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Special Issue on

Peace and Communication in Post-conflict Africa

Guest Editor

Eddah Mutua-Kombo

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Africa Media Review/*Revue africaine des médias* is the leading communication journal in Africa and provides a forum for research and debate on communication theory, practice and policy in the continent. It seeks to raise awareness and understanding about the interconnections between media, communication and social processes in Africa, and how these shape and are affected by policies and practices at global, regional and local levels. It welcomes contributions on all aspects of communication informed by the African condition or relevant to Africa and its people.

The journal is a collaborative publication between the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nairobi, Kenya and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Dakar, Senegal. It is published twice a year and covers articles in English and in French.

Africa Media Review/*Revue africaine des médias* est la principale revue de communication en Afrique ; elle sert de forum favorisant la recherche et les débats relatifs à la théorie, la pratique et la politique de communication au niveau du continent. Elle cherche à conscientiser les individus sur l'interaction entre les médias, la communication et les processus sociaux en Afrique, mais également sur la manière dont ceux-ci modèlent et sont modelés par les politiques et pratiques à l'échelle mondiale, régionale et locale. Cette Revue est ouverte aux contributions portant sur tous les aspects de la communication traitant de la condition africaine ou liés à l'Afrique et aux Africains.

La revue est une collaboration du Conseil africain pour l'Enseignement de la communication (ACCE), à Nairobi, au Kenya, et le Conseil pour le développement de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique (CODESRIA), basé à Dakar, au Sénégal. Elle est publiée deux fois par an et contient des articles en anglais et français.

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Introduction
Peace and Communication in Post-conflict Africa

Eddah Mutua-Kombo*

This special issue of *Africa Media Review* assembles essays that highlight factors that inform the theorization of peace communication in post-conflict Africa.

While the history of conflict and violence is not new to Africa, it takes on a new dimension in a context where authors write about its causes and effects on African people. Specifically, the authors use experiences of civil wars in Liberia, Togo, Sudan and Somali, genocide in Rwanda, and post-election violence in Kenya to seek to embed in African communication scholarship and media practice a commitment to address a wide range of issues inherent in conceptualizing peace communication. The authors do so by coalescing diverse theoretical approaches and academic training in multiple disciplines (linguistics, religious studies and philosophy, history, geography and communication) to give post-conflict communication research an interdisciplinary flavour that grounds peace as a vital human phenomenon in post-conflict settings. The interdisciplinary approach contributes to the theory and practice of peace communication education and research in two ways. Firstly, it recognizes the emerging field of knowledge in conflict and peace studies that stands to enrich the understanding of the role of communication scholars, media practitioners, civil society and communities of a complete view of issues that both hinder and promote peace in Africa. Secondly, the approach works to reveal structural factors that perpetuate violence in Africa, and the need to challenge these factors. Each of the articles in this issue identifies factors responsible for violence in the countries studied and delineates strategies to promote peace in post-conflict settings.

Eddah Mutua-Kombo employs ethnographic research to argue for the importance of including Rwandan women as the knowing subjects

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(i.e. subjects that possess knowledge) in research about post-conflict Rwandan society and Africa in general. She uses a feminist critique of knowledge construction to argue for the need to theorize Africa outside of the colonial paradigm that offers a monologic or one-sided analysis of post-conflict Rwanda. She proposes that future research on post-conflict peace communication should seek to account for the importance of Rwandan women's experiences of the genocide as sites of knowledge.

Benson Ojwang provides an analysis of the Kenyan media functions in post-conflict situations. The analysis is rooted in an exploration of ways that the media not only cause and frame actions and reactions about electoral violence but also reflect the desires of the public to engage in post-conflict reconciliation efforts. Ojwang's discussion of the Kenyan media during and after the election violence echoes Esipisu and Khaguli's (2009) assertion that the media need to be 'eyes of democracy' so as to enlighten and sustain an inclusive process of reintegration and reconciliation.

Heidi Frontani, Kristine Silvestri and Amanda Brown introduce us to the quandary of Liberian and Togolese refugees in Ghana and the way it mirrors the failure of the media and United Nations resettlement programmes in supporting the social integration of refugees. They propose that the media use the human rights perspective rather than security terms to frame the plight of refugees by prioritizing their integration in their new 'homes'. This study shows that the media have a responsibility to set an agenda that frames issues of displacement and resettlement in ways that advocate humane policies for refugees.

Hala Guta discusses the politicization and Arabization of the education system in Sudan. Her analysis of selected primary school textbooks and official policies of the Ministry of Education reveals the impediments to peace in Sudan. The failure to recognize cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in schools limits the prospect of using the education system to promote peace. She recommends a radical education policy reform in order to challenge the hegemonic ideology that guides the current divisive curriculum. Her essay shows that Sudan needs a curriculum that promotes the ideals of teaching for peace.

The article by Susan Kilonzo employs a historical-critical approach to show how religious institutions have failed to provide a voice to the voiceless at a time when a proactive response was anticipated in reuniting communities in the aftermath of post-election violence in Kenya. The outcome of this careful analysis is a sharp critique of religious institutions, following the 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya. By focusing on the actions of these institutions, she leads the reader to see where religious institutions

stand in speaking out against ethnic hatred and assuming leadership in reconciling communities in post-conflict settings.

Sarah Drake and Mutua-Kombo examine ways that Somali refugees embody post-conflict life in Central Minnesota. Specifically, their article brings to the forefront the challenges facing second and third generations of Somalis in the US. The major concern expressed by the older generation of Somalis points to the 'risk' of losing Somali identity in a new cultural environment. Somalis involved in programmes seeking to keep Somali language and oral traditions alive see their efforts as vital for the future of Somalia.

Finally, I am especially pleased that the articles in this issue attempt to extend academic discourse that seeks to theorize Africa outside of paradigms which stereotypically frame the continent as conflict-ridden and violent. Without doubt, the authors provide us with an optimistic possibility for peace in Africa embedded in the voices emanating from the articles. In each article, we are introduced to voices that enrich how we think about what constitutes peace as expressed by those living the post-conflict experience. Now, it is time to reflect on what they teach us and perhaps to offer responses to questions we cannot wish to ignore. For example, how do we begin to theorize peace efforts in post-conflict societies in Africa? Can our research begin to give voice to the voiceless? How can scholars and media practitioners begin to engage in work that promotes peace in societies torn by conflict? Contributions in this issue indicate that different players in society have the ability to promote peace in their communities. Nonetheless, while a strong case is made to theorize peace from a perspective that privileges African experiences and contexts, a caution is necessary not to romanticize the idea. The goal of African communication scholarship should be to critique and transform what we know or do not know in the context of, and in comparison to, people's lived experiences, something which is often overlooked in hegemonic ideologies guiding divisive policies that threaten prospects for peace. At the same time, Eurocentric representations of Africa as conflict-ridden should be challenged by way of further exploring recommendations made in this issue.

Reference

Esipisu, M. & Khaguli, I., 2009, *Eyes of Democracy: The Role of the Media and Elections*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, UK.

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Introduction
Paix et communication dans les zones post-conflit en Afrique

Eddah Mutua-Kombo*

Cette édition spéciale de la *Revue africaine des médias* est constituée d'essais qui mettent en relief les facteurs qui sont à la base de la théorisation de la communication pour la paix dans les zones post-conflit en Afrique.

Même si l'histoire des conflits et de la violence n'est pas chose nouvelle en Afrique, elle prend une nouvelle dimension dans un contexte où les auteurs évoquent ses causes et ses effets sur les populations africains ; en particulier l'usage par les auteurs des expériences vécues durant les guerres civiles au Libéria, Togo, Soudan et Somali, le génocide au Rwanda, la violence post-élections au Kenya, ceci dans le but d'engrainer dans la communication africaine intellectuelle et la pratique médiatique un engagement à couvrir toute une gamme de questions inhérentes au processus de conceptualisation de la communication pour la paix. Pour cela, les auteurs combinent diverses approches théoriques avec leur formation académique dans diverses disciplines (linguistique, études religieuses et philosophiques, histoire, géographie et communication) afin d'insuffler à la recherche en communication post-conflit le sens d'une interdisciplinarité qui renforce la paix comme étant un phénomène humain vital dans l'environnement d'après guerre. L'approche interdisciplinaire contribue à la théorie et la pratique de l'éducation à la communication pour la paix et la recherche en ce sens que, premièrement, elle reconnait les nouvelles pistes de connaissance dans le domaine des études de la paix qui permettent une vue claire des questions qui bloquent ou promeuvent la paix en Afrique et une meilleure compréhension du rôle des intellectuels de la communication, des agents des médias, de la société civile et des communautés. En deuxième lieu, cette approche permet de révéler les

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facteurs structurels qui perpétuent la violence en Afrique et le besoin de confronter ces facteurs. Dans cette édition, chaque article identifie les facteurs qui sont à l'origine de la violence dans les pays étudiés, et propose des stratégies pour la promotion de la paix dans les zones d'après guerre.

Eddah Mutua-Kombo emploie la recherche ethnographique pour défendre l'importance de l'inclusion des femmes rwandaises comme sujets de connaissance (sujets qui possèdent de la connaissance) dans la recherche sur le Rwanda post-conflit en Afrique en général. Elle fait usage d'une critique féministe de la construction du savoir pour défendre le besoin de théoriser l'Afrique hors du paradigme colonial qui offre une analyse monologique du Rwanda d'après la guerre. Elle propose que la recherche future sur la communication pour la paix dans les zones post-conflit cherche à prendre en compte l'importance de l'expérience des femmes lors des conflits comme étant des sites du savoir.

Benson Ojwang apporte une analyse des fonctions des medias en période post-conflit au Kenya. L'analyse se base sur une exploration de la façon dont les médias non seulement causent et influencent les actions et réactions par rapport à la violence électorale, mais aussi projettent le désir du public de s'engager dans les efforts de réconciliation après les conflits. La discussion d'Ojwang sur les médias au Kenya avant et après les violences électorales fait l'écho de l'affirmation selon laquelle les medias doivent être « les yeux de la démocratie » afin d'éclairer et de soutenir tout processus inclusif de réintégration et de réconciliation.

Heidi Frontani, Kristine Silvestri et Amanda Brown nous ont dépeint le dilemme des refugiés libériens et togolais au Ghana. Ces dernières projettent l'échec des programmes des médias et des Nations Unies pour l'intégration des réfugiés. Elles proposent que les médias utilisent la perspective des droits de l'homme à la place des termes de sécurité pour mettre en avant les déboires des refugiés, donnant ainsi la priorité leur intégration. Cette étude montre que les médias ont la responsabilité d'appliquer un agenda qui se soucie des questions de déplacement et de réintégration d'une façon qui assurerait la plaidoirie de politiques plus humaines pour les réfugiés.

Hala Guta discute de la politisation et de l'arabisation du système d'éducation au Soudan. Son analyse d'une sélection de livres étudiés à l'école primaire et des politiques officielles du Ministère de l'éducation du Soudan révèle les obstacles contre le processus de paix dans ce pays. Le rejet de la diversité culturelle, religieuse et linguistique dans les écoles freine l'intention d'utiliser le système éducatif pour promouvoir la paix.

Elle recommande une réforme radicale de la politique de l'éducation pour faire face au défi idéologique qui guide le curriculum courant qui divise. Son essai montre que le Soudan a besoin d'un curriculum qui fasse la promotion des idéaux de l'éducation de la paix.

L'article de Susan Kilonzo use d'une approche historique-critique pour montrer comment les institutions religieuses n'ont pas réussi à apporter une voix pour les sans-voix à une période où on s'attendait à une réponse proactive pour réunir les communautés au lendemain des violences post électorales au Kenya. En se focalisant sur ces institutions, elle amène le lecteur à voir la posture des institutions religieuses quand il s'agit de décrier la haine ethnique et d'assumer une place de leadership dans la réconciliation des communautés dans un contexte d'après guerre.

Sarah Drake et Mutua-Kombo examinent la manière dont les réfugiés somaliens symbolisent la vie d'après conflit au Minnesota Central. L'article met particulièrement en exergue les défis auxquels sont confrontées les deuxième et troisième générations des Somaliens aux Etats-Unis. La préoccupation majeure de la première génération est le « risque » de perdre son identité dans un nouvel environnement culturel. Les Somaliens prenant part aux programmes de préservation de leur langue et de leur tradition orale considèrent leurs efforts comme étant vitaux pour le futur de la Somalie.

In fine, je suis particulièrement content du fait que les articles dans cette édition s'intéressent au discours académique qui cherche à théoriser l'Afrique hors des paradigmes qui tendent à stéréotyper le continent comme étant une terre de conflits et de violence. Sans aucun doute, les auteurs, par leurs voix qui émanent de ces articles, nous présentent une possibilité optimiste pour la paix en Afrique. De chaque article sortent des voies qui enrichissent la façon dont nous appréhendons la paix, expriment ceux qui vivent une expérience post conflit. Il est l'heure maintenant pour nous de réfléchir sur ce que nous apprennent ces essais, et peut-être d'offrir des réponses aux questions qu'on ne devrait souhaiter ignorer. Par exemple, comment théoriser les efforts de paix dans les sociétés africaines après-guerre ? Est ce que notre recherche peut donner la voix à ceux qui n'en ont pas ? Comment les intellectuels et les médias peuvent-ils s'engager dans la promotion de la paix dans les sociétés brisées par les conflits ? Les essais dans cette édition montrent que différents agents dans la société ont la capacité de promouvoir la paix dans leurs communautés. Tout de même, bien que la théorisation de la paix s'inspire d'une perspective qui privilégie les expériences et contextes africains, il faudrait de la prudence pour ne pas verser dans le romantisme. L'objectif de l'étude de la com-

munication en Afrique doit être de critiquer et de transformer ce que l'on sait ou ce que l'on ne sait pas dans le contexte de, et en comparaison aux expériences vécues par les peuples. Ce qui est souvent négligé par les idéologies hégémoniques qui guident les politiques de division qui menacent les efforts de paix. Aussi, les représentations euro centriques de l'Afrique comme un continent de conflits doivent être remises en questions grâce à une meilleure exploration des recommandations faites dans ce numero.

Référence

Esipisu, M. et Khaguli, I., 2009, *Eyes of Democracy: The Role of the Media and Elections,* London: Commonwealth Secretariat, UK.

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Theorizing Post-conflict Peace Communication: Can Rwandan Women's Narratives of Sexual Violence Become the Point of Departure for Research?

Eddah Mutua-Kombo*

Abstract

Francis Nyamnjoh asserts that 'African context and experience should contribute towards theory-building' (See Wasserman 2009:286). To what extent is this statement relevant to post-conflict peace communication research? This article advances an argument that the experiences of Rwandan women during and after the 1994 genocide can help us to develop a theory of post-conflict peace communication. The epistemic implication of this argument is that how we understand communication in post-conflict settings is grounded in the embodiment of lived experiences. To develop a valuable theory that explains this reality is to bring to the forefront the voices of those who have lived the experience. The author uses Rwandan women's narratives of sexual violence to illustrate the epistemic implications of their experiences in optimizing the understanding of post-conflict peace communication.

Key Terms: Rwanda, genocide, women, sexual violence, post-conflict peace communication.

Résumé

Francis Nyamnjoh défend la thèse selon laquelle « Le contexte et l'expérience africaines doivent contribuer à la construction des théories » (voir Wasserman 2009:286). Dans quelle mesure cette assertion peut-elle être pertinente à la recherche sur la communication pour la paix d'après guerre ? Cet article propose que les expériences des femmes rwandaises pendant et après le génocide de 1994 puissent bel et bien nous aider à développer une théorie de la communication pour la paix d'après guerre. L'implication épistémique de cet argument consiste au fait que la façon dont nous comprenons la communication dans un contexte d'après guerre s'appesantit sur la symbolique des expériences vécues.

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Développer une théorie solide qui explique cette réalité nécessite de mettre en avant les voix de ceux qui l'ont vécue. L'auteur utilise alors les narrations des femmes rwandaises sur la violence sexuelle pour illustrer les implications épistémiques de leurs expériences et exploiter la compréhension de la communication pour la paix d'après guerre.

Mots clés : Rwanda, génocide, femmes, violence sexuelle, communication pour la paix d'après guerre.

Background

The need to expand African communication education and research remains a priority for African communication and media scholars. Under the auspices of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), scholars, media practitioners and activists have had opportunities to pursue dialogue about what constitutes a new paradigm in African communication education and research in the twenty-first century. Taylor, Nwosu & Mutua-Kombo (2004) argue for the need to reorient communication education and research in order to respond to phenomena in need of attention in the African communication environment. Building on this argument, this essay proposes an epistemological project that challenges the current status of African communication education. The questions raised about the status of African communication research and Rwandan women's experiences are at the same time suggestions for the directions in which future research about communication scholarship in Africa should or could go.

Africa is under-theorized in the area of post-conflict peace communication in contrast to the plethora of research on a wide range of issues about conflict that has besieged the continent in the post-colonial era. The paucity of research about how communities communicate after conflict limits broader understanding of what constitutes communication in post-conflict settings. For this reason, theorizing post-conflict communication becomes imperative to illuminate knowledge that offers a broader understanding of peace communication in Africa beyond the stereotypical image of Africa as chaotic, wild and conflict-ridden. In view of the foregoing concerns, this article presents an argument that has epistemic implications for post-conflict peace in Africa. The purpose is to evoke theoretical discussion needed for analysis and hopefully the resultant creation of a theory or theories of post-conflict peace communication. The context of the argument is framed around Rwandan women's narratives of sexual violence. The question posed is: Can Rwandan women's narratives of sexual

violence become the point of departure for African communication in a post-conflict setting?

This question offers an important proposal for African communication research to seek the inclusion of the lived experiences and authentic voices of women and their knowledge as a legitimate point of departure for research. What are the options available to realize this proposal? At the moment this essay proposes two options: (i) use women's narratives as theoretical framework since women's words and actions show epistemological potential, and (ii) engage scholars working with Rwandan women to mediate how to use women's narratives and experiences to create theories about post-conflict settings. These options are deemed relevant to other post-conflict societies, including Sierra Leone, Liberia and Southern Sudan, just to mention a few.

This author's work, examining women's participation in peace building in the post-genocide Rwanda, points to possibilities of building theory from women's narrative – what they say and do – in response to their horrific experience of the 1994 genocide. The essay begins by describing the context that the women's narratives were told, excerpts of women's words, and fieldwork interaction experiences. Finally, the essay offers a discussion of lessons learned to inspire scholars to respond to these lessons from Rwandan women's lived experiences. The Rwandan context has the potential to illuminate indigenous knowledge useful to understanding post-conflict peace communication.

Context

The setting where interactions between the women and the author occurred indicates a prospect to generate indigenous knowledge about post-conflict peace. The women spoke and acted in ways that reveal how the genocidal experience engulfed their existence. The evidence of the genocide and the memory it holds are exemplified through facets such as genocide memorial sites, mass graves, amputated bodies and messages about peace, reconciliation and forgiveness on billboards and in Rwandan people's vocabulary. In the post-genocide era, peace and reconciliation are what a majority of Rwandans desire. However, it is ironic that the performance of post-conflict peace and reconciliation occurs in a double-faced setting.

While on one hand the inhumanity of the genocide is undeniable, it is also the case that humanity is present in form of determination, perseverance, hope and resiliency of Rwandan women, exemplified through involvement in numerous peace initiatives. It is these virtues of humanity that give direction for the women to chart new ways for peace in their

country. References to historical, cultural, political and economic factors signify what shapes women's interpretation of their social world. Women's worldview explains the complexity of meanings assigned to being at and/or absent from the place the violence occurred. The contention is that being at the place where the violence occurred and lived, the effects of the genocide influence one's perspective differently from those who were not present or did not experience the violence. This is a perspective that draws our attention to politics of place and space in post-conflict peace communication discourse. It reveals the essence that the 'place' does define the experience of the present, notably in ways communication in post-conflict setting is shaped. Accordingly, acknowledging the meanings assigned to the place helps us to avoid the temptation to politicize historical experiences and memory.

In discussing the 'place' where the narratives were told, the author's intention is to show the complexity of the context in shaping ways that life is comprehended in the physical space. It also draws attention to the complex ways to look at Rwandan women's experiences without necessarily suggesting that the impact of the genocide and trauma is only present or best comprehended at the physical space. As Jelaca (2009) argues, 'trauma does not necessarily carry the obvious physical markers. It is trans-spatial, transnational and translational and it is not fixed to a single context, interpretation, situation or space' (Jelaca 2009:10). Having noted this argument, however, it is pivotal to make it clear that the scope of this discussion is limited to narratives told by women who were, and still live, at the physical place of the violence of the genocide. Nevertheless, Jelaca's (2009) theorizing of trauma, notably the questions she poses about the where, what and how of trauma, are useful in enriching our understanding of the context in which the Rwandan women's narratives were told. Writes Jelaca:

> Is trauma deeply tied to the space of its origin, or does it float around, unbound, uncontrollable? Does it help to leave the space of trauma in order to heal, or does one need to face their demons at the place of the trauma's origin? Can one ever talk about the authentic site of trauma? ... I do not intend to offer answers to any of these questions, as those would inevitably lead to essentialisms of sorts. Who can say for sure what works and what does not when it comes to healing trauma, without making a blunt generalization and denying endless ways in which people cope? (Jelaca 2009:1).

Rwandan Women's Narratives

How then does one make sense of the narratives told? Does one say 'I went, saw, heard and documented' and leave it at that? Or does the person take a step further and ask questions about meanings assigned to what the women say and do about their experiences of the genocide? The intention in this article is not to offer full analysis of the women's narratives shared. The goal is to make them available and to persuade readers that we need to know about them. At the same time, an attempt is made to offer an opportunity for scholars to engage in critical reflection on Rwandan women's experiences, particularly with regard to what we can learn about the following:

- The act of forgiveness
- Reconstruction of forgiveness
- Women's agency in claiming back their own bodies
- The revelation that women can recoup themselves and move forward to reconstruct their country and reconcile communities.

The following paragraphs sample women's narratives that provide the context of the argument in this article.

'We Are the Genocide'

I met Halima and other women who are victims of sexual violence at 'Village of Hope' (VOH) at Gizosi, Kigali in July 2008.[1] My visit to this facility that offers numerous services to survivors of sexual violence was facilitated by Rwandan Women's Network (RWN), a local Rwandan Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). RWN is dedicated to the promotion and improvement of the socioeconomic welfare of women in Rwanda through enhancing their efforts to meet their basic needs.[2] Halima is a beautiful woman in her late fifties. She is a survivor of sexual abuse that rampaged throughout Rwanda in 1994. She is one of the estimated 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls raped and the astounding 70 per cent of women who were infected with the HIV virus during the genocide.[3] During my conversations with her, she sat quietly with her arms folded on her chest. When it was her time to talk she began by asking me: 'Have you visited any of the genocide memorial sites?' I said 'Yes'. 'Have you seen disabled women like me?' She then proceeded to ask me to look at her arms that she had kept folded throughout our conversation. I saw scars on both arms and amputated fingers. Thereafter, she pulled off her headgear to show me another scar on her head. Pointing at her arms and amputated

fingers, she noted the following 'This is it ... the experience of genocide. It reminds us of the depth of the violence. We are the genocide. Please tell people in Kenya not to do stupid things'[4]

It is not about Male Power

Uma and I were enjoying a drink of Rwandan coffee at a coffee-house located in downtown Kigali. We had not seen each other since 2004 and so it was wonderful to be able to meet again. As we talked about different journeys in our personal and professional lives, we could not help but stop to reflect on what unites us even when our experiences are so different. I cannot exactly recall how we got started on some very emotional discussion about sexual violence. Uma shared how she had found the topic troubling. She explained how some 'outsider' scholars were trying to theorize sexual violence from a 'Western perspective'. I asked her to elaborate on her claim. In response, she recalled an incident where a [foreign] professor told her that violence against African women was inevitable as long as gender inequality continued to render women powerless in Africa.

She lowered her voice and posed a number of questions: 'How many people know or realize that sexual violence – during the Rwanda genocide – did not happen purely because of gender inequality or male power? How can one explain systematic rape of a given group of women? What about the women who ordered young men to rape Tutsi women? What do you call this? Sexual violence is not male power as may be perceived in the West. During the genocide, sexual violence was not necessarily an act of male power. It was Hutu power which was also extended to women. The women in power distributed condoms to men at roadblocks to rape women'. In fact, this violence inflicted on Rwandan women was an act of genocide.

Anger and Victory in the Bedroom

Solange tells me of her experience with four prisoners who were convicted of sexual assault during the genocide. She is married to a civil servant (government official) and resides in a government house. She describes how she was in her bedroom with the male prisoners as she showed them how she wanted the room painted. She recalls:

> I wondered what they were thinking – a woman in a bedroom with them! I was thinking about it all through but did not get afraid. But deep inside me, I felt the anger. I imagined what would have happened if that moment and day was one of the 100 days. As I walked around the room and showed them what I wanted done, I felt so much power around and with me. I knew

> they could do nothing to me! I had overcome their 'power' as all women in Rwanda had done. We have said no more violence. There is law in place. It is a good thing.

The Act of Forgiveness

Fatawa
I am HIV positive and yet I am able to do something for my life and others. For example, I am teaching young men about the importance of using condoms. For women who are positive like me, I teach them about good diet. Village of Hope has taught me how to help others. I am a full person. My brother's friends' who I had known for a long time raped me because I was half Tutsi. I was violated but we are all living together. For now, we feel free of our burden of bitterness. We feel free. Only God can punish. We have to forgive those who did bad things to us.

Kazi
We have forgiven those who hurt us because we want to live together peacefully, celebrate our families. Here at Village of Hope, we empower our children to live in harmony. We do this through drama and songs and dance. We are happy when we see our children growing up as Rwandans. We do not want them to grow up in the Rwanda of the past.

Domitila
Many bad things have happened to us. *Gacac*a is a place where we talk and testify about what happened to us. If they say the truth we forgive them.

Each of the women's voices offers pointed argument for the inclusion of often overlooked stories coming directly from the women. These stories are both about the genocide and the post-genocide period. These two experiences offer examples where women engage in activities that spearhead the process of reconciliation and forgiveness.

