

Assessing the Role of Media in Peace building: A Case Study of Juba, South Sudan

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Abstract:-The upsurge of warfare in South Sudan has attracted different media establishments continue to have strong interests and stakes in the outcome of the country's conflict. This study established the role of media in the country's peace building. The study employed a descriptive survey design using the Likert's scales. The study targeted a population of 238 people from which a sample of 149 respondents was determined using the Slovene's formula. Data was quantitatively collected using a semi-structured questionnaire, organized, coded and subjected to SPSS for analysis into descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that there was inadequate competency profiling and peace building skills among media staff, inadequate broadcasting period and content regarding peace building. The study concludes that there is an indirect relationship between media and peace-building in South Sudan. The study therefore recommends increased competency profiling for the media staff, public capacity building

in issues of good governance and nationalism, media training institutions to provide study units in conflict reporting, and improved broadcasting of peace building content in the country.

Key words: - Media, Peace building, Conflict resolution

I. INTRODUCTION

Media has become an indispensable part of everyday life of human society (Mbaine, A. E. 2006). They influence its political, social, cultural, economic and intellectual life. This influence, in a conflict situation, can be converted into either a positive or negative power that incites violence or promotes peace (Mamdani, M. 2001). Global history has shown that the media can promote peace and makes people aware of circumstances surrounding their lives. Continents such as Latin America, Asia and Europe have huge use of media in terms of peace-building and promote their interests.

History has indeed shown that the media can incite people toward violence (Chalk, F. 1999). Hitler used the media to create an entire worldview of hatred for Jews, homosexuals, and other minority groups. Rwanda's radio RTLM urged listeners to pick up machetes and take to the streets to kill what they called 'the cockroaches.' Broadcasters in the Balkans polarized local communities to the point where violence became an acceptable tool for addressing grievances (Hackett, R. A. 2006). The media's impact on the escalation of conflict is more widely recognized than the media's impact on peace-building. Yet it is not uncommon to hear experts pronounce that the media's impact on peace-building must be significant given its powerful impact on conflict. However, this simple relationship must not be taken for granted and should be critically examined in order to most effectively use the media for conflict prevention and peace-building (Wolfsfeld, 2011).

The time line of media sets out how media forms have developed over the centuries. In the late 1400's the development of printing in china spreads to Europe. In the 1800's, media develops through the rise of technology creation of photography, creation

of the telephone, creation of cinematography, creation of the phonograph, first advertising agency. In early 1900's, the first form of modern media is developed, first featured film, first portable phonograph, and radio is invented and radio stations emerge. Inmid-1900's, the first television was broadcasted, newspapers and magazines were digitalized for advertising. in late of 1900's, it was introduced of computer, the rise of internet and portable computers, video's and DVD's, the rise of computer games, development of cable and TV satellite shows, and Compact Disk. In 2000's newspaper and advertising newspaper sales fall, due to interactive media developed particularly the internet and TV shows, the rise of digital TV and films (Wolfsfeld, G., &Gadi, W. 1997).

Several efforts have been made to use the media to promote peace. For example, Radio for Peace-Building Africa (RFPA) is a program founded in 2003 by the international non-profit organization called Search for Common Ground. RFPA isoperational in Burundi, Central African Republic, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda. Given that there has been an upsurge of warfare in South Sudan, different

media establishments continue to have strong interests and stakes in the outcome of the South Sudan conflict. While some of the media actually try to promote peace building and nation building initiatives, they run the risk of being targeted by any of the warring parties. Others, because of their clan affiliation or ideological orientation, may attempt to stimulate further conflict or present a particular interest in reporting their stories. Others again might function as inciters of violence in some situations; often where the interests of the faction or clan they back are at stake (Mohamed Husein Gaas, Stig Jarle Hansen, and David Berry, 2015).

Existing theory only tends to portray media as essential in reporting and generating discourses on conflicts (Wolfsfeld, 2011; Bratic, 2006). Many scholars view the media as a public means of mass communication and was earlier related to participation in public interest. Yet, the role of the media in the conflict, as well as its ability to mediate peace is not adequately tackled. It was against this background that the study was conducted, in order to make an assessment of the media's role in peace building in South Sudan by using Juba as the Case study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Media and peace building

Media refers to several mediums or channels used in an organized fashion to communicate information to groups of people, as a service to the public. Media is the main way that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment (Howard, 2002). Media is a double-edged sword. It can be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or disinformation that manipulate public sentiment. On the other hand, it can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and represents diverse views. It is the kind of media that enables a society to make well-informed choices, which is the precursor of democratic governance. It is the media that reduces conflict and fosters human security.

