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Syrian Refugee Camp, Malatya, Turkey

Responsible Syrian refugee reporting in Turkey
The long journey from Syria to Malatya, Turkey

By Akin Bodur, Aymur Sarıskalıoğlu, and Tulay Atay-Ayar

Some crossed the border running, embracing their children, while others waited for nightfall to reach the barbed wire. While official sources put the number of Syrian refugees within Turkey’s borders at 2,620,553 (UNCHR, 2016a; Posta, 2016), almost three million Syrians have arrived in Turkey since April 2011 (UNCHR, 2016b). Most of those able to get here, young girls and children in particular, carried with them—if they were so able—their tiny bags loaded over their shoulders, squeezing into them their love, anger, hopes and dreams as they left their homeland behind. But, those who came with nothing save the clothes they wore carried these across the border in their hearts.

These victims were probably not even aware that they had been chosen as extras for a likely World War III. Some called what was happening the ‘Arab Spring’, while others referred to it as the ‘Greater Middle East Project’. However, those fleeing their bombed homes, those forced to choose between life and death, those who lost loved ones, and those fleeing war could not name their fears and hopes as the people footing the bill of the pain and suffering.

When the use of Turkey’s borders by groups coming from Syria and many other countries to fight in the name of ‘jihad’, and the problems within different ethnic groups living in Turkey, people with relatives in Syria, those opposed to the war, and supporters of the Syrian administration or rebel groups generated a general misconception, the Turkish media maintained its convoluted coverage. The mostly biased and deliberate coverage of the international and Turkish media, political preferences, as well as the differing views of Turkish politicians towards events in Syria, led society and civil society groups in the country to start taking sides also. Such a view brought different perceptions of asylum seekers with it.

While 273,519 of the approximately three million Syrians coming to Turkey live in refugee camps, very few are able to stay with relatives. These ‘Temporary Housing Centers’, ‘Guest Cities’, or ‘Container Cities’ as these camps were called, were established in the Turkish provinces of Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaras, Hatay, Adana, Adyaman, Osmaniye and Malatya. Many were able to take refuge in the houses they rented in place of their abandoned homes. So began life in the cloth tents they pitched in streets and parks. This also caused changes in the urban economic, social and cultural structure. Refugees began to be exploited as cheap labor or sex workers. Many Syrian women and girls were forced into loveless marriages in

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What is Peace Journalism?

Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choosing which words are used, create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good journalism. (Adapted from Lynch/McGoldrick, Peace Journalism). Peace Journalism gives peacemakers a voice while making peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable. A number of valuable peace journalism resources, including resource packets and online links, can be found at:
http://www.park.edu/center-for-peace-journalism/resources.html

Center for Global Peace Journalism

The Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University promotes the concepts of peace and peace journalism, including advocating non-violent conflict resolution, through seminars and courses both in the U.S. and abroad, through its website and magazine, and through partnerships.

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Approaching sunset at a Syrian refugee camp in Malatya, Turkey.

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Life in the Malatya, Turkey refugee camp (L); artwork by a refugee student who attends a UNICEF school at the Malatya camp.

A quiet moment at Syrian refugee camp in Malatya, Turkey. Continued on next page

A kindergarten teacher works hard to keep her students’ attention at the Malatya Syrian refugee camp.

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where almost all the media is run like a propaganda machine. A change in the political preferences of politicians and a strengthening of the opposition media are steps in the right direction of peace journalism. So, too, is counter narrative coverage by local media which are publishing information and developments only after relevant processing and filtering—due diligence.

Continued on next page

The Peace Journalism seminar has had a positive impact in this direction. Held in the same city as the refugee camp, the seminar allowed bureaucrats, politicians, academics, as well as journalism students several days of focused thought and discussion on the theme, shedding light on the principles and applications of peace journalism while giving direction to future journalists.

In conclusion, let us express the need for peace, in the words of founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to the public, in his capacity as a party leader in 1931: “We are working for peace at home and peace in the world.”

A quiet moment at Syrian refugee camp in Malatya, Turkey.

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Refugees: The power of telling people’s stories

If there is one story to tell today, it’s the refugees story. A story of turmoil, a story of loss, a story of desperation, and with nearly 60 million people forcibly displaced today, each story is simultaneously ubiquitous and unique. The refugee story is one that has also been told many times. Nearly every one with a recording device or pen be it non-profits enlisting funds, reporters competing for the saddest story, or fearmongering politicians, has told the refugee story.

I know a little about telling the refugee story- I am a recovering refugee. My family and I fled communist Romania in the early 80’s to finally live a life in freedom and security. Our struggles and experience often was tokenized by sincere actors waging war against communism or against religious freedom. Stories like ours are sometimes insincerely for personal gain. But one clear difference between how my family tells our story compared to outsiders is how close we get to the pain and how we humanize our collective memory. It stays near to us always.

My parents rarely talked about our refugee experience in terms of politics or policies but rather focused on the pain of not only themselves but of all Romanians. Stories are personal and private; they often do not belong only to one person but to a people, tribe or community. If not handled with care, stories can trigger new traumas, or cause increased bias or stereotypical views. These stories of trauma and crisis must be told in a nuanced, layered or realistic contextualized way.