It is this specific context which we consider when we attempt to extract meaning from the experiences of Rwandan women, in the larger context of theorizing peace communication in post-genocide setting in Rwanda and beyond.

Making Meaning of Women's Experiences of Sexual Violence

Two questions come to mind as the article explores what these narratives mean to the women who narrate them and those who listen and document them.

1. For what purpose do the women tell their ordeals?
2. For what purpose do researchers collect and document these narratives?

We will need to examine the epistemic implications of women's narratives in order to authenticate the argument seeking to centre Rwandan women's experiences as the point of departure for post-conflict peace communication. The narratives reveal knowledge that the women know, which we do not know and need to know.

On the other hand, the experiences of researchers who listen to and document these narratives need to be brought to the forefront of discussions about post-conflict peace communication research. In general, fieldwork experiences discussed below are useful in setting a frame for an epistemological discourse that recognizes the complexity of research among populations that have experienced unbearable trauma. These circumstances enable researchers to clarify their purpose, examine what they bring to the research setting, and how it affects the research process. Also important is how these experiences allow the opportunity to address tensions that arise from different 'truths' about academic/research training, personal knowledge, urgency and activism.

We become better informed about what constitutes post-conflict peace communication research by recognizing diverse experiences and how they are responded to in a research setting traumatized by the genocide.

Fieldwork Experiences

Drawing from the fieldwork experiences, a number of themes emerge that point to ways that the experience of the genocide defines how Rwandan women comprehend their lives. These themes reveal the unique knowledge that the women possess and which needs to be further studied.

Gaining Access and Establishing Rapport with the Women

Summer 2004

Rwandan women have suffered 'interview fatigue'. Asked to elaborate on this concern, Anna responded 'Rwandans are tired of being asked what, why and how questions about the genocide. There are many foreigners coming here to ask us questions. What is the purpose of it? We want to tell our story from our own perspective rather than have outsiders cue us on how to tell our experience' (Mutua-Kombo 2009:317).

Summer 2008

Karekezi expressed the following to my translator:

> Are you saying she (referring to me) wants to ask us questions? Does she know what we experienced? Should it be us to tell her what happened?

Our interactions revealed insider knowledge that the women possess which the author does not know or possess and may never know as an outsider to the experience unless a deliberate effort is made. In this regard, it is important to seek knowledge that explains women's responses during the initial stages of the research process in view of two important revelations, namely: (i) women's apprehension in welcoming the author (an outsider) and/ or readily accepting to be interviewed, and (ii) women's critique of researchers and the desire to direct the interview process. From these initial experiences of the research process, a significant question emerges that might offer insights into post-conflict peace communication research: What do women's responses to the research process teach us (researchers) about how we enter their space?

Negotiating Identity and Acceptance

The author's attempts to connect with the women did not go as expected. The author had hoped that her shared regional identity with Rwandan women as East Africans and her national identity as a Kenyan would make her acceptable to the women. The author's notion of acceptance based on both identities differed from how the women identified themselves with others. I was naïve to think that, since I was Kenyan African, the women should be able to easily identify with me and readily accept me as one of them. Through this experience, I was quick to learn that I was an outsider to the world of Rwandan women. For the most part, what I experienced trying to 'fit in' and learned about the women's experiences from their narratives confirmed my 'outsiderness' in this contested space. The distance between the women and me became obviously wide.

In order to reduce the distance, I realized that how Rwandan women comprehended their lives was not the same as I thought. Being a Kenyan or African – like them – was not enough to guarantee immediate acceptance. Clearly at stake was what the women knew about their experience of the genocide. So, the question to consider is what we might need to understand about identity – regional, national or ethnic – that might be useful in guiding post-conflict peace research. This experience also teaches a number of things. For instance, it challenges the Eurocentric notion of a homogeneous 'African' identity and treatment of Africa as one monolithic

culture. At the same time, it emphasizes the fact that local experiences need to be taken into consideration while theorizing and studying about Africa.

(Re)Learning the Place Where the Violence Occured

As earlier discussed, our interactions did not occur in a vacuum. Women's responses to my questions, and more so their interpretation of their world, revealed without doubt that they we were communicating in the place where the violence of the genocide occurred. For example, the explanations as to why the women have forgiven those who sexually violated them point to the fact that their lives have to be rebuilt at the same place where they were destroyed. In many cases, this phenomenon was framed in the form of questions, and not necessarily in declarative statements or direct answers to questions asked. For example, the women would respond to a question with a question. Some examples include: 'How can we not forgive them when we all live together? 'If it was you, what would you do?' These responses re-routed the contours of research, often calling upon the author to remain attentive to nuances of emerging new knowledge. Our conversations about old narratives of women as killers vis-à-vis new narratives of women as peacemakers revealed how this 'place' grounded Rwandan women's perspective of their existence. It was clear that the women did not want to accept a negative representation portraying them as killers. They saw themselves as peacemakers while at the same time acknowledging that not all women were innocent during the genocide. Their words and actions defined how they are transforming and reconstructing the 'place' for peace and reconciliation. The opportunity to probe possibilities for new knowledge lies in paying attention to the emerging new narrative that presents women as peacemakers and heightens their epistemological prospects as creators of knowledge.

Discussion of Lessons Learned

If we are to productively understand Rwandan women's narratives of sexual violence, then we must ask epistemological questions that seek the meaning assigned to what women say and do about their experiences. The questions asked by researchers are to be contextualized in a process that becomes 'a corrective epistemological project to work against hegemonically universalist subject positions available in dominant modes of theorizing' (Lal 1996:113). Posing questions that heighten the epistemic implications of Rwandan women's experiences offer to present them as creators of knowledge. The effort results in knowledge generated from a

location of women's authentic experiences to allow us to know the authenticity of their knowledge. In view of the narratives and researcher's experiences discussed, this essay offers some examples of questions to guide future epistemological projects.

- What do Rwandan women's responses to the experiences of sexual violence mean? In other words, what is the underlying meaning in their words and actions?
- What don't we know about Rwanda women's experiences that might hinder our understanding of what they say and do? For example, what research questions might provoke such statements as 'We have forgiven those who did bad to us'? Do we understand the act of forgiveness as the women do?
- In what ways do Rwandan women as creators of knowledge evoke new ways of scholarship about post-conflict peace communication?
- What methodological and theoretical frameworks are appropriate for this work? Are future epistemological projects likely to contribute to the development of methodologies and theories suitable for studying African communication phenomenon? This question is pivotal, given that research in the late 1980s and early 1990s decried the lack of appropriate methodologies and theories suitable for African communication research (see Boafo & George 1992; M'Bayo & Nwanko 1989; Obeng-Quidoo 1987; Okigbo 1987).

Benefits of Engaging in Future Epistemological Projects

Future epistemological projects become the point of departure for research that offers opportunities where we begin to probe other possibilities that challenge regimes of knowledge (Madison 2005). By so doing, we acknowledge diverse perspectives that have epistemic implications for optimizing indigenous knowledge about post-conflict peace communication in Rwanda. These are the perspectives that women who survived the genocide bring to the table by communicating beyond the pain of their experiences to a new reality, emphasizing peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. This new reality propels researchers to engage in theoretical discourse, seeking to reclaim traditionally marginalized zones of knowledge and to present women as producers of knowledge. The process of centring women as knowing subjects can be mediated through scholarship that is geared at creating theories about communication in post-conflict communities. In the case of Rwanda, new theories created would be grounded in Rwandan women's experiences and context in which they live and serve.

Equally significant is the move towards developing a greater awareness of women's experience in ways that influence and lead to different understanding of communication. Generally, African communication research is modelled on Western communication theories. This is not to say that we do away with these theories but, rather that we find ways to move them around to fit and respond to realities of the African experiences and context. To dare to build theory from this contextual location is to affirm the fact that theories are not necessarily permanent.

African communication research has the potential to move and reshape the grand narrative in ways that advance recognition of indigenous knowledge and sharing of common concerns of the global communication research community. Nyamnjoh's (2009) view of research as dialogic is useful to the understanding of post-conflict situations. This is to say that one need to be aware of the nuances of post-conflict experiences to make meaning of women's words and actions.

A commitment to explore how Rwandan women know and comprehend their lives advances theorizing that offers insightful understanding of a particular/ non-universalized phenomenon that needs to be explained. Examining Rwandan women's expressions, actions and communication styles will reveal deep layers of knowledge of their experiences that need to be unveiled to expand the frontiers of communication research in general. For example, Kinyarwanda language terms *Gahuza miryango* (the one who brings families together, the reconciliator) and *Twese hamwe* (all of us together) are often used by both men and women to explain women's role in peace building. In this context, these are conceptual terms that embody communal cultural values that capture the new meaning of existence in post-genocide Rwanda. It is how this new existence is (re)constructed and performed by Rwandans themselves and represented to the world that requires further investigation.

In conclusion, the future of post-conflict peace communication research bears rich possibilities. This article attempted to provide us with narratives of Rwandan women with the intent that we know about them so that we can act accordingly. Indeed, if African communication researchers commit to explore this under-theorized area of African communication in such places as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, South Africa, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, among others, we will learn more about how communities communicate in post-conflict situations. Moreover, in the case of this essay, we will create greater awareness of Rwandan women as creators of knowledge, transformers and peacemakers, and not solely as victims of the genocide. This call to explore epistemologies of

post-conflict peace challenges the 'lopsided view of the world that currently characterizes the discipline of communication' (Miller 2005:226). African communication researchers have articulated this 'lopsidedness', and so, we do not need to belabour it but instead openly talk about the way forward. It is now time to respond by thinking and rethinking about our own experiences and contexts to inform authentic research on post-conflict peace communication. How we venture into new frontiers to expand and refine current theoretical standings depends on ways that we choose to engage Africa.

Notes

1. Names of actual women (and one male intermediary) who shared their experiences have been changed to assure confidentiality.
2. http://www.rwandawomennetwork.org/
3. See http://www.herizons.ca/nod/335 – excerpts from *The Men Who Killed Me: Rwandan Survivors of Sexual Violence*, 2009, edited by Anne-Marie de Brouwer and Sandra Ka Hon Chu.
4. The women who were present at the focus group discussion were aware of the violence that had rocked Kenya in January through March 2008, following the disputed general elections results.

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The Semantics of Peace and the Role of the Print Media in the 2007-2008 Post-election Violence in Kenya

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Abstract

The controversial elections of December 2007 in Kenya led to killings, mass displacement, injury and widespread socio-economic destabilization. Despite a series of peace rallies and policy guidelines initiated by the government, the resettlement exercise, dubbed 'operation *rudi nyumbani*', was dogged with controversy and discordant voices from politicians, the clergy, residents of ethnic clash-torn areas, as well as the clash victims. Eventually, voluntary reconciliation through reintegration was promoted and the exercise was renamed 'operation *karibu nyumbani*'. In this article, the author analyzes the implications of the messages of peace and conflict inherent in the utterances of the key political players as reported by the mainstream newspapers, namely *The Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and their weekend editions *Sunday Nation* and *Sunday Standard*. Specifically, the article reviews the language choices that the media used to frame the hopes, fears, expectations and disappointments entailed in the peace messages by setting the agenda through which the public could monitor and evaluate the peace process. It emerges that the Kenyan press oscillated between peace building and peace threatening modes, depending on the prevailing political and public mood.

Key Terms: peace, reconciliation, reintegration, national healing, discord.

Résumé

Les élections controversées de décembre 2007 au Kenya ont été à la source de plusieurs meurtres, blessures, déplacements forcés et en masse de refugiés et de la destabilisation généralisée du tissu socio-économique. Le programme de réhabilitation appelée alors « opération *rudi nyumbani* », en dépit d'une série d'appels à la paix, a été entaché d'irrégularités et de voix discordantes venant des politiciens, de l'église, des résidents des zones déchirées par les conflits

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ethniques aussi bien que des victimes des affrontements. A la fin, la réconciliation volontaire à travers la réintégration a été promue et le programme été nommé cette fois-ci « opération *karibu nyumbani* ». L'auteur de cet article fait une analyse des conséquences des messages de paix et de conflit inhérents aux discours des grands politiciens tels que rapportés par les journaux, notamment *The Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, *Sunday Nation* et *Sunday Standard.* Cet article étudie en particulier le choix du langage des médias dans le but d'influencer les espoirs, les craintes, les attentes et les déceptions qu'ont engendrés les messages de paix, ceci tout en fournissant un programme par lequel le public pouvait suivre et évaluer le processus de paix. Il devient clair que la presse kenyane vacillait entre deux positions, celui du maintien et de la menace de la paix, dépendant de l'humeur politique et publique du moment.

Mots clés : Paix, réconciliation, réintégration, reconstruction nationale, discorde.

Introduction

The violence that followed the 2007 election results in which Mwai Kibaki was declared winner and hurriedly installed as president of Kenya was precipitated by heightened expectations, hyped pre-election opinion polls and media reports of alleged inevitable rigging. Given their role as watchdogs and opinion shapers, the media monitored the election process and enlightened the public. Through their live updates at the national vote tallying centre, the media set the tempo of public interest as a national conflict unfolded amid finger pointing and grandstanding by political party stalwarts. The ensuing newspaper reports propagated the antagonistic stand of the main political parties, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and Party of National Unity (PNU), who blamed each other for the breakdown of law and order in Kenya at that tumultuous moment.

The humanitarian crisis that ensued compelled the international community to assign former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to mediate between President Kibaki and ODM's Raila Odinga under the auspices of the Panel of Eminent African Persons. Kenya's leading newspapers, *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* responded to the crisis by highlighting the initial knee-jerk reaction by the government, when President Kibaki attempted to stamp his authority as head of state and ordered that all Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) had to go back to their homes immediately. Kibaki's decree was considered as merely reactive. Politicians, the general public, and the IDPs themselves, did not receive President Kibaki's hard-line stand on the IDP issue with enthusiasm.

Apparently, the president's attempt to impose peace from above did not match the desires and social needs of the victims. For instance, the press described the order regarding the IDPs that called for peace as hard-hearted when the situation on the ground had not even been assessed properly (*Daily Nation* January 3, 2008). This portrayed a vain attempt to exercise authority by issuing a decree before initiating interpersonal acceptance and reconciliation in the affected areas. The lack of a peace strategy coupled with the prolonged political accusations, counter-accusations and bickering over power sharing that characterized the Kofi Annan-led mediation talks delayed the launch of the IDP resettlement exercise (Buri 2008).

This analysis is conducted within the context of a disputed presidential election settled by a controversial power sharing agreement. The article argues that the media played a key role in managing and shaping the public perception of the state of the evolving nation, the peace process, and the regulation of violence.

Methodology

In this article, I analyze the implications of the messages of peace and conflict inherent in the utterances of the key political players as reported by the mainstream newspapers, *The Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and their weekend editions *Sunday Nation* and *Sunday Standard*. *The Standard* is Kenya's oldest circulating newspaper founded in 1902 as a private enterprise. It is considered elitist in coverage and only began to dabble in politics with the advent of multi-party politics in the early 1990s (Hatchen 1992). It is considered leftist and has progressively become the voice of the opposition in the political conflicts that have faced Kenya since the end of the Moi era in 2002, during the national constitutional referendum of 2005 and the disputed 2007 national election results. *The Standard* and *Sunday Standard* combined have an average daily circulation of 150,000. *The Daily Nation* and *Sunday Nation* were registered in 1959. Together, they command the largest market share with an average daily circulation of 250,000 copies. This paper is considered pro-establishment since President Kibaki came to power in 2002 (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights 2006). It covers a wider variety of political, socio-economic, local and regional issues (Ainslie 1996). A consortium of Kenyans under the Standard Group flagship owns *The Standard*, while His Highness the Agha Khan owns *The Nation*.

A qualitative lexico-semantic approach guided the study and the meaning and context of the target words and phrases were considered. A

purposive sample of newspapers was selected on the basis of thematic content. The period covered spanned from January 1, 2008 when the post-poll violence broke out, to June 2009. This was slightly over one year since the new government assumed office. This was a critical moment because in June 2009, a performance audit of the one-year old government was released.

In all, 45 issues were found to contain articles that substantively addressed the themes of post-election violence, peace and reconciliation. The sample contained 20 issues of *The Standard* and five issues of *Sunday Standard*, 13 issues of the *Daily Nation* and seven of the *Sunday Nation*. From these issues, I read and identified 65 articles purposively because they contained some or most of the key thematic words and phrases related to the post-election violence. The key terms that acted as thematic indicators were: peace, reconciliation, justice, conflict, revenge, violence, incitement, mass action, coalition, negotiation, power sharing, national healing, national cohesion and the related sub-themes.

Of the 65 articles, 26 (12 by The Standard Group, 14 by The Nation Group) turned out to be pro-Kibaki and PNU while 39 (31 by The Standard Group, 8 by the Nation Group) were pro-ODM. *The Standard* and *Sunday Standard* largely pushed the theme that PNU had rigged the elections while *Daily Nation* and *Sunday Nation* foregrounded the need for an immediate end to the violence and that ODM should have gone to court if they felt aggrieved. The papers therefore followed a dichotomy based on political party lines.

Specifically, the analysis examines the language choices that the media used to frame the hopes, fears, expectations and disappointments entailed in the peace messages. The analysis also focuses on the semantic import of the public rhetoric of politicians, government functionaries, public opinion and editorial commentaries carried in the print media and how they built or potentially threatened peace.

Theoretical Conceptions of Peace and the Kenyan Situation

Galtung (1968) distinguishes between two forms of peace. To him, negative peace is that which entails the absence of war or cessation of violence and hostility while positive peace is a process of life enhancement. Galtung (1968) suggests that there are political, military, economic and cultural dimensions of peace that can be realized by developing 'Peace Journalism'. Peace is therefore not the conservative concept of law and order but entails justice, equity and harmony (Galtung 1974). Despite the lofty phrases on paper, the implementation of Kenya's national accord caused resentment

among the disillusioned public, newspaper commentators, the donor community and the IDPs. It has been acknowledged that law and order may have been restored in Kenya but the other prerequisites for peace, namely justice, socio-economic equity and harmony have remained elusive since independence (Wamwere 2009).

Azar, Jureidini and McLaurin (1978) agree with Galtung (1968) by holding that attitude change in war-torn countries is not achieved by simply signing peace treaties. This view bears a lesson for Kenya, in the sense that the signing of the National Accord between Kibaki and Raila simply ended the violence but grumbling persisted and perceptions of threats to peace pervaded public debate. Press reports were replete with sentiments of betrayal and a demand for the leaders to address the underlying historical injustices that had little to do with the disputed election results. The need to streamline land rights in the Rift Valley was often mentioned as a prerequisite for lasting peace and coexistence. For instance, a *Daily Nation* editorial stated that 'the bitterness in the Kiambaa area [where IDPs perished in a church fire] serves as a stark reminder that historical grievances based on Kalenjin resentment against the Kikuyu in the Rift Valley still makes the region a powder keg' (Odunga 2009:15).

While underlining the role of the media in perceptions of peace as seen through the media, Van Dijk (1988) suggests that the processing of news by audiences essentially depends upon news structure or the emphasis given to a story. The news writer frames ideas and opinions by means of information selection and dissemination to audiences. News reports can therefore offer a broad picture of social reality and promote social solidarity by reinforcing national identity and shared beliefs through language choices. In pursuit of this role, a consortium of private media owners, the Standard Group, The Nation Media Group and Royal Media Services, attempted to promote social solidarity by running a media campaign with the title 'give us back our country'. The state-owned media did not participate in this peace initiative because it was basically a campaign of the public against the inaction of the state. By using the inclusive phrases 'us' and 'our' to represent the citizens' voice and right to enjoy peace, the message was that ordinary Kenyans were keen to dissociate themselves from political machinations by demanding the unconditional restoration of the erstwhile peace. Nation Television, Nation Newspapers, Kenya Television Network and the Standard Newspaper carried the campaign. This lobbying for peace through the media was intended to influence the leaders to search for a peaceful agreement since the electorate who were being used as pawns in the game were communicating that they were no

longer interested in violent means of resolving the election impasse. The media peace campaign was carried in the daily newspapers and aired on prime time TV through open letters and graphic images of fireballs, dead bodies and shattered buildings. These media messages with emotional overtones were meant to appeal to the leaders' conscience and jolt them into action.

In situations of political uncertainty, the mass media are said to play a crucial role in the construction, articulation and reflection of reality where public opinion tends to become more media dependent (De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989). In the Kenyan case, the media determined the mood of the nation by running headlines that held readers on tenterhooks. For instance, on February 10, 2008, *The Standard* reported that the whole of the following week it would be 'all eyes on Serena' for the hopeful yet apprehensive Kenyans. This implied that the media was prodding the public to focus on the news that would emerge from Serena Hotel where the Kofi Annan-led mediation talks were in progress. This media angle reinforced the notion that Kenyans had suspended their daily activities until the impasse was solved.

It has been concluded that journalists and editors may select and transform the news (Fowler 1991). In the context of post-election violence in Kenya, the print media initially highlighted stories that portrayed heightening apprehension, mistrust and little hopes for the restoration of peace. For instance, the running head of *The Standard* for the first two weeks of January 2008 was 'Kenya Burns'. *The Daily Nation* also reported that 'the Republic of Kenya was a smouldering burnt out shell' (February 3, 2008:1). The descriptions of Kenya as a burning place evoked a sense of helplessness and self-destruction that could scare away investors and tourists, since no one would be interested in entering a burning house. This was a threat to peace because it could fuel violence through revenge and counter-attacks. It also implied that the Kenyan conflict had reached a point of no return. The obsession with reportage on violence and news from the warfront tended to mask the unfolding humanitarian crisis following the death and displacement of so many people. It was therefore not appropriate to comment that Kenya was on fire at a time when peace efforts were in top gear, especially after the arrival of the Panel of Eminent African Persons.

The media can also be catalysts of attitude change in conflict and peace situations. Bartal and Antebi (1992) argue that attitude change can only be brought about by social actors working with tools such as [civic] education, language, socio-political practice and the media. Similarly, Fiske (1992)

argues that media discourse has the power of transmitting to the public an interpretation of events that makes sense to them. At the onset of the post-election violence in Kenya, press reports were devoid of peace messages until Kofi Annan arrived one month later. Even after the signing of the National Accord, the peace building mode lasted only two months, and then the media downplayed the achievement of the Accord as the naming of the cabinet was put off several times. This frame is seen in a report in the *Daily Nation* that 'Kibaki and Raila could not agree on names to appoint to the cabinet because they were being held hostage by their party hardliners' (April 11, 2008:2).

The media reports of unending squabbling among national leaders implied that the national leaders could not be trusted and that they had a different agenda from their followers. This attitude of the media reinforced the contention by Wolfsfeld (1997) that conflict is the *sine qua non* of news. The rapidly changing focus of newspaper reportage on the Kenyan conflict illustrates that the media play a dual role that can either enable or disrupt national identity, depending on the circumstances. This oscillation between brief periods of patriotism in times of national catastrophes and the prolonged checks on the government in peacetime suggest an ambidextrous media. One should note that after the formation of the grand coalition that did not provide for an official opposition in parliament, analysts argued that the press ought to play the role of the opposition to fill the void (Kwayera 2009).

The public's dependence on media messages for guidance therefore increases when the social environment is ambiguous, threatening, or is rapidly changing as was the case in post-violence Kenya. Journalists' reporting and media discourse have a strong impact on framing stories and shaping images and representations of nations, actors and events through war and peace reporting which interprets the world for journalists and media audiences alike. As Blumer and Gurevitch (1997) argue, there is a link between media change and social change. Shinar (2003) also observes that in situations of uncertainty, people turn to the media for guidance. The media become the most effective channels for acquiring information to use in making decisions about political goals. This link was apparent at the height of the election dispute in Kenya when Kibaki and Raila were petitioned, mainly by the media – including publishing open letters – to set aside their differences and meet for the sake of peace (Mburu 2008). A sustained media campaign that Kenya was 'on the brink of war' (Buri 2008) ensured that the antagonistic parties engaged in self-examination and backed down from the initial explosive stands.

Wolfsfeld (1997) holds that 'all news media employ a particular cultural and political perspective that has a major impact on the tone of news coverage, hence the news media have become the central arena for political conflicts today' (p.3). Indeed, the Kenyan media have been used to fight political battles. Politicians often blame the media for fanning tribal or political feelings and conversely for giving them a blackout or not reporting on their 'positive deeds or achievements of the government' (Wamwere 2009:11).

A more holistic view of peace is provided by Baldwin (2005) who argues that peace is the liberty and ability to obtain fulfilment and prosperity in life. In the Kenyan context, this means that, even though the national accord was signed and a semblance of normalcy restored, the tens of thousands of IDPs have not experienced peace because they still live in turmoil, insecurity, disease and hopeless anticipation of compensation. Indeed, the *Sunday Standard* (February 10, 2008) cautioned Kenyans that the calm that followed the signing of the national reconciliation accord by Kibaki and Raila in February 2008 and the eventual handshake by the two principals should not be mistaken for peace. True to the media's prediction, two months later, violent demonstrations were soon planned in protest at the delay in naming the coalition cabinet. Mandelzis (2007) indicates that peace was traditionally equated with the absence of war. On the contrary, current thinking and the events witnessed in Kenya show that peace perspectives go beyond the mere absence of war.

The Kenyan media cannot be said to be fully independent, free and democratic. They have been known to take sides during political campaigns and sometimes play to the whims of the powers that be. The media owners hold sway in editorial policy and political alignment determines the reportage with some unabashedly supporting the ruling party (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights 2006). For instance, during the national referendum in 2005, *The Standard* was decidedly pro-opposition while *The Nation* published views supporting the Kibaki government that were proposing the draft constitution (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights 2006). Such blatant political patronage and short term partisan loyalty does not augur well for sustainable peace and national cohesion because a section of the public may eventually shun any peace messages initiated by sections of the media that they do not favour. For instance, the readership of *The Daily Nation* plummeted in opposition strongholds, such as Kisumu, shortly before and after the 2005 referendum and the paper was declared alien in the area. It would be difficult for those who

subscribe to the ideological leaning of an alternative media house to identify with the peace initiatives of the perceived enemy paper and its editors.

