreements on some issue of common interest or concern, divergence, incompatibilities, clash of wills and the like; it may involve antagonism and opposition” (Awedoba 2009, 5). It is estimated that “between 1980 and 2002, the three northern regions recorded 26 violent ethnic conflicts. Seventeen (17) of them occurred in the Northern Region alone. Of the 26 conflicts, 18 were intra-ethnic, involving the same ethnic groups” (Pul 2003, 1). A conflict mapping study in northern Ghana conducted by the UNDP in 2012, which reviewed news reports in the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times from 2007 to 2012, also recorded thirty conflicts, the majority of which were reported in the northern region (UNDP 2012).

Conflicts often arise from land ownership, chieftaincy, religion, and ethnocentrism (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011). Immediate causes of conflicts in Ghana have been linked to disputes over specific resources such as fish, cows, mango, guinea fowl, etc. (Sulemana 2009). For example, in 1940 the Cow War occurred, in 1946 the Fish War, in 1981 the Pito War, and in 1994 the Guinea Fowl War. Recent major flash points of violence in Ghana have included Nakpanduri-Bungkurugu in the northern region between feuding brothers; Bawku in the upper East region between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups; in the northern region between Abudus and Andanis of the Dagbon ethnic group; and the Golden Stool and Techiman Stool in the Brong Ahafo region among the Tuobodom people. All these conflicts receive media attention and coverage and are impacted by such coverage positively or negatively.

Media, Conflict, and Peacebuilding

Denis McQuail (2000, 66) provides a list of mediation roles the media play, which can inform an understanding of the role of they play in peacebuilding, including the following:

- Window on events and experience
- Mirror of events in society and the world
- Filter or gatekeeper

- Signpost, guide, or interpreter
- Forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas
- Interlocutor or informed partner in conversation.

Beyond the roles identified by McQuail, the media ease social conflicts and promote reconciliation (Coronel 2003; Hamelink 2008). They also provide warring factions mechanisms for mediation, representation, a voice, and platforms to settle differences peacefully. In conflict prevention and management they are information providers and interpreters, watchdogs and gatekeepers, policymakers and diplomats, and peace promoters and bridge builders (Bratic and Schirch 2007).

Reporting Conflict and Peace Building

When reporting on conflict and peace building efforts, it is important for journalists to examine their own motivations for such assignments, assess who they are working for, and make a genuine assessment of the stance they have taken. Neutrality is important for positive media contributions to conflict resolution or de-escalation (Puddephatt 2006; Hamelink 2008).

Journalists must do their own research into causes of conflict and ask all vital questions in order to gain an understanding of the issues involved and analyze the conflict to establish its antecedent factors, trajectories, and current status. This means journalists must ask the right questions about parties involved in the conflict to find out if sides have already been formed and hearts hardened. They must also find out whether there are shadow parties or invincible hands behind the conflict and who provides factions with weapons, ammunition, and money. These analyses will help the journalist know or determine to whom to speak.

In covering conflict it is important for journalists to observe the following:

- Go to the field to speak to parties in the conflict rather than rely on secondary sources or even telephone interviews.
- Meet with all parties to appreciate the issues and to build confidence and trust.
- Aim to find a solution by talking to other actors such as mediators.
- Tell a compelling story that can appeal to the conscience of factions.

- Focus on costs of conflict such as loss of lives, destruction of property, erosion of goodwill, and setbacks in development.

Stories journalists tell should appeal to the conscience of the factions to stop the conflict. It is important to highlight the fact that, for example, when professionals flee from conflict zones it affects education, health care, business, and projects such as the construction of schools, roads, hospitals, etc. As has been noted by Aapengnuo (2008, 1), “there are growing concerns about the impact of these conflicts on national and sub-regional security and stability. Their impact is most felt in the area of economic growth and development.”

Conflicts and violence often result in the loss of lives, burning of houses, farmlands, farms, and produce as well as other property, including state assets. Monies meant for development, such as the building of schools, roads, etc., are rather spent on peacekeeping. Teachers fleeing conflict areas affects education, health officials leaving their posts affects healthcare delivery, businesses relocating elsewhere affects economic expansion, job creation, income, and leads to unemployment and despondency. These are the true costs of conflict and people in conflict areas must be informed through good reportage.

Media reportage is, therefore, crucial to bringing conflicts under control. Professionalism and ethical behavior call for journalists to be as faithful to the truth in their reporting as possible and be mindful of their own attitudes and composure. Journalists must strive for neutrality, putting aside their prejudices and avoiding color, embellishments, slants, or their own positions. They must also give all parties an equal chance to be heard and not neglect the voices of the minority. Allowing parties to propose solutions to the conflict can also make them feel a part of the peace-building process and encourage them to do more.