Regardless, the refugee story must be told, even though telling it wrong haunts me. I know that there is a certain power to own a narrative or to name a problem. But it’s a power that remains in the hands of the storyteller not the story’s subjects. It’s a power that I have felt often in my current project “The Refugees Welcome Guide and Advocacy Project”- a peace-tech project that seeks to support sustainable social cohesion for refugees by providing resources and information via a guidebook offered in print, app, and on a website. It is also an advocacy campaign that seeks to shift the narrative about refugees and their needs, who they are, and how they became refugees. We recently organized and sponsored a refugee resource fair in Southern California. Over 130 refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, Uganda, Cuba, Iran, Iraq and more came for free bikes, clothes, food and medical, career, and job support. It was an event that was not open to the media, a decision made to insure everyone felt safe and secure. It was a decision that was collectively and easily made by the organizers.

Each day presents such choices to either tell the story with dignity or not at all. Telling the powerful stories of the powerless in times of crisis to raise one’s own profile or to in some way gain more power in a manipulative and unethical way, has been called “crisis porn.” When the powerful elites, be they news agencies, humanitarian aid organizations, or charities, use images and stories of their beneficiaries for their own enrichment, that is also “crisis porn.” No matter how noble the cause, as a peacebuilder and communications specialist, I believe that a story becomes exploitative when the subjects are not involved in its telling. In the case of refugees, having others tell their stories disempowers them and puts them at greater risks. It also continues the mechanisms that create cycles of violence. Having their story told for them not only disempowers refugees but continues the paradigms of oppression that are often the root cause of violence. Not only should the characters within stories be empowered to tell the story themselves, the institutions and traditional storytellers (like media) need to disempower themselves and make room for these authentic voices.

Stories are not only in written text, details in a photo or video can either build empathy or create social distance between the audience and the storyteller. Often stories have heroes and villains, but no individual or group is always a super hero, villain, victim, or martyr. Generally, most humans are ordinary, flawed, and complicated. Rather than empower stories, when the traditional storyteller (like media) does not make room for authentic voices or disempower themselves, the situation can become exploitative. This exploitation happens when the stories character’s emotions, culture, joys or sorrows can become appropriated by the storyteller but not embodied.

Objectifying values, motivations, actions, histories, knowledge, and ideas in order to create talking points or examples that further an agenda or social cause is also exploitative. I have heard this time and again in my work doing communications as a grassroots community organizer that not everyone wants to lend their story to the cause. In these cases, stories have become collaborate or capital. Community members knew that telling their stories can also elevate an institutions status, making them professional public intellectuals and experts on the suffering of others. In fact, this is only appropriating suffering for one’s own personal gain.

And yet it’s a difficult balance. Logistically and institutionally, it’s a struggle to create opportunities for refugees or others in crisis to speak for themselves. Perhaps they lack the technology, platform or forum to do so; perhaps it is a language or capacity gap that impedes. How can one honor the refugee story and yet not be exploitative? While not always the easiest answer, we can do a few things. First, hand the mic over as much as possible and let them speak for themselves. Second, share the stage or the page, if there is an opportunity to write and speak, bring refugees and their stories with you. Third, be quiet (be disempowered for a moment). Sometimes stories will never be told if the only way to tell them is to betray the trust and dignity of the person. Some pictures should not be taken, some words should not be written.

Refugee stories were never ours to tell. It is not our sorrow to display or our trauma to convey. Sometimes refugee stories in the silence and void, comforted by the ambiguity and darkness, for once not exposed to the pain.
My Afghan colleague, Khalid, and I sat in the restaurant of the Mustafa Hotel in downtown Kabul. He had just picked me up at Kabul International Airport.

“The boys have changed,” Khalid said putting down his cup.

The previous year, 2003, he and I helped five war-orphaned boys enroll in school. We fed them once a day and made sure they had a change of clothes. Then Khalid and I proceeded with our day. I was a reporter. He worked with me as a translator. The boys didn’t know their ages. I guessed about 13.

Each evening we reviewed their lessons in back room of a pharmacy owned by Khalid’s brother. When I left Kabul in May of that year, I promised the boys I’d return in two weeks. Khalid assured me he would continue tutoring them, and the boys vowed they would complete school.

The other boys joined him. They were equally subdued. They had stopped expecting me. I had been relegated to memory. Someone they had grown to trust and who had left them. And in that gap they had made choices without me. On our way from the airport to the hotel, Khalid told me that all the boys had dropped out out of school.

Jawad and another boy, Jamshid, worked at the Mustafa seven days a week cleaning and running errands for the owner. The others worked for shop owners. The need to put food in their stomachs had taken precedence over education. The other boys the previous year.

During the time I knew them, my days had been filled with the desperate pleas of war widows, amputees and war-orphaned children. I watched police beat them with metal cables, watched freaking-out Westerners flee down Chicken Street chased by hungry children shouting, “One dollar, mister!” For the sake of my sanity, I needed more going on inside my head than the echo of, “Money, Mister!” at the end of each day.

