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# Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions

## **WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVES**

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Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions  
WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVES



Journalism in Conflict and  
Post-Conflict Conditions  
**WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVES**

**Kristin Skare Orgeret and William Tayeebwa (eds.)**

**NORDICOM**

# Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions Worldwide Perspectives

Kristin Skare Orgeret and William Tayeewa (eds.)

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This book is published in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Global Policy at the University of Gothenburg.

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## Preface

*Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions: Worldwide Perspectives* is a most important book in our time of uncertainty. It adds to our knowledge base and understanding concerning the role of journalism and media in the complexities of post-conflict processes and peace building – a role that is often ignored in contemporary discussions. The aim of the book is

... to provide both empirical and theoretical input to the discussions of the role of journalism and media in conflict and post-conflict situations and in the often rather muddy waters between them. Together, the contributions to this book from different parts of the world emphasize that discussions about post-conflict situations will gain from including the media. At the same time, the contributions problematize the concept of post-conflict and powerfully illustrate that the phase between war/conflict and peace is neither unidirectional nor linear, as the use of the concept sometimes seems to imply. (Kristin Skare Orgeret, page 16)

Now, just as 50-60 years ago, issues of peace building, democracy and development are of central importance in the social sciences. One principal issue at that time – even in media research – concerned the end of colonialism and the political, economic and social development of states that had newly won their independence. And then as now, technological advances were a prime driving force. Peace was at the forefront after World War II, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had recently been adopted by the UN.

New theoretical and methodological perspectives were being developed – to a great extent as a consequence of the internationalization of research, for example, the seminal work on the role of information and journalism in society from national as well as global perspectives. Different paradigms were emerging, and the media were given a crucial role in most of them.

The research field and knowledge production are different today, in our age of globalization and digitization. The character and directions of academic inquiry are constantly changing. Old subjects evolve, their influences wax and wane, and new

subjects emerge – all as a result of the many intellectual and social processes taking place on different levels: the national, regional and international.

Society differs radically from that of the 1950s and 1960s when the media and communication research field developed. Our contemporary global and multicultural societies raise more complex issues than ever before. Changes in society and technology are giving rise to new knowledge that has turned some previous knowledge on its head. Yet some fundamental principles remain, such as peace that is based on human rights – particularly freedom of expression. At present, we need to regain our sense of context and broaden our perspectives in a more holistic direction.

Every day we see threats to freedom of expression – and freedom of the press: new forms of state censorship and repression, self-censorship, surveillance, monitoring and control, hate speech, gatekeeping, propaganda/disinformation, acts of terror, anti-terror laws and organized crime, and even cases of outright murder in which journalists or their sources have been targeted. These are critical issues in many countries, but especially in zones facing social, ethnic and political stress, armed conflicts or disaster situations.

This issue cannot be neglected now, when the 2030 Agenda is on the global as well as the national arena - more precisely Goal 16 in the UN's new Sustainable Development Goals which is to: "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

Three specific targets under this goal are: 16.1 significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere; 16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all; 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

These three targets have a clear bearing on media and journalism – and peace – not least on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The safety of journalists is essential to protecting all citizens' right to reliable information and journalists' right to provide this information without fearing for their safety.

The challenges to freedom of expression – especially freedom of information – and the role of journalists in conflict zones and post-conflict processes are unique and call for empirical results, theoretical insights and analytical concepts. If we wish to address the elusive relationship between media, conflict and peace building, we need to bring together researchers from different parts of the world. From that point of view, knowledge such as that presented in this book is more important than ever.

Nordicom has a long tradition of publishing books on vital issues related to freedom of expression, freedom of the press and journalism in contexts of conflict, war and crises. These publications have often been the result of collaboration between researchers in the Nordic region and researchers in other parts of the world. Many of the books are global in nature. An effort has also been made to avoid Western 'biases' and normative assumptions. The present publication is an excellent example of a

## PREFACE

long-term and fruitful collaboration between researchers in the North and South – in this case between research departments in Norway, Uganda, Nepal and Colombia.

Let me conclude by thanking, on behalf of Nordicom, the editors, Kristin Skare Orgeret and William Tayeebwa, for their remarkable efforts, and all the contributors around the world who have made the book possible. Brought together in a holistic framework, the chapters make an excellent contribution to our knowledge base concerning the potential of media and the role of journalists as well as the problems faced in the complex field of conflict, post-conflict and peace.

Göteborg in May 2016

*Ulla Carlsson*

UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression,  
Media Development and Global Policy  
and former Director of Nordicom



# Foreword

Mahmood Mamdani

The essays in this book focus on the tension built into the vocation of the journalist. He and she not only report on what has happened but also play a key part in forging a way forward. The media both report on conflict and play a critical part in building consensus. The link between the two is the following: reporting on events is not just a passive process. In constructing a narrative for the reader, the journalist plays an active role in defining the event in question and underlining what is at stake. In so doing, the journalist both reports as well as joins the effort to forge a way forward.

The essays in this volume seek to probe the contradictory character of the journalist's vocation: to report on conflict but also to build a consensus on the way out of it. What, in this context, is the meaning of mediation and reconciliation? Are journalists external to the conflict? Can they be objective or should they recognize their own limitations, thereby reporting all sides to the conflict? What are the moral dilemmas faced by a war journalist as opposed to a peace journalist, since the former is more likely to turn into an official mouthpiece?

The essays address these questions in different contexts, ranging from Afghanistan to South Sudan, Syria to Libya, and Nepal to Colombia. In doing so, they allow us to go beyond the sometimes banal and formulaic literature on "peace-building" in "post-conflict" societies.



## Introduction

# Conflict and Post-Conflict Journalism

## *Worldwide Perspectives*

Kristin Skare Orgeret

Peace is a difficult thing to measure. It is a bit like counting the people who did not die and the wars that did not happen. We give such an importance to the word peace but we do not tend to notice it when it occurs, or report on it. Sometimes it takes reminding ourselves of how terrible the war once was to see the peace growing around us. ([www.fallen.io](http://www.fallen.io))

The above is taken from the powerful interactive documentary “The Fallen of World War II”, written and directed by Neil Halloran (2015). In addition to capturing the staggering numbers of fatalities, the documentary accentuates the unstable zones between conflict, post-conflict and peace, often a somewhat blurred (and not even necessarily unidirectional) period where much is at stake in terms of deciding what direction the future will take.

In recent years the concept of “post-conflict” has been popular in discussions of international relations, political initiatives and peace research, but as much as it describes an unstable phase, it is often unclear what precisely is meant by the term. Williams calls the concept of post-conflict a new addition to post-war vocabulary and argues that whereas it does not have “any exact meaning”, it is used “vaguely for everything that helps reinstate the ‘good times’” (Williams 2005: 546 in Ismail 2008). Post-conflict may interchangeably be used as a synonym for nation building, state building or peace building, and sometimes post-conflict reconstruction is considered as a part of the more general peace-building process, not as its synonym. Some of what Vincent Chetail (2009) calls “the chronic ambiguity of post-conflict peace building” may, as he claims, stem from the fact that it designates both the process of establishing a sustainable peace and the political and institutional strategies to do so. Nevertheless, he continues, these different – albeit overlapping – meanings share two essential attributes and a more common purpose: post-conflict peace building is a long-term process and it is multidimensional in name; the ultimate objective being to reconcile security development and justice.

It is within such greater understanding of the complexities of post-conflict processes and peace building that the present book finds its roots. It is the book's overall intention to introduce and further deliberate the role of journalism and the media, often ignored in discussions about post-conflict processes, into that broader complexity. Although the role of the media in both conflict and post-conflict settings remains a relatively unexplored era of research, this does not mean that the media have a limited impact in these situations. On the contrary, "media can positively influence reconciliation in the aftermath of violent conflict just as the negative use of the media magnifies and promotes conflict" (Yamshon and Yamshon 2006). Also the school of peace journalism has delivered important contributions to discussions of how the media can "escape from the war propaganda trap of symbolically constructing armed conflicts as polarized, black and white, zero-sum games" (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2008: 13). Hence, journalism can not only help to distribute information but also counter hate speech and create an environment of balanced opinions, an "information equilibrium" (Koven 2004). Reconciliation is a long-term process and reconciliation based on ambiguity will not last. Ideally, both the notion and its interpretations must be publicly discussed, and here lies an important task for the media.

### Post-conflict peace building

The term "peace building" appeared as early as the sixteenth century, but did not become a subject of study in its own right until the 1960s and 1970s within the framework of peace research. Its conceptual origins lie in the distinction between "positive peace" and "negative peace" developed by the Norwegian sociologist and researcher Johan Galtung. Whereas negative peace is defined as the "absence of direct and organised violence between human groups or nations", the notion of positive peace is part of a longer-term conception according to which establishing a sustainable peace is made possible through cooperation between these groups or nations and the eradication of the root causes of the conflict" (Galtung 1975:29).

In 2007, Michael Barnett et al. look into the terminology used by twenty-four governmental and nongovernmental agencies to describe post-conflict peace building, and highlight the vast diversity of expressions used. Notwithstanding the difficulties in comprehension that such a multitude of concepts may cause, the plethora of terms reflects more profoundly the differences in the mandates and political interests of the various actors involved in processes of post-conflict reconstruction (Barnett et al. 2007). For instance, as Chetail (2009) develops, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has a preference for the terms "stabilisation" and "peace support" in line with its military mandate, whereas the European Union uses the expression "civilian crisis management" within the framework of its European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). A UN Progress Report of the Secretary-General is often referred to in relation to the immediate aftermath of conflict as it lists five central areas of action in post-

conflict: basic safety and security; political processes; basic services; core government services and economic revitalisation (UN 2010).

The African Union (AU) Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework was adopted in Banjul, The Gambia in 2006, and refers to the same five areas as the above-mentioned UN report, which it terms “constitutive elements” in post-conflict reconstruction, but in addition the AU significantly adds gender as a self-standing element. This is important, as experiences from post-conflict situations show how even in contexts where women did play important roles during the conflict and peace building, they are often marginalised in the ultimate political settlement (see, for example, Castillejo 2011 and 2013). Efforts to develop new political systems in post-conflict contexts should ideally emphasise the inclusion of female leaders and women’s policy priorities in order to eliminate institutional barriers to women’s participation in reconstruction and governance.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the African Union defines “post-conflict reconstruction and development” as:

... a comprehensive set of measures that seek to: address the needs of countries emerging from conflict, including the needs of affected populations; prevent escalation of disputes; avoid relapse into violence; address the root causes of conflict; and consolidate sustainable peace (AU 2006).

In order to ensure that the broader society feels ownership of the processes leading to sustainable peace, and that external actors get as realistic as possible an impression of the situation, it is important that a multitude of local voices and experiences is included in the stories about conflict and post-conflict. Other important tasks facing countries in crisis or recovering from recent hostilities are restoring effective governance and building public trust in government. The history and political culture of the state need to be taken into account. As conditions in post-conflict countries vary widely, rebuilding trust will require different approaches, but accessible communications and getting one’s voice and perspectives heard are seen as fundamental prerequisites of post-conflict reconstruction.

### The role of journalism

Diverse, multiple voices are important for free speech in democracy and, equally, for a broad understanding of knowledge and autonomy. The media may play a role specifically in supporting the peace process, allowing for participation, dialogue and reconciliation and strengthening civil society. Hence, the classical societal roles of journalistic media are seen as important in supporting the transition to a stable and democratic society. The core societal role of the media may be summarised as follows:

1. To provide information about people’s rights
2. To discover illegal actions and protect people from corruption through the so-called watchdog function

3. To function as a two-way channel between those who govern and the governed
4. To serve as identity suppliers: the media should reflect how people see themselves and offer a wide spectrum of possible roles for people to take up

The media have a significant position in addressing issues of identity in post-conflict society, as well as communicating the story to the rest of the world. Johan Galtung stresses the role of reconciliation in the processes a war-struck society ultimately has to go through. This includes building stable relationship between the antagonists, or in the words of Lederach, “to address, integrate and embrace the painful past and the necessary shared future as a means of dealing with present” (1997: 34-35). The media may serve as a platform where both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations can share their experiences in order to get a clearer picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation. The role of visual images is important as they may help us to remember as well as to forget the conflicts or wars afterwards.

According to Laplante and Phenicie (2009), post-conflict conflicts may be attributed in part, to the media’s failure to adequately mediate conflicting views of a country’s history. As Laplante and Phenicie continue, internal conflicts do not occur spontaneously, but tend to have a history. Not only can the media influence society before the conflict by recognising and properly addressing the issues at stake, but they can also have an influence afterwards. Nora Kuusik (2010) shows how not giving people the possibility of political participation, and not allowing them to express themselves freely, is a significant cause of conflict. Lack of information can, at any stage of a conflict, make people desperate, restless and ready to manipulate the dispute. The ability to make informed decisions, as Kuusak reminds us, “strengthens societies and fosters economic growth, democratic structures and the positive outlook on the future” (2010: 56).

On the one hand, free independent and pluralistic media provide a platform for debate and exchange of knowledge and opinions. On the other hand, the terrible experiences of Rwanda and the Radio Mille Collines which actively fomented ethnic hatred, driving the Hutu people to kill at least 500,000 Tutsis in 1994, showed that media can also be misused for propaganda purposes, to spread rumours and incite hatred. Simultaneously media have the potential to advance or to minimise the impact of harmful symbols in adjusting social relationships. This tendency creates an inherent conflict in the media’s ability to help achieve (or to hinder) peaceful goals. Thus the media’s representations of identity, of history, of the justification of transitional measures – indeed, the narratives of the society itself, become critical in shaping the extent to which stability, reconciliation, new nation building, and community can be sustained. The media can be a forum where identity issues play out, and they can also provide the space for encouraging acceptance of certain narratives that are part of transitional (post-conflict) efforts.

The aim of the present book is to provide both empirical and theoretical input to the discussions of the role of journalism and media in conflict and post-conflict situations and in the often rather muddy waters between them. Together, the con-

tributions to this book from different parts of the world emphasise that discussions about post-conflict situations will gain from including the media. At the same time, the contributions problematise the concept of post-conflict and powerfully illustrate that the phase between war/conflict and peace is neither unidirectional nor linear, as the use of the concept sometimes seems to imply. Reaching a peace agreement or arranging for the termination of hostilities is, in itself, no guarantee that peace can be secured. The examples from Afghanistan, Colombia and South Sudan in this book show this up clearly. Remaining post-conflict societal friction may even be as threatening to long-lasting peace as the war itself. Hence, post-conflict may be seen as a “conflict situation in which open warfare has come to an end. However, such situations remain tense for years or decades and can easily relapse into large-scale violence” (Junne and Verkoren 2005). Post-conflict peace may be described as typically frail. The World Bank estimates that, on average, countries emerging from hostilities have a 40 per cent chance of relapsing into conflict within five years (2006), and around half of all civil wars are due to post-conflict relapses (Brown et al. 2011: 462).

As we will see in the following contributions to this book, just as all conflicts are different, each post-conflict situation is also defined by its context (see also Chand and Coffman 2008). Post-conflict transition may be broken down into three broad, sometimes overlapping phases: emergency-cum-stabilisation, transition and recovery, peace and development. Journalists also contribute to the world’s experiences of conflicts and crises: from shaping global audiences’ perceptions and knowledge about them, to influencing decisions about international national political or military strategies. In a crisis or conflict situation, international media can attract worldwide attention, and media and journalism can be of great assistance in conflict management and peace building locally, regionally and internationally. Weak or non-existing reporting may have devastating results. Sometimes it is necessary to be aware that media and international reporting or efforts to shape a media environment can definitely be manipulated, and that foreign correspondents sometimes adapt a frame expected by the public at home.

The Institute on War and Peace reporting has a set of “six duties” for journalists covering conflict and peace: understand the conflict; report fairly; report the background and the causes of the conflict; present the human side; report on peace efforts; recognise journalists’ influence.<sup>2</sup> The list emphasises that journalists, even facing increased external pressures as a result of the conflict, must maintain standards such as professional research and balanced coverage. Also inspired by the so-called peace journalism paradigm of Johan Galtung, the list stresses the responsibility of journalists to cover the “trauma and the human stories of all the conflict’s victims” and that true balance requires a look at alternatives to war.

Journalists are also products of the conflict that a country experiences or has experienced. The fact that journalists are often persecuted threatened or harmed during conflicts may very well affect their ability to report freely. Conflict zone reporters face a multitude of dangers unique to their particular form of journalism. Female journalists

are more exposed in conflict settings heavily dominated by men, and hence are even more vulnerable. Particularly when covering war and conflict, there is a need to get local and ordinary voices heard. This is the point of Shabbir Hussain (2014: 6), who argues that “though the media, when reporting on government officials, always refer to the ‘ordinary people killed in the conflict’, they never discuss what happens to the local population when military jets bomb the area and fire missiles”. When common people in a conflict have no voice in the media, elitist and securitised versions get a monopoly in mainstream media discourse, often at the expense of more peaceful perspectives (for example, Hussain 2014; Ross 2006).

### Worldwide perspectives

The first chapter of the book, Elisabeth Eide’s “Afghanistan: Journalism in pseudo-post-conflict. A clash of definitions?” explores the concept of post-conflict. Applying criteria for specific peace milestones and possible indicators of progress, and using Afghanistan as an example, Eide discusses how the scores for Afghanistan are low. It is particularly the “economic recovery” and the “risk of recurring conflict”, which are seen as the main challenges. She further points at how Afghanistan (and Iraq) have been subject to invasions by US-led Western forces, and a gradual withdrawal of (most of) these, and how such withdrawals often imply less Western media coverage of the countries invaded – hence, these countries develop into “post-conflict” as seen from the perspective of the withdrawing forces and their home countries, whereas the situation on the ground provides indicators of ongoing conflict. The chapter discusses the development of journalism as an institution post-Taliban, by way of the judicial, political, military and economic developments, and analyses some 2014 news/reportage from two particular outlets as a case. The reporting demonstrates Afghanistan’s fragility and lack of security – for journalists as well as for people in general – in a situation which was at least planned to be post-conflict.

The instability of the so-called post conflict situation is also well illustrated by the case of the Republic of South Sudan which, after 60 years of civil war, emerged as the world’s youngest nation in 2011, and which again moved from a post-conflict situation back to open conflict in late 2013. The signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement on 23 January 2014 between President Kiir’s government and the opposition forces led by Riek Machar did not prevent violence from erupting again shortly afterwards. The fact that insecurity and flux often spread beyond a nation state’s border, sometimes to an entire region, is also shown in the case of South Sudan. In her chapter “Justified mission? Press coverage of Uganda’s military intervention in the South Sudan conflict”, Charlotte Ntulume discusses neighbouring Ugandan press coverage of the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF)’s involvement in the conflict in South Sudan. The study supports earlier conclusions that in times of war and conflict, journalists often depend entirely on official sources for information, and media serve as mouthpieces

of the authorities by amplifying their voices and muffling those that differ from the official position. In such times, the “watchdog” in journalism takes a back seat as other concerns take precedence. As a result the news is framed along the lines of the authorities’ standpoint and describes the mission first and foremost as a humanitarian cause. However, in a few cases the press, and particularly the nongovernmental newspaper *Daily Monitor*, in its editorials, attempted to explain the deployment and questioned the government’s decision.

In some cases the instability of post conflict societies tend to spread to entire regions and even effect the larger world. Joseph Stiglitz has discussed how modern conflicts are often turned into post-crisis-crises. In their chapter “Who’s to blame for the chaos in Syria? The coverage of Syria in *Aftenposten*, with the war in Libya as doxa”, Rune Ottosen and Sjur Øvrebø examine how the civil war in Syria can be discussed as a post-crisis-crisis. The war in Syria is the worst humanitarian crisis of our time and has fuelled a massive exodus displacing an ever increasing number of people (12 million at the end of December 2015), creating the largest wave of refugees to Europe since the Second World War. In terms of terrorist attacks the war spreads far beyond the borders of Syria. Ottosen and Øvrebø investigate the relationship between the war in Libya in 2011 and the unfolding events in Syria in 2013. Their hypothesis is that Norway’s role in Libya is underreported, and an underlying assumption is that because Norway played an important part in the Libyan bombing, Norway must also take some responsibility for the events after the bombing came to an end. Part of a propaganda war is to keep controversial issues hidden from the media. Investigating the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*’s Syria coverage, the authors find that in the majority of articles about Syria the connecting line between the regime change in Libya and the following events in Syria is not drawn. In the articles where Libya is mentioned, however, they find a certain willingness to draw historical lines to the Libyan war. The authors conclude that *Aftenposten*’s coverage of the Syrian conflict had a war journalism orientation with some elements of peace journalism in it.

Theories of peace journalism have also inspired Chapter Four, “Framing peace building: Discourses of United Nations radio in Burundi” by William Tayeebwa. The chapter discusses how in its post-conflict, peace-building operations in Africa the United Nations has been accused of promoting the Western model of “liberal peace building” as opposed to exploring alternative approaches proposed by national actors. Tayeebwa argues that in order to push its agenda in conflict and post-conflict countries, the UN produces radio programmes that it distributes to radio stations. The chapter analyses a selection of such radio programmes from Burundi and shows that although alternative approaches of peace building are discernible in the broadcasts, the dominant framing favours the Western-centric “liberal peace building” agenda.

To best serve the public as watchdogs and truth-tellers, news organisations need a broad display of voices and perspectives. Balanced gender representations in the media increase the citizens’ possibilities for recognition and democratic belonging. In Chapter Five, “Women making news – conflict and post-conflict in the field”, Kristin Skare

Orgeret discusses what challenges and opportunities women journalists face when covering conflict related issues either at home or in a foreign context where gender roles may be very different from those of their home country. Based on interviews and discussions with experienced female journalists from seven countries around the world, the discussion evolves around questions linked to the particular challenges and opportunities faced by women journalists, and how their security can best be ensured when covering war and conflict zones. How do they experience differences between working in an open conflict situation and a post-conflict situation? A main argument of the chapter is that female journalists' conditions of employment, including aspects of safety, can serve as a pointer of democratic development, freedom of expression, civil rights and media freedom in general.

Women's perspectives are also the issue of Chapter Six, "Experiences of female journalists in post-conflict Nepal" by Samiksha Koirala shows how women often take over nontraditional roles brought on by the changes and transformations during the conflict. The chapter shows that despite the popular discourse of women being naturally inclined toward peace making, in Nepal such stereotypes were defied as women assumed active roles, either as negotiators or as party cadres and guerrillas, in the ten-year armed conflict of the Maoist war. The chapter explores the participation of women journalists in Nepali media, including their experience of reporting during the war. Through two case studies of Nepali journalists, the chapter examines the role of women journalists during conflict and post-conflict, and argues that Nepali journalism in general has not been successful in making post-conflict reporting balanced and gender sensitised, although some steps taken over the last few years have been in the right direction.

The following two chapters, Chapters Seven and Eight, discuss the tensions between local and global media agendas and media coverage. The chapters deal with journalism in the context of war and post-conflict in Colombia from two different perspectives. First, Henry Caballero Fula explains and analyses the emergence of a diverse indigenous journalism in Colombia from an inside perspective. His argument revolves around the issue of violence: how has violence against indigenous activists and journalists contributed to producing this particular form of communication? The indigenous media in Colombia raise some questions about understandings in the global North of journalism in conflict and post-conflict. Seen through the lens of the professionalisation of journalism, the indigenous journalism found in Colombia does not necessarily fit current definitions of "journalism". However, the chapter argues, much Northern journalism also emerged closely related to social organisations and political parties. Conceivably, the emergence of indigenous journalism can enrich current understandings of Northern forms of journalism such as alternative journalism, community journalism and citizen journalism.

Caballero concludes by reflecting on the role and importance of autonomy for indigenous peoples. This raises the question of how indigenous journalists can achieve a degree of autonomy within indigenous movements organised around demands for

indigenous autonomy in a context of conflict or post-conflict with extreme levels of violence against indigenous peoples.

Chapter Eight, “Global and local journalism – and the Norwegian collective imagination of ‘post-conflict’ Colombia by Roy Krøvel, analyses Norwegian journalism on war and peace in Colombia, undeniably produced by specialised journalists situated within a Northern culture of journalism that highly value the idea of the autonomy of journalism. However, the chapter argues, this journalism is also embedded within a very Norwegian, collectively produced, imaginary of peace and understanding of the role of Norwegians in making peace “happen”. This imaginary of peace works to frame Norwegian journalism on war and peace in Colombia and makes alternative perspectives less salient – and reduces indigenous peoples to voiceless victims of war. Krøvel concludes that the Norwegian journalism on conflict and post-conflict in Colombia tends to make indigenous perspectives on the peace process difficult to understand for a Norwegian audience.

In Chapter Nine, “Improving post-conflict journalism through three dances of trauma studies”, Elsebeth Frey shows how the concepts of crisis journalism, conflict sensitive journalism and post-conflict journalism may overlap. The chapter links the traumatic stress that may appear in post-conflict as well as in a crisis situations, and explores the possibilities of an interaction between post-conflict journalism and trauma studies, where specific strategies are proposed to sketch out a (normative) hands-on framework for journalism in such situations. Frey shows how knowledge about resilience and trauma may make journalists more capable of understanding, and thus producing, more meaningful and sensitive journalism.

Trauma is also central in the last chapter of the book, Anne-Hege Simonsen’s “Moving forward, holding on. The role of photojournalistic images in the aftermath of crisis”. Simonsen shows how, in post-conflict situations, photographs may work as triggers of collective as well as individual emotions. Their powers depend on where in the post-conflict process their users find themselves and how far the process of negotiating the past has come. The chapter shows how, with its power to display moments and scenes that reach “beyond words”, photojournalism plays a vital role in mediating conflicts and crisis, or what Zelizer has termed “unsettled events”. But what happens after the event, when the “breaking news” moment has passed? The chapter discusses how journalistic photographs work as tools of remembering as well as forgetting. Since journalistic photographs are not so much windows on the world as windows on the mind, Simonsen argues, photographs may empower people to move on, but also to keep conflicts alive.

The ten chapters in the book consider the problems and the potential of media in conflict and post-conflict. Jointly, they provide examples of how different conflict and post-conflict may be and that such phases are processes, but not necessarily linear. Furthermore, the role of journalism is crucial, both as part of these processes as such and in how they are communicated to society and the larger world. Rather than specific prescriptions, the chapters taken together propose ways of thinking about the role of journalism and media within the complex field of conflict and peace.

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## Notes

1. See: <http://africacenter.org/security/topic/reconstruction/#sthash.zuu97usI.dpuf>
2. [http://ijnet.org/ijnet/training\\_materials/guidelines](http://ijnet.org/ijnet/training_materials/guidelines)

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1.

# Afghanistan

## Journalism in Pseudo-Post-Conflict

### *A Clash of Definitions?*

Elisabeth Eide

*I admit it, we have problems, but we are at least partly free ... All the journalists who have died during all these years have not died in vain.*

Abdel Mujeeb Khalvatgar, executive director of Nai  
– Supporting Open Media, Kabul, Afghanistan

In the spring of 1988, I sat with exiled Afghan friends in Peshawar, Pakistan, and discussed the future of their home country. The USSR had recently pulled its last military forces out of Afghanistan after more than nine years of occupation.<sup>1</sup> One friend, Nassim Jawad, said, “There will be no peace. Afghan groups will fight each other for the next thirty years.” Fifteen years later, in 2003, I met Nassim in the Mustapha Hotel in Kabul, where freelancers and stringers shared beers while waiting for the next eruption of the ongoing conflict.<sup>2</sup> The Taliban had fled when US forces entered Kabul with their allies, and many Afghans were still optimists. Nassim, who had long been in exile and worked for a transnational organisation, was, however, still sceptical.

In the not-too-distant future, Nassim’s 1988 prophesy may prove true. After the Soviet Union collapsed, their loyal friends in Kabul lasted for another three years, and then the Mujahedin, the resistance forces, installed themselves in the Afghan capital. This conglomeration of Mujahedin parties did not agree on how to share power, and instead started fighting each other from different corners of Kabul. Commanders looted private property and abducted women and young girls. Large parts of the capital which – unlike much of the country under the USSR – had been spared were reduced to ruins. This provided the Taliban, a traditionalist religious offshoot from the Mujahedin centered in the southern provinces, with an argument for seizing power. With their promises of peace and security they were welcomed into the Afghan cities by some citizens. However, their rigorous ways of treating civil life (not least women) and their brutality towards (non-Pashtun) enemies soon estranged them from many. They still ruled most of the country from 1996, gradually expanding towards the North, where they had traditionally been weak. After the al Qaeda attack on the US on 11 September 2001, a new phase occurred through which the Northern alliance,

the pre-Taliban government supported by US forces, advanced on Kabul and established themselves there. After a conference in Bonn, Germany, in November, Hamid Karzai became president, and retained this position until 2014, when new presidential elections were organised.

In 2015 the situation is not unlike that in 1988, except that the remaining superpower, the US, is not on the verge of collapse, and except that they will still keep some forces in Afghanistan after signing a strategic partnership treaty with the new president, Ashraf Ghani, on 30 September 2014. The Taliban, temporarily weakened after the main blow against them in 2001, have regrouped and partly control large areas of the country. On the day after the NATO withdrawal came to an end, they characterised the NATO engagement in Afghanistan as a defeat.<sup>3</sup> Suicide bomb attacks, an unknown phenomenon in Afghanistan until 2005, are now an almost daily occurrence. Having followed the development and different wars in Afghanistan closely for the past 28 years, I find it hard to conclude that this country has reached the position of post-conflict. Friends in Kabul tell me that they venture out every morning fearing that they will not get home in the evening. Still, there are conflicting media discourses on what has been “achieved” in Afghanistan during the last 13 years of US-led intervention, and some scholars mention Afghanistan in their treatment of the post-conflict concept (see below).

### Post-conflict – hoped for

So what is post-conflict, really? And does the concept apply to Afghanistan? Brown et al. (2011) suggest a number of criteria, and I will apply them below in an attempt to characterise Afghanistan’s situation at the end of 2014.

The scores for Afghanistan, as seen from the above, are low. As Collier et al. (2008: 461-462) argue, challenges to post-conflict societies are, especially, the “economic recovery” and the “risk of recurring conflict”. They characterise the post-conflict peace as “typically fragile” and claim that “around half of all civil wars are due to post-conflict relapses”. Afghanistan answers to the “fragile” characteristic, but must be seen as more of an “ongoing conflict” which “undoubtedly makes it more difficult to implement recovery policies, and indeed may affect their design, as we see today in the examples of Afghanistan and Iraq” (Brown et al. 2011: 6).

These examples are special since both countries in the new millennium have been subject to invasions by and the gradual withdrawal of US-led western forces. Often, such withdrawals imply less western media coverage of the countries invaded (Galtung and Ruge 1965), and the number of reporters in the countries is clearly reduced. A temporary conclusion of the discussion is that in a sense these countries develop into “post-conflict” as seen from the perspective of withdrawing forces and their home countries, while the situation on the ground provides indicators of ongoing conflict. Indeed, 2014 has, according to international monitoring, delivered more civilian victims of acts of war and terror in Afghanistan than any of the previous post-2001 years.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1.** Afghanistan and peace milestones

Peace milestones	Possible indicators of progress	Afghanistan 2014
Cessation of hostilities and violence	Reduction in number of conflict fatalities, violent attacks. Time passed since the fighting stopped.	Fighting between Taliban and related groups, and the government/foreign forces still goes on. Many fatalities.
Signing of political/peace agreements	Signing/adherence to ceasefire agreements; political agreements; endorsement of peace/political agreement by all parties to the conflict.	No agreement in place between government and Taliban. Political-military agreement with the US.
Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration	Number of weapons handled in, demobilisation of military forces, military barracks closed, spending cuts on military procurements.	No demobilisation of military forces or spending cuts.
Refugee repatriation	Number of returnees (voluntarily), etc.	After 2001, more returnees; lately more forced returnees, but many more refugees flee the country.
Establishing a functional state	Reduced impunity and lawlessness? Rules of law introduced and maintained, reduced corruption. Tax revenue.	Still blatant impunity towards (former) warlords. Corruption still a major problem. Small tax income
Achieving reconciliation and societal integration	Number of violent incidents between groups; perception of "others" via surveys; extent of trust.	Many violent incidents. Small minorities (Sikhs, Hindus, Ahmadis) feel threatened.
Economic recovery	Growth recovery. Increased revenue mobilisation, restoring economic infrastructure, increased foreign direct investment.	Little progress, but some major investments.

Source: Brown et.al. 2011. Their original table is edited and supplemented with a third column containing my assessments of the current situation in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter will look, particularly, at the odds for journalism in a country which cannot really be seen as a fully-fledged post-conflict example, but where some of the features might still qualify – the “new” is that the main part of the international military forces that were party to the conflict have left Afghanistan. Thus, other developments may occur. Applying a more simple definition of post-conflict, then, may open space in this collection for a small study of journalism in Afghanistan. Post-conflict may be seen as a “conflict situation in which open warfare has come to an end. Such situations remain tense for years – or decades – and can easily relapse into large-scale violence” (Junne and Verkoren 2005). It is a matter of discussion whether “open warfare” has ended in Afghanistan, but since much of the warfare has to do with a variety of terrorist/insurgency attacks and attacks *against* terrorists and insurgents (increasingly by national and local forces) the country might qualify.

In this analysis, I shall first concentrate on the prospects for the development of journalism as an institution in post-Taliban Afghanistan, by way of the judicial, political, military and economic developments, and then – as a case study – analyse a limited amount of 2014 news/reportage from two particular outlets. One is the Institute for War and Peace Reporting in Kabul, which has a large number of both young and more experienced journalists working across the country. The other is Nai Open Media in Afghanistan. The year 2014 is an appropriate year to study, since in this year most of the NATO-led forces left the country, abandoning the military and security responsibilities to the Afghan national army and police.

A central research question is the degree to which the reporting promoted by these institutions concentrates on ongoing conflict and the extent to which it focuses more on people's everyday lives and problems. Linked to this is also the conflict between traditional western "impartial" journalism and other endeavours aiming at educating the population in a war-torn country as a means of reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> Worth adding is that this writer has followed the situation in Afghanistan closely for at least 30 years and has co-authored a volume on Afghan literature (Eide and Schoulgin 2004) and a book based on historic studies as well as anthropological observations and scientific interviews (Eide and Skaufjord 2014). Many travels in the country between 1997 and 2013 contribute to a deeper understanding of its history, politics and journalism.

## Journalism, the law, ideals and practices

After the 2001 invasion and the establishment of the Bonn-negotiated government in Kabul, a new constitution, partly building on previous ones, came into operation, guaranteeing equal rights for citizens (including gender rights) and freedom of expression. Under the Taliban, the media outlets had been reduced to zero, except for a TV/radio station focusing only on religious content, and a small pamphlet-like newspaper communicating similar content. Now, with the help of international support, numerous media came into existence. Journalists who had been barred from exercising their profession re-entered the newsrooms, and new journalists were recruited in relatively large numbers. Today, approximately 12,000 people work in the private media sector in Afghanistan (Khalvatgar 2014).

Their freedom is, however, clearly limited. The constitution also states that Islam is "the religion of the state" and that "no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam". This leaves a lot of interpretation up to the government and its bodies, and also to the highest religious leaders. An example of how this works is the way in which a young student of journalism, Seyed Pervez Kambakhsh, was accused of having downloaded from the Internet an article critical to Islam's view on women, and sentenced to death by a provincial court in Mazar-e-Sharif in 2008. Because of national and international pressure, the verdict was changed by an appeal court in Kabul to 20 years' imprisonment.<sup>7</sup> His final escape was facilitated by the high-

level contact between Kai Eide, the former UN chief of mission in Afghanistan, and former president Hamid Karzai, who set the country's legal institutions aside to save the prisoner, who now lives in exile (Eide 2010). This chain of events demonstrates the lack of a judicial system with fair and open trials, and simultaneously shows severe limitations to free expression. In the provincial court, Kambakhsh had no right to a lawyer, or to speak for himself. The informal pressures against government and judicial institutions were substantial, especially from the Afghan *Ulema* (Eide 2010, 2013).

According to Nai director Mujeeb Khalvatgar,<sup>8</sup> 44 journalists have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001, and more than 450 violations against media (workers) have been recorded. In most of these incidents of violation the government was to blame. On the other hand, most of the killings of journalists are attributed to the Taliban or other "shadowy armed groups with unverifiable links" (Khalvatgar 2014). In the month of October 2014 alone, more than 20 cases of violence against journalists in Afghanistan were recorded, and several of these were perpetrated by local police or security forces – the very forces that are to be trained by the remaining international military forces.<sup>9</sup> Most violations of free expression occur "when a journalist asks for information from government staff and is then subjected to verbal and even physical harassment" (Khalvatgar op. cit.). There is not yet an "access to information" statute in Afghanistan, and journalists have been known to be pressurised to reveal their sources, even if the media law is against such practices.

The unlawful situation in Afghanistan can be illustrated by the introduction to the Nai September 2014 report:

Afghanistan's media community has passed yet another bloody month. A female journalist was killed, three other journalists injured, four beaten by the security forces and three threatened and insulted in different parts of the country in September 2014. Moreover, in September, a radio station in Herat city was partially damaged by a bomb attack and Ghazni Provincial Department of National Radio Television was completely destroyed and lost all its equipment in a suicide attack.<sup>10</sup>

This short excerpt demonstrates how Afghan media workers are caught in crossfires. The female journalist's killers remain unknown as do most other assassins of journalists in the country. National security forces regularly commit violence against journalists, and media institutions are destroyed. The incidents of violence, destruction and harassment have led to increasing fear and, furthermore, uncertainty as to which risks to take, which areas one may travel to and, not least, whether to report on the Taliban. In addition, the risk of intimidation and violence from local powers may increase and on the other hand local actors and powerful people may "establish media sources that serve their narrow interests" (Khalvatgar op. cit.).

This occurs as local and national special groups and personalities purchase independent TV stations. Another concern is the dependency on foreign funding now threatening to close several more or less independent media outlets. The dwindling funds may be seen as a post-conflict problem: major international donors move

elsewhere, to other conflict areas, leaving behind recipient institutions that are not (yet) sustainable. According to Nai, dozens of print media outlets have shut down, as have, recently, three radio stations, bringing down the number of media workers. As Khalvatgar writes: “Only a few TV stations are self-sustaining businesses and even these stations would be unable to continue if there was a 100 per cent cut in foreign funding.” A well-known feature in many other countries is the way in which advertisements are directed towards media favoured by the government – or government media. This is also the case in Afghanistan.

Important to the development of the media scene is also that institutions of higher learning offering journalism education have not been able to provide sufficient skilled individuals for the many outlets springing up after 2001. In addition, decades of conflict and war have hampered development of knowledge and technical skills in the population at large, especially in the countryside, where most Afghans live.

### What kind of journalism?

This part of the chapter presents the study of a sample of stories published by two important websites which emerged after 2001. The sources are: Nai – Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) in 2014, and interviews with some of the reporters working there in 2012. The IWPR presence in Afghanistan was established in 2002, and shortly afterwards it created the first independent news agency, Pajhwok. According to its website, the IWPR programme has trained more than a thousand journalists in “factual, unbiased reporting, promoted transitional justice and human rights, founded a locally owned investigative journalism NGO, set up six media centres of excellence throughout the country, helped found a journalism faculty at Nangarhar University and worked to promote the rights of women and youth.”<sup>11</sup>

Nai was established in 2005, supported by the Internews network.<sup>12</sup> While both institutions train journalists, Nai is more involved in “media watch” activities, promoting reporters’ and editors’ rights and reporting abuse against journalists, whereas IWPR works more directly with journalists’ reporting. Both institutions may be characterised as “post-Taliban conflict” in the sense that whereas during the time of Taliban there were no journalistic outlets, the fall of Taliban allowed for a surge of new media institutions and the reappearance of old ones. Both Nai and IWPR demonstrate normative journalistic values, such as *giving voice* and defending *independent* journalism, as seen from their respective self-presentations:

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan works locally to empower independent media and promote freedom of expression. Nai is an Afghan nongovernmental organisation established in 2005 with the support of Internews Network. The original mission of Nai remains to build and promote a strong independent media sector in Afghanistan through our work in the areas of training, advocacy and production.<sup>13</sup>

Mujeeb Khalvatgar from Nai believes that Afghan reporters are more concerned with local than international issues, whereas for international reporters it is the opposite. “For them, the most important feature is bombs that detonate, for us it is rather corruption and government scandals ... Here are many untold stories. The reconstruction of the country is underway, often unprofessionally so, but it happens” (Interview, Kabul, 6 May 2013). If it is the case that Western reporting from Afghanistan has largely concentrated on war and violence, one would still expect resident Afghan journalists to focus more on everyday matters, serving the population’s needs to navigate their daily lives.

The IWPR is based on a belief that Afghan reporters may do a different – and a better – job than their foreign colleagues: “Very few stories from Helmand are not based on “embedding”. We Afghans are able to cover realities on the ground” (Interview with Noorrahman Rahmani, country director of IPWR, 30 March 2012). The most vital activities of IWPR have been to train local reporters:

IWPR supports local reporters, citizen journalists and civil society activists in three dozen countries in conflict, crisis and transition around the world. We contribute to peace and good governance by strengthening the ability of media and civil society to speak out.<sup>14</sup>

Both institutions seem to be the result of a combination of eager local journalists and international networks to promote the (re)building of the journalistic field in Afghanistan after a long period of Soviet/communist censorship, civil war restrictions and Taliban closure of all media outlets. Owing to the expanding media scene, we may speak partly of a post-conflict situation but on the other hand Afghans find themselves still living with conflict, after the US-led invasion.

Howard (2002) distinguishes several types of what he calls “media interventions” in conflict areas. Of special importance in the case of Afghanistan is building professionalism where there is a blatant lack of such key elements as impartiality, accuracy and balance and awareness of democratic practices, especially election coverage. Nai carried a story on 7 July 2014 about how the media committee in the Independent Elections Committee (IEC) fined 23 media houses for unbalanced reporting during elections. Nai supported this accusation, but also warned against powers putting pressure on media, thereby hinting at other culprits beyond the media.

Howard also discusses how journalists “mainly from the global North-West, have argued [that] the ostensibly impartial role they play is incompatible with reporting which openly seeks conflict resolution or involves personal intervention. This position has discouraged synergistic relationships among media practitioners and peace builders.” This raises the question of whether other kinds of journalism are required in societies finding themselves in transition from conflict to (eventual) post-conflict, such as Afghanistan.

What follows here is an overview of recent stories (all from 2014) published on the websites of Nai and IWPR. The selection focuses particularly on stories that cover con-

flict/war – and other stories linked to development and reconstruction. The questions posed are whether the two institutions, both supported by Western funds, provide the Afghan public sphere with independent journalism on a wider platform than conflict and war coverage, and how the stories relate to the central powerful institutions of Afghanistan. The study is limited by the fact that the selection is made from the English language stories published on the respective websites, whereas there are presumably many more stories published in the two main Afghan languages.

## IWPR reporting

The IWPR, having set up local branches in several parts of the country, cover a wide range of issues. Their stories range from reporting on their own seminars to stories linked to development issues. In between these we find election coverage (presidential elections in Afghanistan took place in two rounds in 2014) and news reports on soaring opium production.

The bulk of stories, however, may be grouped in two broad categories: conflict/war or terror reporting and development/everyday stories, concerned with reconstruction and people's welfare. I have excluded stories that are a result of IWPR-arranged conferences and talks, as they do not really meet the criteria of independent journalism. It is an important educative part of IWPR's work to promote a viable public sphere in the country such as the "Critical Mass Media Reporting" project or the "Afghan Reconciliation: Promoting Peace and Building Trust by Engaging Civil Society", the latter organising a series of debates.

Among the development/reconstruction or everyday stories, several have at least some conflict focus, especially one telling of raisin farmers who have had much of their production stopped by Taliban threats and attacks, not because raisins might be used for wine production, but simply due to logistical constraints.

**Table 2.** A selection of 2014 stories published in English on IWPR's website

<b>Conflict/war/terror</b>	<b>Development / everyday</b>
Afghanistan: Lords of Ghor (warlords fighting and implementing own judicial system, outnumbering government forces)	Cautious welcome for new Afghan president (asking how long the coalition deal will last)
Anger over long-delayed Afghan highway (not ready after seven years of work, owing to terror incidents)	Afghan raisin producers hope for sweeter future (lamenting Taliban damage hampering production)
Afghanistan: Opium production soars in Kandahar (more than previous year, in spite of arrests, prosecution)	Women in eastern Afghanistan demand education (critical of government for not having sufficient literacy programmes)
Rockets hit Afghan border province (Kabul blames Islamabad)	Afghanistan: vaccination boost for Kandahar (aiming at reducing mortality rates)

## Project optimism

The most clear-cut “development story” is probably that on vaccination in Kandahar. From other sources we know that similar vaccination programmes have been under attack, for example in northern Pakistan, where Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have killed vaccination teams, and similar Afghan Taliban efforts are mentioned in the article. However, Kandahar, an old Taliban stronghold, still enjoys success, with its motorbike teams reaching remote areas. Poor roads and bad security are mentioned as obstacles, as is the lack of medical care such as childbirth aid, but the reporter focuses on progress and on reaching out, particularly to women in remote districts. Thus, this story qualifies as an example of a *development optimism* discourse. Typical is this “before and after” passage, often found in reporting on outside intervention to areas in need:

Women living in remote districts of Kandahar have welcomed the initiative, as it is often hard for them to travel the long distance necessary to get medical attention. Conservative social traditions also inhibit women’s freedom of movement. Those working on the initiative say it used to be very difficult to reach isolated villages by bicycle or on foot. “Now we can get to remote areas fast and vaccinate people,” said one vaccinator.<sup>15</sup>

At the end of the story, the reporter quotes a woman who says she has witnessed many deaths caused by lack of access to healthcare, while she praises the new initiative. This is also an example of how reporting highlights the plight of the rural population, which constitutes a clear majority in Afghanistan but is often neglected in international reporting. As a background for this, it is essential to know that IWPR has educated young journalists in the southern provinces of the country, where one of the aims has been to carry stories from the ground filed by people who know the local population and their traditions (interview with Noorrahman Rahmani, 3 April 2012).

An underlying *discourse of threat* is present here, but more distinctly in the reportage on the raisin farmers of Kandahar, where “years of conflict have reduced agricultural production and food-processing facilities have long fallen into disrepair”.<sup>16</sup> Unlike the previous story, however, here the blame is on “conflict”, without specifications. In addition, one of the sources interviewed blames some of the “development interventionists”, claiming that “recent attempts by nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and NATO-led troops to rebuild raisin-drying facilities had been worse than useless”, since they have built the storage out of cement rather than “raw brick”, and cement storage makes the raisins rot rather than dry. Another local leader blames the government and private investors for broken promises of investment in this agricultural sector. Thus, a *critical development discourse* emerges, based on interviews with local experts, who blame the central powers for lack of concern.

