The Media in Conflict: A Case Study of the Somali Civil War

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A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in International Studies at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi.
Declaration

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other university.

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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor

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Dedication

To my loving family, especially my late grandmother Aulo Nyabonyo and my wife Jenny for their inspiration
Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to both individuals and institutions for their direct and indirect contribution to the successful completion of this dissertation. I would like to express acknowledgement and appreciation of the local and international media that operated in Somalia in 2004 and 2006 and whose reports we have examined in this study. I would like to especially thank Alice Martin, regional manager of British Broadcasting Corporation – Monitoring (BBCM), who kindly allowed me to use the BBCM archive to retrieve reports from BBCM and BBC World Service as well as other international and local media houses that operated in Somalia during this study’s period of focus.

I wish to express special thanks to my Supervisor, Dr Ludeki Chweya, IDIS lecturers and colleagues in the graduate class whose scholarly input contributed immensely to the development of this study. Finally, I equally extend gratitude to all other individuals and institutions for their contribution in one way or another to the successful completion of this study.

God bless you all.
Abstract

This study set out to trace the development of the media against the backdrop of the origin and evolution of the Somali conflict, assess the extent of media involvement in the Somali conflict and the impact of the media on the course and outcome of the conflict. The study attempted to answer the question: Is the media an important supplementary actor in a conflict and more specifically in attempts to end it? The study focused attention on the dimension of the role the media played in escalating the Somali conflict during the rise and fall of the Union of Islamic Courts and what role the media can play in the current efforts to resolve the conflict. The study sought to assess possible expressions of war journalism versus expressions of peace journalism using the tools of conflict analysis.

The study employed the peace-war journalism framework of analysis and found that both the local and international media propagate “war journalism” than “peace journalism”. In addition, propaganda-orientation in media coverage prevails over factual orientation. However, the findings show that international media lead in propagating violence-orientated reports.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDIS</td>
<td>Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFJ</td>
<td>International Federation of Journalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Inter-Governmental Authority and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGASOM</td>
<td>IGAD Peace Support Operation in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
<td>Radio France Internationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSF</td>
<td>Reporters Sans Frontières</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTLM</td>
<td>Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBC</td>
<td>Somali Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNM</td>
<td>Somali National Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSDF</td>
<td>Somali Salvation Democratic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>STN</td>
<td>Somali Television Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFC</td>
<td>Transitional Federal Charter for Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFG</td>
<td>Transitional Federal Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>UIC</td>
<td>Union of Islamic Courts</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNOSOM</td>
<td>United Nations Operation in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td>United Somali Congress</td>
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<td>VOA</td>
<td>Voice of America</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration..................................................................................................................................... ii
Dedication..................................................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgements....................................................................................................................... iv
Abstract........................................................................................................................................... v
Abbreviations................................................................................................................................ vi
List of Figures................................................................................................................................ ix

## CHAPTER ONE: MEDIA IN THE SOMALI CONFLICT: THE RESEARCH AGENDA

1. Introduction................................................................................................................................... 1
2. Objectives of the Research.............................................................................................................. 9
3. Issues in Conflict and Media........................................................................................................... 9
4. Theoretical Framework.................................................................................................................... 23
5. Hypothesis..................................................................................................................................... 29
6. Methodology................................................................................................................................. 29

## CHAPTER TWO: THE MEDIA AND THE SOMALI CONFLICT

1. Introduction................................................................................................................................... 38
2. Genesis of the Somali Conflict ....................................................................................................... 38
3. The Rise and fall of the Islamic Courts.......................................................................................... 42
4. Role of Foreign Media in the Somali Conflict............................................................................... 48
5. Role of New Media in the Somali Conflict.................................................................................... 50
6. Conclusion.................................................................................................................................... 52

## CHAPTER THREE: WAR AND PEACE JOURNALISM IN THE SOMALI CONFLICT

1. Introduction................................................................................................................................... 53
2. Peace/Conflict Orientation versus War/Violence Orientation..................................................... 53
3. Truth Orientation versus Propaganda Orientation....................................................................... 55
4. People Orientation versus Elite Orientation................................................................................ 56
5. Solution Orientation versus Victory Orientation......................................................................... 57
6. Ranking of peace journalism content.......................................................................................... 58
7. Ranking of war Journalism Content............................................................................................ 59
8. Peace Journalism and War Journalism in Local Media Compared............................................ 61
9. Peace Journalism and War Journalism in International Media Compared.................................. 62
10. Peace journalism and war journalism across all media compared............................................ 63
11. Summary Analysis of Peace Journalism and War Journalism.................................................. 64
12. Conclusion................................................................................................................................... 65

## CHAPTER FOUR: IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CONFLICT: INSIGHT FROM THE SOMALI EXPERIENCE

1. Introduction................................................................................................................................... 66
2. Media and War Journalism............................................................................................................ 67
3. Media: A Double-Edged Sword..................................................................................................... 70
4. Power of the Media....................................................................................................................... 71
5. Traditional Role of the Media........................................................................................................ 74
6. Conclusion.................................................................................................................................... 76

vii
BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................................................. 77

APPENDICES ......................................................................................................................................... 83

MEDIA REPORTS ....................................................................................................................................... 83
Appendix I: War stalks Somalia's city of death ....................................................................................... 83
Appendix II: Somalia: Fierce fighting erupts in central region ............................................................... 84
Appendix III: "Hundreds" of foreign terrorists in country - foreign minister ........................................ 84
Appendix IV: Somalia-Split Government: Somali official say warlords plan to attack temporary seat of government ......................................................................................................................... 84
Appendix V: Children dying in south due to lack of drugs, health facilities ........................................ 85
Appendix VI: MPs, Islamists form committees to continue mediation efforts ...................................... 85
Appendix VII: Somalia: Britain welcomes peace accord ........................................................................ 86
Appendix VIII: Fighting erupts in northern Somalia as peace talks falter, says Islamic official ....... 86

List of Tables

Table 1: Radio Stations that Operated in Somalia between 2004 and 2006 ............................................. 31
Table 2: Somali websites that were in operation between 2004 and 2006 .............................................. 34
List of Figures

Fig. 4.1 Comparison of Peace/Conflict-Oriented vs War/Violence-Oriented Journalism .......... 54
Fig. 4.2 Comparison of Truth-Orientated versus Propaganda-Orientated Journalism ............... 55
Fig. 4.3 Comparison of Peace-Orientated and Elite Orientated Journalism .............................. 56
Fig. 4.4 Comparison of Solution-Oriented and Victory-Oriented Journalism......................... 57
Fig. 4.5 Ranking of the Different Orientations of Peace Journalism ........................................ 58
Fig. 4.6 Ranking of the Different Orientations of War Journalism ......................................... 60
Fig. 4.7 Comparison of War Journalism and Peace Journalism in the Local Media ................. 61
Fig. 4.8 Peace Journalism and War Journalism in International Media Compared ..................... 62
Fig. 4.9 Comparison of peace journalism and war journalism across all media .................... 63
Fig. 4.10 Comparison of Peace Journalism and War Journalism in the Somali Conflict .......... 64
CHAPTER ONE

MEDIA IN THE SOMALI CONFLICT: THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Introduction

The media has been brought into sharp focus recently as a major player in conflict whose role needs to be revisited. This in our view has been proved beyond doubt by the demonstrations in the Middle East that led to what has come to be referred to as Jasmine revolutions, notably in Tunisia and Egypt, in which the social networks – new media – as well as the traditional media were a major catalyst. War makes news, as conflict has a time-tested news value. It has also been the view held by many that the level and orientation of coverage of a war by the mass media may easily escalate or reduce it. It has thus become imperative for the media, especially in Africa, to understand conflict and appreciate its role in covering it so that war reports are done consciously and effectively.¹

The objective of this chapter is to review the background of the role of media in the Somali conflict as a research agenda. The influence of media in conflict is a subject of considerable academic venture. One of the leading assertions in the literature is that since World War II, the extensive use of the mass media in diplomacy, the so called “public diplomacy”, has transformed both the appearance and the substance of diplomacy.² The media has since taken on new roles and uses in international conflict resolution and diplomacy.

The media has also experienced “technological changes” that, “coupled with continuing transformations in the international arena, may ultimately bring about new and alternative roles for the television in international conflict.” Indeed, technological developments continue to shape the influence of media in conflicts. Advancements in digital and Internet technology are forcing journalists to work more with amateur photographers to get real-time pictures of important events. A case in point is the Saddam Hussein execution, which was filmed by amateur photographers allowed into the execution room with their mobile phone and it is from mobile phone images that the world learnt about the event.

Betz argues that over-reliance on the news media; self-interest of the individual journalists, media news and its journalists can be considered players in a conflict, resulting in an increase in the total number of players. In addition, the use of the media as a propaganda tool are forcing a change in the ways the media and journalists operate and are used in international conflict situations, in particular when it comes to resolving conflicts.

The role of the media will require increased attention in the management of conflict. This raises a further question whether the media is an actor in the transformations that occur in the conduct of conflict management diplomacy. Regarding decision-making on conflict situations by the leaders, Reljic argues that the power of the electronic media, especially TV, increases the pressure on political decision-makers to act. Images of suffering and death lead politicians to take a public stand and declare that “the world must stand up against this.”

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2 Ibid
Since the early 1990s, crises all over the world, such as the Iraq war and the ensuing post-war insurgency as well as the Gulf war before it, successive political crises in Lebanon, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the fall of the Berlin wall, just to mention a few, have all played out in the glare of the world media.

Conflicts in Africa, such as the belligerent events that marked the instability in the Great Lakes region in the 1990s and the beginning of 21st century, as well as conflicts in the Horn of Africa, especially in Somalia, were also marked by this phenomenon of active media coverage of military manoeuvres during conflicts.

The media has become an important trans-national actor in international issues. Real time media coverage links the world instantly. It is therefore important to note that intervention in conflict takes cognizance of the process of internationalization of conflict where the media plays a prominent role. This has led scholars in conflict to argue that although media coverage makes “conflict omnipresent in modern life”\(^7\), conflicts are devastating and too complicated to be left only to combatants and few peace makers to resolve.\(^8\)

Davidson suggests that the media can increase the quantity of information and international communication; increase the quality; provide early warning of situations which might lead to conflict; make peace-makers aware of potential opportunities which might help to increase international understanding; stimulate the use of mechanisms of conflict resolution whether negotiations, mediations and arbitration, and provide information that might facilitate these processes.

\(^7\) Hannes Siebert, “Debunking the Big O,” in Melissa Baumann (ed) *Media and Conflict: Track Two*, Vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) p.3
The media can also help to create a mood in which peaceful solutions are more likely to be sought and accepted. Betz argues that the changes the media is experiencing in their role and also in the way that role is perceived by other actors on the international scene presents an opportunity for the media to play an important and perhaps decisive role in conflict resolution.

If concrete measures and strategies are put in place by peace-makers as well as the international community on how the media should act in conflict situations, the media can be an effective tool for sending messages. Such messages would be about peace, democracy, ethnic tolerance and methods of alternative conflict resolution. Usable documentation and a best practices model for media programs in conflict management are needed in reporting conflict in order to provide concrete examples of coverage that are worthy of emulation.

The increasing transformation in the Internet technology now enables any medium, electronic or press to publish their news in real time using pictures just as television would, though to a more limited extent. Research on the role media in conflict has led to suggestions that belligerent events in one part of the world can influence another event elsewhere since "the media... is ever present during any conflict and its reportage could help ease the conflict or make it worse."
Analysis of media role is relevant as “conflict resolution continues to hold an important place in international affairs as long as there are outbreaks of war”\textsuperscript{12}; especially on the African continent that still experiences considerable conflicts. The examples of the Rwandan 1994 genocide and the Afghan Taliban regime, from which the world was able to learn through media coverage, give credence to the argument that conflict is the spur to learning, and humankind’s great characteristic is the ability to understand complex phenomena and to master them in such a way that one can put such learning about phenomena into use, for good or for ill.\textsuperscript{13}

The experience of the 1994 Rwandan genocide appeared to influence international pressure to act following the occurrence of similar events in the Sudanese region of Darfur. While lessons learnt from the Taliban regime appear to inform the Ethiopian-led intervention in Somalia against the Union of Islamic Courts in December 2006.

Zartman argues therefore that intra-state conflicts deserve serious attention\textsuperscript{14} as they have become a defining characteristic of the post Cold War era. Internationalization of conflict gives previously ‘internal’ conflict international characteristics which render it no longer purely internal.\textsuperscript{15} This is well illustrated by conflicts where there is massive loss of life (including genocide) and violations of human rights, which occur in internal conflicts such as those witnessed in Somalia, Rwanda, Angola, and Sudan, raising international concern since human rights are now considered to be an international and even universal concern.

\textsuperscript{12} Betz (2006) \textit{Op.cit}
\textsuperscript{13} Arthur J.R. Groom, \textit{Approaches to Conflict and Cooperation in International Relations: Lessons from theory for practice}, Retrieved 30 June 2007 from \url{http://www.ukc.ac.uk/politics/publications/journals/kentpapers/groom1.html}
Africa has experienced internal conflicts which have resulted in the trend towards “Afro-pessimism”, the view that holds that Africa is doomed to remain in a state of ever increasing conflict, making development and democratization almost impossible. It has been argued that Africa continues to make news for the wrong reasons because there seems to be a conspiracy by the western media to portray the continent as a lost cause, from which nothing good will come. Whereas this claim is partially true, the events on the continent tend to lend credence to what appears in the international media.

Mbaine points to the occurrence and re-occurrence of armed conflict in many African states notably giving the examples of Sudan, which has just come out of two decades of armed conflict, the Angolan whose chapter was closed with the death of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in 2003, and the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Intra-state conflict has become a characteristic of the modern, post-Cold War times. Africa has experienced more of this internal conflict than any other continent.

