

**THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A CASE OF
CIVIL WAR IN SOMALIA**

BY

FATUMA MOHAMED HASSAN

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own original work and that it has not been presented to any other University for a degree award.

Signature.....Date.....

Fatuma Mohamed Hassan

R52/86845/2016

Supervisor's Approval

This project has been submitted with my approval as the University Supervisor

Signed Date

Dr Patrick Maluki

Lecturer (IDIS)

University of Nairobi

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to everyone who taught me the values of knowledge, integrity, hard work, respect, and self-improvement and always encouraged me to dream and work hard towards my dreams.

Most importantly, those who made me learn that life will never be straight line.

A special gratitude goes to my husband, Mohamed and my mum Khadija who were by my side through thick and thin. Thank you all and be blessed.

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the media in Somalia, looking at how the press – mainly radio – is used in conflict management while at the same time assessing the positive and negative impacts the media has on the prolonged Somalia conflict. The thesis also looks at the challenges faced by the journalists and their media houses in respect to the conflict in the war torn horn of Africa nation. Special attention is given to the de-escalation approach used by media operating in Somalia to mitigate the impact and spread of conflict. The study focuses on the years when the country's conflict was at its peak, especially during the era of warlords, moderate Islamist, extremists such as Al-Shabab and the Federal government. The study pursued to evaluate possible expressions of peace journalism against war journalism by using tools unique to conflict analysis. The study used secondary sources of data, this includes; several media houses websites and reporters operating in Somalia, as well as other researchers works on Somali conflict. The study used the frameworks of peace and war journalism to analyze the impact of media reports has had on the conflict in Somalia, and the result shows that even though both local and international media houses tend to use more of war journalism than peace journalism, some local stations in the country have championed peace journalism and actually helped calm tensions in different parts of Somalia. The research also found that radio station is the most preferable source of media in Somalia; since most people are not literate they do not depend on newspaper. The study further revealed that several media faced various challenges from Somali government, the former Islamic Courts Union (ICU), extremist groups such as Alshabab, and the local administrations such as Puntland, which in several cases had threaten journalist and some have gone further to arrest them.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
NUSOJ	National Union of Somali Journalists
RTL	Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
VOA	Voice of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Everywhere in the world there are continuously security challenges, posing more threat to the stability and peace across the world than ever before. The root causes of conflicts from global perspective have increasingly becoming dynamic in nature.¹ However many of today's threat to security has been generated within particular society, spread to neighborhood environment. This also has been intensified by unhealthy regional dynamic arising from political instability and struggling for power especially in Africa continent.

Media, whether local or international, time and again takes an essential role in today's conflict. Essentially, their contribution to conflict can take to opposing forms; one that perpetuates conflict by fueling animosity and tension, thus taking the responsibility for increased violence, and the second one which strives to seek solutions for the conflict by reporting on the process made in quelling the tension.

Advancement in media technology had greatly changed the dynamics of conflict and its resolution. Compared to earlier people, today's² people around the world are more aware of the major developments in international relationship. Currently there are millions of global news network with live broadcast across the world, social media such as Facebook also included that provide prompt news as they are unfolding.

¹Mbeke P, "The role of media in conflict and peace building in Kenya," InterNews Network, Nairobi 2009.

²Eytan Gilbao "Media and Conflict: Framing Issues, Making Policy, Shaping Opinions," Transnational Publishers, Inc., 2002

History has also shown that media can provoke people and lead them towards enmity. A good example is how the Germany leader, Adolf Hitler used the media to incite hatred against Jews o Europe.³It is reported that Joseph Goebbels who was Hitler's right hand man for propaganda, had the eloquence and the skills of mass persuasion, making radio broadcasts and motion pictures as his favorite weapons. He is believed to have had hold over radio programming and controlled who was admitted to the schools of journalism.⁴

Over the last few years, some African countries experience a spill over from revolutions namely the one that swept across Arab countries and later became known as the Arab spring. There is no argument that media, particularly social media, played a major role Arab spring. Most conflict scholars take the example of Libya war to highlight how the media can sometimes get it wrong. Several Western media initially compared what was happening in Libya as a dictator slaughtering his people, and emphasized the need to intervene on humanitarian ground.

Others grouped the Libyan case to the revolutions that was taking place in some Arab countries. Here the media failed to notice that, unlike the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, the Libya conflict was from the onset a bloody and devastating one.⁵The role of the media in Libyan conflict can clearly be illustrated on how fast the image of the killing of Muamar Gaddafi was transmitted throughout the world, even before some of his close allies could confirm that. The release of the amateur video has sparked a major surrounding the killing of Libya's strongman and its legality.

³Adena, Maja et.al "Radio and the Rise of The Nazis in Prewar Germany". The Quarterly Journal of Economics. 2015

⁴Preager.Buric, A. "Media, War and peace in Bosnia. In E. David (Ed.)", Regional Media. 2000

⁵Mekay Emad, "One Libyan Battle Is Fought in Social and News Media". The New York Times. 2011

The media played a key role in restoring some sort of peace and de-escalating conflict thus setting the new agenda for discussion.

In 2010, during the general election in Ivory Coast, the media in that country was prevalent with partisan coverage and fake news that led to incitements and violence, while the media practitioners themselves were targeted and intimidated.⁶ Both the main candidates in the election, Alassane Ouattara and Laurent Gbagbo used the media to reach out to their supporters and relay messages that were filled with hatred and intolerance led to deadly post-election violence. In 1994 Rwandan genocide, RTLM played a decisive role in initiating the killing of more than eight hundred thousand people in just one hundred days. It is believed that RTLM's reports urging for the murder of the Tutsi ethnic members have contributed to the Rwanda genocide.⁷

The 1993 humanitarian intervention into Somalia which was led by the United States of America was the result of media coverage that highlighted the humanitarian crisis in the horn of Africa nation. However, due to the abrupt nature of the intervention, many avoidable mistakes were made making the mission unsuccessful. Because of these failures, the UN mission had to abort and US left desperate Somalis at the mercy of ruthless war lords.⁸

Somalia lacked an effective central government for nearly three decades. Some parts of the country are under the rule of local authorities, as in the case of Puntland and the self-declared republic of Somaliland, but don't have the recognition of international community as states. While regions in the East and Northern Somalia have been peaceful, clan conflict, kidnapping, assassinations and

⁶ Media Foundation for West Africa, "Post-election violence in Cote d'Ivoire," 2011

⁷ Yanagizawa-Drott, David. "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence From the Rwandan Genocide," Quarterly Journal of Economics, August 2014.

⁸ Walter P. Davidson, "Mass Communication and Conflict Resolution," New York: Praeger, 1994

other threats to locals and foreigners frequently occur in other regions of the country. Since the state collapse in 1991, an estimated one million people had died in the Somalia civil war.⁹

The years following the state collapse saw Mogadishu – the capital city of Somalia – falling into the hands of ruthless warlords who claimed to have had the loyalty of their respective clans. This was a huge challenge to the peace building process, as there was no substitute capital that could replace Mogadishu. As a result, Somalia fragmented into several weak regions that had the hallmark of clan territories. For example, Somaliland and Puntland are dominated by specific clans, Isak and Majerten respectively. The intense clan wars that followed the state collapse in 1991 resulted in the destruction of all sectors of the economy, namely livestock and farming. Hundreds of thousands of people fled to the neighboring countries such as Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia, while millions of others were internally displaced.¹⁰

In the past decade, the government of Somalia, allied forces including the African Union peacekeeping mission (AMISOM) and Islamist groups fighting them have employed media propaganda against each other. The aim is to win hearts and minds of the local population.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The cost of conflict is immense causing suffering and poverty, destroying economic development and depriving people of their basic need. Countries undergoing major political changes towards democracy often faced conflict in different forms. The influence that the media has in conflicts around the world has tremendously increased over the past few decades. Looking at the Rwandan genocide, the Libyan civil war and Kenya's post-election violence, you notice that media is a

⁹ Ken Menkhaus, "Somalia: What went wrong?" The RUSI Journal, Vol. 154, No. 4, August 2009

¹⁰ Ibid

double-edged tool in conflict situation and thus can be used to escalate or deescalate situations.¹¹ Studies show that the escalation role is more common with local media that uses vernacular, while national and international media outlets play a significant role in de-escalation roles.¹²

To clearly comprehend the exact role the media plays in Somalia conflict management, it is very imperative to figure out the ways in which media outlets influence conflicts and how they can be used to manage it. Much academic work has been done in the field of how media can transform the economy, society as politics of a nation, but little effort have been focused on media in conflicts. Furthermore, the field of media and how it contributes to conflict management is a new one that arose due to the high demand, since conflicts are common place in today's world.

Conflict researchers believe that the press can be a tool to change conflicts and enforce reconciliation. However media experts are not that optimistic. They claim that even though news outlets are encouraged to do more in peace journalism, the normal practice is that they favor traditional standards which are: the importance of fact checking, independence, objectivity and impartiality.¹³

Therefore, the study analyzed how mass media affect these human behaviors which in turn determine human reaction to conflict situations with reference to the civil war in Somalia.

¹¹ Abdi, J. and Deane, J. "The Kenyan 2007 Elections and their Aftermath: The Role of Media and Communication", Policy Briefing No. 1, BBC World Service Trust, London. 2008

¹² Ibid

¹³ Nohrstedt, Stig, and Rune Ottosen. "War Journalism in the Threat Society: Peace Journalism as a Strategy for Challenging the Mediated Culture of Fear?" Conflict and Communication Online 7, no. 2 2008.

1.2 Research Questions

The study was directed by the following research questions

- i) To what extent do media deescalate violence in Somalia?
- ii) What are the positive and negative impacts of both local and international media for conflict resolution in Somalia?
- iii) What are the challenges facing media for conflict resolution in Somalia?

1.3 Objective of the studies

The core objective of this study is to examine the role of the Somalia media in conflict management.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i) To determine the extent to which media deescalate conflict in Somalia
- ii) To establish the positive and negative impacts of both local and international media for conflict resolution in Somalia
- iii) To examine the challenges facing media in Somalia in their role in conflict management

1.4 Study Hypotheses

H₁: The media deescalates conflict in Somalia.

H₂: Both local and international media have positive and negative impacts for conflict resolution in Somalia.

H₃: The media in Somalia is facing challenges in their role in conflict management.

1.5 Justification of the study

The study will add to the body of knowledge relating to media operations and conflict management as well as promoting aspects of peace journalism in times of conflict. It also strives to enable decision makers in the field of security and conflict resolution, security agencies and political leaders to make sound decisions on how to avert conflicts through media sensitization and early warning systems as well as holding media owners to account for the negative actions of their companies. As a tool for enhancing peace, the study may encourage media practitioners to embrace set policies and ethical standards which regulate the conduct of the media fraternity.