Challenges and Limitations

Covering conflict and peace building is not without its own challenges. There are logistical, financial, human, and other resource constraints to overcome. Many journalists fear entering war zones because of safety concerns. Safety thus remains a major limitation in providing the kind of coverage suggested above. It is important therefore that journalists obtain

the consent, trust, and cooperation of combatants by being responsible, accountable, objective, and balanced in their reportage and avoiding pandering to partisan political considerations.

Conclusion

The media can play a phenomenal role in conflict by fanning it or helping to escalate it, manage it through good reporting, and to seek solutions that bring about peaceful outcomes. West African journalists can contribute to conflict management and peace building by playing a mediatory role, providing information between combatants and the rest of society, developing the trust of combatants, surmounting resource constraints, and seeking to forge mutually beneficial relationships with the key actors involved in conflict and peace building.

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6 | THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PEACE JOURNALISM

Admire Mare

Introduction

It has generally been acknowledged that conflict coverage, whether by international news agencies or local reporters, produces its own significant impacts on conflict. As such, International Media Support suggests that “more and more local and international groups, media trainers, media institutions and others have developed methodologies for interventions aimed at countering the dangerous effects of poor or deliberately manipulated conflict coverage or for media interventions designed to reduce conflict through a change in the way the media work” (quoted in Betz 2011).

Traditionally, journalists have been highly involved in conflicts by acting in various roles. They are literally on the frontlines, taking photos; making notes and interviewing politicians, military forces, and members of civil society; selecting news and pictures from news agencies, correspondents, or social media; and writing news, opinion pieces, editorials, and background features. Thus journalism has not only been sharing sober and rational information when conflicts occur, but also the rage, trauma, grief, and relief of war with its public.

Roles of Journalists in Conflict Situations

In times of conflict and peacebuilding, journalists can assume the roles of agenda-setters and opinion leaders, gatekeepers and advocates, interpreters, disseminators, and adversaries, as well as missionaries and entertainers.

As Galtung (2002, 62) argues, journalism “inherently or intentionally emphasizes and encourages violent conflict by its treatment of the issues.” According to Shinar (2007), the varied roles they play can be grouped as follows:

- The monitorial role: the journalist as a detached observer, having the main (and only) task of providing information of public interest.
- The facilitative role: the journalist’s main tasks consist of providing citizens with the information they need to make decisions, as well as enabling and supporting public interest.
- The radical role: the journalist as a watchdog, speaking on behalf of citizens, while challenging political authority and holding the powerful accountable.
- The collaborative role: implies cooperation with the state or other centers of power, e.g., in order to assist the state in peacebuilding and sustain a national agenda for progress and prosperity.

Structural Factors Impacting Conflict News Construction

Journalism is embedded in multiple layers of societal context that influences how conflict news is constructed. How journalistic selection and processing of information takes place and the way journalism is organized has a certain impact on the construction of reality as well as on the role it plays in depicting conflicts. The hierarchy model of influences identifies five layers that exert pressure on media content at the micro and macro levels of professional practice:

- Media workers, who act as filters of media content in their professional roles, ethics, and personal beliefs.
- The daily work routines within the newsroom (the beat system, deadline pressures, editorial policies, and newsroom cultures and practices, etc.).
- The broader organizational imperatives of media institutions (profit maximization, ownership dynamics, community pressure, etc.).
- Extra-media influences (advertisers, technology, news sources, market structure, and state actors, etc.).

- The influence of ideology (system of values and beliefs that governs audiences, journalists, and other stakeholders in the news system).

Dominant Paradigm in Conflict News Coverage

Journalists covering conflict are often called war correspondents and not peace journalists and typically leave a conflict area once peace is attained to cover another war, returning if the first flares up. War journalism is based on the notion that negative news sells and important people say important things. It presents conflict or war as matters of the state and for statesmen, not something to be comprehended or questioned by ordinary people. Professional values such as “objectivity” and “balance” mean war journalism is biased toward violence as opposed to context. The outcome is that conflict is often presented as spectacle and media reports are violence-laden. In war journalism, journalists also run the risk of becoming active participants in conflict as instigators or cheerleaders of conflicting parties and can take up the roles of propagandists and embedded actors.