Inter-state conflict has once again entered the agenda since 1998, but African conflict is still predominantly intra-state. Intervention by other states compounds the situation. In African conflict, the lines of confrontation are most often “drawn over issues of exclusion, identity, and the frustration of basic needs under conditions of mis-development and the crumbling hold and legitimacy of an impoverished state”. Anyadike points out that:

The conflicts in Africa arise as a result of a global economic system that keeps Africa locked into a cycle of poverty and domination, aggravating local conflicts over power and wealth. When we take this global situation into account and extrapolate its implications for the practice of journalism, we encounter many constraints for African media.

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It is impossible to analyze the African media's role in reporting conflict and conciliation without examining the conditions under which that media operates even in times of peace.

The role played by the media in intra and inter-state conflicts is often misconstrued to always be negative by sceptics on the role the media can play in conflict. The role played by the media in conflict is often assumed at conferences and seminars without question or any clear understanding of what this role is all about. In most cases, there is undefined rush to judgement without a rigorous analysis.\textsuperscript{19}

Conflict is endemic in society and an important ingredient in the society. Mwagiru argues that of all the issues that require attention in the post Cold War era is that of how internal conflicts can be managed effectively in one of the most pressing challenges.\textsuperscript{20} In situations where the media is dealing with conflict cases, the issues become more complex, since the media has the power to help alleviate or escalate the situation by internationalizing an internal conflict. The successes the Islamic Courts had registered in realizing peace and stability in the country for the first time in over a decade were therefore overshadowed. The biased analysis was also witnessed in the escalation in fighting since March 2007 in Mogadishu. Some actors used such analyses to foment and manipulate differences between Darood and Hawiye clans in an attempt to control the stakes in the port city and capital of Somalia.

The media has often therefore been singled out for escalating conflicts as has been experienced in many parts of the world. It can be argued that the rise of protracted conflicts, like in Somalia, which adversely affect regional and national security, calls for peace-makers in the region to understand how the media operates and use it as a tool for reconciliation.

\textsuperscript{18} International Institute for Strategic Business Studies (IISS), \textit{Strategic Survey} (Oxford University Press, London, 1996.

\textsuperscript{20} Mwagiru (1996) \textit{Op cit.}
During the period they controlled parts of Somalia, the warlords controlled the country’s economy where various sectors thrived at their whims. The media sector, recovering from the days of heavy control under Siyad Barre’s dictatorship, found a favourable environment to thrive on in this new order. Radio stations and newspapers mushroomed in Somalia while Somalis in the Diaspora established one web site after another. This led to a situation where each area controlled by a warlord had its own media that was necessarily favourable to the warlord to whom it owed its survival.

The Union of Islamic Courts came to the scene in the context of media growth unchecked by a central authority. The newcomers also necessarily had their own media favourable to them since it was engaged in fighting the warlords. Owning or controlling the media was therefore necessary for swaying not only popular support but also the international community.

Events that unfolded in Somalia following the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts up to their fall are probable evidence that the local media in Somalia, which is unregulated by a central authority, may have contributed to the escalation of the Somali crisis. The international media may have also played a leading role in this escalation. However, recent and present studies as well as efforts to resolve the conflict have paid little attention to this dimension of the conflict, leading to inadequate appreciation of its complexity and an intractable conflict resolution process. For instance, on 1 July 2006, a Web-posted audio message purportedly recorded by Osama bin Laden urged Somalis to build an Islamic state in the country, and warned all nations that his Al Qaeda network would fight against them if they intervened there.21

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External powers such as Ethiopia and Eritrea were accused of propaganda to drum up domestic support for the conflict. As Ethiopian and TFG troops marched to Mogadishu, it was common for Eritrean news agencies websites "talking dirt" about Ethiopia, Israel, America and Great Britain. Eritrea even claims the assertions it has troops involved in Somalia is part of a disinformation campaign being waged against it by Ethiopia.22

The Somali conflict has lasted a long time. Efforts to end the war, including some very promising steps like Somali Reconciliation Conference, TFC, TFG have subsequently failed and thereby opened a new round of conflict as reflected in the UIC and Al-Shabaab.

Many studies link the media to the escalation or mitigation of conflict. This study attempts to understand the cause of escalation of the Somali conflict and failure of settlement deals from a standpoint of the influence of the media.

Objectives of the Research

This study contributes to the debate on the effect of media coverage on conflict through analysis of the Somali case during the rise and fall of the Union of Islamic Courts between 2004 and 2006. In addition, the study analyses the impact of both local and international reporting on opportunities for resolution of the conflict.

Issues in Conflict and Media

In the field of media and conflict there have been debates around the nature of the role played by the mass media in reporting conflict. The debate revolves around whether the media affect conflict positively, negatively or not at all.

The press in the US colonies actively fostered the Revolutionary War against Britain, while the French press did not advocate for democracy during the French Revolution; some argue this was key to both outcomes.²³

Sceptics have criticized the media in Africa for the manner in which they cover situations of conflict and conciliation. However, scholars who see the media in Africa as playing key role which is either negative or positive in the cause, course and outcome of conflicts argue that the circumstances under which the media in Africa operate in both normal and conflict situations are responsible for shortcomings of African journalism.

Debate around the causes of the partiality of the African media have pointed to institutions, others to the practices of the media themselves, while others point to external circumstances as the causes of this partiality.²⁴

Impact of Media on Conflict

The media create the news by deciding what to report. News is technically facts and interpretation of facts, including editorial opinions, expressed by journalism professionals. These facts also depend on a variety of factors ranging from the editorial judgment of reporters and editors, to other news events competing for the same time or space, to corporate policies that reflect management biases. These decisions lead to the perception of the media as impacting positively or negatively on conflicts, especially by influencing the decisions of policy makers involved in the conflict.²⁵

Positive Impact

The literature shows evidence of positive media contribution in conflict that suggests that the media was significantly responsible for the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union's control over other countries. The ideological and cultural control upon which communist political authority was based could not survive in an era of global media. The Soviet and the East European regimes were unable to prevent the reception of Western radio and television broadcasts. Television played a direct role in the 1989 revolutions, rightly called 'television revolutions' due to the influence images beamed worldwide had on them. Street protests taking place in one country were watched by television audiences in other countries where large numbers of protesters then took to the streets themselves.26

Broadly, Giddens, Jennifer Akin and David Laws argue that real-time media broadcasts directly affected public opinion and public action. Cheap and easy access to technologies such as radio, television, and the Internet make possible access to information that is not censored or controlled by governments. The information revolution, which the media facilitate, is empowering individuals, and making it harder for oppressive regimes to manipulate information and perceptions, thereby to control their citizens.27

Journalists are, intentionally or otherwise, conflict specialists. Much of journalism focuses on conflict, on describing and analyzing the behaviour of the parties involved.28 Moreover, Long-term, on-going conflict-resolution processes such as mediation are not dramatic and are often difficult to understand and report, especially since the proceedings are almost always closed to the media.

Furthermore media allows information to be relayed quickly in times of crisis. During negotiations to end conflicts, the news media allow leaders of belligerent parties to communicate with their constituents.\footnote{Jennifer Akin, *Mass Media*, Posted: March 2005, Retrieved 1 March 2007, from http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/mass_communication/} Frequently, the delegates at the negotiation will find they understand each other much better over the course of their discussions, but that understanding will not reach the larger populations they represent without a concerted communication effort. This communication effort is difficult to achieve when the two sides do not have easily accessible and transparent communication channels like the news media. If constituents are not kept informed of these new understandings (and subsequent compromises) during the course of negotiations, they will almost certainly feel cheated when the announced final agreement falls far short of their expectations. To achieve ratification, delegates justify the agreement by discussing it with and explaining it to their constituents throughout the entire process and the media is often used for this purpose.\footnote{David Laws, *Representation of Stakeholding Interests - The Consensus-Building Handbook*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999.}

**Negative Media Impact View**

Other scholars disagree with the positive view argument that free, independent media may have a positive influence on conflict. Schaffert, for instance, observes that conflict resolution stories are easily pushed aside in favour of the most recent, the most colourful, and the most shocking aspects of a conflict. Groups that understand this dynamic can cater to it in order to gain media attention.
Common criteria for terrorist attacks include timing them to coincide with significant
dates, targeting elites, choosing sites with easy media access, and aiming for large numbers
of casualties. The resulting media coverage can bestow status and even legitimacy on
marginal opposition groups, so television coverage naturally becomes one of their planned
strategies and top priorities. The “30-second sound bite” has become a familiar phrase in
television and radio news and alert public figures strategize to use it to their advantage. In
addition to the control exercised by owners, there are also government controls and self-
censorship.

Kohut gives the example of the United States, which is governed by a constitution
that guarantees freedom of the press, has arguably “the most free” media in the world, and
the right to free speech is expressly written into the constitution. Yet the U.S. government
also exerts control over the media, particularly during times of war or crisis. In many other
countries around the world, especially emerging nations and dictatorships, governments
impose tight restrictions on journalists, including penalties ranging from fines to
imprisonment and execution. In these environments, rigorous self-censorship is necessary
for survival. In a major survey of 287 US journalists, “about a quarter of those polled have
personally avoided pursuing newsworthy stories”.

The common-sense view of the role of the African media in conflict cites numerous
cases of the media acting as inciters of violence, especially in the 1994 Rwandan crisis.

31 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, pp. 61-
79
32 Ibid
Retrieved 22 August 2007 from http://www.cjr.org/year/00/2/censorship.asp
Richard Carver, the Africa Director of Article 19, the international freedom of expression body based in London, argues that the media is more often singled out for “disproportionate blame”, used as a scapegoat for the atrocities and rapidly escalating conflicts seen in many African nations. Policy makers tend to exaggerate media effects, blaming the media for failures and decry irresponsible media but fail to credit the media for rallying public support. For instance, the media helped to rally allied and public opinion behind the US military campaign in Iraq. The question arises: Does the media truly play such a pivotal role in inciting violence, and do they do so through intention or negligence, or because they are used as tools in a political power game? Are the media as responsible for escalating conflict and violence as they are made to seem, or are they used as a scapegoat by governments and external critics?

The case study of Radio de Milles Collines (RTLM) in Rwanda in 1994 is frequently cited as an extreme example of the media's power to ferment violence in conflict situations. The station broadcast propaganda advocating violence against the Tutsi people, who were massacred on a large scale. It is not possible to draw a linear link between what people see or hear in the media and how they behave. It seems, in context, that RTLM was used as one aspect of a strategic political campaign. “This was not primordial blood lust. This was planned. This was not Hutu killing Tutsi. This was some Hutu killing Tutsi - and quite a number of Hutu as well - in pursuit of a purely political agenda.”

RTLM's involvement cannot be taken as indicative of the African media's response to conflict. The managers and broadcasters of RTLM were among the planners of the violence in Rwanda.

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Once the genocide started, the nature of RTLM changed from a propaganda broadcaster to something that illuminates its context quite clearly. The station began to "broadcast orders to those conducting the genocide". In this case, it becomes clear that the media as a whole cannot be related to the isolated example of RTLM in Rwanda, which was used as a political tool by its owners.

The Sceptical view

A third view critiques the arguments on the positive or negative power of the media on conflict. Free media tend to follow, not lead, the democratic transition. Media coverage tends to have effects that vary with the content and context of the coverage.

The sceptics, like Jonathan Mermin and Daniel C. Hallin, point out that these events are over-determined; many other factors are at play. Media effects may be shown in specific cases to influence public opinion, agenda setting, and the framing of an issue, but media coverage alone does not guarantee a particular effect. The sceptics observe that only after Congress and the public became more sceptical about and outspoken against the war in Vietnam did the media cover these viewpoints and actions, but the coverage followed, and therefore did not cause, the change.

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James Hoge and Warren Strobel also note that a scant 2 percent of television coverage showed actual bloodshed, so media pictures were not predominantly bloody, and thus graphic pictures could not have caused the decline in public and congressional resolve to fight the war.38

Media impact can be difficult to prove empirically, since correlation is not causation. General laws are difficult to posit, since media effects vary depending on the type of coverage and the context created by other intervening variables, such as elite consensus. Thus all the three views continue to provide arguments, while scholars sort out the mixed evidence for and against the various claims. However more scholars hold to the sceptical view of limited effects in specific circumstances.40

The “CNN Effect”

A recent media phenomenon, the “CNN effect”, occurs when powerful news media seem to be creating the news by reporting it. Since the world watched the Gulf War live on the Cable News Network (CNN) in 1991, the rise of CNN and other 24-hour news networks has intensified debates on the media’s effect on conflict.41 It has been argued that CNN sets the agenda by deciding which items are newsworthy and require the attention of government leaders. It is also argued that emotionally-charged footage of people suffering, such as mass starvation, bombed-out markets, and burning houses, arouse the public to demand immediate action.