The term 'media' was first used with the advent of newspapers and magazines. Eventually, it broadened to include the inventions of electronic media like radio, television and internet (Pushparaj, 2014). Kumar (2008) defines mass media as tools that disseminate information and entertainment simultaneously to a vast

number of heterogeneous and anonymous audiences. The internet-based interactive 'new media' including social media are new items added to the concept. Habib (2014) acknowledges that the development of new media has made tremendous growth and evolution in the media world. A number of internet-based newspapers, journals and periodicals have already made their presence felt. The web newspapers are becoming increasingly popular. And the net editions of almost all the major newspapers are as popular as their print editions. Mass media have helped in creating social awareness and have also provided people with an easy way of living life (Kwame, K. 2007).

The internal conflicts do not occur spontaneously but tend to have a history (Livingstone, S. 2003). Local media usually have a deeper understanding of the existing political structures, the participants of the conflict as well as the changes preceding the outbreak of violence. It can therefore not only influence society before the conflict by recognizing and properly addressing the issue but also afterwards. Media have the power to defuse tensions before they even reach a critical point and keep a critical eye on government, opposition and society. By supplying credible information and reaching

a large audience, the media help in managing conflicts and promote democratic principles. In the aftermath of a conflict, reconciliation and societal development can be encouraged (Deutsche Welle – Global Media Forum 2008).

Peace-building refers to measures designed to consolidate peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic, and cultural institutions capable of handling conflict, and to strengthen other mechanisms that will either create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace (Adam, G., & Holguin, L. 2003). Peace-building and varying opinions about what it involves Peace-building as action to solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict (Aslam, R. 2014). The creation of peace-building structures to promote sustainable peace by addressing the "root causes" of violent conflict and supporting indigenous capacities for peace management and conflict resolution. According to John Galtung (1985) building peace in countries emerging from conflict is a huge and complex undertaking. It involves a myriad of different players. Its very definition is the sum of vigorous debate.

Globally, peace has remained a human rights concern since the inception of the

United Nations (UN) in 1945. The UN Charter Article 2, preambles (1, 3, 7) support principles of non-interference and respect to state sovereignty. Conflict prevention and peace-building programs use a number of approaches, from facilitating dialogue and negotiations between conflicting groups to using peacekeeping forces to separate armed factions. By incorporating media strategies, however, these programs can reach and potentially influence a far larger audience. Recognizing the media's reach is but a first step in harnessing its power as a potential peace-builder. Care must be taken to prepare media accordingly for the different roles it can play as information provider, watchdog, mobilizer and promoter, among others (Gaas, M. H., Hansen, S. J., & Berry, D. 2012). Currently this is done in a haphazard manner, with policymakers and peace-building media practitioners often working independently of one another and without reference to previous experiences. (Sheldon Himelfarb, 2008).

Media has been in wars effectively throughout the history of warfare but media has only become a systematic tool for peace-building in the last 20 years, beginning with inter-ethnic conflicts of the early 1990s

(Crosbie, V. 2002). This is partly due to the end of the Cold War era and a shift from inter-state to intra-state conflict which saw emergence of numerous conflict actors using innovative tools both in combat and in post-conflict stage. But more importantly, two other congruent developments of the previous decade (1980s) made the practice possible: a) media technologies and equipment coming of age and b) peace-builders becoming better organized as NGOs. Throughout the 1980s, media technologies developed by becoming much smaller in size, considerably easier to use and significantly less expensive. For example, smaller video cameras for personal use became commercially available and easy to operate. Copy machines allowed for easier distribution of printed material. A number of new media channels allowed for the non-professional media content to be distributed. The change in media industry was significant – production of media content was no longer exclusive to corporations and state governments.

