Roles of Media in Man-made Disasters: A Case of Protracted Conflict in South Sudan

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Abstract

Since the attainment of independence of South Sudan, a protracted conflict did ensue between two factions sparked off by political reasons. Since then, the conflict disrupted the socio-economic and political lives of the citizens and a spillover effect was even felt in the neighboring countries. At the epicenter of the conflict lies the issue of media reporting and how the conflict was handled because depending on how it was handled, it either led to reduction of tensions or heightened tensions. This research delves into the role of the media in the protracted conflict. The objectives of the research include; To evaluate the extent to which media has assisted in mobilizing support for peace agreements; to analyze strategies employed by the media in propagating cessation of conflict in Sudan; assess the media's level of success in sensitizing people about conflict prevention and to determine the extent to which government censorship impacted on the rights of journalists. The theory of Peace Journalism was hinged on the study to argue for how conflicts can be managed by the media. The study adopts a descriptive Survey Design; this involved targeting media organizations, both national and international media through the use of questionnaires and documentary evidence. It was expected that the study would be important to local media in South Sudan, the government and international organizations including the international press.

Keywords: *Protracted Conflict, Peace Journalism, Censorship, Manmade Disasters, Emergency Management, War Journalism.*

Introduction

Conflicts, warfare and conflict resolution in the modern society have been to a very large extent influenced by the media. Media has enabled the faster spread of information, whether true information or propaganda. This is because of the easy coverage and mobility that the modern media is characterized with. In fact, according to White (2016), in contrast with people of earlier ages, people around the world today know much more about major developments in international relations, thanks to the development in information technology, which is aided by the media. Therefore, some scholars like Allen & Schaer (2016) have posited that media coverage, especially television, has had an increased influence on conflict management, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early '90's.

Closely intertwined with the media are man-made disasters and especially conflicts. These modern conflicts are more complex and multidimensional than ever before. Because of the complexity of these conflicts, traditional mechanisms of settling them may not be useful owing to the fact in some places, that they involve organized crime that tends to exacerbate state fragility and undermine state legitimacy, which has led to the internationalization of civil wars. Examples of these types of conflicts exist in Syria where violent extremism has increasingly been commonplace (The UN commissioned paper, 2015). In fact, the standpoints that the media covers this conflict are dependent on whether it is pro American or anti America. This kind of reporting has a direct impact on the conflict at hand; it can either create emotions or justifications for certain acts between the protagonists. According to Chamberlain (2018), media coverage of the Israeli- Palestinian conflict has been a bone of contention; at times, truth is usually concealed or exaggerated to suit the intentions of the media station. According to Chamberlain (2018), some media organizations have often been associated with errors, bias and significant omissions.

Consequently, the media has found itself at crossroads; on one hand, it has been employed as an important means of warfare used by governments, military and leaders in all ages everywhere and on

the other hand, the media has been misused for propaganda purposes. However, if well used, the media has great potential to promote peace building in the context of conflicts (Deane, 2013). The power of media influence in conflict was witnessed in the Vietnam War. During the war, US involvement saw a significant growth in information technology posed by discovery of television. This episode saw the media uncovering the intricate details of the war. In so doing, it was discovered that in that war, the U.S. government and military had often lied to the public on the concrete details of its progress. In fact, the coverage of the conflict led the public to accept a possibility that all U.S. foreign policies might have been characterized by deception (Praeger, 1994).

When it comes to the African continent, the media has also been an influential instrument in the conflicts that have faced the continent. A case in point was during the Rwandan genocide in the mid 90's where the Rwandese Radio, '*Television Libre des Milles Collines'* (RTLM) was one of the examples of media that helped promote conflict by encouraging the Hutu population to exterminate the Tutsi terming them as 'cockroaches' that must be eliminated to ensure peace in Rwanda (UNDP, 2016). The conflict resulted in the massacre of almost 1,000,000 Tutsis and the displacement of many others *(ibid).* More recently, the social media played a resounding role in mobilizing people against the governments of Lybia, Tunisia and Egypt. These events demonstrated the enormity and centrality that the media can play in not only conflicts, but also in mobilizing masses to attain a common goal.

Like other African countries, South Sudan has never been immune from armed conflict. The country secured her independence in 2011 from Sudan. However, no sooner did it get independence than conflict erupted. In fact, by December 2013, the longtime political rivalry between President Kiir, and Riek Machar, led to civil conflict that resulted in the death of thousands of people and displacement of more than 2 million from their homes, with many of them fleeing to neighboring states (Muchie, 2013). The protracted conflict in Sudan is multifaceted; not only has it got to do with the long standing economic disparities, political exclusion and social and cultural deprivation in the distribution of political and economic power between the center and the peripheries but also it has also been blamed on negative ethnicity, cultural identity and religion (Omwenga, 2017).

As indicated above, the media has a role to play in disaster management especially in the context of protracted conflicts, like that of Southern Sudan. However, sufficient empirical evidence to confirm or reject claims that media promotes or prevents conflict is lacking. Besides, there is over reliance on anecdotal evidence to illustrate the media's positive impact on disaster management (Schoemaker & Stremlau, 2014). This poses the need to examine, analyze and expose the role of the media in conflict situations, especially in South Sudan.

