

the PEACE JOURNALIST

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20th Issue Celebration!



Study uses The Peace Journalist magazine to analyze
PJ Seminar Trends

The Peace Journalist is a semi-annual publication of the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville, Missouri. The Peace Journalist is dedicated to disseminating news and information for teachers, students, and practitioners of PJ.

Submissions are welcome from all. We are seeking shorter submissions (300-500 words) detailing peace journalism projects, classes, proposals, etc. We also welcome longer submissions (800-1200 words) about peace or conflict sensitive journalism projects or programs, as well as academic works from the field. We do NOT seek general submissions about peace projects, but are instead focused only on articles with a strong media angle.

Deadlines: March 3 (April edition); September 3 (October edition).

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What is Peace Journalism?

Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choosing which words are used, create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good journalism. (Adapted from Lynch/McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism*). Peace Journalism gives peacemakers a voice while making peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable.

A number of valuable peace journalism resources, including back issues of *The Peace Journalist* can be found at www.park.edu/peacecenter.

Center for Global Peace Journalism

The Center for Global Peace Journalism works with journalists, academics, and students worldwide to improve reporting about conflicts, societal unrest, reconciliation, solutions, and peace. Through its courses, workshops, lectures, this magazine, blog, and other resources, the Center encourages media to reject sensational and inflammatory reporting, and produce counter-narratives that offer a more nuanced view of those who are marginalized—ethnic/racial/religious minorities, women, youth, and migrants.

the PEACE JOURNALIST

As I celebrate 20 issues of *The Peace Journalist*, I do so amazed and thrilled that the magazine has done what I intended it to do—create a sense of community among peace journalists and PJ academics and students, and provide a forum to disseminate information about our research and projects. I'm gratified as well that articles from *The Peace Journalist* have been cited in numerous papers, and that the magazine itself has proven a valuable tool for researchers like Dr. Jake Lynch (see page 4).

I am also amazed by the breadth of coverage since that first issue in October 2012. There have been 268 articles in these 20 issues from 67 different countries, literally from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. An equally amazing 175 different writers have contributed their wisdom to the publica-

Contributors

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tion. Special recognition goes to the Five Club—those who have contributed five or more articles to the magazine. These talented authors are Gloria Laker (Uganda); Vanessa Bassil (Lebanon); and Dr. Jake Lynch (UK/Australia). The Three Club (three articles) includes Monica Curca; Mohid Ifikhar; Innocent Iroaganachi; Kirthi Jayakumar; Mayra Ambrosio Laredo; Masoud Momin; Rosaline Obah; Fredrick Ogenga; Marianne Perez de Fransius; Giuliana Tiripelli; and Alexander Vojvoda.

As we move forward to the next 20 issues, it's my hope that the magazine can expand and offer more space for your articles, commentaries, and letters from readers. Thank you, dear authors and readers, for your continued support and encouragement.

--Steven Youngblood, editor

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Study analyzes magazine's PJ seminar articles

'People orientation' most frequently emphasized

When I devised and facilitated a journalist training course in Kabul, in October 2014, about half the 68 participants – two from each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces – were women. I took the picture of four headscarfs bent over a translated Peace Journalism manual to evoke Tina Modotti's iconic Mexican photograph, *Campesinos Reading El Machete*. The suggestion was that being in a position to tell their own stories could be liberating for today's Afghan women, just as the ability to read a revolutionary journal was then, for an exploited rural workforce – albeit separated by both a century and a hemisphere.



Campesinos reading El Machete (top); and Afghan women journalists reading a peace journalism manual.

Since the fall of the internationally backed Afghan government in August this year, I have often wondered about those trainees, hoping they either found a place of safety, or somehow managed to carry on in journalism. Many were forced out as the Taliban took over. Indeed, in retrospect, that moment seven years ago was arguably a high point of the implementation of human rights in the country. Several of the women confided to me that they had faced down opposition

from male relatives – including violent threats – to make headway in the profession. One of our scheduled downtime activities that week had been a group visit to Kabul's only US-style bowling alley, but a fatal attack on a car carrying internationals (including diplomats) on the infamous road to Kandahar led to this venue, among others, being reclassified as unsafe.

My article about the workshop – which was offered in conjunction with Mediothek Afghanistan – was one of four published in *The Peace Journalist* over its first 19 biannual editions that offered accounts of training courses in Afghanistan. In total, 33 countries were covered: Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Cameroon, Nigeria, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Somalia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Israel, Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Spain, the UK, Austria, Germany, the USA, Colombia, India, Pakistan, Fiji and the Korean Republic.

What can be identified as significant trends among the accounts offered in these articles? In all, 55 have appeared, by 47 authors. They were analysed using three factors:

--Which aspect(s) of Peace Journalism was directly referenced or strongly implied in the account?

--What was the phase of conflict that formed the broader context for the training?

--And what claims of success were made – that is, of any evidence that the training had worked, was working, or could reasonably be expected to work?

The first of these factors refers to Johan Galtung's original model, in which Peace Journalism is offered as a remedial strategy to the dominant strain of War Journalism. Whereas the latter is oriented in favour of violence,

and propaganda; concentrates on elite sources, and presents conflicts as tending inexorably towards victory (and defeat of course), Peace Journalism is therefore:

- Peace and conflict-oriented;
- Truth-oriented;
- People-oriented, and
- Solution-oriented.

The second is based on an argument developed by Wilhelm Kempf – who, as editor of *Conflict and Communication Online*, played a crucial role in establishing Peace Journalism as a field of research. In an article from 2003, 'Constructive Conflict Coverage – A Social-Psychological Research and Development Program', he identified two phases of conflict: essentially, peace-making, when armed hostilities are underway, and peacebuilding, when a war-torn society needs to consolidate agreement and recovery. This would dictate what aspects of Peace Journalism would be most suitable.

During wartime, Peace Journalists must try to avoid taking sides, which can entail finding ways to counter the demonisation of particular groups. And they should be on the lookout for initiatives and proposals for peace, from whatever quarter. Once the guns fall silent, they should focus on solutions to the problems bequeathed by war, as well as reporting in ways conducive to reconciliation.

The third analytical factor comes from a proposal by Alan Davis, a veteran officer of the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting, for the monitoring and evaluation of media development aid. What are the benefits of such aid, he asks? One category is the 'benefit transferred' – the content of the training (in this case). A second is the 'benefit applied,' which refers to whether trainees can actu-

Continued on next page

www.park.edu/peacecenter

Seminars *from Pg 4*

ally apply the ideas in their working lives. And the third is the 'benefit beyond,' referring to the wider effects on society. Clearly, the success and effectiveness of journalist training rely chiefly on the second and third categories. It's all very well turning up somewhere, standing in front of a group of trainees, and 'decanting' ideas – it's in the implementation that the real point of the exercise will be vindicated.

Results

Analysing the 55 articles using these three factors, the following findings stand out:

By far the most frequently mentioned aspect of Peace Journalism was people-orientation, with 31 articles: more than all the others combined, since a conflict-and-peace orientation was emphasised in 13, truth-orientation in nine, and solution-orientation in just two. To quote Galtung's definition in full, people-oriented Peace Journalism can involve "focusing on violence by all sides and on suffering all over [not just 'our' side]; also on women, aged, children [rather than only able-bodied adult males], giving name to all evildoers [not just on the "other" side]; focus on people peace-makers, and giving voice to the voiceless.' My Afghan trainees were most interested in telling the story of the conflict through the personal experiences, and efforts to make peace at a local level, of those close to them in their own communities.

The same approach evidently proved applicable to a range of different stories. In Vol 3 No 1 (April 2014), Sarah Stout published an article, 'Peace Journalism takes root in Cyprus', in which she reported: "On Friday, the last day of the training, the participants were assigned to interview refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, and begin to create a story that acted as a counter-narrative to the usually negative stories about migrants."



Over two-thirds of the training courses took place in situations of peacebuilding rather than peacemaking: Kempf's second phase. And a people-orientation seemed just as likely to come to the fore in either one. Rukhsana Aslam's workshops in Fiji – written up in Vol 6, No 2, from October 2017 – "aimed to contribute to the democratic process by enabling greater breadth of voices in mainstream and social media."

In Kuwait, journalist participants made a visit to a Bidoon family, to hear for themselves how members of this group have been further marginalised in Kuwaiti society since the 1990 invasion of Iraq. Trainer Shahad Al-Matrouk reported, in Vol 4 No 2, from October 2015, that "The tour took the group to meet and interview a Bidoon family. The females from the group sat with the mother, and the men sat with the father. The family had four children, the eldest was around 26. He graduated from university but does not have a job because both governmental and private sectors won't hire him because he is Bidoon."

There were more claims in the articles of Alan Davis' benefit transferred (39), than applied (23) or beyond (8), though there were some in the latter categories. Rukhsana Aslam recorded the follow-up research to her Fiji workshop, referenced above: "According to the evaluation report, 12 stories were submitted by the participants in the first two months, followed by 14 more in the later months, which covered a range of topics that are relevant in the Fijian society."