This is also a discourse emerging in the “Women in eastern Afghanistan demand education” story, where four grassroots women and one woman representing the

provincial authorities are given voice.<sup>17</sup> They unanimously demand education facilities for adult illiterate women. One woman says, “Women are still facing obstacles to their education both in the city and in more remote areas ... The government should focus more on this issue, so that any woman can get an education if she wants to.” The provincial authorities try to fend off the criticism when their representative, later invited to speak, tells of the literacy classes already offered.

### Where warlords rule

Another story reveals the frustration among truck drivers whose job it is to drive along the Khost-Gardez highway in south-eastern Afghanistan. The 102 kilometre-long stretch has been underway for seven years, according to the IWPR reporter.<sup>18</sup> Approximately 75 per cent of the distance is finished, but “provincial officials, civil society groups and other residents have expressed concern about the slow progress on several occasions”. Two truck drivers complain, as does a “local resident” and head of “the local association of retailers” who speaks about damaged goods and economic loss due to the bad road. In this typical *reconstruction story*, blame is directed at insurgency, as the “project has suffered more than 450 insurgent attacks, resulting in many fatalities” – but also on confused responsibility, as the contract once given to an American company was later transferred to an Afghan one. At the end of the story, the 350,000 potential beneficiaries of a completed road are mentioned, and the Khost army commander confirms his responsibility for road security. Nevertheless, the local authorities also blame local people for the delay. After the contract transfer, “local people competed with each other and wanted their own men and vehicles to be employed to do the work, local residents burned vehicles and equipment belonging to other tribes in the area”.

Such incidents are quite typical in post-conflict societies. Local men previously involved in warfare struggle to gain income from reconstruction projects, and in tribal societies such as in this part of Afghanistan new conflicts will easily occur. This and the previous story are good examples of giving voice to people “on the ground”, while also confronting the local powers and revealing the obstacles to progress. Thereby it relates to the previous story featuring the *critical development discourse*.

The tribal conflict is on another level in central Ghor province. Another IWPR story headed “Lords of Ghor” focuses on the way in which a large number of “unaccountable militias” operate in Ghor.<sup>19</sup> The text demonstrates that the current conflict in Afghanistan is not only between the Taliban and the government, but that these “violent groups are not part of the Taliban or associated insurgent groups but leftovers from the civil war of the 1990s”. The groups are reportedly engaged in “murder, kidnapping, gang rape, theft and drug trafficking, all carried out with impunity”. The warlords leading the militias have established their own, often brutal, judicial system. Among the voices quoted are two warlords telling of “arbitrary justice”, including special

taxation, flogging, stoning and other forms of execution, as well as amputations. Other sources are an anonymous “senior security official” and a named representative of the provincial branch of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, who tells of severe human rights abuses, including 300 killings in 2013, and of girls being forcibly married to militia commanders.

This is a story of ongoing conflict, perpetual local warfare and rivalries which date back to the 1980s when a wide range of local commanders fought the Soviet Union and received military support from Iran, Pakistan and the US. In the text there is not much optimism, as the government forces are “too thin on the ground” according to the subtitle. With a hint of irony, the reporter states: “The militias in Ghor survived United Nations-sponsored disarmament and reintegration processes after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.” Moreover, the anonymous senior security official informs the reporter that some of the armed militias are still believed to be supported by the old Mujahedin parties, some commanders also from “the intelligence services of Afghanistan’s neighbours, presumably Iran or Pakistan”.

The reportage refers to a previous story published, on “paramilitary violence against women” in 2011 in the same province, and thus confirms that the current findings of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission of warlords forcing young girls to marry them are a deeply rooted problem in Ghor.

The “Lords of Ghor”, may be read as communicating a *criminal warlord* discourse, which posits the armed commanders as unruly elements promoting human rights abuse and disregarding the national laws. In this discourse, the warlords represent a main threat to national stability, and the government security forces play a secondary but positive role, except that they are outnumbered and thus unable to contribute to law and order. The text does not reveal that the government itself has defended impunity and forged alliances with other powerful warlords with blood on their hands. Thus, the larger context is missing and the conflict is made local. But it is simultaneously represented as transnational, since the foreign hand discourse – blaming Afghanistan’s neighbours for increased insurgency – is present in the second half of the text. These two discourses of blame may – intended or not – serve the interests of the government in power and its allies, as the central power is assigned the role of guarantor of the longed-for stability against local and foreign threats. The foreign hand discourse often occurs in media coverage in this region (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan), not least when journalists interview politicians about who to blame after terrorist attacks (Eide and Skaufjord 2010).

The post-conflict elements in this story are largely missing. Warlordism has been a perpetual problem in Afghan society, and indeed, the text confirms an ongoing conflict, little changed by the substantial shifts of power in Kabul. In an article on failed states and post-conflict societies, Brinkerhoff (2005) concludes that “in numerous countries the path to democratisation has proven tortuous: traditional and informal sources of power and authority vie for legitimacy, sometimes constituting an alternate ‘state’ within a state (for example, regional warlords in Afghanistan)”. He

considers this characteristic of countries where state power has limited reach outside the capital. In Afghanistan this is not only a new “failed state” or “post-conflict” issue, but a feature also recognised in older history, where regional and local powers have exercised authority (Eide and Skauford 2014).

### Nai: Journalism on journalism

The clear majority of Nai news stories (most of them much shorter than the IWPR stories) posted on their website represent attacks on journalists, most of them Afghan. This reflects the changing situation in the country during 2014, when most of the foreign troops had left and, with them, a large portion of the foreign correspondents and/or stringers. Two items tell of Afghan journalists murdered, one in Balkh and one in Mazar-i-Sharif, one woman and one man. In none of the cases is the culprit identified, which also points at an important feature: the assassins of journalists in Afghanistan have hitherto gone unpunished, underlining the professional risks at stake. Several stories report on journalists being harassed by government and by unknown assailants. A couple of articles also refer to social media users as vulnerable to local and central authorities.<sup>20</sup> Seen from a generic perspective, some of the stories resemble press releases in the shape of statements from Nai, but they are included since they widen the perspective on the frames within which journalists in Afghanistan work.

### Rape cases and hate speech

Some stories, though, such as “Nai asks media to avoid screening victims of rape cases”, highlight journalistic ethics and needs.<sup>21</sup> The reporter refers to Decree 45 in the Afghan Mass Media Law, which does not allow the disclosure of the identities of victims in violence cases, owing to the potential damage to social prestige in society. Although this law has been disputed and should be further discussed, the focus is here on the rape of young girls. In a traditional society, the potential further damage to the victims is serious, even without public disclosure. Another short article warns people against hostile actions against media (“Avoid provoking people against media”),<sup>22</sup> after a demonstration had taken place outside a TV station in Kabul. The article recognises the right to complain against media abuse of their dignity, but warns that hateful slogans (“death to” is mentioned) could cause “weakening of mutual relationships between government departments and media family members”. The article thus underlines the need for a good relationship with the government, and demonstrates a *loyalty discourse*, unlike the many articles accusing government officials of harassing journalists.

## Elections and the journalist as safety watchdog

The article supporting the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) mentioned earlier in this chapter, also focuses on press ethics. The IEC had issued fines against biased and partisan media during the presidential election campaigns of 2014 and the article names all the culprits. Nai has also published several other articles about the election process, focusing *inter alia* on missing ballot sheets in certain areas and on citizen complaints against the voting process. The complaints were about fraud, men voting on behalf of women, low quality voting ink, long waiting hours and security challenges. As this was the first time that the people of Afghanistan were able to go to the ballots to vote for the replacement of a previously elected president, the elections represented a landmark in recent Afghan history.

Among the harsh critiques raised against the election process, Nai's June newsletter 2014 mentions IEC workers (who are supposed to be neutral) agitating for one of the presidential candidates, police arresting election agitators supporting one of the candidates, and supporters of another candidate beating up IEC workers.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, the reporting also demonstrated the way in which Taliban threats influenced the process: some voting centres were closed and some people did not dare to vote.

During the presidential elections, Nai emerged as a watchdog not only for media coverage but also for the process itself, based on reports from local voters. To guard a society's democratic processes against abuse is an important role for media (and media watchdogs) in a country trying to qualify as post-conflict.

Last but not least, in February 2014 Nai refers to a UN resolution of 26 November 2013 to end the impunity for crimes against journalists, and to the member countries' responsibilities in this respect.<sup>24</sup> The Nai article mentions the increased violence against journalists in Afghanistan, reminds the government of its obligation to "ensure security and safety of the correspondents and media and adopt serious measurements", and urges the government to place the safety of journalists on their agenda.<sup>25</sup> The article also notes that violations enforced by the governmental officials against the correspondents had increased, and states that lack of security impinges on reporters' exercise of freedom of speech. A typical example is a story from September 2014 on violence against local correspondents in Ghazni province. In a terrorist attack, a number of local residents and two local journalists were injured; two other correspondents working for AFP "were trying to film the scene [and] were beaten by the NDS troops on the spot", and others were "violated by the security forces on the scene". The text here quotes Nai head executive Khalvatgar, who demands that the provincial authorities arrest the security forces responsible.<sup>26</sup> The article amply illustrates how reporters are caught in the crossfire in this fragile society: some are injured by insurgent Taliban and others are beaten up by the authorities when they try to report the incident. As far as this writer knows, few authorities (if any) are brought to justice for such assaults. Impunity largely prevails.

## Conclusion: From global to regional-local?

Pouligny (2005: 499) writes that “most outsiders tend to reduce the main characteristics and richness of any civil society: its diversity. In our frequent quest for uniformity, we tend to seek a ‘consensus’ or ‘common view’”. Afghanistan is not a homogeneous country; rather, it strikes the visitor as a country of diversity, but one whose diversity has been exploited by warring parties, foreign and national.

The two media organisations studied in this chapter represent efforts to reconstruct a ruined journalistic field as well as an independent democratic force in a war-ridden country. The reporting depicted here demonstrates Afghanistan’s fragility and lack of security – for journalists as well as for general people – in a situation which had been hoped to be post-conflict. As Pouligny (2005) observes, NGOs may play an important role in post-conflict and war-ridden states, as do the two organisations examined. They are locally-based and led by Afghans, but in both cases financed partly by foreign funds.

Both seem to strike a balance between reporting ongoing conflicts and war activities – and reporting which takes citizens’ concerns in the everyday seriously. Both are involved in journalist training. Nai concentrates particularly on how trained and untrained reporters fare in a society where harassment and terror represent a daily feature, while IWPR functions partly as an NGO organising its own events, partly by providing a range of stories for the Pajhwok news agency. Because of their differing approaches it is perhaps logical that IWPR should publish some stories appealing to journalists not to escalate the conflict, whereas Nai is more concerned with journalists’ safety and the ruling forces’ responsibility in this respect.

As Junne and Verkoren (2005: 16) declare, security sector reform “should be at the heart of any post-conflict debate”. Debate is not only a media responsibility, but this research – albeit limited – demonstrates that security remains a vital issue in reporting on both the working conditions for journalists and citizen safety in general. It may thus occur that journalists in both IWPR and Nai combine what may be labelled “post-conflict” journalism (trying to heal the wounds from decades of war) with journalism treating the ongoing fighting. In other words, there is no apparent “clash of definitions” when it comes to post-conflict reporting in Afghanistan: both civil society reporting and war reporting look for peaceful solutions in the war-ridden country. Howard’s (2002: 12) reflections that “stages of conflict are often fluid with overlapping characteristics and inconsistent types of media practices” are perhaps characteristic of Afghan society. Journalists’ stories are varied and often demonstrate journalist autonomy, but a fairly large proportion of Afghan journalism is far from independent, influenced by powerful political players through their ownership of media.

The sample of stories demonstrates a relatively wide range of topics. A common feature for several, if not most, of the IWPR stories is that the reporter “gives voice” to grassroots people, the “expertise on consequence” (Meilby 1989). Reporters are concerned with gender and social rights, as well as with corruption and citizen safety, and the safety of reporters who attempt to reveal such shortcomings in society.

Afghan journalists are at risk. In 2013, Reporters Without Borders listed the country as number 128, and in 2015 as number 122, when it comes to press freedom. The upward trend since 2012 (number 150) is mainly because no journalists were imprisoned – which may partly be due to self-censorship caused by threats, and by perpetual harassment.

The shift in Afghanistan – from a centre of global attention to being increasingly left to itself, with a few foreign troops and advisors – will be a challenge for reporters. The year 2014 was the most violent in recent Afghan history, with more civilian casualties than in any previous “post-2001 years” and the casualties represented victims of international and government forces and Taliban insurgency. It was also a more violent year for journalists.<sup>27</sup> Reporters will need to cover open conflict, in addition to post-conflict situations (in some more peaceful areas) in the years to come, in line with my Afghan friend Nassim Jawad’s bleak vision of his country’s future.

## Notes

1. They started in May 1987; the last soldiers left in February 1988.
2. This conflict refers to the war between the government, supported by international forces led by the US on one side, and on the other Taliban, plus other groups related to them.
3. Press TV / 29 December 2014 [Accessed via Aopnews.com, 30.12.2014].
4. These observations are partly based on recent visits to the country, partly on statistics.
5. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/afghanistan-hit-with-more-taliban-violence-ahead-of-foreign-troop-withdrawal-1.2872295> CBC 13.12.2014 [Accessed 13.02.2015].
6. <http://www.konfliktbearbeitung.de/downloads/file916.pdf>.
7. This writer, being vice president of Norwegian PEN and having worked closely with our sister organisation in Afghanistan, contributed to the campaign and the pressure to free Kambakhsh.
8. Abdul Majeed Khalvatgar is the director of NAI Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan. [www. Nai.org](http://www.Nai.org).
9. Nai (2014) Media Watch Report Vol. 113, October 2014. [http://nai.org.af/files/documents/mw/Media per cent 20Watch per cent 20English per cent 20report per cent 201113.pdf](http://nai.org.af/files/documents/mw/Media%20per%20cent%20Watch%20per%20cent%20English%20report%20per%20cent%201113.pdf). [Accessed 19.12.2014].
10. Nai (2014) Media Watch Report Vol 112, September 2014. [http://nai.org.af/files/documents/mw/Media per cent 20Watch per cent 20English per cent 20report per cent 201112.pdf](http://nai.org.af/files/documents/mw/Media%20per%20cent%20Watch%20per%20cent%20English%20report%20per%20cent%201112.pdf). [Accessed 24.12.2014].
11. <http://iwprafghanistan.net/about-us/>. [Accessed 22.12.2014].
12. <https://www.internews.org/>. [Accessed 22.12.2014].
13. <http://nai.org.af/about-us/>. [Accessed 13.02.2015].
14. <https://iwpr.net/what-we-do>. [Accessed 13.02.2015].
15. Mohammad Ibrahim Spesalai: Afghan Raisin producers Hope for Sweeter Future. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghan-raisin-producers-hope-sweeter-future>. Published 02.12.2014. [Accessed 20.12.2014].
16. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghan-raisin-producers-hope-sweeter-future>.
17. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghanistan-vaccination-boost-kandahar>. [Accessed 27.12.2014].
18. Ahmad Shah: Anger over Long-Delayed Afghan Highway <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/anger-over-long-delayed-afghan-highway>. Published 01.12.2014. [Accessed 28.12.2014].
19. Anonymous reporter: Afghanistan: Lords of Ghor. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghanistan-lords-ghor>, 04.12.2014. [Accessed 28.12.2014].
20. See for example <http://nai.org.af/blog/social-media-users-introduction-to-court-against-the-media-law-in-herat-province/>. Published 05.03.2014. [Accessed 30.12.2014. No byline, no headline].
21. <http://nai.org.af/blog/nai-asks-media-to-avoid-screening-victims-of-rape-cases/>. Published 27.10.2014, [Accessed 28.12.2014. No byline, no headline].

22. <http://nai.org.af/blog/avoid-provoking-people-against-media/>. Published 29.10.2014, [Accessed 29.12.2014. No byline, no headline].
23. Nai: Media Watch Report, Volume 109, June 2014 [http://nai.org.af/files/documents/mw/Media per cent 20Watch per cent 20English per cent 20report per cent 20109.pdf](http://nai.org.af/files/documents/mw/Media%20per%20cent%20Watch%20per%20cent%20English%20per%20cent%20report%20per%20cent%2020109.pdf). [Accessed 29.12.2014].
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26. <http://nai.org.af/blog/violence-against-local-correspondents-in-ghazni-should-be-recognized/>. Published 04.09.2014, [Accessed 02.01.2015. No headline, no byline].
27. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/21/afghanistan-media-under-attack>. [Accessed 13.02.2015].

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## Justified Mission?

### *Press Coverage of Uganda's Military Intervention in the South Sudan Conflict*

Charlotte Ntulume

On Saturday 21 December 2013, Ugandan newspaper readers woke up to a rarity. The two major English dailies bore the same lead headline: “UPDF Enters Juba”<sup>1</sup> It is not uncommon for the rivals, the government-owned *New Vision* and the privately-owned *Daily Monitor*, to lead with similar stories, but it is unusual for them to run with the same label headline word for word. This was an exception. The news was that the country’s army, the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) had been deployed in South Sudan after conflict had erupted there six days earlier. In the strip below, the *Daily Monitor*’s banner carried a tweet from the army spokesman’s Twitter account: “Uganda has deployed troops in Juba to facilitate the evacuation mission of stranded Ugandans and Kenyans, most of whom are injured.” The scene was set for the UPDF’s latest mission abroad.

These first stories reported that the UPDF was in Juba at the invitation of the South Sudan president, Salva Kiir, to evacuate Ugandans stranded in the conflict and to help secure the capital city and other key installations, including Juba airport. The reports bore details about the mission’s specialisation and hardware – the first cohort of Ugandan troops from the crack unit and the elite presidential guard had arrived in Juba two days earlier with fighter planes; the UPDF’s air force plane C-130 had flown in from Juba with stranded Ugandan citizens; the army had secured Juba airport and had evacuated 105 people from Juba by air and 4,705 by road – including Ugandans, Kenyans, South Sudanese and other nationalities. Photographs showed UPDF soldiers receiving injured people on stretchers at Entebbe international airport and others in an ambulance. The message was clear: the mission was purely humanitarian.

This chapter aspires to analyse the portrayal of the UPDF’s involvement in the conflict in South Sudan in the coverage of Uganda’s two leading newspapers, *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor*, in the period immediately following the onset of fighting – from 21 December 2013 to 21 January 2014. Using content analysis, the coverage was examined from three theoretical viewpoints: media indexing, framing and the ‘fourth estate’ ideal of the press. The aim was to understand how Ugandan-based newspaper journalists reported and framed the involvement and actions of their government in a conflict abroad.

The background presents an overview of the South Sudan conflict and Uganda's involvement in it. For context, a summary of Uganda's relations with South Sudan and a brief of its military involvement elsewhere in Africa are included. This is followed by the theoretical framework, with a discussion of framing, indexing and the "fourth estate" ideal of the press, and how they relate to the media in times of conflict. A brief presentation of the methodology follows, including a justification for selecting the newspapers used for the study.

## Background

### *The current South Sudan conflict*

Fighting broke out in South Sudan on 15 December 2013, arising from skirmishes among members of the presidential guard. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) split between soldiers claiming loyalty to President Salva Kiir and his government and those loyal to his former vice-president, Riek Machar. The fighting subsequently spread to the military headquarters and throughout the capital, Juba, before extending to other parts of the country. President Kiir, who is the chairman of the ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), accused Machar of instigating a coup, but the latter denied the charge. The clash sparked a cycle of retaliatory killings that split the country along ethnic lines, raising political and ethnic tensions that quickly turned into a widespread violent and bloody conflict. There are various versions of the actual events in the army barracks, but longstanding tension within the ruling class is believed to have caused divisions within the cabinet and the army, eventually culminating in the clash on 15 December 2013 (Johnson 2014).

According to the United Nations, tens of thousands of people have been killed and more than two million displaced in the conflict. About 565,000 South Sudan nationals have fled the country since December 2013 and are refugees in neighbouring countries, mostly Uganda, a scenario that signals a regional impact.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the crisis has led to a serious deterioration in food security, and some 4.6 million people faced alarming levels of food insecurity by June 2015.<sup>3</sup>

Among the first initiatives by regional leaders to facilitate reconciliatory talks between Salva Kiir and Machar was an interministerial committee established under the auspices of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This resulted in the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement on 23 January 2014 in the Ethiopian capital mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD),<sup>4</sup> an East African eight-member bloc. However, violence erupted again shortly afterwards between government and opposition forces. A recommitment to the peace process was signed on 9 May 2014, and since then at least seven ceasefire commitments have been agreed to, although all have been observed only for short periods and then violated.<sup>5</sup> The latest, by the time of writing this chapter, was dubbed the 'final agreement', signed by Machar on 17 August 2015 in Addis Ababa and by Salva Kiir on 27

August 2015 in Juba. Among other provisions, the agreement allotted the post of first vice-president to Machar's group, a position from which he had been expelled in July 2013, and demanded a complete withdrawal of all security actors allied to either party in conflict within 45 days.

## Uganda's involvement

Immediately after fighting broke out, Uganda deployed troops into South Sudan. Although the government of Uganda did not disclose the number of UPDF soldiers deployed, various sources put it anywhere between 2,000 and 5,000.<sup>6</sup> The Ugandan foreign affairs ministry initially claimed that the army's primary mission was to protect key installations such as the airport, to evacuate Ugandan nationals stranded in South Sudan and to facilitate safe passage for humanitarian actors. Later, this mandate was broadened to include creating an environment conducive to peaceful negotiations.<sup>7</sup> More justifications for Uganda's intervention were given in subsequent weeks, including that the UN secretary general had asked President Museveni to help find a solution to the crisis,<sup>8</sup> that IGAD had sanctioned the intervention,<sup>9</sup> and that Uganda needed to show solidarity with South Sudan as "one of the guarantors of the independence" of that country.<sup>10</sup> Kasaija (2014) discusses the legal question around Uganda's intervention in South Sudan.

As government officials explained to citizens and to the international community that the UPDF intervention was aimed at ensuring proper conditions for peaceful negotiations, Museveni's ultimatums to Machar's group to agree to negotiations or face military action from a combined force of IGAD countries<sup>11</sup> were seen as parallel to a mediation role and detrimental to any prospects for peace. Soon, the international community and regional bodies (including IGAD, which had earlier endorsed the intervention) were urging Ugandan troops to leave South Sudan. On 15 January 2014, President Museveni admitted in a speech at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICLR) heads of state summit in Luanda, Angola, that UPDF was engaged in combat operations alongside South Sudan government forces loyal to Kiir to defeat the rebels.

There was also pressure internally for the UPDF troops to return home. The strongest disapproval came from opposition politicians, who criticised Museveni for the threatening language he had used while addressing Machar's group.<sup>12</sup> They argued, as did others analysing the conflict in its early days (see, for example, De Waal and Mohammed 2014; International Crisis Group 2013; Mamdani 2014; Bryce 2013), that this was a tribal matter and not a political one, which could not be resolved militarily and in which Uganda should not have been involved. The politicians reasoned that the UN secretary general had asked Uganda to intervene as a neutral mediator between the warring factions, not as an ally of either side. They added that Uganda should not have taken unilateral action against Machar, but ought to have worked with the other East

African Community (EAC) member states (Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania) to forge a common position on how to prevent the conflict from escalating. Critics blamed the government for deploying troops abroad without Parliament's consent as is required by the Ugandan constitution.

In a letter dated 24 December 2013 to the speaker of parliament (but received on 9 January 2014),<sup>13</sup> President Museveni explained that he had taken the decision, in agreement with President Kiir, to deploy "a small force" to ensure regional security, protect the thriving trade with South Sudan, rescue trapped Ugandans and protect constitutionalism in the young country.<sup>14</sup> The letter read in part:

Given the importance of South Sudan for the peace in northern Uganda, DRC and CAR, Uganda cannot and should not stand aloof and watch the situation deteriorating. I have, therefore, decided to deploy, initially, a small force to guard Juba airport, with the agreement of HE Salva Kiir, as well as other elements. I intend to deploy greater capacity if the situation does not improve. The reasons for these deployments are: regional security, the need to protect the thriving trade with South Sudan, rescue trapped Ugandans and constitutionalism in South Sudan (coups d'état are proscribed by the African Union). I am, therefore, writing to you to request you to call Parliament to approve my actions as is provided for by the UPDF Act. The mission for the deployment is for both peacekeeping but, if necessary, for peace enforcement.

Subsequently, in a special sitting on 14 January 2014, Parliament approved the deployment. While the government has not disclosed what the army's involvement in the conflict has cost in monetary terms, the UPDF's continued stay in South Sudan is expected to cost Ugandan taxpayers Shs16.2bn (approximately US\$6 million) in the 2015-2016 financial year, according to the 2015 budget of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>15</sup>

### *Uganda–South Sudan relations*

Uganda shares its northern border with South Sudan, and a significant proportion of the South Sudan population shares languages and cultural values with communities in northern Uganda. Additionally, the two countries have strong social, political and economic ties, so any instability in South Sudan should have a serious bearing on Uganda. The two countries have good cooperation in education and trade. Because of years of conflict in South Sudan, many young South Sudanese have attained secondary and tertiary education in Uganda. Uganda supported the SPLA in its long armed struggle against the government of Sudan, and relied on the SPLA to flush the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel fighters out of bases in South Sudan, where the Khartoum government was backing the LRA in its fight against the SPLA. In the current conflict, Uganda has expressed concern that chaos in South Sudan could provide a favourable environment for the LRA to regroup and launch new attacks in northern Uganda, itself recovering from more than two decades of war.

Uganda has been host to South Sudan refugees for several years. The current conflict has resulted in a constant influx of refugees into northern Uganda districts bordering South Sudan.<sup>16</sup> According to the UN, 154,134 South Sudan nationals have sought refuge in Uganda since December 2013 alone.<sup>17</sup> In the immediate aftermath of fighting, as many as 2,000 people were entering Uganda from South Sudan daily, and up to 42,000 South Sudan nationals had already crossed into northern Uganda at the end of January 2014 (UNHCR). Adjumani district alone, along the border, receives over 80 new arrivals daily.<sup>18</sup>

South Sudan is also host to many Ugandans who, alongside people from other countries in the region, went there after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A. Most were engaged in trade, but a large number were employed in various sectors, including education, health, construction, and in humanitarian and development work. By 2008, according to records of the Uganda Community in South Sudan (UCOSS), there were about 900,000 registered Ugandans in the ten states of South Sudan. The Ugandan Embassy in Juba estimates that there are as many as 1.5 million Ugandans in South Sudan, although Government of South Sudan (GoSS) records indicate twice this number. The number of Ugandans operating businesses in South Sudan is unknown. Some sources cite over 150,000 Ugandan traders operating across the porous border between the two countries, but a census by the Ugandan Embassy in 2012 recorded 40,000.<sup>19</sup>

South Sudan, with a population of over 11 million people, is Uganda's main destination for informal exports, mostly foodstuffs, manufactured goods and construction materials. Before the conflict broke out, Uganda's exports to South Sudan were valued at US\$220 million per month.<sup>20</sup> According to International Alert, immediately after fighting broke out into war, export revenue from South Sudan to Uganda dropped by about 80 per cent in one month.<sup>21</sup> By May 2014, Uganda had lost 15 per cent of its export market (about \$30 million per month), mostly as a result of the conflict.<sup>22</sup> Kasaija (2014) posits that the most plausible reason for Uganda's intervention in South Sudan is economic.

## Uganda's military involvement elsewhere

This chapter would be incomplete without mention of Uganda's intervention in conflicts abroad, especially in the Great Lakes region. This dates as far back as the early 1990s when Museveni offered aid and sanctuary to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) during the Rwandan civil war in a *quid pro quo* scenario, as some of the RPF founders had been his old comrades in the five-year guerilla war that ushered his National Resistance Army (NRM) into power in 1986 (Clark 2001). Uganda also offered support to the 1996-97 uprising of the Rwanda-backed rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Zaire (AFDL) led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, which overthrew Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko. Kabila renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

However, Uganda's first direct military involvement in conflicts abroad was in the second Congo war, which broke out in August 1998 after President Kabila fell out with former allies Rwanda and Uganda. The decision to intervene in DRC was purely the president's after consulting his close military advisers, without Parliament's approval (Clark 2001). Uganda gave two official reasons for its involvement: to prevent genocide in the DRC and to secure its sovereignty – citing President Kabila's failure to flush out (and later, allegations of his approval of activities of) the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels based in Congo near Uganda's south-western border who were looting property, abducting young people and killing civilians. The UPDF was later accused of plundering the DRC's natural resources, an accusation that indicated that the reasons for Uganda's intervention had shifted from security concerns to economic gain.

Elsewhere in the region, Uganda has been involved in AU and UN peacekeeping missions, including the AU mission in Sudan established in 2004 to provide security and peacekeeping in the Darfur region and the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM) established in January 2007. Uganda provided troops for both missions. In the case of Somalia, Uganda was the first to deploy troops in March 2007, has provided four of the five AMISOM force commanders and has the largest contingent in AMISOM, with 6,223 troops.<sup>23</sup> Outside the region, a UPDF contingent of between 1,000 and 1,500 soldiers is deployed in the Central African Republic (CAR) as part of the AU-led mission against the LRA, which has bases there. Uganda is the mission's largest troop contributor.<sup>24</sup> Museveni has received both criticism and acclaim over Uganda's military adventures abroad and has on some occasions had to deny the warmonger label attached to his name and foreign policy (Otunnu 1999: 45; Omach 2011: 300).

## Theoretical framework

### *Framing, indexing and the fourth estate ideal of the press*

Studies into the media coverage of policy debates, major issues and events often use indexing and framing, especially since both emphasise the importance of sources in news coverage (Groshek 2008). In indexing research, which has its origin in Bennett's (1990) *Indexing Hypothesis*, scholars have observed that the media routinely rely on government officials for most of the news they present to their audience. In particular, during times of war the mainstream media's behaviour is akin to that of a "faithful servant to the authorities" (Wolfsfeld 1997: 69), as they echo the voice of the administration with little (if any) challenge; align the public with elites; and lead citizens in "rallying around the flag" (Wolfsfeld op. cit.; Harp et al. 2010: 467).

Yet, the notion "fourth estate" presupposes that a free, independent press that keenly observes and holds the government accountable is a fundamental pillar of a democracy. As the "watchdog" of democracy, media are expected to act independently and to hold the state and its various institutions to account by investigating and critically reporting on their activities (Bennett 1994; Donohue et al. 1995; Schultz 1998; Norris

2008; Dimova 2012). But as mainstream media construct news frames along the claims of official news sources (Entman 1991) they tend to compromise their watchdog role and fail to provide the necessary checks on those in authority (Bennett 1994).

The framing theory was first advanced by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), who suggested that people use sets (or frames) of expectations to make sense of their social world – that is, everyday life situations and the people in them. Building on Goffman's work, Gitlin (1980) perceived framing as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organise discourse” (cited in Papacharissi and Oliveira 2008: 54). Entman (1993) suggested that the messages and information sent to audiences carry with them a pre-existing set of meanings or frames. Entman offered one of the most commonly cited definitions:

Framing essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe ... [italics in original]. (Entman 1993: 52)

Several authors have proceeded to show that media and media professionals contribute to the expectations we use to make sense of the world and to the *selection* and *salience* of issues. They have examined the ways in which media organise and present issues and how their audiences make sense of them (for example, Reese 2001, Dimitrova and Strömbäck 2004; Greenwood and Jenkins 2013). Frames influence how people understand, remember, evaluate and act upon a problem (Reese 2001: 7) and can influence how audience members perceive an issue (Schudson 2003). Lee and Maslog (2005) refer to news framing as the process of organising a news story thematically, stylistically and factually, to convey a specific story line. For frames to be effective, the audience must be able to recognise them and their meaning should be persistent over time (Reese 2001).

The media provide a forum in which ideas about the social world are routinely presented and debated, and which is dominated by social institutions that have power to influence frames routinely used to structure news coverage of the social world (Baran and Davis 2012). Druckman (in D'Angelo and Kuypers 2009) notes that framing involves multiple actors and mechanisms, and that frames become attached to particular issues or events, “reflecting the power of certain actors and the very basis of the culture in which we live”.

The idea that news frames are often structured upon the viewpoint of official sources (Entman 1991) resonates with indexing, where official government voices dominate the news, whereas other “social voices” appear muzzled (Bennett 1990). Bennett notes that “media professionals tend to ‘index’ the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic” (Bennett 1990: 106). Voices from alternative sources are

included in news stories and editorials when the opinions they express are consistent with those held in official government circles. The reasons for this vary, but include the media's limited resources, which make it economical to get information from the government at no cost; journalists' inability to know what is happening everywhere all the time; easy access to official sources which ensures timely delivery of reliable and complete information; journalists' subservient attitude; and the state's powerful public relations machinery – including regular press briefings, exclusive events and experienced spin doctors (Dimova 2012: 64; Carpenter 2007). In their interactions, journalists and government officials tend to develop a “transactional” or “symbiotic” relationship, where politicians become familiar with how the media operate and gradually learn to make or influence news, whereas journalists are able to “fill the daily ‘news hole’ with a steady supply of economical, well-produced material” (Bennett 1990: 103).

This trend is more pronounced in situations of war when access to information, to the protagonists and to the truth is particularly difficult, yet the media must inform citizens. In order to have a degree of legitimacy, journalists depend on official sources, reporting mainly the government's version and letting the audience come to their own conclusions. Bennett adds that the issue areas most commonly associated with indexing include military decisions, foreign affairs, trade, and macroeconomic policy areas that are vital for the advancement of state power (Bennett 1990: 122). In times of conflict and war it is common practice for governments to hold regular press briefings to keep the public informed about the goings-on in the battlefield, although information is often limited to what the state is willing to reveal.

Wolfsfeld (1997: 69) considers the role of news media in political conflicts as “faithful servants” to the authorities, “semi-honest brokers”, or “advocates of the underdog”. As “faithful servants”, the media persistently produce “official frames of the conflict” and silence any challengers. As “semi-honest brokers”, they provide a significant amount of time and space to challengers to air their views against the authorities, although official voices maintain some influence. As “advocates of the underdog”, news media are independent and amplify the claims of the challengers against authorities. In times of national crisis and war, Wolfsfeld argues, the media are most likely to act as “faithful servants”, especially in the early stages of the conflict.

The news media in these incidents rely almost exclusively on official sources for information about the conflicts and there is a close, cooperative relationship between government officials and journalists. This process is often called the “rally around the flag” phenomenon as journalists display their patriotism by supporting the state against its enemies (1997: 69).

As the “fourth estate” and “watchdog” of democracy, the media have an obligation to speak out and amplify alternative voices against those in authority in situations where other stakeholders are unable to participate in deliberations about matters of national interest. The notion “fourth estate” is believed to have originated from Edmund Burke when he used it in 1787 in reference to the press upon the commencement of news-

papers' reporting in the House of Commons. The notion entreats the news media to cast the spotlight on activities of the state and expose abuse of authority and resources and to defend the democratic rights of citizens (Donohue and Tichenor et al. 1995; Dimova 2012; Norris 2008). Arguing for a "fourth estate" based on journalistic independence and political autonomy, Schultz (1998: 51) states: "the fourth estate ideal at its most basic holds that the role of the news media is to act as a conduit of information, ideas and opinions to assist in the good governance of society; to act as a check on the powerful, by reporting, analysing and criticising their actions on behalf of the public, which lacks direct access to information or power."

## Methodology

Using content analysis, the study examined all locally sourced and reported news stories, editorials and analyses published in *Daily Monitor* and *New Vision* during the month following the deployment. The timeframe was from 21 December 2013, when the UPDF entered South Sudan, to 21 January 2014, one week after Uganda's Parliament eventually approved the deployment. There was a frenzy of debate among the public during this period over the troop deployment and call-in talk shows on FM radio stations across the country frequently featured politicians discussing the subject. Outside the country, regional and international actors, including IGAD, were urging Uganda to withdraw its army from South Sudan. It was therefore interesting to investigate how the two leading newspapers covered the matter in their mainstream news and editorials.

There were 48 articles in all, including 43 news stories, four editorials and one news analysis. The number would have been much bigger, but the analysis excluded stories from international news outlets and agencies, features and opinions because the main interest was in investigating how Ugandan-based newspaper journalists reported and framed news related to the army's deployment in South Sudan. The study inductively analysed the content to identify manifest frames without referring to a pre-determined range of frames (for example, as used by Orgeret and Sobhan 2012). The manifest frames were then categorised as either "favourable" or "unfavourable", depending on how they portrayed the UPDF deployment.

The content analysis was mainly qualitative and involved carefully studying the stories in depth to identify or uncover meanings, themes and patterns (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009: 308). This approach is useful in developing themes that illustrate the range of the meanings of the research problem. The analysis included identifying frames in the content and sources of information. The frames helped in determining whether a story portrayed the UPDF deployment as a justified or unjustified cause. The sources identified included government officials, security forces, politicians (parliamentary and opposition), foreign officials, international news agencies, rebel forces and unidentified. These were further divided into either official or non-official sources.

## The newspapers

The government-owned *New Vision* and privately-owned *Daily Monitor* are the leading daily newspapers in Uganda and are published in English. The two newspapers were selected because they are well respected, influential for setting the tone for news coverage in the country and represent opinion leadership in Uganda. They regularly feature elite columnists, including high-ranking government and military officials, religious leaders and key actors in the private sector and civil society – and therefore command a lot of attention from the authorities. Furthermore, newspaper stories are often quoted by FM radio stations, which are the dominant medium of communication for the masses and the primary source of information for the population. Newspapers contribute significantly to daily news bulletins (both directly quoted and as leads for developing stories) and also provide topics for debate on FM stations, especially political talk-shows. *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* include broad coverage of the South Sudan conflict and related news.

## Results and discussion

### *Manifest frames*

The content was carefully read and examined to identify all the manifest frames in which the UPDF deployment in South Sudan was portrayed. From the coverage, 18 frames were identified, appearing 87 times throughout the 48 stories (Table 1). The most frequent frames were those that depicted the deployment as a “peace keeping and enforcement mission” and as a “rescue mission”, both appearing 12 times throughout the coverage, together accounting for 27.6 per cent of the total number of times the identified frames appeared. The frame portraying the deployment as “suspicious UPDF interest in oil-rich areas in South Sudan” appeared the least number of times – only once. It was common for one story to bear more than one frame. For instance, the story “700 dead in Sudan, Museveni steps in” (*New Vision* 20 December 2013) portrayed the UPDF deployment as a rescue mission to evacuate stranded Ugandans, as a mission to protect Uganda’s economic interests, and as a peace-making and mediation mission.

The 18 manifest frames were divided into two main or dominant frames: justified deployment and unjustified deployment (Table 2). All the frames in which the UPDF deployment was portrayed in positive or favourable terms were listed under the ‘justified deployment’ main frame, while those that depicted it in negative or unfavourable terms were listed under the ‘unjustified deployment’ frame. The majority (72 per cent) of manifest frames portrayed UPDF’s involvement in the war as justified, while 28 per cent represented it as unjustified. ‘Peace keeping/enforcement mission’ and ‘rescue mission’ accounted for 38 per cent of manifest frames under the ‘justified deployment’ frame. Under the ‘unjustified deployment’ dominant frame, the ‘big bully’ frame dominated with 25 per cent.

**Table 1.** Manifest frames identified from the coverage by *Daily Monitor* and *New Vision* (number)

1	Rescue mission (of stranded and injured Ugandans and other nationalities) – hero in the region	12
2	Peace keeping and enforcement mission (restoration of stability and order; setting the stage for negotiations)	12
3	Genocide prevention and saviour of South Sudan (by averting mass loss of life)	8
4	“Big bully”, barking orders and intimidating Riek Machar’s side; Uganda as an aggressor	6
5	Ally in the war (invited by President Salva Kiir/GoSS)	5
6	Legitimate mission (in line with IGAD framework)	5
7	National security interests (protection of Uganda’s territorial integrity)	5
8	Protection of economic interests (trade, oil)	5
9	Illegal deployment/mission (without Parliament’s approval)	4
10	Protection of key installations in South Sudan	4
11	Unjustified/unnecessary intervention	4
12	Biased arbitrator	3
13	Facilitation of movement of humanitarian assistance; safe passage for refugees	3
14	Military interests (desire to be recognised as an influential military powerhouse in the region)	3
15	War too costly for Uganda	3
16	Regional security	2
17	“Big brother, good neighbour and friend”: standing in solidarity with South Sudan	2
18	Suspicious UPDF interest in oil-rich areas in South Sudan	1
	Total number of times the themes appeared	87

**Table 2.** Manifest and dominant frames in the coverage (number)

Justified deployment (favourable)		Unjustified deployment (unfavourable)	
Peace keeping/ enforcement mission (restoration of stability and order; setting the stage for negotiations)	12	“Big bully”, barking orders and intimidating Riek Machar’s side; Uganda as an aggressor	6
Rescue mission (of stranded and injured Ugandans and other nationalities – hero in the region)	12	Illegal deployment/mission (without Parliament’s approval)	4
Genocide prevention and saviour of South Sudan (by averting mass loss of life)	8	Unjustified/unnecessary intervention (military intervention not the best approach)	4
Ally in the war (invited by President Salva Kiir/GoSS)	5	Biased arbitrator	3
Legitimate mission (in line with IGAD framework; requested by the UNSG)	5	Military interests (desire to be recognised as an influential military powerhouse in the region)	3
National security interests (protection of Uganda’s territorial integrity)	5	War too costly for Uganda	3
Protection of economic interests (trade)	5	Suspicious UPDF interest in oil-rich areas in South Sudan	1
Protection of key installations in South Sudan	4		

**Table 2.** Cont.

Facilitation of movement of humanitarian assistance; safe passage for refugees	3		
Regional security	2		
“Big brother, good neighbour and friend”: standing in solidarity with South Sudan	1		
UPDF has conducted itself in a professional manner	1		
Total number of times unfavourable themes appeared	63	Total number of times unfavourable themes appeared	24
	72%		28%

### *Sources of information*

A total of 68 sources were identified in the coverage and grouped under eight categories: government officials and institutions; security forces (army and police); parliament (including plenary, committee sessions and press conferences); opposition (including leaders of opposition parties and MPs); foreign officials (including sources from foreign governments); international news agencies (stories reported by Ugandan journalists, but attributing some information to international news agencies); unidentified sources in two instances (where we have no information at all about the source); and rebel forces.

The highest number of sources appearing in the stories were government officials, accounting for 20 (29 per cent) of the 68 sources (Table 3). Government officials included the president (quoted six times), a statement from State House (president’s office), the prime minister (once), cabinet ministers (six times) and government spokespersons (six times), who included the ruling party’s spokesman, the foreign affairs ministry spokesman and the presidential press secretary. Security forces were also dominant in the coverage, appearing 18 times (26.4 per cent) and comprising the chief of defence forces (quoted three times), the army spokesperson (eight times), unnamed army officers (six times) and the Uganda police force spokesperson. The source category that appeared the least number of times was “rebel forces” (Machar’s envoy). Machar was quoted in some stories, but the appearances were coded under international news agencies because his comments were cited in international media stories, which were then quoted in the local stories.

**Table 3.** Sources in the stories (number)

<b>Government officials</b>	
President, prime minister, cabinet ministers, government spokespersons and State House (president's office) statements	20
<b>Security forces</b>	
Chief of Defence Forces, UPDF spokesperson, unnamed army officers and one quoting police spokesperson	18
<b>Parliament</b>	
Committee sessions, press conferences, MPs speaking independently	8
<b>International news agencies</b>	
Information in local stories, quoted from international media agencies and from BBC	7
<b>Opposition</b>	
Opposition party leaders, shadow ministers and opposition MPs	6
<b>Foreign officials</b>	
Officials from the GoSS and other governments in the region	6
<b>Unidentified sources</b>	
For example "according to sources"	2
<b>Rebel forces</b>	
Mr Riek Machar's envoy	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

The coverage was further examined in more depth on the basis of three questions focusing on the dominant frames in the stories, the sources of information and the media's role in explaining and justifying the UPDF deployment in South Sudan. The questions were:

- i) Frames: What was amplified and what was played down?
- ii) Sources: Who influenced the news and at whose expense?
- iii) Roles: Was the media a government mouthpiece or the fourth estate?

### Frames: What was amplified and what was downplayed?

Overall, the media portrayed the deployment of UPDF in South Sudan in favourable terms. The majority of stories amplified the "justified deployment" frame, quoting sources explaining that the mission was intended more for humanitarian reasons than combat operations. The government and army sources played at the public's altruistic nerve by first announcing that the UPDF had entered Juba to rescue and evacuate stranded and injured Ugandans and other nationalities, and to facilitate the movement of humanitarian assistance and safe passage for refugees, causes that depicted the army as heroes. Photographs illustrating the stories showed bewildered citizens, some wrapped in bandages, alighting from military planes at Entebbe airport. Natu-

rally, this was a rallying call to the public to support the mission. Another imposing label was that of a peacekeeping mission intended to restore stability and order in a lawless South Sudan and to set the stage for negotiations.

News reports that President Museveni had acted on requests by the Government of South Sudan, UN and IGAD to protect key installations in Juba and to initiate regional efforts for a solution to the conflict cast the mission in a positive light. Other noble justifications advanced later for the intervention included that the UPDF had helped avert massive loss of life, thereby preventing genocide; that Uganda's territorial integrity and security in the entire East African region was at stake; that there was need to protect the thriving trade between the two neighbours; and that as a good neighbour and friend, Uganda could not sit back as South Sudan burnt down. These further promoted the "justified deployment" frame.