1.6 Literature Review

Huge junk of the literature focusing on media and conflict management indicate that journalists play a major role as actors – whether positive or negative – in conflicts. Very little evidence is there to show that media practitioners are passive observers. Even though media tries to minimize to contribute to the ongoing conflicts, claiming that they just report on events and have no way to shape the public opinion is an understatement. Scholars of peace are convinced that if the media decides, it can play a crucial role in resolving tensions and building peace.

The coverage of media on a specific conflict can either lead to two things; escalation of the violence because the journalists decide to employ war journalism, or de-escalation of conflict after promoting peace journalism. Journalist usually incorporate facts with the views from opposing sides just to allow them put forward their narratives. By focusing on casualties and who won over whom, the media oils war machines and make conflict parties widen their animosity. On the other hand, by focusing on efforts to resolve the conflict while keeping a keen eye on the destructions that resulted from the war, media brings opposing sides closer to each other thus initiating dialogue

and ultimately peace.¹⁴ This kind of journalism promotes positive considerations among rival parties through appreciating opposing viewpoints.

Most of armed clashes take place within the borders of states and are usually between government troops and rebel groups. In this scenario, every side targets to win the support of the masses, in other words the heart and the mind of the ordinary citizens. In most cases, the state is financially and militarily superior to the non-state actors, thus the later strives to play the victim and influence the perception of the population mainly through media. Thus media outlets became a handy tool in this digital era.¹⁵

Betz (2004) claims that over dependence on news outlets without checking the self-interest of individual journalists can make media and its practitioners considered as players in conflicts, increasing the overall parties to a given conflict.¹⁶

The political and military leaders are at times accused of ignoring the complex role the media plays in escalating or deescalating armed conflicts. For instance, a survey carried out among service members of the USA military in 1995 show 64% of the soldiers believed they could have out rightly won the Vietnam War, if the media hadn't ruined their chances.¹⁷

¹⁴ Lynch, Jake, and Annabel McGoldrick. "Peace Journalism." Stroud: Hawthorn Press, 2005.

¹⁵ Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, "America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity," The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Daniel C. Hallin, "The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam," University of California Press, 1986

The US politicians initially succeeded in convincing their citizens that Vietnam War was about restoring peace and America had the moral responsibility to help alleviate problems in the Southeast Asian country. Then the military commanders forgot one essential thing; to control media coverage on the war. Journalists were given the freedom to report from frontlines and send uncensored images and stories. Media houses were able to bring the real stories of Vietnam War to American sitting rooms, and the public was shocked to know the truth about the war. The journalists got access to the wounded soldiers, bringing to light the huge casualties on the American side. They also interviewed frustrated soldiers who began to question the aim of the senseless war.¹⁸

Most media analysts claim that since World War II, mass media has been increasingly used as a channel for public diplomacy, which has overhauled the substance of diplomacy. This has expanded the job of the media to include being a tool for international conflict resolution and diplomacy.

The media has undergone tremendous transformation in the past decades and the parallel change in the dynamics of international arena, thus ultimately bringing about alternative and new roles for media in international conflicts.¹⁹

Technological advancements have indeed continued to shape the impact of media in armed conflicts.²⁰

¹⁸ William M. Hammond, "Reporting Vietnam: Media & Military at War," University Press of Kansas, 1998

¹⁹ Adolt E. Mbaine (ed). "Media in Situations of Conflict, Roles Challenges and Responsibility," Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2006.

²⁰ Betz, M. "Radio as a Peace Builder - A case Study of Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of Congo." The Great Lakers Research Journal , Vol 1. 2004

Innovations in digital journalism and the spread of internet based media have made journalists open to different sources including amateur photos and videos to get the real time news and important events. A good example is the execution of former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, which was filmed by amateur journalist, who got access to the execution room with their smart phone and through that the world learnt about that historic moment.

In Somalia, the media has many similarities with those in the other parts of the African continent. The characteristics they share include huge consumption of radio content, weak print media and a significantly growing television audience that are mainly urban residents.

The internet and social media era has reached Somalia, even though much later than the rest of Africa. In the year 2000, the country has established a national internet service provider, becoming the last in the continent to do so. However infrastructural problems such as unreliable electricity supply are hindering the internet access to majority of Somalis.

Skjerdal claims for the complex conflict of Somalia to be explained accurately and to create understanding between the various parties, both in the local and international media working in Somalia need to embark on a journey of improving their output. He adds that current journalists' approach appears to be sticking to the professional ethics and code of conduct rather than taking up a peace mediation role.²¹

²¹ Skjerdal, Terje S. "The Somali Media and their Peace-Building Potential," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*: Vol. 11 , Article 9. 2012

1.6.1 State of Media in Somalia

The perpetual conflict in Somalia that has continued for nearly three decades has enabled some sectors in the economy to develop much faster than the others. These sectors include but not limited; the money transfer market, telecommunications and also the media.²²The media landscape in Somalia has undergone tremendous change in past two decades, marked with the closure of old ones and opening of new outlets. Financial and insecurity challenges are said to be the main cause of media closure in the country. The authorities as well as Al-Shabab are both guilty of shutting down media organizations that do not subscribe to their ideologies.

A research carried out by BBC reveal that radio is the dominant and most accessible medium. There are over dozens of privately owned radio state in Somalia and majority of them are located in the capital Mogadishu. Somali speaking media based in the Diaspora continue to play a vital role in the country.

Internet based media is very common among Somalis living abroad and acts as a strong link with their relatives back home. However, the internet just like television has its accessibility within Somalia hindered by hindrances such as limited access to electricity.²³

In its November 2011, the BBC says in a policy briefing “*the media of Somalia: A force for moderation,*”

²² Issa-Salwe, Abdisalam M. “The Internet and the Somali Diaspora: The Web as a New Means of Expression.” Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies 6 (2006)

²³ Ibid

“Media matters in Somalia. The society arguably ranks among the most media literate in Africa. While much divides a deeply fractured, war-torn and now drought-stricken and famine-stricken country, an ancient love of poetry and a common language unite it. So, throughout recent history, has an avid consumption of news and information. Obtaining information and assessing its trustworthiness has, in this traditionally pastoralist and nomadic society, always shaped not just politics, society and culture, but the odds of survival.”

However, no single local radio station in Somalia can claim that it has monopoly over the country’s audience. Due to this, international radio stations such as BBC Somali service and its counterpart VOA which broadcast via short wave and FM relays have huge audience in the major cities.

Majority of the local radio stations in Somalia established good relationship with the international and regional organizations that deal with media development, thus deriving good income from projects rolled out by these agencies as well and sponsored adverts by humanitarian organizations.

The authorities in the breakaway republic of Somaliland oppose the running of private radio stations in the territories under their control, even though it allows international broadcasters such as BBC and VOA to broadcast via FM relays. Radio Hargeisa, the state run broadcaster, hardly reaches outside Hargeisa, thus most listeners relay on BBC and VOA for news and information.²⁴

²⁴Höhne, Markus V. “Newspapers in Hargeysa: Freedom of Speech in Post-Conflict Somaliland.” Afrika Spectrum 43, no. 1.2008

Throughout the country, internet accessibility is very low. According to the website (www.internetworldstats.com) only 7.9% of the Somali population has had access to internet by the end of 2017. Social media networks namely Facebook is popular among Somalis with 7.2% penetration rate.²⁵

1.6.2 Impact of Media on conflict in Somalia

Positive Impact

There is huge amount of case studies done on the positive effects the media has on conflict management. The first thing that comes to mind is the phenomenon of the CNN-effect and how the media shapes Western foreign policies in the days and months leading to interventions. There is no argument about how the international media played an enormous role in bringing the attention of the western world to the Somalia civil war in 1991 by showing gruesome images of malnourished children and mothers. Nonetheless, the number of conflicts that get significant international media attention are said to be very small, and those who are lucky to get it, the coverage happens much later when the fighting is out of hand. Nevertheless, the attention of the international media can have significant impact for a conflict.

Literature reviewed shows that media has positive contribution in the area of conflict management and a prominent example mentioned is that of the fall of the infamous Berlin wall and the collapse of Soviet Union freeing many countries from its ruthless ideology. The top officials of the Soviet Union, especially those in East Europe failed to control their peoples' positive response and welcome of the Western based media houses. It has been pointed out that television played a major

²⁵ For more details visit <https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#so>

role in 1989 revolutions which swept across Soviet Union after images of protestors and the poor living conditions were beamed throughout the world.²⁶

David Laws and Jennifer Akin argue that news broadcasts and the media coverage of current affairs directly shape the public opinion as well as action. New technological advancements have enabled common man to get direct and uncensored news from all over the world via radio, television and internet. This revolution in information has empowered the once voiceless masses. This also makes it harder for repressive government to manipulate information and public opinion, thus controlling their citizens.

During times of crises, the media enables the public to get information quickly and most times accurately. For example, when there are dialogues to end conflicts, the news media enables leaders of confrontational parties to speak to the supporters.²⁷ Often, the negotiating parties find that they have reached some break through which needs to be communicated to their supporters or constituents, and that is when media becomes a handy tool to relay the good news. This job becomes harder when there are no media outlets that are easily and transparently accessible to the opposing parties. If the supporters are kept in the dark and not informed about the progress during negotiations, they will most definitely feel cheated and once the deal is announced they may disown, because it falls short of their expectation. To seek the approval of the masses, the delegates

²⁶ Anthony Giddens, "Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives," New York: Routledge, 2000.

²⁷Akin, Jennifer. "Mass Media." Beyond Intractability. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Available at <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/mass-communication>>

justify the outcome of the negotiations by explaining the agreement to their supporters through media channels.²⁸

Internal wars do not occur in vacuum but tend to have precursors. In Somalia, local media often have greater knowledge of the existing political structures, parts to the conflict as well as the circumstances leading to the outbreak of violence. The local media can therefore guide the society before the conflict erupts by identifying and appropriately addressing the issues at hand. The other advantage that Somali local media has over the international media is that they recognize the actors with the ability to accelerate the conflict, thus able to hold them to account. The media helps in managing conflicts by delivering credible news and information and reaching as much audience as possible. It can also encourage reconciliation and societal development after the conflict is over.²⁹

Negative Impact

Others researchers disagree with the analysis that free and independent media has positive impact on conflict management. Schaffert argues that stories on negotiations to end conflicts are easily pushed aside and that media houses usually go for the most recent, and the mainly appalling aspects of the conflict. Armed factions that understand this situation can perpetuate the conflict while negotiations are ongoing in order to attract media attention.³⁰

²⁸ Laws, David. "Representation of Stakeholding Interests." *The Consensus Building Handbook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. 1999.

²⁹Westphal, Florian "The Right Information at the Right Time." 2004. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001389/138983e.pdf> page 27-29

³⁰ Richard W. Schaffert, "The Media's Influence on the Public's Perception of Terrorism and the Question of Media Responsibility, Media Coverage and Political Terrorists," New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992.