And in the same edition of the maga-

Alexander Vojvoda's report on PJ trainings in Cameroon in the Peace Journalist in 2017.

zine, Alexander Vojvoda contributed an account of his training course in Cameroon, where a forthcoming bitterly contested election came with forebodings of violence. "Directly after the workshops and in-house trainings," he reported, "participating journalists from the Central, Far-North, North, West and North-West regions started to set-up local and trans-regional communication platforms via social media such as Facebook or WhatsApp. These groups and forums are dedicated to the exchange and discussion of peace journalistic material e.g. radio programmes and cultural events dedicated to highlighting the work of peace builders and inform the local communities of the potentials, tools, and principles of peace journalists."

Any social conflict is both complex and dynamic: a set of relations, being reproduced in relationships at multiple levels and in many different dimensions. Looked at from a perspective such as human rights, the course of a conflict can enable progress, but it can also close down opportunities for the fulfilment of human potential, as seemingly now in Afghanistan. No matter how dire the situation seems from the outside, however, there are always peace actors, operating in their own context.

Given a chance, and a steer from Peace Journalism training, it seems editors and reporters can reach out to those sources to offer a fuller picture to their readers and audiences: one that enables them to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict.

--Jake Lynch

The media play a crucial role in international and local conflicts today. Either they take an active role in escalating the conflict or report the conflict responsibly which can contribute to its resolution. When the media cover stories on a highly politicised issue such as migration, they have the ability to create narratives which shape public opinion, attitudes, and behaviours of all those involved in the migration process. Negative stereotypical representation of migrants promotes anti-immigration

and xenophobic sentiments. On the other hand, balanced, reasonable and unprejudiced media coverage of migration helps in creating an inclusive environment for them.

Study: Turkish media narratives Afghan migrants portrayed as threat

The majority of the media around the world associate them with negative news. For example: between 2013-2014, unfavourable media coverage of migration surpassed positive content in all thirteen countries surveyed. (McAuliffe, Weeks & Koser, 2015). Moreover, use of hostile language such as ‘bogus asylum seekers’ and ‘illegal migrants’ creates a ‘culture of disbelief’ about the motives of those seeking asylum. More often than not, the media uses dehumanising language to isolate migrants from the rest of the population by comparing them to insects and animals. A similar trend can be identified in the South Asian media as well. Recent qualitative research conducted by Islam (2018) and Wadud (2020), revealed that Rohingya refugees were portrayed as a security threat, economic burden, victims, and disease spreaders in the national media of Bangladesh, China, and India.

This article attempts to suggest that an alternative model rooted in peace journalism should be employed to analyse representation of migration in the media.

Peace Journalism and media coverage of conflicts

Any attempt to understand peace journalism should begin with the definition of the concept of peace itself. Traditionally, peace is defined as an absence of war or violence. However, Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung expanded the definition of peace to include positive peace. It refers to the creation of an environment where justice and harmony can flourish. It also includes the creation of political institutions and social systems that serve the needs of the entire population and can lead to construc-

tive resolution of conflict. Galtung has used the notion of positive peace to explain Peace Journalism. It can be defined as the conscious choice of reporters to use constructive news frames to promote non-violent responses to conflicts. Galtung criticised mainstream journalism for portraying conflict as a zero sum game between two parties. He emphasised the claim that international news gives more attention to negative events (coups, riots, etc.) and news from elite countries is deemed as more important than the countries on the periphery.

The bias towards violence and propaganda by the media creates “us-other” binaries and leads to further escalation and polarisation between different groups. In this way, war journalism is propaganda-oriented, violence-oriented, and victory-oriented.

Media and Migration in Turkey: Reporting on Afghanistan’s Internal Conflict

On August 15, 2021, the Taliban completed its takeover of Afghanistan by capturing the nation’s capital city, Kabul. This prompted fear amongst the people and forced hundreds of thousands to seek refuge in other countries, including Turkey. It is a key transit point for asylum seekers attempting to reach other European countries.

Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees in the world as it began to provide temporary asylum to Syrian refugees under its then open door policy. According to the statistics by UN-

HCR, Afghans are the second largest refugee community in Turkey. Afghans who have been seeking asylum after the Taliban’s takeover have been met with a hostile attitude.

In my study, I analyzed 21 news stories, editorials, and opinion pieces between August 16, 2021 to August 30, 2021 that reported on the situation of Afghan refugees after the Taliban takeover. For this purpose, I have used a qualitative data analysis software called MAXQDA to analyse the online editions of Turkish media outlets *Milliyet*, *Hurriyat* and *Daily Sabah*.

The rationale behind choosing these three newspapers is that they are the most circulated daily newspapers in Turkey and their online version is available in English. Based on the insights from the framework developed by Kalefi, Gardikiotis & Frangonikolopoulos (2020), an analysis of the

“
(Turkish media) failed to provide a long term solution seeking approach or give voice to all parties involved in the conflict.”
”

Continued on next page

Turkish media *from Pg 6*

content published in these selected newspapers for two weeks after the Taliban took control of Kabul, has been conducted. The above-mentioned newspapers started reporting immediately and extensively on the prospect of a large number of Afghan refugees entering Turkey. The presence of negative media coverage of Afghan refugees was clearly evident and the likelihood of people seeking refuge was frequently referred to as another ‘crisis’ or ‘wave’ after the large refugee migration in 2015 towards Europe. All the news articles referred to refugees as irregular migrants and an additional burden to the country’s economy and security. By describing the situation in this way, migration was presented as an unmanageable threat.

Moreover, choosing to refer to asylum seekers as illegal migrants neither acknowledges the context of the conflict nor the reasons for the flight. This form of reporting echoes British press coverage of migration between 2010 to 2016 when the majority of the news stories lacked direct quotes from Afghan refugees on an individual level and failed to report on their experiences. Moreover, the media coverage was elite-oriented as they only presented the views of key politicians of Europe and Turkey which perpetuated anti-immigrant rhetoric in the public opinion by using an “Us vs. Them” approach. For example, on August 23, 2021, a news piece by *Milliyet* quotes Turkish President Erdogan saying, “We can’t handle an extra burden.” Another news article by *Daily Sabah* reiterated the same message by quoting the French President, Emmanuel Macron. “Europe alone cannot shoulder the consequences and must anticipate and protect ourselves against significant irregular migratory flows,” he said. Afghan refugees were depicted as a mass and the rare instances when their names and stories were highlighted were of Afghan politicians of the former ruling party. For example, *Daily Sabah* reported on August 26, 2021, “A total of 162 irregular migrants were held across Turkey.”

Conclusion

An analysis of the coverage of newspapers revealed that they failed to provide a long-term solution-seeking approach or give voice to all parties involved in the conflict. Therefore, journalists need to be trained so that they can suggest creative people-oriented solutions to the ongoing conflict, instead of exclusively reporting on the actions of the elite leadership. Moreover, rather than using sensationalist language which further victimises and demonises refugees, journalists should make space for people’s stories by debunking negative stereotypes surrounding migrants and refugees. For example, Turkish media can report on the benefits that immigration has on Turkey’s culture and economy.



To conclude, a form of journalism based on the principles of empathy and truth is required to report on an extremely contested and sensitive issue such as migration.

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--Navya Khanna

Voice of the voiceless: The lonely

Spanish university team produces special multimedia project



A team at Universidad Francisco de Vitoria (UFV) in Spain has put peace journalism into practice by researching the ultimate voiceless in society--the lonely.

The students of Mirada 21 Group, which includes all of the media platforms from the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria (UFV), analysed the social problem of solitude, a challenge that the coronavirus crisis has highlighted.

The multimedia report "Loneliness in times of pandemic" gives voice to young and elderly people who share their experiences during the pandemic, in which the common element is the solitude.

The report includes the speech of UFV professors specialised in different fields like ethics, humanities, and psychology; as well as representatives of social institutions.

Loneliness is a significant social problem in Spain. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE) there are 4.7 million single-person households. About 41% of these people live alone involuntarily.

Covid-19 has revealed the true severity of this endemic problem. Last summer, the media reported dozens of deaths due to the coronavirus, whose bodies no one had claimed. People of various ages whose absence had not alarmed their family or friends. It was precisely this that led the Mirada 21 Group students, along with the directors of the different media areas, to raise awareness of this reality through the multimedia report "Loneliness in times of pandemic." To what extent has the coronavirus crisis increased loneliness? What are the main causes of this social problem? In

this sense, the director of the UFV Humanistic Department, Ángel Barahona, highlights the problem that "both capitalism and Marxism, which are twin brothers, have managed to dissolve the family," and that breakup has created a society "of loners."