40 Ibid
41 Ibid
This gives leaders little time to think through an appropriate response and can force them to take valuable resources from more urgent, less photogenic issues.\textsuperscript{42} The CNN effect also brings up issues of accuracy of facts. The New York Times, with its vast resources, has long been known as "the newspaper of record"; once something is reported by this leading news outlet it is accepted as fact (unverified) and carried by other outlets, even when errors creep into the Times' account. Some scholars argue that the CNN effect is overrated, if not a complete myth. Warren Strobel and Susan Carruthers, for example, argue that the U.S. government has not been forced into doing anything; rather, it used reaction over media stories to introduce policies that it already desired.\textsuperscript{43}

**Reverse CNN Effect**

When most analysts speak of the policy driving power of the media, they are referring to the ability of news organizations to force certain political actions. But sometimes media reports have the opposite effect: they cause policy inaction. This phenomenon can be thought of as the reverse CNN effect.\textsuperscript{44} To date, there has been little systematic inquiry into this effect. There is, however, some anecdotal evidence to support the existence of the reverse CNN effect. For example, despite media coverage of the genocide in Rwanda, none of the major Western powers intervened. In 1994, genocide occurred in Rwanda. A massive slaughter of Tutsi and moderate Hutus was undertaken by extremist Hutus, resulting in over 800,000 murders.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid
Much of this was captured on film and broadcast in the US and worldwide at a rate much heavier than the Somalia crisis prior to the December 1992 US troop deployment.\(^4^5\)

Yet, despite all of this footage, the world remained unmoved. Americans remained wary of intervening to help stop the genocide. Public opinion polls taken at the time found that most Americans were opposed to military action.\(^4^6\) In the words of Warren Strobel, “the images from Rwanda of ethnic warfare and its grisly results held no power to move the US administration to intervene or to move the public to demand that it does so\(^4^7\). In other words, there was no CNN effect in this case. Could there have been a reverse CNN effect? Over-saturation of negative media images leads to feelings of helplessness and pessimism.\(^4^8\)

In such a media induced context, the favoured action becomes inaction. Strobel has thus concluded that “in this environment, the news media themselves were an additional factor in keeping the United States out of Rwanda in anything more than a highly circumscribed way”.\(^4^9\)

When the media raises the most significant concerns, CNN effects become possible. When issues of lesser concern or interests less than vital are the focus of the media, CNN effects become possible if the perceived costs (as suggested by the images and reporting) are minimal, whereas reverse CNN effects become more likely if the costs are seen as potentially equalling or outweighing the benefits. This thesis is based largely on anecdotal evidence.\(^5^0\)


\(^{4^6}\) Ibid

\(^{4^7}\) Ibid

\(^{4^8}\) Ibid

\(^{4^9}\) Ibid


Objectivity or Subjectivity in Journalism

The purpose and responsibilities of journalists to their objectivity is a major discussion point in conflict reporting. While most citizens take this for granted, objective reporting has not been the historical norm. The concept of objectivity itself has often been the focus of debate. As Susan Carruthers states, "... news can never be 'value-free', from 'nobody's point of view'." It is a sentiment voiced by numerous journalism professionals and teachers. Deciding what the news is requires value judgment. In the Western news media there is a consensus that news is something unusual which departs from everyday life and is quantifiable, like the outbreak of war is news, but any fighting thereafter might not be. As the war continues, its newsworthiness depends on whether the news agency's home troops are involved, whether the troops of close allies are involved, how many casualties are reported, how photogenic the victims are, whether reporters have access to the fighting and information about it, and what other stories occur at the same time. Western news consists of events, not processes. This bias can result in news reports where events seem to have no context.

In Africa, the media is, due to historical circumstances, at a disadvantage when reporting on any national issues, a disadvantage aggravated in times of conflict. Lack of advanced professional training, government restrictions on press freedom, and day-to-day economic and technical constraints make the African media's work very difficult at the best of times. These factors frequently lead to over-dependence on non-African sources of expertise, technology and information.

Many citizens who have access to resources therefore gain much of their news and information from external news sources in conflict situations. African governments hold the attitude that “security” requires a complete freeze on any information regarding the state, its actions and any conflicts it may be involved in, giving insurgents the chance to spread propaganda and incendiary misinformation, or to spread counter-information to the propaganda and misinformation spread by the state, to a public hungry for any information whatsoever.53

The media are ideal pawns for the conflicting parties, even away from the frontline, and are subject to intimidation and coercion. Much of the African media face a day-to-day struggle for survival.54 Often, the media are either directly state-owned or in such a precarious position that they must foster the state's goodwill to survive. This means that the media tend to reflect or support the dominant attitudes of the state and to assert the state's authority. Such attitudes can result in coverage that is almost as negligent of civil society and the diversity of African voices as the much-maligned international media coverage of Africa.55 These factors support the view that the African media is faced with constant tensions in reporting on conflict that force it to compromise its coverage.

In the common-sense view of both journalists and media consumers the world over, conflict situations lead to expectations of certain similarities between the media and the third parties that traditionally aid in resolving conflicts, such as mediators or arbiters.

53 Ibid p.395
54 Ibid
Both begin by analyzing conflicts, finding out who is engaged in the conflict, what motivates them, what are the realities behind the dispute and what the conflict could probably and possibly lead to in most cases, both ostensibly try to take an impartial view of the situation. However, the path from conflict to media-encouraged conciliation is not as simple as developing the correct skills and awareness within the African media. There are more profound problems, especially the government's restrictive attitudes to press freedom, and the lack of technology and training in the African media. When external critics lambaste the African media for inappropriate coverage of conflict situations, assigning blame almost exclusively to the media and not considering the complexities of the situation, African governments use this criticism as further ammunition to discredit or argue for state control of the media.

In response to the drawbacks of "objective" journalism, some journalists have begun advocating for alternative models, such as "peace journalism" and "public journalism". "Peace journalism advocates the belief that journalists should use the power of the media to help resolve conflict rather than report it from a distance. Its detractors argue that once a journalist has set himself the goal of stopping or influencing wars, it is a short step to accepting that any means to achieve that end are justified. There can be no greater betrayal of journalistic standards."

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In general, the literature available on media and conflict demonstrate that journalists play an increasing role as actors in conflicts, influencing them positively or negatively. Little evidence shows that the media are passive observers. Whereas the media minimize their own effect, claiming that they merely report on events and do not affect them, peace studies scholars are convinced that the media can play a critical role in defusing tensions and forging peace. It is inaccurate to say that the media has no impact on the events they report, especially conflict. They do have an impact. In coverage of conflict, the debate about the positive or negative role of the media, subjectivity or objectivity, the CNN effect or its reverse seems to converge on two points of focus for journalism – war or peace.

Media coverage of conflicts can either focus on war and escalate it or focus on peace and potentially influence the conflict situation and promote its resolution. Journalists do not simply report the facts; they also give the parties involved in the conflict, or interested third parties, an opportunity to express their views. By focusing on the war machinery, the war diplomacy, the strategies and the casualties, journalists make rivals sharpen their offensives and counter offensives, thereby oiling the war machine. In contrast, by focusing on creativity and human ingenuity to resolve conflicts, journalists enable rivals to get to know one another, uphold understanding and empathy, thereby promoting positive understanding among rival parties through appreciation of the opposing viewpoints.

The rest of this study has attempted to analyse the case of Somalia to establish the effect of media coverage on conflict through analysis of the Somali case during the rise and fall of the Union of Islamic Courts between 2004 and 2006. The study has also attempted to establish through analysis the impact of both local and international reporting on opportunities for resolution of the conflict.
**Theoretical Framework**

This study draws its basis from the concept of peace journalism. Peace journalism is an attempt to redefine the role of journalists who cover conflicts and draw from numerous theories and disciplines that include critical realist theory. Critical realism has been described as: “a way of describing the process of ‘knowing’ that acknowledges the reality of the thing known as something other than the knower (hence ‘realism’), while fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence ‘critical’).”

In considering the nature of dialogue between the knower and the thing known, it is the criteria on which choices are made as to which facts to include and which to leave out, that are the salient issues.

The founder of the field of peace studies, Johan Galtung, has endeavoured to expound the following questions: What is conflict? What is violence? What is peace? What are the root causes of violence? And, what are basic needs? His theory is based on years of observation of conflict situations around the world. Galtung identifies three types of violence: direct, cultural and structural. Direct violence is what we usually think of in terms of aggression or military force. Cultural violence is the way a group generally perceives another group. Structural violence is harm which is built into the laws and traditional behaviour of a group or society.

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59 The founder of the field of peace studies is Johan Galtung, a scholar and practitioner from Norway. Galtung was inspired to create the discipline of peace studies while he was a mathematics student fellow in Finland in 1951.
Each of these forms of violence can be destructive and often operate concurrently and in a mutually reinforcing fashion. Thus, by representing speeches, images or beliefs which glorify physical violence, the media reinforces and enables structural violence in times of peace and direct violence in times of conflict. Peace studies define violence as the use of force to attain a goal. As Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick write, "violence is only one possible response to conflict – a collective expression, or political tool to achieve ends. It can easily be self-defeating, in the long term nullifying any gains or even killing those who would have benefited from the achievement."

In order to achieve peace, it is not enough to stop the violence. The underlying conflict causing the violence needs to be addressed. The root causes of conflict and violence vary from case to case. Conflict usually arises when basic needs are not met. Basic needs include survival, well-being, identity and freedom. Conflict analysis broadens the scope of actors and stakeholders, takes into account root causes and basic needs and assumes that solutions must be based on legitimate goals.

In peace studies, conflict is often defined as a situation in which two or more parties perceive that they have incompatible goals. Conflict is not necessarily negative, nor need it lead to violence. It is necessary for progress and evolution.

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68 Annabel McGoldrick is a co-founder of Conflict and Peace Forums (CPF), based in the UK. She covered conflicts in Thailand and Burma, and Yugoslavia, helped to make the BBC Counterblast programme, Against The War, with Harold Pinter, during the Kosovo crisis in 1999. She teaches Peace-Building Media, Theory and Practice, at the University of Sydney.
69 Jake Lynch, international correspondent for television and newspapers, was independent reporter in Sydney in 1998-99 and was based at Nato HQ in Brussels for Sky News during the Kosovo crisis. He covered conflicts in Ireland and Yugoslavia. He has authored CPF papers, What Are Journalists For? (1999) and Using Conflict Analysis in Reporting (2000). He teaches Peace-Building Media, Theory and Practice, at the University of Sydney.
Peace studies identify two ways of looking at a conflict: the high road and the low road, depending on whether the focus is on the conflict and its peaceful transformation, or on the meta-conflict that comes after the root conflict, created by violence and war and the question of who wins. Media even confuse the two, talk about conflict when they mean violence. The low road, represented by war journalism sees a conflict as a battle and the battle as sports arena and gladiator circus. The parties, usually reduced to the number 2, are combatants in the struggle to impose their goals. The underlying reporting model, often very visible, is that of a military command: who advances, who capitulates short of their goals; counting the losses in terms of numbers killed, wounded, and material damage.

The zero-sum perspective draws upon sports reporting where “winning is the only thing”. The same perspective is applied to negotiations as verbal battles: who outsmarts the other, who gets the other to say yes; who comes out closest to his original position.66

The high road would focus on conflict transformation, whereby conflict is seen as a challenge to the world.67 Peace journalism calls on reporters and editors to be more critically self-aware. It asks journalists to take responsibility for their reporting and understand the dynamics of an information economy, that it should give space for alternatives to war and violent interventions.

Lynch and McGoldrick write: “Peace Journalism entails picking up on suggestions for non-violent responses from whatever quarter, and remitting them into the public sphere. There is never, in any conflict, any shortage of them.”

Using the peace journalism and war journalism dichotomy, this study classifies the local and international media operating in Somalia with a view to establishing whether the reporting on the Somali conflict was more of peace journalism or of war journalism. Whereas peace journalism is conflict, truth, people and solution-orientated, war journalism is violence, propaganda, elite and victory-oriented.

Peace journalism concentrates in a proactive war on exploring the root of the conflict through balanced coverage committed to casting light on the conflict. Thus peace journalism makes it possible for the parties to enter genuine dialogue. Being peace and conflict-oriented in nature, peace journalism explores conflict formation between the parties involved as well as the goals being pursued by all the parties and the issues in the conflict. It takes the form of general “win, win”-orientation since it is founded on open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere as well as history and culture. It sees conflict and war as a problem and focus creativity to cope with the conflict and ultimately resolve it.

Peace journalism focuses on making conflicts transparent and gives a voice to all the parties, in addition to empathizing with them and understanding the causes they are pursuing. All sides are therefore humanised. It exposes truths and untruths on all sides, uncovering everything. It is for this reason truth-orientated.

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69 Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) *Op cite*
Peace journalism is solution and people-oriented insofar as it focuses on suffering all over the area affected by conflict; on women, aged, children. It therefore gives a voice to the voiceless. It also gives a name to all evil-doers and focuses on peace-makers. Thus it is proactive in directing attention to the prevention of violence before it occurs. In addition, it directs attention to invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure).

This form of journalism is based on the formula: Peace = non-violence + creativity. It highlights peace initiatives and prevents more war. It focuses on structure, culture, the peaceful society. The aftermath is: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation.

War journalism focuses on the conflict arena in a reactive way and tends to focus on the visible effect of violence – the number of people killed, wounded and the extent of material damage. Its focus on the “us – them” dichotomy of the war gives it in general a zero-sum orientation to conflict reporting. From the war journalism perspective, there are two parties and one goal – to win the war since the focus is who prevails in the war.

War journalism is victory-orientated and adopts the formula: Peace = victory + ceasefire. It conceals peace initiatives before victory is at hand. It focuses on treaty, institution, and the controlled society. It believes in leaving for another war and returns if the old wounds flare up again. It is thus reactive as it waits for violence before reporting.

In contrast with peace journalism, the space, time and causes (who threw the first stone) in war journalism are closed. War journalism makes wars opaque and secret. It is founded on “us-them” dichotomy, propaganda, and it provides a voice for “us”, seeing “them” necessarily as the problem and. “Them” is dehumanised, more so when the weapon is considered evil. It focuses only on the visible effect of violence inflicted by “them” and victory scored by “us” (killed, wounded and material damage).
War journalism is also propaganda and elite-orientated as it tends to focus on “our” suffering and on able-bodied male elite in society. It tends to be “our” mouth-piece, cover-up tool and the vehicle for lies. It gives a name to “their” evil-doers and focuses on elite peace-makers.