Media use during the second Sudanese Civil war was minimal as compared to the usage of media in the civil war that started in 2013. Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) used a radio as a medium of preaching anti-Islamic propaganda and as a way to increase mobilization of populace to take up arms against the Islamic Fundamentalist's regime in Khartoum. The popular SPLA radio was based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia until the time when Tigrean rebels took over control of Ethiopia and the radio broadcasted in Southern Sudan from October 1991 (Pease and Dennis ed., 1995). Just like the SPLA radio, many other radios affiliated to the Marxist movement operated until the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the radios were used to preach the communist ideologies.

Media's role in the South Sudan civil war has been perceived as live and direct. It has not only been seen as a peddler of negative propaganda, but also as an inciter to both sides of the political divide. Despite of this glaring evidence of media's entanglement into the conflict, not much has been done to actually highlight the specific contributions in the war. On the other hand, potential benefits of media exist but require documentation in the context of South Sudan. A study by Cramer, Goodhand and Morris (2016) confirmed that the media can positively affect people's attitudes towards 'others' and sensitize them about conflict prevention hence encouraging social cohesion and peace. However, the transition from attitudinal change to behavior change is left unexplored in the context of South Sudan and it is unclear if such changes can be sustainable or durable. As a result, this study attempts to fill in this gap by outlining the different roles the media has played in conflict management using the context of protracted conflict in South Sudan.

Research problem

Manmade disasters usually result into immense social economic and political ramifications; they range from poverty, destruction of economic development to deprivation of people's basic needs (Omwenga, 2017). As has been witnessed, most conflicts often take place in countries undergoing major political changes towards democratization. In such countries, the right to credible information and freedom of expression are essential in ensuring accountable and transparent governance, constructive communication, decreased perceptions of threat and creating more stable and sustainable political structures (Deane, 2013).

Despite the significant roles that media can play in disaster management, the subject has not been extensively studied by both scholars and practitioners, especially on African conflicts. The media scene in South Sudan is controlled by politics, side by side with an interminable peace process. Since the local media in South Sudan is largely controlled by the government, there have been witnessed cases where the government has arm twisted the media by arresting journalists and banning international media coverage, including the deportation of those journalists considered as 'enemies of the state'. The presence of this obstructive tendency to the media may have contributed to an increase in violence because of the fact that information could not reach the intended audience; hence this could result in acceleration of the conflict and hence derailed the peace process. It is this scenario that motivated the research which intends to establish how the media contributed towards ending or accelerating the protracted conflict in South Sudan.

Justification and significance of the study

The justification for this study is informed by the apparent gap in the literature on the role of the media in disaster management in South Sudan. The critical need to focus on the role of the media in raising awareness in and countering propagation of violence in South Sudan is key component of effective intervention based on the need to restore stability, promote welfare and growth as well as meeting SDGs. The need to understand the role of media in Disaster management in South Sudan is also part of the responses to scholarly reference realities right from the start. The study is intended to provide clear relief efforts that ultimately contribute towards achieving stability and peace in the country.

There are a number of studies done on this subject. However, there still remains a big gap to be filled in the context of South Sudan. It is anticipated that the findings in this study will be important towards highlighting applicable standards that guide the decisions in the role of the media in disaster management. Above all, the findings of this study may lay the groundwork for further investigation and debate on the problem. Lastly, the results of this research are beneficial to a number of stakeholders and decision makers alike. These include conflict managers and peace practitioners who compose the main actors that provide humanitarian intervention activities and can thus provide best practices in terms of activities provided. Similarly, the findings are beneficial to educators, politicians and administrators by providing lessons from which they can learn and shape national policies.

Specific objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;
i. To evaluate the extent to which media has assisted in mobilizing public support for peace agreements in South Sudan.
ii. To analyze the strategies/methods employed by the media in propagating cessation of conflict in South Sudan
iii. To assess media's level of success in sensitizing the public about conflict prevention
iv. Determine the extent to which government censorship impacted the rights of affected populations, mobilization of resources, and safety of journalists and or aid workers.
v. Evaluate potential best practices of how media could contribute to effective emergency management in South Sudan

Study questions

The following research questions are derived from specific objectives outlined above:
  i. How has the media assisted in mobilizing public support for peace agreements in South Sudan?
 ii. What are the main strategies/methods employed by the media in propagating cessation of conflict in South Sudan?
iii. To what extent has the media succeeded in sensitizing the public about conflict prevention?
 iv. In which ways did government censorship impact on the rights of affected populations, mobilization of resources, and safety of journalists and or aid workers?
  v. What are the potential best practices of how media could contribute to effective emergency management in South Sudan?

Literature review

Overview of the media

In its most simple or basic form, media includes apparatus which comes-in-between two or more parties. It can also be defined as the communication channels that are used to disseminate entertainment, news, education or promotional based messages. Based on this, the media comprise of all broadcasting and narrow-casting medium that includes magazines, news-papers, radio, Television (TV), direct mails, bill-boards and telephone as well as internet (Sigmund & Molly, 2009).

According to Schoemaker and Stremlau (2014), media refers to an avenue for communicating a desired message to an individual or groups of people in a particular geographical area. In the context of this definition, the term communication is derived from a Latin word which means to share and includes the active transmission and reception of messages in form of words, sounds or images, or a combination of the three, which in the modern world also takes the form of digital information.