To address these and other questions, the UFV students have written a report, which includes both audio and video clips, that collect the testimonies of young and old people, experts, caregivers, and heads of institutions. They have also released a podcast in which they share the story of Encarna, a woman who lived with her terminally-ill husband during lockdown. The students also recorded a dialogue in which UFV experts and the UFV Accompaniment Institute (Instituto de Acompañamiento UFV) address the concept of loneliness, its main causes and how it can be combatted. Finally, they have designed different infographics to visualise the data in the report. The result is a complete journalistic project that, through different media, analyses the complex reality of solitude.

For this project, UFV students enjoyed the collaboration of many academics, such as Ángel Barahona, director of the UFV Humanistic Department, Isidro Catela, Professor of Ethics, and Susana Martínez, Professor of Psychology.

Ángel Barahona, director of the UFV Humanities Department, analysed the reasons for this endemic loneliness "to transform the human beings that we must love into atomized individuals, turning them into State systems, both for the production of capitalism and for socialist solidarity in

Continued on next page

Lonliness from Pg 8

Marxism. It is the family that has been destroyed, and yet it is the only place where one can be free, be loved as one is, be welcomed, make mistakes, start over..." Ángel Barahona believes that the concept of community within the family "does not exist in the despotic world of individuals who compete with each other, who are snipers out of nowhere, which is what they have managed to do by dissolving the family, atomizing it or lowering the birth rate, dissolving the powerful ties within the family, wanting the State to replace it." The conclusion is clear: "education (public or private) replaces the family; that is the monumental error."

Students also reached out to other institutions to learn how institutions have met this challenge, including the UFV Accompaniment Institute; the Hospital Foundation of the Spanish Order of Malta; the residence for people with intellectual disabilities, Hogar Don Orione and Casa Hogar El Sauce; the nursing home Los Llanos vital; the help services Telephone of Hope; and the healthcare services Samur.

As we have said, loneliness is a significant social problem in Spain. "In a city you are surrounded by people, but you find yourself very lonely," says Dr. Marisa Fernández, director of accompaniment "Companions from Malta" (Compañeros de la orden de Malta). "There is loneliness even if one is accompanied. Loneliness is ugly, solitude can be good but forced solitude..." declares Agustina Díaz, a resident of the nursing home "Los Llanos." "Loneliness is something very hard since human beings like to relate to each other and feel part of a group," confirms Ana Sanz, an occupational therapist.

The pandemic has also exacerbated the consequences of loneliness. "You miss two things that you don't recognize until you lose them: health and freedom," claims Agustina Díaz. However, there are ways to make it more bearable. "What helps a lot is talking with the family, making video



calls..." says Alejandro Carrasco, head of "Don Orione" activities.

With or without a pandemic, the image of residences has not always been good. "Society still blames itself for not being able to take care of their elders and that guilt affects the image of nursing homes," states Esther García, director of the "Los Llanos" residence. However, "when the elderly join the residence, they improve a lot, they are more accompanied, they have a great family here."

One thing is necessary. "We need to give importance to the elderly. It is true that we have left them aside, but the elderly need to be given the importance that they have historically been assigned as the guardians of experience and knowledge."

The multimedia peace journalism-style project "Loneliness in times of pandemic" not only addresses this important problem, but also offers a possible remedy: a return to the culture of society, as solitude can only be combatted by togetherness.

Link to the multimedia report:

<http://bit.ly/LaSoledadM21>

Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4E3JppAQfZ8&feature=emb_title

--Mayra Ambrosio Laredo



Project interviewee Agustina Díaz (opposite page) says living in the elderly residence "Los Llanos" is lonely. Professor-Angel Barahona (left) said that capitalism and Marxism have managed to dissolve the family and that breakup has created a society of loners.

Rotary Peace Center launches PJ seminars

Project trains Zimbabwean journalists

A Peace Journalism Initiative led by Makerere University Rotary Peace Centre was recently launched in a bid to equip Zimbabwean journalists with the skills to report and frame their reportage in a peace-inclined perspective and context.

Over 25 young journalists, story tellers, short-film makers, and web journalists are benefitting from this four-month training program.

The initiative, which is the first of its kind in Zimbabwe, will see the first cohort graduating on Dec.1, 2021.

Rotary Peace Fellows from Nigeria, Liberia, and South Sudan helped to coordinate the peace journalism trainings.

The purpose of the initiative is to educate and empower practicing journalists and journalism students to transcend conventional barriers in reporting and to become highly capable of applying gender and conflict sensitive storytelling techniques in producing collaborative multimedia stories.

The overall goal of the Peace Journalism Initiative is to use media as a platform to promote national dialogue and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

The training is facilitated by a panel of renowned peace journalism experts from the United States, Uganda, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe.

These trainers include Director of the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University and Luxembourg Peace Prize Laureate (2020-2021) Professor Steve Youngblood; Ugandan award winning journalist and founder of the Refugee and Migration Media Network Gloria Laker Aciro; Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Specialist at Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps and Facilitator at

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Samuel Odobo; Director of the Southern Africa Institute for Economics and Peace Trust Mamombe, and Makerere University's Head of the Journalism Department Dr. William Tayeebwa.

Fostering change through journalism
I chose Peace Journalism as my Social Change Initiative (SCI) for the Rotary Peace Fellowship after the realization that journalists lack the right aptitude and attitude to report on peace on the continent.

As I covered the Lesotho political crisis in 2014 and 2015, I realized that journalists were furthering political contestations and endorsing competing ideologies.

This is when I made a conscious decision to specialize in peace journalism and help inculcate a sense of responsibility to journalists.

The programme, which comes at a time in which Zimbabwe is heading for elections in 2023, will certainly steer the fourth estate on values of upholding peace during this time, while desisting from traditional and war-mongering styles of reporting which tend to be sensational, inflammatory,



Patience Rusare, at the Rotary PJ seminar on Zoom on Sept. 1.

and one-sided in many cases.

Violence, derogatory language and hate speech should not be used as a method of expression of views for communities and nations to thrive.

The training program launched with a Zoom session on Sept. 1. At this first session, Zimbabwe Minister of Information, Publicity, and Broadcasting Services, Senator Monica Mutsvanguwa said, "The training programme could not have come at a more opportune time than it has, with Zimbabwe going for elections in two years' time. It is critical to have a team of journalists who appreciate the value of upholding peace in political contestations.

"There is urgent need to inculcate peace journalism as a major module in foundational journalism and media training at educational institutions across the country," she said.

It is therefore incumbent upon peace journalists to consciously shift towards the appropriate selection of words and pictures that aide and promote peaceful co-existence.

During the September training, Professor Youngblood's session was a time for introspection on where the Zimbabwean media stand.

Some of the reflections showed that journalists both from state media and private media do not report the actual narrative of conflict victims, rather their reports suffer lack of objectivity and high sensationalism.

Most journalists revealed that most of their stories contain a lot of negative language that often indicates the "blame game" which contribute to the escalation of the conflict.

Continued on next page

Empowering Yemeni Youth

Young journalists learn about PJ

Can peace journalism can play a positive role in confronting the war and conflicts in Yemen? Yes, since PJ provides opportunities for society as a whole to consider, evaluate, and cover this conflict in a non-violent manner. PJ is directed to serve the people, and conveys the concerns and sufferings of all minorities and groups that are affected by the conflict. Peace journalism depends on the ethics of journalistic work unlike the traditional press that is concerned with the scoop. PJ depends on how you cover news related to the conflict without fueling it further.

Manasati 30 is an electronic umbrella organization for the Youth Platform Foundation, which provides a free online space for Yemeni youth between the age 15 to 30 years old to engage in dialogue and exchange opinions regardless of their cultural, social, and regional backgrounds. Recently, as

Zimbabwe from Pg 10

The 25 young journalists were charged by Professor Youngblood to be proactive, examine the causes of conflict, look for ways to encourage dialogue before violence occurs and explore solutions while reporting conflict to achieve peace journalism.

Professor Youngblood encouraged Zimbabwean journalists to reject propaganda from any source and instead seek facts from all sources, and give more voice to the voiceless instead of merely reporting for the elites and those in power.

"Peace journalists provide depth and context rather than superficial and sensational blow by blow account of violence and conflict, they consider

part of the project "Empowering Yemeni Youth Towards Peace," the Youth Platform launched a web page titled, "The Road of Peace." The page introduces reports that were developed as an outcome of several trainings targeting more than 76 young journalists from various Yemeni regions. These trainings as a part of the Empowering Yemeni Youth Towards Peace project were ensuring better access to information and active participation of youth in peace building. Aimed to develop skills and capabilities of journalists to provide a balanced coverage of peace building process, the trainings resulted in the production of more than 70 stories. More than half of them were written by women and published on Manasati 30 and other local media outlets.



Trainer Salem bin Sahel teaches PJ to young journalists in Yemen.

consequences of their reporting, carefully select and analyzed the words they use to avoid inflammatory," said Professor Youngblood.

The Zimbabwe peace journalism project will continue with sessions on the first day of October, November, and December this year.

A dream for a peaceful Zimbabwe
My stint at Makerere University's Rotary Peace Centre has offered refreshing perspectives on peace journalism by exploring the core values of truthfulness, social justice, equity, African concepts and cultures of peace, and balanced news reporting.