The Kenyan press has been accused by politicians of being anti-peace for highlighting the bickering in the grand coalition government, the ever present plight of IDPs, the failure to promote national healing and the failure to jumpstart the reform agenda and the constitution review process. For instance, Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka asked the media to focus more on the achievements of the coalition government instead of reporting petty political disagreements (*The Standard,* November 12, 2008). What is reported and how it is framed influence public opinion because, as Karlberg (2005) opines, the ways we think and talk about a subject influence and reflect the ways we act in relation to that subject. The upshot of the Kenyan media's obsession with political reportage is that the sprinkling of peace messages are buried under stories of conflict that capture the abuse of power, mega-scandals, misrule, power struggles, premature campaigns and other forms of non-conformity with the wishes of the electorate. Despite the fact that the media plays its watchdog role by blowing the whistle on poor governance, stories of conflict have the potential to excite public debate, and both politicians and the public link every national conflict to the 2012 elections. When this frame of unending cycle of conflict is propagated, the IDPs are wary of their fate in future (Isiakhorida 2009).

So, did the Kenyan media suffer burnout and shift too fast from the peace building mode of early 2008 to the dominant strategy of foregrounding conflict? To answer this question, I now examine the language and implications of the peace and conflict messages communicated following the post-elections violence period. The discussion focuses on three phases identified to illuminate issues that either promoted or curtailed the post-conflict peace and reconciliation process. The three phases are framed as follows: (i) echoes of intense conflict and conditional peace, (ii) voices of reconciliation and negotiated peace, and (iii) reports of elusive peace and disillusionment.

Echoes of Intense Conflict and Conditional Peace

The print media initially adopted pessimistic descriptions of the 2007 elections. The negative adjectives served to heighten tension among the audiences and agitated the grieving ODM while PNU was sent into a damage control mode. Depending on the media house, the persuasion of the reporter and the target of the accusation, the elections were described as bungled, stolen, marred, chaotic, sham, discredited, infamous, bloody,

divisive, disgraceful and contentious. The press initially framed the situation variously in the standard language of conflict as violence, chaos or skirmishes. These usual words did not convey the magnitude of the situation as one that deserved external intervention because Kenyans were accustomed to reading reports of chaos or inter-clan skirmishes. As the conflict intensified, however, press reports adopted a more emotional and desperate style by describing the violence as bloodletting, self-destruction or madness (*Sunday Standard*, February 3, 2008). The latter three nouns had the potential to influence the leaders and citizens to question their moral role in the saga and reconsider the destiny of the nation. Bloodletting implied intentional killing while self-destruction carried overtones of a nation wilfully committing suicide.

The vote tallying was variously described as doctoring, heavily rigged, stage-managed, daylight robbery and full of falsity and contradictions. The ODM rallying call that was picked up by the media was: No Raila, no peace, and a threat to hold a million man march on state house and install the peoples' president. Mogekwu (2005) notes that pejorative language, such as the foregoing, fuels antagonism and hence is a threat to peace. The aforementioned descriptions underlined the lack of legitimacy of the PNU and sustained the sense of loss for ODM besides fanning the desire to launch revenge or seek justice. These frames would therefore sustain the debate on the electoral fraud, thereby distracting attention from finding a peaceful way forward. The media aptly warned that Kenyans should not expect peace without justice (*Daily Nation*, January 3, 2008).

As the situation caught the attention of the world media, Kibaki issued a press release that for peace to be guaranteed; ODM and Raila must recognize him as the duly elected president or go to court if they felt aggrieved. But he also acknowledged that there was indeed a problem. He also ordered ODM and Raila to tell their supporters to stop barricading roads and destroying property. The imperative 'tell' was an indication of condescension that demeaned Raila's stature. Kibaki further insisted that 'the violence was premeditated, organized and executed by ODM followers and was illegal' (*Daily Nation*, January 3, 2008:23) while ODM issued a press rejoinder stating that the rioters were defending their right spontaneously. The reference to the violence as either 'premeditated' or 'spontaneous' represented two opposing explanations of its cause. The press emphasized that the two positions were irreconcilable. This widened the gap between the antagonists and delayed consensus on the strategy for restoring peace in the short term. The rift occasioned hardening

positions, since no party was ready to take responsibility for the breakdown of security, or to cede ground, hence jeopardizing peace.

In response to the widening rift, the media carried a terse message from the international community to the effect that U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and Kofi Annan had ordered that the violence 'must stop'. Thereafter, the then US Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, addressed the press in Nairobi with a message from President George Bush. The press reported that there must be 'real power sharing' (*The Standard*, January 22, 2008) and highlighted the word 'real', implying that the flipside of real would be fake or pretentious power sharing. This subtle insistence on equitable power heightened the suspicion against the PNU side and cast doubt on their commitment to the search for peace.

As the standoff heightened, a clique emerged around president Kibaki as advisors and the press labelled them hardliners, implying that they were not willing to change or cede ground. The most vocal of them was Martha Karua, the then Justice Minister, who told a BBC reporter on the *Hard Talk* programme on February 9, 2008 that 'power sharing was not a must' (*Sunday Standard* 2008, February 10, p.32). President Kibaki also released a press statement emphasizing that he was duly elected and was willing to work with anyone from across the political divide that was ready to work with him. Kibaki's inclusion of the qualifier 'duly' that was highlighted by the media was a contradiction in terms, because he had recommended that the complainants go to court yet he was sanitizing himself before arbitration.

At the centre of the impasse was the fate of IDPs. Kibaki's response to the IDP problem was reactive rather than proactive. The decision to enforce the Operation *Rudi Nyumbani* (Operation Go Back Home) decree and the subsequent closure of IDP camps was seen as a simplistic peace strategy. It lacked a mechanism for reconciling IDPs and the communities they were returning to. The government's assertion that every Kenyan had the right to reside, work and own property in any part of the country did not seem probable because members of one ethnic group in the Rift Valley were still being killed in the areas the government was asking them to return to. The resettlement directive simply assumed that a return to normalcy was tantamount to restoration of peace – which was not the case. As revealed in a story published in the *Sunday Standard*,

> ... the displaced have not known peace because, like elephants locked in a permanent struggle for supremacy, the two principals [Raila and Kibaki] have trampled on the rights of the displaced and condemned them to embarrassing landlessness and destitution (Wamwere 2009:11).

This report, in other words, stated that continued bickering at the apex of national leadership translated to suffering on the ground and leaders had to set an example by themselves showing signs of harmonious relations. It would appear that external players were equally concerned about the issues affecting the IDPs. It was evident in press reports that there was pressure from the international community for Kibaki and Raila to strike a speedy peace deal. For instance, a news report in the *Sunday Standard* of January 20, 2008 stated that Kofi Annan and Tanzanian President, Jakaya Kikwete – who had been brought in as a neutral neighbour – demanded that the two protagonists had no option but to agree. Further reports highlighted the interest of external players. Kikwete was reported to have said unless there was a voluntary deal signed to stem the violence, the international community would mobilize for immediate intervention. On the other hand, Annan's demeanour in context of his role as the chief mediator was described unfavourably: the matter was so serious that Annan's mood had changed from that of persuasive diplomacy to one of intimidation by warning that UN peacekeepers would be deployed to quell the violence (Musau 2008). Everyone was scared to be seen as the one frustrating the process because unspecified action would be taken by the international community against those perceived to be against the progress of the peace talks. This communicated that those who posed obstacles to peace are usually isolated and castigated. In the Kenyan context, the common phrase 'enemy of development' is used to describe anyone who does not co-operate in any venture that is for the common good, such as the national peace talks. What the press reports implied is that it would have been embarrassing to await external intervention and that there was a need for home-grown solutions since Kenya was not a failed state (*Sunday Standard,* February 3, 2008; Ngumbao 2008).

Reflecting on these reports, one sees some level of coercion and arm-twisting, suggesting that the peace deal was more conditional, bent to external pressure and was not self-initiated by the conflicting parties. The urgency to respond to the need for a home-grown peace deal was evident in the way the media portrayed the country's peace prospects as bleak (*The Standard,* January 22, 2008).

Pessimistic phrases and headlines dominated the news in the first phase of the Kenyan conflict. For instance, it was reported that the prospect of a civil war was real, Kenya was on the brink, Kenya was burning, and Kenya was becoming a failed state (Otieno 2008). Others were that Annan had called off the talks, that it was a make or break situation, and that militias targeted flower farms for revenge attacks (*The Standard* 2008,

January 22). The *Daily Nation* further described Kenya as 'a burnt out smouldering ruin' (January 3, 2008). The desperation emphasized by the media had the effect of prodding the leaders into action and formed the channel of communicating the progress of the boardroom diplomacy led by Kofi Annan because Raila and Kibaki could not see eye to eye for the better part of January 2008.

This first phase of media reportage was therefore characterized by reporting frames that foregrounded images of conflict and disagreement. According to Mandelzis (2007), in such circumstances, the antagonists ask the question: Who is the aggressor and how can he be stopped? In the Kenyan context, this led the media to popularize expressions and images of aggression and intimidation. These frames created the impression of escalating conflict, vengeance and mistrust that did not augur well for peace building at the national and village levels.

Voices of Reconciliation and Negotiated Peace

In this section, I explore the role of the media in voicing messages of reconciliation, especially their response to the formation of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Team (KNDRT) in February 2008. This team was mandated to find an end to the violence, formulate the power sharing agreement, initiate a framework for national healing and reconciliation and establish ways of redressing the disputed election results. In one of the first calls for reconciliation and negotiation, an editor asked Kibaki and Raila: 'How many more must die, how much more must be destroyed before you come to your senses?' (*Daily Nation*, January 3, 2008). This portrayed a media that demonstrated social responsibility by directly questioning the moral probity of the leading antagonists. It followed the realization that the media could not simply remain objective and highlight the conflict without contributing to attempts at resolving it. Consequently, media owners, in conjunction with the Concerned Citizens for Peace, changed tack and began a programme of peace education. This demonstrated a humane and patriotic, as opposed to an objective but aloof, media. They realized that focusing on the blame game in the face of a humanitarian catastrophe could only promote hatred and vengeance and prolong the conflict.

As the KNDRT team got to work, the press portrayed the peace and reconciliation process as very delicate by propagating phrases like 'the stakes are high', 'the world is watching', and that it was 'a race against time' (*Sunday Standard*, February 3, 2008). Such phrases put all observers on tenterhooks, besides putting pressure on the negotiators to find a

quick fix to peace. Such ultimatums could have led to the subsequent shaky peace deal that later spawned new conflicts over power sharing.

The gesture of peace and reconciliation imminent in the handshake by Kibaki and Raila on February 1, 2008 was expected to neutralize the preceding period of fierce media and public outrage over how the government had failed to manage the conflict. It is in this second phase of media coverage of the post-election violence that we see the media tone down its language that seemed to escalate the violence, and focus more on communicating messages that sought to promote reconciliation and peace. Of interest is how the media articulated their role in the post-conflict setting. A report in the *Sunday Standard* highlighted the fact that the media were required to show leadership in areas of dialogue, national cohesion and reconciliation (Okello 2009). According to Okello, the media ought to highlight messages that promoted unity and patriotism rather than hype disagreements that drove citizens to the abyss of deeper conflict. Similarly, Bratic (2005) argues that in order to work for the public good, the media should convey messages in forms that contribute to the formation of positive attitudes and opinions and to the increase of knowledge and awareness. He concludes that the journalistic agenda of social responsibility could facilitate the agenda of peace building. The media in Kenya has on various occasions indulged directly in national crises by creating public sentiment. For instance, the *Daily Nation* of January 3, 2008 addressed Kibaki and Raila in an editorial and told them that: 'the earnest cry of all Kenyans is: step back from the brink'. In another report, *The Standard* incited the public sentiment by telling Kenyans to shun politicians who would flee the country by plane if a full-scale war broke out. Therefore, in times of public repression, the media reflects public sentiment by being the mouthpiece of the masses. However, in times of normalcy, the media can whip up emotions by their reports of investigative journalists. Bratic (2005) opines that, since the need for information is increased by uncertainty in conflict situations, the power of the media as the main agenda setter increases, in part due to its power to summarize overarching developments in the conflict. The media should be arbiters in conflict rather than catalysts. Tehranian (1993) envisages that new cultural forces, including responsible mass media, peace discourse and peace journalism, are essential for achieving a transition to a peace culture. Similarly, Bratic (2005) suggests that the media should represent all sides and opinions in a conflict and post-conflict situation since this promotes the potential for reconciliation and acceptance of a diversity of ideas.

The question of whether to offer amnesty to suspects of the post-election violence or to prosecute them featured as a barometer of commitment to reconciliation. ODM reportedly called for the unconditional release of their arrested supporters, regardless of the seriousness of the charges that faced them, arguing that this would lead to peace and reconciliation. As one reporter toned down the issue, 'the question of war crimes does not arise in our case because there was neither war nor a war situation' (Mwalulu 2009). However, PNU responded by telling the press that there would be no blanket amnesty without trial and prosecution to punish the real offenders. Here, there was a subtle negotiation through the media between PNU and ODM, using the violence suspects as the bait. The media promoted the view that since ODM had recognized Kibaki as the president for the sake of peace, the ODM youths should have been released unconditionally from remand in exchange for the ODM peace gesture. The self righteousness exhibited by both PNU and ODM on the issue of how to deal with perpetrators of the violence and the subsequent scuttling of the amnesty debate confirms the contention by Haugerud (1995) that official rhetoric is a strategic balance between coercion and persuasion. ODM has both coerced and persuaded the government to release the ODM youths unconditionally. The media reaction to the amnesty debate as a plank in the reconciliation efforts was nonchalant since they reduced the issue simply to 'the amnesty debate'. The implication here is that political debate is usually a battle of wits and the more convincing and wily debater often wins on the basis of conviction, regardless of the truth of the matter.

The media portrayed Raila as pro-peace and concluded that he had conceded too much while the PNU camp was increasingly painted as content with coalescing executive power around Kibaki. Raila struck a conciliatory tone. He told the press that ODM was committed to the success of the negotiation talks and 'were doing all to ensure that the ground was stable for talks and that Kibaki also ought to have approached mediation in good faith' (*Sunday Standard*, February 3, 2008:3).

This second phase of post-conflict reportage could be called the Operation *Karibu Nyumbani* (Operation Welcome Back Home) phase. Here, IDPs were presented for acceptance through peace rallies and voluntary reintegration by their neighbours. Indeed, the National Dialogue and Reconciliation statement signed by the ODM and PNU negotiators on February 1 states in paragraph 3 (1) that: 'The final goal of the dialogue is to achieve sustainable peace, stability and justice through the rule of law and respect for human rights'. The National Dialogue report was

adopted by parliament and entrenched in the constitution as the National Accord and Reconciliation Act. However, the press consistently referred to the accord as 'the Peace Accord', although the word, peace, was not part of the standard reference to the accord. By popularizing the modified phrase 'peace accord', the media conveyed the public desire for long term peace. The accord provided for the formation of a Grand Coalition Government on the principle of portfolio balance and power sharing on a 50-50 basis.

The Kenyan media apparently shifts its focus periodically between promoting conflict and peace. This tendency is driven by the public record of the personalities involved in the respective political crises. There are stock scandals associated with controversial players in the political arena. These are revived by the media periodically, sometimes for political expediency. For instance, the Goldenberg scandal that dates back to 1995 remains unresolved and is usually featured around election time by the media to dismiss some contenders as unfit for political office (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights 2006). Conversely, the media cause and frame actions and reactions. In cases where the government's official position is not convincing or totally lacking, the media offer alternative insights, speculation and verification of facts. For instance, when an ODM member of parliament was gunned down by a policeman in January 2008, *The Standard* strongly disputed the police statement and dismissed the government spokesman's explanation that the shooting was an outcome of the intrigues in a love triangle. This media opinion led to major riots. The media may also reflect the desires of the public through such phrases as 'Kenyans are tired' and 'MPs must pay tax now like all Kenyans' (*The Standard*, May 12, 2008:3).

The period of negotiated peace was short-lived. Despite the passing of the National Accord and Reconciliation Act, further conflict was reported over delayed naming of the cabinet. This threatened to reverse the gains of the truce as reflected in an opinion editorial, headlined: 'It is time to put an end to the madness and demand our country back', published in the *Daily Nation* of April 11, 2008. This was a candid wake up call to the Kenyans to take charge of the peace process and the destiny of their country and not over-rely on the political class for all the answers. Oriang' (2008) wrote that Kenyans needed peace and quiet to search their souls and come up with a new way of co-existing because the principals [Kibaki and Raila] appeared unable to put an end to the nonsense. Here, Oriang' was requesting Kenyans to make peace and to forget how politicians had misused them.

It is also instructive that when the coalition cabinet was formed, the *Daily Nation* of April 14, 2008 set the national sense of accomplishment with their headline: 'Cabinet for Peace'. This portrayed that there were no options except to form an all-inclusive cabinet that catered for all regional, ethnic and political party interests. The media conceded that though bloated and expensive, at least all conflicting interests were taken aboard in an attempt to pacify all. This was, however, a misleading promise because the media soon began to portray the cabinet as a 'Tower of Babel' with dissenting views that threatened the nascent peace (Musau 2008).

A report by Buri (2008) introduced the concept of 'homing' as an idea that pinpointed the missing link in the resettlement and peace campaigns at the community level. Buri contends that homing heightens peace and reconciliation and confirms that operation *Rudi Nyumbani* would not be as easy as the government presented it. 'Homing' here is an excellent concept that captures a deeper understanding of what is needed to promote reconciliation. It is about having a mechanism in place to ensure that the communities where the IDPs were returning to understood the need to accept them back as fellow Kenyans who may be different, based on ethnic identity, but shared one national identity as Kenyans. Buri proposes that, for national healing, there should be repentance of our active and passive participation in the sacrifice of innocent blood at the altar of our political ambitions and greed for control. He further points out that 'resettlement is more than simply telling the people to pack and go back to their lands, and homing entails reinstitution that would bring the people as close as possible to the pre-election state' (p.18).

The report by Buri implied that by building transitional camps and supplying building materials, the government was simply housing rather than homing the returnees. This means that resettlement was more than identifying a piece of land and dumping the landless there to eke out their survival. It is about the role of the larger society in reconciliation and healing. A holistic approach is seen in the media report by Orwa (2008) that emphasized the need for political, social and economic institutions that focus on all the needs of the displaced.

Given the urgency of the humanitarian crisis, peace had to be negotiated. For instance, a government Minister was quoted as telling IDPs that those responsible for their suffering had to be brought to book, but they must also make steps towards forgiveness. This report conveyed the idea that in negotiated peace, one ought to concede certain things in the process of pursuing justice. Another voice of reconciliation was seen in an article by Okanga (2005) that posed the question: 'The differences that

divided us are long gone, so why is so little progress being made in reconciling Kenyans?' This alluded to the complacency that was setting in due to the perceived calm in the country. It was also reported that leaders had become insensitive to the needs of the refugees they helped create and that 'they have gone on with their lives as if nothing happened' (Orwa 2008). These reports suggested that the leaders were the real obstacles to the peace and reconciliation process. The media propagated the notion that leadership and a sustained peace agenda at the national level were lacking.

Reports of Elusive Peace and Disillusionment

In this section, I trace how the media framed the aftermath of the national accord and progress of reconciliation one year after the country was mobilized towards uniting. The objective is to show how the media contributed to the pace of reconciliation and sustaining the peace building mode. Given that the core principle of the grand coalition government in Kenya was a temporary arrangement meant to end the violence and restore peace, it is important to analyze media reports as to whether the national accord achieved the goals of peace or merely restored normalcy. Apparently, too many contentious issues remain unresolved. One year after the peace accord, the media consistently reminded Kenyans that 'Kibaki assumed power with a contested mandate and that his claim to the presidency is at best tenuous, if not downright illegitimate' (Ahmednasir 2009). The idea of a contested mandate implied that Kenyans were simply tolerating Kibaki for the duration of his term for the sake of peace. Therefore the idea of deceptive peace is inherent in the report. The disillusionment and confusion is further captured in an Opinion-Editorial in the *Daily Nation* that:

> ... We have two governments in one ... we don't know which one to pay allegiance to and the Prime Minister who would have been our Messiah is locked in a bitter power struggle with Kibaki over the interpretation of the National Accord and its full implementation (Kamichore 2009:17).

This newspaper commentary illustrates the fact that commitment to reconciliation remained lacklustre. The media's conception of two governments in one promoted division and bickering at every level, including in the civil service. Moreover, by labelling Raila as the Messiah who failed to liberate the people, the media portrayed him as selfish and power hungry. This is a negative pointer to peace prospects. The use of the qualifier 'bitter' underlines the belated realization that, after all, the National Accord was full of loopholes and could not guarantee peace for Kenyans. This shows that the media both reflect and create the political situation.

The discourse of harmony that had dominated the press around the time of signing of the National Accord and appointment of the cabinet was short-lived as media reports degenerated back to reportage that emphasized the folly of having signed a hurriedly negotiated power sharing agreement that did not spell out all the modalities of implementation. The media's change of tact was due to the realization that the political class had taken Kenyans for a ride and was not interested in real change that could guarantee peace. Some politicians also betrayed the trust of the media and the nationalist tone that had been echoed by the media at the time of signing the accord and in the first three months of the cabinet's existence. The political class began displacing their shortcomings by blaming the media for fabricating stories about them and for highlighting negative issues. The media changed tack, mainly acting as the voice that could audit government performance and follow up on promises of change on behalf of the public.

There were media reports that questioned the sustainability of the peace arrangement and whether it was foolproof. Such reports threatened peace by portraying the leaders as short-sighted and inept. Disillusionment soon set in and an audit report by the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy a year later noted that the public accused the president and the Prime Minister of 'failing to mobilize Kenyans for national healing and reconciliation' (*Sunday Standard*, May 3, 2009:8). The report indicated that a greater percentage of the population lived in fear of their neighbours and there existed a high possibility of chaos come the next general election, unless Kibaki and Raila changed their style of leadership. Failure in national healing and reconciliation was exemplified by hostility towards returnee IDPs, and according to one IDP, 'no one had gone to them [in the camps] to brief them about cohesion and the peace initiative' (*The Sunday Standard*, February 3, 2008:12). This shows that there were no follow-up activities that could hasten reintegration and many were merely fascinated by the high level handshake between Raila and Kibaki which was merely symbolic.

The degree of commitment to the search for peace is further challenged by the news report that The Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission Bill 'devotes seven pages to the question of amnesty and only a single page to the issue of reconciliation and reparation' (Dolan 2008). In a related event, the Minister for special programmes declared that the government had no more money to pay IDPs their compensation and ordered the camps closed while other camps had to be demolished at night by armed government security ostensibly to flush out fake IDPs. Follow-

ing the governments' demolition of IDP camps before reparation, the media painted a picture that the mood in the country was changing for the worse due to disillusionment and despair. The media sentiment was close to the actual mood in the country because it was reported that 'many Kenyans affected by the violence believed that the potential for fresh violence loomed large since the leaders were not interested in the peace situation in the villages so long as all was well in their palatial homes in Nairobi' (*The Standard* 2009, January 12). This report implied that the leaders were the beneficiaries of the violence and could not follow up reconciliation and compensation matters on behalf of the voters. This is further apparent in the report by Kwayera (2009) that when the embers of the 2007 post-election violence faded, it was expected that constitutional and institutional reforms would top the national agenda as a first instance of preventing the recurrence of the mayhem. This report bears a hint of latent chaos in that 'the embers simply faded'. This implies that the hatred, mistrust and predisposition to violence are simply dormant and can be re-ignited instantaneously. The report reinforced the media frame that the peace was temporary and superficial. Hence, Kenyans should not rest easy but should consciously entrench peace, that is, extinguish the embers completely, metaphorically speaking.

The reconciliation efforts faced hiccups because of mistrust in the coalition government, with the media introducing labels like 'strange bed fellows', 'marriage of convenience', 'Siamese twins' and 'a cabal held together by mutual affinity for corruption', to describe the power sharing arrangement (Namunane 2009). These derogatory descriptions by the media portrayed the coalition government as morally deficient or socially inferior. By comparing the coalition government to Siamese twins and people in a marriage of convenience, the press implied that there would be no mutual agreement because these were two entities forced to operate together by circumstances. They were not bound to be the epitome of peaceful coexistence because their wishes would hardly coincide. By extension, if there was no peace in the cabinet, then peace would also be elusive among the ordinary citizens, many of whom considered the national leaders as role models. In the eye of the media, and by extension the public, the leaders could therefore not be trusted to pursue real governance changes that were expected to entrench peace. The media thus sent the government into a damage control mode. The refrain that the leaders were not committed to reform and that the peace agenda had been conveniently forgotten therefore gained currency in the media.

To predict further doom for peace, a debate as to whether the coalition would last till the next elections in 2012 was started by the media even before national healing was complete. The media drew the public attention to the so-called protocol wars in government, pitting the Prime Minister against the Head of the Civil Service and the Vice President. This was followed by press reports of 'cracks in the coalition, sabotage, cancelled cabinet meetings, intra-party wrangles over allocation of ministerial posts, resignations from government, parliamentary censure motions, premature presidential campaigns and crystallizing political alliances in readiness for the presidential battle in 2012' (Okelo 2009). This shift of focus pointed to the fact that the politicians had their own selfish agenda and national healing was secondary to their continued political survival. It would seem that politicians thrive in conflict and political debate flourishes only if there are contentious issues. This implies that peace may not be an interesting topic for politicians. The media apparently hold the politicians accountable for the aftermath of the politically instigated violence. Therefore, newspaper stories and analyses revive debates on unresolved issues when the memory of the public is clouded by secondary conflicts. This helps the readers to refocus when the government and politicians introduce diversionary tactics to cover up the real issues. This is why *The Standard* urged the government to 'walk the talk by implementing the peace accord in full ... especially by redefining the executive powers of the Prime Minister' (January 12, 2009).