There were far fewer unfavourable portrayals of the deployment, which rendered the "unjustified deployment" frame less salient in the coverage. In instances where the negative portrayals seemed to leap off the pages, they were quickly neutralised in subsequent sections of the same issue or in the next day's newspapers by statements, clarifications and explanations by authorities. A case in point was when the main headlines featured Museveni's threats and ultimatum to Machar, quoted from international news agencies. He was warning Machar to comply with a ceasefire suggested by the government of South Sudan within four days or face defeat and the wrath of a combined force of IGAD countries.<sup>25</sup> The following day, the spokesperson for the ministry of foreign affairs addressed journalists at the government's Uganda Media Centre, not to clarify the president's warning and language, but to explain (for the sixth time in one week) UPDF's role in Juba— to evacuate Ugandans and to secure Juba airport in order to facilitate the safe passage of Ugandans and other foreign nationals, and of humanitarian aid. He stressed that the deployment was within the mandate of IGAD resolutions.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, news stories quoting opposition MPs depicting President Museveni as a bully and asking him to withdraw his warning to Machar, and stories of Machar accusing the UPDF of aggression and fuelling the fighting in South Sudan, were promptly balanced with comments from the presidential press secretary that the president was only a messenger carrying IGAD's warning to Machar, and that Uganda could not stand by and allow a repeat of the Rwanda genocide play out in South Sudan.<sup>27</sup>

Genocide prevention was a common frame in the news coverage, with stories quoting senior government officials citing, in at least eight instances, prevention of mass loss of life and the 1994 Rwanda genocide where more than 800,000 people were killed in a hundred days. In one such case, the chief of defence forces, General Katumba Wamala, told journalists that the UPDF had helped evacuate more than 30,000 people from Juba, Bor and Bentiu in South Sudan; then he invoked Rwanda genocide memories, saying the army had averted a repeat of the tragedy and would continue, in the journalist's words, "to instill sense into the warring sides until sanity returns". General Wamala was quoted as saying: "It was important for us to go there.

The SPLA had collapsed and it was a matter of time to see another Rwanda there.” He added that the war was driven by ethnic hatred among South Sudanese people – it was not Machar and President Kiir fighting, but “old and young people driven by ethnic hatred”.<sup>28</sup>

In a later article, the minister of state for security, General Jeje Odong, was quoted as having said, while appearing before Parliament’s Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs: “Just imagine what the situation would have been if there was no steadying hand to prevent genocide. Do we want tourists to visit skulls of genocide victims in Rwanda and then cross over to visit yet another set of genocide victims in South Sudan?”<sup>29</sup> The defence minister, Crispus Kiyonga, was quoted as saying “Africa must learn to defend itself ... In Rwanda, millions of people were killed as African states looked on. We must not allow this to happen to South Sudan.”<sup>30</sup> Government of South Sudan officials voiced similar sentiments in news stories. The South Sudan ambassador was quoted as saying that if Uganda had stood back like the rest of the world and watched, the fighting could have turned into “mass ethnic killing”<sup>31</sup> and the speaker of the South Sudan national assembly, Magok Rundial, applauded Uganda for the intervention. “We are grateful to Uganda people, without you we would not survive.”<sup>32</sup>

The coverage was conspicuously silent on a number of issues concerning the deployment, even when alternative voices tried to raise them. For instance, the controversial issue of Parliament’s approval was never explained. For the period under review, there was no single investigative story, analysis or interview with relevant persons that sought to unwrap the issue of the illegality of the intervention. The questions about the cost of the war, the number of troops deployed and the casualties were also not discussed in the newspapers, in spite of queries having been raised by opposition politicians.

The news coverage also remained silent on claims by the opposition that UPDF and security officials were in Juba to identify areas where the forces could be deployed to guard oil wells. The allegations were made before the parliamentary committee on Defence and Internal Affairs. In responding, the minister of state for security, a UPDF general himself, “vehemently” denied the claims and was quoted as saying, “This is absolutely nonsensical and unacceptable for [the opposition MP] to allege that we are planning to guard oil wells. I cannot sit here and accept that kind of nonsense.”<sup>33</sup> One would have expected any shrewd journalist to follow up the allegation or, at least, to seek further comment from the MP who had made the claim, but the story ended with the minister-general’s angry remarks and was not developed afterwards.

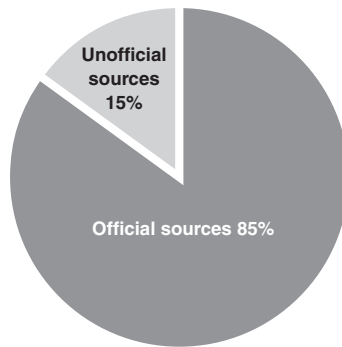
By giving prominence to certain arguments and presenting diverging voices as sideline frustrations or wild allegations, journalists selected some aspects of the debate and made them more salient than others in the news (Entman 1993) and, knowingly or unknowingly, promoted a particular perception of the UPDF intervention in South Sudan. This way, the “justified deployment” frame took precedence over the “unjustified deployment” frame.

## Sources: Who influenced the news?

Media researchers have underscored the strong relationship between journalists, their sources, stories and the impact of their work (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005; Ottosen 2007). Sources are so important in framing news and shaping content that, in Sigal's (1973) view, "News is not necessarily what happens, but what a news source says has happened" (in Harp, Loke and Bachmann 2010: 468). The media play a key role in shaping the public perception of issues "through collecting, framing, and distributing" information and, in war situations, state authorities know how important positive media coverage is for winning the public's support towards their efforts. Thus, politicians and military sources do whatever they can to influence news and have some control over the coverage (Harp, Loke and Bachmann op. cit.; Bennett 1990).

On the other side of the "transactional" or "symbiotic" relationship between journalists and officials, the former depend on the latter for material. Bennett (1990: 103) further notes that in times of conflict and war, journalists rely on official sources to lend credence to their stories. And when their message is consistent, "the tendency to quote them – and, in turn, the overall story frame – becomes even stronger", even though the message may be suspect (Carpenter 2007). The two authors argue that this consistent selection of official sources limits the range of voices in the news and excludes other viewpoints.

**Figure 1.** Official and unofficial sources in the analysed coverage (per cent)



In this study, of the 68 sources identified in the coverage, 46 were official government sources, including army and police officials, cabinet ministers, government spokespersons and parliamentarians, accounting for 68 per cent. Another 12 sources, although not speaking on behalf of the Ugandan government, were officials nonetheless, raising the overall percentage of official sources to 58 (85 per cent). The non-official source categories identified were international news agencies, rebel forces and unidentified sources, totalling only 10 (15 per cent). There was a complete absence of other "social voices" (Bennett 1990) such as opinion polls, civil society, religious leaders and

organisations, the academia and political analysts – an indication that official voices, especially of political and military actors, dominated the media coverage of the UPDF intervention in South Sudan.

### Media's role: Government's mouthpiece or "fourth estate"?

Research has shown that in times of war and conflict, especially in the early stages, journalists depend almost entirely on official sources for information, settle for the role of "keeper of the official record", and are patriotic, sometimes outdoing the state in propaganda (Bennett 1990; Carpenter 1997; Wolfsfeld 1997; Kellner 2008; Harp et al. 2010). To examine the role of Uganda's two leading newspapers in explaining and justifying UPDF deployment in South Sudan in the weeks following the decision, it is necessary to compare the news that they disseminated on the conflict with the information that the government officials provided through various platforms.

The government's official information about the troop deployment was provided at press conferences addressed by the minister of state for foreign affairs and the spokesperson; in Parliament by the ministers in charge of defence and security; at various locations by the army spokesperson and other senior UPDF officers; and in President Museveni's letter to the speaker of parliament. The clearest, consolidated communication on the reasons for Uganda's intervention was contained in the president's letter to the speaker dated 24 December 2013 and in the defence minister's motion on 14 January 2014 for a resolution of Parliament to authorise the deployment. The minister informed Parliament that the government of Uganda had entered into a Status of Forces agreement with the government of South Sudan and that the UPDF deployment had aided the evacuation of Ugandan citizens back home and the stabilisation of the security situation in Juba. The president's letter termed the mission as intended "both for peacekeeping but, if necessary, for peace enforcement", and the two documents gave the reasons for deployment as:

- i) Regional security: the attempted coup had negative security implications for Uganda and the region, including the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic; a stable and prosperous South Sudan is vital for regional peace, security and stability;
- ii) Request by President Salva Kiir Mayardit on 16 December 2013, to President Museveni to assist in the protection of key installations and in stabilising the situation in South Sudan;
- iii) Coups d'état and other unconstitutional changes of government are condemned and rejected under Article 4(p) of the African Union Charter to which South Sudan and Uganda subscribe, and the AU recognised President Kiir as the democratically elected leader of the government of South Sudan.

- iv) The need to evacuate Ugandan citizens trapped in South Sudan;
- v) The need to prevent potential genocide and other atrocities against humanity;
- vi) The need to protect Uganda's thriving trade with South Sudan.

A careful study of the coverage showed that frames in the news content that depicted the deployment in the same way as the official government communications appeared 57 times, representing 66 per cent of the total number of frames — the reason “justified deployment” emerged as the overall news frame. The manifest frames that echoed the government's messages were:

- i) Rescue mission (of stranded and injured Ugandans and other nationalities) – UPDF as heroes;
- ii) Peace keeping and enforcement mission (restoration of stability and order; setting the stage for negotiations);
- iii) National and regional security interests (protection of Uganda's territorial integrity)
- iv) Uganda as an ally in the war (invited by President Kiir/GoSS)
- v) Protection of key installations in South Sudan
- vi) Genocide prevention and Uganda as saviour of South Sudan (averting mass loss of life);
- vii) Facilitation of movement of humanitarian assistance; safe passage for refugees
- viii) Legitimate mission (in line with IGAD framework).

In the early days following the deployment, all government officials speaking on the matter said the mission was for a humanitarian cause. The army and government spokespersons repeatedly denied that the UPDF had deployed to stop mutinying forces loyal to Riek Machar or to carry out any combat operations. The press soon embraced this message and adopted the officials' language in the news. In one story, reacting to Machar's claims that UPDF planes had bombed Bor town in South Sudan, Uganda's minister of state for foreign affairs said the claims were “a bunch of lies” intended to taint Uganda's image: “Let him [Machar] not drag us into their problems. Uganda is not involved militarily. We are just evacuating our citizens. Let him not mislead the world. Uganda would only get involved under the auspices of the United Nations.”<sup>234</sup>

The story's kicker read: “Rescue mission: Former South Sudan VP accuses UPDF fighter jets of bombing his forces in Jonglei state as Ugandan government dismisses allegations as “a bunch of lies”. The newspaper branded the deployment as a “rescue mission”. Another instance in which the language in the newspapers mirrored or promoted the government's message was in the *New Vision* editorial, “South Sudan: House made right decision” – the only editorial on the conflict published in the government daily during the period under review. Citing vested interests, including trade, Ugandans living in South Sudan and the LRA problem, it stated:

The contextual details surrounding the fracas are numerous and intricate. Uganda neither asked for nor precipitated this situation but it would be foolhardy for Uganda to sit back and allow the two antagonists to fight to a standstill and risk a spillover into our borders.<sup>35</sup>

However, in a few cases the press attempted to explain the deployment and questioned the government's decision. In "What Uganda agreed with S. Sudan on UPDF mission", for instance, the *Daily Monitor* provided details about the Status of Forces Agreement that the two countries had signed.<sup>36</sup> The newspaper published three editorials on the conflict during the period under study: "Threats will not end Sudan's pain" (2 January 2014), "Tread carefully on South Sudan" (15 January 2014), "Be honest on South Sudan deployment" (17 January 2014). In all three, the *Daily Monitor* cautioned the government to be an impartial mediator, truthful, transparent and accountable to the citizens, and to avoid a unilateral approach to the situation, which would stretch Uganda's already strained financial and military resources.

Editorials are known to provide the clearest indication (more than news stories) of newspapers' opinions. Researchers have studied editorials to determine the press's attitude towards conflicts (for example, Ottosen 2007; Goddard, Robinson and Parry 2008). In a study of the British media's coverage of the initial combat phase of the 2003 Iraq war, Goddard Robinson and Parry state that, "more than their news coverage, editorials can be taken to represent the 'voice' of a newspaper because the choice of what to discuss and in what way is the newspaper's alone" (2008: 8). Therefore, in spite of having considerably mirrored the authorities' messages, *Daily Monitor* did voice its critical opinion about the deployment. As for *New Vision*, it is curious that the government's newspaper ran only one editorial on the subject, but it is not surprising that it was in favour of the deployment, which opinion it expressed in a tone undistinguishable from that of the authorities.

The analysis showed that the coverage in the two newspapers largely served as the authorities' mouthpiece, with *Daily Monitor* assuming some independence but not entirely breaking free of the "faithful servant" attitude (Wolfsfeld 1997). Most of the news coverage was a reproduction of of the leadership's standpoint, with few alternative, challenging voices.

## Conclusion

The *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* coverage of the UPDF intervention in the South Sudan conflict in the early days following the deployment toed the government line on the justifications. Challenging voices were kept on the periphery as political and military actors dominated the news as sources. The authorities seemed to have choreographed their steps carefully, starting with the humane arguments for the deployment and gradually unpacking the more controversial reasons. It was up to journalists to make the connections; to peer under the veil and weave the whole story together.

Instead, and the press went along, helping the government to unload its message as it had wished. Journalists seemed to tread carefully, appearing to prefer to run with information officials provided than to navigate uncertain territory. News stories on the army's involvement in the conflict were nearly always based on statements by the government and the military. Even when it emerged that authorities had either lied or concealed the truth at the start, journalists did not probe.

The fourth estate ideal implores the media to be "an objective and independent observer of state affairs, and journalists as independent critics of the government" (Dimova 2012). But, with the absence of news analyses in both newspapers and of editorials in *New Vision*, journalists provided little critical comment, perhaps leaving it to opinion columns. As a result, the UPDF deployment in South Sudan was portrayed more as a justified cause than an unjustified one. The study supported earlier conclusions by Bennett (1990) that in crisis and wartime, media serve as mouthpieces of the authorities by amplifying their voices and muffling those that differ from the official position. In such times, the "watchdog" in journalism takes a back seat as other concerns take precedence. The result is that news is framed along the lines of the authorities' standpoint.

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## Who's to Blame for the Chaos in Syria?

### *The Coverage of Syria in Aftenposten, with the War in Libya as Doxa*

Rune Ottosen & Sjur Øvrebø

The main purpose of this article is to investigate the framing, in the Norwegian daily *Aftenposten*, of the gas attack in Ghouta, near Damascus, Syria, on 21 August 2014. Another purpose is to determine – based on an examination of the strategies of the parties involved in the conflict – which of them was blamed for its escalation. The post-conflict case investigated in the article is the relationship between the war in Libya in 2011 and the unfolding events in Syria in the autumn of 2013.

As Joseph Stiglitz (2013) has pointed out, modern conflicts are often turned into post-crisis crises – and thus the civil war in Syria will be discussed as a post-crisis crisis, following the bombing of Libya in 2011. Increasingly, the optimism linked to the notion of post-conflict has been replaced by a Middle East dominated by “failed states”. There is evidence that some of the Islamist militants who took part in the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi’s regime in Libya were armed by Qatar and the US (Tunander 2012). Some of these groups, later to be known as the Islamic State (IS), moved to Syria with their weapons and continued the struggle there (Reehorst 2014). The hypothesis of the study is that Norway’s role in Libya is underreported, and an underlying assumption is that because Norway played an important part in the Libyan bombing Norway must also take some responsibility for the events after the bombing came to an end.

The second hypothesis is that *Aftenposten’s* Syria coverage will lack a willingness to see a connection between the events in Syria and the regime change in Libya. The media is an important instrument for informing people of crucial events and also an important instrument for the propaganda war present in all major conflicts (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014). Part of the propaganda war is to keep controversial issues hidden from the media. This can be understood as doxa – explained by Pierre Bourdieu as the evident but unmentionable (Bourdieu 1979). Berit von der Lippe (1991: 152) has argued that doxa is a key concept for understanding the role of the media in “the new world order” after the end of the cold war. NATO bombing in the former Yugoslavia in 1999 was the turning point for the new “out of area policy” in the NATO alliance, with military operations justified as humanitarian interventions (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014: 20-21).

## Propaganda theory

It is well known in the field of media studies of war and conflict reporting that media strategies, propaganda and psychological operations are an integral component of modern warfare (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014; Knighthley 1982; Luostarinen 2002; Ottosen 1994). An essential part of propaganda strategy and psychological operations is for one party to draw attention away from its own wrongdoing, placing the blame on the other side through enemy images, selective use of information and even – in some cases – disinformation (Taylor 1992; Ottosen 2013). In the case to be investigated here there are at least three parties involved in the propaganda war: the Assad regime in Syria (often supported by Russia); the US and NATO; and the opposition (including IS). All these parties have tried, by different means, to influence public opinion through propaganda and media strategies (*Huffington Post* 10 July 2014). Fifteen journalists were killed in Syria in 2014. Since then other reporters have been attacked, kidnapped and harassed, and it has become increasingly difficult for journalists to report from the ground in Syria (Reporters Without Borders 2014). This makes it even more difficult to identify the guilty party behind atrocities such as the sarin gas attack discussed below.

## Peace journalism

Galtung's model of peace journalism builds on the dichotomy between what he calls "war journalism" and "peace journalism" (Ottosen 2010). The model includes four main points which contrast the two approaches: war journalism is violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented. This approach is often linked to a dualistic approach, a zero-sum game where the winner takes all (as in sports journalism). A potential consequence is that war journalism contributes to escalating conflicts by reproducing propaganda promoting war (Galtung 2002). Galtung's theory is also relevant for the propaganda warfare mentioned above since an essential element of the peace journalism model is to expose propaganda lies on all sides.

The peace journalism section of the model has a moral and ethical point of departure, acknowledging the fact that media themselves play a role in the propaganda war. It presents a conscious choice: to identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented approach; and this in turn implies a focus on possible suggestions for peace that the parties to the conflict might have an interest in hiding. Peace journalism is people-oriented in the sense that it focuses on the victims (often civilian casualties) and thus gives a voice to the voiceless. It is also truth-oriented, in the sense that it reveals untruth on all sides and focuses on propaganda as a means of continuing the war (Galtung, op.cit.: 261-270).

In this context, the peace journalism quest to identify atrocities on all sides in a conflict is of particular interest. Western media have traditionally framed victims according to a notion of “worthy” and “unworthy” victims (Herman and Chomsky 1988). In this instance, the potential victim of President Assad’s regime would be “worthy”.

## Methodology

The material investigated in this chapter is a quantitative content analysis of *Aftenposten*’s Syria coverage based on Entman’s concept for frame analysis in the 72 articles about major events in Syria in the period 21 August-28 September 2014 (Entman 1993). This will be combined with a qualitative study of the 12 articles in which the word “Libya” is mentioned, based on Johan Galtung’s theory of peace journalism and Ruth Wodak’s notion of historical discourse analysis (Wodak 1996).

The first research question: How is the gas-attack in Ghouta framed in *Aftenposten*? The second research question: Are the unrest in Libya and the gas attack linked to the unrest in Libya in 2011? The third research question: Is the fall of the Gaddafi regime relevant to the civil war in Syria?

The first part of the analysis is based on predefined frames (see Figure 2). Robert Entman suggests that framing means selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993: 52). We will also identify who, in the coverage, is blamed for the gas attacks. Based on a codebook designed for this particular task, the material is coded and analysed in the statistical programme SPSS. *Aftenposten* is chosen as it is the biggest and potentially the most influential newspaper in Norway.

## Variables and values

The sample of 72 articles was collected by using the search word “Syria” in the database Retriever in the following periods:

1. The immediate reactions to the gas attack (21-29 August 2013).
2. The UK prime minister, David Cameron, lost the vote in Parliament on British participation in the attack on Syria and the US president, Barack Obama, prepared an attack on Syria (30 August-6 September 2013).
3. The G20 meeting in St. Petersburg 7-14 September 2013 where Syria was a hot topic.
4. Unity on agreement on destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons (15-28 September 2013).

The sources are identified in a separate analysis. The coding of “who is to blame” for the gas attack is based on a combination of reading the whole article and analysing the use of sources. The framing analysis is based on van Dijk’s (1988) notion of main story, analysing the headline, lead and beginning of the article and main quotes. Cases that did not fit the predefined frames were placed in the “uncertain” category.

Sources are defined as persons quoted in the article by the use of quotation marks, clearly expressing themselves on behalf of themselves or of others. Sources not identified as a person but, instead, belonging to a group (identified as Syrian opposition, members of regime, rebels or opponents of regime) are not counted in as sources.

The nationality of the source is not always known. In the case where the source is not linked to a specific nationality or nation it is coded as “unknown”.

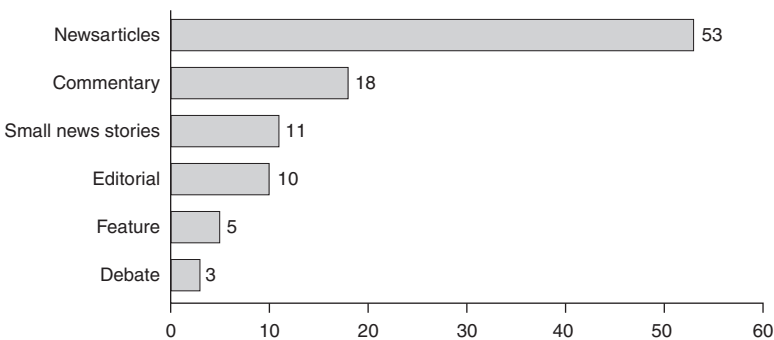
The category “politician/decision maker” also includes press officers, secretaries and so on talking on behalf of ministers, presidents or institutions. The category “expert/researcher” includes lecturers, teachers, professors and academics.

## Sample and genre

The sample was categorised in the following genres: news; editorial; comment or news analyses; reportage/feature; interview; chronicle or letter to the editor; brief (small news story).

Most of the articles were news stories (Figure 1). It is worth noting that as many as seven editorials and 13 commentaries were written about Syria in this limited time period. This says something about the significant political implications of the issue, since editorials are the main genre for expressing the official view of the paper (Ottosen 1995).

**Figure 1.** Genres in the sample (per cent)



Note: Number of articles: 72.

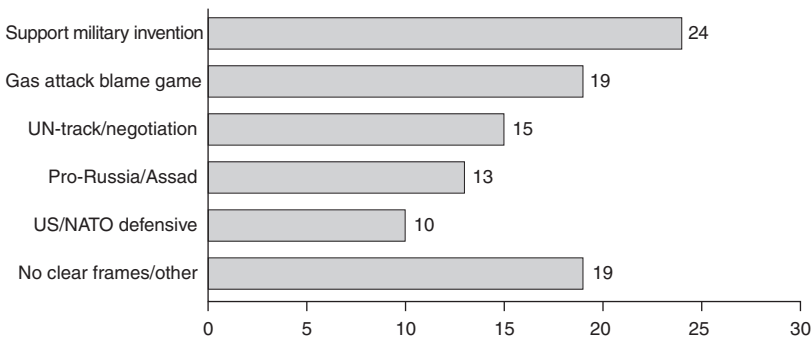
Most of the sources used were Norwegian; 75 articles had a total of 25 Norwegian sources. Findings from earlier research show that a “Norwegian angle” is a typical

feature in the Norwegian press, even on the foreign pages (Ottosen 2001; Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2005). Typically, the second biggest group of sources is US-based (also typical for Norwegian foreign reporting (Ottosen 2005)). Since 1949, Norway has been a loyal member of NATO. It is a well documented fact that mainstream media's coverage of security policy is influenced by the country's security political orientation (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014). The category of US-based sources is almost as large as the Norwegian cluster of sources. As we see, Syrian and Russian sources are far fewer, even though the events actually took place in Syria.

## Predefined frame

As we can see from the result of the framing analysis (Figure 2), the expectation or the quest for a military attack is the most dominating frame in 24 per cent of the articles.

**Figure 2.** Frames in the sample (per cent)<sup>1</sup>



Note: Number of articles: 72.

This finding fits well into Johan Galtung's model for war journalism mentioned above. The quest for a military solution regardless of a UN decision is the most dominant frame in *Aftenposten's* coverage. It is quite remarkable when we now know that an agreement to abolish Syria's chemical weapons through a peaceful agreement was signed not long after negotiations. Very much in line with Galtung's peace journalism approach, this happened despite *Aftenposten's* war journalism approach. As we can see, the typically peace journalism frames (including negotiations, disarmament and following the UN lead) were found only in a clear minority: 15 per cent of the articles. The conclusion is that at this stage *Aftenposten* took a position closer to war journalism than peace journalism, with a substantial group of articles (19 per cent) that had no clear orientation. We should mention here that if the sample of articles had been collected in the period during which the UN was sponsoring negotiations about removing all the chemical weapons from Syria, the outcome would probably have been different.

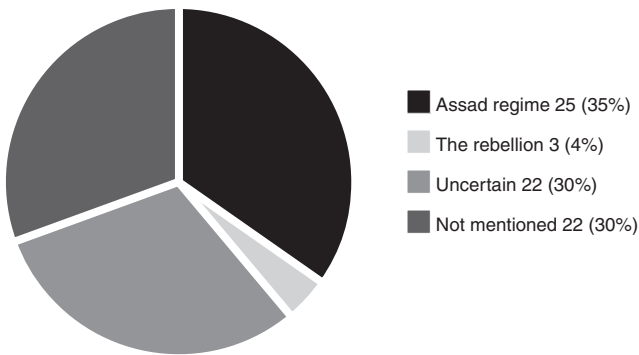
All in all, the conclusion from the framing analysis is that *Aftenposten's* coverage leans towards a war journalism approach, but with some elements of peace journalism.

**Table 1.** Who is to blame for the attack by chemical weapons in different periods (number)

Who is blamed for the chemical attack	The phase of the happenings after gas attack				Number of articles
	Chemical attacks are documented 21-28 August	Cameron voted down, Obama announces attack 30 August-6 September	G20 meeting with peaceful proposal from Russia 7-14 September	Agreement on removal of chemical weapons 15-28 September	
Assad regime	8	9	4	4	25
The rebellion	1	0	2	0	3
Uncertain	7	5	5	5	22
Not mentioned	1	10	6	5	22
Number of articles	17	24	17	14	72

Table 1 shows that the Assad regime is mostly blamed at the beginning of the investigated period. Political leaders in the West quickly blamed the Assad regime after the attack and this, of course, could have affected *Aftenposten's* framing at this stage (Hersh 2014). It is worth noting that in the first period (21-29 August) only one article did not mention any of the parties as potential perpetrators. This lack of nuance, however, is quickly changed, and during the next week ten articles did not mention any of the parties as responsible. The tendency to blame Assad is weaker in the later stages of the investigated periods. The category “uncertain” is quite stable throughout the period.

**Figure 3.** Who is blamed for the chemical attack, the whole period (number)



If we look at the blame game presented in Figure 3 covering the whole investigated period, we find that *Aftenposten* generally blamed Assad. When a potential perpetrator was identified the rebel groups were very rarely mentioned as responsible. However, if we lump together the “uncertain” and “not mentioned” categories we can conclude that most articles are not clear about blaming anyone. It is fair to conclude that in

the period as a whole *Aftenposten* expressed uncertainty about responsibility. Nevertheless, it is clear that if we compare the Assad regime and the rebel groups Assad is by far the most likely guilty party in *Aftenposten*'s coverage. Was this a reasonable position at the time? Our answer to that rhetorical question is: not necessarily. There was contradictory information available at the time and responsible media should be very careful about playing the blame game. In a December 2013 essay in the *London Review of Books*, the Pulitzer prizewinner and US-based investigative reporter Seymour Hersh had already considered the press coverage and blamed the media for too easily buying President Obama's conclusion that the Assad regime was behind the attack.

Barack Obama did not tell the whole story this autumn when he tried to make the case that Bashar al-Assad was responsible for the chemical weapons attack near Damascus on 21 August. In some instances, he omitted important intelligence, and in others he presented assumptions as facts. Most significant, he failed to acknowledge something known to the US intelligence community: that the Syrian army is not the only party in the country's civil war with access to sarin, the nerve agent that a UN study concluded – without assessing responsibility – had been used in the rocket attack. In the months before the attack, the American intelligence agencies produced a series of highly classified reports, culminating in a formal Operations Order – a planning document that precedes a ground invasion – citing evidence that the al-Nusra Front, a jihadi group affiliated with al-Qaida, had mastered the mechanics of creating sarin and was capable of manufacturing it in quantity (Hersh 2013: 9).

Hersh claimed that the Obama administration manipulated details and ignored the fact that the US lacked the reliable intelligence to draw a clear conclusion about the identity of the perpetrators, and he implied that the objective was to build an argument for a military attack on the Assad regime. The US-based think tank Stratfor questioned the conclusion that Assad would want to massacre his own population – he must have known that this would be used as an excuse for a military attack. Stratfor also made a point of the fact that the Assad regime avoided using exaggerated force in many other cases, in order not to provoke a Western military attack (Reehorst 2014: 202). Even though the Assad regime is identified as the most likely perpetrator at the time, Hersh's arguments only became known to the readers of *Aftenposten* several months later. In an interview with Hersh on 15 April 2014, *Aftenposten*'s US correspondent Kristofer Rønneberg quoted Hersh going even further than in his article from the *London Review of Books*. Now Hersh identified the rebels and Turkish intelligence and military as most likely to be responsible for the sarin gas attack (*Aftenposten* 15 April 2014).

**Table 2.** Blame according to genre (number)

Type of text	Who is blamed for the gas attack				Number of articles
	Assad regime	The rebellion	Uncertain	Not mentioned	
News article	13	2	13	10	38
Editorial	3	0	2	2	7
Commentary	7	0	2	4	13
Feature	0	0	1	3	4
Debate	1	0	0	1	2
Small news story	1	1	4	2	8
Number of articles	25	3	22	22	72

Besides the running news coverage of the military action in Syria, *Aftenposten* also served as a forum for public debate through editorials and comments from editors and journalists. Earlier research on enemy images in journalism indicate that they are more clearly expressed in commentaries and editorial where opinions are more candid than in a neutral news text (Ottosen 1995). With these findings it is no surprise that a majority of the editorials and commentaries in the sample blame the Assad regime for the sarin gas attacks. As expected, the news articles are more divided on the guilt issue – equally divided between blaming the Assad regime and blaming the category “uncertain” (13 articles in each). There are even two articles blaming the rebels as well. The uncertainty is more clearly present in the debate articles and small news briefs. All in all, the answer to the first research question is clear: in the sample, the Assad regime is generally blamed for the attacks, with some measure of uncertainty. The rebels are blamed in only a few articles. The coverage has clear elements of what Johan Galtung labels war journalism (Galtung 2002).

## The connection between the unrest in Syria and the bombing of Libya in 2011

The bombing of Libya started with a controversial interpretation of UN Resolution 1973 of March 2011, implemented to establish a no-fly zone over Benghazi to protect the civilian population against attack by Gaddafi’s forces. NATO took the lead and continued the military operation until August 2011, when Gaddafi was removed from power. Russia, China and a number of African countries expressed discomfort with NATO policy. Many countries, among them South Africa, claimed that Resolution 1973 was misused and that NATO’s warfare obstructed a peace initiative from the African Union (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014: 139-141).

Even though the bombing of Libya ended in August 2011 and the Gaddafi regime fell, it is difficult to call Libya a post-conflict situation in the traditional sense of the word. Libyan society in 2015 is more chaotic than before the bombing, and there is

no central government in charge of the whole country. In December 2014, it was even announced by the Pentagon that the so called Islamic state (IS) had established bases for training in the country (BBC World News 4 December 2014). It must be reiterated here that Norway took an active part in the bombing, and thus must be regarded as co-responsible for the present situation (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014). We can draw upon a study by an academic working at Norway's Air Defence College, Jens Gunnar Haugen Dragsnes (2012). In an article entitled "Do we need to understand the effects of the bombs we drop", he concludes that Norway might have strengthened its popularity in NATO for taking a leading role in the bombing of Libya, but might also have undermined the UN Security Council (Dragsnes 2012: 48-49). He concludes that 75 per cent of the targets hit by Norwegian bomb attacks were stationary goals with civilian relevance. In the long run this can be difficult to defend when the purpose of UN Resolution 1973 was to protect civilians; the implication being that Norway was responsible for violation of the Geneva conventions (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014: 152-153). In his book *Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya*, Horace Campell goes even further in his criticism of NATO. He sees the attack on Libya as a part of Western hegemony in Africa. He is also remindful that even though Gaddafi was a brutal dictator he also was a respected leader of the African Union. His conclusion is that "[the] Libyan intervention and murder of Gaddafi will go down in history as a colossal failure of NATO" (Campell 2013: 33).

There is no doubt that radical Islamist groups joined the fighting against the Gaddafi regime under NATO's protection. Around 500 fighters from Libya moved from Libya to Syria; some have joined Jabhat al-Nusra, while others have linked up with IS (Wehrey 2014). There is also evidence that these groups brought their weapons and equipment, partly sponsored by Qatar and US, into Syria and continued the fighting there. They were assisted partly by Turkish intelligence, which had its own motives for undermining the Assad regime. They were able to bring heavy artillery, and even tanks, across the border from Turkey (Tunander 2012; Reehorst 2014).

The second research question is whether *Aftenposten* wrote about this connection between the situation in Libya and the chaotic situation in Syria. To assist in the analysis, we draw upon Ruth Wodak's notion of historical-oriented critical discourse analysis (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014: 99). Wodak emphasises that a historical context is necessary to analyse conflict escalation and those media which fail to bring in this dimension will fail to give the audience a proper understanding of why conflict escalation takes place (Wodak 1996, 2011). Many journalists covering conflicts often fail to see the connection between earlier wars and present conflicts (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014). The critical question to be investigated here is whether *Aftenposten's* readers are reminded of the connection between Norway's warfare in Libya and the present violence in Syria.

## The Libyan connection

To identify the potential Libyan connection in *Aftenposten's* Syria coverage, the search word "Libya" was used on all the material in the Retriever database. Twelve articles using the word "Libya" were identified in the sample. The next level of the investigation was to identify in what context Libya is mentioned and whether a connection between the unrest in Syria and the war in Libya is established.

The conclusion, after examining the material, is that based on Teun van Dijk's understanding of main story as title, lead and beginning of story (van Dijk 1988) none of the 12 stories used the connection between Libya and the civil war in Syria as the main story. We will examine the 12 articles in which Libya is mentioned based on Galtung's peace journalism model and Wodak's historically-oriented discourse analysis [the translation from Norwegian to English is by the authors].

If we see all 12 articles as a whole, the genres are commentaries, editorials or chronicles/debate articles. An interesting observation here is that no news articles mention Libya as background for the escalation of violence in Syria.

### *Article 1*

The first article was published on 27 August 2013 under the title "Belief in military intervention in Syria". It is a commentary by *Aftenposten* journalist Helene Skjeggstad. The commentary is oriented to war journalism and starts: "There is more indication that Barack Obama's 'red line' has been crossed. More people believe USA will act." The word "Libya", not part of the article itself, was placed in a fact box. The relevant piece of text is: "Libya: The United States carries the largest military burden for the operation in Libya which eventually led to Muammar Gaddafi's death on 20 October 2011. The operation had the support of the UN Security Council, but the Russians felt overrun in the process that led up to the decision and in the execution. This is largely the reason the situation in Syria has, until now, not found a solution in the UN."

The war orientation is clear when going to war is labelled a responsibility. But the discourse in this paragraph also helps the reader to understand why Russia is reluctant, because of the Libyan experience, to support a new UN military intervention. This can be read as an attempt to understand "the other side" and thus includes a peace journalism element, even though it was not part of the main story. As a whole, the article is framed so as to create an growing acceptance of military intervention although it contains some historical facts leading it towards peace journalism.

### *Article 2*

The next article in the sample was published on 28 August under the title: "Chaotic showdown in Syria". This is also a commentary by Helene Skjeggstad. Its orientation is towards war journalism and includes the statement that "more and more countries

want military action against Syria even without a UN mandate”. Here Libya is mentioned only briefly and the most relevant part of the text is:

It is not only Russia's close relations to Syrian President Assad that makes them oppose an intervention. During the war in Libya the UN Security [Council] implemented a no-fly zone. Russia believes that the implementation of this decision was not according to their understanding (of Resolution 1973), and still bears a grudge for this. In addition, Russia opposes how the West, led by the US, intervenes in other countries.

This paragraph can be read as an attempt by *Aftenposten* to contextualise the Western approach to the conflict, and to understand Russia's (and, indirectly, Syria's) perception of the conflict.

### *Article 3*

The next article was also published on 28 August, under the title “Painful decision during election campaign”. It is a commentary by *Aftenposten's* journalist Per Kristian Haugen. The article implies that Assad is responsible for the gas attack and the question raised is whether a military intervention is possible without a UN mandate. The most relevant part of the text is as follows:

In 2001, we supported wholeheartedly the invasion of Afghanistan, but kept distance when President George W Bush invaded Iraq in 2003. In 2011, we took upon ourselves an important role in Libya, precisely because the action had the support of the UN Security Council. In 2013, only a diplomatic miracle can ensure a UN mandate to intervene in Syria. On Libya, Russia and China reluctantly abstained from veto. In retrospect, the Russians were particularly clear that they had almost been tricked into accepting an action that would protect the civilian population, but which lasted only until Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime was overthrown and the dictator was dead.

Even though the extrajudicial execution of Gaddafi is made more acceptable here by linking the word “dictator” to the description, we again see an attempt to understand the “enemies of the West” (that is, Russia and China). Norway's role in the bombing is mentioned briefly, but not linked to controversial interpretation of UN Resolution 1973.

### *Article 4*

On the following day, 29 August, there was another relevant article under the title “The consequences of bombing stocks of arms are incalculable”. This is a background article by *Aftenposten's* journalist Halvor Tjønn drawing upon interviews with the research fellows, Helge Lurås and Bjørn Arne Johnsen, both claiming that a full-scale war against Syria is unlikely.

The following relevant piece was not a part of the article itself, but a fact box under the article:

In Libya 2011, France and Britain asked the UN Security Council for operation to protect the civilian population in Benghazi. Russia and China abstained from voting. The offensive continued until Moammar [sic] Gaddafi was gone.

This was a repetition of a point made earlier, about the misuse of the situation in Benghazi, and reminded the reader of the position of Russia and China. The term “gone” in describing the extra juridical execution of Gaddafi is a misleading way of describing the brutal murder and modifies the small elements of peace journalism in the text.

### *Article 5*

On the same day, 29 August, another relevant article appeared under the title “Dove and hawk”. The article is labelled “news-analysis” and is a commentary by *Aftenposten*’s journalist Kristoffer Rønneberg. The most relevant part of the article:

Barack Obama has based much of his credibility, both in the Middle East and the rest of the world on the fact that he is not George W Bush. He is not the type that attacks a country without a UN mandate, as was the case in Libya in 2011.

The attempt at such a sharp contrast between presidents Obama and Bush can, in retrospect, be questioned. After this, in November 2014, Obama attacked IS in Syria without a UN mandate. Obama’s warfare, with drones on a global scale, has also been questioned by experts on international law (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014: 167). The article lacks a historical context, and the potential long-term effects of the Bush doctrine (of which preemptive attacks are an important element) is not mentioned, even though it could have formed a relevant historical reference point. The question omitted is whether the long-term policy of the US in the Middle East is more important than the policy of a single president. In a 2007 public statement, General Wesley Clark revealed a secret US plan after 9/11 to topple seven regimes in the Middle East, including Syria. If this plan still exists, we could talk more about continuity than a break between the foreign policies of presidents Bush and Obama (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014: 185-186). Seen in this light, this manner of reasoning by *Aftenposten* lacks the historical perspective Ruth Wodak expects from a proper historical discursive context.

### *Article 6*

The next relevant article was published on 30 August under the title “A myopic Norwegian strategy”. It was a commentary by Per Kristian Haugen incorporating a discussion on the problems awaiting a UN decision to intervene in Syria – an intervention that most likely will never happen. Haugen reminds us of what happened during the Libya crisis when Russia abstained from a veto.

An excerpt from the text:

In 2011, the Security Council gave a green light for an action that would protect civilians in Libya in the conflict between rebels and forces of Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi. It was possible because nobody vetoed.

Here, readers are assisted in drawing the connection to NATO's use of Resolution 1973 to topple the Gaddafi regime, which was labelled by critics as a misuse of the resolution (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2014). The article blames Norwegian politicians for lacking the courage to act without a UN mandate, and thus draws the article in the direction of war journalism.

### *Article 7*

The next article of relevance was published on 30 August with the title "Putin will lose if he gives in". This was a one-page article written by *Aftenposten*'s Moscow correspondent Steinar Dyrnes. The most relevant part of the text is a reference to an interview with the Russian research fellow Georgij Mirskij. The main point of the article is to explain Putin's foreign policy and an attempt to build a stronger foreign policy and not to give in to pressure from the US. Libya is merely mentioned as an example and is not significant in the article.

An excerpt from the text:

Researchers do not think that it is important for ordinary Russians to save Assad. But he [Mirskij] believes the Russians, more than anything else, want to protect Syria against an American invasion, as in Iraq, or against bombing, as in Libya.

Here the historical arguments are in line with Ruth Wodak's quest for a proper and relevant historical context.

### *Article 8*

The next article of relevance occurs on the same day as Article 7 (30 August), and is titled "Painting Russia into a foreign policy corner". This is a foreign policy analysis written by journalist Helene Skjeggstad. The main point of the article is to explain the changes towards a more active foreign policy under the Putin presidency. The experience with the Libyan case is mentioned as a prominent example of Putin's disappointment with the West. Because Putin did not veto UN Resolution 1973 he had expected to get something in return, but was disappointed.

The most relevant part of the text, subtitled "The crisis in Libya", reads as follows:

The most obvious change is that Russia has got a new president and Vladimir Putin has returned to power. Yet few doubt that it was Putin who also took the decisions when Medvedev was president, thus the explanation is simple. There are a number of events in 2011 (with Putin in power) which never became "a new beginning". One

example is the crisis in Libya. Before the Security Council resolution, Russia considered supporting the resolution or abstaining from voting. They chose the latter and both Putin and Medvedev reacted strongly when NATO, led by the US, went further than was stated in the resolution. In Russia, if something is offered, one expects to get something back. This was not the case in Libya, and Putin has not forgotten.

This historically-oriented discourse fits well into Ruth Wodak's theory that to make sense for the reader relevant historical facts must be built into the discourse. This attempt to understand "the other side" is also an aspect of Galtung's peace journalism approach.

### *Article 9*

On 2 September, *Aftenposten* published a debate article written by Thorbjørn Jagland, Norway's former foreign minister and prime minister, presently chairman of the Nobel committee for the Peace Prize and general secretary of the European Council. The title was: "If it is not already too late". It was an appeal for joint cooperation between Russia and the West to join forces to secure peace. The crisis in Syria and Libya is only mentioned briefly, but the context in which Libya is mentioned critically reflects how the Western countries dealt with the conflict at the time. The most relevant paragraph:

(Russia has) not forgotten that the Western powers redefined the mandate from the Security Council on Libyain a unacceptable manner for Russia. They will not be taken for a ride again.

### *Article 10*

On 4 September, *Aftenposten's* correspondent Kristoffer Rønneberg published a background commentary about President Obama's relationship to Congress under the title "Obama redefines predecessors' practice". The main issue is whether the US should attack Syria and whether the president should consult Congress on the issue. Libya is only mentioned as an example. There is a small caption under a photo of President Obama: "Obama bombed Libya in 2011 and has stepped up the use of drones to kill suspected terrorists without a vote in the US Congress."

It is worth noting that this opinion piece was printed three days before President Obama visited Sweden on his European tour. Here we can draw upon a comparative study by Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2014) on the coverage in *Aftenposten* and the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* of the events in Syria. Both *Aftenposten* and *Dagens Nyheter* put the main blame on Russia for the escalation of the conflict in Syria. But in the study Nohrstedt and Ottosen point to additional differences in the two Scandinavian newspapers' coverage:

In particular, *Aftenposten* makes more references to the UN than *Dagens Nyheter*, and mentions the UN resolution on chemical weapons, the UN Charter, and the regrets of the general secretary, Ban Ki-moon, that the world community had failed

in the Syrian conflict and that it was a “collective failure” (Andreassen 12 September 2013; Rønneberg and Dyrnes 13 September 2013; Rønneberg 12 September 2013). Even more relevant is that at least the Norwegian newspaper makes an attempt to report Putin’s arguments in favor of negotiation which implies invoking international law, the international “modern order”, and the need for solid proof of which party to the conflict is responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Putin is quoted in *Aftenposten* saying that Russia was not defending the Syrian regime but, rather, the UN system, which would be in jeopardy if the US took military action against Syria (Dragnes 12 September 2013).

In contrast to *Dagens Nyheter*, *Aftenposten* seems willing to understand Putin’s position and, using elements of peace journalism, favours negotiation, whereas *Dagens Nyheter*, in an activist and war-journalistic manner, argues for US intervention in Syria – even without a UN mandate.

### *Article 11*

The next article in which we find a reference to Libya is an editorial on 7 September under the title “Syria causes split among world leaders”. The occasion is the aftermath of the G20 meeting where Russia warned strongly against US military intervention in Syria and spoke in favour of negotiations. In the editorial, *Aftenposten* puts most of the blame on the Assad regime and claims it was “most likely” behind the chemical weapons attack on 21 August. The editorial discusses the importance of the coming vote in the US Congress. *Aftenposten* has no clear position, but indirectly supports bombing through the following statement:

Even a limited military attack with cruise missiles and, perhaps bomber planes could harm the most advanced part of the Syrian president’s military machine, the air force and advanced artillery. That could give the rebels the advantage after they have been on the defence for a while.

But the editorial also tries to understand the position of Russia and China and the arguments against military intervention, and this is where the reference to Libya is drawn into the argument:

Both countries have non-interference in internal affairs as their foremost guiding star. They also feel that the West has somehow fooled them in Libya by claiming that the military action against Muammar Gaddafi was to protect civilians, whereas in reality it was support for regime change.

Even though the reference to Libya is only a small part of the argument, the editorial has a historical dimension, living up to Ruth Wodak’s quest for the need for historical reference in the discourse on present conflicts.

### Article 12

The last of the 12 pieces with reference to Libya was a letter to the editor written by a research fellow at the Norwegian Institute for Foreign Affairs, Svein Melby, on 18 September under the title “America’s new role”. The main point of the article is censure of Obama for being a weak president, more willing to use force than his predecessors. The reference to Libya is not important to the main argument, but is mentioned as an example of Obama’s avoidance of direct military involvement in the Middle East:

To avoid new demanding military engagements in the Middle East is a main point in Obama’s policies. “Leading from behind” in Libya and a low profile in Syria was thus fully in line with his main strategy.