The Rotary Fellowship gave me new

Vanessa Bassil, the founder and the head of Media Association for Peace (MAP) in Lebanon, trained 10 Yemeni journalists from (from Aden, Hadhramaut, Sana'a, Taiz, and Al Hudaydah) in a training the trainers (TOT) course on peace journalism. She praised the efforts of all trainees to overcome the challenges of online training in a country in which electricity outages are a big problem. "They even asked for additional time to ask more questions and get more knowledge. It was a real pleasure," Bassil noted.

This online TOT training led to several trainings conducted by the trainees where they transferred the knowledge and skills to largest number of journalists in their areas.

Continued on next page

focus and direction. A visit to the war-torn city of Gulu in northern Uganda further exposed me to the realities of the role of media in peacebuilding. Ravished by a decade of civil war, Uganda today has a media whose practices can prevent the escalation of conflict and promote non-violent resolution.

I was determined from then on that I would want the same for my country. I envision a Zimbabwe with peaceful elections. A Zimbabwe where people can peacefully demonstrate on the streets and air their views. And a Zimbabwe with no media-induced violence. That is my dream from this day forward.

--Patience Rusare

Killelea: Peace is not something storytellers love

Media prefer conflict, abhor stats

I've noticed that conflict lends itself to storytelling, for reasons I only partly understand.

Perhaps there are evolutionary reasons. Perhaps we are more inclined to be interested in stories about danger and destruction so we may better equipped to understand, and ultimately avoid, danger to ourselves. Perhaps the reason is cultural. Regardless, it's a fact that armed conflict and violence is attractive to storytellers, both narrative and non-fiction and people are captivated by it.

'It bleeds, it leads,' so goes the old newspaper adage, and there's likely something like it in the proprietary prioritising and sorting algorithms used by Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok.

Peace, on the other hand, is not

Yemen *from Pg 11*

In Aden, the center of south Yemen and the temporary capital, the city which was destroyed by the war in 2015, the peace journalism training gave a hope for young journalists. Trainee Rasheed Seif said, "The training was very useful. Every minute I learned something new."

Another training was held in the east of country in Al Mukkala city. Trainer Salem bin Sahel said, "Journalists desperately need training on peace journalism for safe, reliable and sensitive coverage of conflict in Yemen." Journalist Maryam Al Maari noted, "A lot of information was valuable to start writing reports and articles, to reduce the current conflicts and focus on humanitarian issues."

The training covered many topics related to the ethics, concepts, and principles of peace journalism. The pitfalls of electronic journalism were also discussed. All trainees wrote

something storytellers love, except when used as a counter point or end state in a story about conflict (case in point: Tolstoy's *War & Peace*). Peace is in many ways also the absence of something, which makes it difficult create a story around.

Another thing I've noticed is that storytellers love are individual, personal stories. It moves our emotions.

The statistic that 3,700 people died crossing the Mediterranean in 2016 has little visceral effect on people, compared to a story about a weeping father cradling his drowned child, whose lifeless body was washed up on a cold pebbly beach after their boat sank fleeing the violence in their homeland.

Storytellers love conflict and abhor statistics, and both ideas are hurdles

drafts of press reports that take into account best PJ practices.

In Taiz, the cultural capital of Yemen, the trainer Ahlam Al Makkalh said, "This training was very important especially for journalists who worked in conflict areas and has a role in reducing conflict and hate speech."

In May 2021, a training for journalists from 12 Yemeni platforms aimed to develop skills to provide balanced coverage of events in Yemen. Trainer Aseel Sarya commented, "This training comes at an important stage of the conflict and war that Yemen has been going through for six years. The country needs media that works to promote a culture of peace and dialogue instead of hate and violence."

Journalist Somaya Muhammed said, "This training answered all my questions and I discovered that peace journalism has a purely humanitar-

ian goal and the journalist should not be a judge but only transmitter of the truth." This training was the fifth for Manasati 30 and the first for candidates from 12 Yemeni media platforms.

They are hurdles but ones that must be cleared.

There are two truths are at the core of my work: the first is that peace is much more than the absence of violence, and the second is that statistics understand the world in a holistic way personal stories never will.

At the The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), we understand that peace to has two forms.

One form is 'negative peace' which

Continued on next page



In Aden, trainees work formulating a set of peace journalism standards.

In Yemen, the ordinary citizen needs access to non-biased and balanced coverage of events and verified information. Perhaps an informed public can generate hope that the bullets of war can turn into the doves of peace and love.

--Shaima Ba Sayed

Storytellers *from Pg 12*

measures the levels of violence within societies. It's important, but this says nothing about what creates a peaceful society. The other is Positive Peace, which is the quantifiable foundation that long lasting peace and societal resilience is built on; a foundation that our research has found contains eight pillars namely the acceptance of the rights of others, an equitable distribution of resources, free flow of information, good relations with neighbours, high levels of human capital, low levels of corruption, a sound business environment and a well-functioning government.

While negative peace is often mentioned in our research, Positive Peace is our foundational focus for societal transformation.

Before launching the IEP, I had already set up The Charitable Foundation; one of Australia's largest private foreign aid providers. In that capacity I visited a number of areas that were either experiencing conflict or were in a post-conflict period, and it was in those travels that I started to think about peace.

I knew that people have long considered war a system, studying its causes and capacities, goals and attributes all the way back to Sun Tzu in the fifth century BCE and beyond, but what about Peace?

When I returned from a trip to Democratic Republic of Congo, I made a concerted effort to find out what was known about peace, especially how to measure it. After a while, I realised the answer was 'not much.'

After conversations with Stuart Rees, the Founder of the Sydney Peace and Conflict Center and The Sydney Peace Foundation and meeting with a number of organisations dedicated to peace I decided that the best start towards a systemic understanding of peace would be an annual index

Institute for Economics and Peace



The Institute for Economics and Peace aims to create a paradigm shift in the way the world thinks about peace. We do this by developing global and national indices, calculating the economic cost of violence, analysing country level risk and fragility, and understanding Positive Peace.

IEP's research is used extensively by governments, academic institutions, think tanks, non-governmental organisations and by intergovernmental institutions such as the OECD, The Commonwealth Secretariat, the World Bank and the United Nations. The Institute is headquartered in Sydney with offices in 6 countries

Founded by IT entrepreneur and philanthropist Steve Killelea in 2007, the Institute for Economics and Peace has had a profound impact on traditional thinking on matters of security, defence, terrorism, and development over the last 13 years. (*From <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/>*)

of global peace, that can be used to compare the changes in peace globally, in regions and countries.

With such an index, a greater understanding of peace may be achieved. It would also be an integral step towards our later work in Positive Peace and the concept's eight foundational pillars.

The IEP launched the first Global Peace Index in 2007 and it was, what we in the software industry call, a minimum viable product, but it was successful. This essentially means that the product was robust and workable in all circumstances, but without any of unnecessary ephemera. It was more go-car than luxury sedan, but interesting insights emerged in the report and index, like the quantifiable confirmation that military expenditure was not rising in a post-cold war environment, counter to conventional wisdom.

What we were able to do by ranking countries according to their peace was to take the absence of violence, which is a non-event, and turn it into news. People love rankings, its probably related to our competitive nature. The initial launch received billions of media impressions and was covered

by the likes of CNN, BBC, FOX, The Economist, Guardian and many more.

Since 2007 we have expanded significantly our product offering, but we still find that the annual Global Peace Index receives great publicity.

The 2021 Global Peace Index includes significantly larger data sets, now from 163 countries representing more than 99.7% of the world's population, but still the product is assiduously without narrative.

The aim of products like the Global Peace Index and others that hope to understand peace as a system, is to move beyond individual stories which are almost always partial. The secondary effect of this is that our products may act as a silent editor and bring some context for these individualistic and sometimes biased stories that I have no doubt will continue to be produced. Each of the tens of millions of data points tell a story, yet only the aggregated data can tell the whole story, and that is why measurement matters.

After all, we're only human and we all like a great story.

--Steve Killelea

In the first week of February 2021, the media reported the murder of four people who were shot dead in Karachi, Pakistan.

The two words 'murder' and 'loss of life' are enough to reveal the intensity of the tragedy being reported. There is no need to add anything more as it will not add to the story.

India, Pakistan Media dramatize stories about women

However, it seems that some journalists do not agree with this and they seem to feel the need to add more. The above story was further explained that out of the four people who were fatally shot, one was a woman.

Was mentioning the gender of the woman necessary? Did it add to value of the news? Did it make an impact? Does mentioning the gender of one of the victims not change the intensity of the story and add value to the report?

These are some interesting queries that can be put to the reporter and editing team. Some journalist will agree that the victims' gender was important, while others may ask why this was relevant. One journalist was of the opinion that if the story focussed on 'passion' or 'vengeance', the gender of the victims was important, otherwise it could have been left out.

This could be a way to dramatize the story and add more tragedy – if that is possible in a story that focuses on four murders.