Most militant and rebel groups plan their attacks and assassinations to overlap with important dates targeting prominent people, choosing sites with easy media access, and aiming for large numbers of casualties.³¹ Most militant and rebel groups plan their attacks and assassinations to concur with important dates targeting prominent people, choosing places in which the media can access easily and maximizing casualties to the large numbers possible. The subsequent media coverage can give status and even legitimacy to that group, so media reporting definitely becomes one of their calculated strategies and achieved priority.

In Somalia, the Al-Shabab militant group use media platforms to propagate their ideologies and alleged gains they made during battles with what they call the “infidels”. This has negative impact on the minds of the Somali population and is likely to attract them more followers.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

1.7.1 The Social Responsibility Theory

This study employs the social responsibility theory which states that the press has to be accountable in safeguarding the public against harm. The theoretical approach of the social responsibility theory has led to the establishment of journalism ethics and code of conduct.

Robert Hutchins, who was among the early communication researchers and at one time led the Commission on Freedom of the Press, was concerned over the journalistic ethics of the libertarian media cultures.

³¹ Ibid

Early intellectuals of the social responsibility theory argued that media should contribute to the wellbeing of the society in general. This theory has widely being recognized and used by journalists and media scholars since 1946.³²

The commission articulated the view that the media should provide a comprehensive, truthful, and intelligent account of the stories they are covering and in a context which gives them meaning.

The social responsibility theory, according to Siebert takes the view that the broadcasters need to take responsibility of both legal and moral accountabilities for all that they publish in regards to the society.³³Schudson argues that journalists should be always socially responsible, as credibility is a core foundation of this theory.³⁴Under this theory, media coverage tends to cover more on the prejudices in the community and educate the masses on their rights and responsibilities. Opponents of this theory argue that it leads to more problems, since more enlightened people tend to achieve their rights through whatever means possible. Therefore, the implications of this theory is not limited to influencing people to fight against injustices but can also persuade them to embark on other dangerous journey such as organizing revolutions. The media in Somalia is far from achieving this kind of standards as most of them are commercial driven, but recent efforts show that social responsibility among media houses in the country is something that can be attained through constant training of journalists and kind of independent oversight on different media platforms.

³²Commission on Freedom of the Press. Records, “[Box 4, Folder 1], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library”

³³ Fred S. Siebert, “Four theories of the press.” University of Illinois Press, 1956

³⁴ Michael Schudson, “The Power of News,” 1995

1.8 Research Methodology

1.8.1 Study design

The study employs a descriptive case study research design, since it is aimed at establishing the role of the Somalia media in conflict management. Descriptive case studies are best placed to investigate in depth a phenomenon that requires an exhaustive approach. The role of media in conflict management in Somalia needed such an approach and this research design was therefore considered appropriate for the study.

1.8.2 Study Site

Somalia, a country located in the Horn of Africa, to the east borders the Indian Ocean, to the west has Ethiopia, to the southwest has Kenya, to the northwest is Djibouti, while to the north it borders the Gulf of Aden.

It has arguably the longest coastline in Africa, with 3,300 km and an estimated population of around 14.3 million inhabitants as of the year 2016.³⁵ The country is ravaged by more than two decades of civil war, and currently Al-Shabab militant group control large swaths in South and Central Somalia.

³⁵United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. "World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision".



Source: UN Cartographic Section

1.8.3 Target Population

Target population according to Trochim (2006)³⁶ refers to the whole set of objects or individuals to which a study is interested in generalizing for conclusions. The target population of this study is 10 radio stations, 4 television stations, 4 newspapers and 11 websites, which are actively working in Somalia.

1.8.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed purposive sampling approaches. Purposive sampling will be used in identifying media houses. The population of the study consists of 10 radio stations, 4 television stations, 4 newspapers and 11 websites, which are actively working in Somalia. By employing purposive sampling method, the study examined over 20% of the media coverage, together with international media outlets like the Al-Jazeera, BBC and CNN.

1.8.5 Data collection methods

This study used primary and secondary data concentrating on data linked to the role the media plays on the Somalia conflict and media transformation focusing on the efforts to resolve the conflict. The study also relied on primary data in form of interviews with some journalism and security experts who have wide knowledge about Somalia war for key information relating to the impact the media has on the Somalia conflict and the challenges it's facing. The secondary data used include paper-based sources such as academic journals, books, periodicals, internal records of media organizations, research reports, annual reports, and conference papers,

³⁶William M.K. Trochim, "Research Methods Knowledge Base."
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qual.php>Trochim (2006)

1.8.6 Reliability of data collection instruments

In every study, the reliability of findings largely depends on the accuracy and quality of the data collected and processed, which is also reliant on the research instruments used. When the source of the data is reliable and valid then automatically the finding would be credible.³⁷To boost trustworthiness, the researcher will look for designed tools with modest, explicit, logical and inclusive questions. Various tools can be used to gather data, depending on the kind of data needed. Consistency can be strengthened by having clear understanding and definition of operational terms to avoid vagueness. Before deciding to use research tools, the research first inspects, cross-checks and scrutinize information regarding the specific tool to make sure that it give accurate and consistent results. That helps the researcher to ascertain that the output is in line with the objectives of the study.

1.8.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study looked at how journalists and several media stations both international and local media station report the conflict and how it could have been assumed differently and their impact to bring peace or hatred amongst the warring section, it also look at the challenges at which media houses facing. The study will use tools of conflict analysis.

1.8.8 Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were put in place in this study. A research approval was sought. The researcher made sure that the questionnaires are efficiently administered to the respondents. They were made to be aware of the intention of the study and afterwards their consent was achieved assuring them that the information they give out will be confidential. For the purpose of anonymity,

³⁷ Del Greco, et.al "Questionnaire development: 2. Validity and reliability." CMAJ, 136, 699–700. 1987

the respondents were requested to not write down their names on the questionnaire. The researcher and the supervisor were the only people to access that information.

1.8.9 Scope and Limitation of the study

The scope of this study is limited to; the role of media in conflict management, challenges facing media in Somalia, and how media deescalate violence with in that country.

The study will be limited to the role played by both international and local media in conflict management within Somalia; this country was chosen because of the years of violence it has experienced. The analysis of human factors will be limited to age, gender and social status.

1.9 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: The introduction chapter gives background information on hoe the media transforms conflicts. It also contains the research problem, research questions objectives, study hypotheses, justification. Moreover this chapter presents the relevance of media to conflict, literature review, theoretical framework as well as the methodology used in this study.

Chapter 2: This chapter discusses the role of media in deescalating conflict in Somalia, it will explain how both international and local media operating within Somalia has been used to deescalate war or conflict between the warring parties.

Chapter 3: This chapter discusses the impact of both international and local media for conflict resolution in Somalia. It will explain the impact which media has on people of Somalia and how various media houses operating in Somalia have been involving in conflict resolution mission.

Chapter 4: This chapter discusses challenges facing media houses operating in Somalia in regard to conflict management.

Chapter 5: This chapter contains conclusion, recommendation and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

MEDIA DEESCALATING CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

2.1 Introduction

The media has played major role in civil wars around the world, including the one in Somalia. It has in many occasions fueled the conflict by spreading propaganda especially the local media that was operated by the warring parties. On the other hand the media has deescalated conflict within the fighting forces through preaching on peace and highlighting that war had only negative results – death and destruction.

Lynch and McGoldrick categorized the international and local media working in Somalia based on the reporting style especially whether their reports on the conflict in Somalia are based on peace or war journalism doctrines.³⁸ This kind of categorization enabled to conduct an assessment on how the media in the horn of Africa nation through the coverage contributed to the management of conflict in Somalia.

The website Media for Peace describes peace journalism as an academic field that offers an alternative to the “propaganda-driven mainstream media.” This approach is said to have led to journalism standards that incorporate peace and conflict management tools by giving a platform to the ignored peacemakers in the society there by contributing peaceful solutions to the conflict.³⁹

³⁸ Jake Lynch, Annabel McGoldrick "peace journalism," Hawthorn Press, London. 2005

³⁹Media for Peace, “search for common grounds,” 2016, can be found at <https://www.sfcg.org/media-for-peace/>

Peace journalism is a term that has been established by Johan Galtung, who urged journalists to do the following:

“Go for the less newsworthy to get a more balanced picture; particularly more coverage of non-elite nations, non-elite people, non-personal causes of events and for more positive events. Be conscious of the tendency to cast the non-elite in a negative light, to disregard the structural, and to go for the negative, like the violence, rather than the positive, like the solutions.”⁴⁰

Since its inception, there was controversy surrounding peace journalism, and some journalists see it as an infringement of impartiality which is a core value for the modern media.

The media can adopt different strategies to deescalate conflicts, one of them being giving adequate training to journalist to avoid publications of content that fuel hate speech and incitement to violence.

Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Colline (RTLM) in Rwanda is an example of how irresponsible media can fuel conflict. This station was primarily responsible for spreading hateful messages and ethnic incitement that led to the killing of nearly one million people in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The Kenyan media was accused of fuelling the post-election violence in 2007 and 2008, particular how it failed to moderate hate messages that incited violence. TV stations were accused of airing graphic images that escalated the tension between different communities in the flash point areas.⁴¹

⁴⁰Johan Galtung, “Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses,” *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1985)

⁴¹Mbeke, P. “The role of media in conflict and peace building in Kenya,” Nairobi: InterNews Network. 2009

Experts believe that the violence was as result of a decade long inflammatory language which was mainly relayed by local vernacular media. The violence which was mainly concentrated in the Rift Valley region caused the death of more than one thousand three hundred people and half a million displaced from their homes.

The shock that came with the post-election violence in Kenya resulted in the formation of National Cohesion and Integration Commission whose mandate is to prohibit the use of abusive, threatening, insulting words or actions, or producing a program intended to fuel ethnic hatred.⁴²

Further to this the government of Kenyan formed a team that monitors incitement hate speech on radio-stations, on social media, and on blogs, putting inciters on notice.

The fruits of the commission were seen in the run-up to the 2013 elections where some big weight politicians were arrested on the basis of this act; even those most of them didn't end up behind bars following convictions. The beneficial effect is that the arrested served as a caution to many Kenyan, and as a result, the scale of incitements and hate speeches has been reduced.⁴³

⁴²“For regulation introduced in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC,” see Frère (2010)

⁴³Susan Benesch and others made “a discourse analysis to identify dangerous speech in Kenya,” Awori, Benesch, Crandall (2013).

2.2 Peace Journalism vs. Traditional Journalism

Peace journalism was created to counter traditional journalism. According to peace journalists, the main problem with traditional view of journalism is that it escalates conflicts instead of extinguishing them. The argument of peace journalists is that their opponents- the traditional journalist- focus on the observable attributes of conflicts rather than looking at the deeper explanations of what causes these conflicts.