Galtung’s (1997) concept of war journalism builds on the dichotomy between what he calls “peace journalism” and “war journalism” approaches. In Galtung’s typology, war journalism is seen as violence-, propaganda-, elite-, and victory-orientated, whereas peace journalism is seen as taking a moral stand where journalists make a conscious decision to identify other options for readers or viewers by offering a solution-, people-, and truth-orientated approach to reporting in conflict situations (Ottosen 2010, 262).

Key Features of War Journalism

Scholars (Galtung 2002; Lynch 2002; McGoldrick, 2005) have identified some of the key elements that characterize war journalism. Below are some of the hallmarks of such news reports:

- show that conflict involves two parties with one goal;
- portray a win-lose situation;
- take a closed space, close time, and cause and effect approach;
- focus only on visible aspects of the violence, i.e., death of people, destruction of property;

- present war as secret, opaque (something not for public consumption);
- dehumanize enemies (they are described as barbaric, blood-thirsty, etc.);
- are reactive, that is they wait for violence to occur before reporting;
- adopt an us-them approach;
- are propaganda oriented;
- are aimed at exposing “their” (i.e., enemies like rebels, terrorists, etc.) untruths;
- cover “our” (i.e., this can refer to the ruling party in a civil war context or those in control of the levers of power) lies;
- are elite oriented;
- focus on “their” violence and our suffering;
- give the name of the evil doer;
- focus on elite peacemakers;
- focus on elite and official sources such as the military intelligence, public officials, and ministers;
- are victory oriented;
- equate peace with victory and ceasefire;
- conceal peace initiatives before the victory is at hand;
- focus on treaties and institutions.

The above list of elements that constitute war and peace journalism is not exhaustive, but it offers a useful heuristic model that is helpful to understanding different conflict situations.

Peace Journalism Theory

The term peace journalism was first coined by Galtung in the 1970s and is manifested through the way in which journalists select which stories to report and how to report them in ways that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, 5). Peace journalism is a remedial approach based on a critical awareness that widespread reporting conventions produce a dominant diet of war. Journalism thus offers a set of tools, both conceptual and practical, intended to equip journalists to offer a better public service. It serves as a normative mode of responsible and conscientious media

coverage that aims to contribute to peace making, peace keeping, and changing the attitudes of media owners, professionals, advertisers, and audiences toward war and peace (Shinar 2007, 199). It is also a program or frame of journalistic news coverage that contributes to the process of making and keeping peace, respectively, to the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Peace journalism aims to tell stories in a way that encourages conflict analysis (disentangling the kinds of conflict, actors, motivations, and phases and effects of conflict) and a nonviolent response in society. It aims to transform conflicts from their violent channels into constructive forms by empowering the voiceless and seeking common ground that unifies rather than divides human societies. Peace journalism advocates that journalists take a more active role in finding solutions to conflict. Such a role, however, means that they should become advocates for peace, suggesting a much more active and subjective role, rather than borrowing from the traditional journalistic values of accuracy, impartiality, and responsibility.

Like health journalism, which not only focuses on how to cure disease, but on possible ways of overcoming and preventing it, peace journalism is a tool for creating and encouraging empathy among readers regarding the sufferings of other people in conflict situations. It is oriented to conflict transformation, informs with veracity, cares for the opinion of the victims of the conflict, and understands peace as a solution where all the involved parties receive some benefits.

Peace journalism demands that the journalist take an interpretative approach, concentrated on the stories that highlight peace initiatives. It tones down ethnic and religious differences, anticipates later conflicts, focuses on the structure of societies in conflict, and promotes the solution of the conflict, reconstitution, and reconciliation (Galtung 1997, 1998). With regard to its practices, peace journalism implies that information must be given in a detailed and balanced account not only about confrontation and radicalized actors, but also the causes that explain it. Information should explain the historical and cultural roots of the conflict, give voice to all of the actors, explain how common people suffer implicit violence, inform if there are any actors willing to negotiate, and, above all, understand peace as a search for and delivery of solutions. Therefore, the journalist must

present peace proposals from different actors and highlight the positive perspectives. Other practices included in peace journalism are taking a preventive stance or proposing, for example, through editorials and columns, reconciliation instead of revenge.