According to Omotoso (2012) the media is also referred to as 'fourth estate' and the author attributes this to its surveillance role which requires media practitioners to scrutinize, monitor, and report the activities of the other realms, especially the three arms of government or estates (legislature, executive and judiciary). The media enhances accountability within the government and assists the populace to scrutinize leaders and policy makers. The media also highlights on issues of public concern which can then be translated into public pressure, hence putting pressure on government leaders to take appropriate actions on specific issues of concern.

Review of empirical studies

The role of the media in mobilizing public support for peace agreements

Gakunju (2016) in her work about the impacts of Media on conflict resolution using a case of - the 2007/8 PEV in Kenya, underscores the crucial roles played by the media in the restoration of peace and reconciliation in the country. The author argues that this happened at different stages of the electioneering period, that is, before, during and after the PEV. The author explains that the media facilitated and brought together Kenyans from various walks of life to re-build their nation. In the pre-election period, the author notes that, to some extent, the media supported the efforts of the then Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) towards the realization of the aim of free and fair elections, through advertisements that urged the public to respect one another in pre-elections period. Again, during the election, the media houses opted to live-streaming of events as they unfolded, and this was in order to keep the Kenyans well-informed about the events. Lastly, the media was actively involved airing peace messages and other peace-building strategies with the aim of de-escalating the violent conflict that broke following the disputed 2007/2008 presidential elections. Gakunju's study is a rare and important study of the media and its potentials in conflict resolutions and restoration of peace. The study highlights the importance of the media calling on international community to put pressure of protagonist to end the conflict. The major shortcoming is that the author lacks empirical evidence to support her claims.

In a study conducted in Rwanda about community-based media and its role in peace-building, Mutasa (2015) sought to understand the contribution of the media in relation to restoration of peace in Rwanda following the genocide that led to massacre of the Hutu and Tutsi moderates by the Hutu

extremists. Mutasa's study was guided by the citizen participation theory and a rhizomatic approach. Using data collected using informant interviews of media practitioners; the author demonstrates how the media encouraged restoration of peace by defining community in terms of region as opposed to ethnicity, and tribe. The author also explains how the media facilitated peace by putting more emphasis on homogeneity (such as same language and culture) as opposed to tribal difference. The findings show active involvement of the media in passing reconciliatory messages through the airwaves and establishing a platform for popular participation as well as an environment for sharing experiences and resolving disputes. In light of the above observations, it is clear that the study provides useful insights worth considering in the current study. The study seems to suggest that the media has an important role to play in conflict resolution but also raises the need to use appropriate methods of reporting. The only weakness of the Mutasa's study is the failure to show the extent to which the media influences mobilization of public support for peace agreements. Thus, the current study seeks to fill this research gap.

Orgeret and Orgeret (2016) in their article about conflict and post-conflict journalism using a worldwide perspective, demonstrate the important role of the media in conflict resolution. According to the two authors, the media does support peace process by creating room for active involvement of the public, giving chance to the voiceless, promoting dialogues and reconciliation as well as empowering civil society. The authors also enumerate the core societal role of the media as providing information about people's rights, unearthing illegal actions and protecting the public from corruption through its watchdog role, proving a two-way channel between those who govern and the governed, and to serve as identity suppliers where the media reflects how people see themselves and offer a wide spectrum of possible roles for people to take up.

Mwendia (2013) while studying the role of the media in countering political and tribal conflict in Kenya, also underscores the importance of the media in sensitizing people about peace and respect for one another. Mwendia's work is appropriate or relevant for the current study because it adds to the debate about the media and its potential impacts to bringing peace as well as providing recommendations for sustainable peace building. However, the main shortcomings of the study are that it takes a general look at the possible impacts of media on peace and fails to clearly show the extent to which the media can help in mobilizing support for peace agreement.

In yet another study, Lush and Urgoiti (2012) provides interesting lessons for conflict resolution and building using relatively broader perspective of participation to ownership and social cohesion. The study uses the case of Namibian community broadcasting sector`s sustainability to show how active involvement particularly during programming and governance of the media houses reflects the broad diversity of community interests while simultaneously encouraging community ownership and by extension, social cohesion. The authors reveal that the Namibia`s community media sector has succeeded but only to some degree because involvement or participation is limited since programming is largely produced by paid employees, volunteers and people paid for their airtime. The study recommends for the active involvement of the audience especially in production of programs. The authors also call for regular consultation of the audience in relation to program's format, content, and scheduling to make it more representative. One weakness of Lush and Urgoiti's study which the present study seeks to fill is the link between the community /stakeholders and public support for peace agreements.

Strategies/methods employed by the media in propagating cessation of conflicts

In one of the latest studies, Hussain and Lynch (2018) investigated the existing journalistic strategies used during the three deadly conflicts in Pakistan. Basing their findings on data collected through semi-structured interviews with journalists, analysts and stakeholders involved in the religiously inspired Taliban conflict, separatist-led Balochistan conflict and the ethno-political conflict in Karachi, the authors identify six strategies that include demonstrating the challenges of the victims, and contextualization of the Taliban conflict; integration of multi-perspectives and an highlight of peace-makers' voices during the Balochistan conflict, and lastly, humanization and solution-oriented coverage of the ethno-political of the Karachi's conflict. Based on the findings of this article, the authors recommend for pragmatic form of peace journalism, which portrays the ground realities as compared

to the more critical form of peace journalism difficult to be practiced in conflict situations. The current study seeks to identify strategies/methods employed by the media in propagating cessation of conflicts in South Sudan.