Professor Gadi Wolfsfeld who extensively wrote about peace journalism asserts that the media gets it totally wrong when choosing which news line to take, thus not understanding the diverse aspects of conflicts.⁴⁴ The hurry for breaking news means that long term processes such as negotiations and peace building receive little or no attention in the mass media; and the push towards simplicity of stories means that multifaceted explanations are overlooked.

Johan Galtung, a renowned Norwegian peace researcher coined the term peace journalism in the sixties. Galtung was skeptical of the way in which the media fails to differentiate between conflict and violence. He argues that conflict is not necessarily equal to physical violence, even though the media doesn't differentiate between the two. Throughout the years, Galtung had doubts of the media's contribution to conflict de-escalation. The researcher says that during the four decades he worked as peace maker in which he was involved in mediation efforts covering nearly 50 countries, something he learnt and that gave him great success was to "avoid any contact with journalists."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Making Sense of Media and Politics," New York: Routledge, 2011

⁴⁵Johan Galtung, "Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses," Journal of Peace Research Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1985)

Lynch argues that Peace Journalism puts forward a set of guidelines in the reporting of conflicts, suggesting approaches for journalists to employ which are based on an awareness of the root causes of the conflicts and current affairs.⁴⁶

He says that while traditional journalism leads its audience to value conflicts as a means to achieving something, Peace Journalism, on the other hand greets and opportunity where the audience can consider non-violent, developmental responses.

Many journalists see media based intervention in conflicts or the core values of Peace Journalism as something that goes against the ethics of neutrality and objectivity in the profession. Majority of journalists who go against the principles of Peace Journalisms claim that it is not their job to take sides in reporting a conflict, since their job is to tell the facts as they are. Subjective decisions that curtail the work of journalists should be seen as an apparent attack on objectivity and neutrality.⁴⁷

These decision are likely to affect to affect the topics to report, the nitty gritty of the story especially the people to interview particular parts of interviews quoted, and how to phrase the introduction of the story.

Peace journalism got uneven reactions from academics and media organizations. Thomas Hanitzsch who is a researcher on the media maintains that the way the peace journalists criticize the objectivity rule of traditional media can be termed as a misinterpretation, and on the contrary, it is Galtung and his likeminded who put across a “naïve epistemological view on media coverage.”

⁴⁶Ibid

⁴⁷Ibid

Hanitzsch goes on to say that peace journalists miss the point when they claim that traditional journalism automatically bears a distorted image of real stories.⁴⁸

Hanitzsch basically disagrees with the notion that the responsibility of career journalists should incorporate acting as “peacekeeping forces.” BBC correspondent David Loyn who also shares the same opinion argues that it should not be the work of journalists to start peace talks. He continues to say that the claim by peace journalist regarding traditional war coverage which they say obscures the essence of conflicts is untrue; but that approach is informative. He concludes that, “the opposite of peace journalism is good journalism.”⁴⁹

2.3 Africa and peace journalism

With a continent full of civil wars and conflicts like Africa, peace journalism is very essential. Africa needs careful mixture and reporting of stories in such a way that the media creates opportunities for the whole society so as to think about and value peaceful approaches to conflict. Peace journalists look beyond the clashes and escalations of conflicts by giving a perspective of what is actually happening and seeking fairness and accuracy in their reporting. These journalists contribute in spread the message of peace and non-violence thus making peace building part of their daily job.⁵⁰

While traditional journalism in Africa depicts conflicts as one between parties whose sole objective is to win, on the other hand peace journalism strives on conflict reporting that leads to win-win scenario for the warring parties by giving balanced coverage to all of them.

⁴⁸Thomas Hanitzsch, "Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory," *Communication Theory*, Volume 17, Issue 4, 1 November 2007

⁴⁹Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

Whereas traditional journalists are reactive and focus on the noticeable impacts of the conflict such as death, injuries and destruction, peace journalists are proactive and provide alternatives to conflicts in terms of reporting of sensitive other social issues. Peace journalists put emphases on highlighting peace processes that can contain conflicts and also on the traditions, actions and structures that bring about tranquillity in society.⁵¹

Fackson Banda, a Zambian media researcher, is regarded as one of the best well-known activists of the African edition of peace journalism. He argues that the aim of peace journalism is to free the media from the control of Western-inclined libertarian media regimes.⁵² Like McGoldrick and Lynch, Banda opposes the critics of peace journalism who claim that it is biased. He claims that journalists are inevitably biased, be it personally, institutionally and systemically. Banda argues that with the bias, he chooses to side with “the poor, the weak, the marginalized, and the politically disenfranchised.”⁵³

Peace journalism has been experimented in many African contexts, although not in similar method as advised by Banda and other peace journalists. The focus tends to be on small media such as community radios.

For example, a study done in Uganda compared the role of peace journalism against the traditional media in the covering the conflict of the Northern Ugandan which began in 1986. The coverage of two national newspapers was investigated for a period of three years. Both papers primarily covered the conflict by means of shallow article which mostly lacked perspective. The New Vision,

⁵¹Rukhsana Aslam, "The Role of Media in Conflict: Integrating Peace Journalism in the Journalism Curriculum," Auckland University of Technology. 2014

⁵² Banda F. et.al, Introduction: "New Media and Democracy in Africa—A Critical Interjection, Palgrave Macmillan Series in International Political Communication," Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009

⁵³Ibid

a state-run newspaper, turned out to be more confrontational in the reporting compared to the privately owned *The Monitor*, a conclusion which is unanticipated in the African perspective since the state media normally tries to downplay conflicts while the privately owned media tend to focus on them. However, the study found that both the state run and the private publication fell short in journalistic standards, such as the lack of balance for stories.

During the months leading to the 2007 general election in Kenya, the masses heavily relied on the media and expected it play as source of reliable information as well as society's watchdog, by covering the election and reporting on it impartially. With live coverage at the national vote-tallying center, the media houses attracted huge public interest, as post-election violence unfolded amid accusations and counter accusations by political parties' supporters.

In the days leading to the election, several media houses namely the Royal Media Services, the Standard Group and the Nation Media Group run front page stories with titles like 'Give us back our country' in order to bring together Kenyans and direct their attention towards the rampant corruption as well as government's inaction of that time. But that campaign gave the upper hand to the opposition led by Orange Democratic Movement of Raila Odinga, pitching the citizens against the ruling party.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Ojwang, Benson. "The Semantics of Peace and the Role of the Print Media in the 2007–2008 Post-election Violence in Kenya." *Africa Media Review*, 2009.

The media did not realize what it has caused Kenya and continued with the shocking reports and created more hopelessness for the nation. The leading newspapers, Daily Nation and the Standard had both alarming headlines such as “Kenya is burning” and horrific accounts of how dead and mutilated bodies were uncovered in parts of the country.

The post-election violence in the county and the war journalism employed by the Kenyan media highlighted the need to inculcating peace journalism in the minds of media practitioners. In Kenya, very few journalists have undergone peace journalism trainings, and those were not equipped to handle on issues that have repercussions for societal peace. Conducting a conflict-sensitive training for journalists was seen essential, since they are in one way or the other involved in reporting on conflicts.⁵⁵

Nigeria which has witnessed conflicts and election-related violence has benefited from peace journalism during the 2015 general election. With over 800 people killed in the previous election⁵⁶ as section of Nigeria’s many media houses opted to train their journalists on peace journalism to prevent the violence that followed previous elections to happen again.

The training which was funded by the peace building program of the Durban University of Technology brought together journalists who were chosen from both electronic and print media.

The contribution the training had on the journalists’ work was extraordinary. For instance, the Nigerian media had a massive role in sensitizing the public on the need to embrace peace and avoid

⁵⁵ Lynch, Jake and Galtung, Johan. “Reporting Conflict: New Directions in Peace Journalism.” St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2010.

⁵⁶Baiyewu, Leke. “Nigerian Refugees in Cameroon Triple in Two Months – UN.” Punch, 16 November, Available at: <<http://www.punchng.com/news/nigerianrefugees-in-cameroon-triple-in-two-months-un>>.

violence. In most of the country's 36 states, messages of peace were broadcasted in local stations calling on people to vote in a peaceful manner. Therefore, the effort contributed to ensuring that the elections were largely non-violent, and saved more lives.

Then we ought to look at Somalia, a country that can provide an interesting case study for peace journalism versus traditional journalism. Few countries in Africa pose more challenges for journalists than Somalia, are more conflict-ridden than the horn of Africa nation.⁵⁷

Media organizations reporting on Somalia, whether domestic or international, cannot ignore issues of conflict. Therefore, the country suits very well for examining theories of media and conflict.

The nearly three decades old Somalia conflict has been a frequent issue equally for both international media and the local media.

The media landscape in Somalia has many similarities with those in other African countries. Newspapers and magazines are very weak, as is the case for almost all nations in the sub-Saharan Africa. The high illiteracy rates and that fact that Somali became a written language in 1972 are attributed to be the main cause of weak print media. On the contrary, radio is the leading the way and is source of information for almost all Somalis.⁵⁸

Even though there are no recent reliable figures on the audience and media content users in Somalia, there is clear indication on how influential the Diaspora Somalis are when it comes to the country's media. Somalis in North America, Europe, Kenya and South Africa are very effective in the media

⁵⁷According to Freedom House (freedomhouse.org), Reporters Without Borders (rsf.org), and the Committee to Protect Journalists (cpj.org)

⁵⁸Terje S. Skjerdal, "The Somali Media and their Peace-Building Potential," *Bildhaan* Vol. 11, 2012

arena, particularly internet based media. You can find hundreds of websites that write about the Somalia current affairs, as well as discussion forums and blogs in foreign languages.

During the peak of the conflict, the approach of peace journalism was tried to at least mitigate the civil war in Somalia.

2.4 Role played by the media in deescalating conflict in Somalia

For the last three decades Somalia has experienced conflict and upheaval. The current international effort to enable Somalia build a federal system and achieve stability is challenged by local conflicts and a deadly insurgency led by Al-Shabab.

The 1993 humanitarian intervention into Somalia which was led by the United States of America was the outcome of media influence. However, due to its abrupt nature, many avoidable mistakes were made making the mission unsuccessful. The media, of course, offers few suggestions, merely the cry of “Do something!” As Sir Michael Howard noted “television brings crisis closer to governors but provides no new means to resolve it.”

Because of this forced intervention, the US government had taken a clear position on Somalia and thus could not begin preparing the US public for their role, duration and eventual winding up of its commitment in that war-torn country.⁵⁹

There are principled and pragmatic arguments that the current media in Somalia can be a useful tool used in the process of peace building and development. On the other side, new media avenues are becoming more easily accessible; giving chance to those groups whose aim is to create havoc in the world. For instance, Al-Shabab which has killed thousands of people in Somalia and beyond

⁵⁹ Walter P. Davidson, “Mass Communication and Conflict Resolution,” New York: Praeger, 1994

takes advantage of the internet to lure in young recruits across the world. Through the websites such as al-kata'ib, the group has spread their version of Islam from Somalia, among other places.