It is clear that in Kenya, politicians scheme to court controversy at the expense of peace. For instance, when there was a parliamentary censure motion against the agriculture minister William Ruto, the ethnic group of the proposer of the motion received threats of violence, should the minister be voted out of office. Another political punch bag was the issue of whether tosend violence suspects to the International Criminal Court in the Hague or try them locally. Debate on all these emerging conflicts were refereed by the media and at any rate, the emerging conflicts were wont to submerge the real causes of the electoral conflict. Little wonder then, that the press has emphasized 'the need to address all historical injustices if lasting peace is to be achieved, since successive Kenyan rulers had perfected the art of sweeping issues under the carpet and hoodwinking the public through Commissions of inquiry whose recommendations are never implemented' (*The Standard*, December 14, 2008).

Agenda 4 of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation team was meant to address reforms and redress historical injustices. This agenda was suspended and daggers were drawn again with both parties accusing

each other of sabotage. In reaction to the handling of Agenda 4, the media resorted to confrontational words and phrases in their banner headlines for instance: accord loopholes are seed of discord in the coalition, Kilaguni talks collapse, coalition deadlock, dysfunctional government, and calls for fresh elections (*Sunday Standard*, May 3, 2009). Even the militant clarion call by ODM *bado mapambano* (the struggle continues) was thrown into the mix to pressure PNU to accept reforms. Such a change of tune did not augur well for sustainable peace and social harmony. The women leaders of Kenya also called what the press labelled 'a sex boycott' to appeal to the moral conscience of the ruling class to be more proactive to the nagging national problems of the day. The intended national sex boycott could lead one to ask whether peace can begin from the bedroom or whether it was yet another push for peace through punishment and intimidation. For instance, *The Daily Nation* asked whether all diplomatic strategies for peace and change had failed for Kenyans to take politics to their private lives. The sex boycott was considered a threat to peace on the home front as some apolitical men would not support it, leading to domestic violence (*The Standard*, May 4, 2009). It was also dismissed as an insult to the IDPs who shared single tents with their teenage children, had no food, and hence no time to engage in such luxuries. It was seen as a bad example to the youth that leaders could degenerate to mixing such debasing topics with the intricacies of national leadership (*Daily Nation*, April 25, 2009).

The elusive image of peace was further painted by Onyango (2009) who reported that plans to erect a memorial at the site of one of the most horrific killings of the post-election violence had caused inter-community tension to resurface in a village in the Rift Valley. A resident of the area was quoted as saying that they could not take lightly the monument that was being proposed by their Kikuyu friends since it was against Kalenjin customs and would only serve to incite the local [Kalenjin] people. He added that the monument was an abomination according to their culture. While discussing the same issue, Okech (2009) argues that there was merely a cessation of violence in the Rift Valley but there was neither healing nor reconciliation because of a dearth of a unifying national leadership.

The foregoing reports that portrayed peace as elusive illustrate that the events were leading Kenyans back to the intense conflict discourse that characterized the immediate post-election reportage of early 2008. They all pointed to heightening tension and the fact that the litany of unresolved conflicts were on the rebound. According to one columnist, 'early elections must rescue the nation before this whirlwind of growing chaos shreds

Kenya into pieces' (Wamwere 2008:12). In his view, even in matters of peace, coalitions are not its only facilitator. He held that a coalition could be terminated if it failed and that in Kenya, the coalition had been pushing the country to the brink that nobody except its political architects seemed ready for (Wamwere 2008). However, I find Wamwere's position partisan and wishful thinking because the sentiments on the ground are that there should be no elections until national healing and reconciliation is complete and effective. In fact, many Kenyans have vowed never to participate in any future national elections, citing the death and suffering occasioned by the conflict over the controversial 2007 debacle. Ironically, and without remorse to the victims of post-election violence, the peace agenda diminished as some politicians, led by one Martha Karua, began to campaign in earnest for the far off 2012 presidential elections within their first year in government (*Daily Nation,* April 7, 2009).

Discussion

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that long-term peace can only be achieved by dialogue, justice and the restoration of mutual trust among grassroots communities that interact and share resources. In the absence of structured dialogue, apprehension rises. This could be why some victims of the violence were reluctant to go back to the Rift Valley until the principals agreed to a peace deal. The victims' apprehension was a pointer to the government that the official peace messages and the top-down intervention strategies were not satisfactory. The news reports from the initial phase of intense conflict revealed that the public mistrust and the government's denial could not guarantee sustainable peace for Kenya.

The choice of words by the media and the dominant reporting frames can be grouped into three distinct phases. Initially, they revolved around aggressive language and grandstanding aimed at maintaining the status quo by PNU on one hand and allegations of stolen elections and quest for electoral justice by ODM on the other. The second phase saw utterances and media reportage geared towards mediation, negotiation, reconciliation and promotion of peaceful coexistence, while the disillusionment phase brought in media analyses that focused on Kenyan's disappointment and loss of hope in the coalition government.

Peace implementation is not a one-step activity. In the mediation phase, therefore, the press emphasized that peace had to start from the top leadership, since 'Kenyans fought because of them' (Otieno 2008). In a related article, *The Standard* reported that Coast MPs had noted that peace could not be imposed. Hence, those who were making hasty peace moves

were warned that 'they were creating monsters by practising nepotism, and that Kenyans had to be patient because we cannot have peace tomorrow' (Ngumbao 2008). Kenyans were told not to waste the golden opportunity for lasting peace through the Annan-led mediation talks. The fact that the media report highlighted phrases that emphasized that peace 'could not be imposed' and that 'we cannot have peace tomorrow' represented the realistic view that if the peace process was rushed, there would be mistakes and others would cry foul. Thus, there was the need for a systematic approach free of short-term measures taken for political expediency. The report also implied that conflict situations provide a window for ventilating sectarian differences and entrenching peace. This way, the media called upon the leaders to take responsibility, stay focused on the needs of Kenyans, and not to criticize the peace efforts, but take up the task of reconciling Kenyans.

The media frame of an increased lack of peace and dim prospects, featured in the third part of my analysis, could be counterproductive. For instance, the Permanent Secretary for Information and Communication told the Kenyan media 'to stop pessimism and development of prosecutorial press that only thrived on gloom' (Ndegwa 2009). This implies that Kenya was simply experiencing a period of suppressed violence and any sensationalization of disagreements could revive the violence and frustrate peace efforts. As Herman (1996) notes, some phases of peace are simply less violent versions of war. Herman's view is pertinent to Kenya in that we have witnessed a version of peace punctuated with a virulent war of words in the press between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila and among their coalition cabinet ministers. For instance, Raila once referred to Kibaki's leadership style as archaic while a PNU cabinet minister referred to Raila as power hungry. Such contemptuous references by national leaders cause simmering resentment not only among them but also their followers, thereby destabilizing the national psyche towards peace and unity. Besides publishing the leaders' utterances for public evaluation of their character, the press should also carry feedback that reflects public opinion that indicates to the leaders that they become enemies of peace when they dispense with decorum in public. It emerges that peace messages that involve self initiative of the actors from below are readily acknowledged by the public and the media, as opposed to high sounding official rhetoric that is hardly implemented.

Since Kenyans look up to the media for opinions that shape public debate, the latter should interpret and reflect the public mood to the gov-

ernment. Despite the agreement through the National Accord, the peace oriented media coverage in phase two of the post election saga degenerated due to the suspense and latent mistrust attributed to political blame games. From the media reports, Kenyans faced mixed fortunes and lasting peace was an uncertain prospect. Given the unprecedented post-election violence, the Kenyan media was apparently torn between neutrality and involvement. They oscillated between advocacy journalism and involvement journalism. Tumber and Prentoulis (2003) observe that in involvement journalism, reporters shift from objectivity to subjectivity. Kenyan news reporters adopted subjective phrases such as 'our' and 'we' in phase two of the conflict. This portrayed them as having a personal stake in the future of the country. The step by media owners to sponsor a media campaign, directly exhorting the warring parties to give Kenyans their country back, also indicated that they were not mere profiteers but could also demonstrate social responsibility. This was a strategic shift from the earlier objective and aloof stance that portrayed the media as passive commentators on the conflict as Kenya burned.

Mandelzis (2007) believes that journalism is a professional field whose aim is to facilitate a shared, socially binding viewpoint by providing information unbiased by personal attitudes and beliefs. In the Kenyan case, although the media aggravated conflict and heightened tensions in the initial phase, they sometimes contributed to peace building by directly castigating the perceived antagonists and impressing upon them that if they did not stop the violence, there would be no country left to govern. This demonstrates that in extra-ordinary times of conflict, the media need not be laid back for the sake of neutrality and impartiality. In any case, media freedom was also threatened by the circumstances as were the very lives of the journalists, their property and relatives. This is where a patriotic media was seen at work. The Kenyan media was decidedly more sentimental in their language than the Western media that focused on the violence and international arm-twisting.

Conclusion

In the eyes of the Kenyan media, sustainable peace in Kenya requires a cultivation of a national ethos and facilitation of voluntary social integration from below. Social justice stands out as a key prerequisite for peace. As some media analysts have warned, if Kenyans do not address the underlying causes of the violence, then the national elections of 2012 would foment a worse predicament (Wamwere 2009; Mwalulu 2009; Onyango 2009). The

media can choose to be a catalyst for peace or conflict, depending on their ideological leaning and interpretation of situations. The reporting frames chosen by the Kenyan media in covering the post-election violence of 2007-2008 therefore ultimately influenced conceptions of peace prospects by consumers of news. Significantly, the Kenyan media have upheld the view that peace is neither achieved by signing of pacts nor by policy pronouncements. It should be an inclusive process, defined and pursued in the public interest and not a preserve of the political class.

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Media Image and Social Integration of Liberian and Togolese Refugees in Ghana

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Abstract

In the 1990s, refugees throughout West Africa originated largely from Liberia and Togo. This article explores the reception of Liberian and Togolese refugees in one West African country – Ghana – from 1990-2007. It focuses attention on the role of Ghana's print media, both state- and private-owned, in fostering or hindering the social integration of refugees. Ghanaian newspapers, radio broadcasts, United Nations reports and semi-structured interviews were used to build on studies of politics of belonging and relationship between ethnic identity and social integration among migrants to Ghana. It was found that Ghanaian media framed Liberia's largely Krahn and Mandingo refugees as security threats, mercenaries and criminals, but not Togo's Ewe refugees. Ghana's ties to the Ewe people built hostility towards Togo's anti-Ewe regimes, while Ghana supported Liberia's anti-Krahn and Mandingo regimes. Liberians' social integration was thwarted not only by Ghana's good relations with the Liberian government, but also by media framing, lack of historical ties, internal dissent, cultural values opposed to Ghanaians and long term dependency on large United Nations organized settlements. Conversely, Togolese refugees self-settled with Ghanaian Ewe and quickly became self-sufficient in Ghana's Volta region, once a part of Togo. The media can support social integration and more humane policies toward refugees by framing issues in human rights rather than security terms.

Key Terms: Ghana, Liberia, Togo, media framing, refugees, social integration.

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Résumé

Dans les années 1990, la plupart des réfugiés en Afrique de l'Ouest venait du Libéria et du Togo. Cet article explore l'intégration des réfugiés libériens et togolais dans un pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, le Ghana, entre 1990 et 2007. Il étudie le rôle des médias au Ghana, fut-il la presse écrite d'État ou du privé, dans la promotion ou le blocage de l'intégration sociale des réfugiés. Des journaux Ghanéens, des émissions radio, des rapports des Nations Unies, des interviews partiellement structurées ont été utilisés comme la base d'études sur la politique de l'appartenance et la relation entre l'identité ethnique et l'intégration sociale chez les migrants au Ghana. Il a été démontré que la presse Ghanéenne a largement dépeint les réfugiés Krahn et Mandingo comme une menace pour la sécurité, des mercenaires et criminels, contrairement aux réfugiés Ewe du Togo. Les liens du Ghana et du peuple Ewe ont engendré de l'hostilité envers les régimes anti-Ewe au Togo. En même temps, le Ghana soutenait les régimes du Libéria qui étaient contre les Krahn et les Mandingo. L'intégration sociale des Libériens était compromise par non seulement les bonnes relations entre le Ghana et le gouvernement libérien, mais aussi par le rôle des médias, le manque de liens historiques, le manque de cohésion interne, les valeurs culturelles contraires au celles des Ghanéens, la dépendance à long terme des programmes de réinsertion des Nations Unies. En retour, les réfugiés togolais qui se sont eux même établis chez les Ewe du Ghana se sont rapidement intégrés dans la région Volta du Ghana qui auparavant faisait partie du Togo. Les médias peuvent supporter l'intégration sociale et des politiques plus humaines envers les réfugiés dans la façon dont ils évoquent les questions en des termes de droits humains au lieu de termes de sécurité.

Mots clés : Ghana, Liberia, Togo, couverture médiatique, refugiés, intégration sociale.

Background

In 1994, there were approximately one million refugees in West Africa, mainly Liberians and Togolese (Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1994). More than a decade later, little had changed. In 2005, Togo had 39,000 citizens leave their homeland. At the time, this was the world's largest movement of refugees within a single year time frame. Liberia fared just a bit better. Between 2000 and 2005, 70,000 Liberian refugees repatriated. Yet, Liberia remained one of the top ten source countries for refugees, with approximately 231,000 Liberians remaining in asylum outside of their homeland (UNHCR 2006).

Liberians' main countries of refuge have been Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and, for those with greater means and education, the USA (Kuhlman 1994). The main countries of refuge for Togolese have been Benin and Ghana (UNHCR 2006). In early 2006, Ghana had approximately 54,000 refugees, including around 38,000 from Liberia and 14,000 from Togo. Togolese refugees in Ghana, mostly self-settled into smaller communities, have been relatively successful in terms of social integration. Liberian refugees in Ghana have been placed in large United Nations-organized settlements and faced multiple obstacles to acculturation.

Theoretical Framework and Scope

This article explores the reception of Liberian and Togolese refugees in Ghana from 1990 to June 30, 2007, when the United Nations withdrew support for refugee settlements in Ghana. It pays special attention to the role of Ghana's print media in fostering or hindering social integration. The article builds on studies of migration and politics of belonging (Castles and Davidson 2000), specifically the relationship between ethnic identity and social integration among migrants to Ghana (Schildkrout 1978; Schlottner 2000; Nugent 2002; Akyeampong 2006). It expands upon research on the print media's framing of political issues, migration and refugees (Dardis 2007; Vliegenthart and Roggeband 2007) and adds to studies of refugee communities which all too often focus on their impact on, rather than interaction with, host communities (Kuhlman 1994).

Gitlin (1980:2) defines frames as 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual'. Robert Entman (1993:52) describes framing as the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making 'them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described'. In order to fight negative media framing by Ghanaian media and improve social integration, Liberians created an alternative press which expressed their perspective on the contributions of refugees to the host society. This article examines the extent to which their alternative press effected their social integration and served as an effective media for change in post-conflict life.

The scope of the paper is limited to refugees, specifically Liberian and Togolese refugees, who are among the 8.4 million, globally, who have fled persecution in their own country and sought safety in another, thereby

securing the protection of international law (UNHCR 2006). Internationally-displaced persons, or individuals who leave their homes due to persecution but remain within the border of their own country, do not have the legal protection or official status of 'refugee' (UNHCR 2006). These 23.7 million internally-displaced persons across the globe (UNHCR 2006) are beyond the scope of this article.

Methodology

United Nations documents, government and independent Ghanaian newspapers, radio broadcast summaries, and semi-structured interviews with journalists with experience in Buduburam, Ghana's largest Liberian refugee settlement, were the main sources used for this study. Many United Nations reports were available online; newspapers from 2006 to 2007 were accessed online and pre-2006 newspapers and all radio broadcast summaries accessed via Elon University's electronic library databases. In addition, news on Liberian and Togolese refugees, reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation and China's English-language Xinhua News Service, were obtained online and via Elon University's electronic databases. Reports on refugees and human rights from the United States State Department also informed this study.

The authors were sensitive to Ghana's lack of freedom of the press during the decade prior to 1992, when Ghana experienced restricted freedom of the press through a Newspaper Licensing Law (United States Department of State 1993; Hasty 2005). Therefore, non-governmental Ghanaian press coverage of the 1990 wave of Liberian refugees was reconstructed from archived international press releases, available via Elon University's electronic databases, and reports from non-governmental organizations obtained online.

The key terms: Togo, Togolese, Liberia, Liberians and refugee were used to target relevant journal and newspaper articles as well as radio broadcast summaries in electronic library databases and non-governmental organization and United Nations reports on-line. The words describing Togolese refugees and Liberian refugees in the articles, summaries, and reports were evaluated with regard to their tone, whether positive/compassionate (refugees as innocent victims), negative/accusatory/blaming (refugees as criminals, causal in their own fate) or neutral.

The exact number of refugees on the move or who self-settle is difficult to estimate and reports from different agencies and news services on refugee numbers differ considerably. The numbers presented here are

those we believe to be most representative or the best information available after comparing reports from multiple sources for the same period.

Background on Liberian Refugees

In 1980, Samuel Doe seized control of the government of Liberia. Doe was the first non-Americo-Liberian President in the country's history. Americo-Liberians are the descendants of freed African-Americans who founded and became the ruling class in Liberia. During his presidency, Doe gave virtually all positions of power to people from his own Krahn ethnic group and maltreated most other ethnic groups (Adebajo 2002).

In 1989, Charles Taylor, an Americo-Liberian, formerly in Doe's government, overthrew Doe from a base in Côte d'Ivoire, using mostly ethnic Gio and Mano forces. Taylor's regime targeted Krahn and Mandingo who were viewed as Doe-supporters. Liberia erupted in civil war, which lasted until 1996 when there was temporary peace which allowed for the 1997 elections (Adebajo 2002). The elections resulted in Taylor's victory, but fighting continued until 2003.

More than 200,000 people were killed in Liberia's on and off civil war from 1989 to 2003, and up to 750,000 are believed to have fled, most to nearby West African countries (Dick 2002). A peace agreement, Taylor's resignation and exile to Nigeria in 2003 led to the United Nations declaring Liberia safe in 2004 and the onset of repatriation initiatives. By March 2007, approximately 94,000 Liberians had been repatriated, but many are still abroad because they believe their country remains unsafe (Saul 2007; UN News Service 2007).

There have been ethnic and geographic patterns to resettlement. Most refugees returning to Liberia from October 2004 to April 2007 went to Lofa county (52,685) and Nimba county (8,239), home areas for Mandingo, Mano and Gio; fewer returned to Grand Gedeh county (1,931) a sparsely-populated, predominantly Krahn area (Cephas 2007). The slow return of the Krahn suggests that Liberia remains unsafe for them and that their gains in social status during the Doe regime enhanced their ability to settle outside of West Africa. Corruption and violence remain problems in Liberia and many, not just the Krahn, have no families, homes or possessions to which to return (*New Amsterdam News* 2006).

Liberian Refugees in Ghana

Liberians began entering Ghana in greater numbers as refugees in mid- to late-1990, shortly after the outbreak of civil war at home. Refugees chose Ghana for its general stability, reasonable economy and the widespread

use of English (King 2007). Liberians were initially brought by air and sea to Ghana. Navy ships and merchant vessels cooperated with the military branch of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to bring refugees *en masse* (Dick 2002a). The majority of refugees represented the average Liberian, but a substantial number of the initial arrivals were younger, well-educated, urban-based professionals from Liberia's capital of Monrovia or surrounding communities. They were brought to abandoned church premises at Gomoa Bududuram west of Ghana's capital of Accra. By September 1990, there were 7,000 Liberians at Bududuram and more than 2,000 had left the facility and self-settled in Accra or communities nearby (Dolvo and Sondah 2001; Dick 2002a). The social composition of Ghana's Liberian refugee population differed notably from the hundreds of thousands of poorer, rural, often illiterate Liberians who fled by roads and on foot to neighbouring Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire (Owusu 2000).

The initial response of Ghanaians to the plight of the relatively well-educated Liberians was quite warm and welcoming. Ghanaian churches, families, and concerned individuals offered food, clothing, transportation or rented rooms or leased properties for reduced fees to assist refugees (Dick 2002). Ghana's government newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*, reported that the country would do whatever possible to ensure a peaceful resolution to the Liberian conflict (Xinhua General Overseas News Service 1990). The Liberians were the first large-scale arrival of refugees in Ghana since the 1983 forced repatriation of more than one million Ghanaians from Nigeria; their return had been associated with a rise in robberies and homicides by youths with poor employment prospects (Gocking 2005).

Refugees at the Bududuram, with the help of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), quickly created a more permanent and stable atmosphere within the settlement. They built a primary school and a junior high school by 1991 (Dick 2002). But the settlement was overcrowded, lacked proper sanitation and basic social services, especially in the first year when Ghana had no official laws regarding refugees and no United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) support (Owusu 2000; Dolvo and Sondah 2001; Agbale 2007). The ongoing unrest in Liberia was described by Ghana's *The Mirror* as threatening the stability of the entire West African sub-region (Xinhua General Overseas News Service 1991).

Ghanaian Media Coverage of Liberian Refugees

By 1993, media coverage of Bududuram focused on official corruption within the settlement, and its rising death toll from cholera, diarrhea and

malaria (Dick 2002). Additional concerns were raised by the press about refugees when a second major wave of 1,559 Liberian refugees arrived in Ghana aboard the ship the 'Bulk Challenge-Lagos' in May 1996, following renewed fighting in Monrovia (Dick 2002; Zinnah 2005). The new round of refugees necessitated the creation of a second, smaller settlement at Sanzule-Krisan near the border with Côte d'Ivoire in Ghana's southwest. The relatively small Krisan settlement supported 4,000 Liberian refugees along with refugees from Rwanda, Sudan, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire (Owusu 2000; UNHCR 2006a). With the recent arrival of additional refugees and donor participation waning, anxiety within the government and the general public over the expense of supporting these new groups increased. Although, the activities of Liberians were not singled out by the press, security concerns and the financial strain of refugees on Ghana were highlighted (King 2007).

By the mid- to late-1990s, sanitation and other social services within the refugee camps and settlements drastically improved. Residential areas for the refugees began to resemble thriving neighbourhoods with new churches, shops, soccer clubs and markets. The press picked up on the frustration of Ghanaians who were struggling financially, but not eligible for the external aid received by refugees.

The Liberian's relative success in Ghana began to attract Liberian refugees from neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, especially after the 1999 coup there. Liberian refugees from Côte d'Ivoire included less-educated and more vulnerable groups like women, children, young teens, the elderly and the disabled. Ghana's press, which at the time consisted of government papers, including dailies with relatively wide distribution, and private papers published weekly or bi-weekly, raised concerns that recent arrivals, especially unemployed youths, would be vulnerable to recruitment by mercenaries (Kwansah-Aidoo 2003). Mention of Liberians as rebels, armed robbers and prostitutes filled the pages of Ghana's government-owned and largest circulating paper, the *Daily Graphic* and, to a lesser extent, the 'most important' privately-owned paper, the *Chronicle* (Gocking 2005:208; King 2007). Interviews indicate the resonance of these descriptions with Ghanaians, who described popular images of Liberians being 'problems ... people who don't respect our laws' (Agbale 2007) and who engage in 'robberies' and 'prostitution' (Agbale 2007; Amedahe 2007). Increasingly, conflicts erupted between Liberians and Ghanaians as Liberians squatted on land outside the overcrowded Bududuram settlement. Conflicts also erupted within Bududuram when religious leaders were

accused of impropriety with external aid and forming churches for personal benefit (Dolvo and Sondah 2001).

Diminished External Support Fuels Ghanaian Media Criticism of Liberian Refugees

Temporary peace was restored in Liberia in July 1997. Around this time, the UNHCR began phasing out support for Liberian refugees to encourage self-sufficiency. With elections in Liberia, Ghanaians increasingly began to question why Liberians needed to remain in Ghana, especially when some Liberians were doing better than the average Ghanaian (Dick 2002). Ghanaian radio stations voiced anti-refugee and anti-Liberian rhetoric, adding to an ever-widening range of concerns expressed about Liberians in the print media (King 2007).

By mid-2000, the UNHCR withdrew its assistance to Liberian refugees throughout West Africa in the hope that this would encourage refugees to repatriate. Yet, many at Buduburam, not yet self sufficient, relied heavily on remittances from relatives and friends in Ghana or the United States, and, in the absence of remittances, some resorted to prostitution and other socially unacceptable acts, which led to more negative press (Dick 2002; King 2007). Some Liberian refugees found themselves the targets of violence by Ghanaians, and seemingly ignored when they complained of such violence to police, or imprisoned for years without apparent cause (Carvin 2005; King 2006; King 2007). Reporters from Ghana's *The Chronicle* called on Liberian refugees to 'reject criminality', noting that in the first four months of 2002, according to police statistics, more than 100 crimes had been committed at Buduburam, including 49 cases of assault, 32 cases of theft, 12 armed robberies and 11 cases of fraud (Garblah and White 2002).

When the UNHCR and many NGOs withdrew their support, the Government of Ghana re-examined who could claim refugee status. The Ghana Refugee Board, which had been established in 1993 as the local counterpart to the UNHCR, started to interview the approximately 22,000 Liberians at Buduburam. Only 4,000 were found eligible to register as refugees, while the remaining 18,000 stayed at Buduburam with uncertain legal status (Dick 2002; Garblah and White 2002). Subsequently, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Chronicle* portrayed those remaining 18,000 refugees as not being true refugees, but instead using the settlement as a base from which to run goods to Monrovia for profit.

Ghanaians accused Liberians of taking advantage of Ghanaian hospitality and of repeatedly entering Liberia, demonstrating that the Taylor

regime was not a real threat. An article in the *Chronicle* described the settlement as full of 'dubious characters', of whom 4,000 were suspected combatants, many with assault weapons, and that because 'of the skills, weapons, the yearning for action and the spoils of war that a sizeable section of the Budumburam (sic.) community has, the camp has become fertile ground for the recruiting of mercenaries for the battles in the sub-region of West Africa' (Ohene 2003). The same article raised concerns over Bududuram residents being a source of drugs, disease and potential coups.