I can feed, clothe and help educate these five homeless boys I see every day begging outside the hotel, I had thought. I can do that much.

As I tried to sleep at night, the shrieks of “Money Mister!” grew louder in my head. The snarling images of people being trampled as they fought for free food distributed by the U.N. filled my room, hovering over the bed with suffocating intensity. The memory of the boys reciting their school lessons just hours before competed with the despair lurking beside me and eased my headaches.

“I am thinking of going to Iraq,” Khalid said. “The U.N. people say they need staff there. It will be good money, I think. What do you think?”

“I think you’re silly,” I said using one of his favorite English words. He smiled, and I can see he’s remembering some light moment we had together. I want him to let me in on this moment, to laugh over old times.

“I have to support my family,” he says. “There is no job, no income was $50. How could school compete with success in a country where the average monthly income was $50. How could school compete with success like that? I had returned 12 months later than I had promised. Who was I to pass judgement?

“I’d hoped to come back sooner,” I said to Jawad. “I wasn’t offered an assignment here until now.”

An onslaught of beggars interrupted the awkwardness of the moment by offering—demanding—to carry my duffle bag into the hotel.

“I have a job with the United Nations,” Khalid said after a waiter poured our second cups of tea. “I am data entry supervisor for one division of a voter registration drive.”

“That’s good.”

“I am a big shot. I am picked up from my home and dropped off every day. I have a driver. What I’m trying to say is I got very busy. I didn’t have time to come by the pharmacy and teach the boys.”

I looked out a window behind Khalid to the street. I saw one of the boys sweeping a photo copy shop. Another boy approached cars and tries to sell maps and magazines.

I understood that helping the boys had been a selfish gesture with no consideration of the obligation I had taken on, an act of self-preservation that had helped me far more than it had helped them.

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“I have to support my family,” he says. “There is no job, no future here.”

We finished our tea and arrange to meet in the morning to begin the day’s work. I walked to my room and unpacked. Next door an American—perhaps a journalist, perhaps someone with an NGO, I didn’t know—swatted flies.

“You can run but you can’t hide,” he screamed.
Discussion spotlights hate speech in Kyrgyz media

By Alikar Karaboeva

The public discussion “Hate Speech and Discrimination through the Media. Trends, Influence, Challenges, Countering,” organized by the School of Peacemaking and Media Technologies, was held on February 10, 2016 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The participants in the event were Shawn Steil, Canada's Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; Sanzharbek Tazhimatov, expert from the department of ethnic, religious policies and interaction with civil society of the Presidential Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic; Abibek Asankanov, head of Monitoring Center of GAMSUMO [State Agency for Local Government Affairs and Ethnic Relations] of the Kyrgyz Republic; and representatives of international, civil, and religious organizations, and media experts.

The participants discussed the level of hate speech in the media and on the Internet, the role of new media and social networks in spreading hate speech, its impact on the audience, and dynamics and trends of ethnic, religious and social stereotypes. Presenters also discussed recommendations on preventing hate speech.

Media monitoring of “Hate Speech in Media, Internet and Public Discourse – 2015” was carried out by a group of experts from the School of Peacemaking and Media Technologies. Their study showed that the main targets of dehumanising metaphors and ad hominem attacks were Muslims, ethnic groups, and the LGBT community. This was related to the increasing number of Syrian refugees in Europe, facts of recruitment of Kyrgyzstani residents to ISIL, increased hate in local society against refugees and foreigners, and discussions about the gay propaganda draft law.

According to the monitoring study, 62% of negative statements were used by the media against ethnic groups. Journalists targeted Russians, Chinese, Turks, and Canadians in most cases. Often, authors of articles and posts confused ethnicity of the main characters with their citizenships. In some cases, it happened when the topic was politicized; in other cases, it happened due to the failure to meet professional reporting standards.

Canada’s ambassador Shawn Steil expressed his surprise at the negative image of Canadians in local media outlets. In many cases stereotypes and clichés against Canadians were reported in articles and posts that discussed the Kumtor gold mining company.

“When we first started supporting the project on hate speech control, we couldn’t even imagine that Canada would become the object of hate speech, which makes the society become a one-dimensional space,” Canadian Ambassador Shawn Steil said. “Our presence here is not only about the Kumtor issue.”

Canada is considered to be a country committed to the principles of tolerance and diversity, which is confirmed by its new government, which contains representatives of various ethnic groups, indigenous people, and the disabled. “We are ready to share the new understanding, experience with Kyrgyzstan and show the benefits of the diversity format,” Steil added.