Anum Hanif

It is commonly believed that the content put out by the media produces exactly what the people want. Others argue it is the journalists who determine the way a story is treated. Both statements are true to an extent.

However, journalism is about reporting the facts as they are, not adorning it with extra things to increase its appeal. This is an extremely important factor to keep in mind for women-oriented stories, especially those involving violence and crime.

Commenting on this, Pakistani journalist Anum Hanif who works as a producer at *Express News* said, "We as journalists have to understand our responsibility when violent conflicts are related to women and children. We have to consider the impact of our news story/story angle on the survivors and their families. The journalists' responsibility

becomes two-fold while reporting on women sexual abuse stories. Otherwise media risk accentuating stigmas that surrounds sexual abuse victims and traumatize the survivors."

Despite the increase in the number of women in media, stories involving women and children continued to be unnecessarily dramatized. One reason for this could be the lack of women in decision making positions in newsrooms, leaving such stories to be done in a melodramatic way like a tragic play is performed on a stage.

Apart from this, many journalists, including women, are unaware how to tackle sensitive stories. For them, tragedy means a mournful montage with sad music, wailing women, and close-ups of teary faces because that is how it's always been done. Many end up needlessly dramatizing the incident and adding their own content to enhance the intensity.

It does not occur to them that presenting the facts of a tragic incident is enough and there is no need to add to the drama through extra shots or music etc.

Emotional journalism is bad propaganda and only helps to stir emotions and create issues based on an agenda. And such journalism is a dangerous tool. Journalists should not allow anyone to use their content to inflame unnecessary emotions.

On the contrary, journalists should try to dampen heightened emotions and build bridges. They need to understand the importance of peace journalism and gender-sensitive reporting.

"Peace journalism might be new to Pakistan but it is time to discuss, understand and practice this kind of journalism," said Anum Hanif.

Hanif.

In a world full of hate, war, racism, extremism, journalists need to practice peace journalism and gender sensitive reporting. Such reporting enhances the facts and allows the audience to take whatever they want from it. Journalists don't need to spoon-feed audiences and needlessly mould the way they think.

Indian journalist Zeba Warsi, who is Special Correspondent for *CNN News18* and covers gender and human right, said, "Following the principles of peace journalism is crucial, especially while reporting on sensitive issues like gender violence, social inequality and human rights violations. It reminds readers and viewers of our shared

Continued on next page

Media, women from Pg 14

problems and tragedies. Women oriented stories offer a great opportunity to shed light on the many similarities in the challenges being faced by women across borders."

Speaking about journalism on women and disadvantaged communities in Pakistan and India, Zeba Warsi added, "One can draw parallels of the shared struggles of women and other disadvantaged communities in both countries."

Warsi said, "Success stories and stories of triumph over social evils also equally inspire people beyond borders. Such reports should focus on igniting the core human values of compassion and empathy for survivors of injustice."

Peace journalism and gender-sensitive reporting should be a priority for every journalist and media organization across the region and the world. Peace journalism and gender-sensitive trainings for media staff need to be conducted.

"Maybe it is because of lack of proper training of journalists to practice peace journalism. We have health journalism, political journalism and so on but we rarely talk about peace journalism. So what is peace journalism?" Hanif said. "Peace journalism is when journalists prefer non-violent responses to conflict. In our reporting from international relations to gender based issues, peace journalism is very important to practice."

All journalists, especially women journalists, can help to promote positive journalism through the way they do stories. Journalists should be trained to differentiate between facts and sensationalism.

Anum Hanif added, "Media must strive to find some solutions while covering conflicts. Journalists should understand their role when they are reporting on conflicts and sensitive issues. To report the truth without aggravating the situation - sometimes it's an extremely challenging job for journalists and so they face various dilemmas."

The other problem is that women-oriented stories are not considered important to be at the top of the rundown in many coun-

tries like Pakistan and India, where the situation is similar when it comes to women-oriented stories.

It is important that journalists in both countries compare notes and try to learn from each other. Commenting on the importance of peace journalism, Indian journalist Shreya Pareek, founder of 'The Stories of Change' said, "I feel women across the globe face similar issues. Be it wage disparity, sexism or other challenges, women have similar stories to share. Peace journalism helps in bridging the gap between women and brings their stories on a single platform, providing possible solutions and learnings. Peace journalism is extremely important, especially in countries like India and Pakistan which are so similar in nature, yet there is a huge mental divide."



From top: journalists Zeba Warsi, Shreya Pareek, and Maria Shirazi.

The easiest way to do peace journalism is through entertainment and lifestyle journalism as it is not only extremely popular but is also a strong revenue earner. This is a platform that can help in peace journalism and promoting gender sensitive stories.

Lifestyle and entertainment journalist Maria Shirazi believes that light and glamorous stories help spread goodwill. Shirazi has worked as lifestyle and entertainment journalist with *Instep Magazine* and *The News International* in Pakistan for several years. She has always found it easier to tell women's stories. She thinks that the drama should be left to this section of journalism and not for serious stories like crime.

She said, "Art and sport are universal languages and help to promote peace and build bridges. Exchange of different art forms and sports has always helped to build peace as we have seen between Pakistan and India."

Being a lifestyle and entertainment journalist I think this is one of the strongest forms of journalism that can help build bridges without being sensational or dramatic. I would like to think that lifestyle and fashion journalism is the best way to build bridges and get to know others. It helps to promote our culture to the world and for us to get to know theirs."

--Lubna Jerar Naqvi

Media, faith leaders lack strategic engagement

Survey also reveals Jammu-Kashmir journalists' struggles during Covid

The year 2020 brought in the concept of a physical lockdown which has been a difficult change to adapt to for most countries across the world, especially the countries in the Global South. However, for Kashmiris in India, the idea of a physical lockdown came months after the internet shutdown in the valley in August 2019. The internet was finally restored in February 2021. But the question remains, "How did Jammu and Kashmir make it through the first phase of the pandemic without 4G internet when the whole world was investing in pushing the economy online in order to adapt to the emergent circumstances?"

A new youth driven not-for-profit think tank based out of Srinagar, The Jammu and Kashmir Policy Institute, decided to look at the role of local media in this context alongside the role of local faith actors and organizations as important stakeholders to manage the crisis through their community influence during this time. The KAICIID Fellows Programme and Alternate Kashmir also supported the project's efforts in Jammu and Kashmir in October 2020.

Jammu and Kashmir's society is one where people are still deeply rooted in their ethno-linguistic identity and pride themselves on being grounded in their respective faith traditions. Due to its erstwhile special status and geo-strategic location, nestled between the mountains, Jammu and Kashmir has a thriving local media culture that has its reach at the farthest corners of the valley. Even though the internet had brought in access to national and international media, local media voicing the local concerns of the people through the empathic lens of their local journalists remain the first preference of many Kashmiris. Kashmiris who have often felt "not listened to" seem to have a natural preference for their own conscience keepers, their local journalists. Print remains an important medium and the television is still the main broadcast medium for important announcements in remote locations. As internet connection remains a matter of luxury, access to which depends heavily on security im-



Mansoor Anjum, who directs the local Urdu daily, is interviewed by Ambreen Yousof, a team member from Jammu and Kashmir Policy Institute.

peratives as they arise, the local population with their loyalties to local media thus found themselves not as heavily disadvantaged in terms of access to news on the public health crisis as one would have expected.

This is not to say that the local media houses and journalists found it easy to cover news, report, and relay public health information and guidelines amidst the crisis. The local media outlets had understandably taken to modernizing their ways and means of collecting data, processing information, taken to digital platforms for easier dissemination of information. All these modern means of collecting, processing and reporting news became difficult due to the lack of 4G internet. The project documentary that documented the interviews of local journalists on their experiences during this time, revealed the difficulties that the journalists faced especially while reporting from remote locations and the challenge of sticking to their deadlines for submission, printing of news, sourcing news from news agencies, and getting access to interviewees during the COVID lockdown.

The project documentary further sought to engage with community influencers like faith actors and faith-based organizations who were working to support their community and also worked closely with the administration to encourage people to follow public health guidelines. It is a well-known fact that the local people in the Union Territory are more favorably disposed towards their religious leaders and faith actors in terms of following their guidance and instructions as compared to those issued by the State administration. Recognizing the importance of these local influencers, the administration thus coordinated closely with religious actors in different districts to encourage communities to maintain social distancing norms.

Kashmir valley, which has a population of about 97% Muslims, has a culture of community worship which is intrinsic to Islamic teachings and community engagement norms. The active role of faith actors to mobilize their communities to support public health guidelines while worshipping played a major role in arresting the increase in positive cases reported in the valley over the first few months of the pandemic. The Jammu and Kashmir Policy Institute interviewed prominent faith actors and faith-based organizations to better understand the role stakeholders played in combatting the crisis, focusing on if and how they relied on local media to relay information to the public in the absence of 4G internet.