In yet another study, Danaan (2017) examines strategies employed by journalists in the appropriation of media logics in the conflict frame building process. Through objectivity, mediatization and news framing as the main models of the study, the author provides empirical evidence of the various methods used by the media in representing ethnic and religious identities in the conflict-based narratives, with particular focus on the conflict that took place in Jos found at the northern part of Nigeria in 2001, 2008 and 2010. The study discloses the use of Neutral-to-goal-focused or pyramid strategy which according to the author presents a systematic frame building process that changes the nuanced inverted pyramid news structure. The study is important since it underscores the 'strategic' role of journalists towards de-escalation of conflicts and restoration of peace. The current study seeks to find the main strategies that were adopted in propagating cessation of conflicts in South Sudan.

Kosgei (2015) carried out a study that specifically aimed at investigating the role that peace journalism plays in conflict management in Kenya. The study was a descriptive one and relied on key informant interviews. In the study, the author underscores the importance of peace journalism approach explaining that the methods are capable of becoming a third side to facilitating communication and able to ease tensions between rival groups especially in situations of mistrusts. The author observes journalists and news anchors tend to use their own discretion when deciding on the best and appropriate approach to use during conflicts. The study recommends for the need for a policy framework and training of employees on how to report conflicts.

Greenwood and Jenkins (2013) add to the debate about the different types of methods used by the media in propagating cessation of conflicts. The two authors say that most conflicts are visually framed according to active involvement of participants and aftermath of conflicts as opposed to the affected by-standers or efforts aimed at negotiating for peace. The authors also highlight on the use of peace journalism approach that put more emphasis on peaceful demonstration and negotiation as opposed to the usual aspects of the conflicts. The study relied on the visual framing of the 2011–2012 Syrian conflict following the Arab Spring movement that occurred in northern Africa and the Middle East. The study also utilized a total of 193 photographs published in two news magazines and nine public affairs magazines. The study revealed that the media used visual frame of conflict through images of active fighting and victims as well as photographs of peace framing.

After assessing the roles of conventional journalism norms and practices often believed to valorize conflict and/or violence in Uganda, Tayeebwa (2012) observed that although most journalists acknowledge the importance of peace, they still prefer the conventional media approaches including the use of 'drama'; 'crisis'; 'extremism'; 'threats'; and destruction', all which encourage violence. The study recommends for a pedagogical and praxis-oriented actions that help in reporting conflicts, and a need for training in conflict analysis.

Akin (2009) highlights on publicity approach as one of the methods used by media in propagating for cessation of conflicts. The author explains that the method is preferred because of its ability to put pressure on persons or groups viewed as hypocritical or malicious. The author explains that this method facilitated the end to apartheid in South Africa.

Government censorship and the rights of affected populations, resource mobilization, and safety of journalists / aid workers

Chen and Yang (2018) explain that government censorship may violate people's human rights and safety of journalists but only if used inappropriately. The authors argue that government censorship is a hallmark of authoritarian systems/regimes. The study was carried out in China to assess the potential impacts of allowing access to uncensored Internet materials. The two authors intended to track subjects' media consumption, their beliefs about the media, cultural and socio-economic beliefs, political aspects and their behaviors over a period of one year. After calibrating a simple model, the authors demonstrate how China's censorship strategies remained robust to a large number of citizens. The authors demonstrate the role of censorship in manipulating people's beliefs, perception and their preferences in relation to direction of the regimes' intentions. The study is relevant because it highlights on how

government censorship may violate human rights due to the possibility of manipulating people's thoughts, beliefs and attitudes perhaps against their will. However, it lacks individuals' experiences on how censorship has impacted upon their lives. The current study seeks to show how government censorship in South Sudan has affected people's lives, resource mobilization and safety of journalists.

Using implicit and explicit control to model the effect of internet censorship on political protest in China, Lu and Zhao (2018) indicate that the level of awareness of the existing regulations can contribute directly to people's political protests and that the level of psychological perception of censorship can directly or indirectly limit political protest by controlling for their online political expression. The study relied on data collected from 2188 university students in China. The implication of the study is that censorship was a factor in political protects in China. The study is relevant because it discusses the possible implications of censorship on freedom of speech under an authoritarian government. However, the study takes a general overview of censorship instead of media censorship and fails to show the level at which censorship may have affected emergency response. Its omission therefore limits the final results and interpretations, hence the need for the current study.

After investigating press freedom based on the political environment of Zambia's Post, a daily tabloid which operates in the country, Chama (2014) concludes that although press freedom is the life-blood of any democratic nation which aspires to be enhanced, there are other factors or complexities hindering its realization, including conflict of interests, expectations of politicians, and readers' socio-economic background. The study relied on key informant interviews with journalists working or having worked with the tabloid specifically in political coverage and reporting. The study also revealed that the conceptualization of press freedom in democracy is not clear despite the general public's expectations and the press's passionate quest for press freedom. The study demonstrated how the government censorship and strict regulation compromised the Post's level of credibility and its traditional watchdog role of exposing politicians for their wrong doings. The study recommends for the need for the government to provide appropriate mechanisms that encourage online publishing deemed essential in the promotion and protection of democratic gains achieved so far. The relevance of the Chama's study lies on the fact that it presents a critical examination of the possible effect of censorship on journalism in modern democracies. Besides, it provides detailed information on censorship and uses Zambia as a case example of emerging democracy.