Nonetheless, the media in Somalia is diverse, especially with the emergence of digital media. Some of the most prominent websites in the country at times concentrated on non-news stories such as love affairs, social networking and music thus moving away from war and conflict stories.

The validity of reports was tested against the reality to determine to what extent and for what reasons the media outlets in Somalia based their reports on. The background information provided in reports was also looked at and how they make stories clearer. The most essential question was whether the media reports distinguished between conflict and violence; identified all parties to the conflict and searched for root causes of conflict in an attempt to make the story simple and understandable.

The working conditions for journalists and most of the media houses operating in Somalia are tough due to warring parties, with each side, be it the federal government, Al-Shabab and regional administrations trying to control and manipulate any media house within their boundary. Some of the media houses and journalists have come out strong and stand for the truth; they focused their attention in preaching peace and enlighten the Somali people. Radio stations such as BBC Somali Service, VOA Somali, HornAfrik, Shabelle and others are few notable radio stations that had stand strong in bringing peace.

Some humanitarian organizations use big radio stations such as the BBC Somali as well as local radio stations to pass their messages to the public. During the devastating drought in 2011, BBC Somali started a 15 minutes humanitarian program in order to assist people cope with the emergency. The program was called *Gurmad* (meaning assistance). BBC Somali up to date

continues *Baafin* program in which people seek to know the fate of their missing relatives. The international committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sponsors that program.⁶⁰

The target For the Somalia based media houses are the ordinary citizens in the country and much less focus is given to the international actors. Thus, they have a better chance of keeping in touch with the local realities and trending topics in the country. However according to TS Skjerdal, it is not easy to conclude that the local media has a direct impact on such processes as peace building.⁶¹

HornAfrik was established in 1999 by some Somali-Canadians who returned to the country. Before its closure in 2010, the media house run a popular radio station, radio HornAfrik, a television station and a website. HornAfrik has experimented active audience engagement programs, for example call-in shows in which participants discuss the actions of warlords and other local leaders which later became very popular among the residents of Mogadishu. Due to that HornAfrik has become substitute to clan agenda promoting radio stations which later were forced out of the market.⁶²

HornAfrik and Radio Shabelle have gain rising admiration from organizations that advocate for press freedom, as they were viewed the champions of free expression in war torn Somalia. The plight of the media houses in Somalia was shared globally when one of the founding members of HornAfrik and two other journalists were killed in 2007 and 2009. The Transitional Federal Government of the time and militia groups in the capital was putting a lot of pressure on the stations.

⁶⁰BBC World Service Trust, "The media of Somalia: A force for moderation," November 2011

⁶¹Terje S. Skjerdal, "The Somali Media and their Peace-Building Potential," *Bildhaan* Vol. 11, 2012

⁶²Ibid

In Somalia, HornAfrik was the first media house to report on human rights violations and investigate them. Its critical journalistic style was seen deleteriously by the parties to the Somalia conflict.

Alternatively, the station has practiced some hard-line peace journalism, including deliberately choosing not to broadcast news about certain violent actions or fighting. Such an action is contentious in among the journalists around the world.

In war journalism, the argument is that the media doesn't have to do self-censorship. Proponents of peace journalism counter that claiming all journalists in one way or the other censor their information.

Larry Beyna and others hold up the approach of HornAfrik and maintain that, "If carefully done, conscious censoring of volatile news in situations of high tensions and conflict may be able to stop escalation because this step denies further fuel for the violence." However, those who advocate for peace journalism add that such censoring must be carefully done as there is likelihood that the name of the media organization may be dented over time because of lack of transparency.⁶³

Likewise, a comparative study done on HornAfrik and a radio station that promotes peace in Burundi concludes that the media houses should be as liberal as possible and must fight political influence.

⁶³ Beyna, Larry et al. "The effectiveness of civil society initiatives in controlling violent conflicts and building peace: A study of three approaches in the Greater Horn of Africa." Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development. 2011

Regarding program formats, the study emphasize on “soft” genres, such as comedy shows, and call-in shows that offer audience participation. Within this method, there is mostly great confidence in broadcast approaches that promote active audiences and highlight popular topics instead of interviews with elites and hard stories. Nevertheless, the impacts of such programs on real conflict resolution efforts remain largely unstated.

Additionally, the above study on HornAfrik concludes that media houses are not an efficient tool to instigate change on their own. Local peace mediation, which involves warring parties and other stakeholders in face-to-face dialogue are deemed more successful than peace radio program.⁶⁴

Although media both international and local media in several occasion has tried to deescalate war in Somalia, there were some media especially local media which were being used by warring parties to spread propaganda and hatred. Those media are widely used to spread misinformation, political propaganda and hate speech.⁶⁵

Since the rise of Al-Shabab in 2006, the Somali media operating in the country faced fear, intimidations and even the killing of journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a New York-based organization that documents atrocities against journalist has for the fourth year in 2018 ranked Somalia at the top of its list in the countries where journalists are slain and their killers not brought to justice.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Terje S. Skjerdal, “The Somali Media and their Peace-Building Potential,” *Bildhaan* Vol. 11, 2012

⁶⁵ Africa Report N 116, “*Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?*” August 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm>

⁶⁶For more information, visit <https://cpj.org/africa/somalia/>

In 2016, Somali media workers operating in Puntland and south-central Somalia told Human Rights Watch that in the in previous couple of years, the media in general was undertake from all parties to the Somalia conflict.

But the internet is proving more difficult for various warring parties to control, since almost all online news sites are based abroad and run by members of the Somali Diaspora. Lack of regulation and code of conduct has led to the spread of some highly unreliable internet news sites, the growth of fake news and the unchecked endorsement of particular interest groups. The anonymous nature of the internet has helped in the increase of more bold journalists who use their skills to write hard hitting stories for the websites. Unlike local radio journalists, these breed of journalists dare to cover brutalities of all sides without fear or favor.

The internet gave birth to social media which changed many social aspects in the world. This new media platform increasingly plays a role in conflict. Protestors, politicians and insurgents, have all used it as a tool for communication. On the other hand, scholars have turned to it as a source of new data on conflict.⁶⁷ Due to its low cost, increased speed in dissemination of information and easy accessibility social media has quickly penetrated Somalia and to some extent overtaken traditional media platforms particularly among the youth.

Social media is also used to establish stronger state-citizen relations. It has offered new opportunities for interactive dialogue, public engagement and improved the relationship between governments and their citizens.⁶⁸ The sharing of videos relating to such things as police brutality and electoral fraud have to some extent led to accountability and transparency thus giving a voice

⁶⁷Zeitsoff, Thomas. "How Social Media Is Changing Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, August 4, 2017: 1970-1991.

⁶⁸Ibid

to the voiceless. But the opponents of social media influence argue that international condemnation has not stopped the killings in Syria, and that hope of intervention may essentially encourage protestors to turn to violence, setting a dangerous precedence and fuelling the conflict.

Tunisia and Egypt have been used as examples of how the successful use of social media seems to be correlated with nonviolent revolutions. However, this does not hold up in the cases of Syria, Libya, Yemen or Bahrain.

Leading social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have enabled Somalis to discuss issues, connect and above all, to commemorate the accomplishment that their country has made after nearly three decades of war and destruction.⁶⁹

Many constructive conversations about Somalia have recently taken place on Twitter. The first thread of that conversation started in 2011, when the country experienced a devastating drought that turned to famine in some regions. The Somalis in the Diaspora mobilized themselves to collect donations for the millions of drought-struck people.

In Twitter, Hashtags such as #FeedSomalia trended globally, becoming a rallying point for aid organizations, celebrities, and political leaders across the world to join in the campaign.

The Saturday of 14thOctober 2017 was a black day for Somalia, after a truck full of explosives detonated in the busy Zobe junction at the capital Mogadishu. More than 500 people died in that explosion which was arguably the single deadliest attack in Somalia's history.

⁶⁹Dhaha, Ismail, and Abdikarim Igale. "Facebook Usage among Somali Youth: A Test of Uses and GratificaitonsApproach ." International Journal of Humanities and Social Science , Vol. 3 No. 3; February 2013.

The Zobe explosion shook the nation to its core and reverberated around the world. Body parts lay strewn at the junction; burned out cars; collapsed buildings illustrated the impact of that deadly truck explosion.

Among those killed were a young female medical student who was to graduate the following weekend, humanitarian workers, mothers, three brothers and some Diaspora men who just returned to the city after more than 20 years. Although the exact target of the attack remains unclear and no one has taken responsibility.

Somalis on social media played crucial role in the emergency efforts. Using social media platforms, young Somalis in the country and abroad helped in tracking and identifying missing or dead people, shared the names and locations of the wounded while the same time collecting donations for the victims. Those grass root level initiatives were useful in a country that is still emerging from decades of civil war.

Millions of dollars were collected from Somalis across the globe and given to the victims and the families who lost loved ones in the explosion. On Facebook and Twitter, Gurmud252 (meaning emergency support) was set up to coordinate relief and blood donation efforts, help search and identify victims, and spread the word about the latest government directives.⁷⁰

After that deadly attack, Facebook activated the safety check tool in Mogadishu and Turkish military planes landed in the capital to airlift those injured in Saturday's attacks.

⁷⁰ BBC Somali service has extensively covered the stories of the 14th October explosion. Details can be found at <https://www.bbc.com/somali/41693516>

Somali analysts described the coordinated social media based efforts to help the Somalis during crisis as one that has huge positive impact on the conflict-ridden society.

CHAPTER THREE
THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF MEDIA FOR CONFLICT
RESOLUTION IN SOMALIA

3.1 Brief history of the Somali media

During the reign of Somalia's military ruler, Mohamed Siyad Barre (1969-1991), the government was in total control of the media. The ministry of information had Broadcasting Department which ran Radio Mogadishu and Radio Hargeisa. The only daily newspaper, October Star, was state-run and published in English, Arabic, Italian and Somali. There was also the Somali National News Agency (SONNA) was the source of official information to international news agencies.

During the early days of the bloody civil war, many radio stations and newspapers opened, but due to the raging war in many parts of the country they had to affiliate themselves with clans or get out of business.

From 1996, the Somali local media started to become more independent from clan affiliation, while large percentage of their audiences began to ignore propaganda and look for real and constructive news sources. On their part, media owners started looked for qualified journalist and moving away from hiring their kinsmen to do the job.⁷¹

⁷¹BBC World Service Trust, "An analysis of the Somali media environment," London, 2011

Radio plays a dominant role in Somalia's media landscape, due to the oral culture of the Somalis, the inexpensive nature of the medium as well as the high illiteracy rates in the country. The print and TV sectors are weak and radio is by far the dominant medium. There more than 56 radio-stations in the country including radio Mogadishu which was relaunched in 2001 after the state collapse in 1991 and Radio Hargeisa in the Self-declared Republic of Somaliland.⁷²

After the state collapse, Somalia was mapped into three sub sections namely; South Central, Puntland and Somaliland.