Continued on next page

Alikar Karaboeva is coordinator of the Encouraging Diversity Through Media Project implemented by the School of Peacemaking and Media Technology. Alikar is a professional journalist. She spent more than 10 years at internews Network in the Kyrgyz Republic.
Imagine being in Timor-Leste in 1975: people left without the means of government by the former colonial ruler, citizens menaced by the Indonesian military in charge of forcing the East Timorese to accept annexation of Timor-Leste into Indonesia. Imagine that while the Indonesian military was killing thousands of innocent East Timorese, the international community was silent about it. Imagine a country with no other instruments to fight a powerful military invasion other than a peaceful protest. In fact, a violent confrontation was not in the genes of the East Timorese. Therefore, little imagination was needed to envisage the reality of Timor-Leste. In this context, the East Timorese relied on what James Scott called the "weapon of the weak", hence a discourse on human rights and peace - as leitmotiv - to gain international recognition and protection against the brutality of the Indonesian military.

This discourse began with the support of international peace journalists, who - by risking their lives - portrayed the suffering of the East Timorese in the international arena. Peace journalism, in fact, focuses on giving a "voice to the voiceless". It is people-oriented and endeavors to lay bare truths, with a focus on peace rather than violence. Largely, peace journalism is an ethical choice.

Nevertheless, achieving peace is the duty of politicians and governments, and not an exclusive mission of responsible journalists. However, in the case of Timor-Leste, democratic and free states such as Australia, New Zealand and the USA buttressed the invasion, to the point of ignoring the death of six Australian journalists killed in Balibo (Timor-Leste) by the Indonesian military in 1975. Essentially, Timor-Leste from 1975 until the 1990s has been a media blind spot, in other words, a forgotten country, where the only ruling authority was widespread violence accepted by the international community. Yet, journalists turned out to be strategic in depicting the struggle of the East Timorese. In an interesting article, David Robie (2014) argues that journalists are able to promote peace, while John Pilger criticizes traditional journalism for being oriented towards power instead of people.

John Pilger has been one of the key peace journalists in reporting the cause of Timor-Leste in the 1990s. Pilger and Christopher Wenner are particularly remembered. Wenner recorded the Santa Cruz Massacre in Dili, the capital of East Timor, and ran a documentary - a reflection of how far the global media is from peace journalism.

For the uninitiated, war journalism focuses on controlled so-called "facts" and offers a presentation that is heavily-oriented towards violence and projecting the conflict arena in a two-party and one-goal deal, conforming itself to closed spaces and time, with the cause and effect studied only in the arena.[1] It is concerned only with the visible or tangible effects of violence, thereby making conflict "opaque".

Furthermore, war journalism is exceptionally reactive - and focuses on an "us-and-them" rhetoric; seeing the enemy 'them' as the problem while dehumanising them. It is heavily reactive in that it waits for violence to start before it does or says anything. It is heavily propaganda-oriented, seeking only to expose their untruths while helping to cover-up "our" own flaws and lies.

War journalism tends towards the elite, by focusing on their violence and our suffering, calling them "enemies", and focusing only on the elite segments of society - spokespersons and peacemakers; and is skewed towards victory, in that it considers peace as victory and ceasefire, while concealing peace initiatives even before victory is at hand. War journalism focuses on controlled societies and treaties and gives up on a peace media style that is decisive in East Timor.

The media's response (to Paris)... is a reflection of how far the global media is from peace journalism.

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John Pilger has been one of the key peace journalists in reporting the cause of Timor-Leste in the 1990s. Pilger and Christopher Wenner are particularly remembered. Wenner, known as Max Stahl, taped - Cold Blood: the Massacre of East Timor - broadcast in the UK in 1992. Pilger, instead, crossed the border of Timor-Leste illegally in 1993, and recorded a documentary - Death of a Nation: The Timor Conspiracy. These materials were screened internationally and raised awareness and concern about human rights violations. Wenner recorded the Santa Cruz Massacre in Dili, the capital (12 November 1991). A crowd of people were killed before the funeral turned out into a protest against the Indonesian military, which in turn shot more than 200 people. International protests began in support of Timor-Leste. Several civil society organizations have been established internationally: The East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN) in the USA; Tahanan Politik (TAPOL) in London, run by former Indonesian political prisoners; and the Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor (APCEYT) in the Philippines.

Today there is a prevailing perception that the media in Timor-Leste have poor capabilities to carry out their work with consequent limited impact of the whole country. Media's permeability on the national scale is undermined by the lack of proper coverage of radio and TV, which is mostly confined to the urban center, marginalizing the population of rural areas. Yet, it is incontestable that media, as Tempo Semanal (Weekly Time), so far have done a striking job in dredging up cases of government corruption. For instance, when in 2014 the government of Timor-Leste attempted to pass a law intended to limit media's freedom, José Belo, an investigative journalist of Tempo Semanal, called for peacefully protesting to uphold the rights established within the constitution. Section 41, in fact, guarantees the independence of media. Eventually, a judgement of the Court of Appeal sentenced that such a law was unconstitutional.