Media as Third Party

Samuel Peleg\(^7\) introduces the notion of the media as a third party to a conflict. The third party is the facilitator of communication, the mediator or the arbitrator between the two rival sides. The argument is that peace journalism as a third side can best enhance prospects for resolution and reconciliation by changing the norms and habits of reporting conflicts. Protracted social conflicts, or apparently irresolvable disputes\(^7\) such as the case of Somalia, usually require a third party to mediate between the rivalling parties, or at least, to facilitate their interaction. On-going conflicts generate hostility, animosity, and consequently mistrust to the extent that no direct communication is feasible. This predicament is further exacerbated when the issues in contention are intangible and cannot be compromised\(^7\). As Kempf points out: “Journalists always have two options: either to take sides and to incite one party against the other, or to play the role of moderating third party in order to improve the communication between them and contribute to constructive conflict transformation.”\(^7\)

\(^7\) Samuel Peleg, *Peace Journalism Through the Lens of Conflict Theory: Analysis and Practice*, 17
Hypothesis

The media escalated rather than mitigate the Somalia conflict.

Methodology

Population

This study has used secondary data. The study concentrated on data related to the impact the media had on the Somali conflict during the period between 2004 and 2006 and media developments against the backdrop of efforts to resolve the conflict. The sources of secondary data included paper-based sources on media developments in Somalia and media behaviour during the period between 2004 and 2006 – books, journals, periodicals, abstracts, research reports, conference papers, annual reports, internal records of media organizations, newspapers and magazines. Other sources were electronic such as CD-ROMs, on-line databases, Internet, videos and broadcasts.

Broadcasts and transcriptions, as well as print media articles were mainly retrieved from databases of local Somali and international media houses. The data thus collected helped to see how far the media enabled the rival sides to get to know one another, to uphold understanding and empathy by emphasizing truth-oriented, people-oriented and solution-oriented journalism to expedite peace.

The study investigated how much of the media reports attempted to familiarize the public with the background of the Somali conflict and the motivations that spawn it, how far they went to encourage constructive communication, genuine and honest interaction between protagonists.
At the same time, the study set out to investigate what role the media played in sustaining the conflict and preserving the acrimonious atmosphere of suspicion and abhorrence. During the period under study, radio was the dominant and most accessible medium. Residents of Mogadishu had access to a greater variety of media than people in more outlying areas. There were 20 private radio stations in operation and most of them were based in the capital, Mogadishu. Somalia remains without an indigenous broadcaster offering national coverage. As a result, Somali-language media based abroad continue to play an important role. The internet has become increasingly influential and is a strong link with the large Somali Diaspora. But, like television, its penetration within the country continues to be hampered by practicalities such as limited access to mains electricity.

Although Somalia was the last African country to be formally connected to the internet, the huge Somali Diaspora in the West, the Gulf States and elsewhere has driven the development of a rich Somali internet presence. A large variety of Somali chat rooms and news websites have now been operating for a number of years. Table 2a below shows the radios that offered a news service in Somalia between 2004 and 2006.

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74 British Broadcasting Corporation Monitoring, web site visited on 15 December 2007. BBC Monitoring is the division of the BBC that carries out research on the media and the content they cover on a daily basis in all parts of the world.
Table 1: Radio Stations that Operated in Somalia between 2004 and 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type and Frequency</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Coverage Other remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio Mogadishu</td>
<td>FM radio</td>
<td>Somali Government</td>
<td>Coverage limited to the capital, Mogadishu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio HornAfrik</td>
<td>FM radio on 99.9 FM, satellite and <a href="http://www.hornafrik.com">www.hornafrik.com</a></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Mogadishu. Rebroadcasted BBC programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Voice</td>
<td>FM radio on 88.8 FM</td>
<td>Radio HornAfrik</td>
<td>Based in Mogadishu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Shabeelle</td>
<td>FM radio on 92.1 FM (Marka), 101.5 FM (Mogadishu) and shortwave on 6960 kHz</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Marka and Mogadishu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Banaadir</td>
<td>FM radio. Also web-based on <a href="http://www.radiobanadir.com">www.radiobanadir.com</a></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Mogadishu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Koran Radio</td>
<td>FM radio on 102.5 FM</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Mogadishu. Mouthpiece of TFG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Simba</td>
<td>FM radio</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Mogadishu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Hargeisa</td>
<td>FM and shortwave</td>
<td>SomaliLand government</td>
<td>Based in Hargeisa, Somaliland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Gaalkacyo</td>
<td>FM radio</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Mudug region of Puntland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice of Peace</td>
<td>FM radio</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Boosaaso Puntland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBC Radio</td>
<td>FM radio</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Based in Bari region of Puntland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Bay</td>
<td>FM radio</td>
<td>Somali Government</td>
<td>Based in Baidoa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HornAfrik is the longest established independent broadcaster in Mogadishu and the most popular and influential indigenous station in the country. In addition to its main Radio HornAfrik channel, it also runs Capital Voice radio for Mogadishu and a cable TV service in the city. Radio HornAfrik covers extensive areas of southern and central Somalia.
Although HornAfrik was founded 1999 by members of the Habar Gidir sub clan, it is respected as being relatively independent.75

Radio Banaadir has been on the air since early 2000 and, like HornAfrik, gained a reputation as a largely objective source. Originally on shortwave, it now only transmits on FM. Once regarded as second only to HornAfrik in importance, this position has now been taken by Radio Shabeelle. Banaadir is the name of the region that encompasses Mogadishu and its immediate environs.76

Radio Shabeelle was launched in early 2002 in Marka, the capital of Lower Shabeelle Region, close to Mogadishu. It now operates in both Marka and Mogadishu. It forms part of the Shabeelle Media Network, which also runs the website www.shabelle.net, and the daily Shabeelle Times newspaper. The Shabeelle Media Network operates with assistance from the Paris-based external broadcaster, Radio France Internationale. In addition to its FM service, Radio Shabeelle also transmits on shortwave. The Shabeelle is one of the two major rivers in southern Somalia.

Holy Koran Radio was established in the mid-1990s by a Muslim organization, Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama’a. Radio Mogadishu, the mouthpiece of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), described itself as the “Voice of the Republic of Somalia”. Despite being the government radio, it has an audience limited to the Mogadishu area.

There are seven TV operators in Somalia: three in Somaliland, two in Puntland and two in Mogadishu.77 The two in Mogadishu are HornAfrik (a cable service) and Global.

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75 ibid
76 ibid
77 ibid
With the exception of Somaliland's SLNTV (see below), these services remain limited, with restricted operating hours, low presentation standards, little locally-made programming and much airtime filled with poorly-made local advertisements and relays of foreign satellite services such as Al-Jazeera. As a result, many Somalis use satellite dishes to watch foreign Arabic or English channels.

There are said to be more than 200 Somali news websites, with the "vast majority" of hits to these sites coming from Somalis living abroad. As elsewhere in the world, the operators of some traditional media outlets (radio, TV, newspapers) have added websites to their public offering. Among the sites are those run by well established private broadcasters HornAfrik (www.hornafrik.com) and Shabeelle (www.shabelle.net). The latter includes news reports in English.

The press sector remains poor compared to radio and internet media. Literacy levels are low. No newspapers have national distribution. Circulation figures for individual papers are thought to be just a few thousand at most. Many reports in the press are simply repeats of those already carried on the radio. The following papers are published regularly in Mogadishu: Ayaamaha, Codka Xoriyadda, Qaran and Xog-Ogaal.

Table 2b below shows the newspapers that operated in Somalia between 2004 and 2006, their status in terms of ownership and coverage.

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Table 2: Somali websites that were in operation between 2004 and 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Website address</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qaran</td>
<td><a href="http://www.qaranne.ws.com">www.qaranne.ws.com</a></td>
<td>Based in Mogadishu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HornAfrik</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hornafrik.com">www.hornafrik.com</a></td>
<td>Run by HornAfrik Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabeelle</td>
<td><a href="http://www.shabelle.net">www.shabelle.net</a></td>
<td>Run by Shabeelle Media Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AllPuntland.com</td>
<td><a href="http://www.allpuntland.com">www.allpuntland.com</a></td>
<td>Pro-TFG government led by President Abdullahi Yusuf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awdal network</td>
<td><a href="http://www.awdalnews.com">www.awdalnews.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceelbuurnet</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ceelbuurnet.com">www.ceelbuurnet.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godey news</td>
<td><a href="http://www.godeynews.com">www.godeynews.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayniile.com</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dayniile.com">www.dayniile.com</a></td>
<td>Swedish-based. Affiliated to Mogadishu faction leader Muhammad Qanyare Afrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadhwanaag news</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hadhwanaagnews.com">www.hadhwanaagnews.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiiraan</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hiiraan.com">www.hiiraan.com</a></td>
<td>Canadian-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onkod</td>
<td><a href="http://www.onkod.net">www.onkod.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puntlandpost</td>
<td><a href="http://www.puntlandpost.com">www.puntlandpost.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaranimo</td>
<td><a href="http://www.qaranimo.com">www.qaranimo.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somaaljeceel</td>
<td><a href="http://www.somaaljeceel.com">www.somaaljeceel.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waaga Cusub</td>
<td><a href="http://www.waaagacusub.com">www.waaagacusub.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somaliweyn</td>
<td><a href="http://www.somaliweyn.com">www.somaliweyn.com</a></td>
<td>Sweden-based. Promotes the irredentist concept of Greater Somalia (&quot;Somali Weyn&quot;), or a single pan-Somali state incorporating Somali-inhabited territory in Djibouti, Ethiopia (the Ogaden) and Kenya.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Size

The population of the study comprised of the 20 radio stations, 17 websites, 4 newspapers, and 7 television stations, which are active media outlets in Somalia. Through purposive sampling, the study analyzed at least a third of the media houses, together with international media like the AP, AFP and Al-Jazeera.

Data Analysis Procedures

The study looked at how war journalism reported the conflict and how it could have been understood differently – and more accurately – through the lens of peace journalism using the tools of conflict analysis.

Peace/War journalism classification

Using Table 1 above by Lynch and McGoldrick, (2005), transcripts of reports were used to classify the local and international media operating in Somalia according to their reporting style, whether their reporting on the Somali conflict was peace journalism or war journalism. This classification allowed for the assessment and conclusion on whether the media in Somalia through their reporting or failure to report escalated or contributed to the resolution of the Somali conflict.
Peace journalism qualities of the media

The accuracy of reports was assessed against reality to determine how much and for what reasons the media houses spun their reports. The context provided in reports was also assessed to make stories clearer. The most important question was whether the reports distinguish between conflict and violence, identify all parties to the conflict and search for root causes of conflict in an attempt to contextualize the story, hence the conflict.

Does the reporting give space for alternatives to war and violent interventions? Another issue is whether reporters and editors demonstrate a level of critical self-awareness - do journalists take responsibility for their reporting?

Third party role

To analyse the reports using this tool, the study assessed whether the said media houses played the third party’s role by stimulating mutual positive motivation to reduce conflict.

The three structural dimensions

Using the three dimensions through which peace journalism can mitigate tensions and exert favourable influence on the conflict, data collected from the secondary sources helped establish the initial state of incongruent interests which galvanized the parties to confrontation, identified instances of stigma, prejudice, labelling, demonizing and de-legitimizing processes each side was subjected to and identified how this mutual practice of disparagement and vilification led to the conflict and made it worse. The research assessed how media abated or endeavoured to reduce stigma, prejudice, labelling, demonizing and de-legitimizing processes each side confers on the other.
The study sought to find answers to the questions: How did the media contribute to the mutual psychological and subjective practice of disparagement and vilification – the crux of conflict and a major source of its worsening and stimuli for escalation? How did the media report the behaviour of the parties and their reaction to the situation they are in and the attitude they developed towards the other?
CHAPTER TWO

THE MEDIA AND THE SOMALI CONFLICT

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to examine the media developments during the period under study against the Somali conflict. It attempts to provide the context in which these media developments as the basis for understanding and putting the role of the media in the conflict into perspective.

Consequently the chapter revisits the genesis of the Somali conflict with a special emphasis on the rise and falls of the Islamic Courts, the main development during the period under study. An understanding of this background context of Somalia provides a basis for further understanding and place the contribution of the media in the conflict into perspective.

Genesis of the Somali Conflict

The Republic of Somalia gained independence after the unity of the former British Somaliland and Italian Somalia in 1960. Throughout the 1960s, Somalia remained politically stable and democratic, being one of the few African countries to effect peaceful civilian regime change at the time. Scholars linked Somalia’s political stability during the 1960s to the common Somali culture, language and religion. However, General Mohammed Siyad Barre led a bloodless military coup against the civilian regime in 1969.

Joshua D. Olewe Nyunya, Lessons Learnt from the IGAD-led 14th Somali Peace Process, paper commissioned by the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Secretariat, Djibouti, May 2007. p.9
The military coup changed Somalia's political landscape as the installation of military rule was accompanied by the banning of political parties, suspension of the constitution, and abolition of the National Assembly. The 22 years of the Siyad Barre regime (1969-1991) was characterised by increased authoritarianism, clanism, nepotism, patronage, high-level corruption, general misrule, and imbalanced development concentrated in the capital, Mogadishu.80

A fledgling independent press in the 1960s came to an end with the authoritarian rule (1969-91) of President Siad Barre. During his administration Somalia's indigenous media was extremely limited. There were just two radio stations - one in the capital Mogadishu, the other in the northern city of Hargeisa (capital of the current Somaliland), a single daily newspaper, Xiddigta Oktobaar, and (from 1983) a lone TV channel transmitting only to Mogadishu. All of these operated under strict government control. Most of the news they carried was supplied by the Information Ministry's press service SONNA (Somali National News Agency). As a result, many looked abroad for information, finding it in Somali-language shortwave radio broadcasts.

Following an armed uprising in Mogadishu in December 1990, the country became ungovernable and Siyad Barre lost control of central authority and left Mogadishu in January 1991 as forces loyal to the Hawiye-based United Somali Congress (USC) captured Mogadishu and started fighting for power among its factions.81 Despite Siyad Barre's departure, Somalia became increasingly engulfed in a confused civil war.