### Discussion and conclusion

There is no doubt that in the analysed material *Aftenposten* blames the Assad regime the most for the chaos and civil war in Syria. Through the choice of sources, through framing – and even explicitly in an editorial – Assad is blamed for the use of chemical weapons. Even though we still have no proof of who was behind the attacks, some evidence now seems to point in the direction of the rebels as well, possibly with some assistance from Turkish military and intelligence. To sum up the main findings: in only 12 of 72 examined articles was “Libya” mentioned in the text. This means that a majority of the articles did not draw the war in Libya into the discussion of the civil war in Syria. How, then, is the reference to Libya used to explain the unfolding conflict in Syria? In the 12 articles where Libya is mentioned, there is a certain willingness to draw historical lines to the Libyan war as at least a contributing factor. There are also elements of peace journalism in the willingness to understand why Russia refuses to use the UN as a basis for military interference in Syria. The experiences of Libya, and the fact that NATO used UN Resolution 1973 as an excuse for regime change, are mentioned several times. However, only one article mentions Norway’s prominent part in the bombing of Libya, thus being co-responsible for the chaos that created an opportunity for the rebels to take their weapons and move on to Syria. In 2011, *Aftenposten* supported Norway’s bombing in Libya through editorials and in the way the news was framed (Ottosen, Slaatta and Øfstei 2012). The lack of willingness to take responsibility for the events that came out the chaos created by the bombing in Libya can be analysed in terms of Pierre Bourdieu’s (1979) notion of doxa. This lack of historical reference to a crucial part of the post-conflict crisis in Syria does not live up to the standards suggested by Ruth Wodak in her historically-oriented discourse analysis (1996 and 2001). Based on these findings, we conclude that *Aftenposten*’s coverage of the Syrian conflict has a war journalism orientation with some elements of peace journalism. The hypothesis that Libya was underreported is partly confirmed – and the hypothesis that no link was drawn to the Norwegian

participation in Libya bombing and potential co-responsibility for the chaos in the region is mostly confirmed.

It must be underlined that this analysis is based on two months' coverage. Further research is required to draw a final conclusion to *Aftenposten's* Syria coverage and should also include the current warfare against IS in Syria and Iraq.

## Notes

1. Originally the following frames were defined, but later merged into fewer categories as shown in the table above to get a better overview: 1: Military attack not based on UN decision, 2: UN track, 3: Assad/Russian understanding of the situation, 4: Negotiations, non-violence, 5: Disarmament, 6: Russia/Putin on the offensive in negotiation, 7: USA/Obama is weak and being dominated, 8: Other frames, 9: No clear frame, 10: Cameron loses ground, 11: Blaming, guilt.

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### Analysed articles in *Aftenposten*

- Article 1. Skjeggestad, Helene: Tror på militær inngripen i Syria [Belief in military intervention in Syria] 27.08.2014.
- Article 2. Skjeggestad, Helene: Kaotisk oppgjør om Syria [Chaotic showdown in Syria] 28.08.2014.
- Article 3. Haugen, Per Kristian: Pinefull avgjørelse i en valgkamptid [Painful decision during election campaign] 28.08.2014.
- Article 4. Tjønn, Halvor: – Følgene av å bombe våpenlagre er uoverskuelige [The consequences of bombing stocks of arms are incalculable] 29.08.2014.
- Article 5. Rønneberg Kristoffer: Due og hauk [Dove and hawk] 29.08.2014.
- Article 6. Haugen, Per Kristian: En nærsynt norsk strategi [A myopic Norwegian strategy] 30.08.2014.
- Article 7. Dyrnes, Steinar: – Putin blir taper om han gir etter [Putin will lose if he gives in] 30.08.2014.
- Article 8. Skjeggestad, Helene: Maler Russland inn i et utenrikspolitisk [Painting Russia into a foreign policy corner] 30.08.2014.
- Article 9. Jåglund, Thorbjørn: Hvis det ikke allerede er for sent [If it's not already too late] 02.09.2014
- Article 10. Obama trosser forgjengernes praksis [Obama defies pedestrians practice] 04.09.2014.
- Article 11. *Aftenposten* editorial: Syria splitter verdens ledere [Syria causes split among world leaders] 07.09.2014.
- Article 12. USAs nye rolle [America's new role] 18.09.2014.

## Framing Peace Building

### *Discourses of United Nations Radio in Burundi*

William Tayeebwa

Despite Burundi's notable role as a post-conflict nation and in the peace-building efforts of East Africa, the political situation in the country at the time the programmes analysed for this chapter were recorded in the last quarter of 2009, and leading to provincial and presidential elections in May and June 2010, remained precarious, with reported repression of opposition groups and human rights abuses. Since the parliamentary elections of 2005 that saw Pierre Nkurunziza, a former rebel leader of the CNDD-FDD party (National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy) become president, political tensions kept rising, leading to the 2010 elections. Most notably, the start of the electoral season in 2009 was characterised by accusations and counter accusations by the various opposition political parties of unfair treatment by the CNDD-FDD ruling party. In a dramatic turn of events for the UN, the government of Burundi requested in December 2009 (the last month of broadcast recordings for this chapter) that Youssef Mahmoud, executive representative of the United Nations secretary general to Burundi and head of BINUB, be recalled from the country allegedly for being too close to the political opposition. Prior to the 2009 expulsion, the Burundian government had, in August 2006, made accusations against acting special representative Nureldin Satti and requested his removal. The latest expulsion, in April 2014, was of Paul Debbie, a security chief at the UN office in Burundi who was accused of making baseless allegations in a UN report that raised the issue of distributing weapons to members of the youth league of the ruling party.

Yet, despite the expulsion of United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)'s head of mission, it was during the three months of recording that national consultations were ongoing towards establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as well as an International Criminal Tribunal for Burundi (Tayeebwa 2014). In August 2009, the first phase of demobilisation, disarmament and rehabilitation (DDR) of up to 23,000 former combatants ended, and a follow-up DDR operation financed by a World Bank (IDA) grant had been approved in June 2009. It was also in 2009 (on 18 April) that in a landmark gesture Agathon Rwasa, leader of the FNL (National Forces of Liberation), a leading opposition group, gave up his AK-47 and military uniform

at a ceremony to mark the beginning of the demobilisation of thousands of former PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People-National Forces of Liberation) combatants. The FNL leader stated that: “My demobilisation officially means the end of the war in Burundi; it is a sign that the country’s peace process is progressing” (Boshoff et. al. 2010: 135).

In such a hyperactive political environment, this chapter seeks to establish from radio broadcasts on “Le Burundi Avance” how various actors framed issues during the three months leading to the end of 2009. In the six radio broadcasts analysed, this chapter answers two main questions:

- i) Based on the stated conceptual framework of this chapter, in what discernible ways did the BINUB (United Nations) agenda for peace on the radio programmes promote the “liberal peace-building” approach as opposed to alternative approaches (Annan 2004; Karbo 2008)?
- ii) Who were the main frame sponsors of peace and/or conflict on the programmes and how are the key actors framed?

## Background

The history of Burundi, which gained independence from Belgium in 1962, has been characterised by what Lemarchand (1994: xii) refers to as an “ethnocide”, defined as “ethnic violence as a mode of discourse and a mode of political action”. Lemarchand, a scholar on the twin-nations of Rwanda and Burundi, has estimated that the cumulative number of people killed in ethnopolitical clashes in Burundi since 1965 could be more than those killed in Rwanda; the latter being a country that has captivated the global community due to the 1994 genocide (Lemarchand 1994, 1996). On his part, Wolpe (2011: 5) observed that: “The human catastrophe that is Burundi is dwarfed in Africa only by its neighbour, Rwanda, which in 1994 saw close to one million of its population systematically murdered.” He adds that for Burundi, the ethnic conflict between Tutsi and Hutu “is at the heart of central African regional instability, producing massive refugee flows, insurgencies, and cross-border violence” (Wolpe op.cit.: 1).

Despite its tormented history, however, Burundi gained credence in the peace-building architecture of Africa when, in December 2007, it contributed a contingent of peace-keeping forces to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). By so doing, Burundi became the second country after Uganda to be mandated by the African Union to help in efforts to stabilise war-ravaged Somalia. Burundi’s involvement in the AMISOM was possible after its landmark acceptance in July 2007 to the East African Community (EAC), alongside Rwanda. The five-member pan-African block also includes Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda with the mandate of promoting economic, socialcultural and political ties between the member countries. In his acceptance speech in Kampala, the Burundian president

Pierre Nkurunziza noted how the EAC would help his country to attain political stability and economic prosperity.

The position of Burundi in the geopolitics of Africa was a result of many arduous efforts over the years to bring various warring parties to a negotiated settlement. Most notable were the initial efforts by the United Nations (1993-1995) following the assassination of the first Burundian elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, in October 1993. More efforts were the negotiations mediated by the then Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere (1996-1999), and later by the then South African president Nelson Mandela (1999-2001). All the above efforts culminated in the Arusha Peace Accords signed in August 2000 (Boshoff et. al. 2010; Wolpe 2011).

At a macro level, however, the efforts towards stabilisation of Burundi started with the deployment in 2003 of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB). At the end of its one-year mandate, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) by Resolution 1545 of May 2004, in order to support and help to implement the efforts undertaken by Burundians to restore lasting peace and bring about national reconciliation as provided under the Arusha Agreement.

ONUB completed its mandate on 31 December 2006 and was succeeded by the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), which was established by Security Council Resolution 1719 of 25 October 2006. The BINUB was set up to consolidate the work of the predecessor ONUB towards sustainable peace and stability.

One of the other key mandates of the BINUB was “to promote and protect women’s rights and ensure gender mainstreaming in keeping with UN Resolution 1325 (2000)” as well as protection of the rights of children and other vulnerable groups.

At the end of 2009 (the period covered by the radio broadcasts analysed for this chapter), the UN Security Council – in view of ensuring international support to the 2010 elections – had, by Resolution 1902 of 17 December 2009, extended the work of BINUB for another year. The UN had also, in the resolution, asked the government of Burundi “to fight corruption and impunity, professionalise and enhance the capacity of the national security services and the police, and broaden the respect and protection of human rights”.

At the time of writing this chapter in 2015, the successor mission of the BINUB, the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) that started work in January 2011 had completed its mandate on 31 December 2014 and transferred its responsibilities to the UN Country Team consisting of agencies, funds and programmes, based on the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

## Conflict-sensitive-journalism and peace building: conceptual frameworks

The overarching concepts used in this chapter to analyse the framing of the issues on the BINUB radio broadcasts are “conflict-sensitive-journalism” and “peace building”. Howard (2009: 12) argues that conflict-sensitive journalism (CSJ) is “rooted in the belief

that the news media in many societies can be a powerful force to reduce the causes of conflict and to enable a conflict-stressed society to better pursue conflict resolution". He further points out that almost world-wide, it is predictable that conflict will arise where:

Resources are scarce and not shared fairly, as in food, housing, jobs or land. There is little or no communication between the two groups. The groups have incorrect ideas and beliefs about each other. Unresolved grievances exist from the past. Power is unevenly distributed (Howard 2004: 6).

In such situations, Howard (2003) argues that journalists have a key role to play by providing reliable information to the public that aims at de-escalating tensions. He thus describes a conflict-sensitive-journalist as one who "applies conflict analysis and searches for new voices and new ideas about the conflict. He or she reports on who is trying to resolve the conflict, looks closely at all sides, and reports on how other conflicts were resolved. A conflict sensitive journalist takes no sides, but is engaged in the search for solutions."

In the 2002 publication *An operational framework on media and peace building*, Howard provides an analytic structure detailing which warning signs and impacts on media can be discerned in the pre-conflict, the overt-conflict and the post-conflict stages. He notes that typically, in the pre-conflict stage, there are many warning signs and impacts on media that include "focused attack-journalism on opponents and moderates signalling emergence of hate speech; sensationalised coverage, focus on violence; absence of consensus-seeking reports". In the overt-conflict stage, there is "takeover of media outlets, suppression of independent news media; high media censorship; targeted media destruction" among many other indicators. In the post-conflict stage, there is usually the "easing of censorship, relaxed control of media; extended reach of media outlets; female journalists accorded prominence". Overall, Howard (2009: 12) argues that while maintaining the essential standards of accuracy, fairness and balance as well as responsible conduct, CSJs must endeavor to "strengthen their reporting to avoid stereotypes and narrow perspectives on the causes and process of conflict". The media ought to "explore and provide information about opportunities for resolution".

Related to CSJ is the concept of "peace building", which Howard (2002: 5) states "means intensifying efforts to establish lasting peace and to resolve conflicts peacefully in societies marked by conflict". He argues that the "overarching goal of peace building is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence, as a means to achieve human security", adding that "always, however, external support for peace building is an adjunct to local peace-building efforts and not a substitute for them". For their part, Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 37) describe peace building as a "complex and extensive process of helping a society recover from collective violence" and thus a key defining characteristic of a post-conflict society. They point out that peace building is "often seen as having four pillars: physical security, socioeconomic development, building political institutions, and reconciliation to build relationships and psychological security". The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and De-

velopment (OECD) observed in a 2001 publication that “peace building is aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence or continuation of violent conflict and therefore encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms”. A good summation of the concept of peace building is by Abu-Nimer (2003: 22) who refers to it as “an umbrella term that includes the full spectrum of conflict resolution and transformation frameworks and approaches including negotiation, conciliation, mediation, facilitation, alternative dispute resolution, problem-solving workshops, education and training, advocacy, and nonviolent resistance”. Writing about the work of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Cilliers et al. (2003: 277) see peace building as a process of changing unjust structures through right relationships and it “transforms the way people, communities, and societies live, heal, and structure their relationships to promote justice and peace” in addition to creating a space in which “mutual trust, respect, and interdependence is fostered”.

Karbo (2008), like Kasaija (2002), points out that the term “peace building” came into wide use following the 1992 report by then UN secretary general Boutros Boutros Ghali entitled “An Agenda for Peace” (Ghali 1992). The report links the concept of peace building to three approaches namely “preventive diplomacy, peace making, and peace keeping”:

*Preventive diplomacy* is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur. *Peacemaking* is action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. *Peace-keeping* is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peace-keeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace.

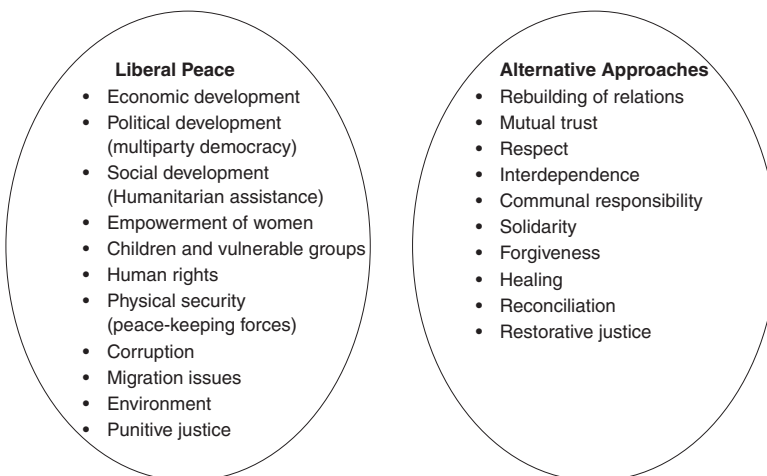
In 1994, the secretary general produced another report, *Agenda for Development*, in which peace was identified as the foundation for development. Both Kasaija (2002) and Karbo (2008) note that in 2004, the United Nations, during the time of Secretary General Kofi Annan, expounded the concept of *Agenda for Development* in which peace building encompassed a wider range of issues such as “economic development, social development, empowerment of women, rights of the child, international migration, environment” (Annan, 2004). The *Agenda for Development* represented the quintessential western-centric “liberal peace” agenda, which Karbo (2008: 115) critiques as presenting “short-sighted approaches to peace building”, arguing that in the context of Africa, peace building should be geared towards “rebuilding of relationships, asserting communal responsibility and solidarity”. In their analysis of African ‘peace-building’ initiatives, Karbo (2008) as well as Francis (2008a and b) and Taylor (2010) note the imposition and wide adoption of the Western liberal peace agenda, which has led to the neglect of indigenous resources

and institutions. Taylor (2010: 157) notes how the liberal peace agenda greatly influences the work of the UN bodies and of intergovernmental organisations, the OECD states and donor agencies, as well as the international financial institutions.

Albert (2008: 32), however, notes that the heavy implantation of conflict resolution approaches that follow a liberal peace agenda are less successful in Africa since traditional mechanisms seem to offer better options of conflict management and post-conflict potential. Taking the case of the African *ubuntu* worldview, for instance, Murithi (2009: 151) notes the differences in approach whereby the liberal philosophy separates aggressor from victims while in the African philosophy a dispute between members of a society is perceived as one involving the whole community. According to that logic, an individual who has been wronged depends on the group to remedy the wrong since, in a way, the group itself has also been wronged. Murithi (op. cit.: 16) notes that the key feature of African indigenous approaches is the insistence on “forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and restorative justice” and provides several examples where African post-conflict and peace-making approaches have been adopted with success (such as the *jir* mediation in Nigeria, the *Xeer, shir and guurti* in Somaliland and *Mato Oput* in Uganda). Murithi (2009) and Albert (2008) advocate for the incorporation and integration of such local approaches into modern ways of managing conflict on the continent.

In this chapter, the conceptualisations of ‘conflict-sensitive-journalism’ and ‘peace building’ as explicated above are used as thematic frames and extrapolated from the UN radio broadcasts. Specific attention is paid to whether themes that emerge from the radio broadcasts subscribe to the liberal peace-building agenda as argued by Karbo (2008).

**Figure 1.** A conceptual framework of “liberal peace building” versus the afrocentric alternative approaches



## Theoretical frameworks – agenda setting, framing and peace-journalism

The institutional imperatives of the BINUB programming model and the research questions posed in this study call to mind reflections drawn from three theoretical frameworks: agenda setting, framing and peace-journalism. The deployment of these theoretical frameworks in this chapter is mainly evaluative, whereby the analysis of the material draws from but also informs the theory.

The stated mission of the BINUB is to promote the agenda of all United Nations agencies in the country towards a common objective of peace-building in all its facets as explicated above (Annan 2004; Ghali 1992). The BINUB radio programmes, therefore, render themselves to the agenda-setting theory, which is the view that the mass media have the capacity and potential to influence public perceptions on any given issue. While most agenda-setting studies have been conducted on the printed media, the gist of the argument remains true for broadcast media. Proponents of the theory argue that the issues the mass media decide to emphasise inevitably take a central place on the public agenda. In so doing though, Berger (1995: 63) points out that those issues not emphasised are consigned “secondary status or, in some cases, relative obscurity”. Another level of agenda setting is what Baran and Davis (2006: 319) refer to as agenda building, which is “a collective process in which media, government, and the citizenry reciprocally influence one another in areas of public policy”. While the original formulation of the theory focused on a one-way process where media gatekeepers played the central role, agenda building acknowledges the role of extra-media factors, particularly the audience, in influencing the media’s agenda. The level of discussion on the concept of agenda setting notwithstanding, the underlying argument remains that the mass media as institutions have the capacity to not only determine the issues that people consider as salient in their lives, but also to influence the perceptions and actions of people on given issues. In this chapter, the issues that the BINUB considers salient for public consumption are highlighted, and the arguments by specialists on those issues (with the aim of soliciting for action) are noted.

Particularly related to agenda setting is the theory of framing. As a matter of fact, some scholars refer to framing theory as second-level-agenda-setting (McCombs et al., 1997). McCombs (et al. 1998: 704) stated that: “The first level of agenda setting is transmission of object salience, the second level of agenda setting is transmission of attributed salience”. In its foundational conceptualisation, however, framing as a theoretical framework was expounded by Entman (1993: 52) who explained it as “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation”. The key features in this conceptualisation are not only the selection process, but more so the intention of the frame sponsors, which is to influence at different levels how an issue is considered for action. For instance in their study to investigate the impact of news frames on readers’

thoughts and on their ability to recall the information presented to them in a story, Valkenburg et al. (1999: 567) observed that “the news media can have the capacity not only to tell the public *what* issues to think about but also *how* to think about them”. From the audience’s viewpoint, Valkenburg, Semetko and Vreese (1999: 551) define a frame as “a schema of interpretations that enables individuals to perceive, organise, and make sense of incoming information”.

This chapter, however, benefits from the conceptualisation of framing as a deductive strategy whereby “a predefined and limited set of frames is invoked and where the empirical aim of the study is to decide to what extent these frames are applied ... and which effects they produce” (Van Gorp 2010: 91). He notes that the various framing devices that can be taken into account include “themes and subthemes, types of actors, actions and settings, lines of reasoning and causal connections ... all of which contribute to the narrative and rhetorical structure of a text”. Other scholars such as Brewer and Kimberly (2010) as well as Nelson and Willey (2001) expounded on the theory of framing by extrapolating and classifying dominant media frames. Brewer and Kimberly (2010: 159) note that “partisan frames”, for instance, are usually constructed and sponsored by actors in a given situation with the intent of moving public opinion in a manner consonant with held positions or preferred policy outcomes. Other frames used by the mass media include “episodic (or anecdotal)”, “thematic (or abstract) frames”, “strategy or game frames” deployed mainly in political manoeuvring, as well as “the substance or issue frame” that is usually presented in the form of policy proposals (op. cit.: 160).

Nelson and Willey (2001: 246), on their part, distinguish between “issue frames, collective action frames, decision frames, news frames, and audience frames”. They point out that “issue frames” are discourse-specific and usually concerned with political discourse, whereas “collective action frames” are often deployed in the study of social movements, social protest, and collective action in general. On the other hand, “decision frames” apply to interpretations made of particular facts, while “news frames” can be classified as exogenous or endogenous. The former are often an outcome of the way the media industry functions at institutional and procedural levels, whereas the latter are mostly imposed internally on the news and are connected with the structural and production elements of news content. Finally, “audience frames” are the “observable outcomes of framing processes as measured by individual perceptions”. In this chapter, some conceptualisations of framing as expounded above are used variously as a deductive strategy on the BINUB broadcasts.

With the hindsight of agenda-setting and framing theories, the philosophy of the BINUB in general, and that of the Le Burundi Avance programme in particular, renders itself to conceptualisations of the peace-journalism paradigm, which is often used interchangeably with CSJ. An explicit link of the theory of agenda-setting and of framing to peace-journalism is expressed by Rukhsana (2010: 336): “Thus it follows that if the agenda of the media is for peace and the framing is done in a manner that aims to promote rapprochement, then it can influence public opinion towards the resolution of conflict”.

In its original formulation, Johan Galtung is credited for having conceptualised how “peace/conflict-oriented” reporting differed from the “war/violence-oriented” strand (Lynch 1998; Lynch and McGoldrick 2005: 6; Shinar 2004: 3, 7). Other scholars have since expounded on the paradigm, with most concurring that it is a genre of journalism that is geared towards deconstructing conflict frames by promoting consensus and common ground (Shinar 2007). For instance, Tehranian (2002: 79-80) defined the genre as “a kind of journalism and media ethics that attempts, as well as possible, to transform conflicts from their violent channels into constructive forms by conceptualising news, empowering the voiceless, and seeking common grounds that unify rather than divide human societies”. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 15), who were among the first adherents of the model and its most prolific proponents, point out that it is about “identifying and predicting patterns of omission and distortion in conflict coverage” inasmuch as it “offers a basis for identifying and rethinking [journalistic] concepts, values and practices alike”. One of the objectives of this chapter is to assess the extent to which the BINUB radio broadcasts promote a peace-building agenda of the UN in Burundi, which prescribes to a peace-journalism paradigm.

### Methodological approach – Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Scholars such as Cavalho (2008: 162) have argued that CDA is the single most authoritative line of research regarding the study of media discourse because it has “set itself the goal of looking beyond texts and taking into account institutional and socio-cultural contexts”. In this regard, this chapter looks at how various interlocutors contest the issues discussed about the selected broadcasts and how that contestation builds into broader sense-making of the post-conflict agenda in Burundi. This kind of analysis is akin to how Fairclough conceptualises CDA as:

... a three dimensional framework where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts; analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption); and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995: 2).

In the same vein as explicated by Fairclough above, Philo (2007: 175) argues that to overcome various constraints with regard to media texts, one “requires a method which analyses processes of production, content, reception and circulation of social meaning simultaneously”. The CDA approach in this study helps not only to examine the explicit meaning in the texts (broadcasts) themselves, but, more so, to pay attention to the institutional frameworks of the BINUB and the Radio Télévision Nationale Burundaise (RTNB), inasmuch as the social-cultural milieu that could have informed the various interlocutors in the broadcasts.

Specifically, the corpus for analysis comprised radio transcripts from *Le Burundi Avance* (Burundi Advancing) programme produced by BINUB for distribution to seven radio stations across the country.<sup>1</sup> The format of *Le Burundi Avance* is a weekly news magazine that, typically, first highlights news from all UN and other multinational agencies working in the country before focusing on one particular issue for detailed discussion by a “guest of the week”. According to Amadou Ousmane, BINUB spokesperson and head of the media and communications section, UN peacekeeping missions run radio stations and/or content production studios in Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan (in Khartoum and Darfur), Haiti and Timor-Leste. The UN mission in Burundi runs two studios that produce radio programmes for the dissemination of information about the work of all UN agencies in the country.<sup>2</sup>

The six programmes analysed for this chapter were recorded as broadcast on the national RTNB. The material obtained from RTNB for analysis covered the three months of October to December 2009, a period of intense activity in the country marking the end of the BINUB mandate, pending extension by the UN Security Council. The six broadcasts, two per month, were purposely selected based on differences in themes, since a couple were re-broadcast. The broadcasts were transcribed in French, but subsequently interpreted in English for the writing of this chapter. A coding sheet was used for each broadcast to capture the issues raised by the programme hosts, the invited guests and any audience members invited to speak on the programme. Based on the transcripts, the dominant frames and the frame sponsors are identified to respond to the research questions posed above. Overall, the entire one-hour broadcast is the unit of analysis. The analysis is based on the various framing devices as expounded in the conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

## Findings and discussion

Ousmane stated that the communication strategy of the BINUB was geared towards “promotion of good governance; to fight corruption and impunity; protection of the rights of children and other vulnerable groups; promotion and protection of women’s rights and ... gender mainstreaming; professionaliz[ing] and enhanc[ing] the capacity of the national security services and the police; and broaden[ing] the respect and protection of human rights”.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis of the BINUB broadcasts mainly follows what Nelson and Willey (2001: 246) refer to as “issue framing” as well as what Brewer and Kimberly (2010: 159-160) refer to as “substance framing”. The extrapolation of the issues from the news magazines followed a deductive approach that Van Gorp (2010: 91) refers to as “themes and sub-themes” as well as “types of actors”. As per the research questions posed above, the main task is to use the conceptual framework of peace building to discern whether the BINUB radio programmes promoted the liberal peace building

approach as opposed to alternative approaches. The analysis also pays attention to who were the main framed sponsors of peace and/or conflict on the programmes and how the key actors are framed.

As per the mandate of the UN mission in Burundi, the 27 weekly news items in the six sampled broadcasts analysed during the three months show that all the topics presented and discussed followed the stated agenda of the BINUB. In all but three news magazines of the 27 (90 per cent), the liberal peace agenda predominates. During the discussion about the condition of albino persons, for instance, the alternative approaches to peace building that valorize community rehabilitation as opposed to psychosocial centres was prominent. The peace-building frames of communal responsibility, rebuilding of relations, communal interdependence, communal solidarity and communal healing are discerned in the 3 October 2009 news magazine about the attacks on albino persons in Burundi. Those same frames, including building mutual trust, respect, communal solidarity, reconciliation, forgiveness and restorative justice could also be discerned in the 3 October 2009 news segment on the demobilisation, reinsertion and reintegration of former FNL child combatants, the 28 November 2009 news segment on the closure of the Dialogue Frameworks project, and the 19 December 2009 [re-broadcast from 18 July 2009] on the national consultations on establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Special Tribunal for Burundi and that of the demobilisation exercise of former FNL combatants.

The theme that predominated the analysed BINUB broadcasts was the demobilisation, reinsertion and reintegration of former FNL child combatants that was a news item on the 3 October 2009, 10 October 2009, 14 November 2009 and 19 December 2009 broadcasts. The financial assistance of 100,000 Burundian francs to be given to each was discussed; the first tranche of payment had been made in July 2009 and the second in November 2009. The sticking issue remained the inflation that depreciated the package, but the recipients were advised to form microfinance associations and invest in money-generating ventures such as animal rearing. During the 10 October 2009 broadcast, the “moralisation” project was discussed. The project, supported by a UN Peace Building Fund worth US\$500,000 had, as its objective, the training of the military and the former FNL combatants constituting Burundi’s new national army (the National Defence Forces (FDN)) and the improvement of relations among themselves and with the general public. In all the instances, the former FNL combatants were framed as courageous, peace makers, responsible citizens and deserving of assistance to resettle in the communities.

The other recurrent theme of the analysed BINUB broadcasts was the events and activities geared towards preparedness for the forthcoming 2010 elections. For instance, the 10 October 2009 programme highlighted the launch of the civic education plan of the Burundian Independent Electoral Commission (CENI in French); the 28 November 2009 news segment focused on the conduct of the mass media during elections; while the 12 December 2009 broadcast focused on views by, for example, the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi on the prevention of electoral

violence. In the 12 December 2009 broadcast, the BINUB highlighted a retreat for women leaders from civil society and the candidates for political offices organised by the NGO American Field Service (AFS) on the theme of “Yes she can” to encourage women to participate massively in electoral politics. In another news item during the 12 December 2009 broadcast, the Netherlands ambassador to Burundi announced 3 million dollars as contribution towards the elections. In all the broadcasts about the 2010 elections, the key themes were about promotion of democracy; inclusivity; avoiding electoral violence and intimidation; consolidation of peace; promotion of national dialogue; pluralism and balance of information; avoiding inflammatory rhetoric; and equal access to media by all political parties and candidates.

The third most recurrent theme during the BINUB broadcasts during the three months was gender empowerment. During the 28 November 2009 broadcast there was a news segment about the launch in Mwaro province of activities relating to the seven-day campaign and activism about violence against women. The theme of the campaign was “Ten years of recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women” and several speakers, notably the executive representative of the UN secretary general in Burundi and the minister of human rights and gender, decried despicable acts such as “rape, domestic violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation, discrimination”. During the 12 December 2009 broadcast, a 3 million dollar project under the Priority Plan for Peacebuilding in Burundi by the UNIFEM (The United Nations Development Fund for Women) on the role of women in consolidating peace through socioeconomic empowerment had been handed to the Ministry of Human Rights and Gender. In the same programme on 12 December 2009, the retreat for women leaders from civil society and also the candidates for political offices that was organised by the NGO American Field Service (AFS) was highlighted – the key message by the deputy executive representative of the secretary general of the United Nations in Burundi was: “Without women, peace and social harmony are inconceivable in a country”. The crucial issue raised was the need for an “inclusive legal framework and civic education for women”.

The national consultations on the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Special Tribunal for Burundi were discussed in two news items on 28 November 2009 and on 19 December 2009 (re-broadcast from 18 July 2009). In both broadcasts, the work of the Tripartite Steering Committee (consisting of the Burundian government, the United Nations and civil society) on the national consultations was highlighted. It was noted that the objectives of the national consultations were the promotion of national reconciliation, maintaining truth and justice, ending impunity and safeguarding human rights.

During the 28 November 2009 broadcast, the closing ceremony of the Dialogue Frameworks project Gitega Grand Seminary was featured. The same project is referred to in the 19 December 2009 (re-broadcast from 18 July 2009) news segment. A noticeable focus of the 28 November 2009 broadcast was the fact that several civil society organisations (notably five political opposition parties) boycotted participation

in the closing ceremony – despite the Dialogue project’s emphasis on the promotion of national dialogue, reconciliation, forgiveness, democratic governance, tolerance and cooperation.

The structural reforms in the judicial sector were also featured in the 28 November and 19 December broadcasts. In all the broadcasts, the main issues were the need for harmonisation of standards for judicial processes and personnel, enforcement of judgements and dealing with the backlog of court cases – all leading to the consolidation of peace.

On 10 October 2009, the BINUB broadcasts included the Congolese refugee crisis within Burundi, the forum on the economic recovery of post-conflict countries held in Bujumbura, and the elections of the executive of the Burundi Union of Journalists. On the 14 November 2009 programme the first news item was the ceremony to mark the international day of food security and the international day against poverty held in Chibitoke province. The second news item, about the international day for disaster reduction, focused on the health sector; the third news item highlighted a church service to mark the tenth anniversary of the assassination of the UNICEF representative in Burundi, Luis Manuel Zuniga, killed – together with several others – in October 1999 by rebels in Mutana; and discussion on a workshop by the BINUB to plan for the activities of the year 2010/2011 and to validate the priorities of the UN mission in Burundi. During the 12 December 2009 programme, the first news items highlighted the ceremony held in the Kabeze commune of Bujumbura rural province to commemorate the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the last item of the day was about the events to mark the international day of anti-corruption.

### *Frame sponsorship*

The frame sponsors of peace were the various representatives of the United Nations agencies in the country – notably the executive and deputy executive representatives of the secretary general and of the Integrated Office of the United Nations in Burundi, the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), the UNICEF (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund), the World Bank, the UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), the Red Cross society and several embassies. On the government side, the ministries and government agencies working on UN-supported programmes were also prominent in the broadcasts. All provincial governors where UN-supported programmes and events took place were given platforms in the BINUB broadcasts. Some civil society groups working on projects supported by the UN and associated agencies were also frame sponsors of messages of peace. In rare instances, such as the 3 October 2009 news item on “attacks on albino persons”, were members of the public given voice on the BINUB news magazine. Evidently, *Le Burundi Avance* programme was the quintessential mouthpiece of the UN’s work in the country.

It is probably unsurprising that there are hardly any frame sponsors of violence discernible in the BINUB broadcasts. In some instances, particularly the programmes

on elections and the demobilisation of former FNL combatants, interlocutors warned against violence but nobody in all the 27 news magazine items espoused ethnic hatred or any other form of violence. In the 3 October 2009 broadcast about the attacks on albinos, several sponsors of violence were identified: traffickers of human organs, traditional healers or witchdoctors in Tanzania, gold-diggers, some law enforcement officers and government functionaries who failed to protect the albinos, who were framed as victims, vulnerable, abnormal, marginalised since birth, persecuted, stigmatised and unhealthy. In the broadcasts about the demobilisation exercise, the implied sponsors of conflict or violence were the demobilised FNL combatants if they failed to follow instructions on re-settlement in the communities. The other implied sponsors of violence were the allegedly armed youth militias if they were not contained during the 2010 elections.

Quite unusually for a programme on a national broadcaster, the president of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, was not quoted verbatim in the broadcasts – not even when he graced two national events. For instance, during the 14 November 2009 news segment about celebrations to mark the international day of food security and the launch of the 2010 agriculture year in Chibitoke province, the president was only paraphrased by BINUB, and yet other officials (including the executive representative of the secretary general and head of the Integrated Office of the United Nations in Burundi, Youssef Mahmoud, were given significant airtime. The same applies to the 28 November 2009 closing ceremony of the Dialogue Frameworks project the president was present but not given voice whereas deputy executive representative of the secretary general of the United Nations in Burundi, Keita Bintu, spoke at length. However, the first vice president of the Republic, Dr Yves Sayingovu, was always heard verbatim at the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international day for disaster reduction. Judging from the backgrounding of the head of state on a national broadcaster, and following the occasional expulsion of UN officials from Burundi, one might infer a conflictual situation between the presidency and the UN mission in the country (Howard 2002: 7-8). Overall, however, it is evident that BINUB broadcasts were excellent platforms that explored and provided information about opportunities for conflict resolution (Howard 2009: 12).

## Conclusion

In light of the conceptualisation of peace building by Howard (2002: 5) as focusing on enhancing “the indigenous capacity of a society” where “external support for peace building is an adjunct to local peace-building efforts and not a substitute for them”, one realises from the analysed BINUB broadcasts that local peace-building efforts and initiatives are hardly the most prominent feature (Figure 1 above). However, the BINUB broadcasts ascribe to the conceptualisation of peace building by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 37) as being those efforts towards “physical security, socioeconomic

development, building political institutions, and reconciliation to build relationships and psychological security". This is similar to that of the OECD (2001: 2) where the focus of peace-building initiatives is on "a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms" and follows what is discernible within the analysed BINUB broadcasts. Listening to the BINUB broadcasts, one can discern that the UN mission in Burundi was indeed doing its best to help Burundians change unjust structures through relationships by creating an environment in which "mutual trust, respect, and interdependence is fostered" (Cilliers et al. 2003: 377).

It is evident from the framing of issues on the 27 news magazine items analysed that the BINUB programming model adheres to the principles of conflict-sensitive-reporting (Du Toit 2012; Howard 2002, 2004, 2009) as well as those of peace journalism (Tehrani 2002; Shinar 2004; McGoldrick 2005). That is the kind of model of journalistic practice that should see conflict-prone countries (such as Burundi has been for decades) transition to a stable nation that aspires to play a more prominent role in the peace-building architecture of the African continent, as is evident from its pronounced role in the AMISOM.

With the hindsight of agenda-setting and framing theories, it is plausible to argue that since the BINUB produced many programmes for diffusion on several radio stations across the country, the Burundian population would progressively valorise the liberal peace agenda (Ghali 1992; OECD 2001; Annan 2004) as opposed to the afro-centric approaches (Albert 2008; Karbo 2008; Francis 2008a and b; Murithi 2009; Taylor 2010). As Berger (1995: 63) warns, issues not emphasised by the mass media are consigned "secondary status or, in some cases, relative obscurity". Given the limited number of voices apart from UN officials and related agencies heard during the BINUB broadcasts, it is not evident that a process of agenda building in which interlocutors influence the media agenda was possible. The analysed BINUB programmes were geared towards highlighting the work of the UN mission and associated agencies in the country – and not any other actors. With respect to framing theory, the nature of the BINUB broadcasts rendered them mostly to what Nelson and Willey (2001: 246) refer to as "issue frames" and Brewer and Kimberly (2010: 159-160) refer to as "substance frames". However, in some broadcasts, such as the 3 October 2009 news segment about the albinos, and that on 28 November 2009 about the campaign and activism on violence against women, the partisan framing is discernible whereby the interlocutors on the broadcasts intended to influence public opinion towards supporting those causes (Brewer and Kimberly 2010: 159).

In the final analysis, it is evident from the BINUB broadcasts that the peace-building model in Burundi followed very closely what was expounded in the Agenda for Development (Annan 2004) that scholars such as Karbo (2008: 115) critique as presenting "short-sighted approaches to peace building". The study of Le Burundi Avance broadcasts lends credence to the claim by African scholars such as Karbo (2008), Francis (2008a and b), Albert (2008), Murithi (2009) and Taylor (2010) that

the liberal peace agenda greatly influences the work of the UN bodies, and of inter-governmental organisations, the OECD states and donor agencies, as well as the international financial institutions in Africa – and pays hardly any attention to alternative afro-centric mechanisms. Although this is not a value-based judgement, it is plausible to argue that, for sustainability capital, UN peace-building initiatives in Africa ought to incorporate as much as possible of the local approaches towards conflict resolution and peace building. From a critical discourse analysis reflection on Burundian society, one finds a repertoire of afrocentric conflict resolution approaches such as the Bashingantahe (council of elders) where, traditionally, feuding parties presented themselves for resolution. The UN peacekeeping and peace-building missions would gain more credibility and acceptance by incorporating such approaches.

## Notes

1. Amadou Ousmane, BINUB spokesperson and Head of Section for Media and Communications. E-mail interview on 05.02.2010.
2. Ibid.
3. See also 'BINUB Background' at <http://bnub.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2963&language=en-US>

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## Women Making News

### *Conflict and Post-Conflict in the Field*

Kristin Skare Orgeret

Wardak is a place where schools for girls are bombed, burned down or forced to close, where individuals ... are considered by some as traitors who deserve to die, where nightly letters are distributed to those who teach girls, to women who dare to work. Where foreigners if they are discovered risk abduction and death. To travel there I have to hide under a burqa. From the moment I put it over my head I am transformed from someone everybody sees, to someone no one notices. None of the rebels care about what appears to be an Afghan woman in the backseat of an old, dented Toyota Corolla (Kristin Solberg 2013 [translated by the author]).

Although journalists work in a globally interconnected world where large amounts of information and social contacts are available on a phone which fits into their jacket pockets, being in the field still matters. The reality on the ground is often very different from what the outside world sees. This is experienced – often in the extreme – by women journalists covering the somewhat muddy fields of conflict and post-conflict situations. Conflict zone reporters face a multitude of dangers unique to their particular form of journalism. It is a powerful illustration that only two journalists died covering the First World War whereas today, a hundred years later, the situation is radically different – the number of journalists killed in wars and conflicts increases every year. The role of the war and conflict zone journalist has changed dramatically in recent years, as they are explicitly targeted by dissenters. During WWII, 1,600 reporters were officially accredited as war correspondents, 127 of whom were women (Linda Steiner, Oslo, 6 October 2015). According to Mark Jenkins (2003), these female correspondents fought a “double” war. “They had to fight red tape condescension, disdain, outright hostility and downright lewdness.” Then, as now, female correspondents ran the same risks as their male counterparts, as well as others unique to women (Whitehorn 2014).

What challenges and opportunities do women journalists face when covering conflict-related issues, either at home or in a foreign country where gender roles may be very different? How do they experience the differences between covering war or open conflict on one hand and post-conflict on the other? These are the questions

with which this chapter engages. Another perspective that has not yet received much academic attention, the role of the body in the journalistic coverage of war and conflict, will also be included in the discussion.

## Methods

The chapter draws on findings from interviews with a number of female reporters from Egypt, Norway, Pakistan, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda who cover wars and conflicts in their home countries and/or internationally. In terms of methods, the chapter presents quotes and excerpts from interviews and dialogue with a selection of reporters. The interviews and talks took place in 2014 and 2015, partly during a conference for female researchers and journalists covering conflict and war in Tunisia in December 2014.

The case study approach has been chosen because it emphasises a detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of phenomena and their relationships. All case study research starts from the same convincing feature: the desire to derive a close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of cases, set in their real-world contexts (Bromley 1986: 1). The closeness aims to produce an invaluable and deep understanding – that is, an insightful appreciation of the “cases” – hopefully resulting in new learning about real-world behaviour and its meaning. The distinctiveness of the case study, therefore, also serves as its abbreviated definition:

An empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (for example, a “case”), set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 2009: 18).

The cases have been selected and studied primarily with an intrinsic interest in each case as such. As they have also been chosen for their diverse natures with differing political, historical and geographical trajectories, they will be studied to find some similarities or differences across different backgrounds or identities.

## (How) does gender matter?

That journalistic practices are always *situated* is emphasised in ethnographic studies (Hannerz 2003). Journalists contribute to the larger world’s experiences of conflicts and crises: from shaping global audiences’ perceptions and knowledge about crises and conflicts to affecting our sense of proximity to the distant other (Chouliaraki 2006). The representation of women in media in times of crises is a highly important topic, not least because traditional female roles are, globally, still considered “private”, as opposed to the more public masculine sphere. That classic public sphere theories need to be reworked to include issues of gender politics, representation and identity

construction has been repeated for more than 20 years (see, for example, Benahbib 1992; Dahlgren 2005). Does the *situatedness* of journalism in the field result in women covering violence and conflict differently from men? And are the challenges they meet of a different nature? Such questions feed into an overarching interest in how women position themselves in the journalistic field, which is also of interest to this chapter.

## Feminist approaches – two central strands and their challenges

Feminism is one of the most powerful struggles for social justice in the world (hooks 2000). The French philosopher Charles Fourier is credited with having coined the word “feminism” in 1837. Today, there are many different variants of feminism associated with a variety of philosophical and political outlooks (Rosser 2005). Many people worldwide practise feminism in the sense of being in favour of equality and professional opportunities for men and women, but without necessarily self-identifying as feminists. Londa Schiebinger (1999) has pointed to the curious fact that feminism is often used to refer to people and policies on the radical cutting edge, whereas when feminist practices or points of view become widely accepted in the culture they are no longer considered feminist but simply “just” or “true”. This chapter will use, as its point of departure, two different main strands central to feminist theories – equality feminism and difference feminism.

*Equality feminism* (or liberal feminism) focuses on the basic similarities between men and women or, rather, considers the individual differences to be larger within the different gender groups than between them. As early as 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft argued that men and women should have equal access to rights because they are both human beings with the capacity to reason. Simone de Beauvoir’s take was that the ultimate goal is the equality of the sexes in all domains (including economic and political equality) and for a worldview in which the basis of human nature outside culture is androgynous, neutral and equal.

*Difference feminism* (or cultural feminism) represents a broad spectrum of feminisms that stress the inherent differences between men and women. This approach recognises bias, for instance, in journalism in general and in war coverage in particular, by emphasising what has been omitted from feminine perspectives – sometimes expressed as “women’s ways of knowing”. It focuses on women’s “natural” kindness, tendencies to nurture, pacifism and concern for others, and hence concludes that women are essentially different from men but equal in value. Difference feminism has been criticised as being essentialist, or suffering from “the disease of thinking in essences” to borrow from Roland Barthes (1957/1972: 75). It is described as a belief in the “real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the ‘whatness’ of a given entity” (Fuss 1990: xi). Diana Fuss, however, problematises the sharp divide between the essentialist and anti-essentialist camps, as she questions the constructionist assumption that nature and fixity go naturally together, as do social-

ity and change. However, for the purpose of clarification the discussion here uses the separation between the two traditions as its starting point.

Feminism has been accused of being a mainly Western product with a tendency to forget the need to focus on multiple forms of oppression, race and gender in particular (e.g. Anzaldúa 1990; hooks 1989). Postcolonial feminism has argued that by using the term “woman” as a universal group, women are only defined by their gender and not by social class, ethnicity or sexual preference (Acker 2006; Hooks 1989, 2000; Narayan 1997). Increasingly, theories of feminism see the need to include a multidimensional approach that also incorporates sexuality and social class. Such an “intersectionality” approach embeds gender processes into specific historical, cultural, and economic/political contexts, emphasising that power structures based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, political orientation, class and so on do not function independently of one another but must be understood together.

### The body in the work of a conflict journalist

Because men and women are embodied differently, these differences will express themselves in differing lived situations. As Lilian N. Ndangam (2008: 215) reminds us, feminist-influenced scholarship has extensively applied the concept of the gaze to show how women’s and men’s bodies have been objectified ever since Laura Mulvey had identified the male gaze in sympathy with Jacques Lacan’s statement that “woman is a symptom of man”. Ndangam refers to Stephen M. Whitehead (2002), who describes how the gaze comes with “a set of moral, social and cultural codes or assumptions that ascribe values on the body and different values to different bodies” (2008: 215). Ndangam stresses how the media is a cultural space where the gaze operates.