As substantiated, the mass media are key players in free countries where their focus is on peace. The history of Timor-Leste explains that a peace journalism approach was decisive in helping the East Timorese to show what was happening in their homeland. Peace journalism - responsible journalism - can contribute to support the cause of voiceless people. Today, Timor-Leste is a democracy, with basic rights guaranteed, and journalists again can make the difference to maintain the balance and check on governments and public officials. As a matter of fact, in a functioning democracy like Timor-Leste, the media have a crucial role in preserving the law and the constitution. Nowadays, East Timorese journalists - by peacefully protesting and arguing against any unconstitutional moves - support the victory of peace and democracy, and help the public to know about their constitutional and legal rights.
If we want a peaceful world, it's time we stop choosing between the geographies of global violence. Paris and Lebanon are acceptable, and perhaps even necessary – for it can be a greater priority for people to be safe in.

The media's perception of what is news should be restructured. As a vehicle of information, the media has a responsibility to the masses, to provide authentic information without clouding it with judgment. Let the people decide and form an opinion about the conflict in their own way, not by the framing of the media.

Media reporting this inter-state conflict in Pakistan by stimulating the dialogue and reflection on both the root causes of conflict and possible feasible solutions.

This study shows that the approach of the Pakistani media appears to be war oriented in an ongoing intrastate conflict that is already an extreme situation. The study found that media play a vital role in transformation of conflict, while communicating characteristics and all the black and white sides of the conflict. However, a number of potential outcomes along with varied influences within the context of conflict could be accounted for by war and peace journalism. A study has been conducted to analyze the reporting of the Baluchistan conflict by print media of Pakistan. The Baluchistan conflict is a guerrilla war waged by Baloch nationalists against the governments of Pakistan in the Balochistan region (see, map, in green).

Analyzing from the war and peace perspective, focused around classification by Johan Galtung in two largest Pakistani newspapers “The News” and “Dawn,” editorials from “The News” have covered the conflict as the creation of local tribal leaders to preserve their power and to practice control over provincial resources. Fighting and target killing news stories were prominent during the period of study. The war journalism framing focused on the elites, the here and now, along with a dichotomy of good and bad.

On the whole, this study has identified war journalism as dominant frame in the coverage of the interstate-conflict, more than the neutral and peace journalism frame in case of “The News” newspaper. Media reporting on the Balochistan conflict is elite-oriented, highlighting the leaders and elites as actors and sources of information supporting the government stance of Bugti operation as legitimate Partisan. It is biased for one side in the conflict and is here and now, war area reporting that lacks context.

Moreover, the media reporting reflected that the conflict as the local tribal leaders fighting for a greater share of resources and royalties and opposing the development in provincial areas to reserve the power of greedy sardars (leaders). Among major news stories, frequently covered were fighting incidences and target killings. Findings reveal that “The News” favored the government stance as legitimate and justified.

On the other side, the research study has revealed prominent peace journalism indicators on the reporting of Balochistan/Pakistan conflict by the “Dawn” newspaper in Pakistan. This has fulfilled the principles of peace oriented indicators and has explored the backgrounds and contexts contributing to the creation of conflict.

This newspaper also presented conflict resolution strategies by initiating dialogue between the government and tribal leaders. It followed a people-oriented approach covering conflict from all sides and by giving name to all evil-doers. The noteworthy feature of the “Dawn” newspaper was largely solution-oriented news stories. Peace building initiatives were highlighted and thus focused on conflict resolution measures. Truth-oriented articles uncovered fabrications on white sides of the conflict, while communicating characteristics and all the black and white sides of the conflict.

This study discovers war journalism in Pakistan

By Ruaiya Anwar

Media play a vital role in transformation of conflict, while communicating characteristics and all the black and white sides of the conflict. However, a number of potential outcomes along with varied influences within the context of conflict could be explained by the war and peace journalism model.

Pakistani media have covered the conflict as the creation of local tribal leaders to preserve their power and to practices control over provincial resources. Fighting and target killing news stories were prominent during the period of study. While on other hand in case of “Dawn” newspaper it can be concluded that, the peace journalism indicators for the reporting of conflict were prominent.

Pakistani media can play a positive role in reporting the Baluchistan conflict. Peace journalism can incorporate elements of peace building and conflict resolution by providing new opportunities for peaceful resolution of this ongoing conflict. Hence, Peace Journalism could be a useful tool for reporting this inter-state conflict in Pakistan by stimulating the dialogue process and providing a space for analysis and reflection on both the root causes of conflict and possible feasible solutions.

Ruaiya Anwar is an Academic Coordinator at the International Islamic University of Pakistan and MS Scholar of Media Studies at Riphah International University in Pakistan.
MAP presents PJ, digital seminars in Lebanon

By Vanessa Bassil / MAP

As part of its Media, Peace and Conflict program, the Media Association for Peace (MAP) recently held two workshops—the Annual Peace Journalism workshop and the Digital Journalism workshop, supported by the German Agency for International Cooperation GIZ-ZFD as part of “Hayda Lubnan” project (This is Lebanon).

The Fifth Annual Peace Journalism Workshop was held on November 27th, 28th and 29th at Crown Plaza Hotel – Hamra, Beirut. It started with Vanessa Bassil, Founder, President and Executive Director of MAP, presenting an evaluation of Lebanese and Arab media and how to pinpoint war journalism. Bassil has also stressed the relationship between politicized media and levels of objectivity.