The complete collapse of all state authority and institutions, following Siad Barre's downfall in January 1991, and their replacement in most of the country by warlords, was reflected in the media. In 1993-94, the US - and then the UN - ran its own "hearts and minds" station - Radio Rajo (later Radio Manta) - in an attempt to undermine the media influence of hostile militias.

The period from the early 1990s to around 2001-02 was the heyday for these warlord-controlled shortwave radio stations. Faction leaders opened shortwave stations elsewhere in the country, including in regional centres such as Baydhabo (Baidoa), Gaalkacyo (Gaalkacyo/Galcaio) and Kismaayo (Kismaayo/Kismayu), though their operations (like those in Mogadishu) were often erratic and unprofessional. Since then, they have been eclipsed by a new breed of more independent FM radios.

During the period they controlled parts of Somalia, the warlords turned the country into a free-for-all economy where various sectors thrived at their whims. The media sector, recovering from the days of heavy control under Siyad Barre's dictatorship, found a favourable environment to thrive in this new order. The launch in 1999 and 2000 of two new stations in Mogadishu - Radio HornAfrik and Radio Banaadir (Banaadir) respectively - marked a decisive fresh departure for the Somali media. This was the appearance of new FM radios much less closely linked to warlords than previous stations. These new stations have increasingly styled themselves as independent rather than affiliated to a particular faction or clan. They have to some extent also set new standards of professionalism in operations and programming.
The mushrooming of radio stations and newspapers in Somalia and the establishment of one web site after another by Somalis in the Diaspora led to a situation where each area under a warlord’s control had its own radio that was necessarily favourable to the warlord to whom it owed its survival. Union of Islamic Courts came to the scene in the context of media growth unchecked by a central authority. The newcomers also necessarily had their own media favourable to them since it was engaged in fighting the warlords. Owning or controlling the media was therefore necessary for swaying not only popular support but also the international community.

In spite of this, diverse and more professional media outlets have emerged in recent years - in particular, FM radio stations with no explicit factional links. The past decade and a half has been marked by change and some improvement, with recent years seeing the emergence of a more professional and diverse domestic media. The most significant development has been the growth in the last seven years of FM radio stations not explicitly linked to a specific clan, faction or warlord. Clan affiliations, however, remain the basis of Somali society, and therefore provide the background to its media.

The disintegration of Somalia, which in late 20th and early 21st centuries has been a leading example of a "failed state", continues to be reflected in its media, which is undeveloped, often fragmented and partisan. Radio and television stations, newspapers, their staff, and journalists working for the local and foreign media continue to work in a difficult environment lacking legal regulation or protection to international standards, and often at the whim of warlords and militia.
The Rise and fall of the Islamic Courts

By mid 2006, differences among the ruling elite had created a vacuum in Somalia and gave rise to the Union of Islamic Courts. Though the TFG finally moved to Baidoa, the Union of Islamic Courts had rapidly and with great ease took control of most of the country, especially the capital Mogadishu, which they did in June 2006, after months of fighting between Mogadishu's U.S.-backed militia leaders and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). The UIC took control and appointed a hard-line Islamic leader to head its new legislature.82

Despite international recognition and help, the TFG did not enjoy broad support or legitimacy within Somalia. For instance, Radio Mogadishu, the mouthpiece of the transitional government, described itself as the "Voice of the Republic of Somalia". Despite being the government radio, it only had an audience limited to the Mogadishu area.

The Union of Islamic Courts, which enjoyed that support, was viewed as a danger to its neighbours because of its irredentist views, and support for international terrorist elements and cross-border Ethiopian rebel groups. In addition, it threatened to unseat the internationally recognized TFG through insurgencies.

This contrast between the TFG and the UIC was reflected in the media during the period under study as both made attempts to control or manipulate the media, including the arrest of journalists.

The Union Islamic Courts (UIC) authorities in September 2006 arrested Radio Simba journalist, Osman Adan Areys for interviewing residents critical to UIC-imposed restrictions. The UIC also shut down East Africa (Mogadishu) and HornAfrik (Kismaayo) radio stations. The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, after driving out the UIC with the help of Ethiopia, shut down FM Radio Warsan and arrested numerous journalists attempting to report on Ethiopian troops in Baidoa, its temporary headquarters. It also closed the radio stations for Shabeelle Radio, Horn Afrik, IQK, which reportedly had ties with the pro-UIC Ayr clan, and the television station Al-Jazeera in Mogadishu.

Over the years Radio Mogadishu, which the Transitional National Government established the station in August 2001 has been controlled by a number of quite different, and rival, which have broadcast using the same name although it has not operated continuously since then. In December 2006, before the TFG recaptured Mogadishu, it launched a station, Radio Bay, Voice of the Republic of Somalia, at its base in Baydhabo (Baidoa, capital of Bay region), roughly half-way between Mogadishu and the Ethiopian border. was taken over by the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) - and renamed "Voice of the Somali People" - following their capture of Mogadishu in mid-2006, it reverted to TFG control in late December 2006 after UIC forces fled the city.
After the UIC swept to control much of southern Somalia in mid-2006, media freedom watchdogs expressed fears that the independence of radio stations and other media outlets was under threat. Such fears followed a spate of reports of Islamists acting to close or control media outlets of which they disapproved. One case which received considerable publicity in the West - not least because it appeared to echo events in Taliban-era Afghanistan - was that of Radio Jowhar (a community station in the town of the same name near Mogadishu) which was temporarily closed by Islamist forces in September 2006 and forced to stop playing love songs and other "immoral" music.

Among other incidents were the temporary closure by the UIC of Radio HornAfrik's relay in Kismaayo in late September 2006; the closure by the UIC of East Africa Radio in Mogadishu in October; and the detention by UIC soldiers of two officials of the National Union of Somali Journalists in December. The ICU also shut down East Africa (Mogadishu) radio station.86

The transitional government was also accused of infringing media freedom. An independent commercial station in Baidoa, Radio Warsan (formerly known as Radio Democratic Media Concern, DMC), was forcibly closed by the transitional government on 14 December 2006. RSF said Radio Warsan had received threats after airing news reports that displeased the government. It noted that the closure in December followed an incident in September 2006 when Radio Warsan had been forced off the air for over a week after seven of its journalists were briefly detained.87 Further government action against Radio Warsan was reported in January 2007.

87 RSF press release 15 Dec 06
The Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists later said that Warsan had been shut down since 7 January. On 15 January 2007, the TFG's national security agency ordered three Mogadishu radio stations (HornAfrik, Shabeelle and Holy Koran) to suspend broadcasts immediately, and for the local office of Al-Jazeera TV also to cease operations. The closure notice gave no reason for the move. A government spokesman later said it had been taken because the stations had been “instigating violence” with “unacceptable” news coverage.

Mohamed Amin, deputy director of Shabeelle Media Network, was cited as saying that the stations had been warned to stop airing "sensitive reports". Shabeelle itself reported, however, that a meeting between the media outlets and TFG security officials had not set any formal conditions for the stations to return to the air. The government, however, later made its position clear. The TFG's Radio Mogadishu on 22 January reported that an Information Ministry spokesman had once again warned the independent media against carrying reports from “unreliable sources” that could “mislead the public”. The government “would no longer tolerate any attempt to mislead the public by spreading rumours, particularly on political and security issues.”

A further statement by the ministry spokesman four days later warned the independent media against publishing reports without “proper sources”, and not to misquote sources. “The spokesman said that the days when every media house could report whatever it wanted to and nobody would question it are over”.

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88 IFJ press release 25 Jan 07
89 French news agency AFP news agency 15 Jan 07
89 Somali NetRadio website 16 Jan 07
90 Shabeelle Media Network website 16 Jan 07
91 Radio Mogadishu news report on 26 January 2007
"Since HornAfrik and Shabeelle returned to the air on 16 January, they appear to be engaging in self-censorship, presumably as a concession to the TFG. Phone-in programmes - which are considered to have been a major bone of contention for the TFG - have noticeably toned down their discussions. Callers are warned to avoid sensitive subjects such as the presence of Ethiopian forces in the country. In news bulletins, the radios give less emphasis to reports of security operations and more to coverage of support for reconciliation and disarmament."\(^93\)

However, recent and present studies as well as efforts to resolve the conflict have paid little attention if any to this dimension of the conflict, leading to inadequate appreciation of its complexity and an intractable conflict resolution process. For instance, on 1 July 2006, a Web-posted audio message purportedly recorded by Osama bin Laden urged Somalis to build an Islamic state in the country, and warned all nations that his Al Qaeda network would fight against them if they intervened there.\(^94\) External powers such as Ethiopia and Eritrea were accused of propaganda to drum up domestic support for the conflict.

Somalia's alleged links with Al-Qa'idah have frequently been mentioned since the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in neighbouring Kenya and Tanzania. Later, accusations of Al-Qa'idah links were made, particularly by the USA and Ethiopia, against the Somali group Al-Ittihad al-Islami, said to be supported by the Islamist government of Sudan. When the Puntland authorities closed local independent broadcaster SBC in 2002 they alleged that its owner was a prominent member of Al-Ittihad and that the station was airing "hate" broadcasts.

\(^{93}\) BBC Monitoring Africa 2007
\(^{94}\) USA Today, Bin Laden releases Web message on Iraq, Somalia, 1 July 2006
At the same time a similar accusation was made against the independent Puntland newspaper Riyaaq, which was described by the authorities as “the official mouthpiece of Al-Ittihad in Puntland”.95

During the rise and fall of the Union of Islamic Courts, there were significant assertions and accusations of misinformation and propaganda tactics, classed as forms of information warfare, by various parties to shape the causes and course of the conflict. These assertions and accusations led to the ban slapped twice between March and June 2007 on a number of radios in Mogadishu and Shabeelle by the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia after it managed to regain control of Somalia with the help of Ethiopian troops.

The tactics include falsification of the number of forces involved, exaggeration or under-statement of the casualties inflicted or prisoners taken, influence or control of media outlets, and other informational means and media to sway popular support and international opinion. Low literacy rates in Somalia, estimated between 17% and 19%, also greatly impacted the effect of propaganda within the country.96

Another tactic used was media manipulation, including the arrest of journalists, such as the September arrest of Radio Simba journalist, Osman Adan Areys, by the Islamic Courts authorities. He was released without charge but the National Union of Somali Journalists said his arrest was linked to interviews, in which local residents criticized ICU-imposed restrictions. Some owners of Mogadishu-based media outlets were allies of the UIC administration of the second half of 2006. One of these was the former director of Holy Koran Radio, Shaykh Dahir Mahmud Gele, who vanished at the same time as other Islamic leaders at the end of 2006.

95 AllPuntland.com website 22 May 02
96 Afrol News web site, Puntland (Somalia) to introduce free primary schools, 6 April 2006 Retrieved 15 July 2007 from http://www.afrol.com/articles/16083
In reference to the UN Security Council resolution to support IGASOM, a Kenyan diplomat told the Washington Post in December 2006: “Unfortunately, the UN resolution was sponsored by the United States, and it will be used by the Courts as a propaganda tool. But at least there's a window.” Muslims were also considered to believe US claims of Al Qaeda activity was part of a propaganda campaign waged by Washington.

Role of Foreign Media in the Somali Conflict

All of Somalia’s immediate neighbours have ethnic Somali communities and Somali-language media. Most Djiboutians speak Somali and so this language is widely used in the output of state-owned Radio-TV Djibouti (RTD). RTD’s medium wave and shortwave signals are audible in Somalia. With a very significant Somali population in the southeast of Ethiopia (the Ogaden region), state-owned Radio Ethiopia uses Somali in its domestic broadcasts, which are also audible in Somalia.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) offers Somali programming in its regional radio service beamed to the northeast of the country. A private Somali-language station, Star FM, is on the air (97.0 FM) in Garissa and Wajir, the two largest towns in Somali-speaking northeast Kenya. Iqra FM, an Islamic radio using Somali and other languages, is on the air (95.1 FM) in the capital, Nairobi, where there is a sizeable Somali community. This community, centred on the suburb of Eastleigh, also forms a market for newspapers published in Mogadishu. Radio Rahma, an Islamic station (91.5 FM) in the port city of Mombasa, has included Somali-language programming (including news) in its output.

BBC Somali service is on air for a total of 2.5 hours on several shortwave frequencies. It also heard via FM relays in Mogadishu (91.1 FM) and Hargeysa (89.0). It is also relayed on FM stations in Djibouti and Kenya. Its website - www.bbcsomali.com - is a valuable media resource in itself, providing textual news reports and an audio archive. The BBC says it is one of its most successful non-English-language sites. Many other Somali news websites provide links to bbcsomali.com. The BBC Somali service marked its 50th anniversary in 2007.

The Voice of America, VOA's new radio service in Somali was re-launched on 12 February 2007. It broadcasts daily on shortwave and medium wave (AM), on 88.8 FM in Mogadishu, and online (www.voanews.com). VOA last broadcast in Somali between 1992 and 1994 when US peacekeepers were deployed in Somalia. Reacting to the launch of the new VOA Somali service, the pro-Islamist website KismaayoNews said on 8 February that the Voice of America was “a tool for disseminating propaganda against perceived enemies” and “a means of promoting US foreign policy based on pure colonialism.”

In addition to the BBC and VOA, other shortwave radio stations already broadcasting in Somali include the external services of Egypt, Italy (RAI) and Saudi Arabia. The Voice of Russia (formerly Radio Moscow) closed its Somali service in the 1990s.

The state radio of Eritrea, which supported the anti-Ethiopian UIC in 2006, gives limited airtime (two 30-minute slots a week) on one of its shortwave transmitter to a programme called “Voice of the Somali People.” This can be seen in the context of various “radio wars” that have been conducted by Eritrea and Ethiopia in recent years.
Ethiopia and Eritrea were accused of propaganda to drum up domestic support for the conflict. As Ethiopian and TFG troops marched to Mogadishu, it was common for Eritrean news agencies web sites "talking dirt" about Ethiopia, Israel, America and Great Britain. Eritrea even claims the assertions it has troops involved in Somalia is part of a disinformation campaign being waged against it by Ethiopia.  