2.2 Activities of the Media in peace building

While large scale or world war has been avoided, continual civil conflicts have not been avoided (Himelfarb, S.,

&Chabalowski, M. 2008)i.e., the conflicts in Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, South Sudan. At the same time, peaceful resolution of conflicts that have major potential for civil conflicts: the transitions in South Africa, in Central and Eastern Africa have been witnessed. Therefore, peaceful resolution of national-civil conflicts is in a great part a communication process (Kirschke, L. 1996). That is; a concept of communication that channels civil conflict away from open war in to what is called cultural negotiation (Bratic, V. 2013). The media can provide information directly to citizens regarding major events of importance for decision -making so that citizens can take action and influence the structure of decision-making. What is expected is a narrative reconstruction of events which reveals the source of the problem, the persons who are responsible and why, and what emerge finally as the solution. The media are the forum for the expression of public opinion and enable the public and public officials to chart the general public opinion regarding the state of public affairs (SFCCG, S. 2009). The mirroring of public opinion enables the public to know what people are expecting and whether representative governments are serving the public or not.

Comminos, A. (2013) gave clarity and coherence to the concept of peace building when he defined it as" Action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict and, rebuilding institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife (and tackling the deepest causes of) economic despair, social injustice and oppression".Inscribed in Wilshire's comment about his role as a journalist is an assumption about media influence which has also come to be known as 'the CNN effect' -so called after the first Gulf War when the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said: "We say we have 16 members in the Security Council: the 15 members plus CNN". The proposition is that today's global media have grown so mighty as to be able to raise issues to the political agenda by their own efforts; issues which would otherwise hold little or no interest for the powers-that-be.

In summary, the influence of the media on society has attracted international agencies closely involved in peace-building since the early 1990's (Skjerdal, S. 2012). The media can contribute to peace, by engaging in credible reporting, representing balanced opinions in its editorial content, and opening up communication channels among parties

in a conflict. It can also identify and articulate without bias the underlying interests of warring factions. By doing so, the media is capable of disseminating information that builds on the confidence of stakeholders in a conflict.

2.3 Peace journalism

Peace journalism is a term that has been established by Johan Galtung (1985), who urged journalists to do the following: 'Go for the less newsworthy to get a more balanced picture; particularly more coverage of non- elite nations, non- elite people, non- personal causes of events and for more positive events. Be conscious of the tendency to cast the non-elite in a negative light, to disregard the structural, and to go for the negative, like the violence, rather than the positive, like the solutions. Since its inception, there was controversy surrounding peace journalism, and some journalists see it as an infringement of impartiality which is a core value for the modern media. The media can adopt different strategies to deescalate conflicts, one of them being giving adequate training to journalists to avoid publications of content that fuel hate speech and incitement to violence.

Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) in Rwanda is an example of how irresponsible media can fuel conflict. This station was primarily responsible for spreading hateful messages and ethnic incitement that led to the killing of nearly one million people in the 1994 Rwanda genocide. The Kenya media was accused of fueling the post-election violence in 2007 and 2008, particularly how it failed to moderate hate messages that incited violence. TV stations were accused of airing graphic images that escalated the tension between different communities in the flash point areas (Mbeke, 2009). Peace journalism was created to counter traditional journalism. According to peace journalists, the main problem with traditional view of journalism is that it escalates conflicts instead of extinguishing them. The argument of peace journalists is that their opponents- the traditional journalist- focus on the observable attributes of conflicts rather than looking at the deeper explanations of what causes these conflicts (Saleem, N., & Hanan, M. A. 2014).

Professor Gadi Wolfsfeld who extensively wrote about peace journalism asserts that the media gets it totally wrong when choosing which news line to take, thus not

understanding the diverse aspects of conflict (Wolfsfeld, 2011). The hurry of breaking news means that long term processes such as negotiations and peace building receive little or no attention in the mass media; and the push towards simplicity of stories means that multifaceted explanations are overlooked.