In addition, Bassil introduced the concept of Peace Journalism and its role in divided societies through investigating factors that lead to conflicts and division, and comparing them with the concepts of diversity and the problematic variance between root causes of conflict and factors of difference.

Bassil emphasized the role of Peace Journalism in managing diversity and transforming conflicts into positive opportunities. The day ended with a better understanding of conflict, where everyone agreed that it is a natural phenomenon that could become something positive and manageable that does not necessarily lead to violence.

On the second day, participants were divided into groups and were asked to evaluate different media coverage of the violent incidents that took place on May 7th, 2008 in Lebanon through analyzing the power of words and pictures affecting the track of conflict situations.

Their study was based on terms and expressions used to report the news and the connotations behind each one of them. As a result, participants were able to specify the standards and regulations that every peace journalist should refer to when covering news-worthy stories.

During the afternoon, MAP member Zeina Merhi introduced the concept of media literacy as a complement to Peace Journalism, while Rachel Karam, reporter at the local TV station New TV, explored various kinds of media practices in the Lebanese context and how they can be used to achieve peace.

The last day of the workshop proved to be diverse as many topics were presented.


The resolution aims at raising awareness about the necessity of protecting women everywhere and preventing violence against them as well as promoting women’s role in peace processes.

On another topic, MAP members Christina Boutros and Aya Amakieh gave their comments and insights on the garbage crisis in Lebanon within the framework of MAP’s Media, Peace and Environment program, while Dana Arnaout talked about media monitoring of violence and hate speech in the framework of human rights.

Finally, Bassil and Gertraud Beck, representatives of GIZ, introduced the “Hayda Lubnan” website whose target is to feature positive, peaceful, and constructive articles for Lebanon.

The participants were then asked to brainstorm story ideas that would promote the role of journalism in conflict transformation and its contribution in achieving real and sustainable peace. Certificates of participation were distributed at the end.

Two months later, MAP organized a Digital Journalism Workshop on January 15th and 6th at AltCity – Hamra, Beirut, to provide digital tools for the trainees on Peace Journalism so they can be able to write for online media. The workshop kicked off with a session on peace journalism and its relationship to digital media with MAP Executive Director Vanessa Bassil, which led a debate about citizen journalism and its role in digital peace.

Then, Veronique Abou Ghazaleh Margossian provided in the second training session the most important techniques that must be adopted in the digital press, and explained how to use the search engine “Google” to publish articles and news in a faster manner.

Another training session was on digital rights and digital safety with Mohammad Najm from Social Media Exchange organization. He briefed the participants on the latest piracy programs, and provided them with advice on how to protect their accounts on social networking sites.

Najm also highlighted Lebanese laws related to digital journalism and discussed incidents that took place with some digital journalists.

The first day ended with a session with the Editor-in-Chief of “Al Jaded” website Ibrahim Dsouki in which he displayed his digital experience and how he moved from working in traditional media to digital media, explaining the challenges and opportunities of electronic media.

The second day of the workshop, commenced with Joseph Yacoub, trainer and strategist in digital marketing, in a session on personal marketing via the Internet, in which he talked about the importance of social networking sites and how to use them, and gave instructions for the participants to increase their digital interaction.

The second session was presented by the Editor-in-Chief for “MTV” website, Danny Haddad, on how to create, develop and manage a news website. He also discussed the use of social networks to support sites, highlighting the most prominent daily difficulties faced in his work.

This was followed by a collective group work led by Bassil aimed to determine the characteristics of digital peace journalism and how to apply them in practical journalistic work, specifically in “Hayda Lubnan” website which is being managed by MAP.

The participants put forward their vision of a better Lebanon and solutions they would like to write about in “Hayda Lubnan.”

The last session was with the activists and took souvenir pictures of the activity.

About MAP

MAP, the Media Association for Peace, is the first non-governmental organization in Lebanon, the Middle East and North Africa region dedicated to work on the role of Media in Peace, Conflict and Social Change through the concept of Peace Journalism.

The vision of MAP is to get to a media that play an essential role in peace-building especially in conflict and post-conflict areas in order to reach a less violent, more peaceful world by spreading, advocating, training, developing, practicing, and researching the concept of Peace Journalism through workshops, seminars, conferences, public debates, projects and publications.
Turning media constraints into opportunities

Giuliana Tiripelli is the author of Media and Peace in the Middle East. She carried out her doctoral research at the Glasgow University Media Group and is now teaching and researching in the fields of social change, the role of old and new media in society.

The journalists interviewed in the book represent a range of outlets and working styles, but all of them are primarily professional practitioners. Their testimonies highlight a series of constraints, which affect different stages of their work.

In the first instance, journalists are familiar with attacks against their stories – from members of the public. These attacks are most often directed against journalists working with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The journalists interviewed in the book represent a range of outlets and working styles, but all of them are primarily professional practitioners. Their testimonies highlight a series of constraints, which affect different stages of their work.