The peace journalism model could be summarized in four normative points:

- Journalists must analyze conflict to be able to inform about violent facts. This analysis must include the roots and causes as well as the confronting parties and their objectives.
- Information should present an orientation to conflict solution, giving relevance to proposals, negotiations, agreements, etc.
- Journalists should pursue truth in a symmetrical manner and not just from one side.
- The orientation of the information must be toward the voice of the common people and not just the elites. (Lynch 2002; Galtung 2002; McGoldrick 2005)

Features of Peace Journalism

Unlike war journalism, peace journalism is marked by the following features (Lynch 2002; Galtung 2002; McGoldrick 2005):

- It is peace oriented;
- promotes a win-win situation for all;
- takes an open space, open time approach and places conflict in history and context;
- focuses on invisible effects of violence, trauma, etc.;
- makes conflict transparent;
- gives voice to all parties (primary actors, secondary to shadowy actors);
- humanizes all sides (giving a human face to the conflict);
- is proactive, reporting before, during, and after conflicts;
- is truth oriented;
- exposes untruth on all sides (as all sides are likely to peddle untruths in the name of promoting their cause);

- uncovers all cover ups (dig up the dirt of all parties);
- is people oriented;
- focuses on violence by all sides and suffering of all (all kinds of violence and suffering are not justified);
- gives name to all evil-doers;
- focuses on people peacemakers (various stakeholders make or break peace);
- gives voice to the voiceless, recognizing that the voiceless are also affected by the conflict and their vision of the peace must be taken on board;
- is solution oriented;
- equates peace with nonviolence and creativity;
- highlights peace initiatives to prevent more war;
- focuses on structure and culture; and
- deals with the aftermath—resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation.

Peace Journalism in Practice

Majid Tehranian (2002) has proposed ten commandments to help journalists practice peace journalism. These commandments are negotiable and suggestive rather than exhaustive, allowing journalists to add their own tenets, depending on the context.

1. Never reduce parties in human conflicts to two. Remember that when two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets hurt. Pay attention to the poor grass.
2. Identify the views and interests of all parties to human conflicts. There is no single truth, there are many truths.
3. Don't be hostage to one source, particularly those from governments that control sources of information.
4. Develop a good sense of skepticism. Remember that reporting is representation (reconstruction of news). Biases are endemic to human conditions and you, your organization, and your sources are not exceptions.

5. Give voice to the peace makers and the oppressed in order to empower and represent them.
6. Seek peaceful solutions to all conflict problems, but never fall prey to panaceas.
7. Your representation of conflict can become part of the problem if it exacerbates dualisms and hatred.
8. Your representation of conflict problems can become part of the solution if it employs the creative tensions in any human conflict to seek common ground and nonviolent solutions.
9. Always exercise the professional media ethics of accuracy, veracity, fairness, and respect for human rights and dignity.
10. Transcend your own ethnic, religious, national, and ideological biases in order to represent the parties to human conflicts fairly and accurately.

Other Useful Tips

Beyond the ten commandments, there are several suggestions from researchers and practitioners that can help journalists improve on their coverage of conflict and peacebuilding using the peace journalism paradigm. For instance, Sabiti (2001) proposes that journalists must:

- Understand the scope of the conflict.
- Develop skills in conflict analysis (the source of the conflict at different levels, surface or symptomatic, demands, and positions).
- Identify the root causes of the conflict (interests and needs of the various groups).
- Understand the impact of the conflict (the players and their motives, roles, and attitudes).

It is also useful for journalists to develop skills in transforming conflict (communication skills, negotiation skills, cooperation, mediation skills and reconciliation) and the ability to distinguish the people from the conflict so that the journalist is tough on the conflict but soft on the people/victims.

Practitioners of peace journalism must provide access to politically underrepresented groups, multiple viewpoints on a diversity of controversial issues, firsthand observations from eyewitnesses of local, regional, and

international events, background, contextualizing information that helps audiences fully understand the story, acknowledge mistakes when appropriate, and demonstrate a desire for solving rather than escalating conflicts.

They must also avoid the use of victimizing terms, such as martyr or pathetic, and the use of demonizing labels, such as terrorist or extremist, unless they are attributed to a reliable source and abstain from opinions that are not substantiated by credible evidence.

Howard (2009) recommends the following on conflict sensitive journalism:

- Avoid reporting a conflict as consisting of two opposing sides. Find other affected interests and include their stories, opinions, and goals. Interview merchants affected by the general strike, workers who are unable to work, refugees from the countryside who want an end to violence, etc.
- Avoid defining the conflict by always quoting the leaders who make familiar demands. Go beyond the elites. Report the words of ordinary people who may voice the opinions shared by many.
- Avoid only reporting what divides the sides in conflict. Ask the opposing sides questions that may reveal common ground. Report on interests or goals they may share.
- Avoid always focusing on the suffering and fear of only one side. Treat all sides' suffering as equally newsworthy.
- Avoid words like devastated, tragedy, and terrorized to describe what has been done to one group. These kinds of words put the reporter on one side. Do not use them yourself. Only quote someone else who uses these words.
- Avoid emotional and imprecise words. Assassination is the murder of a head of state and no one else. Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians. Soldiers and policemen are not massacred. Genocide means killing an entire people. Do not minimize suffering, but use strong language carefully.
- Avoid words like terrorist, extremist, or fanatic. These words take sides and make the other side seem impossible to negotiate with. Call people what they call themselves.