Joanna Shearer (2007: 20) has shown how French female wartime journalists (in contrast to the overwhelmingly male national media during the First World War), made physical the women’s lives in the detail of their text and also “attempted to offer women their preferred courses of action instead of allowing the government a totalising rule over women’s bodies”. Often, the female journalists’ own bodies became a subject in their process of journalistic writing. The prime minister of Romania repeatedly asked Second World War correspondents “When is Ann Stringer of the United Press coming back? She has the most beautiful legs in Romania” (quoted in Allan 2005: 45). The sexualisation of women is something many female reporters have had to relate to – throughout history and today.

As Haley Potter (2013) puts it, “in addition to various other workplace inequalities, female journalists must deal with their sexualised images in the media, potentially the most damaging of the gendered disparities”. Potter proceeds to show how the sexualisation of female journalists has been substantiated by media reports of the experiences of the female anchors of US Fox News, and argues that “... the sexism which plagues the field of the journalism industry is a complex and systemic problem

... inextricably related to such deeply ingrained issues as racism, ageism, lookism and homophobia” (2013).

The difference feminism’s belief in the “real, true essence of things” is interesting in relation to the discussion of journalists’ bodies. Diana Fuss (1990: 5-6) describes how for the essentialist, “the body occupies a pure pre-social, pre-discursive space. The body is real, accessible and transparent; it is always there and directly interpretable through the senses”. For the anti-essentialist, as, for instance, the equality feminist or the constructivist, the body is “never simply there, rather, it is composed of a network of effects continually subject to sociopolitical determination. The body is “always already” culturally mapped; it never exists in a pure or uncoded state” (Fuss 1990 : 6). From this perspective it may be argued that because Norwegian foreign correspondent Kristin Solberg’s body is coded as a “(Western) female body” she has to cover it.

At the same time, the Western reporters covering traditional societies with traditional gender roles described how they are seen as both man and woman: “In the Middle East I am seen as something in-between a man and a woman, and that is clearly a professional advantage” (Wold 2015).

This in-between, or neither-nor position, is described by Elisabeth Eide (2015) in an essay about women reporters who, for several hundred years, have fought conventions and barriers and mediated from-below perspectives often about war and conflict:

Through the experience of other places, countries and continents, a travelling woman could sometimes be less of “the other”, but also partly outside because she was neither one of the “local” women nor one of the travelling men.

That this hybrid position may have professional advantages is emphasised by several of the foreign reporters. Kristin Solberg (2014) describes the advantage of being a woman journalist in Afghanistan where the genders live in a particularly segregated way:

I have access to the women in a totally different manner than my male colleagues. This is an enormous possibility and an enormous responsibility as the general representation of Afghan women in Western media is shallow. Women are portrayed as victims or as beneficiaries of Western support, women are never presented as heroes, never presented as someone responsible for their own lives. We are so prone to name these women as victims.

Solberg works to challenge such shallow representation through her own reporting. Several of the other reporters also stress that it is seen as a huge professional benefit to have potential access to 100 per cent of the population. They emphasise the good reasons for having a female voice from the troubled zones, and all agree that this leads to a different way of reporting.

Of course there is a difference between how I as a woman approach conflict and how a man would do it. When I am in the field with my male colleagues, the only things they can think of is when the next battle is going to take place, what military

equipment is used, how the war is funded and so on. I'm not saying that as a female I am not looking at these prospects, but I think the most important is the human part. Those are the stories that touch people and with which they can relate. And as a woman I feel that the emotional parts are the ones I understand the most. I am not going to count the dead, but I will talk to the woman who has been raped or hurt (Among 2015).

All the women reporters voiced here agree that women cover war and conflict differently from men. When it comes to whether this is because of their biological sex (which would be an echo of difference feminism) or because the geopolitics and contextual features provide them with a role different from men's (more in line with equality feminism) it is not obvious that all the reporters voiced here would agree. Some underlined that they have sensitive male colleagues and they also have female colleagues who are "adrenaline junkies". Some argued that they never saw themselves as a "woman journalist", but also thought that there are stories they produce that they could not have done if they had not been a woman.

What is important is that women journalists venture into the field and cover war and conflict. The discussions here are proof of a multitude of good reasons for having female voices covering different phases of conflict and transition, echoing Katharine Whitehorn (2014): "We must be grateful for getting a view on troubled times that is not dictated only by men and the military."

## The woman journalist in conflict fields

Conflicts are processes, and it is not always easy to define whether a society is in a state of "conflict" or "post-conflict" as some societies move between conflicts and periods of reconstruction and back again, and both processes may take place simultaneously. Typical, in many conflict/post-conflict situations, is that the security situation may change abruptly and make it difficult for the reporters to anticipate where violence could break out. Several of the interviewees stressed that all conflict situations are different. The Syrian war was referred to as a particularly difficult situation to cover journalistically. Some argued that they would be quite all right in a war zone with clear lines, but that the first post-conflict period – what Armstrong and Shura-Beaver (2010) refer to as the "transition phase" and describe as "inherently complex, and may include multiple, smaller-scale transitions that occur simultaneously or sequentially" – is challenging, as "the lines and rules are dubious" (Among 2015). The transition phase may also be challenging in terms of getting access to female sources, as although women may have played an important role in the real struggle they are often marginalised in the transition phase and within the ultimate political settlement (Azikiwe 2010; Castillejo 2011 and 2013; and the following chapter of this book).

When Norwegian correspondent Sidsel Wold shares her experiences of covering conflict and unstable post-conflict zones as a female reporter, she emphasises that

some challenges are the same whether you are a man or a woman, whereas some are different (Oslo, 2015). Common to all is that you need colleagues you can trust.

In conflict you need good people around you. I believe there is a special place in hell for colleagues who don't help each other in wars, with cables for cameras and computers or other things.

If you are a woman, don't complain! There might be very little food and water, there are no ladies room in a war zone. If you get your period – bad luck. War is war. There is no special treatment of female reporters (Wold, Oslo, 2015).

Experiences from the field show that women reporters are not treated radically differently from men in war and conflict zones, and there are few signs of media houses which discriminate on the basis of gender when deciding to whom assignments covering conflicts will be given. Nevertheless, there are some examples of news institutions expecting women to look “ladylike” and beautiful even when covering conflict zones. The South African public broadcaster SABC's reporter Renée Horne was 28 years old when she left for Baghdad to cover the Iraqi war. She received a lot of attention for her professional and thorough war coverage, but was also told to fix her hair:

... they told me to comb my hair. Yes! My bosses had this whole issue and apparently in the meetings here they had a topic discussion about my hair, that I looked a mess and everything else. And, well, if you see the tapes my hair did look a mess ... They did tell me that I was doing great, but – “Please for God's sake put a comb through your hair.” I was so out of it, so tired – “What do you expect, there is no water in this place. I have bottled water. Do you want me to tell my cameraman that I need all the water for my hair? Really, we do not know how long this war is going to last” (quoted in Orgeret 2006).

In the 2014 publication *No Woman's Land – On the Frontlines with Female Reporters*, the International News Safety Institute (INSI) brings together a selection of suggestions for women reporters covering war and conflict. They highlight that journalists must ensure they are well-prepared to understand and mitigate the risks they may face in the course of their work in conflict and post-conflict situations. INSI safety trainer and consultant Caroline Neil puts it this way: “If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail” (INSI 2014). Sidsel Wold (Oslo, October 2015) agrees, and describes how she puts considerable effort into how she dresses, and how this includes dressing differently from one country in the Middle East to another. In any case, wherever she is, she does not much like the bulletproof vest:

First of all it looks a bit stupid. It also sends signals to ordinary people who would not have bulletproof vests that this is a very dangerous place to be. It is also difficult to run with a bulletproof vest. I prefer to wear good running shoes and no vest.

Wold's favourite item of clothing when she works in the field covering unstable situations is the scarf:

The scarf is everything! I cover my head with it if I need to go into a mosque or meet some very religious people. It shields against the sun and it may keep me warm in cold evenings. It is a perfect small tent and protects the microphone from wind so I sometimes use it as my radio studio. It protects against sand or teargas. It is indispensable if you or your cameraman get hurt and you need to stop a bleeding.

Preparing to cover outright conflict or more subtle post-conflict situations includes considering whether reporting a story might compromise the journalist's safety. According to Sidsel Wold, in conflict situations only luck lies between being very brave or being very stupid. At times, the only way to be safe in conflict or post-conflict situations, or in the irresolute field that sometimes separates them, is to decide not to do the story. It may be difficult for an eager and dedicated journalist to turn down the possibility of coverage, but sometimes this is the only solution. Several of the interviewees with considerable experience in conflict zones described the trying situation when you have to turn a story down, and how such a decision may manifest itself as an outright bodily expression. Kristin Solberg describes how her body reacted against going into war-torn Syria in 2014.

I decided to go in with a group of NGO workers from Lebanon where the frontier was still open. However, I had such a bad gut feeling and every night I dreamed that I was being killed. It was a difficult decision to make. I am a Middle East correspondent and I had not been inside Syria for one and a half years. It felt wrong. I felt the need to go into Syria to report with some sort of authority. A correspondent friend from Denmark went and all was fine with her, but there were a lot who went and were not fine at all. I finally decided not to go in with mixed feelings. When I gave in and said no, my body relaxed immediately and I slept for the first night in a long time (roundtable, Tunis, December 2014).

For women journalists, an awareness of cultural norms and practices is particularly important. A current challenge is how the contacts and sources in the field may perceive you as a journalist and as a woman. Reporters who had covered conflict areas in conservative cultures told about the need to develop a situational awareness; some types of conversation would be considered inappropriate and eye contact would be considered to be flirting. The reporters described techniques such as carrying two business cards, one with real details another with a mock e-mail and the phone number to the desk – and the unmarried women wore fake wedding rings.

Kristin Solberg described the experiences of being a woman reporter in Pakistan:

I blame the Hollywood films; around the world there are many men who believe that all Western women are willing. It is difficult to get in touch with male sources when you cannot give them your number. I changed my reporting style the hard way –nobody told me about it in advance. Lower your eyes, don't smile during interviews. Never give away your phone number (round table conversation, Tunis, 2014).

Chatellier and Fayyaz (2012) studied women's roles in post-conflict reconstruction in Pakistan, a country where the post-conflict label only suits parts of the country. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), including the Swat region, is defined as post-conflict although, as Nyborg et al. (2012) remind us, "not a conventional post war context. The KP has nevertheless experienced a military operation and remains a conflict ridden region, making the challenges of development in this area somewhat similar to areas trying to recover from war". Violence and conflict are also felt in the rest of the country – in 2011 alone more than 7,000 Pakistanis were killed and around 6,700 were injured in terrorist attacks, operations by security forces against militants, ethnopolitical violence, drone strikes, and intertribal and cross-border clashes (Chatellier and Fayyaz 2012). This makes Pakistan a highly challenging area for reporters. Malevolent crowd scenes are often described as an especially difficult feature for female reporters (Wolfe 2011). Staying safe when working in crowds has been a significant challenge for many of the journalists covering the Arab uprisings. Even in her own country (or perhaps especially in her own country) a female journalist is not safe. The first global survey of security risks for women journalists was launched in March 2014 and shows that 95 per cent of all journalists killed are from the country in which they are killed (IWWMF and INSI 2014). For women the number is even higher.

### The threatened female body

Senior journalist and talk show host Quatrina Hosain, who has worked for a number of Pakistani and international publications, touched everybody at a conference for female researchers and journalists covering conflict and war in Tunisia in December 2014, sharing her strong story of the psychological effects of abuse and harassment, and how she had refused to become a victim. Hosain was brutally attacked when giving a piece to camera at Ghulam Sarwar's election rally in Wah Cantt, Pakistan, in May 2013. The incident can be seen as part of the growing incidence of violence against journalists in Pakistan (see Hussain 2014). A mob of around 30 men surrounded Hosain and got her away from her camera team. The mob violently assaulted her for what she felt was an eternity, but probably lasted ten minutes at the most. Hosain explained how the thought of staying on her feet remained a mantra for her while the male mob surrounding her in a tight circle pushed her, dragged her, insulted her and aggressively groped her everywhere.

One tried without stopping to tear my shirt off. Somehow in all the chaos all I could think of was I must not fall. I said to myself over and over again, I must stay on my feet, I must stay on my feet, if I fall it is the end (Round table conversation, Tunis, December 2014).

Hosain was finally saved by her colleagues and escaped in a car. One of her team members had been hit on the head and a cameraman's camera was confiscated. When

she eventually reached her home, Hosain discovered that her body was bruised and discoloured all over. Zahid Hussain emphasises that Quatrina Hosain was targeted for her independent views as part of a growing intolerance towards freedom of expression (Hussain 2014). Quatrina Hosain showed great bravery in the way she stood up after the assault and stated that she would show the footage, unedited, on her show the next night. However, as she told the group of other female journalists in Tunis, the terrible attack had left traces, not only on her body but also psychologically, and for a long time she thought she would never be able to return to journalism (Hosain, round table conversation, Tunis, December 2014).

These violent terrorising forces are so dark and extremely powerful in the way they continue to instil fear and horror, and try to victimise you long after the actual assault took place. Some of that dread I will have to continue to fight for ever.

All the women reporters interviewed in this chapter agreed that there is a need to fight the victimisation of women, in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as when the journalist herself is attacked while she is at work in the field. Talking about assaults and harassment is not easy. Jenny Nordberg, a New York-based Swedish correspondent, was sexually assaulted by a group of men during a chaotic procession in Karachi, Pakistan when covering the return of Benazir Bhutto in 2007. For several years she did not want to talk about it, until she finally did so when the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) undertook a survey four years later. This is what she explained:

It's embarrassing and you feel like an idiot saying anything, especially when you are reporting on much, much greater horrors ... But it still stays with you. I did not tell the editors for fear of losing assignments. That was definitely part of it. And I just did not want them to think of me as a girl. Especially when I am trying to be equal to, and better than, the boys. I may have told a female editor though, had I had one (CPJ 2011).

As a result of forceful cultural and professional stigmas, very few cases of sexual assault against journalists have ever been recorded. The fear of being considered "a girl" and less capable than male colleagues was a feeling shared by several of the interviewed women reporters in the first phases of their careers. For some, this phase included an awareness of having to prove oneself, and to deliberately avoid topics that might be considered "soft", rejecting any allusions to female journalists being more caring or kind by nature such as is proposed by difference feminism.

From my experience, you have to prove yourself as a hard and tough "male" correspondent first. And then you can go from there to broader topics, including "female" perspectives (Reema Abbasi, Pakistan, round table conversation, Tunis, December 2014).

I also had to prove my courage first, and then I could go on covering more "women's issues" too, such as in the hospital. In Afghanistan I worked a lot with such issues. I remember a conversation with my driver, where he said that after he married

his wife's family would ask him: why do you let your wife work? There is a lot of pressure on men too. (Kristin Solberg, Norway, , round table conversation, Tunis, December 2014).

The Ugandan award-winning journalist Barbara Among has covered many of the processes, from open conflicts to volatile post-conflict situations, in her own country, as well as in neighbouring South Sudan, and agrees that you have to prove yourself more when you are a woman.

Yes you have to. I have to convince my editors and I have to work extra hard. There is always more danger for a female than for a male in these unstable post-conflict situations, and you have to persuade your editors that you can cope. In Uganda, most of them are men, but I have had some female editors as well. And you have to convince those female editors as hard as you have to convince male editors. The women are often more scared than the male editors to send you out on missions (Barbara Among, interview, Kampala, February 2015).

In all periods of transition there is prevailing tension and a very real possibility that matters could get worse before they improve. The state is often unstable and at high risk of relapse into violence, conflict is imminent and changes may occur quickly, involving particular security threats for women. The IWFM and INSI report interviewed nearly a thousand female media workers from around the world and found that nearly two-thirds of the respondents had experienced some form of intimidation, threats or abuse in relation to work, ranging in severity from name-calling to death threats. An increasing tendency are online threats and abuse.

## Online gender harassment

Research on violence and the harassment of women in the news media shows that more than 25 per cent happens in an online environment (IWFM and INSI 2014). Studies also show that female journalists experience approximately three times as many abusive comments on Twitter than their male counterparts. For some female journalists, online threats of rape and sexual violence have become part of everyday life; others experience severe sexual harassment and intimidation (Mijatović 2015). The female journalists attending the round table discussions during the conference in Tunisia in 2014 described increasing pressure from their leaders to be “visible and active” on social media platforms at all times. They saw this as a double-edged sword – on the one hand it represents an effective way of reaching out directly to your audience and promoting your stories, but it is also problematic, as a lot of harassments happen through these channels.

Sidsel Wold covered the Middle East for the Norwegian public service broadcaster NRK from 2007 to 2011. During the summer of 2014 she covered the Gaza war. She worked at least 14 hours a day and in addition received several hate messages for be-

ing too biased and Palestine-friendly. A Facebook page entitled “We demand Sidsel Wold removed!” spread numerous hateful comments.

My male colleagues receive hate mails too, but I am more exposed. Almost all of the very hateful messages are written by men. Men who hate women. This [Israel-Palestine] conflict is very particular. It is a mixture of politics and religion and that makes some people very very angry (Wold, round table conversation, Tunis, 2014).

Wold’s statement echoes the words of the OSCE representative on freedom of the media, who describes how female journalists “mostly report on crime, politics and sensitive – and sometimes painful – issues, including taboos and dogmas in our societies”. She continues to stress how “these online attacks tend to degrade the journalist as a woman, rather than address the content of the articles” (Mijatović 2015). Wold described how the hate attacks are very difficult to receive when you are in the middle of a conflict zone and do not have your usual network around you. “You start to question yourself. What am I doing. Am I insane?” (Wold 2014). She decided to talk openly about the harassment and hatred – and when she was back in Norway she exposed some of the vile messages on social media, even calling some of the people who had insulted her and asking: “Why do you hate me so much?”.

People are afraid to talk about harassment – it’s a stigma. It is like having a very terrible disease. However, I also experienced that being open about it made me stronger. After the newspapers wrote about the harassment people also started to tell me that I’m doing a good job and I received a lot of support (Wold, round table conversation, Tunis, 2014).

This chapter argues that female journalists can safety serve as an indicator of democratic development, freedom of expression, civil rights and media freedom in general. If journalists are threatened and attacked, as were Hosain and Solberg, the broader societal effects are grim – coverage gaps will enlarge as a culture of self-censorship grows within media and society.

## The invisible conflicts

Experiences from countries where the security situation is problematic show that some aspects of society tend to be very little covered. For instance, during the war in Afghanistan it was 200 times more likely for an Afghan woman to die of pregnancy or while giving birth, than from a bomb or a bullet, but this received little attention in the journalistic reports from the war. In their acclaimed book *Half the Sky...* (2009), Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas D. Kristof state that “the paramount moral challenge” of our present era is the oppression of women. The writers’ call to action was a report from China stating that every year 40,000 baby girls die during their first year of life because they do not receive the same health care as Chinese baby boys. More Chinese

baby girls die unnecessarily every week than the total number of victims during the 1989 massacres in Tiananmen Square. The whole world reacted to the latter whereas few people are even aware of the former. The oppression of women and girls throughout the world is one of our time's most pervasive human rights violations, but is very often ignored in mainstream news reports.

The female reporters given voice in this chapter were all highly concerned about such invisible conflicts and questioned how the more immediate disasters often take over for the underlying disasters in conflict reporting. The need to go beyond the immediate was stressed, and also the fact that audiences are more likely to be interested in such stories. The reporters stressed how the victims of conflict are not only those killed: they are also the mothers who could not get to the clinic; they are also the unborn child and the long-term consequences of conflicts – the orphan who will not get education, support or love.

As conflict reporters we have to look beyond the immediate consequences of conflict. Domestic violence is often higher in conflict. There is a need for journalists being sensitive to these issues, to look for those concealed angles (Among 2015)

## Summing up

Women are important in the fields of conflict and post-conflict, to ensure that the broadest range of stories and destinies is covered. Gender perspectives are important in order to achieve transparency and a wider image of global conflicts and post-conflict situations, and to provide the information necessary to shape public opinion and government policy. The findings from the interviews and talks included here deal with different meanings and roles and the effects of the individual journalist's individuality, professionalism and security. Gender matters simultaneously across all of them.

Providing hard evidence that women “essentially” act differently as reporters and editors has turned out to be rather difficult (Allan 2005: 47). However – as the experiences from the cases interviewed here indicate – because women's lives in many cultures are different to those of men and in many societies they are more involved with home and family, women tend to approach conflict and post-conflict from other angles, making space for other topics and other voices. In addition, women reporters have a much easier task when it comes to getting close to female sources in traditional societies.

Female reporters are more vulnerable to other kinds of risk in conflict and war zones. Several of the journalists told that there are a lot of “testosterone men” with guns in these situations. When women journalists get older and, perhaps, have a family, they often drop out of reporting from phases of conflict, which means that many of the female reporters are young and rather inexperienced, and need to be cautiously followed up by their organisations. At the same time, the journalists included in this chapter found that security training for journalists is very often highly “masculine” and often organised by former specialist forces.

There is a need to acknowledge the particular safety challenges female reporters face in conflict zones, some of which have been discussed here, as well as to recognise that female conflict reporters may need to prepare and act differently and get a different kind of support when covering wars and conflicts. In other words, to borrow from Gayatri Spivak (1988), there would seem to be a need for some sort of “strategic essentialism”.

This strategic approach includes the realisation that – although great differences may exist between members of the broad group of “women journalists” and although the profession should be much more defining than the gender – it may sometimes be advantageous for female reporters to temporarily “essentialise” themselves and to bring forward their group identity in a simplified way, the goal being to achieve more awareness of, and support for dealing with, the challenges they face. It is imperative that journalism education and training programmes include gender perspectives in their safety and security training for journalists covering wars and conflicts.

This chapter has shown how female journalists’ conditions of employment, including aspects of safety, can serve as a pointer to democratic development, freedom of expression, civil rights and media freedom in general. Including the role of the body in the journalistic coverage of war and conflict allows for some interesting perspectives and reveals some of the challenges and possibilities women reporters carry with them in the fields of conflicts.

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Interviews/conversations with female journalists from Egypt, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda in 2014 and 2015.



## Experiences of Female Journalists in Post-Conflict Nepal

Samiksha Koirala

Women journalists today have become very active in the coverage of wars around the world. As the previous chapter has shown, there is an ongoing theoretical debate about whether women cover conflict and wars differently from men. It is often argued that women focus more on human suffering and less on the conventional “macho” aspects of war reporting which are often limited to body counts, weapons and armies (Chamber et al. 2005: 214; Jacobson 2013). But what happens after the war is over? Some feminist scholars have averred that the post-war period is just one more phase in an ongoing “war on women” (Jacobson 2013: 238).

Although there has been substantial discussion about women journalists in war situations, less has been discussed in relation to post-war situations. When the Maoist war was over in Nepal, there was enormous hope for sociopolitical transformation in the country. This chapter is concerned with how women journalists experience these transformations. To what extent did the hope of an equal society materialise? How did the situation change after the conflict? The chapter will provide an overview through a case study based on qualitative in-depth interviews, conducted in February-March 2015, with two leading Nepalese journalists, Babita Basnet and Maina Dhital. I met with Basnet and Dhital in preparatory meetings where I shared with them the purpose of the interviews and what I wanted to focus on. Both interviewees preferred the interview to take place outside their newspaper offices, so that there would be no rush and they would be able to speak freely. The interview with Basnet took place in her office of the Media Advocacy Group (MAG) in Kupondol, Kathmandu. The interview with Maina Dhital was conducted in a meeting room at Sancharika Samuha, in Kunpondole, Kathmandu. Both interviewees have agreed that the excerpts from the interviews may be published.

## Background of the armed conflict

According to the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)-Maoist,<sup>1</sup> they launched the war (popularly termed as the “people’s war” by the Maoists) in 1996 with two main objectives: to uplift the socioeconomic status of people at the grassroots level, and to replace the monarchy with a new democratic republic system (new democracy), as stated in their official website (ucpnmaoist.org). However, this “revolution against the elites”, as the Maoists named it, did not leave the lives of people untouched. Thousands lost their lives and many others were displaced, abducted and tortured by the Maoist rebels as well as by the then Royal Nepalese Army. Several constitutional rights were also curtailed, affecting the lives of Nepali citizens.

After the royal coup in 2005, the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoist party signed the Comprehensive Peace Accord<sup>2</sup> in November 2006, ending the decade-long armed conflict. Both parties agreed to write a new constitution and integrate Maoist combatants into the national army. The war had lasted for more than ten years, had claimed 13,000 lives and displaced more than 100,000 people (OHCR 2012: 3).

The Constituent Assembly election was held on 10 April 2008, but the process of drafting the constitution is still in limbo in 2015, in the absence of political consensus.

## Nepali media before conflict

The Nepali media underwent a remarkable transformation after the political change of 1990. The restoration of democracy and the subsequent promulgation of a new democratic constitution with clear provisions for press freedom resulted in the mushrooming of print and electronic media. With a growing number of media outlets after 1990, the number of women journalists increased (Bhattarai 2013).

The political circumstances made it easier for women to enter the profession. According to a survey conducted by Asmita Publication House, women journalists comprised 12.3 per cent of total journalists in 1993 though it is important to note that the survey was limited to the study of state-owned media.

Although the participation of women was noticed, it was mostly men who made the editorial decisions. Pratyoush Onta states that women journalists seldom had a say in the editorial or managerial aspect of media publication post-1990 (2006: 174). Women were still greatly outnumbered, but there was a positive wave rocking the media industry in those years. The situation deteriorated in 1996, when the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)-Maoist, launched the “people’s war”.

## How the conflict affected the journalists' working conditions and press freedom

Throughout the insurgency, freedom of speech was restricted and many journalists faced threats and abduction. They were caught between government security agencies harassing journalists suspected of being close to the Maoists, and Maoists targeting journalists suspected of being informants (Bhattarai and Mainali 2014: 25). They were met with suspicion on both sides, and this made it hard to manoeuvre.

The civil war was a bleak period with high censorship and suppression (Ghimire and Upreti 2014: 191). Records suggest that the government force killed ten and the Maoists killed five individuals doing journalism-related work (cameraperson, administrative staff of media house), and a further 11 were abducted – seven by the government forces and four by the Maoists (Bhattarai and Mainali 2014: 25).

During the direct rule of King Gyanendra in 2005, Nepali media suffered strict censorship and around 2,000 journalists were out of work (IRIN 2006). After the royal takeover, the government even sent soldiers to media organisations to monitor news content and forced independent radio stations to take news broadcasts off the air (Bhattarai and Mainali 2014:25). In 2005, Nepal alone was responsible for more than half of all cases of censorship worldwide. Reporters Without Borders counted 567 instances, while 145 journalists were physically attacked or harassed (Reporters Without Borders 2006: 71). Statistics from organisations such as Sancharika Samuha suggest that the number of women journalists leaving the profession was high during the royal coup (Rana et al. 2005). The report cited reasons such as insecurity and family pressure. Some of the journalists were also forced to leave their jobs because the organisations they were working with were shut down.

## More women guerillas, but few women journalists

Despite the popular discourse of women being naturally inclined toward peacemaking, there are a number of cases where they have defied such stereotypes and assumed active roles in war (Eliatamby 2011: 37). This was the case during the armed conflict of Nepal, where most women in rural areas were directly involved in the conflict zone, either as negotiators or as party cadres and guerrillas (Gautam et al. 2006: 99).

The high level of female participation has been one of the most reported aspects of the “people’s war”. Some observers estimate that up to 40 per cent of combatants and civilian political supporters were women (Pettigrew and Shneiderman 2004: 1), although this has been contested as the final figures by UNMIN (United Nations Mission in Nepal) showed a much lower female participation among People’s Liberation Army (PLA) combatants. According to their research, women combatants comprised 20 per cent of the total force, still a significant number.

In 2004, the participation of women in the media during the same period was estimated at a mere 5.33 per cent of the total (Parajuli and Gautam 2008), and although the news of women combatants was a priority, there were few women journalists to report these stories. Women journalists were marginalised. Parajuli and Gautam's 2008 survey cited conflict and lack of press freedom as the major obstacles for women journalists to enter the field – not a fully satisfactory explanation, but little has been studied about women journalists in relation to the conflict.

A number of researchers studying post-conflict societies have argued that men and women experience conflicts in different ways. Women often take over nontraditional roles brought on by the changes and transformations during the conflicts that render them as both victims and actors (UNDP 2010: 11). In contrast to the labelling of women as victims, some feminists have described conflicts as an opportunity for women's empowerment, because gender roles are more in flux and amenable to change (Baines 2005: 8), and wars lead the way for women to enter occupations traditionally held by men.

The two world wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 not only provided opportunities for women to enter journalism but also, for a few of them, to advance their careers by entering the field of "serious" news, including war reporting (Chambers et al. 2005: 7). Researchers (Tamang 2009; Manchanda 2010) argue that the Nepalese revolution had a similar effect, enhancing gender equality in the public sphere, including the media. During the conflict, the women of rural Nepal took over the roles of men, ploughing fields and constructing roads (Thapa 2007: 211). It was also during the conflict that Maoists introduced their own quasi-judicial body to give equal shares of parental property to daughters and wives (Thapa 2007: 2010).

One of the most positive aspects of the conflict was the increased representation (through a quota system) of women in the Constituent Assembly. As soon as the conflict was over, the Nepal Citizenship Act 25 of 2006 was passed, enabling children to claim citizenship through their mothers. The Gender Equality Act of 2006 gave women equal parental property rights. The law also criminalised domestic and sexual violence.

While there has not been any comprehensive research on the status of women in Nepalese media (Ekantipur 2014), some brief studies conducted by different organisations suggest that participation has been increasing in the last few years.

### Change in the number but not in the status

The post-conflict period has once again brought in a positive wave of hope and optimism for a stable political environment similar to the one in the early 1990s. It encouraged more private investment including the investment in media (Koirala 2009: 12). Since the conflict ended, Nepal has seen the birth of two major broadsheet dailies – *Nagarik* and *Republica* – along with the establishment of four new television stations and dozens of radio stations across the country. The newly established media

houses are providing job opportunities to newly qualified journalists, and the majority of these graduates are women.

In 2013 – if membership of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), the umbrella organisation of Nepali journalists, is to be taken as a measure – 1,613 out of 10,077 members across the country (16 per cent) were women (FNJ 2013). During the same period, the number of women journalists who received press accreditation from the Department of Information (DOI) was only 7.5 per cent. DOI requires an appointment letter stating that the salary received by the journalist is not less than the basic wage determined by the government. This suggests that most of the women are working without a letter of appointment, or a basic salary, or both.

Statistics on women working in Kathmandu-based media organisations show a positive trend. A survey done by Sancharika Samuha in 2005 stated that the participation of women was 12 per cent. Seven years later, in 2012, a survey conducted by the same organisation showed the number of women journalists had soared to 24 per cent. A number of studies from nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) indicate that women's position in terms of media representation, policy making and decision making has improved somewhat (Steyn 2010: 279).

A study conducted by Sancharika (2012) in Kathmandu found that 17 per cent of journalists in the decision-making process were women. The survey further mentions that men dominated the political and business news beats, whereas women's participation was higher in news about education, health and entertainment. There is little agreement among women themselves about whether the rise in the number of women journalists has made a difference to news values and media content – but it has been argued that women have transformed the newsroom culture by widening the definition of news (Chambers et al. 2005: 10).

## Discrimination and patterns of inequality

According to the study of Sancharika in 2012, 30 per cent of women journalists working in the capital said they felt discriminated against in the workplace. Similarly, a study conducted by the South Asia Media Freedom and Solidarity Project (SAMSN 2014) concluded that although women journalists in Nepal have become more visible in the media workforce over the past decade, they still suffer from many gender-related problems. The primary concerns in the survey centered on recruitment, work assignments, promotion, the impact of the contract system, and growing job insecurity. In unstable situations like this, women are opting for more secure jobs in government and international agencies.

The study also showed a need for greater gender sensitivity in workplaces and that sexual harassment needs to be addressed (SAMSN 2014: 3), and it further revealed that women journalists are often denied fair wages on the pretext that they are single and do not need to support a family (2014: 14). According to the report, only five or six media organisations pay their staff a monthly salary and women journalists are likely to suffer

more, as many have no alternative means of income. Most of the male journalists work part-time as, for example, translators, teachers and researchers, but female journalists – like the majority of the women in Nepal – are expected to fulfill household responsibilities, and to combine additional work with family responsibilities is rarely possible.

It has been argued that, overall, the post-conflict period improved gender equality in the Nepali public sphere. For example, the Constituent Assembly election of 2008 ushered in a new wave of women leaders. Altogether 197 women out of 601 members (32.78 per cent) were elected to the the Constituent Assembly and the Legislature Parliament (IDEA 2011: 61). The media industry has something to strive for here. There is a disproportionate number of men in decision-making roles within the unions and media organisations in Nepal. One quite disappointing example is the number of women decision makers in a government body like the Nepal Press Council. In 2015, there is not a single female representative on the Press Council Board.

## Case studies

The stories of Babita Basnet and Maina Dhital highlight gender issues and describe their experiences during and after the conflict. Other important issues are sex stereotyping in the workplace, and changes in post-conflict newsroom culture.

The two female journalists were selected for their active involvement in the profession during conflict and post-conflict. Although both come from a similar sociocultural background, they represent two separate generations and their experiences also differ because they are affiliated to different kind of media organisations. Maina Dhital's experiences can be related to those of young single women. Babita Basnet is one of the few women decision makers in Nepali media. She is also married and faces the challenge of maintaining a family life while being an active working journalist. Maina Dhital's story illustrates the experience of a Kathmandu-based female news reporter affiliated to big media houses, whereas Babita is representative of female journalists across the country who are also activists. Many of the female journalists in Nepal, particularly those in small media houses, carry stories on women's rights and gender inequality, irrespective of the news beats to which they are assigned.

### *Case study 1 – Babita Basnet*

Babita Basnet was stunned when she received a call from the Nepal Army inquiring about one of her recently published articles. It was the year 2003, and most journalists were practising self-censorship. As the editor of the weekly *Ghatana Ra Bichar*, Babita Basnet, however, was not one of them. She was interrogated about her story on the sacking of the king's military secretary. She was strictly warned about reporting inside stories on the military and was pressed to disclose her news source. Even after the interrogation she continued to receive telephone threats.

Some years before this incident, Basnet had found herself in another unwelcome situation. It was 1997. The effects of the conflict were visible as there were few people on the streets, which were patrolled by the police. She was on her way home after a normal day at work, riding her scooter. Suddenly, two men on a motorbike approached. Unaware of their intentions, she rode on. One of the men snatched the shawl she was wearing. She fell on the road but was not seriously injured. She heard the men's laughter as they passed by. After this she thought she would stop travelling late at night, but with a job of a reporter this was definitely not possible. She recalls that she only had two choices then – to quit or to stay in the profession, becoming stronger. She chose to stay.

Babita Basnet was born in a remote village in 1971. Her early ambitions were ordinary. Whereas many of her friends had to struggle for school education, Basnet was lucky to have parents who sent her from the Khotang district to Kathmandu. A government job was in her mind when she started teaching in a school to support living in the capital.

Basnet started her career in journalism after the 1990 People's Movement (the multiparty movement in Nepal which ended absolute monarchy). Political reforms, rising literacy rates, entrepreneurship, and the adoption of new media technologies were among the factors that led the way to growth of Nepali media after 1990 (Media Foundation-Nepal 2012: 15). Her first job as a reporter was with *Nepalipatra*, where she worked for eight years. It was her passion for writing and her interest in current affairs that led her to the profession, which she had always considered a man's job.

During her 25-year career in journalism, Babita Basnet has struggled with many gender issues. In her first few years as a reporter she felt isolated. With very few women journalists, it was hard to find other women in press forums. She would often question why she was in this masculine profession. But leaving was not simple; she had to earn a living and she had slowly started loving her job. Also, she had received intensive training from the Institute of Mass Communication in New Delhi and at the UN headquarters in New York, which boosted her confidence, and she joined *Ghatana ra Bichar*, one of the most popular current affairs programmes of that time on Radio Nepal. Her confidence did not, however, last long, as she had to struggle hard to get her stories published. As the only female reporter she was often questioned about the credibility of her reports. At that time the Maoist conflict was at its peak and the radio was increasingly popular. Although the times were demanding, she took this as an opportunity to establish her career. After working for about four years, she was offered the post of editor of the weekly *Ghatana ra Bichar*. After more than ten years of working as an editor she is still among very few women to lead an editorial team.

### Making a difference

Hiring women reporters has been one of her objectives, but because of the poor security situation during the conflict it was hard to find women willing to join journalism.

The working conditions for reporters, particularly for women, were particularly harsh outside the capital. According to a report published by Human Rights Watch in 2014, both government forces and insurgent Maoists assaulted women sexually and verbally during the conflict.

By that time, Basnet had realised that advocacy and training were important to bring more women into journalism. When the conflict was brought to an end and the situation was fairly stable, she began giving space in *Sancharika Lekhmala*, a monthly feature magazine published by Sancharika Samuha (Forum of Women Journalists and Communicators) of which she was the president, to articles written by women journalists. Meanwhile, Basnet had to make serious life choices including raising a child on her own. Her experience after divorce was not too bad – people had stopped asking questions about her personal life and judging her on the basis of her marital status. This was something she could not have imagined ten years earlier.

In 2015, Babita Basnet is satisfied with her situation but does not hesitate to admit that she thinks she would have achieved much more had she been a man. Besides her daily routine at the newspaper office, she heads an NGO working for media advocacy, Media Forum. She is also busy training journalists and people from civil society on human rights in post-conflict areas. She explains that she is not facing any problems of gender discrimination and the work situation inside the organisation and the capital has improved significantly – she no longer hesitates to work late, and she is respected by news sources and male colleagues. Basnet credits the conflict, to some extent, for putting gender and increased female participation on the agenda and for having made the post-conflict situation a better one for women's voices.

### *Case Study 2 – Maina Dhital*

Maina Dhital felt low after being beaten by demonstrators during a strike in the capital. That was in 2008. Her motorcycle was vandalised for defying the vehicular strike in which vehicles are not allowed to move although the restriction is not imposed on the vehicles of the press. She was also verbally assaulted. Dhital was wearing a yellow jacket with “press” written on it and she carried her identity card, but neither marker shielded her.

Born in a small village in Lamjung district, Maina Dhital had ordinary initial expectations. She finished school in the village, and completion of the tenth grade meant admission to college. She was lucky to receive support from her family for higher education. Maina came to the capital in the late 1990s. While studying Economics and English, she made some friends who were journalists. They encouraged her to enter journalism at a time when female journalists were few. After working as an intern at *Space Time Daily*, she made it to the largest publication house, Kantipur, and after a few months as an intern she became a reporter for widely circulated national daily newspaper. A one-year course at the Nepal Press Institute taught her many aspects of journalism. But there were still many things she had to learn

through work experiences that were not in the training manuals and which she had not been warned about.

The conflict had already begun when she started working as a journalist, but Dhital did not face any hardship as a reporter. The situation changed for the worse after the Royal Coup of 2005. She was not reporting on political subjects, and did not face direct threats, but she remembers the sense of terror. With tighter restrictions, reporting became more challenging. As a woman working late hours, numerous road checkpoints and questions from security officials became part of her daily routine. The conflict affected the business sector and the media organisations started facing financial problems – even the robust *Kantipur* cut down staff benefits whereas others stopped paying salaries and some even shut down their entire operation. Working with one of the leading organisations, Maina Dhital was drawing a basic salary, but that was not enough to bear all her expenses.

Being one of the few women working in *Kantipur*, Maina Dhital was often subject to gossip and subtle harassment. Most of those who harassed her, she thinks, did not realise that some of their compliments were gendered and that their “funny” e-mails and texts belittled her. Dhital was mainly working with the business bureau, but also moved between the social and political bureau (the latter was more demanding, with late night hours, and she preferred the business bureau). Although she possessed all the requirements for promotion, she had to be satisfied with her position as a deputy chief. In her opinion, although there is less discrimination than previously, when it comes to promotion management seems to hold the opinion that women are better as subordinates than leaders. She has not experienced obvious discrimination relating to salary, but thinks her male colleagues have stronger negotiation powers and are ahead in obtaining various benefits – although she did not trouble to find out how much her male counterparts were earning, as there were many more important job-related issues.

In 2013, Maina Dhital was appointed district bureau chief, the first woman in her organisation to reach that position. The job was not as easy for a woman as for a man. Coordinating district correspondents was challenging for a female boss and there were times when she felt her instructions were not properly followed by her subordinates, merely because she was a woman and, perhaps, less aggressive and demanding than a man.

### Comfortable environment

After receiving the Humphrey Fellowship Program, she went to the United States and returned a year later with a newly-found interest in foreign affairs. She has recently married and is looking for responsibility at the international bureau. With her husband living abroad, her life has not changed much – even today, many women journalists in Nepal give up reporting or leave their jobs completely when they get married. However, this is gradually changing and research from Sancharika (2012: 21) shows that the number of married and single women journalists is now almost equal.

Female sources are more often represented in the news than they used to be. Dhital is now encouraged to concentrate on women in the news reports – one of the major changes taking place since the conflict. The number of women in her organisation has increased and she has experienced a change in her male colleagues' behaviour – they are no longer dominating. With more female colleagues, Maina Dhital no longer feels out of place. Morning meetings are not awkward any more, as her opinions are not ridiculed.

## Discussion and conclusion

The decade-long conflict is over, but journalists are now subjected to assaults from ethno-political rebels and criminal groups (Adhikari 2008: 80). In the wake of a controversial new constitution, strikes and demonstrations are once again on the rise. Nepal echoes some of the experiences of other post-conflict societies such as East Timor, Chechnya, Kosovo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Haiti (Adhikari 2008: 80). As in those countries, Nepali journalism has not been successful in making post-conflict reporting balanced and gender sensitised, but it seems that steps taken over the last few years have been in the right direction.

The above case studies are only two, but may provide some important glimpses of the reality for female journalists in a post-conflict situation. Whereas Babita Basnet reported conflict-related stories directly, Maina Dhital looked into conflict news through an economic perspective. Their experiences suggest that the situation has become more favourable for women journalists after the Maoist war but smaller conflicts in different parts of the country do not allow journalists, particularly women, to work in a completely secure environment. Owing to political instability and increasing incidents of impunity, journalists continue to be targeted by threats and assaults. Because of illegal activities in towns along the Nepalese-Indian border, journalists fear to work in this area (the Terai region). Security seems to be a bigger problem outside the capital and as a result few women work in media organisations based outside Kathmandu. The psychological factor (of the feeling that “I am not as safe being woman”) is a major component of the low participation of women journalists. Owing to social expectations and family pressure, women hesitate to report on issues that could put them in danger. They also face threats that are different from those received by their male colleagues (Bhattarai and Mainali 2014: 45). Whereas a man may be threatened with a beating, for a woman it's normally a threat of rape. According to UNICEF (2009), approximately 70 per cent of the women journalists in the Terai region had left their profession one month after the murder of Janakpur-based journalist Uma Singh. Attacks and killings of journalists and media owners continues to have a chilling effect (Bhattarai and Mainali 2014: 46). Women experience verbal abuse and attacks more often than men. Such incidents do not simply raise the question of press freedom – they also push female journalists in particular to quit their profession.

The case studies presented here further suggest that women journalists in media organisations (and female sources) are more highly valued than previously. It seems that the growing number of female journalists make women feel more comfortable with their occupation. Prior to the conflict they felt alienated, and those in the profession came into it “by accident”. Although actual statistics are not available, the number of female students in journalism colleges today is estimated to be around 50 per cent.<sup>3</sup> More women than ever are interested in pursuing a career in the media industry, and their career span has lengthened, with married women continuing in the profession, as the case studies imply.

The Global Gender Gap Report shows that Nepali women lag behind men when it comes to media participation and decision making – a situation exacerbated by cultural barriers (Steyn 2010: 279). The experiences of the two journalists, along with other relevant reports, suggest that problems such as discrimination in relation to news assignments, promotions and salary still exist. Their experiences also show that women are balancing family and career for the sake of equal treatment in the workplace. Although the cases describe the newsroom culture as changing, women in the post-conflict phase still seem to doubt their own performance but on the positive side, the changing public sphere and a developing gender equality have made them more aware of their rights.

The two case studies alone cannot provide the complete picture of the working conditions of Nepalese women journalists. The two are not necessarily representative of the overall status of female reporters in the country, as many of them work in far less secure environments and meet greater difficulties. Both cases have been in the profession for a long time, and what they have experienced in the post-conflict phase is coloured by the positions they now hold. The fact that they are treated with more respect after the conflict can partly be explained by a changing newsroom culture. Since the cases are associated with reputable media organisations, likely to handle security more professionally than smaller companies, they are also safer at work than others.

Nepali media have grown and modernised impressively since the conflict. In 2006, the number of daily newspapers was limited to 62, and the weeklies to 370. The number rose steeply to 154 dailies and 466 weeklies in 2014 (PCN 2014/15). Also, the press freedom index shows that Nepal has climbed 30 steps (Reporters Without Borders 2014). At the same time, the participation of women journalists has increased threefold in the last 14 years. However, even as women journalists chip away at the glass ceiling, mainstream media is still largely an “old boys’ club” controlled by men at the top with an insidious masculine culture (Rana 2015). The political situation affects the safety of journalists, and gender equality. There is a need for greater research on this subject. The gender-related challenges in Nepali journalism are still apparent at all levels of the news process and could have an impact on the quality of press performance required of any post-conflict society dealing with the crucial issues of peace building (Adhikari 2008: 279).

## Future research

A number of issues arise from this changing status of women journalists. The chapter argues that the post-conflict situation opens the door of opportunity but at the cost of other challenges. How can women overcome these challenges? What can be the role of media houses and the state in such situations? The post-conflict instability can hinder press freedom. For further research, it would be interesting to interrelate post-conflict instability and restrictions on press freedom to gender equality.

## Notes

1. Now known as the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN)-Maoist. The party unified with Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre Masal) January 2009, resulting in its full current name.
2. The Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed between the government and the CPN-Maoist in 2006, which formally ended the civil war, allowing the Maoists to take part in the government.
3. The estimation is based on the number provided by students in College of Journalism and Mass Communication and Kathmandu University (2015).

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## Intercultural Indigenous Communication of the Indigenous Communities of Cauca in the Context of the Armed Conflict

Henry Caballero Fula

This chapter seeks to explain and analyse the emergence of a diverse indigenous media in Colombia from the perspective of an insider. The narrative revolves around the issue of violence: how has violence against indigenous activists and journalists contributed to producing this particular form of communication? Understanding the development of indigenous media and indigenous journalism requires knowledge on the Colombian civil war and indigenous social organisation. Amongst indigenous peoples in Cauca, it is typical for a person to pass through several organisational, political and technical positions without seeing this as a problem and without considering staying in any one of them. Serving as a journalist in the indigenous media is not typically seen as a specialisation in the Occidental understanding of the concept. Instead, a person might serve in the indigenous media for some time before moving on to other responsibilities.