Role of New Media in the Somali Conflict

Although Somalia was the last African country to be formally connected to the internet, the huge Somali Diaspora in the West, the Gulf States and elsewhere has driven the development of a rich Somali internet presence. A large variety of Somali chat rooms and news websites have now been operating for a number of years.

In November 2001, following the 9/11 attacks, the US authorities imposed an electronic quarantine on Somalia, fearing that it offered a base for Al-Qa'idah operations. The move was mainly aimed at the thriving electronic money-transfer business that had developed in Somalia (in particular the Al-Barakat money-transfer company) but it also disrupted Somali internet news media until 2002.

Since then, the lack of an effective national government has meant that the local internet and telecoms industries have been unregulated - and have thrived as a result. A number of mobile phone operators and internet service providers (ISPs) have entered the market. With no taxes or franchise fees to pay, connection and call charges are low. Mogadishu's internet cafes boast some of the lowest rates in Africa.

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There are said to be more than 200 Somali news websites, with the "vast majority" of hits to these sites coming from Somalis living abroad (African Media Development Initiative Research Project 2006). As elsewhere in the world, the operators of some traditional media outlets (radio, TV, newspapers) have added websites to their public offering. Among the sites are those run by well established private broadcasters HornAfrik (www.hornafrik.com) and Shabeelle (www.shabelle.net). The latter includes news reports in English.

Following the defeat in December 2006 and January 2007 of militia of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), Somali Islamists no longer control any broadcast outlets. The Islamists, however, continue to maintain an active presence on the internet. The most active Islamist website recently has been Qaadisiya (www.qaadisiya.com). Although its operations appeared to be somewhat disrupted in the last few days of December 2006 and the very start of January 2007 (following the UIC retreat from Mogadishu on 28 December) this site has been active since then.

In addition to Qaadisiya, the Islamists have used other sites in the past including www.xornino.com and www.midowgamaxkamadaha.com. The latter, which had been the UIC's official website, is currently inaccessible. Xornino.com has been inaccessible for a longer period. Other sites observed recently with pro-Islamist news reports include Goobjoog (www.goobjoog.net), Halgan (www.halgan.net), Aayaha (www.aayaha.com) and KismaayoNews (www.kismaayonews.com).

Since mid-January 2007, the Islamists have been using the name "People's Resistance Movement in the Land of the Migrations", which refers to the historical migrations of the Somali people; in Arabic the organization refers to the Land of the Two Migrations.
Conclusion

This chapter has examined the media environment in Somalia between 2004 and 2006 as well as the developments during the same period. The chapter shows that during that period many listeners tuned to Somali-language international media. The Somali Diaspora in the West and the Gulf state drove the development of a rich Somali internet presence.

The chapter has recounted the challenges of media reporting in the face of the Union of Islamic Courts and the opposing force of the Transitional Federal Government. It has further expounded the influence of the international media as well as the new media in the course and the escalation of the Somali crisis. During the period they controlled parts of Somalia, the warlords turned the country into a free-for-all economy where various sectors thrived at their whims. This led to a situation where each area under a warlord’s control had its own radio that was necessarily favourable to the warlord to whom it owed its survival. Developments in the media in Somalia during this period rend credence to arguments by scholars that hold various views on media impact on conflict - positive and negative media impact view, the sceptical view, as well as the CCN and Reverse CNN effects.

Finally, the chapter shows that the media scene was characterized by misinformation and propaganda tactics, categorized as forms of information warfare by various belligerent parties to shape the causes and course of the conflict. The next chapter presents a comparative analysis of war and peace journalism in reporting the conflict during the rise and fall of the Islamic Courts.
CHAPTER THREE

WAR AND PEACE JOURNALISM IN THE SOMALI CONFLICT

Introduction

This chapter examines the reporting style of both local and international media from the standpoint of the peace journalism and war journalism dichotomy. The main variables examined included: peace/conflict orientation versus war/violence orientation; truth orientation versus propaganda orientation; people orientation versus elite orientation, and; solution orientation versus victory orientation. Based on these orientations, the media content were classified into either peace journalism or war journalism.

Peace/Conflict Orientation versus War/Violence Orientation

The media content was examined on the basis of whether the reports: explore conflict formation (x parties, y goals, z issues); generally a “win, win”-oriented; making conflict transparent; giving voice to all parties (empathy, understanding); see conflict/war as a problem and focus on creativity; humanizes all sides; was proactive (attempts to prevent violence/war before it occurs), and; focus on invisible effects of violence. These were compared to war/violence orientation which focuses on: conflict arena (2 parties, 1 goal-win) war; general zero-sum orientation; making wars opaque/secret; see “them” as the problem and focus on who prevails; dehumanization of “them”; waiting for violence before reporting, and focus only on visible effects (people killed, wounded and material damage). The analysis is presented in Fig. 4.1 below:
Fig. 4.1 above shows that 77% of the media content reported on the Somali conflict was war/violence orientated whereas 23% was peace/conflict orientated. This is evidenced in especially the Associated Press which focused on the conflict arena and reported the news using such racy headlines as “War stalks Somalia's city of death.” In another instance, Radio Shabeelle reported fighting in central region stating; “the fighting is between two rival sub-clans in the Mudug and Galgaduud. The number of casualties in this fighting is not known and the two sides used different kinds of weapons, including battle wagons.” Such are a few of the many media reporting with focus directed towards visible effects of violence. Therefore, the media practiced war journalism rather than peace journalism.
Truth Orientation versus Propaganda Orientation

The media content was classified in terms of whether it exposes untruths on all sides and uncovers all or it only exposes “their” untruths and by extension, helps “our truth”.

![Pie chart showing 23% for Truth orientated and 77% for Propaganda orientated journalism.]

Fig. 4.2: Comparison of Truth Orientated versus Propaganda Orientated Journalism

Based on the foregoing dichotomy, Fig. 4.2 shows that 77% of the media was propaganda orientated whereas only 23% was truth orientated. Therefore, the media reports were largely propaganda orientated. Numerous examples abound in the media reports found across all the media channels. In one instance, Somali Puntlandpost website reported Somali’s foreign minister as claiming that “hundreds” of foreign troops were in the country. Elsewhere, the Associated Press quoted an official of the Somali government that “two key Cabinet ministers are planning to destabilize the government by attacking the southern town of Jowhar, where Somalia's administration has temporarily set up operations because Mogadishu is considered unsafe”. However, these allegations were dismissed as baseless by another official.
People Orientation versus Elite Orientation

Under this dichotomy, the media content was examined as to whether it: focused on suffering all over – on women, aged, children; gave name to all evil doers and focused on people peace-makers, as compared to elite orientation which focuses on “our” suffering: able-bodied elite males being the mouthpiece to cover up lies; give name to “their” evil doers and/or focus on elite peace-makers.

![Figure 4.3: Comparison of peace orientated and elite orientated journalism](image)

As shown in Fig. 4.3 above, 82% of the media content examined was people orientated whereas 18% was elite orientated. For instance, amidst the conflict, Somali Radio HornAfrik, Mogadishu, in Somali, adopting a people orientated journalism, had in their headlines that government officials, Islamists agree talks must continue. This could also be seen in Shabeelle Media Network website which highlighted children dying in the south due to lack of drugs and health facilities.
The website reported an International Contact Group in a statement where the group agreed to work within the framework of the transitional government "to address the humanitarian needs of the Somali people, establish effective governance and stability and address the international community's concern regarding terrorism."

**Solution Orientation versus Victory Orientation**

Under solution orientated journalism, the media highlight peace initiatives (also to prevent more war), focus on structure, culture and the peaceful society and reports resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation. Victory orientated journalism in contrast conceals peace initiative (before victory is at hand), focus on treaties, institution and the controlled society and reports participants leaving for another war or return if the old flares up again.

![Fig. 4.4: Comparison of Solution-Oriented and Victory-Oriented Journalism](image)

Fig. 4.4 above shows that 89% of the media reports were solution-oriented whereas 11% were victory-oriented. Therefore, majority of the media content focused on the solution to conflict than victory of the protagonists.
This is shown in reports such as by Somali Puntlandpost website in Somali, which reported a delegation leaving for Sudan talks. The Shabeelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somali also had such headlines as “MPs, Islamists form committees to continue mediation efforts”. Such highlighting of peace initiatives are indicators of solution-oriented media reporting.

**Ranking of Peace Journalism Content**

Based on the different orientation under peace journalism, the study attempted to rank the aspects in regards to their frequencies in the media reports in order to establish the aspects of peace that the media focused on.

![Fig. 4.5: Ranking of the Different Orientations of Peace Journalism](image.png)

Fig. 4.5: Ranking of the Different Orientations of Peace Journalism
According to Fig. 4.5, the media content focused more on solution-oriented report (50%) followed by peace/conflict orientation (35%) and lastly, people orientation (9%) and truth orientation (6%) respectively. Therefore, looking at the elements of each orientation, the media largely highlighted peace initiatives and focused on structure, culture and the peaceful society. One case example, Shabeelle Media Network website based in Mogadishu, had this for content:

The minister of state for Foreign [and Commonwealth] Office in charge of Africa, Lord David Triesman, has welcomed the agreement between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia [TFG] and the Union of Islamic Courts [UIC] in Sudan. Talking of the accord, Triesman said the problems facing Somalia can only be solved through dialogue and that military action cannot solve the country's problems. He hailed the Arab League states that hosted the talks held in Khartoum and urged the AU, the Arab League and IGAD [inter-Governmental Authority on Development] to continue with the talks and support any efforts to return peace to Somalia. "We are very concerned about the level of problems currently in Somalia" said Triesman and urged the rival sides to reach a solution and not to take any military step. He said the international community, the UN and Britain will continue with their pledges to support the TFG saying Somalia has an opportunity for peace.

Ranking of War Journalism Content

The study identified the main aspects of war journalism that received the largest media attention. The characteristics of war journalism which was examined are ranked in order of their frequency as shown in Fig. 4.6 below.
Fig. 4.6: Ranking of the Different Orientations of War Journalism

Fig. 4.6 above shows that 81% of the media content was war/violence orientated, followed by propaganda orientation with 13% and to a much lesser extent, victory orientated (4%) and elite orientated (1%) respectively. Therefore, majority of the war journalism was violence orientated, especially with greater focus on conflict arena and the visible effects of violence. One of the most credible examples is found in a report published by the Associated Press reporting an attack which involved pickup trucks — known as "technicals" — mounted with heavy machine guns and which took place in Galinsoor, 760 kilometres north of Mogadishu and 60 kilometres south of the Puntland border. This report had the hallmarks of war/violence orientation which focuses on conflict arena; general zero-sum orientation; making wars opaque/secret; see “them” as the problem and focus on visible effects (people killed, wounded and material damage) and on who prevails.
Peace Journalism and War Journalism in Local Media Compared

The study attempted to compare the peace/war journalism dichotomy as propagated by the different local media in order to establish which media channels where they were most prevalent.

Fig. 4.7: Comparison of War Journalism and Peace Journalism in the Local Media

Fig. 4.6 above shows that local newspapers had the highest disparity between peace journalism and war journalism where 80% of the newspaper content was predominantly war orientated whereas 20% was peace/conflict orientated. This was followed by Somali websites with 61% propagating war journalism in contrast to 39% focus on peace reports, and lastly; the local radio with the least disparity with 57% for war journalism 43% for peace journalism. Therefore, majority of the war/violence reports emanated from the local newspapers.
Peace Journalism and War Journalism in International Media Compared

The international media revealed in the examination of reporting of the Somali conflict included the Associated Free Press (AFP), the Associated Press (AP), external websites and other external media like Kenya Television Network (KTN), Radio Ethiopia and Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea among others. Their content was compared in order to expose their extent of war journalism reporting in contrast to peace journalism reporting.

Fig. 4.8 Peace Journalism and War Journalism in International Media Compared

Fig. 4.7 above shows that AFP had the highest war journalism content with 63% in contrast to 37% for peace journalism, followed by AP with 62% war journalism reports compared to 38% peace journalism whereas external website content had the least disparity with 58% war journalism and 42% peace journalism.

However, other external media on the other hand reported higher peace journalism content, albeit with 51% in contrast to 49% war journalism. Therefore, AFP led the park with more war journalism reports.
Peace Journalism and War Journalism across All Media Compared

In the wake of criticism of African media for their coverage of situations of conflict and conciliation, the research endeavoured to examine the dichotomy of peace and war journalism of media content reported in the Somali conflict by comparing local media to international media and other external media. The findings are shown in Fig. 4.8 below.

![Figure 4.8: Comparison of peace journalism and war journalism across all media.](image)

Fig. 4.9: Comparison of peace journalism and war journalism across all media.

Fig. 4.8 above shows that the international media that reports the conflict in Somalia has the highest war journalism content with 62% in contrast to peace journalism with 38%; followed by local media with 59% war journalism and 41% peace journalism and lastly, other external (regional/non-intercontinental) media with a relatively fair balance of 51% peace journalism in contrast to 49% war journalism.
Therefore, international media leads with the highest disparity between peace journalism and war journalism. It is also important to note here that a number of the local media channels rebroadcast international media news such as Al Jazeera, the CCN and the Associated Press.

**Summary Analysis of Peace Journalism and War Journalism**

In overall, the study attempted to compare peace journalism and war journalism based on the aggregates of all the media reports examined. The findings are shown in Fig. 4.9 below.