- Avoid making an opinion into a fact. If someone claims something, state their name, so it is their opinion and not your fact.
- Avoid waiting for leaders on one side to offer solutions. Explore peace ideas wherever they come from. Put these ideas to the leaders and report their response.

Critiques of Peace Journalism

Scholars such as Loyn (2003, 2007) have denounced peace journalism as an “unwelcome departure from objectivity” and “traditional journalistic values” and an approach that could compromise the integrity of journalists by upsetting their role as “neutral disseminators” of media content. Loyn (2007) criticizes peace journalism for its “contempt for objectivity” and calls for the more traditional values of journalism, such as objectivity and balance, to be maintained. Peleg (2007, 2) answered such criticisms stating that since “the concept of objectivity has always been elusive... journalists should aspire to something much more like a neutral perspective on any controversial matter.”

Conclusion

The journalist plays an important role as an agent of change, depending on how s/he “colors” the story with language, tone, and choice of terms. Peace journalism puts emphasis on encouraging journalists to proactively report on conflict potentials so they don’t escalate into violence. The most powerful tools journalists have are the words, pictures, and sounds they use. It is important therefore that these tools are directed toward building understanding instead of fears and myths.

Journalists should work toward promoting cross-community dialogue, with a view to building bridges across confrontation lines, identifying areas of agreement rather than discord, and highlighting positive, often nonofficial developments on the ground.

Traditional objectivity is difficult to operationalize in conflict situations so there is the need to practice “contextual objectivity,” a term used to describe the necessity of media to present stories in a fashion that is somewhat impartial yet sensitive to local sensibilities (el-Nawawy and

Iskandar 2003). There is no one size fits all approach to peace journalism, however, so journalists must be guided by the context in which they practice their craft.

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7 |

MEDIA AND ELECTIONS-RELATED CONFLICT

Sulemana Braimah

Nearly all countries in Africa have settled on elections as a means of choosing leaders and ordinarily, they are meant to afford citizens the freedom to choose their leaders in a peaceful manner. Unfortunately, elections in Africa have often been associated with violent conflicts, as witnessed in recent examples such as Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Guinea, among others.

The media play a critical role in elections in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Providing voter literacy and education;
- Shaping pre-election processes and conversations, facilitating debate among contesting parties and candidates;
- Enabling campaign information dissemination;
- Reporting abuses in the process; and
- Reporting and analyzing election results.

The media therefore play a key role in promoting peaceful elections through peace journalism. Unfortunately, however, they can also become agents for or actors in conflicts.

In the Ivorian conflict following the presidential election dispute (2011 to 2012), for example, the media were both agents and actors. During elections in 2008 and 2012 in Ghana, some radio stations also played the role of agents of conflict. For example, Radio Gold in 2008 urged opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) supporters to gather at the Electoral Commission, charging that the ruling New Patriotic Party

(NPP) was rigging the elections. Also, during the 2012 elections, Oman FM, a radio station belonging to an opposition member of Parliament, recorded a total of 115 incidents of indecent expression (hate speech, provocative expression, comments calling for confrontation or violence, etc.).

Factors that influence the media's role during elections include the relationship between them and actors in an election, the level of independence of the media (both state-owned and private), the extent of commercialization of the media, and the level of professionalism of journalists. Transparency of the electoral process and the media's access to timely information from the right sources also affects the role they can play. Other less direct factors are the extent of media freedoms in the country and the level of media literacy among members of the public.

When conflict breaks out during elections the consequences are severe not only on the population, but on media practice. Firstly there is more repression by authorities and direct targeting of journalists. Also conflict leads to an unprogressive media development environment, both legal and economic.

Is Peace Journalism a solution?

There are different perspectives on whether or not journalists should adopt a peace journalism approach in covering elections. Such an approach demands that journalists speak to all sides and explore the hidden agenda of parties to the conflict (Galtung 2002; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005). Journalists who practice peace journalism must commit to propagating peace, project positive images of peace, and become enablers and facilitators of nation-building. However, those who hold opposing views on peace journalism question whether that would lead to self-censorship (Loyn 2007). They argue that society needs information and that journalists must report issues as they are. By reporting only aspects of a story, journalists may cease to cover the stories but instead become part of them. Furthermore, the nation-building agenda may imply commitment to ideological positions by journalists.