Liberians who did not receive remittances, UNHCR support or living wages through informal sector work became more desperate as health services closed for lack of funds. In the absence of UNHCR-supported community health programmes, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rates rose. Subsidized educational and health services were now full cost, leaving 'restless youths' to form gangs which added to Bududuram's negative image (Dick 2002:21). In March 2001, riots broke out at Bududuram after Ghanaian police released the prime suspect in a series of knifings who had been captured by settlement residents (UNIRIN 2001). Subsequently, 22 Liberians were deemed national security threats and imprisoned (Dick 2002). Although Ghana's print media continued to present an exaggerated image of Liberians as criminals and HIV carriers, the problems faced by refugees remained under-reported (Bernard 2007).

Liberian Social Integration not helped by Negative Coverage in Ghanaian Print Media

Print media in Ghana, rather than aiding the social integration of Liberian refugees, tended to thwart it through its predominantly negative coverage of the group. Negative press coverage of Liberians helped reinforce unfavourable impressions Ghanaians might have formed of Liberians from personal interactions. The *Chronicle* noted the 'swagger and arrogance of the typical Liberian refugee', and Ghanaians interacting with Liberians noted that Ghanaians' complaints about Liberians were dismissed as due to jealousy (Dick 2002).

Press coverage emphasized Liberians, social and cultural difference from Ghanaians, and that Liberians had a penchant for making fun of Ghanaian culture. Liberians negatively regarded Ghanaian food, social system, the way businesses are named after Bible verses, and the odd logos or slogans which typically appear on buses (Dick 2002; Cooper 2005).

Poor social integration had its price. Liberians reported not being allowed to sell produce in Ghanaian markets when others heard their accents (Dick

2002). Instead of being offered discounted housing rates like early arrivals, recently arrived Liberian refugees reported being charged more than average prices because Ghanaians believed Liberians had access to US dollars through remittances (Dick 2002; Jaman 2007).

Ghanaian media coverage of Buduburam improved slightly after measures were taken to reduce crime in the settlement. Nonetheless, infrequent neutral or positive press was insufficient to create a more favourable impression of Liberians among the Ghanaian public. Overall, in most news articles, Liberian refugees continued to be framed as criminals, disease carriers and security risks. This held true even when journalists simultaneously noted improved security or self-help initiatives in the settlements (Dencik 2003).

The Ghanaian press not only portrayed Liberians as socially and culturally different, but also as people to be feared and avoided. The coverage of Buduburam in *The Chronicle* in 2004 included stories on the need for increased HIV/AIDS awareness training for settlement youth, security issues in the settlement, and a plea to Liberians to refrain from interfering with Ghana's elections. The *Ghana Review International* (2004) offered thanks to donors who assisted Liberians to go to school because 'without education some of the youth could become mercenaries, armed robbers and drug addicts, and even contract the deadly HIV/AIDS disease'. Articles with less inflammatory language appeared in the privately-owned, issues oriented, weekly *Public Agenda* and the *Accra Mail* (Gocking 2005); they highlighted the considerable aid to Liberians at Buduburam, for sanitary facilities, technical training and scholarships. Such stories emphasized the financial burden Liberians placed on Ghanaians and did not support the social integration of refugees.

Liberian Response to the Ghanaian Press

Given the overall failure of the Ghanaian press to promote positive public dialogue about Liberians in Ghana in 2004, Liberian journalists Semantics King Jr. and Jos Garneo Cephas founded the *Vision*, a newspaper specifically aimed at overcoming the negative press the Buduburam settlement still received in Ghanaian newspapers. The newspaper sought to demystify the negative Buduburam image as an 'AIDS-infested and crime-ridden blot and a training ground for mercenaries' (DeSaybel 2006:33).

Articles in the *Vision* highlighted that much of the refugee population of approximately 30,000 at Buduburam consisted of dependent single parent women, children, elderly or disabled who suffered depression and post-

traumatic stress (Kreitzer 2002; UNHCR 2006a; Cephas 2007a). These extremely vulnerable groups were also victims of mismanagement of funds by settlement staff, lack of staff encouragement to take more initiative, and poor English language skills (Kreitzer 2002; BRYCS 2004; Phelps 2007). The vulnerability of refugees did not become the focus of articles in the Ghanaian press. Instead, Ghanaians read about Liberians' considerable remittances and improved conditions in Liberia. Few stories mentioned the true reality facing many refugees. Some Liberians had started a life a Ghana – a business or programme of study which led them to stay; some had no home or land to return to, while others lacked the funds rather than the desire to return home. For some, returning home was not an option at all – the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups faced political opposition by those who opposed Doe's regime (Dick 2002; Romann 2006).

The *Vision* was an outlet for some Liberians to express their perspectives, but due to financial constraints the newspaper had intermittent and extremely limited circulation. It reached few Ghanaians beyond government officials and those who had contact with Bududuram for professional reasons. Liberians in Ghana and elsewhere expressed concern over how well they would be tolerated by their host countries after the June 30, 2007 deadline for voluntary repatriation by Liberian refugees throughout West African refugee camps and settlements (UN News Service 2007). One Liberian in Ghana reported that his parents' killers were now serving in the Johnson-Sirleaf government (King 2005). His sentiments are echoed by others (Carvin 2005).

Background on Togolese Refugees

As with Liberians, the impetus for Togolese fleeing to foreign lands was often the result of presidential elections or persecution by government forces. Togolese experienced harsh German colonial rule from the 1880s to the First World War, followed by French colonization and independence in 1960. The country experienced two coups. One was in 1963, followed by another in 1967, which brought Gnassingbe Eyadéma to power. Eyadéma declared his party the country' sole political party until 1991, and tightly controlled the media (Ellis 1993). Like Doe of Liberia, Eyadéma heightened ethnic tensions in his country by selecting three-quarters of the army from his own Kabye (Kabiye) ethnic group, including half from his northern Togolese home town of Pya (Piya) (Ellis 1993; Amnesty International 2005). The Kabye represent 10-15 per cent of Togo' population and are the second largest ethnic group in Togo after the Ewe (20-25 per cent of the population) (Houngnikpo 2001; United States Department of State 2007).

Eventually, Eyadéma was pressured internationally and domestically to abolish his one party state. Joseph Kokou Koffigoh was appointed as transitional Prime Minister of Togo until democratic elections could be held (Ellis 1993). As Koffigoh and Eyadéma vied for uncontested control of the country, more than twenty Lomé-based newspapers appeared virtually overnight, most openly hostile toward President Eyadéma. Television and radio programming were also openly anti-Eyadéma, but Eyadéma still controlled the military and used the press to instill public fear of the opposition's ability to manipulate the spirit world by use of dark arts (Ellis 1993). Throughout the 1990s, hundreds of journalists and other critics of the government were detained, imprisoned, tortured, executed or 'disappeared' (Amnesty International 2001). Formal opposition was replaced by frequent informal anti-Eyadéma political discussions, rumours, puns and other verbal and symbolic assaults on Eyadéma by the urban public in Lomé (Ellis 1993).

In response to persistent informal opposition in the Ewe-dominated south, President Eyadéma's forces attacked civilians in January 1993 in Lomé. Anti-Eyadéma Togolese newspapers had their editors attacked, arrested or fined, offices ransacked and facilities bombed; opposition radio stations were jammed (United States Department of State 1994). By April 1993, Ghana was host to approximately 106,000 Togolese refugees (Afele 1993). By June, approximately 40 per cent of Lomé's population of 600,000, or nearly 240,000 people, were refugees in Ghana or Benin (BBC 1993; USCRI 1997).

Economic sanctions against Togo by the European Union encouraged Eyadéma to make a show of bringing greater democracy to Togo. Eyadéma named Edem Kodjo, head of a small opposition party, as Prime Minister in April 1994. Kodjo sought economic recovery and the return of refugees. Encouraged by the apparent change in political climate, approximately 200,000 refugees returned to Togo between 1994 and 1996 (USCRI 1997); however, Kodjo's limited ability to bring about real change led to his resignation in August of 1996, solidifying Eyadéma's position. At the end of 1996, there were approximately 20,000 Togolese refugees remaining in Ghana and around 10,000 in Benin (USCRI 1997). Nearly 4,000 Togolese repatriated from Ghana after the UNHCR's repatriation programme ended in mid-1997. By late-1998, approximately 1,000 Togolese refugees remained in Ghana and 2,000 in Benin, many of whom were asylum seeking prominent opponents of the ruling party (USCRI 1999).

Eyadéma signed the July 1999 Lomé Framework Accord which suggested that there would be an improvement in media, political parties

rights, and open arms for returning refugees, but bodies shackled and with bullet holes were appearing in fishing nets and washed up on the beaches of Benin and most of Eyadéma's severest critics remained in exile (Amnesty International 1999). Eyadéma ruled Togo until his death in February 2005; Eyadéma's son, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, was appointed to the presidency. Gnassingbé's unconstitutional appointment led to another wave of violence, death and more than 25,000 refugees arriving in Benin and nearly 15,000 in Ghana (United States Department of State 2007). Like his father, Gnassingbé made an attempt to reduce criticism of his regime, appointing Yawovi Agboyibo, a human rights activist and the leader of a somewhat larger opposition party, as Prime Minister. The appointment, along with no reports of summary executions, disappearances, or detentions of journalists in 2005, led many refugees to repatriate (United States Department of State 2007).

Togolese Immigrants and Refugees in Ghana

The Togolese have such longstanding ties with Ghana such that it can be difficult to distinguish between immigrants and refugees, something which rarely holds true for Ghana's Liberian community (Agbale 2007; Amedahe 2007). The ties are largely limited to Ghana's Volta region, which borders Togo and is home to the Ewe, Ghana's third largest ethnic group, representing around 13 per cent of the total population (Gocking 2005). Nearly half of all Ewe sought reunification with Togo rather than integration with Ghana when the Ghana-Togo boundary was being determined (Nugent 2000).

Based on their common ancestry and customs, Ghana's Ewe view Togo's Ewe, the country's largest ethnic group, as kin rather than foreigners (Akyea 1998). The Ewe share many cultural practices: chieftaincies and queen mothers, shared festivals, proverbs and places of worship, including Catholic or evangelical Protestant churches (Akyea 1998; Nugent 2000; Nugent 2002). Togolese generally live in villages separate from, but in close proximity to, Ghanaian Ewe villages (Gavua 2000). In the Volta region, a 'traditional area' generally consists of several villages and hamlets. Some of these settlements are considered Togolese, based on their first language (Nugent 2002; Amedahe 2007).

Togolese refugees who arrived in Ghana in late January to early February 1993 consisted largely of women and children. Men generally stayed behind to watch over the family's property, as did the elderly who would find the journey difficult. By mid-February 1993, after the collapse of peace talks in France between Togo's warring factions, additional waves

of Togolese refugees arrived in Ghana, including many able-bodied men and youths assisting disabled and elderly friends and relatives (BBC 1993d). The large numbers of Togolese refugees initially were welcomed to United Nations-sponsored refugee centres at Aflao (Aflaho) and Denu (Ghana-Togo border towns) as well as Klikor near Aflao (BBC News 1994), though their arrival briefly raised concerns about congestion and the potential for cholera outbreaks (BBC 1993a).

Unlike most Liberian refugee settlements, most Togolese centres were relatively small and somewhat integrated within existing villages (BBC News 1994). At Aflao, the UNHCR funded the conversion of an abandoned school compound into Togolese refugee housing. Only one month after the refugees' arrival, officials from Ghana's Ministry of Health reported not being able to effectively distinguish Togolese refugees from the local population and that Togolese refugees were often going to local health centres and paying for services rather than making use of free camp services (BBC 1993a). The UNHCR reported some concern over lack of shelter and proper sanitation for refugees at Klikor which housed up to 10,000 refugees but noted that most refugees were in good condition and 'many were living with families of the same tribe', being hosted by humble fishing and farming families and in the palaces of paramount chiefs (Associated Press 1993). By and large, approximately 100,000 refugees had effectively 'disappeared' into the Volta region (BBC 1993b; BBC News 1994).

Unlike Liberian refugees, Togolese refugees were entering a country whose President, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, shared their Ewe ethnic background (Gocking 2005). The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation's radio coverage of Togolese refugees focused on their shared history with Ghanaians, called for the government of Togo to cease terrorizing its citizenry, and asked that the United Nations establish more welcome centres to help Ghanaians effectively host refugees in border towns with rising food prices (BBC 1993c). Many international NGOs and UN agencies offered financial assistance and several Members of Parliament offered to use personal allowances to aid the refugees (IPS 1993). Overall, Togolese refugees appear to have been well integrated since their arrival in 1993 and only left Ghana in the mid-1990s when the situation at home improved.

The next larger wave of Togolese arrived in Ghana in 2005. The Ghanaian press compared these masses of rapidly arriving Togolese to Liberians, expressed security concerns, and requested that Togolese be law abiding and considerate of their hosts (*Public Agenda* 2005). Particularly, Togolese refugees in Ghana without Volta region ties who

sought refuge at the UNHCR-supported Krisan settlement received negative press. These settlement-based refugees, together with Liberians, led a November 9, 2005 protest at Krisan that led to Ghanians questioning their presence (*Ghana Review International* 2005; USCRI 2006; King 2007). But negative press of Togolese refugees was short-lived because the majority of Togolese refugees in Ghana were quickly absorbed into approximately 114 villages and towns scattered across Ghana's Volta region (UNHCR 2006a).

Analysis and Discussion

Increased movement across international boundaries, even if only temporarily, raises questions of political and cultural belonging for those who are not full legal members of their country of refuge or short-term residence. Which groups and sub-groups find greater acceptance and social integration, or marginalization and a failure to integrate socially, has much to do with numerous factors. Some of the factors significant in promoting acceptance and integration include the following: (i) the degree of freedom of the press in the refugees' country of resettlement; (ii) the groups' self-definition and how they are defined by the dominant group or host culture, including its media; (iii) whether the refugees are placed in large externally-organized settlements or self settle; and (iv) the degree to which the refugees share a common ancestry or ethnicity with members of the host culture.

Restrictions on Print Media Freedom Limit Social of Refugees

Ghana's newspaper content changed over time due to increased freedoms, but government restrictions on the media left for little room for criticism. Evidence of the limits to press freedom in Ghana in 1990 included that 'there were more sports and lotto papers being published in the country than those that covered political and economic issues' (Gocking 2005:201). Although privately owned media were allowed in Ghana after 1993, journalists who wrote in opposition to the government frequently found themselves jailed or sued under its Criminal Libel laws which were not repealed until 2001 (Kwansah-Aidoo 2003). Independent radio stations and newspapers proliferated in the mid- to late-1990s, but budget crises often led to short life spans. For many surviving independent papers, trepidation over how long multi-party political systems and press freedoms would last, led to news reporting that was largely indistinguishable from that of the government (Alhassan 2005; Nyamnjoh 2005; Duodu 2006). Consequently, press coverage of Liberian and Togolese refugees did not

differ substantially in Ghana's major government-sponsored (*Daily Graphic*) versus its independent (the *Chronicle, Public Agenda* and others) newspapers. Such 'self editing' is not restricted to the African context, but fits well with Herman and Chomsky's (2002) analysis of press coverage of politically-sensitive matters in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Herman and Chomsky note that relations between a country's government and the governments of other countries impacts what is deemed 'worthy' of coverage by the media. Ill treatment of groups friendly to a government generally receives empathetic coverage which conveys outrage at the group's mistreatment and a call for justice. Ill treatment of groups opposed to a government generally fails to be documented or is presented in neutrally-worded press coverage. Ghana's Rawlings government supported Liberia's anti-Krahn Taylor regime. The pro-Doe regime Krahn were the largest ethnic group in the Bududuram settlement (BRYCS 2004; King 2007). As enemies of political allies of the government of Ghana, the Krahn were not 'worthy' of more balanced or empathetic press coverage. On the other hand, Togolese refugees were fleeing an enemy government and highlighting their plight supported Ghana's hostile stance towards Togo.

Liberian refugees were targets of what Herman and Chomsky would classify as propaganda, which played a role in their relatively poor reception by the Ghanaian public. According to Dardis (2007), communication and social movement theory indicate that defining an issue as a problem, blaming a cause, suggesting solutions and invoking a moral appeal are the most important functions shaping individuals' interpretations of sociopolitical issues. Casting blame is the most influential opinion shaping factor (Dardis 2007).

The Ghanaian press framed the Liberian refugee issue as a problem and blamed the Liberian presence for Ghana's political and economic insecurity. Liberians were presented as dangerous criminals, mercenaries, disease-ridden, HIV-infected, drug users, who took advantage of Ghanaians generosity by sapping the tax base to support their multitude of social programmes. Such depictions helped generate negative images of Liberians among Ghanaians who had not had contact with the refugees; they also reinforced or heightened negative impressions of Liberian refugees which may have been reached during limited social interactions with them, thereby harming Liberians ability to effectively integrate into Ghanaian society.

Refugees' Limited Ability to Counter Negative Press

Liberians have not had effective counters to negative media images. They created positive press about their communities in the *Vision*, but the paper was not published consistently, its distribution was severely limited, and aid agency workers and Ghanaian officials had better access to the publication than the Ghanaian public (Henry 2007; King 2007). Liberian refugee communities were physically separate from Ghanaian communities, which served to increase social distance and decrease the likelihood of meaningful cross-cultural contact, mutual understanding or social integration.

Even material well-being often did not lead to social integration, because Liberians, especially Americo-Liberians, like to live large, spending money as fast as they make or receive it through remittances, in stark contrast to the generally more fiscally conservative Ghanaians who save and plan for the future (Dick 2002a). This is not to say that Ghanaians do not make shows of wealth, such as for funerals and weddings (Salm and Falola 2002), but these are communal events related to important rites of passage, not individual displays of conspicuous consumption.

Greater Social Integration among Self-settled Refugees

Voicing security concerns, African governments have strongly favoured organized- versus self-settlement by refugees, because organized settlements are more visible and potentially more likely to receive external aid. But the supposed advantages of organized- over self-settlement often do not hold true, as seen in the Ghanaian case. Large United Nations organized settlements, even generally well functioning ones, as Bududuram was considered by the UNHCR, can fail to support refugee social and economic integration. Such large settlements can become the target of a negative press and lead to the discrimination of settlement inhabitants and those associated with them through the politics of exclusion.

Many Togolese refugees self-settled and lived in poverty with other peasant farmers, fishers, and small-scale traders, but they did not represent an economic burden on the state in the long term. In contrast, Liberians' attempts to secure land outside of the settlements were met with resistance and many Liberian refugees in organized settlements required external assistance for extended periods, often years. With the removal of external aid, the financial burden of supporting Liberians in settlements increasingly shifted to Ghana's governmental and non-governmental organizations which contributed to the media framing of Liberians as threats to Ghana's economic security.

Self-settled Togolese refugees generally were well integrated into the Ghanaian Ewe society. Refugee communities took on activities and behaviour patterns similar to those of their hosts; their presence did not result in social conflict greater than what existed within their host communities before their arrival. Togolese with more education remained in the same communities as less educated Togolese and contributed to their acceptance (Nugent 2000). Schildkrout (1978) noted the importance of a broader ethnic identity and networks of solidarity among successful migrant groups to Ghana, such as the Mossi from Burkina Faso. Like the Mossi, Togolese migrants maintained identities separate from those of their Ghanaian neighbours through various festivals and associations, but made efforts to fit in terms of broader cultural norms with their hosts, often sharing political party affiliations, schools and places of worship (Gavua 2000; Nugent 2002). Even in the United States, the successful integration of West African migrants, like the Mossi and Togolese in Ghana, has been based on taking on aspects of local culture and having networks of solidarity (Salzbrunn 2004).

Negative media images of Liberians were not restricted to Ghana, but were concentrated in periods and locations in which Liberians lived in large organized settlements. Many refugees prefer to self-settle if given the choice and organized settlements make 'forced' repatriation easier, but are no better than self-settlement when refugees want to repatriate (Kuhlman 1994).

The authors do not wish to suggest that planned settlements for refugees should be abandoned. In fact, they are great tools to help those who are less self sufficient – like the disabled, elderly, orphans and single-headed households – and should remain an important force for dealing with large scale refugee movements (Kuhlman 1994). However, large scale settlements and top-down planning have been over-relied upon. In cases where a common cultural background between refugees and their host communities exists, the authors suggest shifting away from large organized settlements towards providing more support for smaller and more socially integrated self-settlements. The need for this shift from planning for, to seeking solutions from, and listening to, holds true not only for the case of refugees, but for development aid more generally (Easterly 2006).

The Importance of Shared Ethnic Background to Social Integration of Refugees

The print media not only produces, but also reflects culture and power relations. Thus, even with balanced press coverage, Liberians' opportunities

for meaningful social integration in Ghana would have been fewer than for the Togolese. Social inclusion in African communities is often dependent upon being descendents of the first settlers of an area as well as having ethnic and cultural ties (Geschiere and Gugler 1998). Centuries of Togolese arrivals in the Volta Region gave Togolese refugees the luxury of ancestral access to land and peoples, which led to greater levels of independence within only a few months of their arrival in Ghana (Nugent 2002).

Unlike the Togolese, Liberians lacked cultural and historical ties to Ghana. They lacked the ethnic and political unity of the Togolese communities in Ghana (King 2007a). The press framed Bududuram's internal unrest as potentially of concern to national security. Ghanaians perceived Liberians not only as security threats, but also as aloof and keeping to themselves – characteristics Ghanaians use to label Accra's longstanding Lebanese communities which have remained non-socially integrated (Akyeampong 2006).

A lack of tolerance for Liberians could also have come from Ghana's media not making clear the causes for Liberians' internal dissent and their difference by ethnic and political background. By the time the media made some distinctions among Liberian refugees in the early to mid-2000s with regard to gender, vulnerability and age, many Ghanaians simply wanted Liberians to repatriate, but numerous Doe-supporting Krahn Liberians could not safely go home.

Conclusion

Whereas all migrants are likely to face challenges related to cultural belonging, refugees are among the most legally and socially disadvantaged migrants, sharing many of the challenges facing the poorest of the poor, including inadequate access to food, land, income, education and essential services (de Jongh 2002). The media can help or thwart the introduction and implementation of more effective and humane policies with regard to refugees and other migrants by manipulating how they frame issues and the relative frequency of particular frames (Vliegenthart and Roggeband 2007). Framing refugee issues in security terms is a widespread phenomenon (Loescher 1993). The use of human rights, rather than security, to frame issues could improve the reception and social integration of refugees and would be of particular significance to those whose prospects of ever repatriating safely remain slim.

In countries with relative freedom of the press, as is now enjoyed in Ghana, there is a need for a more structural view of communication which recognizes the potential role of the media in peace building and good

governance. A good way to develop better communication for the future would be to train journalists to be more sensitive to diverse communities and help ensure that refugees, including ex-combatants, are aware of transitional assistance, training and skills development programmes via the UNHCR and other organizations supporting refugees in their post-conflict lives. Encouraging journalists to deepen public and citizen-state dialogue in ways which support humanitarian relief and refugees' social integration may have improved Liberians' reception in Ghana. A greater focus on the humanitarian issues facing refugees would likely have reduced discrimination against Liberians in jobs and housing and other key life areas; the public would have been less likely to view the refugees as security threats, and the refugees themselves would have been more aware of their rights and services available to them. Although print media stories about gun running and security threats can grab readers' interest and help sell papers, journalists must be aware that their coverage of events can not only have real consequences for members of the groups reported on, but also impact the actions of politicians and law enforcement officials interacting with those groups.

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The Politicization of the Education System: Implications for Peace in Sudan

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Abstract

This article takes a closer look at the education system in Sudan and its role in social cohesion/division. It analyzes themes run in approved textbooks. The findings of this article can be summarized around three main points: the curriculum constructs an exclusionary version of Sudanese identity that is practically the same as Northern Arabic Muslim identity; heroism is associated with war and history lessons are centred on the history of wars; and, war and violence are always linked and consequently legitimized. The article argues that educational institutions in Sudan fail to create harmony and acceptance among different ethnic groups and perpetuate prejudice and violence. An urgent reform in the curriculum is needed.

Key Terms: Sudan, education, violence, conflict, identity.

Résumé

Cet article jette un regard profond sur le système éducatif au Soudan et son rôle dans la cohésion/division sociale. Il analyse les thèmes qui ont été approuvés pour les livres enseignés à l'école. Les résultats de l'étude peuvent être résumés autour de trois points principaux : le curriculum encourage une version exclusiviste de l'identité soudanaise qui est pratiquement la même que celle des musulmans de l'Arabie du Nord ; l'héroïsme est associé à la guerre pendant que les leçons d'histoire concernent l'histoire des guerres. Le troisième résultat consiste au fait que la guerre et la violence sont toujours liées et par conséquent légitimées. L'article défend que les institutions de l'éducation au Soudan n'ont pas réussi à créer une harmonie et une cohésion entre les différents groupes ethniques. Au contraire, elles contribuent à la perpétuation des préjudices et de la violence. La réforme urgente du curriculum est une nécessité.

Mots clés : Soudan, éducation, violence, conflit, identité.

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Introduction

The UNESCO Constitution states: 'Since wars begin in the minds of men [and women], it is in the minds of men [and women] that the defences of peace must be constructed'. This statement articulates clearly that in post-conflict societies, the pursuit for peace is the pursuit of hearts and minds. The transition from violent conflict to peace needs more than political changes. It is true that peace agreements bring violent conflicts to a halt; yet, sustainable peace needs more than a cease-fire. Sustainable peace requires that the culture of peace and coexistence be a way of life and a shared philosophy among all segments of society. Yet, it remains alarming that 31 percent of civil wars in the world resume within the first ten years of the end of the conflict, and makes this search for sustainable peace, not just peace, more pressing (Bigombe, Collier and Sambanis 2000). Conflicts, especially those along ethnic and religious lines, leave societies deeply polarized even after reaching a peace agreement. Therefore, for sustainable peace to be a reality in societies emerging from violent conflicts, it is fundamental that the history of prejudice as a component of individual mindset and attitudes be addressed and overcome. The factors underlining conflict that relate to structural imbalances also need to be analyzed and addressed. Similarly, socio-economic and cultural inequalities inherent in social institutions require political goodwill to chart new ways for peace in post-conflict setting. Peace communication lends itself well to such a vital mission.