The documentary brought to light acknowledgement by the

Continued on next page

I've been in touch with a colleague (an academic and journalist) in Afghanistan about the situation there. Ironically, he first contacted me in early August seeking resource materials on peace journalism. I asked him if he'd answer a few questions, and he gladly consented. For his safety, I am not mentioning his name or city. His revealing comments are below.

Discuss the Taliban takeover of your region.

The Taliban came to power in a way no one could have imagined. For example, preparations were made for a fierce battle with the Taliban, but when I woke up in the morning, all my neighbors came out and looked around and said that the police had left the area. About an hour or two later, the Taliban were informed that police and army had left the area, so they came and took power, which was a surprise to all of us. The people were happy that there was no war and the power was transferred without bloodshed and death, but otherwise the people were very sad for their future and the future of Afghanistan.

How is your city different since the Taliban took over?

People have come to work, but not in numbers. It is unknown at this time what they will do after leaving the post. Based on that, but now there is no significant

change and it is not known because they didn't spend much time and also schools, universities are all off. I would recommend changing this to, "there hasn't been much time since the Taliban took over (my city). But the universities are closed as are the schools. So, it is not clear how much they will bring change.

And what about the plight of women and girls?

The revelations will also appear over time, as they have now announced that girls will be able to continue their education. But the girls are very fearful (not delusional). And do not want to even leave the house. For example, my sister in law who used to be the principal of a school now says that she will no longer serve as principal and she will not leave her home. There are thousands of girls who have worked hard for the last 20 years, but now with the advent of the Taliban, they do not have the courage to go outside or the courage to work or study outside the home.

Do you have hope for the future of Afghanistan?

If we look back at their previous control of Afghanistan, and if they employ the same policies, we will lose hope and the gains we have made in the past 20 years will be lost. It will be as if we've lost 50 years, half a century of progress. But if over the past 20 years, the Taliban has changed, has learned that peace and not war is the solution for all, then that would be a happy moment and would lead to a better future. But now we can only guess as to their intentions...We can only hope for the best.

--Steven Youngblood

Kashmir from Pg 16

stakeholders, local media, and faith actors of the importance of the other's role in assisting the administration during this crisis. However, there was clearly a lack in strategic and intentional engagement between the stakeholders, thus highlighting the need for much work on the same in the future. Local media, in order to retain its neutrality as a news disseminating and public opinion generating platform, sought to distance itself from any intentional or strategic engagement with faith actors or organizations while the faith actors and organizations complained that the media would only issue press releases shared by them but would seldom cover their work or efforts on their own accord. Some journalists sought to highlight how they had covered positive messages and efforts of certain faith actors when they found it helpful in terms of a value-based message to the population but otherwise largely refrained from engaging with faith leaders as regular commentators or public figures who could strongly influence public opinion. It seems

“(Journalists) largely refrained from engaging with faith leaders... who could strongly influence public opinion.”

that the journalists wanted to be cautious of narratives that could project their own image as being inclined to support one faith-based ideology or the other.

As per the findings of the interviews, it is reasonable to thus conclude that the space for negotiating on an approach to consider stronger and more critical engagement between faith actors and local media in Jammu and Kashmir is yet to emerge. This inter-stakeholder engagement strategy can be a major step forward in developing a value-based and critical, balanced approach to exploring narratives driven by faith-based ideals and their interpretations in the interest of the community. This effort could also go a long way to inform the way the conflict and related social issues are decoded by faith communities in troubled regions like Jammu and Kashmir.

--Sohini Jana

This article aims to discuss how social media, meshing with the “traditional” print and electronic media, are reshaping the nexus between media and peace in Ghana. I emphasise that social media have helped users to use technology to curate the news they want to hear or read – leading to confirmation biases. Using a case of a media bias that went viral on social media, I explore the threats contemporary media pose to the stability of Ghana. I conclude with a discussion on how morality can be infused into media practice to routinise peace. In all this, I argue that, as a result of news outlets increasingly tailoring their report to their partisan biases, it is important for journalists to blend morality and law in their practice.

Two years into Ghana’s 4th Republic, the country in 1994 became the first country in the sub-region to connect to the internet. Since then especially beginning in the last decade, the country has evolved to become one

Ghana

Social media reshape nexus between media and peace

of the hubs of social media in the sub-region. Social media, dispersed through WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, have offered Ghanaians the opportunity

to evaluate government policies. Today, around half of Ghana’s population of 31 million people are internet users, and around 26% (8.2 million people) use social media. With this percentage of social media users, media practice in the country is now a creative blend of online and offline activities alongside partisan activities.

The incorporation of partisan politics online has made vicious politics more visible. Consequently, the country has further been polarised with all the manifest challenges of offline activities. Ethnocentrism, partisan politics, and misinformation continue to affect online activities. As more private media houses are established by politicians or align themselves with political parties (as coping strategies), online news has increasingly become the personal opinions of journalists, reducing broadcasting to narrowcasting. In addition to this, as media houses compete to gain the attention of Ghanaian public to lay claim to being the first informants of any important piece of news, they tend to favour speed over due diligence.

The consequence of the above was the near violence that gripped Ghana in 2020. In preparing for the 2020 presidential and general parliamentary elections, the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) embarked on the compilation of a new voters register. But because the exercise was conducted at the episodic era of the

coronavirus pandemic, which at the time had no known vaccine or curative medicine, various interest groups, particularly members of the opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), urged the EC to suspend the exercise. Nevertheless, the EC officials remained resolute to continue with the exercise.

As the NDC read the EC’s posture as one of indifference to their concerns, the party, together with a private citizen Mark Takyi-Banson, filed a case in the Supreme Court (SC). It asked the court to stop the EC from compiling the register or allowing the use of the birth certificate and voter’s ID card by prospective voters as proof of identification. On June 25, 2020, the SC, in a unanimous decision ruled in favour of the EC, stating that the EC is an independent body and will only be directed by the court if its acts contrary to law. Just after the ruling, one of the Members of Parliament (MP) for Ashaiman, Ernest Norgbe, in June 2020, appealed to a High Court in Adenta, Accra, which sought to stop the EC from continuing with the exercise. Again, on June 29 2020, the NDC lost the case, as the court ruled that the reliefs they were seeking had already been determined by the SC.

Media Reporting and Ghana’s Peace

In addition to the NDC losing its court cases against the EC was also the fact that the party, like the NPP does when in opposition, had continuously challenged the competence and neutrality of the chairperson of the EC, Jean Adukwai Mensa, ever since she was appointed by the president of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufu-Addo of the NPP in 2018. The NDC’s doubt about the EC appeared to have been confirmed when as part of the voter compilation exercise, military personnel were deployed to the Volta Region, the political stronghold of the NDC. While the government explained that the soldiers were sent as part of the COVID-19 safety protocols of keeping citizens of neighbouring countries from entering Ghana, the NDC read the government’s action as a strategy to disenfranchise its party members.

Unfortunately, amidst a simmering tension, Latif Iddrisu, a journalist with *Joy FM*, a private media house in Ghana, wrote a report that appeared to support the suspicion of the NDC. According to Latif, Hon K.T. Hammond, the NPP (MP), for Adansi-Asokwa constituency of the Ashanti Region of Ghana, had questioned the citizenship of some of the people of the Volta Region. While the MP said that the military deployment was part of the government’s efforts at preventing foreigners from participating in the voter registration exercise, Latif’s report readily found fertile soil in a Ghanaian electoral environment that is usually charged with ethnocentric sentiments. For weeks, tensions over the alleged statements of Hon. Hammond

Continued on next page

Ghana from Pg 18

kept circulated on social media, gathering tension that nearly took Ghana to the tipping point of conflict.

As the case threatened Ghana’s peace along ethnocentric lines, Latif Iddrisu kept defending himself that he was only doing his job as a journalist – to report as it is. It was only when Hon. Hammond threatened to both sue *Joy FM* and also appeal to the National Media for redress that Iddrisu reportedly apologised.

Conclusion: Media law, morality and peace

Latif’s story brings out complex nexus between media, journalism, and peace in Ghana. More specifically, it signals the complex entanglement between duty to work (law) and morality. Journalists are expected to report and write about issues without recourse to fear or favour. They are also to enforce objectivity, as they repudiate favouritism. While this is not always the case, due to the existential reality of confirmation and negativity biases, journalists are to ensure some degree of fairness.

However, journalists straddle law and morality. On the one hand, they are required by the ethics of their profession (law) to report the case as it is. But they are also to apply their conscience (morality) to ascertain whether or not what duty (the law) requires them to do will serve the interest of Ghana. This is particularly crucial given that ethnic atavism continues to threaten Ghana’s peace.

All this reflects a longstanding debate over the correlation between law and morality. These debates morphed into what is known in legal studies as the Hart-Fuller debate. Hart argued that laws are no more than what societies formally promulgate. He, therefore, separated morality from law. Fuller, on the other hand, argued that laws must conform to fundamental principles embodied by natural law. Can law and morality be fused as one? Should an individual be governed by the law or morality, or both? Can one have a moral justification to disobey a law? What should govern the life of an individual-law or morality? This debate has tested the minds of legal philosophers for decades.