![Comparison of Peace Journalism and War Journalism in the Somali Conflict](image)

**Fig. 4.10 Comparison of Peace Journalism and War Journalism in the Somali Conflict**

Fig. 4.9 above shows that 60% of all the media content reported in the coverage of the conflict in Somalia was war journalism whereas 40% was peace journalism. Therefore, majority of the media, whether local or international, propagated war journalism reports.
Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the reporting style of both local and international media from the standpoint of the peace journalism and war journalism dichotomy using the following key variables examined included: peace/conflict orientation versus war/violence orientation; truth orientation versus propaganda orientation; people orientation versus elite orientation, and; solution orientation versus victory orientation.

The chapter demonstrates the reporting styles of both local and international media from the stand points of peace journalism and war journalism dichotomy revealed that majority of the media reporting were war/violence and propaganda-oriented. The majority of the war/violence reports on the Somali conflict emanated from the local newspapers. However, international media led with the highest disparity between peace journalism and war journalism. In general, majority of the media, whether local or international, propagated war journalism than peace journalism. These media channels mostly focused on the physical effects of violence and the conflict arena. In the next chapter, conclusions of the study are drawn based on the analysis of the study findings.
CHAPTER FOUR
IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CONFLICT: INSIGHT FROM THE SOMALI EXPERIENCE

Introduction

This study attempted to understand the causes of escalation of the Somali conflict and failure of settlement deals from a standpoint of the influence of the media. It proceeded to look at the media in conflict through a critical analysis of the media in general, and the case of Somalia during the rise and fall of the Union of Islamic Courts between 2004 and 2006 in particular. The study focused on the dimension of the role the media played in escalating the Somali conflict and what role they can play in the current efforts to resolve conflict. It also looked at how media coverage influenced the nature of intervention by the international community and the behaviour of various actors locally and internationally.

The study began from the premise that during the rise and fall of the Islamic Courts, the media in Somalia contributed more to the conflict than to its resolution. Literature shows evidence of media contribution in conflict, for instance, in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union’s control. This is argued out in several views; among them are positive and negative media impact view, the sceptical view, the CCN and Reverse CNN effects. Some of the literature also showed that although the media played a role in escalating conflict they have similarly important role to play in mitigating conflict and cannot play third party roles in conflicts.
The study revealed four important strands in the relationship between media and conflict, particularly in the question of whether media escalates or mitigates conflict. These strands are: the majority of the media practice war journalism; the media is a double-edged sword that can be used to relay both constructive and destructive messages during conflict; the power of the media goes as far as authorities, legitimate or otherwise, permit; and media news consists of events and not processes, resulting in a situation when news reports contain events that seem to have no context.

**Media and War Journalism**

The majority of the media practice war journalism. The styles of both local and international media from the stand points of peace journalism and war journalism dichotomy revealed that majority of the media reporting were war/violence and propaganda-oriented. The majority of the war/violence reports on the Somali conflict emanated from the local newspapers. However, international media led with the highest disparity between peace journalism and war journalism. In general, majority of the media, whether local or international, propagated war journalism than peace journalism. These media channels mostly focused on the physical effects of violence and the conflict arena. In the next chapter, conclusions of the study are drawn based on the analysis of the study findings.

A case in point was Radio Shabeelle which reported fighting in the central region stating; “the fighting is between two rival sub-clans in the Mudug and Galgaduud. The number of casualties in this fighting is not known and the two sides used different kinds of weapons, including battle wagons.”
Elsewhere, the Associated Press quoted an official of the Somali government that "two key cabinet ministers are planning to destabilize the government by attacking the southern town of Jowhar, where Somalia's administration has temporarily set up operations because Mogadishu is considered unsafe". However, these allegations were dismissed as baseless by another official.

The findings showed that the international media that reported the conflict in Somalia had the highest war journalism content in contrast to peace journalism, followed by local media and lastly, other external (regional/non-intercontinental) media. It is also important to note here that a number of the local media channels rebroadcast international media news such as Al Jazeera, the CCN and the Associated Press.

Both the local and international media propagated war journalism than they did peace journalism. Violence is given more coverage than peaceful overtures. Wild guesses and categorical conclusions permeate much of the reporting about conflicts. All told, there is a dangerous trend in the offing - one that consciously or inadvertently exalts violence while emboldening its perpetrators.

As the comparative analysis of media reporting in the case study on the Somali conflict demonstrates, local media and the international media (particularly the Associated Press and the Associated Free Press) equally champion war reporting over peace reporting. One of the reasons why their coverage can be dangerous has to do with the criteria used by these media giants in determining what developments they consider to be newsworthy or not. A look at the trends in the way the major media outlets analyzed cover violence would confirm one's fear that journalism has degenerated into a an exhibition of morbidity and chaos.
Newsworthiness has taken on a strange new connotation as something that only focuses on visible effects of violence than the invisible effects. Indeed, the empirical results reveal a disturbing gravitation towards war/violence orientation as opposed to peace/conflict orientation.

In the context of the Somali conflict, the obsession of these media houses – whether local or international - with violence and the extensive coverage it is accorded are exerting a destructive pressure on the prospects of lasting peace and stability in the war-torn nation. Indeed, propaganda orientation seems to prevail in the media coverage of the Somali conflict at the expense of the truth. As for calculating casualty figures, or the number of internally displaced people, one can only wonder where the numbers come from.

The standard format among the great majority of the media houses is the reference to hundreds or thousands of dead and wounded. Exposing the peace versus war journalism dichotomy, the empirical evidence of this research suggests that the international media are the first culprits in propagating violence orientated reports. This is a slap in the face of critics who fault African journalism and local media and by extension, cements the conspiracy theory of the western media to portray the continent as a lost cause. This sad media connivance at abetting violence still continues with all positive developments and indications of national reconciliation deliberately insulated from any significant attention or coverage.

There is indeed some truth to the blame on African media, as shown in the empirical results of the Somali media content. However, to highlight this African media handicap per se as warranting such a blanket condemnation can only be said to be naïve at best, for it conveniently de-highlights the media development occasioned by the conflict arena and the
role that the international media themselves play in proxy to the news aired by the Somali media and other African media in general.

While at face value, both the local and international media appears, positively so, replete with people orientated and solution orientated reports with relatively equal measure, all of this is as much the result of the media's hyperbolic reporting as it could have some grains to it. Obviously, there is hardly any interest in assisting the prospect of peace for Somalis as the overall empirical aggregates of peace journalism and war journalism confirms. Even when there appears to be a merely casual interest in the topic, it is more often than not directed at highlighting violence that had for the better part of fifteen years been the mundane realities of Somalia.

**Media: A Double-Edged Sword**

The media is a double-edged sword that can be used to relay both constructive and destructive messages during conflict. Media allows information to be relayed quickly in times of crisis. For instance, during negotiations to end conflicts, the news media allow leaders of belligerent parties to communicate with their constituents. Frequently, the delegates at the negotiation will find they understand each other much better over the course of their discussions, but that understanding will not reach the larger populations they represent without a concerted communication effort. This communication effort is difficult to achieve when the two sides do not have easily accessible and transparent communication channels like the news media. If constituents are not kept informed of these new developments during the course of negotiations, they will almost certainly feel cheated when the announced final agreement falls far short of their expectations.
To achieve ratification, delegates justify the agreement by discussing it with and explaining it to their constituents throughout the entire process and the media is often used for this purpose.

In the case of Somalia there was violence going on in Mogadishu and other parts of south and central Somalia while peace talks were being held in Djibouti and Asmara, Eritrea, and indeed in other countries of the IGAD region. As evident in our analysis in Chapter 3 reports with victory-oriented content (89% of reports by international and local media houses between 2004 and 2006) were more compared reports with solution-oriented content (11% of reports in the same people). This analysis shows that the media in Somalia during the period in question concentrated more on violence in the country and accorded little coverage to the peace efforts that were ongoing during the same period.

This may be due to the belief that peace process negotiations are part of long-term conflict-resolution processes and are by their nature not dramatic and are often difficult to understand and report, especially since the proceedings are almost always closed to the media. However, this may not be an argument to justify focus on violence since journalists are, intentionally or otherwise, conflict specialists and much of journalism focuses on not only violence during the conflict but on description and analyzing the behaviour of the parties involved.

**Power of the Media**

The power of the media goes as far as authorities, legitimate or otherwise, permit. Authorities are often fully aware that media coverage can bestow status and even legitimacy both on marginal opposition groups as well as illegitimate causes.
Media coverage naturally becomes one of their planned strategies and top priorities for such illegitimate causes. The media is therefore controlled either by owners through self-censorship or through third-party control, like government legislation and rebel leadership.

For example, the United States, whose constitution guarantees freedom of the press, has arguably “the most free” media in the world and the right to free speech is expressly written into the constitution. Yet the U.S. government also exerts control over the media, particularly during times of war or crisis. Governments impose tight restrictions on journalists, including penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment and execution. Rigorous self-censorship in the media is therefore necessary for survival as journalists and editors avoid pursuing “newsworthy stories”.

In this context of control by authorities, there are numerous cases of the media being used to directly incite violence, especially in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. During the entire history of Somalia, radio and television stations, newspapers, their staff, and journalists working for the local and foreign media work in a difficult environment lacking legal regulation or protection to international standards, and often at the whim of the succession of governments, warlords and militia, which controlled and manipulated the media under their jurisdiction. For instance, the TFG and the UIC both controlled and manipulated the media by closing and banning media and houses as well as arresting journalists.

The media is therefore in such contexts used as a scapegoat for atrocities and escalating conflicts. Even in countries where the media is “free” policy makers tend to exaggerate media effects, blaming the media for failures and decry irresponsible media but fail to credit the media for rallying public support in their favour.
The media's role is pivotal in inciting violence or spreading messages of peace insofar as the powers that be want to use them as tools in political power games. Similarly, the same powers can use reaction created by media coverage to introduce policies that it already desired before the media coverage.

Therefore, when analysts talk about the policy-driving power of the media what they are referring to in actual fact is the ability news organizations to forces certain political actions which may or may not have been inspired intentionally or otherwise by people in positions of influence such as government, civil society, the corporate world, the clergy, etc.

The Somali case is a further illustration of the African media's disadvantage in reporting national issues, especially in times of conflict, due to a number of factors: lack of advanced professional training, restrictions on press freedom by authorities in power – legitimate or otherwise, and day-to-day economic and technical constraints. These factors frequently lead to over-dependence on non-African sources of expertise, technology and information. Many citizens who have access to resources therefore gain much of their news and information from external news sources in conflict situations.

The focus by Somali belligerents on controlling the media as outlined in this study exemplifies the attitude that "security" requires a complete control – indeed a stranglehold – over the media in order freeze on any information regarding the authorities, its actions and any conflicts it may be involved in, in order deny the enemy the chance to spread propaganda and incendiary misinformation, or to spread counter-information to the propaganda and misinformation spread by the authorities, to a public hungry for any information whatsoever.
The media are therefore ideal pawns for the conflicting parties, even away from the frontline, and are subject to intimidation and coercion. The media are either directly owned by the authorities or in such a precarious position that they must foster the state's goodwill to survive. This means that the media tend to reflect or support the dominant attitudes of the authorities.

**Traditional Role of the Media**

Traditionally, media news consists of events and not processes, resulting in a situation when news reports contain events that seem to have no context. If news is defined as something unusual which departs from everyday life and is quantifiable, the outbreak of war is news, but any fighting thereafter might not be. As the war continues, its newsworthiness depends on involvement of new actors and what they represent, like the involvement of irredentist and Islamist groups in the case of Somalia. Other factors that influence newsworthiness are, the number of casualties reported, access to the fighting and information about it by reporters, and what other events might take place at the same time.

Media coverage also tends to have effects that vary with the content and context of the coverage since media effects vary depending on the type of coverage and the context created by other intervening variables, such as elite consensus. Media coverage of the Somali conflict, for example, has over the years by the importance of the events on the ground. It could be argued that as much as the coverage of the period between 2004 and 2006 shows that there was a lot of focus on the violence on the ground, there are certain periods in the history of Somalia that peace was given prominence in the media coverage.
The period between 2004 and 2006 was wrought with violence because the rapid rise of the UIC and the speed with which the captured nearly the entire Somali territory caught the attention of the world the media covered it because of this interest. The regional reaction for fear of irredentism, characterized in part by the subsequent Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, and subsequent defeat of UIC also elicited global interest that then informed media. Currently there is media coverage of the fighting between the Islamist Al-Shabaab and the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, supported by the international community that has overshadowed other important parallel developments like the making of a new constitution for Somalia and political wrangles within the TFG.

The two periods in Somalia’s history that saw media focus on peace initiatives were during the Somali National Peace Conference held in Arta, Djibouti, between 2000 and 2001, which culminated in the election of a transitional government as well as the peace talks held in various towns in Kenya, between 2002 and 2004, and also culminated in the election of a transitional government in Mbagathi, Nairobi. This is because of the personal involvement in these efforts of important actors like President Omar Guelleh of Djibouti for the Arta conference and President Daniel arap Moi for the Mbagathi conference.

These instances show that media effects may be shown in specific cases to influence public opinion, agenda setting, and the framing of a particular issue, but media coverage alone does not guarantee a particular effect. It also takes more important other intervening variables like the context, the actors, etc. The much-talked-about CNN effect only comes into play when the media manages to raise the most significant public concerns.
Conclusion

The media can mitigate conflict but they cannot play third party roles in those conflicts. Conflict situations lead to expectations of certain similarities between the media and the third parties that traditionally aid in resolving conflicts, such as mediators or arbiters. Both begin by analyzing conflicts, finding out who is engaged in the conflict, what motivates them, what are the realities behind the dispute and what the conflict could probably and possibly lead to. In most cases, both ostensibly try to take an impartial view of the situation.

The path from conflict to media-encouraged conciliation is not as simple as developing the correct skills and awareness. There are more profound problems, especially in African countries, given the authorities' restrictive attitudes to press freedom, and the lack of technology and training. African media has faced criticism for inappropriate coverage of conflict situations and some African governments have used this criticism as further ammunition to discredit or argue for state control of the media. These critics apportion blame almost exclusively to the media and fail to consider the complexities of the situation.