The chapter concludes by reflecting on key question currently debated amongst indigenous media activists: Who should the communication collectives represent? Is a process of radicalisation of the indigenous communication collectives helpful for the internal debate in the indigenous communities? Are there really a contradiction between the struggle for indigenous collective autonomy and individual freedom of expression for the communicators?

### The armed conflict in Colombia

Colombia has a history of more than 50 years of armed conflict between leftist insurgents and the state – a replica of earlier conflicts between political parties and traditional sectors that are now in power. The recent armed conflict started with demands for political participation and agrarian reform with redistribution of land, although some sectors also demanded a democratic capitalism and others a socialist revolution. In 1964, the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Armed Forces for National Liberation (the ELN) were founded. In 1966, the Popular Force for Liberation (EPL) emerged, and in 1974 came the Movement 19<sup>th</sup> of April

(the M19). In 1984, the Movement Quintín Lame was formed in the department of Cauca, as an armed indigenous defence against the violence of the big landowners.

Because of the violence during the previous period of liberal-conservative conflict (1940-1964), Colombia changed from a rural to an urban country, a tendency strengthened by the displacement of the population caused by the renewed presence of armed conflict.

In 1991, a National Constituent Assembly was organised after pressure from the democratic sectors, among them students and the group M19, which had become a legal political party. Seventy representatives were elected by popular vote (among them 19 from M19 and two from indigenous organisations) and participation with full voting rights was given to two representatives of the EPL guerrilla group and two observers from the PRT and Quintín Lame, making a total of 74 (the FARC and the ELN neither participated in nor accepted the National Constituent Assembly). The Constitution recognised fundamental human and social rights and set in place mechanisms to guarantee constitutional rights. In addition, it recognised the multiethnic and multicultural character of the Colombian nation.

Despite the constitutional advances and the demobilisation of various guerrilla groups, the armed conflict grew more intense during the 1990s due to the traffic in narcotics that had been growing since the previous decade – only now with the added problem of much stronger drug cartels. Sectors of the narcotraffic now extended their reach into the areas of armed conflict and formed paramilitary groups in order to sow terror and barbarity in various regions of the country. The paramilitary forces coexisted with sectors of the military forces and were linked to the prevailing counter-insurgency strategies. On the other side, the guerrillas (primarily FARC), earned substantial revenues from collecting a tax on trade in crops for drug use and directly from drug trafficking, through which they were able to provide their forces with high-tech weapons. The ELN, meanwhile, explored different sources of income such as the collection of “taxes” on oil.

The intensification of the armed conflict led to degradation, with civilians the worst affected. Colombia ranks as one of the countries in the world with the most forced displacement: approximately 5.5 million people since 1985 (over 12 per cent of its population). At least 220,000 violent deaths are attributable to armed conflict. There exists a record of 25,007 enforced disappearances (many of which occurred in unknown circumstances); the political kidnapping of 318 mayors and 332 councilors, 52 deputies and 54 congressional representatives; thousands of kidnappings for ransom; and 790 members of the military held by the guerrillas (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2013).

It is possible that the security forces are perpetrators of extrajudicial executions. This makes it very difficult to research such executions, as researchers will have to depend on information from the very institution suspected of complicity. Nevertheless, there are currently 2,013 ongoing judicial investigations involving 3,254 victims (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos 2013).

Illegal recruitment: more than 5,000 children have been separated from their parents because of the conflict (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos 2013). Many of these children are likely to remain in the guerrilla ranks. There are also allegations of state security forces using children as couriers and informants.

Torture: the justice and peace unit of the attorney general of the republic has, after investigation, received 773 confessions of torture. There are 10,000 victims of landmines and explosive devices (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos 2013).

Sexual violence against women, children and adolescents, and the LGBTTI<sup>1</sup> population: at 1,754 victims there is considerable underreporting. However, according to the data obtained from the first survey of prevalence of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict, the prevalence of sexual violence for the period 2001-2009 on the basis of 407 municipalities with presence of security forces, insurgency, paramilitary or other armed actors in Colombia, was estimated at 17.58 per cent. This means that during these nine years at least 489,000 women were direct victims of sexual violence (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos 2013).

As the armed conflict is mainly rural, and territorially marginal to the centres of power, it has not significantly affected the cities, which only experience the conflict regularly through the media (TV, radio and newspapers). Nonetheless, the dominant sectors of the state have managed to use the armed conflict to legitimise a national security policy (which includes characterising certain groups and peoples as “internal enemies”), the militarisation of the national budget and the imposition of macroprojects which involve the confiscation of land for extractive industries.

The last five presidential elections, at least, have been defined by the candidates' positions on the armed conflict and its solution (military or negotiated). In 1998, the pendulum swung towards political negotiation. In 2002, after the resounding failure of the peace process, the candidate for the military solution won by a landslide. In 2006, he was re-elected following a constitutional change that allowed re-election. In 2010, faced with a legal ban on a second re-election, a different candidate from the ruling party (also clearly favouring a military solution) was elected. In 2014, the incumbent president was re-elected for the period 2014 to 2018 after distancing himself politically from his mentor and former president. The re-elected president promoted the ongoing peace process that began in 2012 – however, the outcome of the 2014 election should not be taken to mean a full swing of the pendulum towards a negotiated solution. Instead, it showed a country completely polarised around war and peace.

## The department of Cauca, the Regional Indigenous Council (CRIC) and the armed conflict

Cauca is one of 32 departments in the country, and the department with the largest indigenous population – its total population is 1,182,000, of which 20 per cent are indigenous, 20 per cent Afro-Colombian and 60 per cent Mestizo. Colombia went from

a predominantly rural to an urban population (70 per cent rural in early 1950 to 26 per cent today). However, in the Cauca region the current rural population is a high 62 per cent (one third indigenous, one third Afro-Colombian and one third Mestizo).

Cauca is a region of great geographic diversity: the Pacific coast, the Amazon rainforest in Bota Caucana, the central and western divisions of the Andes mountain range and the valleys of Patia and Cauca. However, classified by income and by the unsatisfied basic needs index,<sup>2</sup> Cauca is the second poorest department in the country. The contrast between rich biodiversity and poverty is striking.

Because of its topography, absence of roads, isolated populations, long borders, history of military occupation, prevalence of illicit crops, drug trafficking and illegal mining, the department of Cauca has become a place where several armed actors are present, especially the FARC, paramilitaries and the security forces. This is the context in which, in 1971, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) was founded under the slogan “Unity, Earth, Culture and Autonomy”. CRIC produced a programme of struggle: for communal lands (*resguardos*), self-government, education and indigenous health, special legislation, territorial and environmental control and strengthening the family. In developing its struggles, CRIC has consolidated itself and simultaneously stimulated a national indigenous popular movement in the department and the country. In addition to managing their own institutions and projects, indigenous communities have succeeded in controlling and managing numerous municipal governments and in influencing public policies such as developing mechanisms for the enforcement of legislation and for dialogue with the national government.

The indigenous movement has proposed a project for developing the Colombian nation based on “unity in diversity”. It is different from the current developmental and monocultural model that is destroying nature and communities, different from the model implemented by the dominant sectors in the state, and different from the political project of the guerrillas which is armed, does not recognise local participatory processes and is driven by developmental and enlightenment concepts (the guerrilla considers himself as the holder of reason and with a mission to impose it on others). The autonomy of the indigenous project has generated distrust from armed groups (including the state). Each of the sides has accused the indigenous organisations of being its enemy and of being a collaborator with the other side. The CRIC has demanded the demilitarisation of the indigenous territories and spelled out clearly, to all the players in the conflict, that it can be counted on for peace – but never for war.

The CRIC has developed processes of territorial control based on the autonomy of communities and their own authorities. It has also has formed mechanisms for unarmed peaceful resistance such as permanent assembly sites, indigenous guards, and the application of justice and indigenous law for indigenous members of armed groups who commit crimes against communities.

## The press and the communicators covering the armed conflict in Colombia

The escalation of the armed conflict has led to tough restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression and access to information in Colombia. To illustrate, we can indicate three periods. The first is the period (1980s and 1990s) of the emergence of drug trafficking and paramilitary. Although the drug traffickers are not directly part of the armed conflict, at one time trafficking appeared to be so powerful that traffickers sought to impose conditions on the state – for instance to avoid extradition to the US and to legalise the earnings from illicit business. The traffickers managed to influence the policies of political parties and to influence the Congress. They took control over local institutions in some regions of the country. Political leaders who opposed them, and journalists who reported on the increasing penetration of drug traffickers into public arenas, were assassinated. This was followed by terrorist acts against the media and in public places. Sectors of the drug trafficking business found a suitable way to continue penetrating the state and pursuing their business through the creation of paramilitary groups; this allowed them to dominate regions, counting on the connivance of sections of the government security forces, held together by their shared interest in fighting the leftist guerilla organisations. In regions where drug trafficking dominated there was no possibility of freedom of expression or access to information. More journalists were murdered than in any other country in the world.

Second is the period from 2001 to 2010, characterised by emphasis on unifying the nation behind the state, and united by the figure of the president of the republic in the battle against “terrorism”. President Uribe urged the media to support the government institutions in this fight. According to the government’s policy of “democratic security” there was no armed conflict in Colombia, only a terrorist threat that had to be fought by a unified society. There could be no neutrality. Either you defend the state or you are against it. In practice, freedom of opinion was subordinated to the need to fight terrorism as defined by the government. Those who resisted became “useful idiots”, accomplices of the enemies of the nation. Opinions and information were subject to national security. A report by the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights, after its mission in Colombia during November 2004, identified four key features of the limitation on freedom of expression and access to information: self-regulation by the media; the stigmatisation of journalists; limits on resources and the accuracy of information; and the restriction of free movement (Barcia et al. 2004).

Between 2010 and 2014 there were periods of inertia and rearrangement. With President Santos, the dynamics of war and peace changed once again, and priority was given to the search for a political solution. This implied recognition of the existence of an armed conflict and in this sense the state accepted the distinctions, in International Humanitarian Law, between armed actors, unarmed people and protected sites – which has given citizens, communities and the media the ability to think critically

and distance themselves from state actions and policies without being automatically identified as part of the internal enemy. However, President Santos has continued to act within the framework of democratic security policy on many issues. He has put limits on access to information (confirmed by a new law on transparency and access to information which has been denounced by human rights organisations). Public officials continue, albeit to lesser degree, to criticise and denounce social leaders and defenders of human rights. The government also continues, through advertisements to the public, to influence the editorial policies of the media.

Many media owners, journalists and communicators adapt to the dynamic of the previous period by censoring themselves. Nonetheless, some do take advantage of the improved formal conditions for exercising the right of expression in Colombia, regardless of the risks involved.

### Initiatives for indigenous communication in the department of Cauca

Communication has been an integral part of the struggle of indigenous peoples. The Spanish invasion sought to keep the Indians apart: eradicating their language; preventing their relationship with nature and the spirits; destroying ceremonial sites; expropriating the land; and curtailing the possibilities of communication in its various expressions as spiritual communication based on listening, understanding and obeying the messages of mother nature. Caring for the territory is a natural mandate transmitted through signs, dreams and sounds such as natural speech. Family communication is based on dialogue and the transmission of knowledge from practical lessons such as weaving, teaching the indigenous languages, growing indigenous crops and performing rituals. Community communication survives through organisational and territorial activities such as assemblies, collective work (*mingas*), demonstrations, marches, cultural venues and formations – all of which are constituted as direct forms of participation and collective decision making.<sup>3</sup>

In the early days of CRIC, the 1970s, silkscreened posters were widely used and distributed at meetings, *mingas* and other events. Later, the CRIC newspaper “indigenous unit” was originated. It was circulated to all communities. The newspaper contained news and articles on the progress of the indigenous movement in Cauca, as well as other popular regional and national organisations. This newspaper was later named *Alvaro Ulcue Unit* after the indigenous Catholic priest from Cauca who was killed by landowners in 1984. The newspaper, conceived as a tool of communication with an educational approach, was able to train and form a solid foundation for the course of the struggle, based on the programme of Research, Action, Participation (IAP).

The indigenous unit had its most difficult time in the late 1970s, when CRIC was dismantled and most of its leaders tortured, jailed or exiled under accusations of belonging to the guerrilla group M19. However, the newspaper managed to be published

during this time and report to the world on the barbarism that was taking place against the organisation (García and Caballero Fula 2012).

The CRIC newspaper now forms the memory of the organisational process. Both indigenous and non-indigenous wrote for it with deep commitment. Although it was published in Spanish, some indigenous people read it and translated it orally to the rest of the communities, in their languages.<sup>4</sup> In its first 20 years it achieved monthly distribution and it played a very important role in making CRIC known at national and international levels.

In the 1990s, the communications team of CRIC also became the educational team. It combined producing the newspaper with presenting films and organising film forums in communities. The film that was most widely seen was one that a Colombian film-maker had made about the struggle of the indigenous people of Cauca. Subsequently, the CRIC communication team began making films themselves, for showing in cinemas. The team had to travel with their large and cumbersome film projectors, and plants to generate electricity, by car, by mule, by rudimentary community cable cars, and on foot, through the geography of Cauca to reach every community, assembly and *minga*. The team that showed the films was usually the same team that carried out the filming and then edited the films in Popayan, capital of the department. The communication team also organised a weekly radio programme recorded on tape cassettes and sent to the communities where they were played on tape recorders during meetings and educational activities. This intensive activity attracted the interest of people in the communities, who started to send in recorded information for regional programmes and news articles for the newspaper. People started to make radio magazines locally. Training was also conducted in regional workshops on writing, video, radio and popular communication.

This communicative dynamic interrelated with the experience of people in communities who had participated in religious radio stations (one in Tierradentro and one in the North) and led to the formation of local media groups, some of which have started up their own community radio stations. At the beginning of the twenty-first century there were more than eleven indigenous radio stations. Some were without any degree of legality whereas others operated under the norms and laws regulating public radio which put clear limits on what could, or could not, be broadcast. In addition, they had to pay for the use of the “radio spectrum” (Ministerio de Cultura 2001). In the course of time some of them have been closed by the national government, which cited non-compliance with these requirements. Their equipment was confiscated but the communities have been able to retrieve it.

In 2003, the network AMCIC (Association of Indigenous Media in Colombia) was founded and its first meeting was held in Silvia, Cauca. Currently the network of 24 communication collectives in the department of Cauca have the following stations: Voices of our land (Global Project Jambalo), Radio Nasa (Nasa Project, Toribio), Patyumat (Weave of Communication ACIN, Santander de Quilichao), Radio Nasa (Nasa Cxha Cxha Association, Tierradentro Paez), Nasa Usual Yuwe (Association Sat Kiwe

Tama, Caldon), Nuestra Voz (Traditional Authorities zone East), Voices of our Earth (Global Project Jambalo), Renacer Kokonuko (Kokonuko Pueblo), Yanakuna Stereo (Pueblo Yanakuna. Almaguer), Radio Liberty (Pueblo Totoroez, Totoró), Radio Inza (Juan Tama, Inzá) Communications Program of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC Popayan) Namuy Wam (Misak, Silvia). The CRIC has a website ([www.cric-colombia.org](http://www.cric-colombia.org)), a centre for the production of audiovisual content and radio and a virtual station – instruments that support the work of the AMCIC and, of course, the entire organisational struggle.

The conclusion of the public policy of indigenous communication between the Colombian government and the indigenous authorities has taken place at the Permanent Table for Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples (MPCPI). This policy is in an advanced state and some of the agreed components are included in the draft bill of the National Development Plan, which the government has submitted to Congress for the period 2015-2018. The proposal and the claim for a public policy on indigenous communication have been internally defined by the indigenous peoples of Colombia through a process (headed by the *National Organisation of Indigenous People of Colombia* (ONIC) of consultation and formulation in every department of Colombia.

The policy includes:

- A differential communication policy for indigenous people based on the autonomy of each village.
- The inclusion and development of natural or indigenous forms of communication; participation in mainstream media on equal terms and with state support and differential treatment; guarantees for financing and permanent support ; participation in regulatory entities, planning and monitoring of communication; integral and differential guarantees for the training of indigenous communicators.

CRIC has implemented public policy in communication, health, education, indigenous environmental authority, territorial control, own economy, land and territory. One of the initiatives that have been developed jointly between CRIC's programmes of education and communication is the establishment of university programmes. The CRIC has used laws on indigenous rights, and international conventions such as ILO Convention 169 to set up autonomous educational institutions in each indigenous community, and the Universidad Autónoma, Indígena Intercultural (UAIIN), the regional institution in Popayan.

The government has not been able to dismantle the UAIIN, given the constitutional and international norms that protect its autonomy from external constraints by the government and that guarantee academic freedom, research and expression. The government has recognised the university's autonomy to conduct research and develop its own curricula, the only requirement being to meet the quality standards established by the state. For indigenous communities, this is their university, formed because indigenous organisations understood that the existing private and public universities, based on the hegemony of culture, do not contribute to the survival of

indigenous peoples but, rather, to their disappearance. The ways indigenous organisations envisage university autonomy is very different from the way universities are granted autonomy, traditionally and historically, by governments. In any event, it should be noted that university autonomy in Colombia does not exist as such, as it is the government that decides on the higher councils of the public universities, and businessmen and investors who decide for private universities.

Together with indigenous communities and authorities, the UAIIN has developed the curriculum for the degree in intercultural communication. The communication programme of CRIC has also participated in the development of this curriculum, based on the experience and needs of existing collectives and on general communication processes and community dynamics that have occurred in its 43 years of existence.

The UAIIN, together with other indigenous and intercultural universities in Latin America, is constituted in the Network of Indigenous, Intercultural and Communitarian Universities Abya Yala<sup>5</sup> (RUIICAY). Within this network, UAIIN (Colombia), the Pluriversity Amautay Wassy (Ecuador) and the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast URACCAN (Nicaragua) have, together with Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA), formulated the programme RUIICAY HIOA master in intercultural communication. The programme has as its components the implementation of two cohorts of joint masters of intercultural communication; the development of joint research in intercultural communication; and support for teachers of these three universities of Abya Yala to participate in doctoral programmes. The UAIIN have linked Master's students to members of indigenous groups of communication selected by the AMCIC (Asociación de Medios de Comunicación Indígena de *Colombia*) network, in consultation with indigenous authorities.

To support the dynamics of popular and indigenous communication in the continent, the CRIC communications programme co-organised the First Continental Summit Abya Yala in Indigenous Communication in Cauca, in November 2012, and the Second Continental Summit in Oaxaca, Mexico in 2013, and organised the international forum of national and international indigenous communications and public policy debates and practices in Cauca in November 2014.

## Indigenous communicators from Cauca in the middle of an armed conflict

The role of the communication collectives has become more important for the social and cultural struggle of the indigenous communities of the CRIC, and for social sectors in general. Here are some critical issues that help locate the kinds of struggle that have been described in this article so far:

## Critical issue I

*2004: March from La Maria Piendamó (Cauca) to the city of Cali (Department Valle) to organise the first indigenous and popular congress*

The conference raised four points: rejection of armed conflict; the policy of democratic security and the violation of human rights; refusal to sign the Free Trade Agreement with the US and the Free Trade Area for the Americas (FTAA); opposition to the weakening of some democratic aspects of the Constitution; and a call for popular unity.

Over 60,000 people from all social sectors marched along the Pan-American Highway. The march took four days before the participants held three days of meetings and protests in Cali. Collective indigenous media had organised a network of relationships with international media journalists and ensured that they were present to relay information. In the first days of the march, major national media ignored the mobilisation or provided only fragmented images that minimised the importance of the event. Even when the images of kilometres and kilometres of the march, a human river, were broadcast by European networks they were still ignored by the national chains. The PRISA group that owns media in Spain had just bought the main Colombia broadcaster, Caracol TV. Only after the initial concealment and confusion, did Caracol TV begin transmitting information about the large indigenous mobilisation. Later, because of market reaction, the Colombian RCN also had to start broadcasting. For the first time, after two years of unanimity, the people of the country saw a serious, organised, determined and massive demonstration against the policy of democratic security, NAFTA, and the policies of the national government of President Uribe.

## Critical issue II

*The 2008 social and communitarian resistance minga (collective work)*

In October 2008, indigenous peoples headed by CRIC, together with various other organisations, mobilised to force the government to debate a number of issues. The indigenous organisations demanded respect for human rights and respect for life, and an end to aggression against indigenous peoples and other local communities and their territories. They also demanded fulfillment of all international agreements (and in particular all United Nations declarations on indigenous peoples); open debate on various free trade agreements; implementation of a number of still unfulfilled agreements with organisations and social movements; and an end to the so-called Statute of Rural Development, to mining regulation and to other legislation which they saw as attempts to dispossess indigenous peoples of their territories (*Unidad Álvaro Ulcue* 2008).

At the beginning of the *minga*, the participants blocked the Pan-American Highway, the main highway in Colombia. The government took advantage of the situation to attack the 20,000 who had gathered at the village La María in Piendamó with armoured

vehicles, helicopters and small planes. The attack had serious consequences, according to the newspaper *Unidad Álvaro Ulcue*: “With no respect for our human dignity, we have been treated as criminals: one has been shot dead and 122 injured. Five of the injured lost an eye. Forty per cent of the injured have been seriously injured or disabled after being shot with *recalzados* [unconventional bullets where the lead has been replaced], tear gas fired directly at them or injuries with machetes. Six families were forced to leave their homes. Five families were evicted when security forces took over their farms. The whole indigenous community of La María was under siege, and the indigenous territory invaded by security forces. Indigenous leaders have been subjected to police investigation and arrest warrants. The social movement has been met with land confiscation, as if a war had been declared against the social mobilisation and popular protest” (*Unidad Álvaro Ulcue* 2008) The sad outcome of the protest was three dead indigenous persons, including two killed during simultaneous mass mobilisations in the municipality of Villa Rica.

CRIC denounced the acts that led to injuries and deaths, claiming that the police were responsible for shooting the demonstrators. The president, however, went on air live to refute CRIC’s accusations, arguing that the protocols for controlling demonstrations did not allow the use of firearms. To prove his point, the president asked the national chief of the police if they had used firearms during the demonstrations – the police chief responded in the negative, and repeated what the protocols said. This intervention from the president was retransmitted in news programmes on the national television channels. But the president had not taken into consideration the “sting operation” set in motion by the many wasps of the team of indigenous community journalists who had spread out to all corners of La María. From the treetops or from behind rocks, sometimes from inside the houses, the indigenous community journalists filmed everything that happened during the *minga*. In that way they succeeded in capturing on film the moment when an armed man, in disguise, came from behind the police line to fire at the demonstrators before returning to find protection by hiding inside the platoon again. The webpages of ACIN<sup>6</sup> and CRIC were then blocked, supposedly due to technical problems, but the images were handed over to CNN and published internationally. Faced with the images published by CNN, the president had to come out again (transmitted simultaneously on all television channels in Colombia) to apologise for having misled the country. He promised to travel to Cauca to take part in the public debate called for by the protesters.

### Critical issue III

#### *Bus bomb in Toribio*

On 9 July 2011, FARC exploded a bomb placed on board a bus outside the police station in Toribio, causing severe problems for the civilian population (Caballero Fula 2014). Radio Nasa was damaged and a journalist was seriously injured when the equipment

fell on him. The radio station had to go off air for some time, but did receive understanding and support from the community and the indigenous authorities.

## Critical issue IV

### *Operation of radio masts*

The radio mast of Nasa Estéreo was installed on a hill called Berlín in Toribio. The hill belongs to the community, but it has not been possible to repair damage to the antenna because the army has installed a military base on the hill against the will of the community. The means that entrance has been restricted and is only allowed with a permit from the army and subject to army surveillance (La Otra Cara 2015).

In the same way, the station Voces de Nuestra Tierra, from Jambaló, has installed the antenna on a mountain in Paletón. On this mountain, however, Claro, a phone company, has also installed a mobile phone mast. The guerrillas, wanting to cut off the communication lines of the police and the local population, attacked the mobile phone mast, but as collateral damage also damaged the radio mast, driving the station off the air for several months. Voces de Nuestra Tierra and the majority of other broadcasters have also been negatively affected when electricity power lines have been attacked – without electricity, they simply cannot function.

## Critical issue V

### *The killing of the indigenous guards on 5 November 2014*

FARC killed two indigenous guards<sup>7</sup> as, on behalf of the indigenous authorities, they tried to stop a group of guerrilla soldiers from putting up propaganda posters in a neighborhood of Toribio. Manuel Julicue, a local community radio journalist of Nasa Estéreo, was at the scene when the killings occurred, and immediately began reporting live. This is the story told by this community journalist in an interview published online:

I start informing people about what is happening. That they had just fired rounds of shots against us who were there and that two of our indigenous guards had been shot. This was how many many people from various neighbourhoods found out and came to help us. In the end seven guerrilla soliders were arrested because of this intervention in order to defend the territory.

Radio Payumat, the station of the Web of Communication belonging to the Association of Indigenous Cabildos<sup>8</sup> in northern Cauca ACIN, located in Santander de Quilichao, did what it could; it retransmitted the signal and, as always, made the connection. Other media joined in, and in no time the voice of Miguel was back on air (La Otra Cara 2015). The seven guerrilla soldiers were put on trial over the next five days. They

were tried according to the special indigenous jurisdiction in a process that became news and was debated politically at the national level.

## Critical issue VI

### *Harassment, threats and murders*

In 2010, Rodolfo Maya Aricape, indigenous community journalist of the Network School of Communication, was killed in the northern district López Adentro de Caloto (Monroy Gomez 2011). The crime has still not been solved.

On 7 November 2014, a pamphlet bearing the letterhead of the FARC started to circulate. It appeared in the context of the murder of the indigenous guards in Toribio and the subsequent prosecution of the perpetrators. The pamphlet contained threats against 26 indigenous leaders and authorities, among them three journalists from the Nasa Estéreo and Patyumat radio stations that had alerted the community. The FARC later said the statement was apocryphal. Nonetheless, the threat continues, irrespective of where it comes from, until the culprits are found and punished.

Vicente Otero, coordinator of the communications programme, has repeatedly been threatened in leaflets issued in times of social mobilisation. He was once imprisoned on charges the state could not support. Because of threats, he had to leave the country for more than six months (Sulé 2013).

Several stations report bomb threats. Others have been threatened by the burning of their headquarters or by attacks on certain persons, as in the case of the station Canoas in Santander de Quilichao (this happened after the station denounced illegal mining and the production of crops for drugs). The station Usual Nasa Yuwe in Caldono received threats after reporting on illegal mining and after reporting that the local council had denounced Colombian security forces for murdering indigenous persons. The station Pueblo Nuevo in Caldono received threats after campaigning against recruitment to either side of the armed conflict. At the checkpoints of the guerrillas, indigenous communicators are sometimes called names such as “snitch” or “chicken”. They have also been threatened (Caballero Fula 2015).

On 7 February 2009, unidentified gunmen arrived at the home of Gustavo Ulcue, the technician who manages the website of ACIN. “They asked for Gustavo and as his brother opened the door the men immediately entered the house at gunpoint. They searched everywhere. They entered Gustavo’s room and took away his laptop. When they left they told his brother, ‘Be thankful that Gustavo was not in, because if we had found him, we would have finished the job.’” (Tejido de Comunicación y Relaciones Externas Santander de Quilichao 2009). Gustavo has continued to live in the area, but only with numerous self-protection measures.

In attacks on police stations, several radio stations have been damaged – in Jambaló, for instance, where the radio station is close to the police station. Radio Libertad de Totoro was damaged because the Colombian army had entered the station when they

were attacked. Similarly, Radio Nasa from the Paez municipality was damaged during a confrontation with the guerrillas, as the police “took the opportunity to direct shots at the station, damaging some of the equipment” (Caballero Fula 2015). The journalists say that they fear losing the support of the communities more than threats or attacks. However, they know that they have that support and that theirs is the struggle of their peoples (Caballero Fula 2015).

## Freedom of expression and opinion of indigenous communicators

There is a scene in a Nasa video about Father Alvaro Ulcue. A nun explains that because he is doing what is humanly possible for his people to succeed he should not grieve because so few achievements have been reached in the short term. Father Alvaro replies as if talking to himself: “It is the Paez people that are suffering. I am Paez ... What can I do?” Indigenous social activists appear to live this dedication from day to day. Because the people suffer, there is no way to imagine living happy fulfilling lives without sharing that experience with the entire people.

The community and their organisations express themselves in indigenous communication. The person making the communication is understood to be doing a service that could just as well have been done by a member of the council, a member of the indigenous guard or as part of programmes such as those for youth, women, the environment, the economy, UAIIN, education, health or autonomous jurisdiction. So far, indigenous communities do not have a degree of specialisation that would cause a person to become only a communicator, an authority, a counsellor of education, a nurse, a doctor, a lawyer, or a member of the autonomous judicial system (to mention a few positions within the indigenous dynamics of Cauca).

It is not that a decision has been made not to have specialisations within the indigenous movement. Indeed, ongoing activities such as the degrees that UAIIN is promoting (undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in intercultural communication) could be seen as heading in this direction; but it must be said that this is a strange and new dynamic for the current indigenous movement in Cauca. It is more typical for a person to pass through several organisational, political and technical positions without seeing this as a problem and without considering staying in any one of them. A person should always be available to occupy positions of indigenous authority (as a council member), and such positions should be served for at least a year without any kind of financial remuneration. Equally, any person who is serving in a position in the central organisation may at any time be called by their community to provide a service. In the same way, anyone from a community who is serving in regional structures should attend community assemblies and collective work when called on by that community of origin and/or secondment. The dynamics described here illustrate a structure in which people answer to, and are committed to, the organisation and/or the community. In this sense, the issue of personal professional realisation

and the reaffirmation of professional identity do not create permanent tension in the indigenous movement of the CRIC. The life plan of a person is linked directly to the life plan of the community that is part of its native people and, ultimately, to the indigenous peoples of Cauca congregated in the CRIC.

This does not mean that expertise and capability are unimportant. However, it is assumed that learning to handle the various issues of the organisation in depth and properly is more likely to contribute organisationally, as it facilitates greater integration. Each person must strive to know adequately every position he or she passes through.

A number of collectives have been organised around communications. Despite constantly changing members, the collectives are developing communication ideas and proposals for the indigenous and popular movement. In general, indigenous communication must take on the unique challenges of the indigenous movement, from different levels and technical and conceptual approaches, in particular to resist the privatised communication media of transnational capital, and in the service of the political, economic and social model they advocate. Indigenous communication has to take up the challenge of putting the people and communities of the CRIC in dialogue with each other, in addition to making the connection between CRIC and other processes and non-indigenous communities.

However, the communication process is not exempt from tensions, some of which are presented below in order to explain the process itself – although it is necessary to clarify that they are not particularly relevant in the context of the Cauca indigenous movement. In fact, many potential contradictions are solved without explicit contradictions arising.

## Conclusion

The discussion so far leads towards four questions currently debated within indigenous organisations and communities in Cauca. Deepening the understanding of these crucial issues will be of great importance for indigenous media and the communities it serves in the future.

**Do the communication collectives represent the authority of the organisation at community, local organisation or regional organisation level, or do they only represent themselves?**

Typically, this has not been a real contradiction, as the collectives would assume the position of the organisation. Sometimes, however, the authorities may feel that the communication does not fully articulate the line of the organisation. This will normally result in a dialogue between communicators and authorities, and generally such dialogues have resolved the differences in a constructive manner. There are cases where communication collectives, in spite of being embedded in community dynamics, become increasingly estranged from organisational decisions and make use of

the community media to express their positions. This has led to situations of explicit contradiction. While affirming their support of freedom of expression, the authorities argue that since the media (website, radio, or newspaper) officially belong to the organisation or the community, the positions that they make public should also be the official positions of the organisation or the community. In some cases, the solution has been to include an introductory note stating that “the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the organisation” and will only be official when signed by the organisation.

**Can a very radical collective be helpful in the internal debate in the organisation and/or community?**

When it comes to a position diverging from that of their organisation and/or community, a healthy aspiration for a collective indigenous communication would be to generate an internal debate to seek a solution. In all cases, the tension becomes visible when indigenous media power is used in opposition to the authorities. The authorities are one of the pillars of autonomy and indigenous identity, and must be strictly protected as they are permanently in danger of being attacked on all flanks. To maximise internal contradictions by the collective of communication can weaken the organisation and/or the community, as it also faces external political and economic struggles. Playing down these contradictions in the media does not mean giving up democracy, as the main mechanism of democracy is the periodic change of authorities, every year at the community level and every two years in the local and regional organisations (no re-election in the latter case). The communication collectives exercising their freedom assess what to do in each specific situation.

**Can the positions of indigenous collectives lead to the construction of imagined processes and an indigenous movement that does not correspond with reality?**

This type of tension arises when certain positions, actions or events are given more weight than they deserve in reality, and potential political, social and economic allies can receive a distorted view of the organisation and/ or community – and in the medium to long-term this will definitely result in difficulties and setbacks. Some discussions that should take place in the community are prevented from arising. This means that contradictions are not dealt with and necessary agreements are not reached, insofar as everything is considered to be resolved from the positions held by the indigenous collective, especially when the collective acts as the voice of the organisation or community.

**Indigenous autonomy or freedom of expression for male and female communicators?**

Autonomy is a major component of indigenous resistance. It applies to the interests of outsiders who wish to act in the territory or in the community, and also to internal governance. Autonomy belongs to the community as a whole and takes effect through the democratic mechanisms of participation in decision making. The responsibility for organising and coordinating the implementation of decisions falls to the authorities. When claiming to act from their own understanding and viewpoints, communica-

tors are invoking the freedoms of opinion and/or expression. This can, at times, be construed as a challenge to the autonomy of the authorities. The communities have, so far, understood autonomy as a right to be pursued outwardly in order to delimit the power of greater society over indigenous peoples. So far, autonomy has not been contemplated as a right that groups within indigenous communities have in relation to the authorities of indigenous peoples. To the extent that contradictions are dealt with according to the mechanisms of a community's internal democracy, and communication is made available to this end, it will strengthen the overall autonomy process, but when contradictions are dealt with outside the mechanisms of internal democracy they may result in the use the power of communication against community autonomy.

There is a phrase used constantly by Nasa communities in their organisational process which has been taken up by the communication collectives of northern Cauca and the organisational process within CRIC: "The word is empty without action, action without the word is blind, and speech and action without the spirit of the community are death."

## Notes

1. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI).
2. See for instance <http://www.undp.org.lb/programme/pro-poor/poverty/povertyinlebanon/molc/methodological/C/basicsneed.htm>
3. Interview with indigenous community journalist Dora Muñoz member of CRIC communication programme, January 2015.
4. Seven indigenous languages are spoken among the peoples belonging to CRIC.
5. Abya Yala is the name used by native peoples for what elsewhere in the world is known as America.
6. Asociación de cabildos del Norte del Cauca (The Association of local governments in Northern Cauca). ACIN is a member of CRIC.
7. The indigenous guard is an unarmed mechanism of defence and resistance operating under the command of local indigenous authorities (*cabildos*).
8. Name of indigenous administrative area in Cauca.
9. Paez was the name used previously to denote members of the Nasa people. However, because of a process of revindication, the people now prefer to call themselves Nasa after the Nasa Yuwe language. The Nasa people are the most numerous in Cauca and therefore also among the members of the CRIC.

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## Acronyms

- ACIN – Asociación de cabildos del Norte del Cauca [The Association of local governments in Northern Cauca].
- AMCIC – Asociación de medios de comunicación Indígena de Colombia [Association of Indigenous Media in Colombia]
- CIDH – Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights]
- CNN – The Cable News Network
- CRIC – El Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca [The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca]
- ELN – Ejército de Liberación Nacional [Armed Forces for National Liberation]
- EPL – Ejército Popular de Liberación [Popular Force for Liberation]
- FARC – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia [The Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia]
- FTAA – Free Trade Area for the Americas
- HiOA – Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus [Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences]
- LGBTI – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
- M19- Movimiento 19 de abril [Movement 19<sup>th</sup> of April]
- MPCPI – Mesa Permanente de Concertación con Pueblos Indígenas [Permanent Roundtable for Concertation with Indigenous Peoples]
- ONIC – Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia [National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia]
- RUIICAY – Red de Universidades Indígenas, interculturales y comunitarias del Abya Yala [Network of Indigenous, Intercultural and Communitarian Universities Abya Yala]
- UAIIN – Universidad autónoma indígena intercultural [Autonomous Intercultural Indigenous University]

## Global and Local Journalism and the Norwegian Collective Imagination of “Post-Conflict” Colombia

Roy Krøvel

Over the past 25 years, Norway has been engaged in various peace processes around the world, normally in the role of a “facilitator” or “neutral mediator”. As a result, Norwegian foreign diplomacy has been credited with a number of international successes. Moreover, as might be expected, Norwegian media have not remained unaffected by the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The media have reported on efforts to facilitate peace in places as diverse as Sri Lanka, the Middle East, South Sudan, Cyprus, Guatemala and Colombia. This chapter seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between Norwegian foreign policy and Norwegian journalism. In particular, it will focus on aspects of the production of collective imagination of war and Norwegian understandings of how peaceful transitions from “conflict” to “post-conflict” can come about.

We know from research on journalism that not all voices are equally likely to be heard in the news media. Voices and perspectives from non-elites and from countries outside the global North are being systematically filtered out, misrepresented or misunderstood. The analysis of missing sources and perspectives is a fundamental aspect of source criticism (Howell and Prevenier 2001; Simonson 2013). Critical journalists and/or researchers should always ask themselves how new information and alternative perspectives could alter the interpretation and understanding of a particular phenomenon. How could excluded voices affect the collective imagination we produce on causes for war and conflict and the possible paths to a peaceful future?

The ongoing peace process in Colombia presents us with an excellent example of how better to understand the relationship between Norwegian diplomacy and journalism. The Colombian peace process could help us evaluate journalism as social activity capable of producing information that can facilitate an independent and critical public reflection on the engagement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This investigation begins with the killing of two unarmed indigenous guards by a group of guerrilla soldiers in Toribio, an autonomous indigenous community in Cauca, Colombia in October 2014. It proceeds by analysing the causes for and consequences of the killings in a local and regional context, before moving on to a brief description

of the many ways this violent crime was reported around the world. Although the conflict between the guerrilla organisation and the autonomous indigenous communities has many important consequences for the ongoing peace process and Norwegian facilitation in Colombia, in general Norwegian media were not capable of producing independent quality journalism on the significance and meaning of the killings in relation to the conflict and the peace process in Colombia.

In this chapter, I explore how the global media made sense of the assassinations in Toribio. This led to an exploration of the social imagination of peace that drives Norwegian mediation efforts in Colombia. Finally, I ask how these social imaginaries contribute to Norwegian journalism on Colombia.

### Assassination and justice in Toribio: Media coverage around the world

Activist journalists connected to the indigenous organisations in the area spread news of the assassination of indigenous leaders in Toribio rapidly and effectively. The largest organisation, El Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC),<sup>1</sup> connects well over a hundred local autonomous administrative areas and can count on dozens of indigenous activist journalists (depending on the definition of “activist journalist”) to produce and distribute information on current issues. The assassinations took place in the early hours of 5 November 2014. On that day, the national indigenous organisation, La Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)<sup>2</sup> had already run a piece on its webpage condemning the assassinations.<sup>3</sup> The article contained detailed (and seemingly very reliable) information about what had taken place – it included the names of the victims and considerable background on the reason they had been assassinated. The blame was put squarely on the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC),<sup>4</sup> the largest of the Marxist guerrilla organisations in Colombia.

Almost immediately, traditional and indigenous media in Colombia put the events in historical and social context: for decades, faced with increasing pressure from the Colombian army, paramilitaries and left-wing guerrillas vying for control over a strategically important region, indigenous organisations have been struggling to maintain autonomy in the region. As the negotiation between the Colombian government and the FARC in Cuba entered a decisive phase after 2012, the armed parties rushed in to convert territorial ambitions and claims into “facts on the ground” in Cauca and elsewhere. FARC has long claimed to have a particular role to play in the region. In fact, the Colombian Communist Party, often seen as a precursor to FARC, had been an early instigator of indigenous organising, dating back almost to the Russian revolution of 1917. Over the years, a significant number of teenagers, mostly indigenous, have joined the FARC as guerrilla soldiers. Nonetheless, the Constitution of 1991, which came as a result of a previous round of peace negotiations, grants the peoples

of the region autonomy based on indigenous worldviews and ways of organising. Paradoxically, according to Colombian indigenous organisations, the ongoing peace process in Cuba – facilitated by Norway – threatens to undermine essential aspects of the previous peace agreements such as the collective right of indigenous peoples to resource-rich territories.

For these and a number of other reasons, global media found the assassinations in Toribio intriguing and important. A striking feature of the global media coverage is the many variations in frames and perspectives. Journalists and editors interpreted the news according to the differing horizons of understanding available to them. Subsequently, in moving from an interpretation of the information on the killings to journalism based on that information, journalists around the world have sought ways to present the news within frames and existing narratives suited to their particular imagined audiences.

The South African *Pretoria News* of 7 November 2014 reported that the men had been killed in revenge for removing a FARC propaganda poster, and quoted the Colombian interior minister condemning “this indescribable act”. For the Malaysian *Utusan Borneo* of 10 November, the rich and colourful photos of the traditional indigenous procession and burial a couple of days later seemed to be the key aspect – a large photo of grieving faces and flags is accompanied by a short text explaining that FARC was responsible – and it is hard not to sympathise with the anguished family members and friends of the dead men. The *China Post* ran a similar short story the following day, 11 November. The Kuwaiti *Arab Times* of 11 November informed its readers that unarmed indigenous guards had arrested those responsible for the killings. The guerrilla soldiers were found guilty by a traditional tribunal and sentenced to “40 to 60 years in jail and 20 lashes”, according to the *Arab Times*. BBC Online took full advantage of the possibility of linking the news of this event to stories the BBC had published previously. By following the links on the website, a pattern of repeated threats, violence and other forms of human rights abuse against indigenous activists emerges to show that this is not an isolated event and must be understood as part of a pattern, in historical context. At the same time, the BBC raised a different and equally interesting perspective: “The United Nations says it is concerned by the verdict handed down by an indigenous court in Colombia to seven members of the FARC rebel group” (11 November 2014). The article is illustrated by a photo of seven handcuffed guerrilla soldiers appearing before some 3,000 members of the Toribio community. Other international media follow up on this aspect, focusing on the human rights of those sentenced for the killings – which indeed opens up a potentially rich terrain of reflection on the relationship between collective rights (as manifested in UN convention ILO 169, for instance) and individual human rights.

The intention here is not to identify, decode and describe the totality of existing frames, narratives or discourses found in the immense global media reporting on the assassinations in Toribio but, rather more modestly, to document and indicate some of the many very readable and informative ways of reporting on the issue found in

the international media. A substantial range of options is available. The conclusion so far is no more than to note that media in very diverse localities did find ways to make the assassinations relevant for local audiences. All these different ways of covering the issue added something to the understanding of current events in Colombia in general and the ongoing peace process in particular, bringing new insights to the collective imagination of Colombian society and to audiences' horizons of knowledge. And they provide the background for an informed reflection on Norwegian journalism about peace issues in Colombia.

### A short note on methodology

Building on Roy Bhaskar's and Norman Fairclough's (Fairclough 2005) versions of critical discourse analysis, this research starts with defining a social problem: while Norwegian institutions do play a role in defining a future Colombian society, a Norwegian audience has only limited access to quality journalism critically and independently evaluating Norwegian institutions in a Colombia context.

I have chosen an explorative methodology for this study. This means that the research has moved through various phases where results have led to new questions and more investigation and search for sources of information. This qualitative design has been chosen in order to capture a broad diversity of perspectives, frames and discourses with a strong emphasis on hermeneutics (Gadamer and Silverman 1991).

The first step in the investigation process was to document indigenous media reporting online on the assassinations in Toribio. These organisations largely reproduce and disseminate articles produced by collectives of activist journalists operating from within local autonomous indigenous structures (through global networks of indigenous organisations and supporters, these articles are likely to find a large and concerned audience). The second step in the investigation was to document the information disseminated by the FARC rebels, both online through FARC's own channels of information and through statements and interviews given to traditional media.

The third step was to employ Library Press Display to select relevant articles from 2,200 newspapers in 58 countries. To avoid ending up with an overwhelming load of information, I limited the search to articles dealing directly with the assassinations in Toribio. This global search resulted in a selection of 18 relevant articles on the case in Toribio: six from Colombia and 12 from various other places around the world. The selection is not designed to be representative and the results will not be used to speculate on universal frames, narratives or discourses but, rather, to document some of the existing diversity of journalistic reporting on the issue. Documenting diversity globally will help us to imagine how Norwegian journalism on the topic might look.

I have also employed Retriever, an online searchable database containing most Norwegian newspapers and online journalistic media to get an overview of Norwegian coverage of war and peace processes in Colombia since 1990. The total number is too

large to handle with qualitative methodologies, but the overview helped me to choose the most relevant articles for a qualitative reading. In the end, the most fruitful step in the investigation of Norwegian media coverage proved to be the coverage in the two main television channels (NRK and TV2), including their respective webpages. With the kind assistance of the archives of NRK and TV2, I received a full list of all television reporting on Colombia and the peace process since the start of the latest round of talks in 2012.

According to critical realists such as Fairclough and Bhaskar, a major challenge in critical discourse analysis is to move from the empirical realm of descriptive documentation of events – for instance, what happened in Toribio – to the underlying natural, social, political, cultural and economic causes which operate in the realms of the actual and real and are therefore not directly accessible to us. Underlying causes must be sought through hermeneutical interpretation and theoretical reflection, which requires deep knowledge and first-hand experience. In the case of Toribio, it is therefore relevant here to mention that I first visited the village in 1996 as a journalist. I have since returned several times to Colombia and the Cauca region, and have interviewed and held discussions with a large number of both guerrilla and indigenous leaders. I am currently involved in a university project with educational activities and research in Cauca, and regularly interact with ten Master's students from the indigenous media and a similar group of indigenous educators at Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural (UAIIN) in Popayan, Colombia.