Nevertheless, the two eminent scholars made considerable statements. Hart observed that, “law may be law but too evil to be obeyed.” Fuller also observed, “If law is not fused with morality it ‘may become dangerous.’” These two statements signify the need to have a balance between law and morality, framed around one’s agency.

In resolving the entanglement between law and morality, Harold J. Berman in *Justice Law and Argument*, observed, “Law governs external behaviour, morality emphasizes intention law establishes a correction between rights

and obligations, morality prescribes duties which do not bring forth subjective right; law establishes obligations sanctioned by power, morality escapes organized sanctions.”

While the distinction between law and morality could be arid, I argue that the two are the same, but looked at from different perspectives. Morality is believed to hinge on God, whereas (positive) law is a societal invention. Broadly, the debate is over God (theocentric) and man (anthropocentric) as the sources of morality and law, respectively. Either way, law and morals are united in the fact that they are informed by beliefs and values. Separating the two is to obfuscate the importance of beliefs and worldviews in shaping the law.

Extrapolating this to Latif’s case, I suggest that journalists must apply morality in their media practice. They should incorporate existential knowledge, alongside cognitive knowledge in their media practice. My suggestion is condensed in the Akan idiom, “It is the wise person who is sent on an errand to deliver information, not a person with long legs.” This indicates the importance of wisdom in reporting for the sake of peace. For consumers of news outlets, the idiom means they have to read across the spectrum for counterviews.

--Charles Prempeh



Peace speech can build, sustain peacefulness

Columbia Univ. launches study examining peace speech in media

How do linguistic features- words, phrases, even punctuation- that are used in news reporting relate to levels of peace and conflict in societies?

The extreme power of hate speech to mobilize destruction and violence is evident around the globe. In Nigeria, hate speech in the news was identified as a major driver of election violence. In Kenya, hate speech over social media and in blogs played a central role in inciting ethnic divides and conflict. Studies in Poland have shown that exposure to hate speech leads to lower evaluations of victims, greater distancing, and more outgroup prejudice.

But what about the reparative power of peace speech?

Peace speech are basic linguistic structures that may help to build and sustain peacefulness between people and between groups. Communication through language has been underscored as an important process in constructing our reality, and it has been suggested that linguistic features of peace and conflict can be found in all aspects of language including in phonology, grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. Nevertheless, there is limited empirical evidence identifying the specific features and effects of peace speech. As noted by peace linguist Patricia Friedrich, "Just how much a change in vocabulary can shape the outcome of interactions should be a matter to be empirically verified by peace linguistics as soon as possible, so we can all move from the realm of possibility to the realm of empirical evidence and corroboration."

The language used in the media is particularly influential. Advocates of peace journalism have long emphasized the importance of language on conflict, highlighting the need to avoid language which victimizes, is imprecise and emotive, demonizes, and imprecisely labels. And peacekeepers working in conflict zones are currently using data-science and natural language processing methods to track hate

speech – monitoring hostile news, blogs, broadcasts, and social media posts in order to provide early warning predictions of increases in ethnic tensions or violence in local communities. But we are missing the opportunity to leverage the same methods to comprehend and track peace speech.

To address this gap, we have brought a multidisciplinary team of scientists led by Dr. Peter T. Coleman, Dr. Larry Liebovitch, and Dr. Philippe Loustaunau at The Earth Institute at Columbia University's Sustaining Peace Project to apply techniques from data science and natural language processing to study peace speech in the news media. Building on our expertise in peace and conflict studies and data science methodologies, we initiated a pilot study using a statistical document classifier to analyze English-language news articles from 20 countries using data from the News on the Web (NOW) dataset, and are now working to expand these studies with a corpus from LexisNexis that includes millions of articles from around the world over the past decade.

Our initial pilot studies set out to test whether linguistic features could be used to distinguish news from more and less peaceful countries. Countries were categorized as more or less peaceful based on their scores on different indices measuring peace and conflict, such as the Global Peace Index, the Positive Peace Index, the Fragile States Index, and the Human Development Index. We then used several distinct methodological approaches including subject matter expert derived lexicons, bottom-up term frequency calculations, and attention layer analyses to test whether linguistic features could be used to correctly classify news articles as coming from either a more or less peaceful country. Our pilot studies yielded promising results, offering preliminary evidence that there are indeed linguistic differences between the language used in more and less peaceful contexts.

We found that reporting in peaceful societies use language that is looser, more open, more creative, and even more playful, while reporting from less peaceful societies reflects tighter, more ordered, and bureaucratic language. Interestingly, these observations are in line with what Michele Gelfand and her colleagues' have coined as "tightness-looseness." Tightness-looseness refers to differences in the strength of social norms and the strength of sanctioning norm-breakers, or how much tolerance there is for deviance from norms within societies. Higher incidence of ecological and man-made threats— natural disasters, disease prevalence, fewer natural resources, and greater degree of conflict and external threat— are associated

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www.park.edu/peacecenter



Cheapfakes are dangerous propaganda tools

Interfering with photos by providing false context or conveying untrue information is one of the most common forms of cheapfakes. Cheapfakes are images altered using cheap, accessible software, as opposed to more sophisticated deepfakes. A slight manipulation is enough and the message that the picture sends can convey a completely opposite meaning. Such cases have existed since the discovery of photography, and now with unlimited technological possibilities, these have only become more frequent.

Experience shows us that the motives for such manipulations are different, ranging from the most harmless ones, such as entertainment, to reasons like harming others, or political motives. In addition to these two motives, there is also the potential financial benefit as an incentive to create manipulated images.

One such case of propaganda for political purposes was the manipulation in the picture seen above/right. This is a cheapfake because the disseminator has manipulated it to distort the truth. The photo on the right was published by Reuters in 1999 and shows the Albanian woman and 2,000 other refugees seeking to enter Macedonia at the Bllaca border crossing. This photo is considered one of the most powerful that Reuters' photographers have ever shot.

Meanwhile, after more than two de-

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with higher levels of cultural tightness due to the existential needs for coordination, predictability and control inherent in such locales. Our studies suggest that differences in the tightness-looseness of the language used in reporting may also be able to help distinguish the level of peace in a given country.

These promising preliminary findings suggest that energy dedicated towards identifying the linguistic features of peace speech has the potential to scale up to useful tools for policy and practice, including contributing to global



The original image (right) is manipulated (left) and republished.

cadecades, the same photo of the woman, Sherife Luta, has been republished online and manipulated to spread propaganda. This time, the same woman poses as a Serbian victim of NATO bombing. The photo on the left is a manipulation and was posted on Twitter by the Russian Embassy in South Africa, a place where such propaganda may be more successful given the lack of information that may prevail in that country about the war in Kosovo. The famous Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels said that propaganda becomes ineffective the moment we are aware of it. Therefore, Russian diplomacy in this case makes propaganda in a part of the world where the expectation that it will be effective is higher.

To understand the manipulation, a basic photo verification is enough, using Google Reverse Image Search to see if it has been published on the Internet previously. The same photo had been manipulated and appeared

on a television broadcast of the Russian state news agency, RIA Novosti, in August 2014. There, Sherife Luta poses as a Serbian mother, a victim of NATO bombing, as in the photo the other refugees have been wiped out and a dilapidated building has been set up in the background. This shows that manipulating pictures is intentional propaganda trying to distort the truth. Such cheapfakes are dangerous because they deviate from reality and try to persuade people to believe something that is not true.

This example of a cheapfake shows how dangerous such a propaganda tool can be. Such manipulations can create narratives based on untruths. Thus, societies should be aware of such forms of fakery like this that were published by a reliable outlet like Reuters but was then manipulated in detail and re-published through official Russian diplomatic channels on Twitter.

--Dren Greguri

metrics of peace and conflict, and could even serve as a foundation for journalists to carefully consider the unintended consequences of the kinds of language they use in their reporting. We know language matters, and specifying exactly how and what the features are of peace speech could help provide the basis for a more fundamental and practical understanding of the ways media intersects with levels of peace and conflict.

--Peter T. Coleman and Allegra Chen-Carrel

CCMN battles Covid misinfo in Cameroon

Community engagement mobilizes population

The Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN) has been at the forefront in the fight against the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic beginning in March 2020. CCMN engaged communities and local populations in the fight against the COVID-19 crisis through community media outreach, while strengthening the production of reliable information related to the COVID crisis.

This is being done via the improvement of the quality of the programs produced and the involvement of journalists from many local radio stations as possible while taking the necessary security precautions in the processing of content. The focus was centred on producing content to discourage misinformation, disinformation, fake news, myths, and conspiracy theories around the virus and vaccine.

CCMN members could go through with such because its mission was geared towards strengthening the professional capacities of commu-



CCMN Covid poster

nity media, particularly with regard to communication during a health crisis while ensuring increased resilience of affected populations, including the remote ones

that are often deprived of reliable information and confused by rumours and fake news largely available through social media in Cameroon.