Clark and Grech (2017) explore the prevalence of unwarranted interference, perception of likelihood/fear of such interference and censorship amongst a non-probability convenience sample of 940 journalists in the 47 Council of Europe member states. The study adopts a quantitative approach and utilizes an anonymous self-report questionnaire. The study reveals that most of the respondents were subjected to significant levels of unwarranted interference. Most respondents indicated that they had been beaten, others threatened with force, while other experienced physical assault. Despite this, a large number of journalists are resilient and committed in their role as public watchdogs. The study recommends for the need to come up with appropriate policy to safeguard journalists.

Odongo (2012) looks at the level of independence and freedom of the mass media sector using the case of Uganda. Using qualitative methods based on key informant interviews and content analysis, the author observes that government censorship and media regulations have both contributed to violation of human rights in Uganda especially the right to information and expression. The author partly blames this on media laws' inconsistency and lack of alignment to international and regional standards. The study recommends for a self-regulatory media system as a way of ensuring less interference by the government in the regulatory process.

Theoretical orientation

A theory is a symbolic way for researchers to understand a particular phenomenon. The theory helps in explaining, describing, understanding, or reforming the mechanism of a particular process. It explains how things work (Dainton et al. 2014). The current study will be guided by human Capital theory and Agenda Setting Theory.

Human capital theory

This study will be guided by the theory of Peace Journalism. This theory was propounded by Johan Galtung (1965), renowned for his scholarship on matters of peace and conflicts. The theory holds that often news about conflicts has a value bias towards violence. Other terminologies that are synonymous with the Peace Journalism theory include: 'conflict-solution journalism, Conflict sensitive journalism and Constructive sensitive journalism'.

As opposed to war journalism approach, which essentially is skewed towards bias to violence and violent groups, Peace journalism aims to correct these biases. Its operational definition is 'to allow opportunities for the society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict (Lynch, 2008). This form of journalism involves picking and highlighting cases related to calls for peace, and articulation for non-violence policies from whatever quarter and allowing them into the public sphere.

This theory finds application to this study; from the stand point of the theory of Peace journalism, the systematic and systemic misreporting of the unfolding events in South Sudan during the period of the conflict was an attempt to impose war journalism. The government attempted this by sanctioning the media from reporting critical events hence fanning bias towards violence and violent groups. If peace journalism is embraced, the effects of manmade disasters will be reduced considerably.

Agenda setting theory

This theory is associated with Lippmann (cited in Albalawi, 2015, p.26) and Shaw and Mcombs (cited in Kosgei, 2015, p.16). This theory explains how the media sets the agenda for public attention and lays the groundwork for public views. It also explains how people learn how much importance to attach to a given topic as per the level of strength or emphasis placed on the topic (as reflected in certain news coverage). According to this theory, the media links the real world to how people envision the technologies in their minds. The media is viewed to play key role in orienting people's attention towards particular issues (Vu & Gehrau, 2012). The theory maintains that there exists some relationship between media's agenda and the public.

The main concept of this theory is that media triggers people's awareness about specific issues. It holds the assumption that the media determines the dominant discussion through frequent coverage of issues. According to the theory, the media may not be what we want or think but only divert our minds to what to think about (Theunissen, 2015). Through frequent reporting of issues, the media transfer them from press agenda to public agenda. These assumptions are based on the fact that the media tends to filter and shape reality, before presenting it to the public. The media channels determine priority with which individuals regard salient issues (University of Utwente, 2015).

Media agenda setting represents decisions made by the media houses/organizations about issues to be prioritized and discussed through the media channels. These issues may revolve around their importance towards the general public (Public agenda setting) and towards policy, such as those involving government officials or agencies in order to decide the important issues worth discussing (Theunissen, 2015).

This theory is relevant because though frequent, meaningful and responsible coverage of acts that breed insecurity in South Sudan, the media can sensitize the public against such actions that break peace. Besides, frequent discussions on insecurity issues not only attract attention to the need to address such challenges but also raise consciousness on the need to restore peace.

Conceptual framework

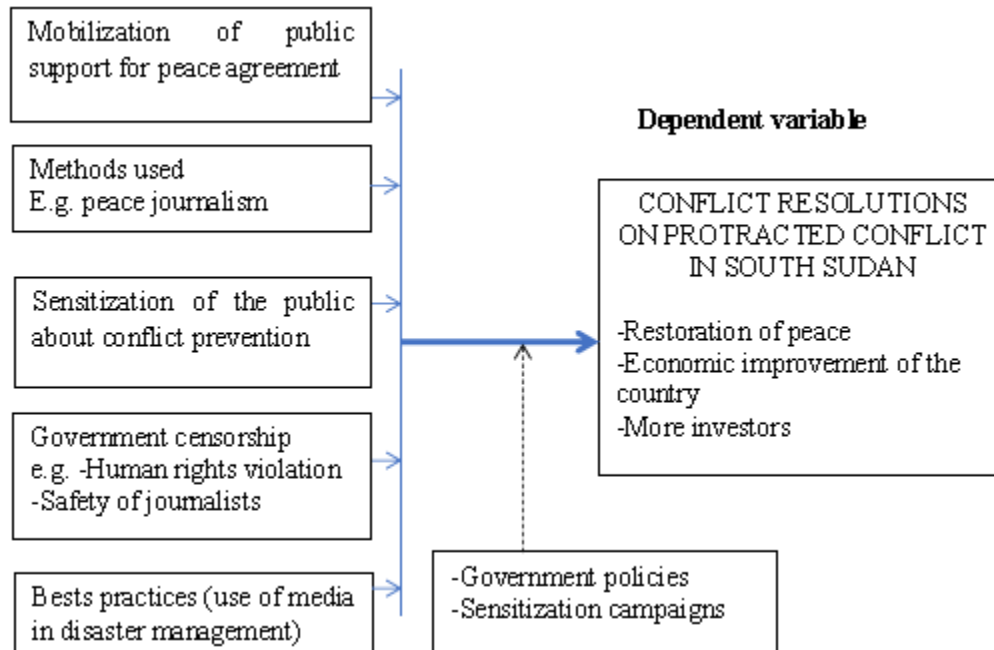Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework that will guide the current study.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