Nevertheless, an interpretive process will always depend on the possibilities and limitations of the researcher and his or her horizon of knowledge and experience. In order to enrich the interpretation of the Norwegian coverage of the Colombian peace process, I have involved a group of Norwegian journalists from *VG*, *Klassekampen*, *Aftenposten*, NRK and TV2. The journalists and editors are all experienced and well-informed about Norwegian foreign policy and international relations in general – but they should not be considered to be “Colombia experts” (if such a thing exists in Norway). Instead, they belong to a relatively small group of journalists who are the most likely candidates for proposing to produce, or agreeing to finance, journalism about Norwegian efforts to facilitate peace in Colombia. In my view, they are well placed to reflect constructively on structural constraints on journalism and on the possibilities of creative and critical reportage. It is hoped that by interviews and by drawing on the experience of seasoned foreign reporters, the interpretation of Norwegian coverage will become more robust (Ritchie et al. 2013: 182). The interviews have been open and qualitative, without predefined questions. Typically, the dialogue began with a general discussion on media coverage of the global South and Norwegian foreign policy, before the questions turned more directly to the Colombian peace process. I normally showed some of the reports published by the BBC on the assassinations in Toribio, inviting comments on the reports. Are they newsworthy from a Norwegian perspective? How could the issue have been made interesting for a Norwegian audience? The interviews ended with

a discussion on the possibilities of the journalist or the editor getting funding for quality journalism of the sort produced by the BBC.

I learned during the interviews that it can be difficult to make journalists and editors speak and reflect freely if they feel they are chosen to represent a newspaper or broadcaster, so I agreed not to use any quotes that could connect what was said directly to any particular news medium (a list of interviewees is, however, provided at the end of the chapter).

## Norwegian imagination of peace and diplomacy – from Gandhian to pragmatic perspectives

The question of peace, peace negotiations, peace processes and peace agreements looms in the background of the stories told on the Toribio assassinations. In a Norwegian context, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has had a strong influence on how peace is conceived and thus how a peaceful society can be imagined to come about. In the 1930s, for example, the first Norwegian university professor of philosophy, Arne Næss, introduced Gandhian perspectives on peace to a Norwegian audience (Gjefsen 2012). Through Næss and others, Gandhian understandings of peace found a pivotal place within the Norwegian collective imagination of what peace is.

From a Gandhian perspective, peace is much more than “no war”; peace should also be seen to include freedom from hunger, poverty, exclusion and various forms of structural violence. Further, Gandhi’s philosophy and practice of nonviolent resistance rejects separating means and ends, and violence can therefore not be used to obtain peace.

Although Gandhi’s philosophy has influenced Norwegian understandings of peace, there are also other, more pragmatic, perspectives. On several occasions the Nobel Peace Prize, for instance, has been awarded to political and military leaders who have employed violent means to achieve their goals. And while one tradition within the Norwegian collective imagination of what it means to be a Norwegian includes a vision of Norway as a particularly peaceful society, a tradition which can be followed back at least to the 1890s and the struggle for independence from Sweden, the Norwegian foreign policy after the Second World War has been predominantly pragmatic. Norway is considered a reliable member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and has loyally supported NATO’s engagements in Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere.

A recurrent theme in the literature on Norwegian international engagement is precisely this seemingly unresolvable conflict of being caught somewhere between what appears to be altruistic engagement for peace and justice in “faraway places” such as Guatemala, Colombia, Sudan or Sri Lanka and egotistic maximisation of national interest (Dale 2000; Lange, Helge and Øyvind 2009; Leira and Borchgrevink 2007). Some (for instance Norwegian researcher Terje Tvedt) have described the resulting foreign policy regime as both egotistic and altruistic at the same time, because even

acts of outwardly pure goodness must in reality be understood in a realist context of national interests (Tvedt 2004, 2006). How will altruistic acts of goodness further Norwegian national interests to be seen internationally as a particularly peaceful nation?

Practical experience with war and peace mediation has shaped and formed a Norwegian model for this type of international engagement. Experiences during the Guatemalan civil war in the 1980s and 1990s had a particularly strong influence on the official Norwegian discourse of peace "facilitation" (Krøvel 2000; Nissen 2011). From documents in the archive of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is clear that much Norwegian activity in the 1980s was based on a Gandhian understanding. Norwegian nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) worked on the assumption that it was necessary to first do something about the causes of war, which were understood to be related to extreme poverty, social exclusion, structural violence, racism and so on. In Guatemala, the NGOs therefore supported housing projects for the urban and rural poor, supported health clinics and built schools for Mayan children. However, while the NGOs felt that these activities were important and valuable, the Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian Peoples Aid and others gradually came to the conclusion that the war itself undermined the efforts to remove structural violence and exclusion as causes for the civil war. In Guatemala, the 1980s in particular were an extremely violent period in the long history of civil war. Hundreds of villages, mostly indigenous, sometimes with housing projects and health clinics, were destroyed by the counter insurgency and hundreds of thousands of families fled for their lives. Understandably, Norwegian NGOs felt like Sisyphus, forever destined to be rolling an immense boulder up a hill. Ending the war thus came to be seen as a pre-condition for doing something about the underlying causes of the war.

At the same time, a reassessment of Norwegian foreign policy took place in light of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. In a white paper from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1989), the then foreign minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, redefined Norwegian interests from focusing mainly on Europe and regional security issues to a more global perspective. According to this way of thinking, Norwegian wellbeing was increasingly linked to global security issues, global health issues, environmental issues and rights issues. Others closely related with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for instance Jan Egeland, connected Norwegian security in a globalised world and peace and conflict issues even more explicitly. According to Egeland, a superpower would not be a very effective mediator in wars and civil wars around the world because it would inevitably be associated with colonial histories of various types and vulnerable to the suspicion of serving neoimperial interests. A small state such as Norway, in contrast, could be much more effective because it would be seen as an honest broker (Egeland 1988).

This argument gained influence for two main reasons. The first was because Egeland (as many others from Norwegian NGOs and academia) was recruited to a top position in the state department. As secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egeland was in a position to convert his theory into praxis, and, indeed, he was

involved in efforts to facilitate a number of peace processes, most notably in Guatemala and the Middle East. The second was because of the apparent success of the “Oslo Back Channel”, which led to an agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1993. The signing of the Oslo Accords was interpreted by many, internationally and in Norway, as a massive diplomatic success for Norway and Norwegian diplomacy (Bauck and Omer 2013; Waage 2000).

The engagement in peace processes around the world encountered resistance from hard realists inside and outside the state department. The early “successes”, such as the signing of the Oslo Agreement (1993) and the peace accords in Guatemala (1996), convinced many of the importance and value of such engagements but the resulting strategies for Norwegian engagement in such processes should nonetheless be seen as a compromise between realists – mostly concerned with Norwegian security interests – and a more idealist camp which saw engagement for peace as a social responsibility and a valuable activity in itself.

This compromise was hammered out in the form of strategies and policies, and came to be known as “the Norwegian model”. It is noteworthy for some of its particular features. First, the model combines efforts from NGOs and state departments to the extent that many people have been circulating between the two (Tvedt 2004, 2006, 2008). Quite often, Norwegian NGOs will be financed directly by the state department to implement activities within the overall framework of Norwegian engagement. Sometimes, the state department prefers to have NGOs deal with activities that would be too sensitive from a diplomacy perspective, or might cause diplomatic problems. Second, the Norwegian strategy is to have the fighting parties sign a binding agreement of some sort, which presumably will begin a process of mutual interaction and interdependence and which will lead to mutual understanding. In the talks between Israel and PLO in 1993, for instance, the most difficult issues such as the return of refugees and land reform were left to be solved at a later stage. The most urgent issue, then, is to have “no war” so that international society and local parties can begin to do something about the underlying causes of the war. Third, based on this line of reasoning, it is of great importance to talk with “everyone”, even those labelled terrorists in the international community. From a Norwegian perspective, mediators must pay particular attention to those who command the armed groups. At crucial points in the peace processes, the state department have invited the two strongest armed parties to secret talks in tranquil surroundings in Norway. The purpose has been not only to facilitate talks, but also to build trust and, perhaps, friendly relationships between the enemies on the battlefield (Krøvel 2011).

The Norwegian model has historically given priority to activities aimed at the military leaders of both sides. From a Gandhian perspective, a number of problems emerge. Gandhian peace scholars, for instance Johan Galtung and Jake Lynch, insist on not reducing the conflict to a war between two parties (Lynch and Galtung 2010). Instead, mediators and journalists alike should seek to understand and engage with a broad variety of involved parties as a necessary background for understanding the many complex underlying causes of conflict formation.

While the Norwegian method came about as a pragmatic response to the harsh realities "on the ground" in Guatemala and the Middle East, it has become increasingly vulnerable to criticism for focusing excessively on military and political leaders, thereby enabling these elites to define the parameters of future nation-building processes. An increasing number of Norwegian scholars have criticised aspects of Norwegian efforts in the Middle East (Waage 2000), Sri Lanka (Sørbø 2011), Sudan (Piene 2014), Guatemala (Krøvel 1999; Nissen 2011) and elsewhere for failing to lay the groundwork for more peaceful societies to emerge.

### Social imagination of conflict and peace processes

In the remainder of the chapter, I will employ the term collective or social "imagination" in order to discuss how experience and knowledge are being employed in order to respond, react, transform and transcend crisis or war (Hall and Lamont 2013). My use of the term encompasses the horizons of knowledge which make interpretation and understanding possible (Gadamer and Silverman 1991), but offers in addition a terminology to discuss more specifically how relationships between causes and effects are imagined. It also underlines the social or collective aspects of producing such imagination, and thus invites analysis of the contributions from different groups or individuals – for instance, diplomats, NGO representatives, journalists, media and academics. The social imagination resulting from these various contributions cannot be reduced to the sum of individual contributions. Nonetheless, it is necessary and valuable to study contributions from one group or institution – for instance, journalists or the media – to the collective process of producing a Norwegian social imagination of peace and peace processes. The relationships between social imagination and particular contributions should, however, be seen as interrelated in the sense that contributions build on existing social imagination at the same time as they contribute to developing and changing them.

Existing theories on Norwegian journalism are relevant as a starting point for a reflection on the contributions from journalism to social imagination of the peace processes in Colombia. Tvedt (2004) has demonstrated the close relationship and interdependency between the Norwegian model and Norwegian journalism on development issues. Norwegian journalism about the world outside Europe and North America depends to a large extent on support from state institutions, while individual journalists often circulate between the media, state institutions and NGOs. Elisabeth Eide and Anne Hege Simonsen argue that the world is being "constructed from home", meaning that the ways the media report on global issues are designed to conform to already existing Norwegian worldviews – news from around the world is being domesticated (Eide and Simonsen 2008). Anne Karin Sæther shows how media coverage of Latin America has decreased over the last decades and is now mostly restricted to a few limited topics (Sæther 2007). The Norwegian media coverage of the Guatemalan

peace process conforms to these general trends: the focus was on Norwegian activities and Norwegian mediators. Norwegians, or those closely related to the Norwegians, were the leading sources cited by journalists. Norwegian journalists in general did not question or challenge the analysis and framing of the conflict presented by Norwegian sources in the state department and the NGOs involved in the peace process. Media coverage was entirely subsumed within the dominating narratives and discourses produced by the state department and the NGOs (Krøvel 2011). Only much later did a few critical voices begin to be heard.

### Indigenous media and the FARC: framing, narrative and horizon

The regional indigenous media related the news from Toribio as an episode in a longer culturally embedded narrative of indigenous struggle for autonomy, dignity and peace against repression and external dominance. The main theme of the narratives is a collective will to survive as a people by constructing collective autonomy. This collective will is sometimes formulated as a right enshrined in international conventions such as the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 (1989) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), but is always reflected in a persistent emphasis on the intimate relationship between individual and community identity and autonomy. The news is embedded in histories of indigenous culture, society and the struggle of previous generations for identity and autonomy. As Rappaport (1990) has shown, these histories are malleable and living; they are adapted and reconstructed to fit the needs of new eras as they are being retold by new generations. The indigenous media online tell numerous stories of heroic struggle and martyrdom. It is not surprising that the assassinations in Toribio are told within this culturally embedded narrative – as are countless other politically motivated killings of indigenous leaders in Cauca over the last three to four decades. The perpetrators come from different sectors of Colombian society, the Colombian army, right-wing paramilitaries and various leftist guerrilla organisations, but the motive, according to the indigenous media, is always to break the will to collective autonomy in order to militarily dominate a region which is rich in natural resources as well as strategically important for the armed groups.

However, the killing of the unarmed guards in Toribio resonates with a second strong narrative with a shorter history within the indigenous movement. As the story is told by indigenous media and activists alike, the indigenous movement has armed itself to defend indigenous autonomy at many points in history but most recently in the 1980s (Supelano 2010, 2015). This most recent experience with armed resistance, although initiated by indigenous activists and closely associated with some sectors of the indigenous movement, leads to a number unforeseen problems, most notably a tendency to increase the influence of military commanders over the indigenous

movement which resulted in a stronger focus on military needs and considerations at the expense of the longer-term social, cultural and political interests of the indigenous peoples. The armed resistance thus led to processes that, over time, shifted the internal balance of power within the indigenous movement, and civilian leaders grew increasingly sceptical about the "armed method". Around 1990, the armed organisation and the indigenous movement joined ongoing talks between the Colombian government and several Marxist guerrilla organisations (the FARC and ELN did not participate). The talks led to peace agreements with a number of armed insurgent organisations, among them Movimiento Armado Quintin Lame, which again was enshrined in a new constitution. This earlier peace process granted the indigenous peoples of Colombia substantial rights over political, social and cultural matters. Again, not surprisingly, the indigenous media interpreted the killing of the unarmed guards in Toribio as yet another attempt by an armed organisation to demolish the autonomy granted in the peace process of the early 90s. The killings were seen not only as an attack on autonomy but also on the principle of peaceful resolution of conflicts. In the understanding of the indigenous movement, the FARC sees its interests best served by reigniting violence and intensifying conflict in a region which had grown more peaceful.

A third theme is also visible in the indigenous media – a method of nonviolent resistance. Since the demobilisation of the armed indigenous insurgents, the indigenous leaders have become vulnerable to violent attacks, which have led to a search for alternative mechanisms to protect indigenous activists. International solidarity has had some effect, but the indigenous communities have, by and large, had to find ways of defending themselves. The unarmed indigenous guards play a pivotal role in the defence of local communities and leaders, and have become something indigenous peoples of the region feel proud about. In reportages in mainstream media<sup>5</sup> and documentaries produced by national and international media,<sup>6</sup> the bravery of the guards and the nonviolent method itself have been turned into models for admiration and emulation. The killing of two unarmed guards is therefore interpreted as a deliberate attack on nonviolence as a method.

These three themes – histories of struggle for autonomy, rights enshrined in already existing peace agreement and nonviolent method – come together in the indigenous critique against the ongoing peace process between the FARC and the government, supported by Norway and taking place in Cuba. From an indigenous perspective, the suspicion is that both the Colombian government and FARC see their interests best served by rolling back indigenous autonomy and territorial rights. Being excluded from participating in the Cuba talks further stokes suspicion among indigenous organisations. They fear that the assassinations in Toribio are part of a campaign by FARC which will create "facts on the ground" and lead to territorial hegemony in the region, something which seems to resonate well with FARC's strategy at the negotiating table. FARC seems to envisage a post-conflict Colombia where FARC and its demobilised guerrilla soldiers are granted communal rights to govern a substantial number of territories, some of which overlap with indigenous territories. Indigenous activists

see this as a danger to existing autonomy and a source of perpetual future conflict.

The indigenous media, then, explicitly link the event in Toribio to the ongoing peace process between FARC and the government. The peace process is seen as inseparable from the military strategy on the ground and as causing military commanders to act against civilian indigenous leaders to strengthen FARC's negotiating position. The event in Toribio is also explicitly connected to upholding the promises of previous peace agreements, and directly interpreted as an attack on nonviolence as a method.

FARC runs a fairly advanced information machinery, including a webpage publishing fairly well-written articles.<sup>7</sup> From the perspective of the FARC, the event in Toribio and the issue of indigenous autonomy look very different from the version told by indigenous media. FARC has historically been closely associated with the Colombian Communist Party, which has a long history of organising among the rural poor, including indigenous communities in Cauca. In fact, a number of revered early leaders of the indigenous movement in Cauca were educated by Communist organisers (Rappaport 1990). The very lively organisational life we observe among indigenous peoples today owes at least some of its success to the courageous and persistent labour of members of the Communist party. The FARC still believes it exerts considerable influence in the region and it rejects being supplanted by indigenous organisations – and it also claims to speak for all working men and women in Colombia in the class struggle against capital. According to this view, there should not be any distinction between workers of different races or ethnicities and permanent special rights to indigenous peoples might produce divisions and conflicts within the band of working men and women. Instead, labourers of the world should unite under the leadership of the Communist Party in order to prevail in the struggle against capital.

In the demands presented at the negotiations in Cuba, FARC raises the issue of indigenous poverty, racism and structural exclusion but indigenous peoples are not given special treatment – rather, they are mentioned as only one of many groups suffering repression and exclusion. Structural violence against indigenous peoples is framed as one of many aspects of capitalist exploitation. The solution would be to abolish the capitalist system, not to introduce permanent special rights for one group.

### Covering Toribio as something more than an episode

Making sense of the assassinations in Toribio is a demanding task that is understandably difficult for a journalist who is not intimately familiar with local context. An outside observer would have to draw on knowledge and insights from various disciplines in addition to having a solid grasp of Marxism-Leninism and indigenous cultures. Most media outside Colombia limit themselves to mentioning only the immediately and directly accessible aspects of the event. Many focus on the anguish and pain felt by those left behind, accompanied by photos of grieving faces. Others highlight the combination of grief and the colourful dresses of the funeral procession. There is

certainly, in the reporting from around the world, a sense of Orientalism (Said 2003), of representing the other as very strange and different.

Among the international media observed here, the BBC, however, tries to provide some historical context to the information by providing short news items with links to other relevant news items. This opens the possibility of moving from episodic framing to thematic framing. By providing a web of links to previous news items, the BBC makes it possible for the reader to look for patterns or structural issues in the series of inter-linked news items. However, the potential for a historical understanding of the various episodes is rather shallow, as each individual news item concentrates on the visible and directly accessible, to the detriment of underlying structures and invisible causes. What emerges from reading the interlinked episodes is far from a critical history. Instead, it resembles what professional historians would call a "chronicle" – a list of events, but lacking in analysis of deeper structures or causes. Linking various episodes does not in itself produce a fully-fledged thematic framing of the issue (Scheufele 1999).

### Toribio is not on the agenda in Norway

At first glance, Norwegian media seem to have paid significantly more attention to Colombian issues after Norway became involved in the latest round of negotiations on a peace agreement (the number of newspaper articles mentioning Colombia increased by approximately 40 per cent from 2013 to 2014). However, the number of articles mentioning FARC actually decreased after 2008. This finding indicates less media interest in the peace process than in the war, as the number of articles correlates well with spectacular and bloody events on the battlefield. It seems, then, that war and death are still strong news values in Norwegian media. Nonetheless, the Norwegian media do cover FARC and the peace process. The five non-Colombian names mentioned most often in these articles are "Norway", "Havanna", "Børge Brende",<sup>8</sup> "Oslo" and "Sri Lanka" – the dominating media frame for war and peace in Colombia is a culturally embedded Norwegian narrative, a longer history of Norwegian peace making from Guatemala and the Middle East to Sri Lanka and Colombia. The peace process is the real narrative, while other actors are ascribed to the different "act spheres" depending on the roles they are seen to play in relation to the negotiations in Cuba (Prince 2003: 92). News values are attributed to events based mainly on their perceived importance in relation to the peace process.

I believe this is key to explaining the most puzzling finding in this study: from studying the Norwegian database retriever.no and the international PressReader it is fair to conclude that Norwegian media are much more interested in Colombian affairs than are most other media – but no Norwegian newspaper has registered an article dealing with the assassinations in Toribio even though the Norwegian News Agency disseminated a piece entitled "FARC soldiers convicted for killing Indians" (FARC-soldater dømt for drap på indianere 2014).

## The Norwegian agenda as set by the media

Norwegian media do have some coverage of Colombian issues. NRK has dedicated a section online to Colombia.<sup>9</sup> Five of 45 articles on nrk.no (30 September 2012 to 31 December 2014) deal with general poverty in Colombia, earthquakes and other issues not directly related to the ongoing peace process. Two or three others see current affairs through the lens of the peace process. The presidential elections in 2014, for example, were mainly interpreted in light of what they might mean for the ongoing peace process. The vast majority, however, deal directly with the negotiations in general and refer directly to the Norwegian efforts as a crucial component. Overall, close to 90 per cent of the articles in the section “Colombia” are directly related to the peace process and the possibilities of finding a peaceful solution to the violent conflict. Superficially at least, these findings seem to be in line with the general recommendations of the peace journalism model promoted by Galtung (1996) and Lynch (Lynch and Galtung 2010), as journalists are advised to pay as much attention to peace stories and the search for possible peaceful solutions to the conflict as to traditional war reporting.

NRK Sápmi (Sami) is an interesting exception to the rule. NRK Sápmi broadcasts in Sami, an indigenous language, to an indigenous Norwegian audience. It is perhaps not surprising that indigenous journalists broadcasting to an indigenous audience demonstrate a greater capacity to identify with indigenous peoples around the world. In June 2014, NRK Sápmi<sup>10</sup> quotes Colombia’s United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): “in the five months to May 2014, ten cases of mass displacements resulting in 4,500 indigenous people from five different states were forced to leave their homes”.<sup>11</sup> The article points to legal and illegal mining as one important cause of the forceful displacement of indigenous peoples. Another cause, according to the article, is the armed conflict between guerrillas and the Colombian army. The article is noteworthy for dealing with the displacement of indigenous peoples and the underlying causes without necessarily connecting them to Norway’s perceived role as a fixer of the problem (the article does not appear under the banner “More on Colombia”). Another interesting article, and possible exception to the rule, is “They are damn tired of the war” published before the start of a round of negotiations in Oslo.<sup>12</sup> According to the reporter, the inhabitants of Toribio are sick and tired of being terrorised by army, paramilitaries and guerrillas. Locals are given time and space to criticise all the warring parties, leaving the impression that a peaceful solution is needed urgently. The negotiations in Oslo (from 17 October 2012) are only mentioned briefly but seem to be the reason NRK has travelled to Toribio and published an article on the situation there. However, although the article conveys some of the local frustration with the war and the warring parties it does not mention indigenous critique of the peace process – for instance, the disappointment over being excluded from the dialogue on peace and the future of Colombia, and the fear that the peace process will undermine autonomy and indigenous territorial rights. From reading the article it is difficult to imagine why indigenous organisations would criticise a peace

process, even one that excludes indigenous peoples from having a voice. Later, the national evening news NRK *Dagsrevyen* follows up with a short video documentary on demobilising guerrilla soldiers, another key issue from an indigenous perspective.<sup>13</sup> Although indigenous organisations have protested against guerrilla demands to establish zones for demobilised guerrilla soldiers on indigenous territories, the documentary does not discuss such potentially problematic issues.

A superficial analysis of the media coverage of the Colombian peace process would seem to confirm that Norwegian journalists pay as much attention to peaceful solutions as to war reporting, but a more detailed reading reveals that the coverage systematically ignores minority perspectives and criticism. Peace is presented as the opposite to war, the peace process as the pathway to a peaceful society, whereas according to Galtung and Lynch candid peace journalism should strive to take account of all relevant voices. In the case of Norwegian journalism on Colombian issues, the social imagination of peace and the Norwegian role in the peace process becomes a filter that excludes important perspectives and hinders the construction of what Arne Næss calls "total view" (Næss, quoted in Brennan and Witoszek 1999: 22). Instead of a total view, the collective imagination is produced by a chain of individuals and collectives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, journalists and NGOs, employing limited horizons of understanding and serving multiple interests besides informing about the prospects for real peace.

### Structures, patterns and the possibility of creativity

So far, the narrative has focused on the structure and pattern of Norwegian coverage (or lack of it). Such considerations invite reflections on emergent structures such as financial constraints on the free carrying-out of journalistic ideals. However, the interviews soon came to revolve around the many creative ways journalists find to produce stories, in spite of structural constraints. My focus had to change from emergent structural constraints, to also include the possibilities of innovation and the creative production of journalism.

A number of the interviewees wanted to underline the importance of the many efforts to cover Colombian issues, as well as Norwegian engagement. Some of the larger newspapers and broadcasters rely on journalists based in the US – or elsewhere in America – to report about Colombian issues. These journalists will sometimes have the possibility to visit Colombia and do research there. Smaller newspapers rely mainly on freelancers to report from Colombia. While none of the media represented in this selection have a permanent presence in Colombia, one editor emphasised that today's journalist and editors can follow and communicate directly with Colombian sources without necessarily being present. These journalists and editors did not feel unescapably restricted by a perceived lack of interest from the imagined audience. In different ways, they all expressed the social responsibility of journalism to cover

stories simply because they are deemed to be “important”. They also believed in the possibility of telling important stories to catch the interest and imagination of the audience even though the audience did not know in advance that they wanted to, or needed to, hear that story. If they were told well, a Norwegian audience would be interested in stories about peace and war in Colombia and about Norwegian involvement. However, all the interviewees emphasised that creative stories are needed to capture the imagination of the audience, especially stories concerning a country few Norwegians know much about.

To interpret the findings so far, both structural constraints and the possibility of creative reporting must be considered. How can the creative potential of socially responsible journalism be unleashed?

First of all, we must recognise that very few Norwegian journalists would claim to be expert on Colombia – it is unlikely that a small country such as Norway would be able to maintain a reasonably large group of expert journalists in any country of the world. The overwhelming greater part of Norwegian journalism on Colombia comes from enlightened generalists. The journalists and editors chosen for this chapter all belong to this select group of enlightened generalists, prime candidates for producing future critical journalism from a place such as Colombia. However, although all the interviewees are exceptionally well informed about international relations, and Norwegian foreign policy in general, at the time none possessed the knowledge about Colombia needed to discuss in-depth the possibilities of peace and Norwegian involvement. None of them knew the details of the previous peace accords, the existing indigenous autonomy and the violence committed against the indigenous peoples. I believe that such in-depth knowledge must be considered a crucial component for journalistic creativity to ignite – an understanding probably influenced by the fact that the department (of Journalism and Media Studies) where I work, defines “knowledge” as one of three key dimensions of learning global journalism (alongside “skills” and “competences”).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, I was particularly interested in enquiring and developing further any theme or example that emerged during the interviews that could teach me more about the creative processes behind producing journalism about such issues as peace and war in Colombia. Many examples emerged during the conversations. One young journalist at a large newspaper told how friendship with Latin Americans and previous backpacking in Latin America had equipped her with a network of contacts. When a Mexican student in Norway at the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo made a spectacular protest against the killings and abductions of students in Mexico, seeing the possibility of using the network to travel to Mexico and investigate further, at least one of the editors of the newspaper where the journalist works had independently developed the idea that the newspaper needed to explain to the audience the background of the protest in Oslo. When skills and local knowledge met the desire to produce investigate reporting, the editorial team made available the necessary funding for the journalist to cover an issue that was deemed newsworthy but which had previously been reduced to short episodic news items with very limited context. Similarly,

the editors of two smaller newspapers explained that they regularly held meetings with staff members who wanted to report from localities in the global South. Normally, the ideas for such reporting would come from the journalists, based on their interests and knowledge, whereas the discussions would revolve around financing and how to make the topic relevant and interesting for a Norwegian audience. A journalist at one of the major broadcasters explained during the interview that the journalists do come up with a large number of such ideas every week but, mainly because of financial constraints, the number of journalists dedicated to international reporting was too small to follow up on more than a few "salient issues". Based on the interviews, I believe existing knowledge and experience among journalists is a key ingredient in the creative process, contributing to setting the agendas and producing frames and perspectives, especially at a time when the business is experiencing financial crisis.

The financial restrictions on global journalism are real. As Champagne (2005: 51) noted, the journalistic practices that best conform to the journalists' ethical codes are very often simply not profitable. The restrictions are closely related to those emergent structures that hinder the creative process of journalism. A much more continuous observation of Colombia (including permanent presence in Latin America) would probably be needed to cover issues such as the violence against indigenous peoples in Colombia.

### Concluding remarks – a fractured reflexive

Covering violence against indigenous peoples in Colombia would lead journalists to ask questions about indigenous peoples and their role in Colombian society. As a result, it could lead to an interest in indigenous perspectives on the peace talks in Cuba. Questions would have to be asked about who is participating and who is not, and questions would have to be asked about the possible consequences of supporting talks that grant privileges to armed parties to the detriment of nonviolent parties.

Academics and journalists have grown increasingly sceptical towards Norwegian efforts in places such as Guatemala, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Sudan, which was also my general impression after conducting the interviews mentioned above. A growing number of critical studies of Norwegian engagement have been published over the last few years.<sup>15</sup> However, these are mostly critical reflections from a historical perspective, formulated with the privileged perspective of hindsight. Guatemala is now ridden by general violence at more or less the same level as before the peace agreement. The process in Sri Lanka broke down, leading to extreme levels of violence. The war in South Sudan has returned, albeit in new forms. It is also hard to support the argument that the Oslo Accord led to a lasting peace in the Middle East, although regional politicians have been sprinkled generously with numerous peace awards for their efforts.

The public deliberation on Norwegian engagement with such peace processes might best be understood by the term "fragmented reflexive" (Archer 2003). In individuals,

a fractured reflexive happens when someone “cannot conduct purposeful internal conversations and thus design purposeful courses of action”. The internal conversation breaks down into bits and pieces. A fragmented reflexive does not lead to autonomous reflection and meta-reflexivity. The collective public conversation on peace processes in Norway has not yet developed a meta-reflexive perspective capable of learning from previous experiments with similar processes.

The fragmented reflexive has resulted in a false dichotomy between war and peace. The Norwegian social imagination produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the media and others constructs post-conflict as something very different from the vision handed down in the Gandhian tradition. From a Gandhian perspective, the insights from previous peace processes seem to teach us that the peace process itself can become an obstacle to peace. A peace process that excludes important voices risks cementing social injustice and power structures, thus laying the groundwork for future conflicts.

Norwegian journalists need to ponder on how to produce critical journalism that can have an impact while the peace process is still ongoing. Journalism has a crucial role to play if Norwegian society is to heal the broken reflexive. It is necessary to develop holistic perspectives and provide critical information that is not framed by Norwegian special interests or biased because of underdeveloped horizons of understanding. From the interviews and the theoretical reflection above, I believe action should be taken concerning two specific challenges.

First, the model for financing journalism is in crisis and is not likely to be able to fund the production of the appropriate knowledge and experience necessary to educate and maintain a critical mass of journalists with the capacity to produce independent and creative journalism on Norwegian peace efforts around the world. Alternative models for financing a necessary build-up of knowledge and experience must be considered. Currently, financing is provided by some NGOs, by independent foundations such as Fritt Ord and by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). These efforts by agents positioned outside the media business must be intensified to counteract the structural constraints imposed on the production of journalism. At the same time, these efforts should be scrutinised in order to strengthen the autonomy of journalism in confronting these forms of alternative funding.

Of equal importance is the role of education in fostering knowledge, capacities and skills to produce creative and critical journalism on peace-related issues in Colombia and similar places around the world. The interviews cited here indicate strong willingness – among both journalists and editors – to produce independent and critical journalism on peace issues. However, such journalism requires not only willingness and generic journalistic skills but also deep knowledge of the local historical, social, cultural and political context. Knowledge is a necessary ingredient for journalistic creativity to erupt, and the provision of such education should be seen as part of the social responsibility for journalism education. Nonetheless, education is a lifelong process that cannot be confined to schools and universities. Collective efforts by communities of journalists are also needed if Norwegian journalism is to become able to

produce critical perspectives independent of the influence of the state, of NGOs and of business.

## Notes

1. The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca.
2. The Colombian National Indigenous Organization
3. <http://cms.onic.org.co/2014/11/onic-rechaza-muerte-de-guardias-en-toribio-y-exige-que-grupos-armados-no-involucren-a-poblacion-indigena-en-el-conflicto/>
4. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I4qKvDUCc4>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpKf7Cfxx2U>
7. <http://farc-epeace.org/>
8. The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs 2013 –
9. <http://www.nrk.no/emne/colombia-1.572455>
10. <http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/fordrivelse-truer-urfolksstammer-1.11783291>
11. <http://colombiareports.co/4500-indigenous-people-colombia-displaced-5-months-un-report/>
12. <http://www.nrk.no/verden/de-er-mokk-lei-av-krigen-i-colombia-1.8349413>
13. <http://www.nrk.no/skole/klippdetalj?topic=urn:x-mediadb:20410>
14. <http://www.hioa.no/Studier-og-kurs/SAM/Bachelor/Journalistikk/Programplan-for-Bachelorstudium-i-journalistikk-2015/JB3000-Globalisering-og-internasjonale-emner-for-journalister-2015>
15. For instance [http://www.nrk.no/verden/\\_-gir-noreg-skuld-for-krigen-i-sor-sudan-1.12244383](http://www.nrk.no/verden/_-gir-noreg-skuld-for-krigen-i-sor-sudan-1.12244383) / <http://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/sri-lanka/brente-det-norske-flagget/a/244157/> / <http://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/2004/04/27/396884.html>

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## Acronyms

- BBC British Broadcasting Corporation
- CRIC El Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca)
- ELN Ejército de Liberación Nacional [National Liberation Army]
- FARC EP Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo [The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army]

GLOBAL AND LOCAL JOURNALISM AND THE NORWEGIAN COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION  
OF "POST-CONFLICT" COLOMBIA

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NRK	Norsk rikskringkasting [Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation]
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ONIC	La Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia [The National Indigenous Organization of Colombia]
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UAIIN	Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural [The Autonomous Indigenous Intercultural University]
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WWII	Second World War (1939-1945)



## Improving Post-Conflict Journalism through Three Dances of Trauma Studies

Elsebeth Frey

The journalist usually described horrific events in a sober way, because they are cruel enough without adding cruel words. But when she covered the funeral of two young brothers in Northern Ireland, she had trouble being neutral:

... the little boy standing there with his football scarf, burying his two brothers, and the divorced father, who came from England, who was not able to leave the grave. His ex-wife had to walk up to him and put her hand on his shoulder, he got up and came back. It was dreadful (Groth interview 2014).

This is one of many stories that popped into the journalist's head. Journalists encounter tragedies in their reporting. They report on what is happening, searching for the right words and pictures to tell the what, how and why. Their work may influence the way the public perceives the violent incident. Some would go further, saying that for the affected people a community narrative could be the beginning of recovery (Ripley 2009).

This chapter explores the possibilities for interaction between post-conflict journalism and trauma studies, a multidisciplinary field focusing upon "the scope and effect of extreme accidental or intentional stressors upon individuals and communities" (Newman and Nelson 2012: 18). It introduces post-conflict journalism using Newman and Nelson's framework of three tensions – or the so-called three dances. They are discussed against the journalists' input and output in the working process, connected to selected cases. Although the first example was from post-conflict Northern Ireland, the rest of this chapter is about post-conflict Tunisia and about the sudden terror attack in Norway on 22 July 2011. The case of Tunisia may be defined as a revolution followed by a classic post-conflict situation; the attack in Norway was a catastrophe caused by one man that lasted for 189 minutes (Stormark 2011) – similar events are played out in violent societies, and in civil war before (and even during) the post-conflict period.

Qualitative in-depth interviews took place with two Tunisian journalists and two Norwegian journalists, three female and one male. The journalists work on more than one platform, and together they cover radio, television, online and print media. All of

them do journalistic work on the ground. Two have worked for foreign media in their own country. Their years of journalism experience range from five to 37.

### The two main cases

Tunisia had economic problems, unemployment, corruption and lack of freedom. On 17 December 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire; the suicide provoked demonstrations and the protests spread. On 14 January 2011, the president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, fled the country. In the election for the Constitutional Parliament on 23 October 2011, the political party Ennahdha won the most seats. Ennahdha, the Tunisian party of the Muslim Brotherhood, led a coalition government. After massive sit-ins and violence, the crisis deepened after the assassinations of parliamentarians Chokri Belaïd and Mohamed Brahmi in 2013. In May 2013, the war on terror was officially declared. On 28 July 2013, 65 parliamentarians walked out of the National Assembly, leaving it no longer constitutionally able to sanction any laws. Four non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), Tunisia's Employers' Organisation (UTICA), the Tunisian League of Human Rights (LTDH) and the Order of Advocates – started the national dialogue in October 2013 “to implement the roadmap which aimed at introducing a new constitution, electoral laws and setting a timetable for fresh parliamentary and presidential elections to end the political deadlock” (Hilali 2013). A technocrat government was appointed, and on 26 January 2014 the new Constitution was sanctioned. The first free parliamentary election was held on 26 October 2014, making the political party Nidaa Tounes the biggest in the National Assembly. In the second round of the election for the presidency on 21 December 2014, Béji Caïd Essebsi from Nidaa Tounes won over Moncef Marzouki (Tunisie numerique 2014), who had been the interim president.

In Norway, a bomb exploded in the governmental quarter in Oslo on 22 July 2011 at 15:25. At least 325 people were in the departmental buildings and in the streets nearby; eight were killed and many injured. The material damages were enormous. After bombing downtown Oslo, the perpetrator, Anders Behring Breivik, drove to the island of Utøya. He arrived at 17:17 and started shooting. There were 564 people present, most of them members of the youth organisation of the Labour Party. Breivik was arrested at 18:34. At the island, 69 persons were killed and many injured (NOU 2012: 14).

### *The process of journalism: input and output*

Journalism is about gathering facts, interacting with sources, analysing the material and processing it before publishing it. One could call the first part methodology or input, and the second part output or presentation. With web journalism and cover-it-live, as with sending information directly on radio, television or smart phones, one could argue that the methodology and the presentation do not necessarily follow in

that order. The process of gathering news and facts (and how journalists behave in so doing) could be termed methodology. Certain working methods and skills are tied to this input phase, and one could argue that they are different from the tools of the presentation or output phase which demands other techniques and skills (for instance, writing skills). Even in digital journalism, someone needs to take the pictures – and even if this “someone” is a random person with a cell phone, the journalists and the editor have to regard the picture or video professionally, legally and ethically before deciding if they will publish.

### *Crisis journalism*

Crisis journalism is the journalistic task of covering crises and traumatic events, a huge topic concerned with gathering information and conveying news in chaotic circumstances (Wilkins et al. 2012; Andenæs 2012), testing ethical weighting in contact with vulnerable human beings (Kallevik 2004; Englund 2008; Ochberg 1996) and preventing and/or working on acute and secondary stress reactions (Backholm 2012; Newman and Nelson 2012; Spratt 2012; Idås 2013). There are interdisciplinary ties between crisis journalism and trauma studies.

### *Conflict-sensitive journalism*

Although conflicts are not necessarily violent, conflict-sensitive journalism focuses on the news media’s dealings with violent conflicts. Conflicts are sometimes “rooted in multidimensional causes and factors and their complex interaction and overlap of various conflict issues” (Tahir 2009: 2, 3). Accordingly, journalists have a need for “greater analytical depth and skills to report on it without contributing to further violence or overlooking peacebuilding opportunities” (Howard 2009: 13-14). Hence are implied the journalists’ growing sensitisation to conflict and understanding of the causes of violent conflict which, in turn, should enable “citizens to make better-informed choices in their own best interests” (ibid.). In the pre-conflict phase, poverty and corruption could be examples of causes, and hate speech is a possible warning sign. Then the conflict could unfold into physical and emotional violence, abuse and manipulation. Finally, there is the post-conflict situation.

### *Post-conflict journalism*

Post-conflict journalism conveys news about the aftermath of the conflict and the continuing process. Tahir (2009: 1, 3) writes that in post-conflict situations “... the media keeps an eye on the enforcement of peace agreements that have been put in place by competing parties and ensures that they are being implemented judiciously”. Processes of democratisation and building peace are core issues in post-conflict journalism, as are “rebuilding the society infrastructure, resolving the conflict behind the war and building confidence among warring parties” (de Koster 2009: 13).

## Labels may overlap

Tunisia fits directly into the above definition of post-conflict journalism. On the other hand, Tunisian examples indicate that the boundaries between the different stages of a conflict are not necessarily strict. Was the conflict over when Ben Ali left the country? Was the conflict still in play up until the time the new Constitution was sanctioned by the Constitutional Assembly? One could also ask whether there is an ongoing conflict in Tunisian society, both politically and when violence is concerned. Reporting on several of the violent incidents in Tunisia in recent years could be seen as crisis journalism and as conflict-sensitive journalism, as well as post-conflict journalism. One example is the terror attack at the Museum of Bardo on 18 March 2015 (*Le Monde* 2015). Another is the murder of the opposition parliamentarian Chokri Belaïd on 6 February 2013. The distrust following the murder of Belaïd, and the way in which the authorities followed it up (or, as many thought, did not engage properly in the inquiry) is still present in Tunisia. Even in December 2014, the NGOs behind the national dialogue were needed to help guarantee the best electoral conditions (*La Presse* 2014).

A calamity such as the terror in Norway in 2011 can also be seen as a process with different stages. Timothy Coombs (2015: 1) defines three stages – pre-crisis, crisis event and post-crisis – in dealing with crisis communication. Regardless of how one tends to organise journalism under different labels, there are many similarities between crisis journalism, conflict-sensitive journalism and post-conflict journalism. One similarity is that the need for accuracy will be crucial. Another is the assumption of many sources, and sources with differing opinions. In addition, there is the manner in which knowledge of the three dances may have an effect on journalistic coverage and hence on society – as is discussed in this chapter.

## Traumatic events and distress responses

Newman and Nelson (2012: 19) write that traumatic events, by their very nature, “are a shock to the system, knocking each individual off his or her equilibrium”. The Norwegian National Centre on Violence and Traumatic Stress (NKVTS) defines a traumatic event as overwhelming and unexpected, often implicating serious threats against life and health: “you experience that you have little or no control over what is happening” (NKVTS 2013). The risk of trauma increases from natural disaster to unintended failure, to human failure and finally to intended evil action.

After a traumatic event, a person may experience several distress responses such as trouble sleeping, or irritability, or trauma-related symptoms. Research indicates that people exposed to trauma remain relatively healthy and most do not develop long-lasting psychological disorders. However, major depressive disorder or clinical depression is a possible outcome after traumatic events. As for the com-

plex diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), studies indicate that only 10-18 per cent of those exposed to trauma develop PTSD (Newman and Nelson 2012: 18-19). Current research is just starting to examine post-traumatic growth, which means that "... an individual becomes even higher functioning than prior to trauma exposure" (ibid.). More than half of the Norwegian journalists who covered the terror of 22 July 2011 report on personal and professional growth (Spratt 2012). Newman and Nelson agree that trauma could be a transformative experience, but they dislike setting up the expectation that the affected "... should achieve a higher level of functioning after uncontrollable misfortune may be unrealistic and/or affect procedures of social justice".

In violent conflicts and after civil war, society is divided and polarised. Human rights violations in conflict and mass violence have "... an enduring impact on individuals and communities" (Nickerson, Bryant and Litz 2012: 9). There is probably a considerable number of affected people with overwhelming emotions and strong convictions, and who could be traumatised. Furthermore, as Howard (2009: 37) postulates "... awareness of the effects of trauma and stress on journalists leads to greater sensitivity in news gathering among traumatised survivors of violent conflict". Acknowledging that "... no one is above a human reaction" (Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma 2011: 2), and that what is important to the journalists' health could heavily influence their work, is a major part of crisis journalism. As Klas Backholm (2012: 41) writes, "understanding what might impact on journalistic work choices, and the underlying wellbeing of the individual making these choices, is of utter importance". This chapter postulates that it may be important to the victims, the survivors, the affected people, the communities – and to the journalists themselves.

### Three dances of trauma stress studies

Elana Newman and Summer Nelson's framework of three tensions is based upon their knowledge and research in the field of traumatic stress studies: the dance of approach and avoidance, the dance of fragmentation and integration, and the dance of resilience and vulnerability (Newman and Nelson 2012). They illustrate what could go on inside the mind of a person who experiences trauma, and they describe contrasting strategies. Individuals, organisations and communities can adapt these strategies. For instance, the news audience "may crave and detest information about calamities", thus taking steps to approach and to dance away.

In the rest of this chapter I present and discuss the three dances as a framework for crisis and post-conflict journalism. While doing so, I review them in the context of the input and output of the journalistic process, as well as examples and the experience of the informants.

### *The dance of approach and avoidance*

When facing a life-threatening danger, our survival brain takes over and we run for our lives (avoidance) or we fight back (approach). The part of the brain called *amygdala* processes fear, anger, hate and so on. During a catastrophe, the temporal lobes stifle the signals so that we act automatically in order to rescue ourselves (Theisen and Johannessen 2011; Rees 2011; Newman and Rees 2012).

One Tunisian informant lived this at the demonstration on the day of the martyrs, 9 April 2012. The authorities had forbidden demonstrations at Avenue Habib Bourguiba in Tunis, but people gathered anyway:

I was there with nine people from Ligue de droit de l'homme, when a policeman with a gun came towards us. I could not breathe, I didn't see clearly. Where would I hide? I ran, found an apartment and ran in. I could not think straight, washed my face to make myself respire. I had physical pain, pain in my nose and in my throat. For two days, my nose was aching, I felt the same compression (Saoudi interview 2014).

What happens in the brain in extreme situations will determine how we act, as we are acting on impulse. Furthermore, it could have an impact on which impressions we save or supplant, and how we deal with the aftermath – approaching the problems or avoiding them. In a life-threatening situation, both strategies can be useful. Newman and Nelson (2012: 19) write:

... “approach coping” refers to an individual’s tendency to attend to a stressor by seeking information or closely monitoring the stressor, whereas “avoidance coping” represses, ignores or diverts attention away from the stressor.

In acute situations, journalists are inclined to provide the general public with useful, efficient, relevant and credible news, filling the information gap and doing so rapidly. There is “a need to make as many news stories as possible and use the sources one can get hold of” (Ree interview 2014).

As they have to document what is happening, reporters and photographers are moving in, approaching the calamity. After the bomb went off in the government quarter in Oslo, my informant ran towards the barriers, holding his camera. Accounting for the gravity of the situation, the number of dead and injured and material damage, is important: so is finding first-hand witnesses and speaking to several sources. However, Newman and Nelson (2012: 26) argue that journalists:

... should be aware of how the tension of approach and avoidance may influence their own journalistic behavior and beliefs, the beliefs and behaviours of sources and victims, and the interaction between journalists and sources.

When interviewing the affected, journalists should know that accusatory language or trigger words could cause strong reactions on the spot – or days later. Furthermore, they must decide which questions are suitable in the context and which could be

overwhelming to the interviewees and, in addition, perhaps irrelevant to the news story (*ibid.*) Equally important is the decision whether to contact victims, their relatives and other affected people.