This article envisions peace communication as a process that takes place not only through traditional mass communication channels (electronic and print media) but also in all aspects of societal institutions (educational, religious and communal/traditional institutions). Specifically, this article takes a closer look at the educational system in Sudan and its role in social cohesion or division. It argues that educational institutions in Sudan have failed to create harmony and acceptance among different ethnic groups by adopting a univocal expression of Sudanese identity and excluding all other segments of the Sudanese population.

Sudan's Conflict: History of a Polarized Society

Sudan stands out in the twenty-first century as a country that was embroiled in one of history's longest civil wars, a war that stole more than two million lives. Although the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan (GOS) on January 9, 2005 marked a moment of historic importance and brought to an end the civil war between Southern

and Northern Sudan, another conflict continues in Darfur in the western part of the country. The war has pitted Northern Sudanese who are culturally Arabs and mainly Muslims, against other ethnic groups who are seen as Africans. Although many scholars hold that the conflict was rooted in the domination of the Northern Sudanese over other ethnic groups, the Sudanese conflict is more complicated and multidimensional. This conflict had an economic dimension that put a more-developed North against less-developed peripheries. At one level, it was an ethnic conflict, as the civil war was between Arabized Northerners and what might loosely be called the black population. On another level, it was a religious conflict between Islam, on one side, and Christianity and traditional religions, on the other. Both the ethnic and religious conflicts combined to form a cultural conflict (Loisa 2005).

Sudan's past is closely bound up with its current challenges. The historical process of dichotomizing the country into the Arabized North and African South dates back to the seventh century. At the time, the Arab-Muslim empire invaded the Sudan and concluded peace accords with Northern people that established remote Arab control over the country and opened communication channels with the Arabs. Through conquest, intermarriage, trade and settlement, Northern Sudan underwent Arab-Muslim assimilation. Arab migration and settlement toward the South were hindered by the difficult geographical terrain and harsh tropical climate. The relationship between the Arabs and Southerners was limited to those who were engaged in the slave trade (Daly and Sikainga 1993; Deng 1995; Khalid 2003).

This division was further enforced during the 58 years of colonization under an Anglo-Egyptian administration (1898-1956). During colonization, both Northern and Southern Sudan were administered as separate colonies under a governor general. This separation of administration, however, reinforced Arabism and Islam in the North, while Southern Sudan was ruled as an African colonial territory, where African culture and Christianity were encouraged. In addition, the British introduced the concept of 'Closed Districts' by which the British closed the South to all Northerners, including Northern government officials (Sarkesian 1973). Closed Districts included Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains of Southern Kordofan and the Funj areas of the Southern Blue Nile. Along with this, British colonizers formalized a language policy that allowed vernacular languages to be taught in primary schools in Southern Sudan, where English was designated as the official language. Consequently, Arabic was not used in schools and government offices in Southern Sudan (Biong 2003; Collins 1983).

Northerners had undergone centuries of assimilation into Arabic-Islamic culture. Since independence, Northern-dominated governments often made, and continue to make, attempts to extend this process of assimilation to the other regions of the country, including the South and the West. Successive post-independence central governments have adopted different policies aimed at nationalization in an effort to construct a united Sudan with Arabic-Islamic culture as the key determinant for national unity (Khalid 1990; Sarkesian 1973).

All these factors – the heritage of master-enslavement history, the British separation policy, pattern of exclusion by successive post-independence governments – prevented Sudanese from the North and South from interacting and identifying with each other and resulted in deep polarization among ethnic, religious, and regional lines (Khalid 2003). The role of an imposed Arabic culture is an issue of great concern to all segments of the Sudanese population. However, its influence on education has far-reaching implications for the way Sudanese view themselves and each other. It is not uncommon to hear Northerners cry out 'abid!' (slave) to Southerners as fights break out between people from different ethnic groups (Jok 2001). Thus, it is essential that social institutions in Sudan, such as media, education and religious organizations, engage in deconstructing the cultural aspects of Sudanese life that legitimize prejudices and eventually lead to violence.

Politics of Official Knowledge and Education

In this section, we review literature that contextualizes the role educational institutions play in imparting knowledge that defines how members of a society interact with each other. It is this backdrop that sets the context in which we build the argument to use educational institutions as avenues for peace, not as perpetrators of prejudiced and violent acts in Sudan.

Education can be thought of as a dynamic process that is rooted in a sociocultural context. No form of education, as a source of knowledge, is politically neutral (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; Shor 1992). Schools, among other societal institutions, can play an essential role in promoting peace (or hatred). The importance of schools arises from the fact that they make what is considered the 'official knowledge' available. Schools 'participate in creating what society has recognized as legitimate and truthful. They help set the canons of truthfulness and, as such, also help re-create a major reference point of what knowledge, culture, belief, and morality really are' (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:4). Since the knowledge that is disseminated throughout schools is selected from a much

larger pool of knowledge, 'what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of the complex power relations and struggle among identifiable class, race, gender/sex and religious groups' (Apple1992:2). The content that is included or excluded; the frames that are portrayed; the groups that are represented, underrepresented, or misrepresented; and the themes that are emphasized are all politically loaded aspects of education.

Scholars argue that 'ethnic attitudes' are formed early and that once positive or negative prejudices are formed, they tend to increase with time (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). Half a century of civil war has left Sudanese society suffering from a deep ethnic polarization. With this polarization and the high number of internally displaced persons, mainly from the South and Darfur and moving to the North and Central Sudan, educational institutions (especially primary schools) can play a fundamental role in promoting intercultural, interethnic, and interreligious understanding, leading to peace and tolerance. Critical analysis of the curriculum provides for a better understanding of the relationship between education, social divisions, and conflict (Tawil and Harley 2004). Similarly, this analysis offers better insight into how to develop a tolerant and balanced curriculum, which is fundamental to healing and reconciling a country ravaged by war. An analytical understanding of factors that underpin, shape and influence the design and delivery of education as outlined in the current curriculum is needed. The question at hand is, how then, do we use educational institutions to support sustainable peace in Sudan? How do we educate for peaceful coexistence of diverse ethnic groups and religions in Sudan? The next section is an analysis of textbooks used in primary schools in Sudan. The intention of this analysis is to show how the content determines how schools can become sites where respect of differences and acceptance are fostered or sites of producing hatred and prejudice.

Themes in Text Books

This section of the article presents themes identified in textbooks used in primary schools that have implications for the peace-building process in post conflict Sudan. For this article, textbooks officially approved by the Federal Ministry of Education and the National Center for Curriculum Development and Educational Research as the primary source of data were analyzed. Eleven textbooks used for the analysis are those used to teach Arabic language, religion (Islamic Studies), and social science in 1st, 4th, 6th and 8th grades. These textbooks were published in 2001 in accordance with the recommendations of the 1990 Conference on Educational Policy in Sudan. Since the curriculum is standardized in Sudan,

all textbooks for primary and secondary education are developed by the National Centre of Curriculum Development and Educational Research and published by Publication Bureau unit of the Sudanese Federal Ministry of Education. As mentioned earlier, Arabic is the official language of instruction in Sudan, so all textbooks are in Arabic. The author undertook translations of the content of the texts, including the quotes cited in this article.

Specifically, the analysis focused on themes running through the textbooks. Nevertheless, special attention was paid to issues of representation, given that politics of representation is closely tied to politics of power. A significant observation emerging from the content analysis suggests that the way groups are represented, underrepresented, or misrepresented may reveal the politicisation of the educational system and identity construction in Sudan. The analysis revealed that 96.95 per cent of characters with an identified religion are Muslims. An equally significant observation was that 98.41 per cent of the references to religion were to Islam. From these findings and more to be discussed later in the article, it is apparent that religion is synonymous with Islam. In order to demonstrate the impact of religiosity and Islamization of the education system, some themes identified in the analysis of the textbooks are discussed. Six major themes were identified, but for the purpose of this article, three themes will be discussed: patriotism, resolving conflict through violence, and collectivism and co-operation.

Patriotism

Patriotism appears frequently in the textbooks analyzed. Sudan as a state and as a nation is portrayed in a positive light throughout the books, which all are intended to promote a sense of pride in citizens of Sudan. The country is described as 'the world's paradise' in the fourth grade Arabic language textbook (p. 221). A good citizen is characterized as one who is working for the common good and for the country's prosperity. In the fourth grade text, the poem 'The Trees of My Country' (p.32) indicates that an attachment to the country is highly valued; and the country and its trees are seen positively:

> Since my childhood I loved the trees, I loved the victorious nation, for its love I recite poetry, I guard it in the day and in the night, I draw it in the art lessons, I am happy about it and sing my praise of it (p.32).

The theme of patriotism complements one of the declared aims of education in Sudan. According to the Educational System and Institution Conference of 1990, the education curriculum aims at 'the strengthening of the spirit

of national unity amongst youngsters, the promotion of their feelings of loyalty and love to their homeland, and to everything for its development' (Selman et al., 2003). However, it is worth noting that the 'homeland', which refers to Sudan, is defined as an Arab Islamic state according to symbols portraying Arabic Islamic values. One of the lessons in the fourth grade Arabic language textbook refers to Osman Dighna, one of the national leaders in the Mahdiya revolution during the struggle against colonialism. This war is summarized as a jihad (holy war). An exercise on the 'national poem' in the sixth grade Arabic language textbook states: 'People shout 'takbeer' [God is great] and 'tahleel' [no god but Allah] as they rejoice over Independence' (p. 19). Such statements underline the assumption that the term 'people' is equivalent to Muslims who have secured their political independence through God as conceptualized in Islam. In the same textbook, another statement is made to establish a link between a victorious nation and jihad: 'The nation will never be defeated if jihad will enliven' (sixth grade Arabic language textbook, p. 37). The implication here is that Sudan is an Islamic nation, for only an Islamic nation can carry on jihad. Patriotism is thus equated to commitment, not so much to a country but more to Islam, for it is the latter through jihad that guarantees victory to the former. Patriotism is exemplified by involvement in jihad. The authors define 'us' according to Islamic values. Declaring 'our' principles, they state:

> Allah is our goal. Is there any greater goal than God's affection? Our leader is the prophet, and we do not have any other than the prophet Mohamed. Quran is our constitution. It is holy. Justice, and all justice is in the Quran. Our way is jihad; if it is lost, our nation will be lost. I swear I will never leave my goal. As long as I carry my holy book [Quran] and my gun (Sixth grade Arabic language textbook, p. 42).

One of the few examples of the portrayal of a multiethnic and multireligious Sudan is in the eighth grade Mankind and Environment textbook. However, at the end of the book, it is clearly stated that Sudan is at the forefront of the Islamic Nation in its mission to revive the lost civilization of the Islamic empire (p. 110).

Resolving Conflict Through Violence

Although there are many ways to resolve conflict, the textbooks reviewed consistently advocate violent acts as the means to resolve conflict. In the fourth grade Arabic language textbook, for example, there are 13 lessons out of 53 in which war appears as the main theme. In this textbook (p.47), war and violence are encouraged as acts of bravery and heroism:

I am a brave fighter

Knowledge increased my ambitions

I have no fear when it comes to defending my homeland

My flowing song is the tank and the gun

Shout loudly: welcome death. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Resolving Conflict Through Violence Theme. Example from Fourth Grade Arabic Language Textbook

War is also exalted as part of Islamic history, as exemplified in lessons about Badr battle and Uhud battle. These are battles between Muslims and non-Muslims during the life of the prophet of Islam and as part of national history. The fourth grade Arabic language textbook, (p.36, 42, 83 and 121) represent war as a legitimate method of resolving conflicts. At the same time, war and violence are considered holy and are associated with faith in many incidents throughout the textbook. A good example is an excerpt that reads as follows:

God is great, greater than enemies are

God is the best supporter for the oppressed

I, with my faith and my weapon, will rescue my motherland

And the light of Truth will be with me (p. 135).

In the sixth grade Arabic language textbook, war is presented as a sacred duty, one that will confer divine rewards: 'You know what excellent rewards Allah prepares for Muslims for fighting Kufar [non-Muslims/ infidels]' (p.14). In the same textbook, students are asked to write an

essay on how to support the Sudanese government army in its 'war', referring to the civil conflict in the country (p.139). These textbooks are used to legitimate the conflict and present it as a national war.

History textbooks are the 'primary lens through which [students] incorporate historical knowledge for the rest of their lives that in turn, shapes their future capacities for active citizenship' (Evans and Rosenzweig, 1992:1377). The selection of history narratives in the Mankind and Environment textbook makes the war theme more prominent. In this eighth grade textbook, three out of four chapters deal mainly with the history of wars. The first chapter focuses on the Islamic world and Europe. It deals with what is referred to as Christian wars, wars between the Islamic Empire and the Roman Empire in the eleventh century. The second chapter focuses on colonization and the First and Second World Wars. Although the third chapter is about the history of modern Sudan and its independence, the war theme appears constantly. In this chapter, the struggle against colonization is represented as an Islamic struggle against Christian colonizers, noting that 'religion [Islam] was a key factor that inspired Sudanese to declare jihad against Turk-Egyptian colonizers'. Another paragraph states that 'reasons for Mahdiya revolution were... work of Christian missionaries who enjoyed the ruler's [colonialists] support' (p. 55). The content emphasizes that the 'reasons of success of Mahdiya revolution were ... Muslims [Sudanese] dissatisfaction because of the work of missionaries among Muslims and animist communities' (p. 56). The indication in these two passages is that the Mahdiya was not just a national revolt against outside colonizers, but an 'Islamic' revolution against missionaries and Christian invaders. Ironically, the Turks of the Ottoman Empire as well as the Egyptians, whom the Mahdiya revolted against, are all Muslims. It is not clear why the passage refers to the two as Christian colonizers, and the revolt against them as fighting Christians.

Collectivism and Co-operation

The Sudanese community is a collective society. Although many of traditional family responsibilities for care of the old and sick have been eroded by urbanization, the extended family is still the primary social service provider in Sudan. The theme of portraying Sudan as a collective society and encouraging collectivism among students is apparent in the frequent use of the pronoun 'we', as in 'we go to school' (first grade Arabic language textbook, p.102), 'we clean' (first grade Arabic language textbook, p.120), 'we pray' (first grade Arabic language textbook, pp.134, 139). The use of positive examples of co-operation and collectivism, such as the collective nature of bees, is another manifestation of this theme (fourth grade Arabic

language textbook, p.111). In Islamic studies textbooks, the importance of maintaining strong social networks is stressed as one of the significant rules of Islam (sixth grade Islamic studies textbook, p.37), along with collaboration and co-operation (p. 84).

The theme of collective identity, especially in religion textbooks, is presented as Islamic collective identity. Consequently, the concepts of brotherhood/sisterhood are limited to Muslims, rather than embracing the whole of humanity, as in the 'Islamic Brotherhood Poem', in which the call is to those who share the Islamic faith (eighth grade Islamic studies textbook, p.37). In the same textbook, it is made clear that 'it is not allowed for a Muslim to treat another Muslim badly' (p.34). It would seem that the duty to kindness and good treatment is reserved exclusively for Muslims. By implication, hostility can be allowed or is permissible against 'others'.

Discussion

Never a neutral endeavour, education is always a dynamic process, rooted in a sociocultural and political context. Elites and dominant groups, to advance their hegemonic ideas, have often manipulated education as a terrain of struggle over control of knowledge. The educational system in Sudan is not an exception. The Sudanese education system has always been a victim of political interference. Different regimes have used education and educational institutions to advance their political agendas, with a new curriculum policy resulting from every major political change. The first conference was the National Education Conference (1969). This conference followed the 1969 military coup that seized power from the second democratic government. The second conference took place in 1984, after the declaration of sharia as the supreme law of the country. After the overthrow of the Numeiri regime in the popular uprising of April 1985, elites sought to promote the new democratic era by way of influencing curriculum development actualized through the 1987 education conference. More changes in the curriculum were inevitable when the current ruling party took over power in the 1989 military coup. In 1990, another educational conference took, place whose outcome includes the textbooks used for this study.

A closer look at the different curriculum conference recommendations reveals a clear association between ruling class ideology and official knowledge presented in the curriculum. In the last two decades, three educational conferences have recommended changes in the educational system in a span of six years (1984-1990). During this period, institutionalization of Arabic and Islam were accorded cardinal importance in the national

curriculum. The 1984 conference sought to advance education, based on an Islamic orientation as well as entrenching the role of Khalawi (Quranic/ Islamic schools). In 1987, conference recom-mendation made gave Arabic a more prominent role in the educational system. Thereafter, this prominence was elevated even higher, with Arabic regarded as the holy language alongside Islam, the religion. The National Center for Curriculum Development and Educational Research document titled 'Elements of Basic Education Curriculum' (undated) stated that the 'Arabic language is a holy language, being the Qur'an's tool to convey the Truth' (p.1). The political system further advanced the Islamic agenda when, during the 1990 conference, the consolidation of religious thought and the teachings of the heavens was advocated. Although these teachings of heavens have not been explicitly defined, it is important to recognize that sharia had already been unilaterally declared in Sudan. Accordingly, all the recommendations touching on religion implied the religion of Islam, and the reference to the 'heavens' means heaven as defined and understood in Islam.

In view of the foregoing, it is evident that education has never been a neutral enterprise in Sudan. It is used as a tool of religious, social and cultural domination by Northern dominated political regimes and Islamic zealots. The ideological principles that guide the development of the current curriculum reflect those ideologies. At the same time, it is these ideological standings that provoke the need to demand a shift in thinking about how to use the education system to address ways to unite Sudan. As the system stands, it does not fulfil the quest for peace in Sudan. Many Sudanese have not experienced peace, harmony and other aspects of human development that the current curriculum purports to promote. It is clear from the analysis that the political structure continues to manipulate what knowledge is imparted to Sudanese students.

When the current ruling party, the National Congress Party (formerly known as National Islamic Front), came to power in 1989, it sought to revive the Islamic nation with Sudan at the forefront (Al Mubarak 2001; Al Turabi 1994). Control over knowledge, therefore, has been of great concern for the current regime. Islamic zealots within the ruling party have viewed education as a suitable platform to impose their dream of reviving the Islamic Empire. One of these government officials, Abdul Rahman Ahmed, explained how the control over knowledge is an important tool for domination: 'A vision for life, which is based on the Islamization of knowledge, is a vision for the Sudanese and Muslim excelling in and dominating the world' (quoted in Al Mubabark 2001:10). Hence, Islamization of knowledge is declared as a means and weapon in the struggle to

dominate the world. To achieve this goal, the education system has been manipulated to condition young minds to be soldiers with a 'holy mission' as defined by the ruling party. The 1990 conference declared the aim of Sudanese education as 'to work for the consolidation of religious belief in young people'. It was also declared that the aim of education is to instil values and behaviour 'which are based on the teachings of Heavens' (Selman et al. 2003). From the textbook analysis, it is apparent that religion is synonymous with Islam and heaven is defined according to the Islamic version of heaven. The conference recommendation and curriculum reform happened at the same time that the Islamization of knowledge project was declared by the ruling elite. This project is manifested in many areas, but the major manifestation was in identity representation and national history. The findings indicate that the representation of an official version of Sudanese identity that is associated with Islam is not inclusive of other religions in Sudan. To understand how this new version of Sudanese identity works, it is useful to refer to the citizenship and passport law of 1994. In 1994, a new law was issued which gave the president the right to grant citizenship to any foreigner. It was declared by the head of legal affairs in the Transitional National Council that 'the citizenship and passports which are recognized in our sharia state are the words "la ilaha illa Allah" there is no God except Allah and thus Sudan is open for all Muslims' (quoted in Al Mubarak 2001:100). Although there are no definite figures for how many non-Sudanese Muslims had been granted citizenship according to this law, the overflow of Osama Bin Laden and his followers from the Arab Afghans to Sudan in the 1990s was a clear manifestation of these stipulations. This new definition of Sudanese identity, as much as it coincides with the ruling class ideology, is in opposition to the constitutional stipulation, which states: '[Sudan] is a democratic, decentralized, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country where such diversities co-exist' (Sudan Constitution 2005). However, the version of Sudanese identity that is defined according to the Islamic symbols excludes non-Muslims from being Sudanese, and it is reflected throughout the educational curriculum.

As discussed earlier, the homeland, which in textbooks refers to Sudan, is defined as an Islamic Arabic state according to symbols portraying Arabic Islamic values. Patriotism is, in reality, a call for nationalism disguised as patriotism. Patriotism is defined as synonymous with Islamist nationalism. Statements such as 'Our leader is the prophet, and we do not have any other than the prophet Mohamed. The Quran is our constitution' appear in the fourth grade Arabic textbook (p.42). This official univocal expression

of national identity implies that the norms, which govern the concept of citizenship, are identified with Arabic Islamic culture as the key determinant. This is a materialization of exclusionary Othering, which excludes all that do not share the Arabic Islamic cultural symbols, regardless of whether they are Sudanese by birth. The legitimization of Arabic and Islam in the curriculum is represented as the identity markers of what it means to be a Sudanese. Arabic is not only considered as the means of conversation between different groups or the nation's lingua franca but also as the holy language alongside Islam. The National Centre for Curriculum Development and Educational Research identifies Arabic as the tool to convey the truth via the Qur'an. Thus, being a Muslim is not enough for inclusion. It would seem that identifying with the Arabic Islamic symbols is the prerequisite for inclusion.

The findings of this study reveal that the curriculum perpetuates this construction of exclusive identity. The basic education curriculum constructs, through representation, images and values, a version of Sudanese identity that is practically the same as Northern Arab Muslim identity. This is manifested in the images, names and religious affiliation of characters depicted in the textbooks. The absence of any element of the marginalized groups' cultures, value systems and meaning establishes a 'selective version of a national culture... installed as an absolute condition for any social identity' (Johnson 1990:71). A mono-cultural national curriculum of this kind 'deals with diversity by centring the always ideological "we" and leaves out the marginalized groups with limited choices' (Apple 1993:233). Marginalized groups have to accommodate themselves within the dominant discourse and accept assimilation; otherwise, they are alienated and excluded. Therefore, as Johnson (1990) articulates, the choices of the marginalized in Sudan are narrowed down to two options: 'national culture or no culture at all' (p. 71). The textbook analysis reveals that out of 128 named characters, there are only four non-Arabic names. These results say a lot about whose image should be seen through this national curriculum.

Implications for Peace and Reconciliation in Post-conflict Sudan

This exclusionary version of Sudanese identity has far-reaching implications for the possibility of healing and reconciliation in post-conflict Sudan. Deng (1995) made a significant statement on the relationship between the official policies and conflict in Sudan. He asserted that a crucial factor in determining the critical turning point in Sudan's conflict has always been 'the extent to which policies or actions of the central government have promoted or

diminished a sense of belonging or identification with the country on more or less equitable footing with the North'. He further explained that official policies, including educational policies, have 'delineated the margin, the dividing line between peace and war, co-operation and conflict, unity and polarization' (p.177).

History is another significant terrain of inclusion and exclusion. According to Graham-Brown (1994), state policies tend to define the national history in favour of the dominant groups by constructing 'a version of history, particularly of the recent past, which heightens the role of that group at the expense of the others' (p. 28). The official current version of Sudan's national history substantially demonstrates the manipulation of national history to reflect the ideal of the Islamic state. This is manifested in the representation of the history of Sudan as a history of Islamic kingdoms. For example, the 8th grade social studies textbook, *Mankind and Environment*, in a lesson outline titled 'Sudan Kingdoms', references only Funj and Fur, the two Islamic kingdoms. None of the non-Islamic kingdoms that existed in ancient Sudan are mentioned. The official version of Sudan's history is centred on the events that happened during the rise and spread of Islam. The curriculum divides Sudan's history before colonization into certain periods: arrival of the Arabs, Turk-Egyptian and Mahdiya. The preference given to specific historical periods reflects the decision about which historical events receive prominence and, therefore, are more meaningful and memorable. Entman (1993) states that the way facts are selected, organized and presented can 'promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (p. 52). The highly selective presentation of Sudanese national history as a history of an Islamic state is another indicator of the role that official knowledge, as disseminated in the curriculum, plays in promoting Islamic Arabic national identity. Yet, domination breeds resistance. This can take many forms, from passive resistance, such as refusing to attend history classes (teacher, personal communication, December 2005), to violent reactions. It can also manifest itself in extremely catastrophic situations such as the half-century of civil war and loss of two million human lives.

In their study of the role Radio Rwanda played in inciting violence during Rwanda's genocide, Kellow and Steeves (1998) state that one of the frames that the radio perpetuated is the 'risk and danger frame', which puts citizens in a defensive situation and provokes horror against a real or perceived enemy. The ruling elite, through different social institutions, notably the schools media, and religious organizations, aim to reinforce the

theme of a 'nation at war'. As evidenced throughout the textbooks, there are enormous images and poetry of war. Heroism is associated with war, and history lessons are centred on the history of wars. Islamic history is summarized as a history of wars against *kufar* (non-Muslims/infidels). Inflammatory statements, such as 'enemies' armies', 'enemies' 'conspiracy', and 'enemies' 'abhorrence', are diffused throughout the textbooks. 'Enemies' take many forms; sometimes they are *kufar*, other times they are Jews, and many times they are not specified, allowing the students the option to identify whoever they consider as their enemy. But the relentless message is that there are always enemies.

The community collective identity, especially in religion textbooks, is presented solely as Islamic collective identity. Thus, the concepts of brotherhood/sisterhood are limited to Muslims and do not embrace the whole of humanity. Accordingly, this exclusive collective identity denies any calls for national unity in a multi-religious country like Sudan. The message that is inculcated in primary school pupils is that whoever does not share our faith does not belong to us. With this univocal construction of collective identity, it is more likely that children will identify 'others', who are not Muslims, as their enemies. War has always been fuelled by the myth of an evil enemy:

> We first kill people with our minds, before we kill them with weapons. Whatever the conflict, the enemy is always the destroyer. We're on God's side; they're barbaric. We're good; they're evil (Keen 1991:18).

It is evident that the curriculum ties violence to religion in order to legitimize exclusion and othering. Statements such as 'with my faith and my weapon' (fourth grade Arabic book, p.121) and 'I swear I will never leave my goal as long as I carry my holy book and my gun' (sixth grade Arabic language textbook, p.42) are divisive. The language of these texts bears witness to the culture of violence fostered through the curriculum.