In this study, conflict resolution on protracted conflict in South Sudan is taken as the dependent variable. The level of success in terms of the conflict resolution will be determined by the independent variables which include mobilization for public support for peace agreement, best practices, government censorship, sensitization of the public about the importance of peace, and method used by the media. For instance, some methods used by the media may not be successful in the restoration of peace in South Sudan hence; the type of method is a determinant factor. Peace journalism approach has proved to be successful in propagating for peace. Again, peace can only be restored if the public are sensitized through the media on its importance. Conflict resolution can also be achieved depending on the extent to which best practices on the media is being implemented. Government censorship is yet another factor that determines conflict resolution; this is because if journalists are restricted to air some news, then it may not be possible for the public to be informed adequately. Again, the issue of intimidating journalist and compromising their security for failing to adhere to government rules also influences the level of conflict resolution.

Research methodology

The study adopted a Descriptive Survey Design. This approach allowed the researcher to investigate the role of the media in detail. Target population included Media houses-both local and international, print media, social media, government Information and Communication Ministry. Data was collected with the aid of questionnaires.

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Sampling technique

Random sampling was used to select respondents/participants. Questionnaires were then developed, pre-tested and shared with the selected sample population of 150 respondents.

Data Collection

Data collection was done in Rumbek and Juba. The study used questionnaires, which were distributed to different medias, humanitarian organizations, and ministries of humanitarian affairs and information. Below is a table summarizing targeted data:

Table 1. Sample Size

S/N	Data Collection Method	Sample Population
1	Questionnaires	150

Source: Primary data

Data analysis

Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS statistical software. The research links media (telecom, social media, print, and TV) to the domain of emergency management. Within the purview of emergency management, media could be a lifeline and also source of violence particularly in armed conflict.

Results

One hundred and fifty questionnaires were received after a period of about two months from the time of distribution. The data was triangulated as depicted below:

Demographics of respondents

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and received at the end of the study period. Of the 150 respondents, 50 were female. Over 36 percent of the respondents were between the age range of 31-35 while only 1 percent were between the age group of 51-60 years. The table below shows the gender and age groups of the respondents.

Table 2. Age group of respondents

Age Range	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
18-25	25	15	40
26-30	18	12	30
31-35	42	13	55
36-40	9	5	14
41-45	1	5	6
46-50	3	0	3
51-60	2	0	2
61-65	0	0	0
Above 65	0	0	0
Total	**100**	**50**	**150**

Source: Primary Data

Level of education of respondents

The study also collected the highest level of education of respondents, 21 percent of the respondents have bachelor's degree while about 5 percent completed at least advanced certificate. The table hereunder presents disaggregated information on respondents' level of education.

Table 3. Highest qualification of respondents

Level of Education	# of Male	Number of Female	Total
Primary school	15	13	28
Secondary school	25	3	28
Advanced Certificate	5	2	7
Diploma	10	5	15
Bachelor's degree	27	5	32
Master's degree	10	0	10
Ph.D.	0	0	0
None of the above	8	22	30
Total	**100**	**50**	**150**

Source: Primary data

Professional domain of respondents

Respondents were asked about their specific areas of specializations as this is critical in the value attached to this research. Majority of the respondents constituting 60 percent were journalists, humanitarian workers, and others. Twenty percent were nutritionists, development practitioners, and GBV workers. Educationists and medical practitioners constituted 10 percent each. The pie chart below shows the various areas of specialization of the respondents.
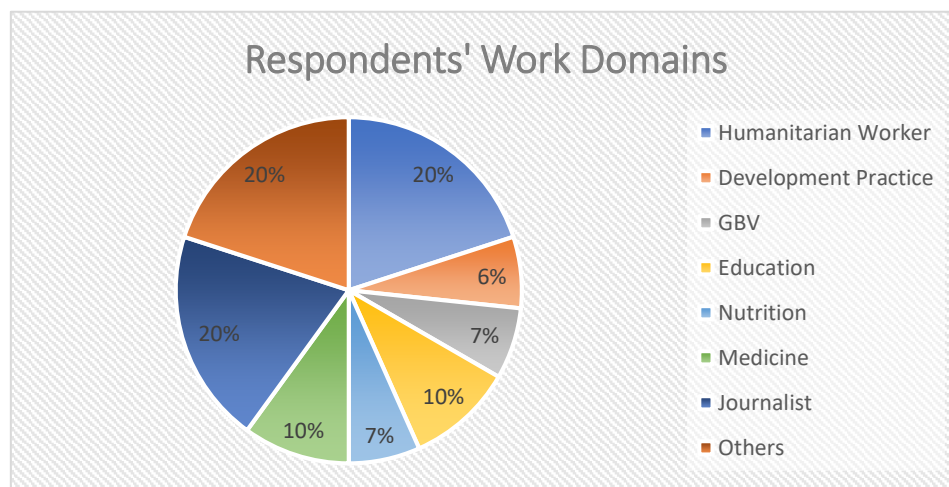
Source: Primary Data