South Central Somalia has seen the mushrooming of media houses, mainly radio stations. These operate under constant threats, with bans, intense fighting and arrest of journalists (mainly from Al-Shabab and the FGS). This led to the shutting down of a number of radio stations.

Likewise, radio is the main medium in Puntland. Although the semi-autonomous region's media is seen to be independent, the authorities there sustain a strong control over it. This is in contrast to the lack of a strong central authority to exert its control over the media in South Central region.⁷³

The media landscape in the breakaway Somaliland is very different from the other two regions. Newspapers flourished in the breakaway region and have played a considerable role in the fostering of democracy and maintaining a strong sense of self-rule. Unlike South Central region, there is a strong administration in Hargeisa, which keeps a firm hand over the broadcast sector.

⁷²Ismail Einashe, "Somalia - Media Landscape," European Journalism Centre (EJC), 2018

⁷³Ibid

3.2 Positive Impact of Media on Conflict

Were it not for the media, most of us would have known little of what is happening beyond our immediate neighborhood. The more one goes outside his/her town or country, the more valuable and expensive it becomes to get information. As the saying goes, no man is an island, thus we turn on the internet or the TV to know what is happening in the world. Even when the news is limited or at times biased, it gives a sense of what is happening elsewhere in the world.

In the past decades, the significance of a professional, free and plural media in contributing to good governance has attracted the attention of international development community. A vibrant media enables people to get free information, have dialogue, express their views, leads to greater political participation and encourages accountability.

After 1991, when the community Soviet Union collapsed, there was a surge in the programs that developed and strengthened the capacity of local media houses especially those that advocated to have free and independent media. Some development workers and civil society groups believed that communism's end was due to the beginning of rebellious voices on such stations as Radio Free Europe.⁷⁴

There are a massive amount of case studies regarding the positive effect the media has on conflict management. The first thing that comes to mind is the phenomenon of the "CNN-effect" and the effect it had on Western foreign policy regarding issues of intervention.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Amelia Arsenault and Shawn Powers, "The Media Map Project: Review of Literature," <http://mediamapresource.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/literature-review-the-media-map-project.pdf>

⁷⁵ Theresa Bly, *Impact of Public Perception on US National Policy: A Study of Media Influence in Military and Government Decision Making*, Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2002, 72.

There is no question over the impact of gruesome media images of dying children and in the 1990's in war-torn Somalia has had in bringing the attention of the world to the impoverished country. But, how many such conflicts in the world get considerable international media attention? Most scholars will say, very small. And those who get the coverage, receive it after things are out of hand. Nevertheless, the attention of the international media can have important impact on a conflict. Literature reviewed strongly supports that the mass media played a critical role during the cold era that engulfed the world for years. Some scholars point out that were it not the involvement of western media, the fall of blockading Berlin wall and the subsequent end of the communist Soviet Control over parts of Eastern Europe couldn't have been possible.⁷⁶ Communism which has its roots in the doctrine of firm cultural and ideological control couldn't control global and fast transforming media. The Soviet representative in Eastern Europe failed to control their citizens' warm reception towards Western television and radio broadcasts. Some researchers went far and even referred the 1989 revolutions across the USSR as the 'television revolutions' due to the prominent role this media platform played in the uprising.

Jennifer Akin⁷⁷ and the likes argue the current age of LIVE broadcasts directly affect and shape public opinion must faster and in unprecedented scale. Over the years it has become very easy and cheap to acquire electronic gadgets such as radio, television and of late the internet, enabling people all over the world to get latest and uncensored news and information. This kind of information – facilitated by the media – has empowered individuals and communities while at the

⁷⁶Sarotte, Mary. "How Journalists Helped to Open the Berlin Wall." Time.com <http://time.com/3557508/mary-sarotte-berlin-wall/> (Accessed on 10th September 2018)

⁷⁷Akin, Jennifer. "MassMedia." Beyond Intractability. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. 2005

same time giving hard times to repressive and manipulative regions that control and shape public opinion.

Internal wars do not occur in vacuum but tend to have precursors. In Somalia, local media often have greater knowledge of the existing political structures, parts to the conflict as well as the circumstances leading to the outbreak of violence. The media can therefore guide society before the conflict erupts by identifying and correctly addressing the issues at hand.

The other advantage that Somali local media has over the international media is that they recognize the actors with the ability to accelerate the conflict, thus able to hold them to account. The media helps in managing conflicts by offering credible news and information and reaching a large audience. It can also encourage reconciliation and societal development after the conflict is over.

3.2.1 Positive impact of local radio stations on Somalia conflict

In the final years of 20th century, there emerged several private radio stations in southern Somalia mostly owned and operated by returnees from the Diaspora. The increased in radio stations was partly due to two major factors: 1) The notion that radio stations are good business ventures as they attract commercial advertisements and large audiences. 2) The view that radio stations get international funding through NGOs.

The new radio stations had to compete for these two sources of income by doing programs that were in line with them. Sometimes, the commercial aspect was dangerous. When HornAfrik radio aired a negative advert about a Shampoo (hair care product) producing company based in

Mogadishu – after receiving money from a rival company – that led to an attack on its compound and several deaths.⁷⁸

Among the peace programs broadcasted by the local stations particularly HornAfrik was a call-in show in which participants discussed the behavior of warlords and their warmongering which later became very popular among the residents of Mogadishu.

In contrast, the station has practiced some hard-line peace journalism, including deliberately choosing not to broadcast information about certain clashes or fighting. Such an action is contentious in among the journalists around the world.

3.2.2 Positive impact of international media on Somalia conflict

Prior to the year 2000, Somalia had more than a dozen peace conferences that all ended with the same result – failure. Many peace mediators questioned the approach of those conferences which brought together the warlords and other armed groups.

In 2000, Djibouti government with the blessing of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initiated a peace process that brought together Somali traditional leaders, intellectuals, religious leaders, artists and poets. The aim was to search for a national solution free from armed groups, elect a President a Transitional National Council, and then the President to appoint a Prime Minister.⁷⁹

The Radio Television of Djibouti (RTD) was the main broadcaster of the conference, and thousands of Somalis in the country and across the world watched it every night. The TV

⁷⁸Mohamed Gaas, et.al. "Mapping the Somali Media: An Overview." Norwegian University of Life Sciences, UMB, 2012

⁷⁹ See IRIN Guide to the Somali National Peace Conference, 2000. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/djibouti/somalia-irin-guide-somali-national-peace-conference>

broadcasted the peace process, the negotiations as well as keynote speeches by compatriots and foreigners.

The RTD always started its broadcast with disheartening images from Somalia conflict and drought – children and mothers so skinny that they couldn't walk, with the song *Soomaaliyey i maqal* (Listen to me Somalia) playing under. This has won the hearts and the minds of ordinary Somalis and brought renewed hope in them.

The BBC Somali Service for many years shaped the public opinion in Somalia. This international radio gave fair share of coverage to the peace negotiations for Somalia. The BBC Somali had sent reporters to Djibouti peace conference and analyzed it very well.

3.3 Negative Impact of Media on Conflict

The current news media in the world compete on how to cover conflicts. For them, conflict stories make great headlines attracting listeners, viewers and readers on the platforms. The greater the conflict story, the larger the audience which makes media business financially successful.

As a result some peace journalists and anti-war activists claim that it is always in the news media's interest to not only tell conflict stories, but play it up, making it look more serious than the situation on the ground. Dragging and slow peace processes such as mediation are not newsy and are most times not easy grasp and report on, mainly because the process takes place behind closed doors. Therefore the media prefers conflict stories to peace process stories since the former can have color, sources, shocking testimonies as well as good background information.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Hamelink, Cees. "Media and Conflict: Escalating Evil." Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2010.

Most militant and rebel groups plan their attacks and assassinations to correspond with important dates targeting prominent people, choosing places in which the media can access easily, while making sure that the attack results in huge casualties. The subsequent media coverage can grant legitimacy to group behind the attack, so media coverage is part and parcel of their strategies and ambitions.⁸¹

In Somalia, the Al-Shabab militant group use media platforms to propagate their ideologies and alleged gains they made during battles with what they call the “infidels” – Somalia army and foreign troops helping them. This has negative impact on the minds of the Somali population and is likely to attract them more followers.

There are also some observers who argue that the “CNN effect” is a myth and overrated. The same media that advocated for intervention in the Somalia situation in 1993 was the same that questioned the presence of US troops in the Horn of Africa nation after 18 American troops were killed in Mogadishu. This has forced Washington to withdraw from Somalia in 1994, leaving poor Somalis more destitute and on the verge of starvation.⁸²

Untrue and biased reporting can lead to suspicion and bitterness about the objectivity of media in matters of conflicts, especially when a section of the society feel being disadvantaged by media coverage and publicity. If the media does not objectively report, then the public would interpret this as disregard of duty by media houses news editors and journalists.

⁸¹Schaffert, Richard W. "The Media's Influence on the Public's Perception of Terrorism and the Question of Media Responsibility." *Media Coverage and Political Terrorists*. New York: Praeger Publishers. 1992: 61-79

⁸² Theresa Bly, "Impact of Public Perception on US National Policy: A Study of Media Influence in Military and Government Decision Making," (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2002), 72.

Conflict-related stories have flooded the press all over the world. Reports covering genocide and violence normally catch the world's attention while news of development and cooperation are less sexy, thus the media focuses its time and resources on wars and famine.

3.3.1 Negative impact of local radio stations on Somalia conflict

After the fall of Mohamed Siyad Bare, Somalia particularly South Central and Puntland experienced a vacuum in radio stations. The national broadcaster, Radio Mogadishu was under the control of rebel leader Mohamed Farah Aidid, who initially used it for his own propaganda. Aidid was engaging fierce fighting with the UN troops led by United States who came to restore hope in Somalia. On 12th June 1993, after Aidid militia killed UN soldiers, United Nations Operation in Somalia II attacked and destroyed Radio Mogadishu. Then Aidid created a mobile radio station (mounted with a vehicle) that continued to broadcast throughout hostilities, but with considerably less powerful than the fixed station.⁸³

Some other warlords in the capital also launched their own radio station, often fuelling the conflict. For example the outspoken warlord, Bashir Rage Shirar owned Radio East African which used to broadcast a program called Samaale. The program aired interviews with some so called Somali historians who rather explained the origins of dominant clans, Darod and Hawiye. Those interviews exacerbated the tension and mistrust between those clans and were far from contributing to the constructive national identities. The aim of such programs was to empower warlords and

⁸³ D.B. Stockwell, "Press Coverage in Somalia: A Case for Media Relations to be a Principle of Military Operations Other Than War," Master's Thesis: DINFOS, 1995.

promote them as the defenders and champions of their respective clans. In this early stage of the Somalia war, warlords were very powerful and news makers.⁸⁴

By the mid-1990s Somalis who returned from the Diaspora ventured in to media business setting up radio and televisions as well as news sites. By then the warlords were becoming weaker and the Somalis had learnt how to cope with the civil war situation. The returning Diaspora Somalis had good understanding of how media works in the countries they migrated to, but the problem was how to change the mind-set of local journalists who only knew how to report on war and violence.