Conclusion

The education system exposes Sudanese students to ideologies that endanger prospects for peace in Sudan. An apparent manifestation of these ideologies is the xenophobic violence by *mujahedeen* (fighters) of Popular Defence Army. Mostly university and high school students in the South performed these violent acts during the 1990s. As revealed in narratives cited in the textbooks analyzed, the curriculum and education system in Sudan is a catalyst of violence, rather than acting as an agent of cohesion. In this regard, there is a critical need for radical curriculum reform in Sudan.

To attain a society that is inclusive at all levels, notably in as far as religious and linguistic diversity is concerned, a radical reform of the education system is inevitable. More importantly, the hegemonic ideology that guides curriculum development must be re-examined to counter hegemonic actions that favour the interests of the powerful. The people who have been historically marginalized and under/misrepresented must be empowered to question the status quo by raising fundamental and reflective questions about their circumstances. Conferences that involve all stakeholders (teachers, parents, educational scholars and activists) would be possible avenues to challenge the status quo. However, non-mainstream and marginalized groups such as people of South Sudan, Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Nubians just to name a few must be involved in providing solutions through the articulation of their concerns. This approach is guided by Freirean philosophy asserting that 'attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects' (Freire 1993:64). Any reform in the current curriculum policy should engage all Sudanese voices, especially those who have been denied representation throughout the history of independent Sudan. Such participation by the non-mainstream, marginalized groups should not be seen as a favour bestowed on them by some external party, but rather as the result of their conscientization (Freire 1993). Ultimately, the univocal expression of Sudanese identity needs to be questioned and stopped if Sudan's national unity is ever to be achieved.

Kabano Rutayisire, a key education stakeholder in Rwanda, stated that 'a closer look at the education system before the 1994 genocide reveals that the education system – and specifically the school curriculum – failed the nation' (Tawil and Harley 2004:18). Sudan has to learn from Rwanda's genocide. The kind of education and the culture it perpetuates failed, and will continue to fail the Sudanese nation, if no serious attention is paid to it.

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Silent Religiosity in a Snivelling Nation: The Role of Religious Institutions in Promoting Post-conflict Reconciliation in Kenya

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Abstract

This article seeks to examine the role of religious institutions in peace building, prior to and after the 2007 post-elections violence in Kenya. The author builds an argument that supports the view that religious institutions have a role to play in peace building. Using Klopp's (2002) conception about liberal versus illiberal nationalism, the author explains how religious institutions in Kenya can be a voice for the voiceless communities, especially during and after conflicts largely triggered by the political leaders in the country. The arguments presented bring to the forefront the role that religious institutions play in post-conflict situations to reconcile diverse ethnic communities, and offer some lessons learned about post-conflict peace communication.

Key Terms: Religious institutions, elections, post-conflict, ethnic cleansing.

Résumé

L'objectif de cet article est d'examiner le rôle des institutions religieuses dans le maintien de la paix avant et après les violences postélectorales de 2007 au Kenya. L'argument de l'auteur confirme le rôle que les institutions religieuses doivent jouer dans le maintien de la paix. Se basant sur la conception de Klopp (2002) par rapport au nationalisme libéral et non libéral, l'auteur explique comment les institutions au Kenya peuvent devenir la voix des communautés qui n'en ont pas à cause des dirigeants politiques dans le pays, particulièrement durant et après les conflits. Les arguments du texte mettent en avant le rôle des institutions religieuses dans les situations de post-conflit, dans la réconciliation des communautés ethniques et dans la compréhension des leçons de la communication pour la paix.

Mots clés : Institutions religieuses, élections, post-conflit, génocide.

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Introduction

On 27 December 2007, some ten million Kenyans went to the polls in what was generally anticipated to be the most hotly contested and close-run presidential, parliamentary and civic elections in the country's 45 years since emerging from British colonial rule. President Kibaki trailed in the polls most of the time and only started catching up well into the tallying exercise. In the late afternoon of 30 December 2007, he was announced the winner by an extra 231, 728 votes over Orange Democratic Movement's (ODM) candidate, Raila Odinga. President Kibaki was then hurriedly sworn in for another term, notwithstanding raucous protests that the election had been rigged. These protests and an ODM press conference were abruptly silenced by a news blackout and security clampdown as armed soldiers bustled candidates, party agents, diplomats and domestic as well as international observers out of the Kenyatta International Conference Centre where the tallying process was taking place. Upward adjustment of already announced results from some populous pro-Kibaki constituencies, ostensibly favouring the President, fanned the flames of suspicion. Televised utterances by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) Chairman, Samuel Kivuitu, only served to make matters worse, as did a hurriedly composed media statement released by four out of twenty-two commissioners, commenting on the twist of events and calling for tranquillity. Widespread and often ethnically motivated violence erupted and rapidly spread to various parts of the country.

The violence was of a magnitude that was hitherto inconceivable to many Kenyans and the international community that had known the country as an island of peace. From 29 December 2007, following the delay of the announcement of the contested results, to 29 February 2008 when President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga signed the national peace accord, the country was in political and violent turmoil. The violence later turned out to be an ethnic cleansing process, left over 1,150 people dead, and over 300,000 others displaced.

On 4 January 2008, it was evident that Kenya was facing a crisis, with apparent killing and eviction of innocent ethnic groupings in several parts of the country, especially in Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa, Molo, Kuresoi, Kibera, Eastlands (Mathare and Kariobangi). Hundreds of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps emerged in several parts of the country, signifying the magnitude of the violence. Some citizens fled as refugees to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Tanzania. Those accommodated in camps continued to suffer the crisis. With the need for protection and food, it was reported that women and young girls were

forced to provide sexual favours. The men providing security in these camps were also associated with the rape cases. Those who sought refuge in the camps at least saved their lives despite these events. Those who sought refuge in places thought to be safe havens, such as churches, faced the wrath of the rioting gangs. One sad story told by a Kikuyu lady suffices here, in an incident that led to the highest number of lives lost in one incident:

> On 1 of January 2008 at around 10 a.m., I heard people yelling that some raiders were coming. I saw smoke coming from some houses in our village and the houses were burning. Everyone in the village started running away to the church (KAG). My mother who was 90 years old was with me at the time. I decided to take my mother into the church for safety. After a few minutes, I saw more raiders coming towards the church. We thought the raiders would not attack the church. The raiders were pushing many people into the church. The raiders threw some mattress into the roof of the church and threw more into the church. They were also pouring fuel (petrol) onto the mattresses. All of a sudden I saw fire break out. I took my mother towards the main door to get her outside, but there were many others scrambling toward the door as well. We both fell onto the floor. I wanted to save my mother from the burning church, but one of the raiders prevented me. I saw the fire had reached where my mother was. I heard her cry for help as the fire burnt her, but I could not help.

Kikuyu men attempting to defend their church and loved ones were hacked to death with machetes, shot with arrows, or pursued and killed. The death toll for this horrific incident was 17 burned alive in the church, 11 dying in or on the way to the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, and 54 others injured who were treated and discharged.

After the signing of the National Peace Accord, tranquillity slowly returned but the damage had been done. It was now time to start the peace building processes, which of course was a huge burden if left in the hands of the government alone. This article highlights the role of religious institutions in addressing the post-conflict issues before and after the post-election violence. Drawing from existing published literature, newspaper reports, post-conflict commissions of inquiry reports and personal experiences, the article takes a dual perspective of analyzing the successes and failures of religious groups in the peace building processes in Kenya, especially after the post-election violence of 2007.

History of Election Violence in Kenya

In order to understand the need for the involvement of religious groups in peace building processes, it is imperative to highlight the root causes of

conflicts and violence that have led to the absence of peace. The term 'peace' has been viewed from different theoretical perspectives. Generally, peace is described as a state of freedom, rest, quietness and calmness. In peace and conflict studies, the terms 'negative peace' and 'positive peace' are applied quite habitually. Negative peace describes the sheer absence of war or violent conflicts, whereas positive peace denotes a more inclusive comprehension of a variety of factors related to the creation and institutionalization of justice and freedom (Bangura 2007:34). The complexity of these factors not only contributes to the absence of war, but also augments the totality of peace in the human society. This means that positive peace reflects the need to gratify human needs as well as contribute towards the achievement of human rights.

Prior to the 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya, the threat to peace in the country could be seen in the ethnic and land clashes that had occurred over the years, and the rise of youth militia movements such as Mungiki and Kalenjin warriors. The violent activities of these movements have been well documented by scholars such as Jacqueline Klopp (2002), Mutuma Ruteere (2008), Musambayi Katumanga (2005) and David Anderson (2005). Additionally, the works of Klopp (2002), Ndegwa (2005) and Odhiambo (2004) depict how ethnic and land clashes have characterized many parts of the Rift Valley and Western provinces since the introduction of multi-party elections in 1992. The ethnic clashes are attributed to former president Daniel arap Moi regime's desire to preserve its political, social and economic position. According to Klopp (2002), the regime pioneered the *Majimbo* (federal) system of leadership that incited the local community (Kalenjins) to evict the minority ethnic groupings in the Rift Valley province.

Reports by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) indicate that from 1991 to 1996, over 15,000 people died, and over 300,000 were displaced in these areas. In the run up to the 1997 general elections, new violence erupted at the Coast, killing over 100 people and displacing over 100,000. Other incidents of politically instigated clashes occurred between 1999 and 2005. How then do we understand what could possibly explain the violence following the 2007 elections? How does this help us understand the role of religious institutions in reconciling diverse ethnic groups in Kenya?

Theoretical Framework

In order to understand the role of religious groups, a theoretical approach that contextualizes the issues relevant to this study is offered. Using Klopp's (2002) theory of liberal versus illiberal nationalisms, this article explains

how political leadership in Kenya impacted on the events that followed the 2007 general elections. Klopp (2002) observes that illiberal, uncivil nationalism results from ethnic mobilization which unscrupulous leaders can organize and exploit for narrow political interests. On the other hand, liberal nationalism is understood as a rallying call by such bodies as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and reformers to counteract the actions of proponents of illiberal nationalism. However, Klopp, referring to the work of Mamdani (1996), argues that the latter approach has been profoundly ineffective as a mobilizing strategy for reform, especially against the existing despotic form of the African state. All the same, Mamdani's observation should not prevent us from examining the role that NGOs and civil society, including religious institutions, play in organizing for peace. As Mathijs (2008) observed, since the early 1990s, civil society has played a significant role in peace-building, and in particular, contributing to good governance and democracy (Mathijs 2008). Mathijs attributes the active participation of civil society to the fact that they are politically neutral. They are also liberal in their approach and in many cases are able to make decisions not influenced by political leaders.

Religious institutions are viable mobilizing agents given that they comprise of citizenry who come from diverse backgrounds, and if well organized, might have an advantage over other civil organizations in the peace-building process. Additionally, they have the capacity to 'preach' peace from the very heart of all diverse communities in Kenya. Even though these institutions might not have an equal political voice in comparison to their counterparts in the political arena, they have the capacity, through mobilizing the congregants, to condemn the injustices of the political system. The challenge at hand however is ensuring that these institutions are willing to rise above partisan politics and engage citizens – their followers – in the process of averting violence and building peace.

In the discussion to follow, the article brings together perspectives that reveal how religious institutions and leaders have a central place in promoting peace. Belshaw (2001) notes that if there are any special groups that live, understand and identify with the poor in Africa, it is religious groups. For most of these groups, the doctrinal understanding is that stewardship encompasses taking care of the environment as well as humanity. This is a practical form of love that is geared towards helping the sick to be healed, the hungry to obtain food and the homeless to gain access to shelter. Their conception of holistic development is one that is guided by universal principles of peace. It is in this perspective of engaging in philanthropic services that Zalot (2002) asserts when arguing that even

given the goodness of God's creation, humanity nonetheless is still called upon to create, shape and bring order to this creation so as to allow human beings become fully human. The following are some examples to support Zalot's statement.

Batson (1993:4) observes that religion has given rise to celebrated acts of selfless concerns for others. He gives the examples of Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King Jnr., Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi. That Albert Schweitzer's deep religious conviction led him to sacrifice personal prestige and comfort to provide medical care for thousands; Martin Luther King Jnr.'s dream of a society in which all people, black and white, would be free was essentially a religious vision; religious conviction lay behind Mahatma Gandhi's life of asceticism and non-violent protest; Mother Teresa, even as her own health deteriorated, did not cease to express her religious faith by caring for the needs of the poorest of the poor. Contemporary religious groups and leaders need to be inspired by such examples when confronting their role in the zones of conflict that have arisen in many African nations. This call is further emphasized by Rasmussen (1994), who argues that the notion of a separation between the spiritual and the material is clearly foreign to the Biblical perspective of development. He notes that spiritual is the rich inner life of cherished values, meanings and loyalties that comprise the mysterious central identification of selfhood, as well as the value content of the whole cultures.

It is against this theoretical background that the analysis in this article proceeds to consider the role different religious institutions played in the peace-building process before and after the Kenyan post-election violence of 2007-2008. The goal is to examine the successes and failures of religious institutions in mobilizing citizens in the peace-building processes following the post-election violence.

Participation of Religious Institutions

The task here is to explain the nature of participation of religious institutions prior to and after the elections. The analysis focuses on whether their participation was active and or passive in the context of the four national accord agendas set for the coalition government to reconcile Kenyans. What role did religious groups play in this political wrangling in Kenya?

Critical Historical Role of the Church

Mue (2008) utilizes a critical-historical approach to explain the failure of religious groups, and specifically the role of the church, in post-colonial Africa. He argues that the church supported the colonial administration

but did not act to condemn the social injustices of the colonial era, preferring instead to engage in political diplomacy with colonial powers. The same can be argued about leadership in African churches after independence that did little to condemn the injustices of the political leaders of the time. In Kenya, the history of the presidencies of Jomo Kenyatta and Arap Moi provides sufficient evidence of terrible injustice, notably the assassinations of senior and junior political leaders who dared expose the ills of the government. Other injustices included harsh laws and restrictions on press freedom and academic freedom, elections rigging and corruption. These injustices took place as religious groups and their leaders watched in silence, especially during the Kenyatta regime.

Nevertheless, with the introduction of multiparty politics in 1992, a few courageous church leaders became vocal critics of the political establishment. These religious leaders include Bishops Henry Okullu, Alexander Muge and David Gitari of the Anglican Church of Kenya, Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki of the Catholic Church, Reverend Timothy Njoya of the Presbyterian Church of Kenya, and Reverend Mutava Musyimi of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), among others.

How then did religious groups respond to the post-election violence? As members of civil society embarked on peace-building efforts, the participation of religious groups was minimal. They were not really visible at the national level in championing the rights of the displaced and assisting the peace-building process, as was the case with many NGOs. This record does not speak highly of church leadership, and hardly conforms to the words of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere when he observed: 'Everything which prevents a person from living in dignity and decency must be under the attack from the church and its workers' (Okullu 2003:19).

The term 'church' refers to any religious institution that has a vision and mission based on the core values of its faith. The task then, seems to rest squarely on the religious leaders who must not only denounce evil in society but also enable the faithful to fulfil their roles. According to Okullu (2003), the clergy may not have the capacity to restructure an economic system, but they have a duty to state that a system which leaves the majority of people unable to access basic human needs is immoral and unjust. Instead, as Orabator (2002) observes, religious groups in Africa tend to be reactive bodies that watch as events unfold and that fail to act to prevent the crumbling of what could otherwise have been salvaged. It is only after the situation is out of hand that the groups hasten to collect and bind together the pieces when it is already too late. But people expected

that religious groups would intervene, and voices from sections of Kenyan society challenged the groups to act.

The Churches and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC)

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) was established in 2008 to address human rights violations following the post-election violence. The TJRC was seen as an effort to overcome the impunity enjoyed by inciters of violence, and to promote reconciliation. It was assumed that the religious institutions would take a lead in the effort. However, at the time the TJRC was agreed upon, religious groups were unable to point out with conviction that the TJRC process was state-owned and skewed by political interests. The reason for this state of affairs was that in the run-up to the 2007 general elections, several religious groups were seen as being openly partisan along ethnic lines. The media reported on 'prophesies' by leaders of various Christian churches regarding who would win the presidential elections. The churches also had their preferred presidential candidates, according to geographical and ethnic boundaries. Similarly, in Mombasa, Muslims campaigned for their fellow Muslim candidates.

When the violence erupted, the religious groups could not then rise above political partisanship in order to counter the tide of violence. They were not in a strong position to condemn the post-election violence largely instigated by certain political leaders. As a result of the religious alliances, over 300 churches were burned during the post-election violence, an indication that religious institutions, especially the churches, were no longer respected.

However, after being silent for almost one year, the religious groups came out in defence of justice and human rights. The public condemnation of the president and prime minister centred on the failure to punish corruption in high places, to deal with extra judicial killings by the police and to resettle thousands made homeless by the post-election violence (*Daily Nation*, 20 February 2009). The cheers by Kenyans on witnessing this public act were an indication of what they had expected of the religious leaders after the violence. For example, the Hindu council leadership castigated the coalition government as follows:

> You [referring to the President and the Prime Minister] have been reluctant to punish your friends who are greedy, you have neglected the IDPs; you have not acted decisively on insecurity and extra-judicial killings. Kenyans hoped that the two of you would unite the diverse ethnic communities into one united nation of Kenya; that you would punish those who

> break the law even if they are your friends; that you would turn your faces from corruption and greed; that you would resettle the IDPs back to their homes; that you would facilitate the creation of jobs for the unemployed especially the youth; but all Kenyans are witnessing are disagreements within the Grand Coalition instead of cohesion and there have been little or no effort towards healing and reconciliation. Kenyans are now disillusioned with your leadership and you should take responsibility for the status of the nation. We urge you to take charge and restore dignity and unity, equity and justice for all the people of Kenya. We pray that God will help you to overcome the challenge facing our nation with courage and devotion (*Daily Nation*, 20 February 2009).

Another public act was a formal apology by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) for taking sides during the 2007 general elections. This was an effort by the churches to recover their credibility, and show their commitment to support the peace building and reconciliation process. At the same time, an inter-religious forum consisting of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKON), the Episcopal movement, the Hindu society and NCCK remained outspoken about the ills of the political leaders in the country. One example illustrating this collaboration was the NCCK's One Million Signatures initiative that sought to mobilize Kenyans in all administrative provinces to support the prosecution of leaders who had instigated the post-election violence.

Similarly, a group of churches formed the 'wheels/caravan of hope' (*msafara*) initiative. This is a peace initiative that co-ordinated prayers for the nation and food distribution to internationally displaced persons all the way from Mombasa, through Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret and to Kisumu. Other initiatives by the churches included collaboration with the provisional and district administrations. For example, churches in the Rift Valley province joined the Rift Valley provincial commissioner to reconcile communities most affected by the 2007-2008 violence. In the months of February through April 2009, religious groups and other civil organizations were actively involved in persuading the president and the prime minister to resolve their differences amicably.

These initiatives show that at last the religious groups desired a peaceful Kenya. What is significant in the diverse responses is their condemnation of corruption among political leaders and poor governance. Philip (2008) argues that, in the long and difficult process of peace building in post-conflict states, corruption has increasingly been identified as a major obstacle to success and as something whose eradication should be of high priority.

The ills of corruption and the lack of political will to reconcile Kenyans and fully implement peace for displaced persons to return to their homes continue to render Kenya vulnerable to ethnic animosity and even more violence.

The delay in implementing peace building and reconciliation mechanisms is what continues to rally religious leaders to challenge the Kibaki-Odinga coalition government to overcome partisan politics and to come to the aid of Kenyans in the Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza provinces who still feel unsafe and unprotected from their fellow citizens in their own country.

Proposals Towards a More Active Role

Wainaina (2009a) recommends that religious groups should fearlessly join the international community and continue to urge the government to hold perpetrators of human rights violations to account, and also to support initiatives to strengthen judicial independence and the establishment of a society based on the rule of law and human rights. This is one of the ways to address the root causes of ethnic rivalries. The causes, for example, of land squabbles in most parts of the country are known. These have not only been documented in research done by Kenyan and other scholars. They are also evident from the reports from commissions formed by both the government and private bodies to investigate the land clashes in the Rift Valley and Western provinces in the late 1990s (see Klopp 2002; Odhiambo 2004; Ndegwa 1997; Turner and Brownhill 2001; Mueller 2008). Clearly, religious institutions should be in the forefront in advocating a long-lasting solution to the burning issues that lead to violence in the country.

In particular, Mue (2008) urges religious groups to take the lead in fighting tribalism and forging an abiding spirit of nationhood. The groups should condemn the ethnic politics that has divided the country's 42 ethnic groups, commonly referred to as 'tribes', in an effort to form a united Kenya. Equally important is the need for these groups to call for a fair distribution of resources such as land, which has remained a central issue in giving rise to widespread ethnic conflict.

Finally, religious institutions should endeavour to give hope where there seems to be no hope. They should mobilize citizens to embrace peace and nationhood, and not to seek to establish ethnic enclaves. In sum, advocating social justice should be the priority of all civil organizations in the country.

Lessons Learned About Post-conflict Peace Communication

The experience of religious institutions reveals some useful lessons about post-conflict peace communication. For the most part, religious institutions

have the potential to communicate peace messages. Many of them are grassroots-based and can use their doctrinal foundations to reach the majority of people and positively impact on them for the betterment of their communities. Diverse religious groups could overcome political partisanships because of their focus on spiritual and human wellbeing, a virtue which cuts across ethnic enclaves. In situations where the political leadership fosters ethnic and tribal perspectives, spiritual conviction that favours nationhood then becomes a tool to (re)unite citizens. In this role, religious groups have to emphasize the need to embrace compatible cultural values, meaningful relationships and spirituality. These are the building blocks to promote meaningful interactions in post-conflict settings.

Another important element of post-conflict communication is the willingness of religious groups readily to own up to their mistakes, and to their failure to act on behalf of those they serve. This is a communicative act that encourages leaders to rally for a new beginning that seeks to foster reconciliation. Rosenberg's (2005:3) concept of non-violent or compassionate communication founded on 'language and communication skills that strengthen our ability to remain human, even under trying conditions and a powerful process for inspiring compassionate connection and action' is what religious institutions need to focus attention on.

At the same time, communication in post-conflict setting involves raising critical questions about the protection of human rights and the promotion of ethical values and good governance. The gesture by the NCCK to focus attention on issues concerning the economic and political rights of citizens is to be seen as an attempt to communicate humanity.

Overall, the participation of religious groups, even though it came late, enables us to see the meaning of the saying 'better late than never'. Many Kenyans can attest to the positive acts and motives of these institutions as a result of their involvement in peace-building initiatives following the election violence. The religious leaders engaged by reflecting on their mistakes and formally apologized. Thereafter, they embarked on the task to organize their constituents to act for peace. In my view, these are communicative acts that allow those involved in the peace building and reconciliation process to reflect on their actions and change what needs to be changed. In all, it is a way of communication that calls for a redefinition of the role of community structures to realize that, in the words of the NCCK official Oliver Kisaka (2008), these institutions embody traditions of renewal, redemption and forgiveness.

Conclusion

Religious institutions as community structures need to use every available opportunity to speak up for citizens and to publicly assume the leadership in the fight against injustice and political corruption in Kenya. As Orobator (2002) argues, these institutions need to modify and apply doctrines that promote humanity. So far, the extent to which these groups act and respond in preventing conflicts facing Africa remains inadequate. The Kenyan experience, notably the late response by religious institutions, teaches the need for these institutions to remain neutral (politically) and committed to promote humanity and not wait to do so only in times of conflict. Their positioning in society gives them the opportunity to champion strong and effective community ties that favour a vision of one Kenya built on ideals of a nation and nationhood rather than ethnic enclaves.

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Somali Language and Oral Tradition in Post-conflict Life in the US: What Does the Future Hold?

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Abstract

As global conflicts increasingly force people to leave their homelands, it is important we become aware of the issues that impact on different aspects of refugees' lives in foreign lands. A variety of problems are associated with forced migration, notably challenges of cultural adaptation such as language issues, cultural assimilation, cultural adaptation, identity, loss of social networks of relatives, friends and neighbours, harsh climates, racism and so on. This article discusses some of the concerns expressed by Somali refugees living in Mid-West United States of America. They fear that the Somali language and oral traditions might be lost if attempts are not made to preserve them. Specifically, the authors examine the efforts to and challenges of preserving the language and oral traditions in a post-conflict setting. The article concludes by pointing to a question about the future of third generation Somali-Americans who have adapted the English language and see no economic and social benefits in the Somali language for them.

Key Terms: Somali refugees, language, oral traditions, culture, post-conflict setting.

Résumé

Pendant que les conflits dans le monde poussent de plus en plus les populations hors de leur terroirs, il devient important d'être conscient des facteurs qui affectent la vie des réfugiés dans les terres étrangères. Différents problèmes sont associés à la migration forcée, en particulier les défis liés à l'adaptation culturelle avec les

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problèmes de langue, l'assimilation culturelle, l'identité, la perte de réseaux sociaux des parents, des amis et voisins, les climats insupportables, le racisme, etc. Cet article discute des préoccupations exprimées par les réfugiés somaliens vivant aux USA dans le Mid-West. Ceux là craignent que la langue somalienne et les traditions orales soient perdues s'il n'y a pas d'efforts de préservation. Les auteurs examinent particulièrement les efforts et les défis quant à cette préservation dans un contexte d'après guerre. L'article conclu par la question relative au futur de la troisième génération des Somaliens-Américains qui se sont adaptés à la langue Anglaise et qui ne voient aucun bénéfice économique et social pour eux dans la langue somalienne.

Mots clés : Réfugiés Somaliens, langue, traditions orales, culture, contexte de post-conflit.

Introduction

> If we lose our language how will second generation of US-born Somalis communicate if they decide to go back to Somalia? What about Somalis scattered all over the world who have to learn different languages other than English? How will we communicate if we lose our language?
> — Somali elder in Central Minnesota.