Community media in the conflict-affected communities in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest Anglo-phone regions as well as the extreme

North region today operate in a situation of threats from government security forces, Boko Haram fighters, and anglophone secessionist militias, and are experiencing continued pressure from local and national political elites to follow their own narratives.

The result is extreme self-censorship, which prevents them from addressing subjects that, in one way or another, talk about conflict transformation, conflict prevention, and peace initiatives. Programmes of dialogue and debate are no longer present on the airwaves because they are too dangerous for local media actors.

COVID-19 has equally exacerbated the situation of our network of community media organs already serving these communities. In this bogged-down situation, local populations have limited access to quality and reliable sources of information on local and regional levels that would enable them to understand the situation, inform themselves regularly on current developments, and contribute to the search for solutions to their daily struggles.

Despite such a weakened media sector, the CCMN has contributed to the national COVID-19 outbreak response in Cameroon through Risk Communication and Community Engagement, which helps to mobilize populations to stop the transmission of the disease and get their feedback. Thus, response actions and messages have been tailored for the communities' needs. It is critical for CCMN to always communicate to the public what is known about COVID-19, what is unknown, what is being done, and actions to be taken on a regular basis using its peace journalism approach that is solution and people oriented.

CCMN acknowledges that preparedness and response activities should be always conducted in a participa-

tory, community-based way that are informed and continually optimized according to community feedback to detect and respond to concerns, rumours and misinformation. Changes in preparedness and response interventions were therefore take as a point of duty to CCMN to announce and explain ahead of time, based on community perspectives. Responsive, empathic, transparent, and consistent messaging in local languages through trusted channels of communication, using community-based networks and key influencers and building capacity of local entities, is being used by CCMN to establish authority and trust.

Many local, national and international organizations have supported and partnered with the Cameroon Community Media Network to enhance their interventions in connection to the fight against the spread of the Covid 19 pandemic. This support has enabled the CCMN to continue its activities by establishing partnerships with key broadcast and CSO members of CCMN in the crisis stricken regions as well as other regions affected indirectly. CCMN has also supported the production of programs specifically related to the COVID-19 crisis which are then broadcast via media members of the network, as well as through the web. This is also helping to improve on the capacity of content producers and broadcasters within the network.

Production activities involve the design and production of COVID-19 radio programs on weekly basis, including weekly news updates, radio spots/public service announcements, radio dramas, call/text-in and panel discussions, documentaries, and online campaigns. The contents have been uploaded online for the wider community who follow online media platforms of the CCMN (Twitter, Face-

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book, website, and Instagram).

To this end, close to 1000 radio spots, radio dramas, news updates, and call-in programs and so on have been produced by CCMN. An average of 8,700 broadcasts was done on over 90 radio stations every week.

CCMN is equally making use of local languages to produce COVID 19 related content that helped in creating awareness in remote areas of the country. For the past few months, the network engaged over 90 community radio stations in eight regions in Cameroon to disseminate the content produced. It helped in changing people's perception of the virus and also activated their consciousness about the preventive measures and recently the need to get vaccinated.

Outcome of the COVID 19 sensitization campaigns carried out by CCMN

The right information on COVID 19 was made available to communities in local languages. This included the dissemination of the appropriate messages to a heterogeneous audience; increasing awareness among the network's local media and CSOs on the need to upgrade knowledge and skills in communication, awareness raising, and advocacy; and conducting activities to sensitize the community. The campaign also increased awareness about COVID-19, increased trust at the level of the community media as a source of information, and improved knowledge and skills about designing and developing an anti-COVID communication plan.

CCMN's aspiration to continue the fight against COVID 19

In the future, CCMN's goals include: Strengthening the production of reliable component of information related to the COVID crisis; improving the quality of the programs produced; involving journalists from as many local radio stations as possible in sensitizing the public on COVID



Celebrating success at a CCMN-led community sensitization event on Covid-19.

19; and strengthening the professional capacities of community media, particularly with regard to communication during a health crisis. Other goals include increasing the resilience of affected populations, including the remote ones, that are often deprived of reliable information and confused by rumours and fake news largely available through social media in Cameroon; and getting more people to understand the importance of taking the COVID vaccine.

Notwithstanding the strides made, the network has encountered a series of challenges in the course of her efforts. Among these are insecurity associated with the current armed conflict; frequent blackouts due to poor power management and availability in remote localities affecting both production and broadcast efficiency; poor internet connectivity that delayed uploading and distribution of content; and delays in meeting up with some task deadlines associated with ghost towns in the NWR and SWR. Also, most field producers in local communities lack ICT and digital skills.

The key lessons constantly being learned in the process of the CCMN's Covid 19 actions is the significance of civil society and media working together to play an important role in building a culture of integrity in an underdeveloped country and its society like Cameroon. While civil society has a key role in bridging the government bodies and the people at the grassroots level, the role of the media is like a watchdog by providing accurate,

balanced, and timely information that is relevant to the public interest.

This approach has helped to lower the risk for journalists in conflict situations by offering journalists an alternate approach to the sensational journalism practiced in Cameroon. The network emphasizes balanced reporting, objectivity, neutrality, non-inflammatory language, spotlighting the voice of the voiceless, and inclusiveness – basically practicing professional journalism and mindful of the current conflict as well as health crisis context. CCMN has continued to foster its goal of 10% media and 90% community through promoting community development and humanitarian intervention in all localities where its membership network extends and beyond.

Community and local media are an important source of information for local communities. They are trusted and locally embedded actors for local and regional information for, from, and by the community. In most cases, pandemic stories (among others) are even produced in local languages and vernacular.

CCMN has been able to provide its exemplary community service thanks to support from partners like Bread For The World, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, the European Union via Fondation Hirondelle, the Centre for International Development and Training, UK, International Media Support IMS, SOPISDEW, and a host of other organizations.

--Rose Obah Akah

Review: Book provides insightful guidance

While there is a historic tradition of journalism that strives towards a common, public good (however defined), this has occurred in a paradigm of a professionalisation of journalism and a business model where editors responded to a pressure to publish content — whether print, radio, or television — that attracted audiences and satisfied advertisers.

The emergence of social media oligopolies has utterly upturned the news economy by providing viewing metric information that individual media houses can't offer. In response, traditional media raced to a floor of cost savings, attempting to retain whatever audiences they could.

Reporting Beyond the Problem is a compendium of eight alternative approaches that attempts to rebalance, if not reorientate, where journalism should be. The book covers civic journalism, constructive journalism, solutions journalism, explanatory journalism, participatory journalism, engaged journalism, peace journalism, and slow journalism. Helpfully, brief definitions are provided in the book's Introduction.

The book's editors couch these as "socially responsible reporting approaches that inform the public with the understanding that our democracy cannot prosper with an uninformed populace." This infers that there are socially irresponsible reporting approaches as well as a debate about the role of media in enhancing democracy, for example its independent role in holding power to account and/or collaborating with communities to encourage civic engagement. Such dimensions get a good inspection throughout the book.

The case for peace journalism lies in the argument that the manner — framing and word choice — of news reportage can itself "inflare conflict, exploit and/or deepen societal divisions, create distortions, and perpetuate stereotypes while ignoring solutions and reconciliation." The chapter has sample, real news stories, with contrasting "Traditional Reporting" and "Peace Journalism Story" versions.

Peace journalism is motivated by a version of peace theory — working towards "positive peace" with reportage that includes non-violent resolutions to conflict. While there is a well-articulated defence that this is not the same as advocating for peace, the term "peace journalism" remains hostile to many journalists. Perhaps this conflict can be seen in the more traditional debate about the role of journalists in "serving the public good;" who defines the public good or agrees what one's peaceful society should look like (particularly when reconciliation hasn't yet taken place)? In the case of Northern Ireland, for example, the pillarisation of much of its media (serving distinct ethno-nationalist audiences) provides ready channels for those who set out to offend and/or are easily offended. So while there is evidence that audiences will embrace peace journalism-style reporting, media landscapes can remain too incentivised to continue with the episodic and sensational.

The editors conclude with an acknowledgement of the challenges that remain for productive and socially responsible reporting, such as the friction (boundaries) between journalists and their communities, definitions and evaluation of impact, mediating



what a society's best interests are (i.e. defining the public good), and having the skills and support to add depth and context to reportage. Meanwhile, they provide a helpful set of recommendations, for example sending a reporter to a local school board meeting and publishing tweets of key actions immediately, but also being allowed to spend more time writing a piece that puts the meeting in context.

Reporting Beyond the Problem is insightful guidance for those journalists who take the profession's value of public service seriously. The contributors spell out how the information ecosystem has irrevocably changed, with suggestions for adaptation that remain grounded in the fundamental elements of journalism: seek truth, minimise harm, act independently, and be accountable and transparent. *The full version of this book review is available at Shared Future News.*

--Allan Leonard



the **PEACE**
JOURNALIST

In the April 2022 edition:
-Project for Sahel journalists
-PJ Center's 10th anniversary



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