In 2006, the local media landscape in southern Somalia has basically changed after the rise of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and the subsequent Ethiopian intervention. The ICU came to power after ousting the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT) which made of a coalition of Mogadishu based warlords. The ARPCT was accused of working for the CIA and abducting innocent religious leaders at the request of the United States of America.⁸⁵

The victory of the ICU is mainly attributed to good publicity from the local media and arguable the BBC Somali service, which portrayed the group as a beacon of hope and a solution that arrived at a much needed time. They promised to serve justice and pacified the war torn city. In mid 2006, the ICU reopened Mogadishu's international airport, which had not been operational for eleven

⁸⁴Ibid

⁸⁵ Lacey, Mark, "Somali Islamists Declare Victory; Warlords on Run," New York Times, 6 June 2006. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/06/world/africa/06somalia.html>

years – since the withdrawal of the UN forces in 1995. The first airplane took off from the airport, carrying ICU delegates to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.⁸⁶

The rule of Islamic Courts Union was short lived. In the last days of 2006, Ethiopian military with the blessing of Washington invaded Somalia, succeeding to oust the ICU and capturing Mogadishu. The invasion strengthened the authority of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which gained international recognition but with little support from the Somalis.

Given the animosity between Somalia and Ethiopia owing largely to the 1977 war, most of the Somalis were heartbroken to see Ethiopian soldiers in the streets of the capital.⁸⁷ The ICU resorted into guerrilla warfare, fighting the occupying army in the streets and neighborhoods of the city. The local media helped the insurgents by only reporting their side of the story. There was noticeable anti-Ethiopia bias in the Somali media. The pro ICU media described TFG leadership as Ethiopian puppets and traitors.

This had led to the Transitional Federal Government ordering the closure of some local radio stations including Shabelle, HornAfrik which were seen as the mouth piece of the insurgents.

The defeat of Islamic Courts Union paved the way for the birth of Al-Shabab group which is more radical, lethal and committed large scale atrocities against Somalis and East Africans. The group relies on media propaganda with radio serving the main source of information.

⁸⁶ Mohamed Abdi Farah, Somalia: Reopening of Mogadishu's airport welcomed, SomaliNet, July 15, 2006. <http://www.somalinet.com/news/world/English/3290>

⁸⁷ Samatar, Abdi Ismail. "Ethiopian Invasion of Somalia, US Warlordism & AU Shame." Review of African Political Economy, 2007: 155-165.

Al-Shabab runs radio Andulus which is mobile, but mostly based on their strongholds.

Broadcasts are used for propaganda purposes, including anti-government and western rhetoric as well as news about international jihad.⁸⁸

3.3.2 Negative impact of international media on Somalia conflict

During the 1993 US intervention to Somalia, dozens of international journalists arrived at Mogadishu to cover stories about the war and how the country descended into absolute chaos. Most correspondents who were deployed to Mogadishu learned quickly while others at the expense of their integrity.

Major David Stockwell of the US army, who was the United Nations military spokesman during the 1993 operation narrated how a correspondent from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) who just arrived in capital joined his colleagues on the roof of Sahafi hotel for a beer.

As they were enjoying, fighting began nearby, and the ABC correspondent saw that an opportunity to file his debut story with the line “bullets winging over my head.” The following morning, fuming editors from other international media called their correspondents in Mogadishu, furious that ABC had scooped them with combat coverage. The correspondents persuaded their editors that the incident was not only usual, but it was the ABC correspondent's first night in town.⁸⁹

So this clearly shows that the international media was interested more with the conflict rather than the humanitarian efforts which were also ongoing in the country. Most of those news outlets were biased in their coverage on the conflict and misrepresented the Somali angle.

⁸⁸Mohamed Gaas, Stig Hansen and David Berry. "Mapping the Somali Media: An Overview." Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, UMB, 2012

⁸⁹ Ibid

The BBC Somali Service and its American competitor VOA Somali are at times accused of not getting their facts right while covering the Somalia conflict. At times, the two services suffer from lack of balance in their stories, even though that seems to be minimal at the moment.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES FACING MEDIA FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOMALIA

4.1 Introduction

It takes a real courage and dedication to be a journalist in the war torn Somalia. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) considers the horn of Africa nation to be the deadliest in the continent for journalists. The physical dangers is compounded with poor working conditions characterized by low or no pay, lack of proper equipment to work with and long hours in the job. Most journalists have no basic trainings due to the collapse of education system.⁹⁰

From Siyad Barre rule to the warlords, from the warlords to Islamists, Somali media has in the past two and half decades Somali media had to cope with from one set of violence to another. However, one can argue that the Somali media survived each of those difficult times and shaped the public opinion in the country. Generally, the whole media and radio in particular has been seen as a force for moderation in Somalia.

Intimidation, death threats and assassinations are daily realities for journalists operating in Somalia, a country which has been in the recent years twice ranked as the most dangerous place for media workers. According to CPJ 64 journalists have been killed in Somalia between 1992 and 2018.

Most of those deaths were as a result of murdered or dying in combat while on dangerous assignments.⁹¹ As a result Somalia sits at the top of CPJ's Global Impunity Index, ranking countries where killers of journalists go scot-free.

⁹⁰BBC World Service Trust, "The media of Somalia: A force for moderation," November 2011

⁹¹Committee to Protect Journalists. 64 Journalists Killed in Somalia between 1992 and 2018 / Motive Confirmed. Annual Report, 2018.

In the capital Mogadishu and other major cities, assassins are usually masked men who ambush journalists in less populated areas and at times at the gates of their homes. Targeting the cars of the journalist with explosives also recently became a method widely used by suspected Al-Shabab militants. Most of these murders are not properly investigated.

The threats against journalists undermine coverage of the country's development and recovery stories that most people will love to hear.

After Al-Shabab militants were driven out of Mogadishu in mid-2011, the group have resorted to death threats and assassinations against journalists to discourage reporting on the progress made by the capital. Frustrated by the growing number of expatriate journalists returning to the Mogadishu due to the improvement in security, Al-Shabab has in 2012 increased its anti-media campaign, killing a record 18 journalists during that year.⁹²

In an October 2012 opinions article on The Guardian (UK), Jamal Osman, a Somali-British journalist claimed that graft among journalists was one factor that led to the spate of killings of media workers in Somalia.⁹³ His assessment was in contradiction of the CPJ's suggestion that death threats and murders seemed to have been committed by Al-Shabab militants.

⁹²Associated Press (2012-10-24). "Number of Somali journalists murdered in targeted attacks grows to 16; no arrests yet made" Retrieved from <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/10/24/somali-reporter-killed-raising-toll-to-16-deaths-most-them-targeted-in-2012.html#ixzz2CCakjGlQ>

⁹³Osman, Jamal (2012-10-11). "Somali journalists are dying from corruption as much as conflict" Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/11/somali-journalists-dying-corruption-conflict>

The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) was infuriated by such claim, describing Jamal's piece as "defamatory and libelous". The union argued that such claims are fabrication meant to divert public attention from the real criminals "which could contribute the killing of Somali journalists to continue."

NUSOJ added that more than 50% of the assassinations took place in the capital Mogadishu and those targeting were doing their jobs or returning from workplace, besides majority of those killings have been claimed by Al-Shabab.⁹⁴

In addition to the threats and assassinations, journalists in Somalia also face the problem of censorship, leading them not to report on some sensitive topics that may upset the government, Islamist groups and regional authorities.

The Somali Federal government and regional administration including the semi- autonomous state of Puntland have on several occasions shut down independent radio stations, accusing them of inciting hatred and violence among Somalis. Several journalists are also put behind bars.

The Self-declared republic of Somaliland has increased its control over the media by shutting down leading newspapers and imprisoning journalists.

4.2 Threats from armed Islamist groups

In April 2010, radio stations in Mogadishu and parts of southern Somalia faced a catch-22 situation after the now defunct Hizbul Islam militant group instructed them to stop playing all forms of music because to them it contravenes Islamic law. Then the Transitional Federal Government

⁹⁴Xinhua (2012-10-18). Somalia journalists protest "libelous Guardian article" Retrieved from <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/739217.shtml>

(TFG) has issued a statement ordering radio stations not to abide the militants' order and those who do so will be closed.⁹⁵ To the dismay of the TFG all the radio stations save the state-owned Radio Mogadishu, Bar-kulan which a UN sponsored public broadcaster continued airing music and didn't adhere Hizbul Islam's ban.

The threats against Somali journalists went to the extent presenters were receiving protest from Islamists groups claiming that he broadcasted their news in a melodic way that could lead to having seductive effect on Somali women.⁹⁶

In the same month, Al-Shabab militants banned Somali radio stations from broadcasting programs from BBC Somali service and Voice of America (VOA). The latter issued a statement protesting the ban and saying it regrets the decision. Hours later, the Associated Press published that Al-Shabab militants had seized transmitters belonging to the BBC in various parts of the country under the militants' control.

Al-Shabab believes that both BBC and VOA had been broadcasting the agenda of crusaders and colonialists against Muslims.

Unlike VOA which is sometimes seen as a propaganda machine against Al-Shabab, BBC uses strict standards of impartiality and editorial independence by covering both sides of the story.

VOA terms Al-Shabab as a terrorist group, while BBC uses a more lenient term – Islamist militant group.

⁹⁵Jayarajan, Nayana. *International Press Institute*. 19 April 2010. <https://ipi.media/somalia-government-threatens-to-close-radio-stations-complying-with-islamist-militant-music-ban/> (accessed September 21, 2018).

⁹⁶Albadri, Abukar. "Somaliskemedierikryssild" (Somali media in crossfire). *Bistandsaktuelt*. 4 April 2010.

Al-Shabab has been accused of conducting string of killings against journalists and media workers. In April 2016, the Federal government of Somalia has executed Hassan Hanafi, a journalist who turned Al-Shabab media officer after confessing to killing of at least five journalists.⁹⁷ Hanafi who was captured by the Kenyan security forces at Nairobi international airport in 2014 then extradited to Mogadishu, admitted to joining the militant group in 2008 when he worked as a journalist for a local radio station. He used to instruct Somali journalists to report according to Al-Shabab's desire and avoiding stories relating to the group's military defeats. Hanafi later became the head of the militants' media unit, calling on journalists to press briefings and giving them tours of frontlines. The prosecutor of the case told the court that Hanafi kept track of journalists who offended Al-Shabab or reported stories he considered to be pro-government. He would then allegedly bait them into meetings and most those journalists who met him ended up dead.