2.4 Peace journalism: impacts and effects on Peace building

In various countries, and at the international level, advocacy groups and networks have arisen with the aim of democratizing the media, as a distinct institutional field (Mbeke, 2008). Within the ranks of media professionals themselves, a reform movement known as Peace Journalism (PJ) has arisen. Its premises include a normative imperative; i.e. an "ethic of responsibility" to take into account the foreseeable consequences of one's behaviour, and adjust it accordingly. If reporting-as-usual constitutes war journalism, PJ calls on journalists to incorporate into their professional ethos a conscious choice in favour of peace, as an affirmation of their human responsibilities (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2007). In the words of two of its leading practitioners, PJ is multifaceted; It is simultaneously a mode of analysis that

identifies cumulative patterns of omission and distortion in the reporting of conflicts; a springboard for assessing the consequences of these patterns, in terms of the understanding they convey to publics, as well as their influence over the course of events in conflicts; a source of practical alternative methods and approaches to the reporting of particular conflicts; and a rallying point for a challenge to increasingly homogenized global news discourse, and a campaign for change by journalists and activists. (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2007).

In its prescriptions for better journalism, it draws on the insights of the emergent disciplines of Conflict Analysis and Peace Studies, pioneered by Johan Galtung (1985). It calls on journalism to look beyond the overt violence of war, and to attend to the "ABC" context of conflict, of Attitudes, Behavior and Contradictions, including underlying patterns of structural and cultural violence. Journalists, in this view, should identify a range of stakeholders broader than the "two sides" engaged in confrontation, and re-frame conflict as a "cat's cradle" of relationships between the various stakeholders, rather than present conflict as a tug-of-war between two parties in which one side's gain is the other's loss. PJ also calls on journalists to distinguish stated

demands from underlying needs and objectives, to access voices working for creative and non-violent solutions, and to keep eyes open for ways of transforming and transcending the hardened lines of conflict. In that process, journalists would need to broaden the range of sources beyond the political and official elites who typically comprise the primary definers of media agendas, and avoid victimizing, demonizing or emotive language, or dichotomous framing (Kipphan, H. 2001). The hope, the expectation, is that through such practices, journalists can both offer more complete and accurate accounts of conflicts, as well as help create an environment more conducive to resolving or transforming conflicts away from war (Hartley, J., Burgess, J., & Bruns, A. 2013).

2.5 Peace journalism versus War journalism

Peace journalism concentrates in a proactive war on exploring the root of the conflict through balanced coverage committed to casting light on the conflict (Adhikari, M. 2008). Thus, peace journalism makes it possible for the parties to enter genuine dialogue. Being peace and conflict oriented in nature, peace journalism explores conflict formation between the parties involved as

well as the goals being pursued by all parties and the issues in conflict. It takes the form of general “win, wind” orientation since it is founded on open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere as well as history and culture. It sees conflict and war as a problem and focus creativity to cope with the conflict and ultimately resolve it (Schirch, V. B 2007). Peace journalism focuses on making conflicts transparent and gives a voice to all the parties, in addition to empathizing with them and understanding the causes they are pursuing. All sides are therefore humanized. It exposes truths and untruths on all sides, uncovering everything. It is for this reason truth-oriented.

Peace journalism is solution and people-oriented insofar as it focuses on suffering all over the area affected by conflict; on women, aged, children. It therefore gives a voice to the voiceless. It also gives a name to all evil-doers and focuses on peace-makers. Thus, it is proactive in directing attention to the prevention of violence before it occurs. In addition, it directs attention to invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure). This form of journalism is based on the formula: peace=non-violence + creativity. It highlights peace initiatives and prevents

more war (Kumar, D. 2006). It focuses on structure, culture, the peaceful society. The aftermath is: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation.

In contrast, War journalism focuses on the conflict arena in a reactive way and tends to focus on the visible effect of violence- the number of people killed, wounded and the extent of material damage (Des Forges, A. 1999). It focuses on “us-them” dichotomy of the war gives it in general a zero-sum orientation to conflict reporting. From the war journalism perspective, there are two parties and one goal- to win the war since the focus is who prevails in the war. War journalism is a victory-orientated and adopts the formula: Peace= victory + ceasefire. It conceals peace initiatives before victory is at hand. It focuses on treaty, institution, and the controlled society.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study design

The study used a descriptive survey type of research design. It was chosen because it enables the study to provide numeric descriptions of some part of the population in circumstances where the study population is too large, costly and time consuming. In this study the entire population of South

Sudan is too large and the researcher decided to use Juba as a Case study and focus only on the population living under the jurisdiction of that administrative area.