Among the critical commentators of Arrigoni’s work, historian Geoffrey Alderman started his article in The Jewish Chronicle (May 13, 2011) by stating: “Few events – even the execution of Osama bin Laden – have caused me greater pleasure in recent weeks than news of the death of the Italian so-called ‘peace activist’ Vittorio Arrigoni.” Peace activists are not real peace activists: that’s the leitmotif of their oppositional voices. The main dynamic at work here is one which constantly, and successfully, strips from those subjects under discussion (the peace activist, the professional journalist) the role and identity that these acknowledge to themselves.

This tendency makes it easy for journalists to be labeled as ‘partisan’ or unprofessional, and this is a risk of which the practitioners speaking through the pages of Media and Peace in the Middle East are very aware, and very worried about. Journalists constantly think and evaluate how they see themselves, how they are seen, and how they implement the requirements of the sector. They manage personal feelings and experiences to meet a great variety of different expectations, which they have to constantly balance. This creates a difficult context to work in, one which pressures practitioners to detach themselves further from life in the conflict area, and to stick with the mainstream rules of the job. For the journalists covering Palestine, external constraints all contribute to an intense cognitive and ‘internal’ experience. This polarising dynamic also causes a problem for peace journalists more directly. It not only distorts and misrepresents subjects working for conflict transformation, but it also transforms these very subjects and their actions into a source of further dichotomisation. Audiences take one side or the other and these sides fight against one another, reinforcing conflict narratives at global level.

For peace journalists, coming to terms with these dynamics then means strengthening narratives and tools that ‘protect’ the identity of actors working for change. It also entails developing strategies for the prevention of polarisation, and for the management of debate dynamics in those cases where their own stories come under intense fire across the media. The balance between activist narratives and peace-focused ones is particularly important in order to achieve those objectives.

Another relevant constraint for journalism among those discussed in Media and Peace in the Middle East is the presence of a powerful PR machine on the Israeli institutional side, coupled by a less consistent Palestinian system. While reliance on official perspectives is discouraged in peace journalism, an analysis of the developments of news management can inform and strengthen peace journalism application in the area. Israeli news management goes beyond the management of official information, and it acts on the experience of the practitioners during the production stage. This action represents an advanced way of shaping information for political purposes, which can be called ‘experience management’. Experience management is implemented ‘negatively’ (through closures and the withholding of press cards) and ‘positively’ by organising what the journalists are able to easily approach ‘positively’ by organising what the journalists are able to easily approach and see in the field.

A strategic approach in peace journalism has its roots in this reality. It includes developing projects that expand opportunities for experiencing the region in unconventional ways and triggering a journalist’s desire for alternative narratives on the conflict. For those journalists who make an extra effort to overcome established professional conventions and take control of their experiences creatively, the personal pressure arising from their new encounters adds to the other pressures that all journalists already deal with. This context calls for applications of peace journalism to be matched by adequate support for the practitioners in the field, both in the form of assistance and in the form of training over and above the provisions of innovative journalistic skills. In such an environment, where constraints are not only physical but also act at cognitive and emotional levels, safeguarding the well-being of the practitioners is a primary necessity for the provision of more opportunities for change.

While these, and other external constraints, cause a lot of pressure in the work routine, often determine the actions of practitioners, the journalists interviewed in Media and Peace in the Middle East also take pride in their ability to distinguish and decide. They consider themselves free agents who make continuous choices for meeting the needs of their audiences and producing correct information.

For a consistent group of journalists among those interviewed, one of these choices is that of not dealing with conflict transformation. This group sees the promotion of peace as ‘doing’ politics, an action that defines partisanship, and therefore strongly undermines professionalism. The idea at play here is also the belief that, in promoting peace, journalists would take over a decisional role about the future of societies that belongs exclusively to citizens. What this means is that, for some mainstream journalists, it is difficult to conceive of peace as the potential outcome of more accurate information.

This sophisticated ideological armour, which is discussed in detail in Media and Peace in the Middle East, is one of the main elements preventing immediate engagement of mainstream practitioners with peace journalism. Implemented through journalists’ reflection and choices, this ideological element also strengthens a structure that keeps rejecting more responsible
In a situation where there are at least 42 active conflicts raging worldwide, with nine of them being in the South Asian region, there is a prerequisite of responsible reporting and consuming of news that is published or made public to avoid adding further fuel to the already existing fire, in order to promote sustainable peace. The media, often conceived of as the fourth estate, wields an unparalleled power of societal and political influence to have a considerable impact on the progress of any democracy, which should ideally serve the purpose of not only educating the public but also enabling them to make well-informed decisions.

However, in an era of ‘mediatized conflict’, the narratives chosen often tend to be partial, violent, incomplete and dramatized. The following excerpt brings this forward in the context of Kashmir when a Kashmiri (a close acquaintance) visits New Delhi for the first time and hires a local taxi to reach the hotel.

Taco Driver: Kaha se aaye ho aap, yahake toh naahi lag rahe hai? (Where have you come from, you don’t seem to be a resident of Delhi?).

Friend: Ji, Kashmir se. (Yes, I am from Kashmir).