Conclusions

There may not be a consensus on peace journalism yet, however it is important for journalists to remember that they play a key role in the management of election-related violence and democratic stability in West Africa. They must therefore understand the dynamics of elections and conflicts and the role of the media in fueling or mitigating conflict and strive to cover elections in ways that contribute to healthy democratic outcomes and commit to professionalism as well as justice and human rights.

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8

SAFETY FOR JOURNALISTS

Sulemana Braimah

On December 18, 2013 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution on the “Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.” The adoption of the resolution was in recognition of the consistent abuses journalists suffer—including threats, attacks, murders, and torture enforced disappearance, among others—and how such abuses negatively impact on the work of journalists and the value of journalism to society. The resolution went on to declare November 2 the International Day to End Impunity (IDEI) for crimes against journalists.

In Africa, the lead perpetrators of attacks on journalists have been security forces. Other perpetrators have included state or government officials (who are ordinarily supposed to be adherents of the law and protectors of press freedom), political party activists, fundamentalists, and other organized groups. Threats and actual attacks on journalists become more pronounced during conflicts, elections, political unrests, and crises situations such as during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014.

Also, Somalia, for example, has had a running conflict for over two decades now. Not surprisingly, it remains one of the most unsafe and, indeed, deadliest countries for journalists in the world. In the last five years alone, twenty-two journalists and media workers have been killed, according to records of the press freedom advocacy organization the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ 2015). Recent political unrests in Burundi have occasioned the beating and arrest of several journalists by security forces, who accuse journalists of biased reporting. In 2014, during the Ebola crises in Guinea, three journalists were among a group of people murdered by a mob in the village of Nzérékoré, where the journalists had gone to cover an Ebola sensitization exercise by health workers.

The above references to Somalia, Burundi, and Guinea are meant to illustrate how journalists' safety is often affected by conflicts, political unrests, and national crisis situations. Table 1 below includes the number of incidents of media rights violations, including attacks on journalists and perpetrators of violations in West Africa in 2015. The figures are based on the Media Foundation for West Africa's (MFWA) press freedom monitoring reports. Unfortunately, crimes against journalists are often not investigated, with perpetrators often going unpunished, thereby fostering a culture of impunity.

Table 1: *Incidents of press freedom violations including attacks and shutdowns in West Africa in 2015*

Country	Security Personnel	State Officials	Regulatory Body	Political Party Officials	Organized Groups	Individuals	Total
Benin	3	1	1	1		1	7
Burkina Faso	1				9		10
Côte d'Ivoire	2	1	6		1		10
The Gambia	12	1				2	15
Ghana	3	5				2	10
Guinea	7		1	1		2	11
Guinea-Bissau	1	1					2
Liberia					2		2
Mali	1	1			1		3
Mauritania		1					1
Niger	14	1		1			16
Nigeria	17	2		4	4	7	34
Senegal	7	2	1	1			11
Sierra Leone	1	3	1			1	6
Togo	2	1		1			4
Total	70	19	10	7	17	15	142

Role of Stakeholders

Promoting and guaranteeing the safety of journalists is a complex endeavor that requires commitment by different stakeholders. A mechanism developed by UNESCO for assessing the safety of journalists, also known as the UNESCO safety of journalists indicators, identifies the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations, state institutions, political parties, civil society and academic institutions, as well as media actors, including journalists themselves, as key stakeholders who have roles to play in ensuring a safe environment for the practice of journalism (UNESCO, 2013). In assessing the state of safety of journalists in a country, therefore, one has to look at the respective roles and contributions of the key stakeholders indicated above.

Firstly, journalists and media organizations themselves have a major role to play in improving their safety. Such roles include developing capacity in safety mechanisms for risky assignments and environments such as covering conflicts or operating from conflict zones. Media organizations are also required to equip their journalists with the requisite tools that allow them to professionally cover such assignments without over exposing themselves to violence. Both journalists and media organizations need to develop relevant contacts and links with appropriate security agencies to facilitate timely rescue operations when journalists run into trouble, particularly in conflict zones. Above all, it is important for journalists to earn the confidence, trust, and support of the populations they serve so as to have them as allies and defenders at all times.

In a recent survey by the MFWA, some nineteen journalists from different media organizations based in different parts of Ghana were randomly chosen and asked six key questions related to the development of their capacity in safety issues as journalists. The responses to the questions, as presented in Table 2 below, clearly show that there is little being done to build the capacity of journalists in Ghana on safety issues. This is similar to trends in other countries in Africa as revealed in many reports by press freedom groups and UNESCO's safety of journalists indicators.