The effects of violence in Somalia are enormous. Most obvious effects include the loss of life and social networks, human suffering, displacement of people, lack of a functioning government and continuing instability in the country. Generally, Somali refugees have to address major concerns arising around issues about the survival of Somali language and oral traditions in addition to everything else that has happened to them and their native country. This article is concerned with issues surrounding the Somali language and oral traditions among Somali refugees in central Minnesota. Martin and Nakayama (2003) observe that language is powerful and can have tremendous implications for people's lives. As we will see in this article, the impact of language on people's lives is illustrated in emerging concerns by Somali refugees about how being in a new cultural environment, which calls for the need to preserve their language and oral traditions. The sentiments expressed about the possible loss of language and oral traditions by the Somali elder bring to the forefront the need to raise awareness about this issue. Indeed, this concern is among many problems resulting from the displacement of Somalis from their homeland to foreign lands, in particular the US. That the Somali language and oral traditions might be lost in the cause of cultural adaptation – the long-term process of adjusting to and finally feeling comfortable in a new environment (Kim 2001 cited in

Martin and Nakayama 2003:277) – explains the issues discussed in this article.

Concerns about what identifies Somali people as a cultural group raise a critical question about how language accounts for group identity and membership. According to Davies (1999) language is more than a cluster of words or a set of grammatical rules; it is a flash of the human spirit by which the soul of a culture reaches into the material world. It is in this context that one sees how the desire to preserve the Somali language in foreign lands is paramount to Somali culture, identity and cultural membership.

This article begins by discussing the history of Somalia and proceeds to describe the presence of Somalis in the US and the context in which concerns about language and oral traditions were expressed. It ends by describing the efforts taken by Somali refugees to ensure that the language and oral traditions survive and do not get lost as they adjust to life outside Somalia.

Historical Background

The colonial history of Somalia is complex. Following the scramble for Africa in the nineteenth century, Somalia was partitioned in five territories. The British colonized the north, the Italians the south, the French the region now known as Djibouti, and the British also colonized the south, which was ruled by Kenya and the Ogaden region controlled by Ethiopia. The British controlled north became independent on June 26, 1960, followed by the Italian controlled region on July 1, 1960 (Gerard Prunier 1995). After independence, Somalia became known as Somalia Republic. The lands in Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia, however, were not united with the North and South regions that composed the new Somalia Republic. The new government concentrated on unification of all regions and did not accept the existing borders. Despite the political divisions, Somalis had a sense of national identity, a common language and culture, and in Islam a faith that brought all of them together. The five-point star on the Somali flag represents the five segments or clans of Somalia, and traditional clan rivalries were held in check as a *Greater Somalia* was a goal of all during this time and viewed as the way to overcome their colonial past (Meredith 2005).

After the military coup in 1969, staged by General Mohammed Siyad Barre, Somalia became a Marxist state. However, in 1977, the friendship and co-operation treaty with the then Soviet Union was broken after the latter supported Ethiopia in a war with Somalia. The events that followed could be said to explain the political instability in present day Somalia.

Meredith (2005) discussed the opposition to Barre's decision that led to the formation of political movements affiliated to different clans in the country. By the 1980s, armed violence had rocked the country as evidenced by the genocidal massacres of over 50,000 people at Berbera (Jones 2004) and bombing raids on Hargesia where thousands of Somalis were killed (Meredith 2005). Additionally, key infrastructure like schools, hospitals, water, power, ports, telecommunications, roads, bridges and refineries were destroyed or left not functioning. The United Nations (UN) and US intervention in the early 1990s did not bring stability in the region and so their withdrawal a few years later was inevitable. The rest of the 1990s continued in political turmoil in spite of numerous failed attempts at bringing peace and political stability to Somalia. It is safe to say that there has been no functional government in Somali up to date. As *The Economist* reported, Somalia remains Africa's most palpably failed state.

The Presence of Somalis in Minnesota

Since the early 1990s, the state of Minnesota has been home to the largest population of Somali refugees in the US. According to the Minneapolis Foundation (2004), Minnesota is a preferred resettlement area, primarily because of an established Somali community and the availability of unskilled jobs that do not require English proficiency. It is estimated that 70,000-90,000 Somalis live in Minnesota, and about 7000 Somalis live in central Minnesota where this study was conducted. This number is based on estimations by local Somali groups in the area. The exact numbers are unknown because census data are not current, and also there is no option to specifically identify Somalis on the census form. In most cases, their identification is checked as African or 'other' and this makes it difficult to keep track of actual numbers.

The challenge of accounting for Somalis around the globe may not seem so much of an issue in comparison to the immense pressure to learn the national language of the countries in which they settle as refugees. In Minnesota, Somalis like other immigrants or refugees, must learn English to navigate the new cultural environment. The new language allows them to obtain an education and employment. At the same time, the ability to communicate in English gives them communication skills to resist racism, ethnocentrism and discrimination. For Somalis, learning English is basically a survival tool in the post-conflict life situation. While this is the case, however, there is a concern as expressed by the Somali elder about losing the Somali language and oral traditions, especially among the younger generations of Somalis. The elders want to see Somali language and oral traditions preserved as it becomes clear that their children and grandchildren

are rapidly learning English and becoming 'Americanized'.[1] Those who are new to the country still speak Somali, but youth who have resided or were born in the US use English instead of Somali in their everyday communication except when they are at home.

This earticle is concerned with describing what the Somalis are doing to preserve their language and oral traditions. We will highlight the efforts put in place by the Somali community that teach about their desire to preserve for their culture.

Somali Language and Oral Traditions

A review of the literature revealed many aspects of Somali culture and language. According to Adam (2005), Somalis have a culture based on oral traditions and the language uses Arabic and Omaryic scripts that did not include a written language founded on the Roman alphabet until 1972. Somali poetry, songs and proverbs reveal that they are the avenues through which 'language and culture were transmitted orally and historical events, stories, customs, lineage and customary laws were passed on from generation to generation' (Adam 2005:51). Many Somalis 'date their oral history from the ascent of the Prophet Mohammed' (Abdi Sheik-Abdi 2002:61). While all aspects of Somali culture are important and valuable, oral traditions, and in particular the art of oral poetry and song, is where Somalis excel (Briton Putman and Cabdi Noor 2004). Language was used for humour, puns, word play and poetry or songs were used for courting, political rhetoric, and expression of life (Briton Putman and Cabdi Noor 2004).

According to Adam (2005), 'Somali oral literature is full of intriguing stories of legendary personalities that have managed to survive the test of time over the generations' (p. 33). The art of story telling is evident in the narration. Adam (2005) notes that the narrator of a story usually begins with *sheekoy sheeko, sheeko xariir*, meaning 'story story, beautiful story' and then proceeds with the story. As elsewhere in Africa, stories were told at night after the work for the day was complete. With a lack of modern forms of entertainment, stories, riddles, proverbs and songs became the means through which cultural values, morals and character traits were instilled. It is said that communication by word of mouth among families and friends helped Somalis make their ways to refugee camps and different Somali communities already settled in the US (Adam 2005).

According to Nogueira (2003), 'oral tradition' congregates knowledge, memories, values and symbols generally configured in linguistic objects of a non-literary or aesthetic-literary nature, objects with or without consignment in written testimonies, accomplished vocally and recognizable

collectively and during consecutive generations in an anatomy built by the laws of traditionality (p. 164). The question at hand is how the concern about Somali language and oral traditions becomes an important aspect of Somalis lives in foreign lands.

Historically, concerns about the need to preserve African languages and oral traditions have been expressed. Colonialism impacted on African language and oral traditions due to the introduction of European languages and cultural practices to African people. Many aspects of African traditional communication were affected. An example is what Okpewho (1985) says about how the coming of Europeans and other foreigners to Africa reduced the importance of the traditional African communication. However, in the post-colonial era, African languages and oral traditions are seen as viable tools in the struggle for decolonization. On African languages, renowned African writer, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, asserts that to write in the language of the colonizers is to pay homage to them, while to write in the languages of African is to engage in an anti-imperialist struggle (cited in Smith 2005:36). As Okpewho (1983) has noted, the necessity to preserve something of the old ways is in the interest of history and cultural continuity. This seems to explain the implications of Somali elders' concerns.

Research Question

In order to understand the concerns expressed about Somali language and oral traditions, we sought to establish ways that the Somali community in Central Minnesota had responded to ensure continuity of their way of life in a new cultural environment.

Given our informal conversations with members of the community, we sought to address the following research question: What efforts are in place, within the Somali community in central Minnesota, to preserve Somali language and oral traditions?

Methodology

We employed community action or emancipatory research and action research approaches to understand the concerns expressed by Somali elders about their language and oral traditions. Community action or emancipatory research is defined as 'a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems' (Smith 2005:127). Similarly, action research is defined as research that 'aims to solve pertinent problems in a given context through a democratic inquiry where professional researchers collaborate with participants in the effort to seek and enact solutions to problems of major importance of the local people' (Greenwood and Levin,

1998:75). Both approaches to inquiry were preferred for their focus on the involvement of research participants in the research process rather than treating them as passive participants. This research approach informed how to conceptualize the research problem, gain access to the community and identify appropriate data collection tools. Additionally, it provided insights about the need to create strong networks and trust with the Somali community in order to solidify the collaboration.

Research Participants and Setting

The participants were Somali refugees who are residents of a small central Minnesota town with a population of 63,702 people. A total of 63 Somalis over the age of 18 participated in the study. Ten informal interviews were conducted. Fifty-three of the participants responded to surveys (both in English and Somali) distributed at five English as Second Language (ESL) sites. The profiles of the participants were varied in terms of their length of residency in the US, fluency in English, age, gender and education status. Participants were not compensated for participating in the research. The view that the community felt as if they were being 'studied' by the university limited the number of people who would have participated in the study. This sentiment was expressed in response to the increase in the number of studies focusing on the Somali community.

The survey containing both open- and closed-ended questions in both Somali and English was administered at ESL sites. The administration of the survey was made possible by support given by ESL teachers and some members of the Somali community who were involved with the research project. For example, their involvement was significant in helping to explain some of the survey questions.

Participant observation was carried out at different sites where issues affecting Somali people were addressed such as the local Refugee Advisory Council office. These were also sites where Somalis frequently gathered, such as the La Cruz Community Center. Following Lincoln's (1990) principles of naturalistic inquiry, observation data were recorded as they emerged without interpreting what we thought they meant. This new information, which we did not know or understand from the observation data, necessitated follow-up consultations with our contacts in the Somali community.

Data Analysis

Data were organized into common themes derived from the interview and survey responses as well as from the participants' observation field notes. Units of data were categorized into themes based on what Lincoln and

Guba (1985) call the 'look/feel-alike' comparison (cited in Maykut and Morehouse 1994:136) meaning that units were grouped together based on similarity.

All these were coded into themes and analyzed using constant comparative method (CCM) which is a 'procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions' (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:121). Propositions about Somali language and oral traditions use and preservation were written based on the themes that emerged.

Results

Seven essential themes about the use and preservation of Somali language and oral traditions in the US emerged from the interviews and survey. Specifically, they reveal ways that Somalis in Central Minnesota are engaged to preserve valuable cultural aspects of Somali culture in enduring post-conflict life in the US. The efforts reported in the findings are viewed by the Somali community as opportunities to keep their language and traditions alive.

Communication at Home

The participants overwhelmingly reported that 'home' was the place where Somali language was frequently used and oral traditions preserved. Of the 53 respondents, 84.3 per cent reported that they always spoke Somali at home. In addition, 76.6 per cent of the respondents reported that they told Somali folktales in Somali language at home. In the home setting, communication and interactions among family members, extended family and the community occurs most frequently in Somali language. The elders were said to play a vital role in ensuring that Somali language and oral tradition was preserved for the younger generations. They seek support for activities and programmes that keep Somali youth grounded in their culture and encourage families to see the home as the core of any culture. Tse (2001) observed that passing language and traditions to the younger generation from the elders is the most common form of preservation; even though this alone is not effective enough for preservation, as it typically only includes conversational language and leaves out academic language and literacy.

Resources Available in Somali

There seemed to be a deliberate effort to publish material in Somali language. Numerous Somali/English documents were available mostly in the form of handouts and reference materials. These resources are provided by public service providers – either government or non-profits – to both Somalis

and people working with the Somali population. Most of these resources are at county human services offices, hospitals, Minnesota League of Cities, and at events such as the World Refugee Day and Minnesota Human Rights Conference, to name a few. These resources serve the community with educational, information and entertainment needs. There are books, information materials and handouts about interpreters/ translators, internet sites, music and videos/DVDs, all available in Somali. Many of these resources are produced by Somalis and also in collaboration with the Minnesota Humanities Council (MHC) which has produced four Somali folktale books and a bilingual (English-Somali) CD. Additionally, videos are available with English subtitles to help Somali learn English and also people interested in learning about Somali culture. Videos are available to view on the internet and to purchase at the Somali malls in the Twin Cities and St. Cloud. Unfortunately, these resources are not available in the mainstream outlets such as bookstores and libraries. A valuable resource cited by respondents was http://www.hiiraan.com/, a website available in Somali and English with news and information on Somalia and Somalis in the Diaspora.

Somali Businesses and Cultural Events

Somali businesses, places of worship and cultural events are places where the Somali language and oral traditions flourish. At these sites, Somalis often gather and feel bound by their common culture. In particular, business outlets such as the grocery stores and restaurants not only sell foods from Somalia and Kenya but also act as cultural spaces that keep the Somali heritage alive. These sites and events accord with Martin and Nakayama's (2008) description of cultural space as the particular configuration of the communication that constructs meanings of various places. Additionally, cultural events such as weddings, religious holidays and the like provide opportunities to celebrate Somali culture as well as talk about experiences in a new cultural setting. Overall, it was reported that these sites and events are what make Minnesota home away from home to many Somalis.

Somali TV Programming

Two elders interviewed spoke extensively about their desire to establish a media outlet for Somali language television programming. Minneapolis Television Network (MTN) provides public access in Minneapolis on three channels for eight hours a week. MTN has partnered with Minnesota International Health Volunteers to create culturally-sensitive health education videos and programming. Lack of funding has limited extended broadcasting in Somali language. The interviewees expressed the view

that Somali broadcasts would sustain the language and oral traditions through the programmes aired.

Bilingual Mentoring and Tutoring Programme

The need to keep Somali youth connected to their culture as they adapt to a new cultural environment is the reason that the Catholic Charities sponsored bilingual mentoring and a tutoring programme. The responses received indicated the relevance of this programme to Somali youths. The programme is located in a residential area where most of the Somali reside in the town where this study was conducted. The Somali co-ordinator of the programme serves as a liaison between the Somali community and others in the greater community. The programme's co-ordinator's bilingual skills have been invaluable in helping Somali youth navigate both Somali and American cultures and languages.

Somali Classes

While it was clear from many of the responses received that Somali classes were needed, the meaning of 'class' varied extensively among the respondents. Thoughts ranged from a Saturday morning event to a Somali school where the language of instruction is Somali. In January 2008, the Somali Elders Council began teaching Somali twice a week to community members who worked with Somalis. Later that year, a Somali literacy class was started at La Cruz Community Center for Somali women illiterate in Somali. Unfortunately, these efforts closed after a short operation because of a lack of support and funding.

Re-learning Somali Language

The need to preserve the Somali language was exemplified in efforts by some Somali refugees to re-learn the Somali language. This group needing to re-learn Somali comprises of refugees who are not fluent in Somali language. They are members of the Somali community in the US referred to as 'Somali sijui', a Swahili phrase that means 'I don't know Somali'. It is a label used to describe Somalis who were born and raised in Kenya following the Somali civil war in the 1970s. Many of them now resettled in the US have to (re)learn Somali which they did not learn or which they 'lost' while growing up in Kenya. Interviews conducted with members of this generation of Somalis revealed both benefits and detriments of learning or not learning Somali:

> My parents escaped from Somali in the early 1980s. I lived in Kenya for a long time. I did not speak Somali before I came to America six years ago but now I speak it. I learned from my friends here. I want to be part of the

> Somali community in America. I do not want to be isolated from my fellow Somalis just because I cannot speak Somali [Abdul].
>
> You are looked down upon if you cannot speak Somali. I know my uncle has to answer questions about why I do not speak Somali. I was born and raised in Kenya. I grew up as a Somali refugee but also as a Somali-Kenyan. As a result, I am fluent in Swahili and English. This is the reason why I don't speak Somali [Fatou].
>
> I had to learn Somali language to 'fit in'. All I did was to learn by listening to others ... being around Somali speaking people. I did not speak the Somali when I came to the US ten years ago. After I started interacting with Somalis, I started to pick up the language. I know older Somalis blame parents whose children do not speak Somali. They feel that they should have ensured that their kids did not lose the language in Kenya. You get criticized for not speaking Somali. When this happens, and you are one of the 'Somali sijui', you tend to isolate yourself from those fluent in Somali. As a result, you are forced to learn the language whether you like it or not. In my case, when we settled here there were not many Swahili-speaking Africans and so I did not have anyone to speak to in Swahili. I didn't have another community to belong to besides the Somali community. I must say that I have done well because I am now a Somali interpreter! [Salama].

In view of these responses, one can see the historical significance of language and the factors that determine its survival or demise. Social status, and to some extent economic status, such as getting a job as an interpreter, for the Somali language among this generation of Somali refugees is evident in these responses. Nevertheless, further research is needed to establish whether or not these benefits would be true for their children who would be the third generation Somali-Americans.

Discussion

This study began as a response to a concern expressed about the need to support the use of Somali language and oral traditions among young Somali refugees in Central Minnesota. Specifically, the study sought to establish what the Somali community was doing to preserve their language and oral traditions. A major finding emerging from the study is that Somalis are actively involved in efforts to sustain their Somali cultural identity in a new cultural setting. This was demonstrated in ways that respondents' sense of belonging not only shaped their cultural identity but also individual self-concept and group identity. For example, a concept that describes this sense of self-identity as well as group-identity emerged from some respondents' views that the Somali language cannot be lost because Somali people are 'born with it'. This finding concurs with Schmidt and Rose's

(2006) study that reports how Somalis speak of their language as 'our language' or 'my language'. Put together, these two views echo Lustig and Koester's (2006) view that the individual's self-concept is built on cultural, social and personal identities. Although there might be benefits of speaking Somali; elders passing language and traditions to the younger generations as a common form of preservation, and also internalizing the view that the language cannot be lost, this does not seem enough for preservation. Tse (2001) observed that this form of preservation alone – speaking the language – is not effective enough for preservation as it typically only includes conversational language and leaves out academic language and literacy. The findings do not show evidence of focus on Somali language literacy. Okpewho (1992) offered advice on preservation efforts that places responsibility on the communities that want to preserve their language and oral traditions. This approach observes that preservation efforts need to be initiated and owned by the community, not an imposition by any persons outside the community.

The concern expressed about how Somalis would communicate if they were to return to Somalia was not addressed directly in this study. However, peripheral conversations revealed respondents' optimism for a peaceful Somalia in the future. This positive outlook for the future explains the efforts in place to ensure the survival of Somali cultural identity.

Although the focus of the study was not how to preserve Somali language and oral traditions, it is nonetheless interesting to note the emphasis placed on speaking the language as opposed to language literacy and documentation. The emphasis on oral communication seemed palpable, given that some programmes intended for language literacy were closed due to lack of funding. On the other hand, it was unclear how the preservations efforts would serve their purpose besides what the Somali seemed focused on – oral methods of communication – which are susceptible to change as Somalis begin to speak English more often than their indigenous language. As earlier discussed, the concept of 'Somali sijui' reveals that changes in a new cultural environment can lead to the loss of indigenous language. The act of re-learning Somali seems to suggest that speaking Somali is vital to sustain their identity wherever they settle in the world.

Conclusion and Implications

Somalis in central Minnesota feel obliged to preserve their language and oral traditions. Even though respondents understood that the new cultural environment demanded of them to adapt in a new cultural environment, such as learning English to acquire employment and communication skills to navigate a diverse American cultural landscape, they still feel the need

to preserve their Somali cultural identity. They have to learn a new language (English) amid challenges of learning and preserving their own (Somali) language. The effort to adapt, though hampered by the desire to still maintain a Somali cultural identity, appeared to make the older generation of Somalis fearful of total immersion into the new American culture at the expense of losing their own identity. In this regard, one sees implications for future considerations of peace communication if Somalia were to be peaceful. With this increasing anticipation of a 'peaceful Somalia', many middle-aged Somalis remain confident that Somali language can still survive in America. The question remains about what the future holds for the third generation Somali-Americans who will have adapted the English language and perhaps see no economic and social benefits of the Somali language for them.

Note

1. The term 'Americanized' is used to refer to ways that Somali youth have adapted to American way of life. We asked our interviewees who used the term to explain its meaning. Their responses seemed to point to American lifestyles that seemed to endanger the survival of Somali language and oral traditions such as speaking English (all the time) and getting 'hooked' on the American entertainment industry. The concept of 'home' refers to residency, that is, apartments, town houses or single family homes. It is not to be confused with the idea of home when used to refer to Somalia.

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Book Review

Confronting Ethnic Conflict: The Role of Third Parties in Managing Africa's Civil Wars, Jennifer L. De Maio. Lexington Books, 2009

Sakile K. Camara* and Darlene Drummond**

Third party interventionists have long attempted to confront civil war conflicts in the world. Although current literature reveals that third parties, particularly in civil war contexts, play a vital role in the termination and preservation of these conflicts, De Maio's book offers suggestions regarding the mechanisms that cause ethnic conflicts. The book examines four cases of third-party efforts: Burundi from 1995-2005; Somalia from 1988-2003; Sudan from 1983-2005; and the 1994 KwaZulu-Natal civil conflict in South Africa.

Drawing from these specific case studies, De Maio examines whether there are any successful strategies of peace building caused by third party action and the results required for long-term stability in a post-civil war society. De Maio's rationale for the use of these specific case studies is that they all have different situational outcomes and different kinds of third party involvement that provide data as to why some strategies divert violence, while others do not. While the uniqueness of each case is briefly explored, there is no in-depth discussion of the contribution of these cases to the drop in civil war dyads in Africa from 2001-2005 Africa. De Maio adopts what Findley and Teo call an 'actor-centric' approach in that she interviews 50 actual interveners (i.e., policy makers, diplomats and negotiation leaders) who represent international and regional organizations which determine and formulate intervention

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strategies. This qualitative approach differentiates De Maio's work from traditional forms of third-party strategy verification, which use secondary data to make conclusions about the peace implementation process (for example, signed agreements, non-governmental and governmental reports).

Di Maio's work is based on ethnic conflict and third party intervention/ engagement. The book is divided into two sections with nine chapters. The first section gives a rationale for focusing on ethnic conflict and reviews and integrates a wide range of data to provide a conflict event history framework. The author goes on to discuss the causes of ethnic conflict. This includes a number of tables describing the violence of warring inter- and intra-state groups and the success or lack thereof by peace builders. In addition, there is a discussion on theories of ethnicity and ethnic identity, including an interesting discussion of a socially constructed identity as the cause of conflict.

Having established the existence of ethnic conflict throughout the world, the second section and remaining chapters address the strategies for intervention and present case studies of warring nations in Africa. In chapter four, the focus changes to the presentation of a model of successful intervention developed by the author, which includes operationalizing peace as establishing a negotiation process that leads to peace building efforts and a stable government. This may include the cessation of conflict, but not a conflict-free ideology, a topic not often engaged by conflict scholars. In developing her own model of successful intervention strategies, De Maio falls into a pitfall common to scholars that position conflict as a logical argument rather than an emotional one. Most conflict is driven by emotions. While it makes sense to plan strategies around logic modalities, it is ineffective, given the emotional drive, in getting adversaries to desist from conflict for more than a few months or years. Although logic is usually ineffective in curbing violence, understanding the logic of the adversaries is of great importance, but the efforts proposed by this author consist of an initial attempt toward managing conflict. The emotional dimension of conflict is equally important in managing conflicts.

The author suggests several strategies for third party interventionists in building long-term peace opportunities by showing how socio-psychological factors influencing the conflict are important to establishing vital opportunities for peace. Her model can be summed up in her explication of the three contributions that interventionist can make toward the peace building process that are considered common challenges:

- Modify the perception and plan strategies around the way adversaries think about achieving their goal. Through this process, the adversaries discover

that they can no longer achieve their goals through the current available techniques (i.e., military means). The purpose is to get the adversaries to entertain the thought that the cost of war outweighs the cost of peace.

- Gain institutional 'buy-in' by implementing a strategic plan that is inclusive of the institutional choices of the local actors. Before institutional reform takes place, the authority of local and regional actors should be considered because they carry great weight and bring stability, consistency and continuity to the process.
- Institute coherence in internal co-ordination systems before employing external co-ordination efforts. Interventionists may not display sustainable cooperation with other international communities.

The author suggests other strategies, such as taking action early and incentives, but does not give detail to demonstrate how they operate. Based on the structure of each chapter, it is clear that this is a doctoral dissertation turned into a book. The author uses language specific to the plan of a dissertation (i.e., 'I use both theoretical research and empirical analysis', 'my primary research methodology'). Using academic language for a dissertation is arguably appropriate, but the audience using the book as a guide to implement policy and other practical uses might find the language of the academy a little less meaningful.

The last four chapters present case studies which are the central focus of the book. Each case study introduces the history and conflict dynamics of each country, intervention strategy use along with an evaluation of the intervention performance based on the strategies outlined in chapter four. The author further articulates insightful resolutions as to why each conflict was intractable and then suggests goals that might be pursued to engage in peace building success.

The book would be more accessible if De Maio used the fifty voices of those international, national and local actors she interviewed about their decision making process in reducing intra-ethnic group tensions. How successful intervention is accomplished is far more beneficial than developing a model based on common problems.

There is much to recommend about this book. De Maio provides a good review of relevant literature and topic regarding ethnic conflict. This is documented in tables demonstrating ethnic conflict in various countries. De Maio also expands upon third-party intervention techniques with potential remediation techniques, ensuring the continued value of this work for future researchers. Although most chapters may not be relevant and interesting to everyone, the book is certainly a must read for diplomats, third party interventionist, economic officials, researchers and

educators interested in studying ethnic conflict and third-party intervention strategies.

The book's main flaw is that it reads like a dissertation rather than a book about ethnic conflict resolution strategies. We applaud the author for not dictating how to do third party intervention, but for combining theoretical grounding and practical cases to explore ethnic conflict that remains very difficult and in need of greater attention.