Role of media in mobilizing public for peace agreement in south sudan

Different types of media ranging from radio, social media (facebook and twitter), television, and other online news platform like Pan Luel Wel, Radio Tamazuj, Sudan Tribune have to some extent played a key role in circulating news pertaining to the peace agreement on the resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Notable efforts included the coverage of peace rallies such as the ones conducted by the President of South Sudan in Greater Bahr El Ghazal region in March 2019. Similar rallies were conducted in Juba with the participation of opposition figures as well as in Greater Upper Nile and Greater Equatoria. These efforts were aimed at reassuring the public of the good will of the warring parties to the implementation for the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Commonly used types of medium as indicated by all the respondents included; the radio, newspapers (print media), television by at least a quarter of the respondents, social media

(facebook and twitter) by 50 percent of the respondents, and internet (Sudan Tribune, Panluel Wel, Radio Tamazuj, and Miraya) by 50 percent of the respondents.

Following further probing of the respondents, there were indications that a message of peace was circulated as well as information which exacerbated the hatred amongst the communities. Participants in this research have received information like; peace messages, entertainment (music and drama, and radio talk shows), hate messages were observed by at least 50 percent of the respondents, announcements, and government programs (relieve of politicians from their public offices). The respondents were asked to rank their perceptions from the continuum of disbelief and belief. Their responses are summarized in the table hereunder:

Table 4. Respondents' perception of media messages

Messages	Disbelief	Belief
Hate messages	75	75
Messages of peace	30	120
Mobilization for war	20	130
Entertainment	150	0
Programs not essential for peace	50	100

Source: Primary Data

All respondents have at least heard or read information on the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan. From the beginning of the war in 2013, media was observed to fanned in the war in a greater extent, consistent responses across 50 percent of the respondents depict that social media has promoted hatred and war, however, this changed when an agreement was reached, and media helped in disseminating the peace agreement in 2018 to 2019.

Positive contributions of social media

- The media has contributed positively in peace program with recent speedy usage of Facebook which feeds the grass root with immediate information although some information carries partial individualistic interests.
- It has led to public participation as everyone can write in his/her Facebook page or forum page about his opinions and what he/she thinks to make peace possible.
- It has helped South Sudanese to understand themselves and how they think about their tribal lines and how they hate themselves which would have been hidden if social media was not available.

Negative contributions of social media

- It has exacerbated misinformation which usually leads to conflict. In 2016, SPLM-iO spokesperson wrote in Nairobi that there is fighting in J-1, and Dr. Riek is being arrested. This propaganda sparked out 2016 deadly fighting which risked 2015 peace agreement between SPLM-iG and SPLM-iO.
- During 2018, peace agreement mediated by former Sudan President Omer Al Bashir, the media highlighted the hatred between Dr. Riek Machar and President Kiir Mayardit. Dr. Riek went to President Kiir for the hand shake which President Kiir declined with the pretend that he did not see Dr. Riek. This was replayed several times by several media houses and has given less hope for peace to the citizens of South Sudan.
- It has intensified the value of tribal lines within South Sudanese. Majority valued their tribemates as media particularly, social media dwells on negative parts of other tribes. The recent message from Dr. Adwok Nyaba that Dinka is dominating South Sudan does not carry any traces of peace. Therefore, leaders should use media positively amid the peace agreement to help in realization of lasting peace.
- It has trained majority of young people about the negative history that they did not know. Especially, when leaders explained what happened in 1991 factions and how Nuer and Dinka killed themselves. Majority of the young people who lost their fathers, brothers, uncles in 1991 tribal war

between Nuer and Dinka learned how they were murdered and this exacerbated hatred between Nuer and Dinka.

Methods adopted by media to propagate cessation of conflict in south sudan

Media entities in the Republic of South Sudan, social media alike adopted the following methods which are consistent with the theory of peace journalism to propagate peaceful co-existence; broadcasting peace programs on TVs and radios, use of jingles containing messages of peace, use of drama series, facebook news posts, twits, telephone communication, and coverage of peace rallies. The level of success of these methods varies considerably as perceived by the respondents of this study. Hereunder is a summary of the perceived level of success and potential reasons for success or failure.

Table 5. Media's success in sensitizing public on conflict prevention

Types of Media	Unsuccessful	Low Successful	Successful	Reasons for Success/Failure
Print media	0	150	0	Many people do not read/illiteracy
Television	100	50	0	Majority have no access to television
Radio	0	0	150	Many have access to radio
Social media	150	0	0	Free access abused by users to spread propaganda and hate
Other online platforms	90	10	50	Other media rely information. Sometimes are biased. Often used for hate.

Source: Primary Data

Impacts of government censorship on affected population, mobilization of resources, safety of journalists and aid workers

It became clear that government censorship has resulted into reduction of Resource mobilization efforts of humanitarian organizations as journalist were denied access to war affected population, arrested, detained, and deported to their home Countries for the case of foreign journalists, notable here was the restriction/banning of Aljazeera during the aftermath of the civil war in 2013. On a similar vein, 6 journalists were killed because of their reporting, with the highest number of fatalities in 2015 with a record of 5 journalists and 1 in 2017. Five of those journalists were killed in impunity (CPJ, 2019). Other media houses like radio Miraya, Citizen Newspaper, and other local radio stations were equally banned from reporting by the government. These summed resulted in reduced freedom of journalists and to some extent, on a positive note led to reduction of propaganda to spread more violence.