Table 2: Responses by Journalists to Questions on Safety Capacity Development opportunities

Questions	Yes	No
Does the National Media Commission provide safety training for journalists?	0	19
Do journalists associations such as (Ghana Journalists Association) GJA and Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) provide safety training for journalists in your organization?	2	17
Does your organization provide safety training for journalists?	4	15
Does your organization have a written safety of journalists policy that is publicly available?	1	16
Does your organization have safety policies and practices in place to address challenges specific to women journalists?	0	19
Does your organization have safety policies and practices regarding online safety and dangers?	2	17

Conclusion and Recommendations

The role of journalists remains critical in the promotion of democracy, good governance, and in fostering open and peaceful societies around the world. Attacks on journalists anywhere therefore constitute an assault on the very fundamental prerequisites for a society's progress and development. This explains why the UNGA unanimously adopted the Resolution on the Safety of Journalists to ensure that UN member states prioritize the adoption and implementation of appropriate mechanisms for ensuring journalists' safety and punishing crimes committed against them.

While the adoption of the UN resolution has boosted national, regional, and international efforts at combating crimes against journalists, there has been limited success so far. Attacks on journalists have remained high, particularly in conflict zones and in politically unstable environments. The situation calls for concerted efforts by all stakeholders—the UN, governments, civil society, academia, media professional groups, and journalists themselves to improve safety.

The following recommendations are proffered to some of the key stakeholders who are required by the UN resolution to play various roles in promoting the safety of journalists:

Recommendations to Governments

- Create mechanisms for specifically tracking, investigating, and punishing crimes against journalists.
- Train security agencies on press freedom and safety of journalists.
- Adherence to professionalism should be a condition for license renewal by state regulatory bodies for broadcast media.

Recommendations to Civil Society and Academia

- Increase programs to build the capacity of journalists on safety precautions and practices.
- Incorporate journalist safety training into academic and journalism training programs.
- Mainstream gender and the specific types of violence faced by female journalists into broader training programs.

Recommendations to Media Actors

- Provide general safety training for journalists, including safety for women journalists and online safety.
- Develop and implement policies on journalists' safety, especially policies on coverage, violence, or potentially violent events.
- Owners, managers, and editors should prioritize professional standards.
- Increase monitoring and reporting of violations against journalists.

Recommendations for Journalists themselves

- Support safety of journalists and press freedom efforts by highlighting violations and demanding redress from authorities.
- Improve a commitment to professionalism to earn public trust and support.
- Improve self-capacity building in safety methods and redress mechanisms.
- Push for management's commitment to the safety and well-being of all media staff.

- Advocate for the development and implementation of the internal safety of journalist policies by media organizations.

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9 | NGO-MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS IN PEACEBUILDING: EXPERIENCES OF WANEP

Vincent Azumah

Introduction

Between the 1960s and the 1990s, there have been about eighty violent changes of government in sub-Saharan African countries. Many of these countries suffered various types of civil strife, conflicts, and wars. At the beginning of the new millennium, there were eighteen countries facing armed rebellion and eleven facing severe political crises (Bujra 2002).

Many who come from West Africa or have lived in West Africa and people who have studied the history of the region would agree that it has a “tortured” history that goes back centuries. From the period of the colonial “masters,” which can be described as simply dehumanizing, West Africa has not been at peace with itself. In fact if the colonial period was dehumanizing and bad, perhaps things have not gotten any better today.

Indeed, in 2012, the representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General for West Africa, Said Djinnit, noted, “this region is presenting a high number of indicators of vulnerability ranging from environmental degradation, desertification, food insecurity and crisis to illicit trafficking of arms, drug trafficking and terrorism” (WANEP 2013, 8). These problems have been compounded by the many natural resource-related conflicts and recent extremist activities that seem to be gaining hold in some countries in the region.

It is however important to note that despite the prevalence of conflict indicators and the growing extremist activities in West Africa, the region has been able to hold its own and prevented conflicts from escalating into the magnitude seen in the historic Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars. The essay seeks to highlight the role of civil society organizations (CSO) and their media partners in peacebuilding in a region that can be described as the fault line of conflict, using the example of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

WANEP and the Media

WANEP, founded in 1998 in response to civil wars that plagued West Africa in the 1990s, realized very early in its inception that Africa is vast and its conflicts very complicated and in fact a lot more so in West Africa where there are English, French, and Portuguese influences.