3.2 Study population

Because the entire population of Juba is large, the researcher decided to focus on a target population of 238 people, comprising of media practioners, 94 politicians, 36 from civil societies, and 44 scholars.

3.3 Sample size

The sample size was determined using Slovine’s formula which is:

$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$ where n = Number of samples, N = Total population and e = Error tolerance

This number is chosen according to the capacity of the researcher and the available time for the research. In this study: N=238 and e = margin of error of 0.05. therefore,

$$n = \frac{238}{(1 + (238 \times 0.0025))} = 149$$

3.4 Sampling technique

The researcher used purposive sampling technique in the study. This was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain

sample subjects from particular categories of people among the study population.

3.5 Data collection

In this study primary data was collected using a questionnaire that was administered to the respondents. For the illiterates the questionnaire was translated in vernacular and the questions well explained to the respondents. Secondary data was obtained by review of literature from previous researches.

3.6 Data analysis

Quantitative data was collected, organized, coded and thereafter entered into the SPSS v16 for processing into descriptive statistics and inferences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following were the results of the study:

75% of the responses indicated that journalists do not suggest essential information for survival during conflict and crisis, and increase clannish propaganda in the society. 75.9% of the respondents believe that media networks are profit driven, selling popular “propaganda”, which in turn holds back the unification. Based on

the analysis, it was found out that journalists do not focus attention on the search for non-violent solutions to conflicts, and the media programs focus mostly on the political violence. Also, 83.9% of the responses indicated that media houses are dominated by one clan to criticize the other rival clans. Furthermore, 72.5% respondents indicated that media news focus mostly on the political violence. As a result, media outlets have increased in number and politicians use them to submit political ideas, personal politics and market their political parties to the community.

71% of the responses indicated that the media are not being used more widely in social awareness, although some of them release radio dramas for suggesting techniques to solving conflicts. 88.8% of the responses indicated that peace programs are a small fraction of the 24-hour media cycle in Juba TVs, radios, and journals. Majority (86.5%) of the responses indicated that the media networks don't have the ability to shape public attitudes and opinion in favor of peace. 68.5% of the responses indicated that media adopts different strategies to de-escalate conflicts by giving adequate training to journalists to avoid publication of content that fuel hate message and

incitement of violence. Also, 65.1% of the responses indicated that journalists are trained to analyze and report violent events based on media ethics, standards and peace journalism especially in conflict reporting. 69.8% of the responses indicated that internet-based interactive "new media" including social media contents can be used as a tool to trigger conflict or deescalate conflict situations. Also, 64.4% of the responses indicated that media can contribute better to the transformation of conflict by supporting de-escalation process. 65.7% of the responses indicated that in conflict situations, media act as neutral agents to disseminate information and as mediators between the conflicting parties.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of media in peace-building. The study employed case survey design in gathering primary data using questionnaires as a research instrument. Based on the findings, the study concludes that there is an indirect relationship between media and peace-building in South Sudan. This was evidenced by the fact that media employees don't have the required capabilities to appropriately perform their duties and so they lack the ability to shape public attitudes

and opinion in favor of peace. Most of the media are run by one clan which use them to criticize its rivals; they are profit driven, selling popular propaganda, and the peace programs are a small fraction of the 24-hour media cycle.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Competency profiling in order to deploy appropriately trained and qualified personnel for peace journalism in the country.
2. Capacity building in form of public seminars on issues of nationalism and good governance systems, and media training institutions should design study units on conflict reporting.
3. Designing tailored regulatory mechanism for vernacular FM stations different from the conventional ones, because of their immense influence and popularity especially amongst the less educated members of society. The study recommends that media regulatory and law enforcers should design stern laws, rules and penalties for both media houses and personalities

who use media for negative purposes.

4. Using media in social awareness, fostering peace, and radio drama must be used for suggesting techniques to solve conflicts. Nationalism, good governance, conflict resolution and peace building programs should be the main aim of media in order to double the positive effect of media to the society.
5. Professionals should produce conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs and closely integrate their programs into larger peacebuilding strategies since media programs alone are unlikely to produce the massive shifts often needed within a country prone to violence.
6. There should be an intentional effort to conduct a study which sets up media ethics in conflict zone, and the importance of public media for peace-building.

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