After a violent and overwhelming experience, about five per cent of people react by being hysterical but more common is that people in shock grow very quiet. Some talk endlessly and others are able to provide an overview of what happened, but they may be overwhelmed by emotions and physical reactions. With knowledge about the three dances of trauma studies, journalists could more effectively and rightfully decide which people to approach – and comprehend for whom it could be damaging to talk to reporters. The two Tunisians say that most people wanted to give their stories “since after the dictatorship now they are free to talk” (Saoudi interview 2014). Journalists should have the courage to approach anyone, and do so in a diplomatic and respectful way, they say. All four of the journalists have interviewed people in acutely violent situations. The journalist who covered the terror in Norway met a nurse outside a hospital after the shooting on the island:

She told about so much blood and death, and it was ... the youth were dying inside, and she just kept on talking about it. She was in such a state that she just had to tell it, so I did not interview her (Ree interview 2014).

As the journalists plunge into a violent scene, they get an adrenaline kick. Idås writes that this is part of the body’s fight or flight reflex that “can be released in stressful working situations as well” (Idås 2013: 56). This bodily defence mechanism helps us to focus on what is important – and for journalists it is to gather facts. Crisis journalism and trauma studies tell about journalists with tunnel vision, shutting out strong emotions while working hour after hour. My informants agree. “You are so focused on working, you hardly think of anything else,” said one. At the same time, he was reacting to the terror: “It came to me in flashes, how horrible it was” (Ree interview 2014). Another of my informants remembers how her hands trembled and the camera jumped the first time she covered violence. “But as I started to work, as I started filming, I forgot my fear and started collecting images. I got more self-confident and started living the situation as it was” (Khedhir interview 2014). At one point when this journalist was covering the revolution in Libya she “forgot [her] own life, because I was living a historic moment, so I forgot the risk, I forgot all dangers”. Her colleague had to stop her, saying he feared for her life. A person experiencing the stimulus of adrenaline will often neglect basic needs and can seemingly go on without food and water, rest and sleep for hours – or days. The young journalist covering the Norwegian terror worked around the clock from the time the bomb went off on 22 July until he “could feel that [his] body was not handling it” (Ree interview 2014) – then he left for a week’s holiday. As journalists have to control their emotions while working, it is pivotal that accumulated tensions and emotions get released afterwards (Tveito 2001: 13). Listening to body signals, and taking care of and restoring one’s health, are mastering strategies (*ibid.*), and this goes for working journalists as indeed it does for

victims and bystanders of traumatic events. The reactions and emotions reflected in the cases above are normal in abnormal situations. Knowing this, journalists could better manage coping techniques when approaching or avoiding dangerous situations.

According to Tahir (2009: 3, 1), reporters should cover violent conflicts and post-conflicts in accordance with the normative journalistic values of responsibility, accuracy and neutrality; values which will influence both the methodology and the presentation. My informants agree that this is what professional journalists do. Knowing that you may be affected yourself could help you to rely even more on your professional standards. Checking the facts may be more difficult in covering crisis and conflict than in everyday reporting, but it is even more important. Publishing a factual report and giving your interviewees a sense of respect throughout will be examples of conduct within the normative journalistic values. Other professional standards that are important are for instance source criticism and ethical guidelines.

It is often said that journalists write the first draft of history (The Big Apple 2009). Using precise language and finding the right words in the output phase could help people grasp the significance of the conflict or the event. For instance, it was the CBS News reporter Jim Axelrod who, on 11 September 2001, added the words “ground zero” (referring to the site of the attack) to the American vocabulary (Wilkins et al. 2012:8). One informant says it is sometimes difficult to write the news story: “How shall I begin? Once I wrote with my tears and my editor loved it. But sometimes he has had to change the strong words I used” (Saoudi interview 2014).

The angle she picked, the scene with which she started the news story and the way she used pictures and words may matter to her audience – directly and indirectly. Journalists have the option of using or avoiding omissions and distortions as routine frames (Newman and Nelson 2012: 25). Refusing to use narrow perspectives when researching a story will make the journalists search multiple sources from varied levels of society, each of which with different reactions and divergent views on the conflict. Behaving respectfully in the gathering process could, for instance, mean not taking photos or filming people who are dying, injured or in pain (Sorribes and Rovira 2011: 1061). The code of ethics of the Norwegian press reminds us that “the use of pictures must comply with the same requirements of caution as for a written or oral presentation” (Norwegian Press Association 2013: 4, 12). Some go further in underlining the power of photos. Kirsten Mogensen (2013: 83) states that in many cases, images are what the audience remembers best.

### *The dance of fragmentation and integration*

This dance is linked to another part of the brain. The hippocampus is tied to short-term and long-term memory, as well as spatial orientation, identifying coherence and the ability to connect senses with emotions (Ripley 2009; Bailey 2011; Theisen and Johannessen 2011; Rees 2011; Newman and Rees 2012). Disturbance leads to fragmentation or disconnection, and after a crisis it is not unnatural for a person to

remember odd details while, at the same time, completely forgetting other things. He or she could be disconnected from others and have a sense of isolation (Newman and Nelson 2012: 22), as well as a feeling of disconnection from self. To heal again is to go through a process of integration – integrate the memories, connect senses to emotions, and so on (Tveito 2011).

If journalists lean on news criteria of conflict or sensation this may lead to stories that increase fragmentation. If the reporter is also a victim, she or he could have problems connecting senses to emotions and orientation instead of making good and professional decisions. This could for instance have an effect on the way journalists engage with sources and how they approach news choices (Newman and Nelson 2012: 23). One of the major ethical problems in Norway was that the terror was so extensive. The victims, both from the governmental quarter and from the island of Utøya, had different opinions on what the news coverage should include, and it was challenging to identify and consider the different views (Frey 2013). Besides that, affected people may have trouble with integrating memories, emotions and senses. Possibly having distorted recollection, selective memory and with their own agenda (Ochberg 1996: 4), these persons could be poor or misleading sources for the media. “One can never be one hundred per cent sure, but I look for the logic in what they tell me, if it is credible,” says one Tunisian journalist (Saoudi interview 2014). Her compatriot says she has to be cautious about information: “When there is conflict, there is a lot of false information and brainwashing” (Khedhir interview 2014). However, with knowledge of trauma studies, the patterns of emotional responses are more easily recognised, Ochberg (1996) postulates. At the same time, he writes, victims with muted, frozen or numb feelings “appear to untrained observers to be indifferent, unconcerned and unharmed; when, in fact, they were in a state of profound post-traumatic stress. When asked how they could recognise people in shock, one journalist answers: “Grimaces and gestures, and also when they talk I can sense it” (Khedhir interview 2014). Another describes how the person’s eyes looked, his body language, how he was breathing, the nonverbal signs; “I recognised the body language of a person in deep crisis” (Ree interview 2014). The Norwegian journalist actually interviewed this man, but then stopped his news agency from publishing when it dawned on him that appearing on television might cause severe harm. Instead, the journalist got him help. It is widely debated in crisis journalism whether a journalist could harm an interviewee – for instance, by publishing statements by a person with grave traumatic stress who, after weeks or months, has reached a new state of adjustment. Ochberg writes that the affected are at risk of further injury, and there is a possibility that journalists could re-victimise the person (1996: 5-9).

In crisis and conflict situations, journalists behaving contrary to the ethical guidelines could increase the distress of the people injured by the conflict – and the journalists could feel guilty because of “journalistic ethical challenges” (Backholm and Idås 2015) and the possibility of “having caused additional harm to others”. Examples such as the school shooting in Jokela, Finland on 7 November 2007, illustrate this. Journalists interviewed minors in shock and tried to force themselves into the homes of victims.

The chaotic coverage was regarded as a wake-up call to a discussion of journalistic methods, and as a result the ethical guidelines for Finnish journalists were changed in 2011 (Backholm 2012; Raittila, Koljonen and Väliverronen 2010). In late summer 1999, a 12-year old Norwegian girl was killed. The locals reacted strongly to how the journalists worked, and they organised the protection of the family against reporters and photographers. As the citizens had their base in a tent, this became known as *the tent of shame*. Even though the Norwegian press organisation ordered a report of the coverage in Hedrum, some months later it did not seem that the journalists had learned much. The passenger boat *Sleipner* was wrecked on 26 November 1999; 16 died and 69 were saved. Survivors and relatives entering the hospital in Haugesund had to pass through a crowd of photographers and reporters, and were asked questions such as “Did you survive the shipwreck?” (Kallevik 2004: 51-65). Subsequently, in 2001 the Norwegian journalists’ code of ethics was changed, and the sections about methods were tightened up.

An aspect to take into account is something that occurs during and after disaster and terror: the media and government share a common goal in saving lives and alleviating damage (ibid.). Information gathered at the early stage of the calamity is often authoritative and takes on the perspective of official sources. Other voices besides the authoritative sources, “... particularly those that might be critical of official responses, are seldom found in these early media reports” (ibid.). The same happened in Norway after the terror in 2011. Andenæs (2012: 43-52) writes that the media were stunned, and conveyed shock and sorrow. Criticism (normal for journalists) was mostly put on hold. After reports appeared of the late arrival of the police at the island of Utøya and the failure to use the police helicopter, a Facebook group called “We who are disappointed in the media’s witch hunt on the police” was started up (three of the administrators of the group were survivors from the island) but the group had 25,000 followers at most (ibid.). Such a cooperative and uncritical role on the part of the media is temporary (Wilkins et al. 2012: 26, 119, 122). The two Tunisians find it odd that journalists should renounce their critical questions, and one of them says “Journalists should always ask questions and be the watchdog” (Saoudi interview 2014).

Acknowledging and understanding trauma and its possible effects on society, authorities, citizens and journalists could draw people together, thus do the dance of integration. Addressing the problems the victims may have is such an issue. Newman and Nelson (2012: 20) point out that “survivors struggling with trust may disengage from others as an attempt to cope with trauma”. Their approach to justice, safety, control and trust may be in direct conflict with other citizens’ way of looking at the world. In integration and resilience processes, Kaufman (2006: 211) favours downplaying “the importance of “chosen trauma” in group mythology” in order to “reduce the importance of the group sense of victimisation”. At the same time, the victims’ suffering must be acknowledged and rituals of mourning and reconciliation may serve as tools (ibid.). Media reporting on such rituals could have a dual outcome, creating unity and/or excluding groups in society. As stories can help us to understand the meaning and

the complexity of the world, this is as important to take into consideration in a post-conflict society as it is in a society struggling with the aftermath of a traumatic event.

Looking at the broader picture, media covering the causes of and the solutions to conflicts, instead of just the consequences, attempt integration. Ross Howard (2009: 28) writes that conflict-sensitive journalism reports truthfully while using sharper journalistic traditional tools and new insights. Getting the facts right speaks to accuracy, but also to transparency. “Transparency can mean telling readers and viewers what can’t be confirmed as well as what can” (Wilkins et al. 2012: 115-117). If there were facts they were unable to check, my informants from Tunisia and Norway sometimes dropped the story, or they would share their uncertainty with their audience, admitting that the information had not been confirmed by the sources. One example is terror, a huge issue in Tunisia. One of the journalists says that they have never had a statement from the so-called terrorists, even though the country has declared war on internal terror and there are attacks and assassinations. “We have to cover it, but I always say that the minister of internal affairs or the army say it is terrorists. It is absolutely necessary to be precise” (Khedhir interview 2014).

If the journalists feel disconnected, it will be almost impossible for them to meet the need for good analysis and unbiased context description. Furthermore, it is debatable whether society, different disputing groups and the citizens are in the process of integration and what they are ready to take in. During the presidential election in the autumn of 2014, Tunisian news media reported harsh language from the two candidates in the second round, divisions between the north and the south of the country, appeals to hatred and even invitations on Facebook to violence and murder (Dami 2014). In a divided society, integration could mean “encouraging a balance of power, addressing myths and enabling face-saving and consensus building” (Howard 2009: 26). Wollebæk et al. (2013) write that in Norway, after the 2011 terror the prime minister’s words “more democracy and openness”, the framing of the terror as a war on Norwegian core values and peaceful mass mobilisation known as the “roses marches” were important to the process of integration and trust. The media can choose to convey symbols that unite and mobilise togetherness or “... the myths and symbols that justify hostility” (Kaufman 2006: 209). Thus, the “media may provide space for communication flows, which facilitate peace building by promoting participation, dialogue and increased understanding” (Orgeret 2013). We have learned from experiences elsewhere, such as in Northern Ireland where Schmid et al. (2009) found that solidarity within one group correlates with hatred, prejudice and rejection of the other group.

Howard (2009: 26) writes that if the ideals and daily reliability of the news are upheld tension or violence could be reduced. Before the Tunisian revolution, the authorities “dominated the press and made it a tool of political marketing and deceptive propaganda” (INRIC 2012:13), leaving no room for professional values and standards. Hamida El Bour writes about covering the elections in Tunisia in October 2011: “It was yet difficult to make the big change and get rid of the one sided story news-telling

in order to allow diversity and to give voice to all the sides involved” (Frey, El Bour and Rahman, forthcoming). Emna Khammssi and Rihem Hilali show that the news values were not respected by the newspapers *Assabah* (Khammssi 2013) and *Achourrouk* (Hilali 2013) in covering the national dialogue. However, in December 2014 Hassen Alawechni found that *Assabah* reported on the legislative election results in a generally objective way (Alawechni 2014). Perhaps understanding and articulating tension between fragmentation and integration in transitional processes could improve the coverage. In addition, making correct and balanced news in a fuller context and editorial commentaries that increase understanding could lower the temperature in a biased society and be the first steps to reconciliation. That does not necessarily mean covering positive events, as one informant points out. “A free and responsible press uncovers what was hidden earlier. When it is out in the open, things could start to change” (Khedhir interview 2014).

### *The dance of resilience and vulnerability*

The third dance, that of resilience and vulnerability, relates to our capacity to overcome a traumatic event and to our vulnerability. We may experience both at the same time (Newman and Nelson 2012). Newman and Nelson write that “Although resilience is statistically normative, each time it is encountered it seems nothing short of miraculous” (2012: 21). Furthermore, they mean that in order for the media to play a part in reconciliation and healing, there is a need in journalism and journalism education to “systematically discover how news coverage can help or hinder a community’s recovery process” (ibid.).

The Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma (2011) states that the way journalists cover extreme events will probably affect how communities react in the aftermath. Although some think that one must recognise journalism’s limitations in conflicts, others mean “that news media has benefits for peace building as well as democratisation” (Howard 2009: 11). Anne Haaksman de Koster (2009: 67) writes that the media can serve people in a conflict situation. “Anything that make you wiser, is good, and I do mean there is a lot of good journalism that makes you wiser” one of the journalists says about journalism’s role and capacity to help in resilience processes (Groth interview 2014). She adds that journalists are fond of conflict – as a topic, as an angle and as a story. One informant says that journalism plays an important role in building Tunisia. She points to the media’s role in the debate about the Tunisian Constitution, and says “Journalism is the locomotive that pulls the train. Journalism can change attitudes and it can comfort and help victims” (Saoudi interview 2014). Another informant says that if something does not work “it is best to give it importance. This way we help in the process towards a democratic transition” (Khedhir interview 2014).

In disturbing times it is crucial for the journalists to have a critical view of the situation, which means, for instance, reporting on conditions for freedom of expression and other human rights such as attacks on journalists. Aggression towards Tunisian

journalists during and after the revolution can be divided into five categories: from police and security forces; from the second half of 2011 also from religious people; in connection with terror from terrorists and the armed forces; political menace; and harassment from citizens (Berjeb 2015: 30-31, CTLJ 2014a; 2014b). The two Tunisian journalists have been in danger. During the revolution, the demonstrators protected the reporters, but since then many have lost faith in the media and shout at journalists, calling them “whores of Ben Ali” or “journalists of shame” (Saoudi and Khedhir interviews 2014), and accusing them of not being neutral. The report on violence against journalists from October 2014 shows that in the month of the legislative election, journalists were subjected to verbal and physical aggression by the leaders and the staff of the voting stations (CTLJ 2014b).<sup>1</sup> In addition to moderate human rights in vulnerable societies, it is vital to investigate how rebel groups and/or authorities use propaganda and hate speech to control people (de Koster 2009: 27). This can mean dealing with the causes of the conflict – for instance, beliefs and ideologies. In covering the trial after the terror in Norway, the most challenging ethical issue for the television stations TV 2 and NRK was how far they could go in spreading Anders Behring Breivik’s thoughts (Frey 2013: 61). The words he used – for instance being “motivated by goodness, not evil” – illustrate Thomas Hobbs’s point about language used to disturb people (Davies 2013: 240). The media looked at how the terrorist’s message was played and the tactics the perpetrator used, knowing that terrorism “still relies on the oxygen of publicity” (Wilkings et al. 2012: 53). Breivik indeed took this into account, as his lawyer Geir Lippestad confirmed (Lippestad 2013). When the newspaper *Dagbladet* started digging into Breivik’s so-called manifesto it was boycotted by survivors from Utøya. For instance the youth went into shops and turned the newspapers around so that the front page did not show – they felt that *Dagbladet* had given too much space to Breivik.

Finding and reporting on acts of kindness or resilience, and hopeful initiatives, could strengthen reconciliation and help people to overcome the violent conflict. As examples of such resilience in the general public, Newman and Nelson (2017: 25-27) mention supportive social networks and resilient models. However, they observe that “most news stories tend to focus either on survivors who transcend their difficulties heroically or on those who are still suffering from the misfortune post-disaster”. The female Norwegian journalist disagrees and finds the assertion oversimplified but her compatriot says the media tend to publish stories that touch people, even if those stories do not constitute the accurate image. He believes in going behind the news, doing documentaries and feature stories to find balance and stimulate insight (Ree interview 2014). Using “inappropriate stereotypes in words and images” (Wilkings et al. 2012: 29) could imply missing the balance and the fine line between resilience and vulnerability (Ochberg in Newman and Nelson 2012: 25). One way of avoiding stereotypes that will have an impact on both input and output is to talk to everyone; “people on both sides, the military and civilians, politicians, priests, social workers” (Groth interview 2014), being fair and knowing the history of the country and the conflict. Another way of

avoiding stereotypes is to choose alternative issues “although it is not easy. In a difficult political landscape just after the revolution, I had to chase even simple information” (Saoudi interview 2014). Yet another way could be to change an oversimplified image such as that of the Tunisian woman as liberal and free. “That is a stereotype abroad, but in politics the Tunisian woman is not represented” (Khedhir interview 2014). Consequently, this journalist wrote an election story about the scarcity of women on electoral lists. She agrees that Tunisian women are in a better position than women in some other countries, but “inside the country there exists a lot of suffering and through my reportages I try to show another side” (ibid.). With description and transparent analysis, reliable facts and eyewitness accounts, journalists could paint a more complete and realistic picture of the situation. To avoid getting caught in the polarised post-conflict situation and the tendency of the sources to take sides (including the journalists’ own perception of the world) it could be helpful and necessary to fine tune professional norms and working methods. Not contributing to the conflict is equally important when picking the precise words and taking into account their connotations. The most used example is the word “terrorist” as compared to “freedom fighter”.

The Dart Centre (2011: 5) points out that a community is more than a disaster and “coverage must reflect that”. That is what the male journalist did, telling other stories from Norway, stories without loaded words such as Utøya, Sundvollen and Oslo, “stories about the Nobel Peace Prize, the butter crisis and about a moose that had grown up with human beings...” (Ree interview 2014). Conveying achievements and milestones could be steps in the rebuilding of trust, as could actions of togetherness such as the Norwegians gathering and singing “Children of the rainbow” in the streets of Oslo as a protest against Breivik’s racist utterance in the courtroom. The journalist finds the coverage of that event an important element of showing that the country is more than the disaster of 22 July. It has to be said that for many years Norway has been “ranked among the nations with the highest levels of trust and civic engagement in the world” (Wollebæk, Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen and Ødegård 2012: 32). In fact, after the terror in July 2011 this trust *rose* substantially and it was significantly higher in May 2012 than it had been the year before, just months before the terror attack (Wollebæk et al. 2013: 254). However, when there is lack of human security, the possibility of a new conflict remains (Kaufman in de Koster 2009: 19). Thus giving the public newsworthy actualities that support a sense of purpose and meaning, and information necessary to promote resilience, journalists can play an important part. Journalists themselves could establish a sense of meaning. All my informants considered this important. In the case of Tunisia, a country overthrowing a despot and building a new nation, there is even more at stake and the process goes on for years, it could be crucial “..focusing on what will happen in the long run as a result of his or her actions...” (Dworznic 2006: 540). For my two Tunisian informants this is true – one of them says, “I am happy that I am a journalist in this period” (Saoudi interview 2014).

Any society shaken by traumatic events is in need of overcoming them. Contributing to the building of solidarity as a part of the reconciliation and resilience process

could be done using the two way flow of communication, as the online newspaper *VG Nett* did after the terror in Norway on 22 July 2011. On the next day, the website invited people worldwide to form an unbreakable human link and four days later more than a million people had joined and were holding hands virtually (Elnan 2011). One could say that the online newspaper had staged a virtual mourning place, which simultaneously visualised the public's vulnerability and its capacity for overcoming the terror. As knowledge about resilience may help people, organisations and communities to respond to conflict, in addition it is crucial to present information about risk and vulnerability (Newman and Nelson 2012: 27). *VG* did that when, two weeks after the terror, they published a feature story on how to move on and cope with crisis (Theisen and Johannessen 2011).

For the journalists themselves, trauma-related training and knowledge may encourage them to identify factors that could put them in danger and/or "behaviour most likely to help them remain resilient" (Newman and Nelson 2012: 28). Two out of three common factors that may lead to serious reactions in the aftermath are having a personal connection to the affected region and an affinity to the group (Backholm, Moritz and Björkqvist 2012), as do my informants. The primary factor is acting contrary to one's own ethical standards. None of the journalists feel they have stepped over their own boundaries, although two of them report on dilemmas. "When writing about terror I have to be professional, but at the same time, I cannot tell all" (Saoudi interview 2014). Studies indicate a strong coherence between certainty in the role of being a journalist and in taking ethics-based decisions (Idås 2013). The best way of coping with such ethical and moral issues are talking to colleagues, but training and preparing are important, as is the support of an editor experienced in crisis. In other words, approach the problem and feel integrated in your professional community. This quote speaks for all the informants: "Being a foreign correspondent, especially in crisis, colleagues are the pillars" (Groth interview 2014). The journalist remembers that when she covered the tsunami in 2004 she travelled with two colleagues. "We talked constantly, so when we came home and were forced to go to a psychologist he found out that we had done the job ourselves". Pre-crisis training and editorial crisis-related routines are vital instruments when journalists cover violence (Backholm and Idås 2015: 146). In Tunisia, the journalists have little or no training in crisis journalism, no protection or safety or debriefing routines (Berjeb 2015: 33–34), but they talk to their peers and editors. When she covered the revolution in Libya, Khedhir's colleague brought her a safety jacket and a helmet from Berlin.

As the conflict decreases or is resolved, the society is still vulnerable. The situation in Tunisia, with its bad economy and unemployment at about 17 per cent (Sigma 2012; Solberg 2014) is not stable. "There are citizens who suffer, there are people today who regret the revolution, who say it was better under Ben Ali, because now they have nothing to eat" (Khedhir interview 2014). At the same time, these societies need to endure correct coverage and its citizens must be informed about change – or lack of change (Wilkins et al. 2012: 21). Reporting on policy making in the recovery phase is

daily news in Tunisian media, but it could also be subject of in-depth and investigative work (Wilkins et al. 2012: 31). Facts, correct coverage and investigative journalism on terror, the subsequent court process and healing of people and society, as well as preparing for similar calamities, is pivotal. However, in post-conflict societies, there is much more to deal with – for instance, monitoring the processes of democratisation, law-making and economic and social development is essential if the media are to live up to a critical role. In order to make credible and relevant stories in the rebuilding, Esther Thorson suggests using a social science approach to examine how recovery is proceeding (Wilkins et al. 2012: 78). Adding to that, this chapter proposes that knowledge of the three dances of trauma studies may help journalists to improve their sensitivity towards human reactions and coping strategies, as well as conflict structures and “pattern of conflict resolutions” (Howard 2009: 16).

## Conclusion

I have shown how the dances give important approaches both in the input and the output of the journalism process, giving the journalists sharper and more ethical tools. My four informants, with their different experiences, all relate to the three dances of trauma studies. Knowledge of the way people react upon stressors and traumatic events, as well as facts about resilience and trauma, make journalists more capable of understanding victims, the affected and the society they cover and thus produce meaningful and sensitive journalism (Newman and Nelson 2012: 28). Furthermore, as journalists fight to balance “the personal and the professional in creating accurate and ethical news” (ibid.), they are better prepared to take care of themselves as well as having contact with other people. Mastering the strategies in the three dances will show the way to a more reliable, respectful, transparent covering that opens up towards integration and the process ahead. Understanding the three dances of trauma studies could mean a more realistic perspective on post-conflict situations, and a better understanding of how journalism may help to strengthen resilience in people and society. For my informants, their horizons were expanded. They do not talk of post-traumatic growth (Newman and Nelson 2012: 19; Spratt 2012), but they say they have grown, as individuals and as journalists. “I do think you get wiser, as a human being and as a journalist, from trying to find out what is true. Then, there never seems to be anything that is completely true, but one has to try” (Groth interview 2014).

## Note

1. Several political parties have been aggressive towards journalists. On 3 May 2014 Béji Caïd Essebsi shouted at a journalist who asked questions about his positions in the old regime, and then the politician left the conference. Examples of reporters being menaced and physically driven away are linked to other topics than politics, as for instance sports (CtIj2014a/2014b).

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## Moving Forward, Holding On

### *The Role of Photojournalistic Images in the Aftermath of Crisis*

Anne Hege Simonsen

With its power to display moments and scenes that reach “beyond words”, photojournalism plays a vital role in mediating conflicts and crises, or what Zelizer (2010) has termed “unsettled events”. But what happens after the event, when the “breaking news” moment has passed? This chapter discusses how journalistic photographs works as tools of remembering as well as of forgetting. Since journalistic photographs are not so much windows to the world as windows to the mind, photographs may empower people to move on, but also to keep conflicts alive.

In order to see something, you need to have an understanding of it. Perception science teaches us that we see with our brains rather than with our eyes. Mental and physical images thus have common origins (Mitchell 1984), and we may claim that the pictures we choose for representational reasons tell us more about our interior worlds than the physical external. The case of photography is particularly interesting, as photographs, more than any other visual technology, actually register our physical surroundings more meticulously and in much greater detail than does the human eye. This has given photography a special claim on truth and objectivity as a prime tool in a whole range of documentation contexts, from journalism to police surveillance, science and medicine. Even if it is well known that, at second and third glance, photographic truths are just as blurred and enmeshed with subjective positions and interpretations as everything else, there is still an undeniable link to the world of objects and events. As famously stated by Roland Barthes (2000), the photograph proves that something “has been”.

Photographs, then, play a vital role in documenting pasts and presents; they serve as memory containers and symbolic markers of the past. Hoelscher (2012: 291) states that in fact “no medium is more associated with memory than that of photography”.

In post-conflict situations, photographs may work as condensed and multivocal triggers of collective as well as individual emotions. Their powers depend on where in the post-conflict process their users find themselves, and how far the process of negotiating the past has come. This afterlife may be long, and it is by definition entangled with other dimensions of human existence, including what Hirsch (2003)

calls “post-memory”. This term coins the processes in which traumatic experiences create generational wounds, in a way that reaches beyond the actual experience and the actual suffering.

### Spaces or faces?

In early spring 2015, the Tate Modern Gallery in London curated an exhibition called “Conflict, time, photography”. The exhibition seeks to establish a relationship between memory, understanding and imagery on a global and general level. The exhibition poster, however, is limited to photography dealing with the Second World War. The first photo shows a close-up of the mushroom cloud hovering over Hiroshima, seconds after the American atomic bomb was dropped upon the city. The second photo depicts a stone angel, looking down upon the desolate and ghostly skeletons of Dresden apartment buildings seven months after the Allied bombing of the city. The third shows a Japanese soldier’s helmet on a cracked concrete surface. Eighteen years have passed since the war, but there is still a piece of skull attached to the helmet’s interior. In another timeline, on the Tate Modern’s homepage, we are invited to reflect upon how the physical traces of war and trauma blur and fade with time, even though they are held onto by memory, symbolised by the archive.<sup>1</sup>



Picture from *Conflict Time Photography*, edited by Simon Baker, Tate Publishing, 2014.  
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner.

The exhibition carries us, thought provokingly but gently, through history, from the Crimean War to present-day Congo. As *The Guardian's* Laura Cumming noted as a major question mark in her exhibition review, there is a remarkable lack of photojour-

nalistic material in the show (apart from some major works of the photojournalistic veteran Donald McCullin). From the catalogue text we may deduce that this is a deliberate choice. The curators explain that they wanted to move beyond “the instantaneity of photojournalism” and explore the aftermath of war and trauma mainly through artistic photography. The artists selected thus offer landscapes and objects, voids and gaps, and humans represented mainly as shadows or empty shells. Cumming, dissatisfied with this choice, calls for corpses (like Kenneth Jarecke’s scorched Iraqi soldier) and fighters, suffering and survival.<sup>2</sup>

While the exhibition depicts conflict and war as contained, mainly pacified and tamed by retrospective and intellectual musings, Cumming calls for a different and more active perspective. Cumming wants to remember the faces of conflict, not only the places where people suffered. She wants us to feel the fear and the blood, and to acknowledge how conflicts continue to bleed in people’s minds, even if the grass continues to grow and bomb craters are filled and built over. She craves the “instantaneity” the Tate curators find vulgar. These positions sum up an interesting (even if stereotyped) division between journalistic and artistic remembrance. Where the (stereotyped) photojournalistic images invite us to remember through our guts, the (stereotyped) artistic images are more bent towards reflection. I may ponder the watch from Nagasaki that stopped ticking at 11.02 on 9 August 1945 when the atomic bomb detonated. But when I see the naked body of the young Vietnamese girl running from the napalm poured over her village in 1972 my skin crawls. Although I don’t understand her loss, and I may not remember the historic details (as the Vietnam war was not “mine”) I am unable to escape the knowledge that war hurts people. This experience is less intellectual, and maybe less poetic, but its affective power is great.

### Conflict as process

Conflicts are processes, and so is conflict management. Different kinds of conflict may follow different dramaturgical patterns. According to psychological studies, one should take into consideration to what extent traumas are shared. Collective trauma is not the same as group trauma or individual trauma. One way to perceive the dynamics in the aftermath of conflict and trauma is Victor W. Turner’s notion of social drama (Turner 2003). Although this concept was derived from his experiences in small tribal societies, his observations seem also to be applicable on a more general level. To Turner, social dramas follow dramatic events that are not premeditated and that rupture the social fabric in a severe manner. Such events are generally dealt with in four phases which he calls breach, conflict, redressive action and reintegration/disintegration, where the original event appears to be largely settled. Reactions to terror attacks, whether they occur in the US, in Norway, France, India or Kenya, fit this pattern very well, and what is interesting in regard to pictures is that the different phases seem to call for different imagery (Simonsen 2015).

The actual event, the attack, represents an obvious breach, a shock that disrupts ordinary life and ruptures the fabric of society. The shock is followed by a conflict phase marked by liminal behaviour. According to Turner, liminality is both creative and disruptive. The communities affected will experience moments of *communitas*, where new solidarities are formed across traditional boundaries such as social class, economic situation and ethnicity. However, new conflicts may also occur, usually highlighting societal fault lines that people were not necessarily conscious about but that may have contributed silently to the breach. Turner calls the third phase “redressive action”, a term that encompasses the different strategies societal institutions and leaders (so-called “star groupers”) engage in to try and address, redress and repair that which has been broken. Funerals, trials and other ceremonial rituals are examples of redressive mechanisms. In the final phase, the redressive endeavours have either succeeded or failed, resulting in either reintegration of the community/society or a schism and more permanent rupture.

These phases all generate, but also call for, different visual material. Thus, to understand visual agency I believe it is vital to look at the *process* as an important part of the context.

## Defying death

One example of how time and location influence the way we read a photograph is Richard Drew’s “falling man”, photographed on 11 September 2001 and printed the day after. If we look at this image today it no longer has the same impact. To large audiences it has lost some of its initial affective and provocative power, but through time it has accumulated other values. It has become an object of reflection, a memory container, and it has acquired a certain iconic status. This was not the case in the direct aftermath of 11 September.

The photograph named the “falling man” depicts an unidentified man who dropped to his death in perfect geometrical symmetry with the architectural lines of both towers in the World Trade Centre. His fall is head down, one leg casually bent at the knee, arms by his side as if mocking the certain death waiting for him on the ground. Its aesthetic value has to a large extent been ascribed to its abnormal, almost supernatural symmetry. Perhaps as many as 200 people jumped to their deaths after the terror attacks on 11 September, and several were captured by photographers, but in no other image is the visual harmony so contrary to normality as it is here. Associated Press photographer Richard Drew shot as many as eleven images of the falling man, but this is the only one that captures this moment of bizarre beauty. The reading of an image is always individual, and to me this photograph is fascinating because it enhances the terrible absurdity of the entire situation. 11 September caused two mighty physical symbols of Western supremacy and economic power to collapse before the eyes of the world. It created chaos, fear, dust and heat, and more than 3,000 lives were ended in

a few moments. The falling man somehow defies this horror through his brief pose of symmetric carelessness.

The picture was distributed through the news agency's web, but it immediately stirred a controversy in the United States. What I saw from afar (in Stockholm at the time) was not how local audiences interpreted it. American news consumers immediately condemned the image as voyeuristic, pornographic and disrespectful of the dead. As a consequence, the American news media immediately stopped printing it (Junod in Batchen et al. 2012: 167-175), suggesting that Zelizer (2010) is right in claiming that the news media are much more receptive to audience's sensibilities and notions of decorum than they are given credit for. According to Zelizer, public outcries against explicit imagery are usually followed by self-censorship on the media's part. Zelizer's material is from American media, but corresponds with observations from elsewhere. Taylor (1998) has also pointed out, in a British context, that it is usually the text that provides the gory details when it comes to murder, war or terror, whereas the images chosen will usually be suggestive.

Tom Junod (2012: 172) has investigated the fate of the image of the fallen man, and has found that its afterlife as an image was "relegated to the internet underbelly" and so-called shock sites containing graphic material of corpses and executions. Junod noted:

In a nation of voyeurs, the desire to face the most disturbing aspects of our most disturbing day was somehow ascribed to voyeurism, as though the jumper's experience, instead of being central to the horror, was tangential to it, a sideshow best forgotten.

His explanation is the American controversy regarding the fact that people purposely jumped from the buildings. However, the term "jumper" implies a person committing suicide, and this was not a honourable tag. The deaths on 11 September had to be heroic, for the sake of the nation, and thus it was decided that nobody voluntarily jumped on that day. From a national point of view they may have fallen, after being forced out of the windows by smoke and heat or buildings crumbling beneath their feet, but they did not jump. And images, even pieces of art that suggested otherwise, were banned or shunned.

## Home and away

Seen from afar, this reaction may read as a little extreme. Why does every victim of a crime have to be a hero? And what is it about this plunge that is less heroic than all the other terrible ways of dying? From a Norwegian point of view, Drew's picture is an icon with no controversy attached and it is pulled out of the archives whenever the newspapers commemorate 11 September. However, when Norway experienced a severe terror attack on 22 July 2011, the same kind of reaction met the few photographic images that showed dead Norwegian bodies (Simonsen 2015). And this is not surprising.

We know from common sense, as well as research, that death is always harder to digest when it happens close to home. Dead bodies from other continents do not evoke the same emotions (see, for example, Taylor 1998; Sontag 2003; Linfield 2010). Nor do they instil in an audience the same urge to provide the dead person with immediate protection, as if the photograph somehow contains the soul of the dead or the dying.

What is considered offensive is not always easy to predict. In the US, images of dead soldiers, even in coffins draped with the American flag, were banned by the Bush administration until Barak Obama lifted the ban in 2009 (Figenschou 2014: 144). According to Figenschou, the Arabic TV channel Al Jazeera has repeatedly been heavily criticised for showing images Western media would not display – including not only American soldiers, but also graphic images of Palestinian or Iraqi casualties. Her conclusion is that the choice of images of war and conflict is related to how the media is positioned in relation to the war or conflict situation, as well as the media's position in the global media hierarchy.

### Visual regimes and visual spaces

WJT Mitchell (2005: 127) has pointed out that under emotional distress people seem not to make the distinction between the image as an object and the image as content. There is an element of magical thinking that surrounds photography, and which leads people to honour the image if they approve of its content – if they don't, they might just as easily defile an image they find offensive.

Time is of course a vital factor in this. In relation to terror attacks it seems as if the strongest emotions normally occur a little after the initial shock of the new situation, in the liminal phase where all that is known is tossed up in the air and the new reality is yet to be established (Junod 2012; Simonsen 2015). But to understand why certain images evoke such strong emotions it is not enough to look at their content. One also has to consider what Jacques Rancière (2011: 95) calls the *visual regime* to which they belong. In Western societies, journalistic photographs are often looked upon with some suspicion. There are several reasons for this. One is that people sometimes suspect that graphic images or images with strong symbolic content are published mainly for commercial reasons, to make people more interested in the media than the subject matter. A commercialised visual regime thus has the power to override the journalistic motivation behind an image.

Western scepticism is also, however – as Susie Linfield (2010) has pointed out – grounded in a more theoretical friction between journalism's somewhat outdated, modernist view of images as first and foremost illustration or “proof” (documentation), and postmodern photography critics who have been preoccupied with contextualising and deconstructing documentary photography. According to Linfield, too much hope has been invested in photography as a modern, liberating tool for documenting the world “as it is”. When academic critics realised that photographs were not able to

do so, because photographic truths were at best partial and open to interpretation, documentary photography was too negatively described as voyeuristic, pornographic, deceitful and just as treacherous as commercials and other forms of visual fiction.

To understand a visual regime it is also important to take into consideration the context in which the photographs are seen (or consumed). The friction described above may also be ascribed to the sometimes stressful and intolerable circumstances of having to relate to terrible facts and fates at breakfast, while an exhibition with the same photographs may provide calm and space for contemplation (see Sontag 2003 for further reflections on readers' responses).

Visual regimes also connect to political geography, and in particular what Appadurai (2003) has termed mediascapes. This term refers to domestic processes through which the media outline their worlds, and may consist of different centres and peripheries. Appadurai places mediascapes alongside so-called ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes as one of five central dimensions in global cultural production. Mediascapes are socially defined landscapes which, through a mixture of news and imagination, offer a multitude of images, narratives and belongings to their audiences. According to Appadurai, mediascapes blur the distinction between real and fiction, and the further away an audience is from the information transmitted, the more likely that it will construe imaginary and fantasy-driven worlds. The image plays a central role in these cultural constructions.

Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex set of metaphors by which people live as they help to constitute narratives of Other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasies that could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement. (Appadurai 2000: 35-36)

In mediascapes, mechanical images (photographs) play together with imagined communities as well as what Appadurai calls "the imaginary (imaginaire) as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations". To sum up: any audience may be a centre, any crisis may occur on the periphery.

The rather obvious point I am trying to make here is that all crises look different from the perspective of the participant and that of the onlooker. This is the reason the original intention behind a photograph is only partly relevant to the understanding of the political life of photographs. Susan Sontag (2003) gives one example in her discussion of how the English author Virginia Woolf used Spanish photographs to stir humanitarian engagement in the UK of the Spanish civil war of 1936-38. Woolf wanted to raise public awareness by showing the atrocities the republicans were subjected to by their royalist adversaries. What Woolf misunderstood, or failed to communicate, was that these photographs were taken and circulated by the republicans themselves,

in the hope that the dreadful scenes would instigate anger and thus enhance republican recruitment.

### Redressive commemoration

War unfolds in a manner different from terrorism, and (unlike terror) it may be difficult to pinpoint when a war actually starts. Visually, war reporting is dominated by images depicting battles and soldiers (or victims) and damaged civilian property. Yet, the way a photograph is used tells us just as much about its present context as it does about the situation that created it. A study that exemplifies this point well is Susan Keith's 2012 study of how French newspapers visually commemorate the Second World War. As Keith points out, the media has a tendency to commemorate traumatic events in cycles – for example every ten, 25, 50 or 100 years. Keith has studied how French newspapers visually remember the liberation of Paris after the Second World War, and has found the coverage rather reductionist. According to Keith, the French newspapers chose images that celebrated the French as heroes and omitted central parts of the actual historical liberation.

...the French news media's copious visual coverage of the 60th anniversary had turned the complex story of the liberation, with its many participants and facets, into a reductive narrative of French authority and joy, rarely featuring visuals of liberation actors who were more problematic for France: the German occupiers, collaborationists, and American troops (Keith 2012: 217).

Keith states that such ritual acts of commemoration have a strong impact on collective memory as they have the potential "to reflect society's ideas of the long-ago events they marked and to alter accreted conceptions of World War II by adding a new layer of representation and interpretation." When the media fail (or choose) not to do so it results in a "narrowing of memory" (Zelizer 1999: 118). In this process, the photographs are not really tools of remembrance but of forgetting, or at least omitting. To quote Zelizer (1998: 239) again: "the very tools by which we assume to remember may in fact be helping us to remember to forget".

This act of omitting images that do not fit the present narrative of the past is, however, not the same as ostracising them, as in the case of Drew's "falling man". After 60 years, the narrative of the Second World War does not hurt as much on a national level (even if private memories may still be bleeding). On a broader level, the continued reductive representations to which Keith refers also tell a story about a conflict that is largely settled. It may be self-contained, but it is difficult to imagine that an image of American soldiers in Paris would cause a public outcry – at least as long as it did not try to replace the dominant narrative of Parisian heroism.

## Colonial memory and post-memory

One effect of time is that it detaches a photograph from its initial motive, its moment of creation, and thus its denotative dimensions. It may remain a window to the past, but what that means depends on the meaning attributed by the onlooker. Elizabeth Edwards has done several interesting studies of what she calls the social biographies of historical photographs. One of her examples is photograph taken by British colonial officers to document a meeting with Australian aborigine leaders (Edwards 2001). The meeting took place on a British vessel, and the motivation behind the photograph was to document that the encounter had in fact taken place. Edward finds that in modern times the image may serve a multitude of purposes. It may for example be read with postcolonial glasses to give information about the cultural differences and hierarchical power structures at the time. To Aborigine descendants, however, the image also provides information about the internal power relations within the aborigine delegation. In this manner, the same photograph may thus produce several narratives and counter-narratives. According to Edwards, its performative powers are based on individual and cultural experiences, and located in the junction between the act of seeing, the context of seeing and the photograph itself.

In post-colonial settings it further becomes obvious that the act of seeing may very well transcend the individual. Kama Maclean (2011) has followed the fascinating trajectory of the portrait of Bhagat Singh, an Indian revolutionary hero who was executed for murder by the British colonial power in 1931. In 1929 he had his portrait taken, and even though he knew he was soon going to die, the young man, only 21 years old, looks at the camera in relaxed confidence. On his head is a fashionable felt hat, recklessly tipped slightly to one side. Singh has been coined as Mahatma Ghandi's opposite, and his political legacy has inspired several historians. Maclean's fascination, however, is directed at how a mainly illiterate population immediately took to Singh's portrait and reproduced it on concrete walls, posters and in popular art. Maclean invokes the particular powers that only images provide when it comes to "the overlapping zone between the sayable and the seeable". In India in the 1930s, Maclean states, "much was unprintable and unsayable, but much more could be and was inferred by readers of this polysemic image" (Maclean 2011:1078). Singh's picture thus helped to keep his memory and politics alive, long after his short life was ended. The image also managed to penetrate beyond newspapers, pamphlets and written statements. This may then serve as an example of how images may provide a means of understanding the politics of people who, for different reasons, are excluded from the formal political game.

## Concluding remarks

Conflicts and crises generate violence and suffering. Both analysts and media audiences seem to be drawn to images of mutilated bodies, excessive grief and human desolation, and for a number of reasons. In the media we see how photographs play a significant part in the ways wars, terror attacks and conflicts are represented, as well as in historical interpretations of their impact, significance and importance.

We want to understand the world, the human condition, the tragedies we impose on one another, and moral questions arising from scenes of horror seem to have a special attraction. The same core questions are pondered, investigated and debated over and over again: is watching the pain of others voyeuristic and pornographic? Or does it serve the greater good of being realistic about what human beings are capable of? Is there a universal line to be drawn when it comes to decorum and respect for maimed victims, struggling survivors or even perpetrators? Do we learn anything from such images? When, and why, do we publish them?

This chapter has not been aimed at answering these vast and largely philosophical questions. The main purpose of this text has been to examine some aspects regarding what we may call the political geography of conflict photographs. Photographic meaning is never fixed, but fluid and multivocal, and photographic agency is thus best studied through concrete photographs in concrete contexts. Furthermore, photographs often move through time and space, and examining what Edwards calls their social biography is often a fruitful way of gaining insight into the symbolic spaces of crisis management.

## Notes

1. Points of Memory: A timeline of Conflict, Time, Photography at Tate Modern, *Tate*, Issue 32, Autumn 2014, 11.11.2014, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/points-memory-timeline-conflict-time-photography-tate-modern>
2. *The Guardian*, 30.11.2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/nov/30/conflict-time-photography-review-tate-modern-emptiness-ruin-absence>

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**Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions: Worldwide Perspectives** aims to provide both empirical and theoretical input to the discussions of the role of journalism and media in conflict and post-conflict situations and in the often rather muddy waters between them. Together, the chapters in this book emphasise that discussions about post-conflict situations will gain from including the media. At the same time, the contributions from different contexts and parts of the world problematize the concept of post-conflict and powerfully illustrate that the phase between war/conflict and peace is neither unidirectional nor linear, as the use of the concept sometimes seems to imply.

“**Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions: Worldwide Perspectives** is a most important book in our time of uncertainty. It adds to our knowledge base and understanding concerning the role of journalism and media in the complexities of post-conflict processes and peace building – a role that is often ignored in contemporary discussions.”

**Ulla Carlsson**, UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Global Policy, University of Gothenburg

“The essays in this book address questions linked to the contradictory character of a journalist’s vocation – to report on conflict but also to build a consensus on the way out of it – in different contexts, ranging from Afghanistan to South Sudan, Syria to Libya, and Nepal to Colombia. In doing so, they allow us to go beyond the sometimes banal and formulaic literature on “peace-building” in “post-conflict” societies.”

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