Discussions

Media has played a vital role in the context of South Sudanese conflict during the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Responses from this research analyzed both the positive and negative role played by media. Consistent with the theory of peace journalism and agenda setting theory propounded by Galtung (1965) and Lippmann as cited in Albalawi (2015, p.26), media outlets in South Sudan helped in disseminating peace agreements through broadcast of key articles of the agreement over radio, television, print outlets, and radio stations. Bulk of the young population having access to social media easily took to their social media platforms to get news and express their views on the political developments in the Country. Telephone communication was also used in many remotest parts of the Country for families to get updates of the situation.

However, the situation became extremely complex when some media entities failed to embrace ethical journalism and tended to propagate propaganda which helped to fan hatred and war. Notably, Sudan tribune online provided a platform for comments which are not properly scrutinized thus

becoming a platform for hate speeches and tribalism. Facebook by its nature of freedom encouraged hardliners to circulate their tribal agenda.

In this connection, some of the responses indicated that the deadly J-1 fighting in July 2016 was triggered by a post on Facebook claiming that the Dr. Riek Machar, the leader of SPLM-iO was being detained at J-1 which prompted the reinforcement of the SPLA-iO forces and subsequent clash the office of the president leading to collapse of the agreement in 2016.

It can therefore be deduced that the differences between peace journalism and war journalism is complex because information solicited or unsolicited could result into catastrophic impact of an all-out war as seen in July 2016.

Government censorship became apparent in the responses received during this study. Censorship leads to detention, killing, closing of media outlets, and obstruction of international media entities working alongside humanitarian organizations. Two things were certain in South Sudan, the government obstructed media from publishing information which the government felt was inappropriate for the survival of the government or the government felt their responsibility of reducing nuisance caused by unethical media entities. In either of the cases, it was a game of survival by the government or the media entities to stand their ground and defend themselves for undertaking appropriate measures for benefit of the Country. But it is certain that censorship has caused a great harm to the media fraternity leading to murder of 6 journalists between 2015 and 2017, mostly with impunity. Scores of other journalists were arrested and arbitrarily detained by government operatives.

Best practices of how media can contribute to effective emergency management

The research has identified potential best practices that could be embraced in contexts like South Sudan as per the responses received from this research:

- Media should be ethically proactive to provide more accurate messages that glimmers humanitarian aspects without exaggeration of individual interests of entities or politicians.
- Media should be correctly used as a source of information with an intention to save lives rather than destroying lives as it does happen in South Sudan. Media is useful when used to save lives of injured people or people in need of humanitarian aid including for informing the donor community on the plights of the unarmed civilians.
- Media needs to give citizens accurate feedbacks on locations, roads, time and the scale of the emergency to any person or institution who/which wants to help, to have an idea on how to approach such emergency context.
- Media needs to be brief and informative always and keeps tracking the course of emergency from the beginning and even after it ends.
- Media should follow all the events related to the emergency to send to the citizens the frequent updates.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, media had varied roles in South Sudanese Conflict. Media has helped in sensitization of citizens on the milestone of the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan and its revitalized version. It has also helped humanitarian organizations to showcase the challenges facing citizens of South Sudan in displaced camps and protection of civilian sites. Media in its varied forms, particularly social media has helped people to express their views since it is anonymous to post comments and twits without reprehensions from government operatives. The study was hinged on peace journalism and agenda setting theories. It is deduced that, during the revitalized peace agreements and agreement on the resolution of conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, media followed the two theories as better part of the work of media was to spread peaceful co-existence and the need to implement the peace agreement.

However, it should also be noted that media contributed negatively to the potentials of harmony among citizens in South Sudan. This was because social media, telephone communication, online media and some print media misinformed the public and circulated hatred further exacerbating the tribal divides between Nuer and Dinka. The deadly J-1 fighting in Juba was triggered by a Facebook post by

the Spokesperson of SPLM-iO claiming that their leader was being detained in the office of the President leading to all-out war.

The study also uncovered the potential best practices to ensure responsible usage of media; media should be ethically proactive to provide more accurate messages that glimmers humanitarian aspects without exaggeration of individual interests of entities or politicians; media should be correctly used as a source of information with an intention to save lives rather than destroying lives as it does happen in South Sudan. Media is useful when used to save lives of injured people or people in need of humanitarian aid including for informing the donor community on the plights of the unarmed civilians; media needs to give citizens accurate feedbacks on locations, roads, time and the scale of the emergency to any person or institution who/which wants to help, to have an idea on how to approach such emergency context; media needs to be brief and informative always and keeps tracking the course of emergency from the beginning and even after it ends; media should follow all the events related to the emergency to send to the citizens the frequent updates.

Recommendations

This research recommends the following:

1. Need for restraint by the government to allow unhindered access to media entities to cover news relating to the plight of the affected population and particularly following international media laws.
2. Social media especially Facebook should devise control measures to prevent messages which can potentially result in hate and increase war.
3. There is need to conduct another research to examine how media helps in humanitarian situation at the community level.

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