According CPJ, more than 25 journalists have been killed in Somalia between 2007 and 2016, a period in which Al-Shabab was most active.

4.3 Threats from the regional authorities

The semi-autonomous region of Puntland and the self-declared republic of Somaliland have over the years arrested and prosecuted journalists who covered stories deemed being critical to the authority.

Somaliland which had enjoyed years of stability, democratic process and vibrant media environment detains journalist and sometimes locks them up for days or months without charges.

⁹⁷ The Independent (2016-04-11) "Somalia executes al-Shabaab media officer Hassan Hanafi Haji." Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/somalia-executes-al-shabaab-journalist-hassan-hanafi-haji-a6979781.html>

The authority there does not issue licenses to private radio stations and subsequent governments have not lived up to the expectations of greater media freedom.⁹⁸

According to Freedom House (2015), Press freedom is limited in Somaliland, and the authorities their arrested several journalists, and closed multiple media outlets it accused for their critical reporting.

Media outlets operating in Somaliland tend to strongly support secession from the rest of Somalia. News content from print and TV stations demonstrate a strong Somaliland perspective, with little acknowledgement of other viewpoints.

The authorities in Puntland have carried dozens of arrests against journalists and also temporarily shut down local stations as well as outlawing international media outlets. The authorities seem to be mostly sensitive to issues that touch on government officials' record in office, and the region's reputation.⁹⁹

Recently Puntland and Somaliland fought over parts of the disputed region of Sool, particularly Tuka-raq area. Media outlets from both regions were mostly seen as portraying only side of the story ignoring what the other side has to say. For example, some section of the press in Somaliland blindly used the Hargeisa's claimed that the federal government of Somalia was involved in the Tuka-raq fighting. Without challenging the officials, journalists were reporting that Somalia was

⁹⁸ BBC World Service Trust, "The media of Somalia: A force for moderation," November 2011

⁹⁹ East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, "Puntland: Release Journalist Jama Deperani," November 23, 2015, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/2015/11/puntland-release-journalist-jama-deperani/>

attacking Somaliland, even though it was clear that the clashes were between Puntland and Somaliland. In a way, this kind of reporting fuelled the conflict.

4.4 Threats from the federal government

The Federal government's security forces including National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) as well as local militias are accused of threatening and detaining local journalists who mainly operate in the capital Mogadishu. They also closed down media outlets accused of spreading pro-insurgent news to discourage them or punish them. Some journalists in Somalia also claim that senior government officials use intimidation to stop stories that they don't like reported.¹⁰⁰

Security forces, especially NISA in Mogadishu has on many occasions sought to control the media coverage of Al-Shabab and the group's activities. Such actions undercut the media outlets independence, restrictions the public's rights to information, and put media workers at risk.

In the years 2014 and 2015, the NISA command in Mogadishu sat with journalists and radio station managers orally instructing them to stop covering Al-Shabab stories, and prohibited the broadcasting of Al-Shabab voices.¹⁰¹

NISA also tried to force private independent media to refer Al-Shabab to an acronym the government gave to the group which was *Ururka Gumaadka Umadda Soomaaliyeed (UGUS)* which literally means the group that destroys Somali people.¹⁰² Such action can endanger the lives of journalists and by making them the target for Al-Shabab.

¹⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Like Fish in Poisonous Waters, Attacks on Media Freedom in Somalia," May 3, 2016

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² BBC Somali Service (2015-04-03), "Somalia government gives a new name to Al-Shabab." Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/somali/war/2015/05/150504_ugus

4.5 Diaspora Somalis and the media

The members of the Somali Diaspora have invested heavily in the media sector in an effort to increase the accessibility of information to the public and also to contribute to the peace-building efforts. However some Somalis argued that Diaspora members have created their own media in an attempt to influence politics and leadership of the country.

There is also a major debate about the influence the Somalis from abroad had on the quality of media output in the country. Media owners from Diaspora Somalis claim that their outlets are more impartial and objective than locally-owned outlets, since the former is free from the influence of local politics. Nonetheless, some media experts based within the county feel that Diaspora owned media outlets often broadcast/publish inaccurate and irresponsible stories that add to the tensions and conflicts in Somalia. This is mainly due to the fact that Diaspora based media organizations are far from the ground or don't bother to fact check their stories.

Several respondents to this research felt that there was a lack of understanding among Diaspora journalist of the situation back in Somalia, thus their reporting of stories in the country sometimes lack accuracy and perspective.

4.6 Skills and education of journalists

Most media practitioners in Somalia have limited experience or formal training in journalism. Since the state collapse, there were no official media schools o train journalists to an acceptable standard. The situation was worsened by the most experienced journalists departing the country because of insecurity, thus denying young journalists working in Somalia of mentorship and guidance to develop their profession. Media experts as well as local audience believe that the

quality of journalism in the country is currently somewhat poor. They point out that most reports are usually one-sided, sometime not accused and all most all the times lack perspective.

Journalists sometimes use their own view to create stories without efficiently attributing them to a source. There is hardly an investigative reporting or stepping back and looking for other angles to that story. Time and again, journalists failed to question those in power about decisions that they made.¹⁰³

Program editors reported that their main sources of information for news stories were interviews with members of ordinary citizens, analysts, journalists' own observations and the internet. However, in many cases reports only drew on one source (41%), with a small proportion not referring to any sources (12%).¹⁰⁴

News sites and social media are the main source of information for other media outlets but experts claim that the online journalists are even less trained than their broadcast media counterparts.

During the peaceful years, the University of Lafoole was well known for its national journalism school. Many top journalists passed through that school. But between 1991 and 2013, there was no journalism school. In 2013, University of Mogadishu started a faculty for journalism and media studies. In January 2016, the government of Somalia passed a law which requires journalists to have a journalism degree which will take a short period of one year.¹⁰⁵

Due to the prolonged civil war which also affected the education system, many Somali journalists have not undergone training or even formal education. Many of the journalists who had training

¹⁰³ BBC World Service Trust, "The media of Somalia: A force for moderation," November 2011

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ BBC News (2016-01-14) "Back to school for Somalia's journalists?" retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35303220>

and media knowledge had already left the country creating a vacuum where there is no opportunity to educate younger journalists. This matters a lot for Somalia where more than 75% of the populations are below 35 years old.¹⁰⁶

Between the years 1991 and 2011, the country's journalists mainly depended on trainings from NGOs including BBC Media Action, International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) among others. That is now changing. The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), Somaliland Journalist Association (SOLJA) and Media Association of Puntland (MAP) all provide various media trainings and short-term courses to journalists in the country.

¹⁰⁶Somalia, UNFPA. Somali youth in figures - better data, better lives. UNFPA Somalia, August 2016.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study addressed an important issue, looking at role of media in conflict management particularly the civil war in Somalia. The practitioners of peace journalism generally agree that there is a significant progress in the field of mass media as a tool for conflict management and peace building.

At present, no group or organization has a full control on the growing Somali media. There are few newspapers, dozens of radio stations and television shows aired in Somalia that shape the public opinion in the war torn country.

Improving the quality of media output and training of journalists is another issue in the impoverished country. Foreign aid organizations are sometimes reluctant to fund projects aimed at media improvement due to the fear that the money may end up in the wrong hands such as Islamist groups. This hinders the capacity of media workers in Somalia and leads to lack of dominant narrative in the country, perpetuating the civil strife there. Without a national narrative, there could hardly be a chance for reconciliation.

Both the local and international media operating in Somalia need an improvement when covering the complexity of the Somali conflict as well as bridging the gap between various warring parties.

The tone and the language used by the media should be a constructive one that critically looks at what is going on, rather than assume or depend on only one source for a multi-sided story.

The study looked at the role of Somali media as well as international news organizations in deescalating the conflict in the horn of African nation. Especial focus was put on the positive and negative impact that the media has on Somalia conflict transformation and management, the skeptical view by the peace journalism scholars, as well as the so called CNN effects and its reverse. It also looked at the positive and negative contribution the media – both local and international – had on the civil war in Somalia.

The study had a keen eye on the coverage styles of both local and international media in Somalia and how that fares in terms of the war or peace journalism principles, revealing that even though majority of the media houses tended to be war journalism oriented, there were plenty of peace journalism inspired media outlets.

Majority of the reports that covered conflict and fighting in Somalia come from local media houses based in the county. However, the international media was guilty of exercising more of war journalism doctrines compared to the local counterparts by focusing on the physical effects of the conflict rather than how it can be mitigated.

The study also looked at the challenges facing Somali journalists in order to contribute to the peace and reconciliation in the country. They vary from local of basic education, low wages to threats from armed groups. These challenges can be overcome by empowering Somali journalists through trainings and mentorship.

Unbiased media that gives chance to every section of the society, including the marginalized groups, can be an instrument of peace. It gives them knowledge that enables them make sense of what is happening and make informed decisions. It can connect them with those who hold different, opposing viewpoints to foster mutual understanding and greater social cohesion.

It can also inspire people to take part in peace building process, peaceful demonstration and to vote responsibly. It can allow them to express their frustration in a peaceful manner. It can also give them an opportunity to question power holders.

It can provide early warnings of violence so people can avoid it. It can serve as a bridge between parties in peace negotiations.

The media is best placed to address the narratives and grievances of people involved in conflict and ensure that the voices heard are not only those of the elite or those that yell the loudest, but represent diversity.¹⁰⁷

5.2 Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

To make sure that all media efforts aimed at peace processes underline the shared things between warring parties rather than their differences. This enables opposing sides to appreciate what they have in common instead of looking what they disagree on.

Strive to prevention of conflicts, making sure that relevant information is shared before the outbreak of conflicts, because that is the time information is often compromised, rumors are rife and emotions are running high.

Undertake capacity building programs for media practitioners strengthening activities to improve their editorial, management and technical skills to produce balanced, factual and engaging programs that help reduce all forms of violence.

¹⁰⁷Steven A. Zyck and Muggah, Robert. "Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Prevention: Obstacles and Opportunities." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2012: 68–75.

Support programs that reach out to and make citizens – including newsmakers such as politicians, religious leaders and other social commentators – more aware of the need for responsible and fact-based communications.

Scrutinize in greater details the drivers of violent extremism and how media can work over the long term to influence these drivers.

5.3 Suggestion for Further Study

A study of this kind cannot be exhausted in covering the area of examination. In spite of the accomplishment of this study, many questions remain unanswered while some have evolved after this research was compiled.

The change of the landscape in mass media has led to the growth of social media. The study suggests further exploration to be done in areas of social media and how it affects conflict management.

Further analysis in the research topic should be done using multiple factor correlation to assess the inter-variable relationships.

Lastly, the study suggests further study to be carried out to determine how the media can further contribute to conflict management in war torn areas and countries.

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