Some scholars and media practitioners have argued that there is need to turn to alternative models such as “peace journalism” and “public journalism” in response to the drawbacks of “objective” journalism. The proponents of this paradigm shift argue that journalists should use the power of the media to help resolve conflict rather than report it from a distance. We agree with its detractors that once a journalist has set himself the goal of stopping or influencing wars, it is a short step to accepting that any means to achieve that end are justifiable. This can lead to unthinkable compromise of journalistic standards.
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APPENDICES

MEDIA REPORTS

Appendix 1: War stalks Somalia's city of death
Eds: RECASTS to focus on mood in Baidoa, CHANGES overline.
By ANTHONY MITCHELL
Associated Press Writer

BAIDOA, Somalia (AP) - A headless statue of a soldier stands guard at the entrance of Somalia's "City of Death" - a place once more stalked by war.

With bullet holes still visible in its chest more than a decade after they were first fired, this unknown soldier seems a fitting monument to Baidoa, where a new U.N.-backed government is struggling to end 15 years of chaos and anarchy.

An Islamic movement, accused of having al-Qaida terrorists in its ranks, and the transitional government are vying for control of this nation and girding for war.

"We are used to war in Somalia, it holds no fear for us," Sadia Ali Mohamed, a 28-year-old mother of two told The Associated Press as she strolled through the bustling market place in Baidoa, buying beans for her children.

"But now after all this time we want peace."

Baidoa, which earned its ominous nickname in 1992 when famine and war left thousands dying in the streets, is the temporary new government capital for Somalia.

Somalia has not had an effective government since warlords overthrew longtime dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, plunging the country into chaos. The government now holed up in Baidoa was formed in 2004 with the help of the United Nations, but it has struggled to assert its authority. The Islamic network that has emerged to fill the vacuum in much of southern Somalia, including the capital, Mogadishu, has among it radicals who have been linked to anti-Western terrorists and have vowed to bring Quranic rule to Somalia.

Baidoa is a squalid place, lacking clean water and electricity and where children play alongside rubbish rotting in the street, it hardly seems a place worth dying for.

Some 70 kilometres (40 miles) to the north, east and south of the city several thousand armed militia loyal to the Islamic movement have set up camp and threatened to attack. Since June the group has expanded control across much of southern Somalia.

Ethiopia, a Christian nation fearing a hardline Islamic neighbor, has deployed troops in support of the government, and they are clearly visibly in Baidoa. Ethiopia, home to a community of ethnic Somalis, also is worried by declarations from some in the Islamic movement about their desire to unite all Somalis into a "Greater Somalia."

In Baidoa, at least one destroyed factory is now used as a garrison.

Military vehicles bearing Ethiopian number plates rumble through the potholed streets and Ethiopian soldiers haggle in Baidoa's markets for a bargain to take home.

Both the transitional government and Ethiopia insist the troops, in camouflaged uniforms but without insignia, are military advisers, not a fighting force.

Somali soldiers man checkpoints on all roads in and out of Baidoa, a city of 70,000, after two recent suicide car bomb attacks, one of which nearly killed the president. Government forces regularly test weapons, purple tracer fire from their guns visible in the night sky.

"The government is the beginnings of legitimacy," Somalia's President Abdullahi Yusuf told The Associated Press in a rare interview on Friday. "It is a return to law and order ... the alternative is a return to chaos."

The presence of the Ethiopian troops and Somali soldiers has clearly reassured the local population. Cinemas continue to show English football and men gather in the café's to chew over the day's events. Traditional mystical poets perform for crowds in the crowded streets.
"We feel safe and do not think the Islamic forces will be able to attack Baidoa," said Hassan Ali Abdi, a trader in the city. "We are ready and prepared now."

Both the United Nations, using its financial support for the transitional government, and the European Union, are increasing pressure to get both sides to pull back from war. EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel is expected to travel Wednesday for talks in Baidoa, and Mogadishu, where the Islamic group is based.

In anticipation of that visit on Monday, the government and Islamic movement hinted that new talks may be possible despite recent war rhetoric.

However, long term prospects for peace look dim. And conflict could engulf the already volatile Horn of Africa. A recent U.N. report said 10 nations have been sending weapons to the warring sides in Somalia. Eritrea, Ethiopia's traditional rival, is supporting the Islamic movement.

The government is taking few chances.

"The Islamic group want to attack Baidoa as part of a plan to decapitate the government," said Hussein Aideed, the transitional government's interior minister. "We will fight to prevent that happening."

Appendix II: SOMALIA: Fierce fighting erupts in central region

Text of report by Somalia's private commercial Radio Shabeelle on 3?January

Fierce fighting erupted early this morning at Dudumo Ade village, 60 km east of Adado District in central Somalia. For more details here is Abdi Muhammad Ismail.

[Abdi] The fighting is between two rival sub-clans in the Mudug and Galgadud. The number of casualties in this fighting is not known and the two sides used different kinds of weapons, including battle wagons. The fighting between these two sub-clans resumed as mediation efforts led by Somali traditional elders continue.


Appendix III: "Hundreds" of foreign terrorists in country - foreign minister

Excerpt from report by Somali Puntlandpost website on 8?November

The minister of foreign affairs of Somalia, Isma'il Mahmud Hure Buba, has said there are terrorist groups in Somalia.

The minister, who is currently in London, has told the media of that country that there are hundreds of foreigners in Somalia who are helping the Union of Islamic Courts [UIC].

"The main group the UIC cooperates with has a direct link with terrorists. The terrorists entered Somalia during the fighting between the Islamic courts and the [former] faction leaders" Buba told one of the London-based newspapers.

He said the Ethiopian and the Eritrean troops entered Somalia due to the presence of the foreign group which is continuously causing unlimited problems.

[Passage omitted]

Appendix IV: Somalia-Split Government: Somali officials say warlords plan to attack temporary seat of government

By MOHAMED OLAD HASSAN
Associated Press Writer

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) - Two key Cabinet ministers are planning to destabilize the government by attacking the southern town of Jowhar, where Somalia's administration has temporarily set up operations because Mogadishu is considered unsafe, an official said Monday.

Somalia's National Security Minister Mohamed Qanyare Afrah and Trade Minister Musa Sudi Yahalow met in the capital over the weekend to plan launching the attack with the help of rebels from neighboring Ethiopia, said Presidential Security Adviser Mohamed Dheere.
Afrah dismissed the charges as "baseless" and refused to comment further. Attempts to reach Yahalow were not immediately successful.

Dheere, a powerful warlord whose forces control the Middle Shabeelle Region, did not provide proof to back up his allegation at a press conference in the regional capital of Jowhar.

Presidential spokesman Yusuf Mohamed Ismail, speaking in Kenya's capital of Nairobi, said a few government officials are trying to destabilize the administration that returned to Somalia after it was formed during peace talks in exile in Kenya.

"Our forces on the ground are professional and they are capable of taking any preventive or defensive initiative," he said.

Dheere's accusations highlight a deepening rift within Somalia's transitional government.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi urged government members to leave Mogadishu and join him in Jowhar. In a radio broadcast, he also warned that the government was prepared to use force to confront powerful warlords-turned-legislators whom he accused of trying to undermine the peace process from their bases in the capital.

On Friday, Somalia's president and parliamentary speaker ended talks in Yemen without resolving differences that have split the transitional government as it struggles to set up operations at home.

President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden failed to agree on where the government should be based and on the involvement of troops from neighboring countries in a regional force that would be sent to stabilize the country.

The president wants the government to set up in Jowhar, about 60 miles (100 kilometres) northwest of Mogadishu. The speaker, however, insists they be in the capital, as provided in the transitional constitution.

The speaker has set up operations in Mogadishu, together with more than 100 legislators who are pressing the president, prime minister and the rest of the Cabinet and parliament to follow suit.

Somalia has not had an effective central government since clan-based warlords overthrew dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991. Warlords then turned on each other, plunging the country of 7 million into chaos.

The transitional government has been based in the Kenyan capital Nairobi since it was set up last year because Mogadishu is too insecure.

Gedi, lawmakers and members of his Cabinet returned home June 18, setting up operations in Jowhar. The president, though, has yet to return home.

Appendix V: Children dying in south due to lack of drugs, health facilities

Excerpt from report by Somali independent Shabeelle Media Network website on 3 October

At least 20 children have died of various diseases in Jilib District, Middle Jubba Region [southern Somalia].

A member of the Jilib District administration said there was a health problem in Middle Jubba Region. He said diarrhoea, measles, malaria and swelling of the body were threatening the region.

Lack of health facilities and drugs were responsible for the death of the children, as the district has no health facility. [Passage omitted]

Source: Shabeelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somali 3 Oct 06

Appendix VI: MPs, Islamists form committees to continue mediation efforts

Text of report by Somali independent Shabeelle Media Network website on 7 November

A meeting between the Union of Islamic Courts of Somalia [UIC] and members of parliament, led by the Speaker of parliament, Sharif Hasan Shaykh Adan, has been concluded in Jowhar, with both sides setting up committees.

The meeting lasted for hours and was attended by 67 MPs in the transitional parliament. The UIC team was led by the chairman of the Executive Council, Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad.

The two sides formed committees that would continue with the reconciliation. The meeting was addressed by, among others, Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad.
Shaykh Sharif said the intension of the UIC was that the meeting yields good result that would unify the Somali people. He said the people of Somalia have no working government, saying the government lost the people's support after seeking help from Ethiopia.

Shaykh Sharif hailed the Speaker of parliament and other members of the transitional government, whom he did not mention, for their reconciliatory efforts. He said the aim of the meeting was to open talks and form committees, and for the people to know that the talks have been opened.

He said the victory brought by the UIC is for Somalis and it is up them to decide how to be governed, saying the UIC has no specific agenda.

He said the UIC officials are not power-hungry but are determined to implement the Islamic rule in the country. MPs also addressed the meeting.

Appendix VII: SOMALIA: Britain welcomes peace accord

Text of report by Somali independent Shabeelle Media Network website on 24 June


Talking of the accord, Triesman said the problems facing Somalia can only be solved through dialogue and that military action cannot solve the country's problems.

He hailed the Arab League states that hosted the talks held in Khartoum and urged the AU, the Arab League and IGAD [Inter-Governmental Authority on Development] to continue with the talks and support any efforts to return peace to Somalia.

"We are very concerned about the level of problems currently in Somalia" said Triesman and urged the rival sides to reach a solution and not to take any military step.

He said the international community, the UN and Britain will continue with their pledges to support the TFG saying Somalia has an opportunity for peace.

Source: Shabeelle Media Network website, Mogadishu, in Somali 24 Jun 06

Appendix VIII: Fighting erupts in northern Somalia as peace talks falter, says Islamic official

The Associated Press Published: November 6, 2006

MOGADISHU, Somalia: Islamic forces said their fighters clashed Monday with militia backed by Ethiopian troops in northern Somalia, one of the few areas still outside their control.

The Islamic group said they came under attack close to the border of the semiautonomous region of Puntland in the country's north, a region which has close ties to Ethiopia and has so far resisted the spread of the Islamic courts, who now control most of southern Somalia and the capital.

Puntland officials denied there had been any fighting. "The aim of Islamic courts is to get a pretext to attack Puntland," rural affairs minister Ali Abdi Aware told The Associated Press by telephone. Ethiopian officials repeated earlier denials that they have troops inside Somalia.

It was not immediately possible to verify the clashes, although if confirmed, the fighting would mark the first fighting since peace talks aimed at averting an all-out war in the country collapsed. It also comes amid fears that Somalia is teetering on the brink of a war that could engulf the entire Horn of Africa region.

"Our troops were attacked this morning by Ethiopian backed Puntland militias," said Sheik Yusuf Mohamed Siyad Indhaade national security chairman for the Islamic courts. He said that no casualties were reported from the fighting and that the Islamic militia had repulsed the attack.
He said the attack involved pickup trucks — known as "technicals" — mounted with heavy machine guns and took place in Galinsoor, 760 kilometres (470 miles) north of Mogadishu and 60 kilometres (37 miles) south of the Puntland border.

Meanwhile in the southern Somali town of Baidoa — the base of the transitional government led by President Abdullahi Yusuf and virtually the only town it controls — protesters took to the streets to demonstrate after the country's most powerful lawmaker broke ranks to hold peace talks with their Islamic rivals.

"We don't want the speaker because he wants to talk with Islamic courts who are attacking us," said Halima Ahmed one of the protesters on the demonstration organized by the government. "We will withdraw our support from the parliamentary speaker for breaking ranks with the government."

Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheik Aden led a 25-member delegation that traveled to Mogadishu, 250 kilometres (150 miles) east of Baidoa, Sunday to meet Islamic leaders despite the government wanting to try to form a "unified" position with the president and prime minister first.

Somalia has not had an effective government since 1991, when warlords overthrew a dictator and then turned on one another. The government was formed with the help of the U.N. two years ago, but it has failed to assert any real control outside Baidoa. The Islamic courts, meanwhile, have been rising since June and now control most of the country's south.

Experts warn that Somalia could become a proxy battleground for neighboring Eritrea and Ethiopia. Eritrea, which broke away from Ethiopia after a 1961-91 guerrilla war and fought a 1998-2000 border war with its rival, supports the Islamic militia. Ethiopia backs President Yusuf's government.

A confidential U.N. report obtained by the AP said 6,000-8,000 Ethiopian troops were in Somalia or along the border. It also said 2,000 soldiers from Eritrea were inside Somalia. Eritrea denies having any troops there, while Ethiopia insists it has sent only a few hundred advisers.

On Thursday, the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, warned that extremists in Somalia were planning suicide attacks in Kenya and Ethiopia. Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, the Islamic leader, said Sunday that the reports were untrue.