According to Bujra (2002),

Africa is a vast and varied continent made up of countries with specific histories and geographical conditions as well as uneven levels of economic development. The causes of conflicts in Africa reflect the continent's diversity and complexity. While some causes are purely internal and portray specific sub-regional dynamics, others have a significant international dimension. Notwithstanding these differences, African conflicts show a number of crosscutting themes and experiences.

Peace building in such complicated contexts demands multifaceted approaches, most of which are built on principled communication. WANEP therefore places special focus on collaborative approaches to conflict prevention and peace building, working with diverse actors from civil society, governments, intergovernmental bodies, women groups, and other partners in a bid to identify conflict triggers, establish a platform for dialogue and other early response mechanisms, and experience sharing and learning, thereby complementing efforts at ensuring sustainable peace and development in West Africa and beyond.

WANEP's work with the media aims at building a network of media professionals and others working with the media to understand conflicts

and how to communicate and educate on conflict with the principle of “do no harm.” The organization helps journalists understand WANEP and ECOWAS’ Early Warning System (ECOWARN) and its National Early Warning Systems (NEWS), which it operates across the fifteen ECOWAS member states.

To facilitate conflict-sensitive reportage and to leverage the strengths of the media in conflict prevention, especially in the field of early warning and early response mechanisms, WANEP established a Corporate Communications and Capacity Building Department that constantly liaises with the media on three fronts:

1. Uses media reports in some circumstances to support its early warning alerts through triangulation to validate its own reports from Community Monitors;
2. Shares conflict sensitive information with the media for dissemination to targeted audiences; and
3. Avails itself to the media and provides technical and analytical services to bring meaning to occurrences and recommendations for the prevention and escalation of violent conflict.

These approaches recognize the unique position of the media as being the facilitator of both peacebuilding and violent conflict.

Some WANEP Initiatives

Over the years WANEP has tried to make people working with and within the media understand conflict, the players, factors that fuel conflict, and the role of media in conflict transformation. These activities and initiatives by WANEP include:

- Training of West African journalists and police in Lagos, Nigeria, aimed at the following:
 - o Sensitizing the media and police on the workings and operations of ECOWARN and NEWS.
 - o Establishing a partnership with the media and the police on how to manage and disseminate early warning information emanating from NEWS and ECOWARN.

- The creation of close collaboration and synergy between the media, the police, ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate, and WANEP on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- Developing mechanisms for including the media/police on the list-serve for ECOWARN and NEWS products and outputs.
- Involving media in WANEP events as equal participants and not just reporters of opening ceremonies. This helps to provide specific training for media in understanding conflict and the role of media in transforming it.

Challenges

In working with and monitoring the media, WANEP has identified a number of challenges that undermine the media's ability to contribute to peacebuilding:

1. The tendency of the media to want to rush back to the newsroom after official openings of events and not stay to learn more about the nature of the issues under discussion.
2. The media's focus on reporting the accusations and counter-accusations of conflict actors rather than peacebuilding processes because they do not find peacebuilding sensational enough.
3. With the mushrooming of media houses, especially privately owned FM radio stations, there is also a "get it first" syndrome that drives sometimes untrained reporters to rush in to get the news out without first getting it right.
4. The upsurge of new forms of media (Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), which are largely unregulated, can be used to escalate conflict if security agencies don't have clear and lawful strategies to neutralize their effect.

Conclusion

The role of the media in conflict and its related issues cuts across the globe. The media has been accused of acting as a vehicle for virulent nationalism in former Yugoslavia. This is not just a modern phenomenon—both the

Nazis and the Soviet Union used the media to create a hegemonic climate in which they could more easily exercise power.

In Africa, one cannot talk about the role of the media in conflict without mentioning Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLMC). The use of radio in the Rwandan civil war was complemented by the newspaper Kangura, whose stories and articles were carefully written to whip up anger in one section of Rwanda against another. However, policymakers have been slow to understand the importance of media in shaping modern conflict or how, with proper support, it can help create the conditions for peace (Puddephatt 2006).

In fact, in times of violent conflict, as noted by Young (1991), “the media can contribute to conflict escalation, either directly or indirectly. Experienced war reporters observe that sometimes the very presence of cameras will prompt the sides to start shooting.”

It is for these reasons that in the coming years WANEP will continue to strengthen its relationship with the media, including the establishment of a systematic capacity-building program for strategic media personnel and media houses, media training institutions, media regulatory bodies, and media and public relation departments of security agencies across the fifteen member states of ECOWAS. It also plans to support and enhance peace journalism by sponsoring media awards that promote peace journalism in West Africa.

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