Taco Driver: Looking through rear view mirror: Ji, yaha kaise? (How come you are here?).

Friend: Kuch kaam tha. (Had some work).

Taco Driver: Kashmir mein toh rox bomb blast hota rahe hai! (Kashmir experiences bomb blasts every day).

Friend: Nahi, aisa hai. Roz na hi. (No, that’s not true. It’s not an everyday affair).

Taco Driver:TV par toh yahi aata hai. (This is what is shown on television).

The above incident does not really reflect the mindset of a poorly informed taxi driver, but indicates the viewpoint of a majority of the people from the rest of the country as fueled by the consumption of news on popular media.

A perusal of contemporary press headlines on Kashmir reveal that more than half the reportage on the region focuses on stories that promote a perception of perpetual war. Media being the major and often the only source of information about a region stuck in protracted conflict, such reportage covering only incidents of violent and counter-attacks contribute to creating a negative image about the region and its people in other parts of the country. This results in further alienation from reality and strained relations. In this article, we dig deeper into the complexities of understanding Peace Journalism as a practice in one of the prolonged conflicts that the world experiences – Kashmir, stressing upon its importance, possibilities and challenges. The arguments are based upon the responses from practicing journalists in Kashmir (with an experience of 10-12 years) which were collected through questionnaires, using a snowball sampling method.

Journalism is an intervention in a situation of conflict and the ethics of such intervention often determine popular perceptions of events, feelings of insecurity, empowerment, loss, belonging. These factors are instrumental in effecting trajectories of development. The practices of ‘sensationalism’ in the media generate images that halt development processes, as expressed by a respondent who commented, “the local media is under self-imposed censorship and the regional media is totally biased” (sic). Such practices and attitudes unlease a journalistic vacuum, when other aspects of the society go unreported – where “human rights, the plight of minorities, and womens issues are ignored,” according to one respondent.

The good practices of Peace Journalism are supported by sensitive journalists within and outside the Kashmir valley. In fact, some of them even incorporate it in their work to foster overall progress and development. Yet, more often than not they are met with challenges. Censorship, excessive interferences by the higher authorities within the media sector, demand to fetch high ratings through “escalation and sensationalization” pose major challenges to not only practices of Peace Journalism but also peace per se since consumption of such news results in polarizing public opinions.

However, despite such challenges, journalists have pointed towards the alternate space and popularity of the social media which provide an opportunity to explore journalistic freedom and grow in solidarity. These alternative spaces can create conditions for positive peace in Kashmir.

NOTES
Scholarly research in Peace Journalism has taken a significant step forward with the publication, in the peer-reviewed journal, Global Media and Communication (GMC), of a special edition devoted to 'Theoretical and Methodological Developments in Peace Journalism' (see table of contents below).

Researchers first began to take a serious interest in PJ in the early 2000s, chiefly from a series of conferences organised by the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research. A key figure in enabling the field to attain a sense of coherence was Professor Wilhelm Kempf, a notable theoretical contributor to PJ in his own right and also the Editor of a specialised, online, open-access journal, Conflict and Communication. Articles published there, based on contributions to Toda conferences, also appeared in print in the form of edited collections, including Peace Journalism: The State of the Art (edited by Wilhelm himself, with Professor Dov Shinar), and The Peace Journalism Controversy (both under the Regener imprint from Berlin).

But these endeavours were based largely on the contributions of a small number of interested scholars, exchanging views and perspectives among themselves as they developed their ideas. The publication of a special edition in a field-leading journal such as GMC, which takes a more generalist brief across the broadly defined field of Media and Communication, marks a point where PJ scholarship is seen as having been successfully established as a thriving sub-field in its own right; one capable of generating perspectives of potential interest to researchers with a much broader range of preoccupations.

To date, however, as journalist educators Stig Arne Nohrstedt and Rune Ottosen argue in their contribution to the GMC special edition, a programme of ‘co-ordinated and organised re-forms’ has not yet arisen from the PJ movement. A wide range of projects are underway at any given moment, including many in journalist training as chronicled in The Peace Journalist, but Nohrstedt and Ottosen comment, they are “scattered geographically and do not have a global scope”.

Taking together, then, the articles collected in this special edition constitute a significant new horizon in the theoretical and methodological development of Peace Journalism in scholarly research.

To access the journal, go to: http://gmc.sagepub.com/ content/11/3#toc

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Connecting Peace and Electoral Journalism: 3 Tips

1. Avoid treating the election like a horse race. Polls and surveys are fine, but they are only a part of the story. Instead concentrate on issues of importance as identified by the public.

2. Avoid airing inflammatory, divisive, or violent statements by candidates. Instead, edit these comments to eliminate these inflammatory statements. Or, broadcast these comments, and then offer analysis and criticism of what is being said.

3. Avoid stories that give opinions/sound bites only from leaders. Instead, center stories around everyday people, their concerns and perceptions about the candidates and process.

A responsible peace journalist wouldn’t preach that Trump, polls, and insults shouldn’t be covered, but rather that they should receive much less coverage, since each minute of this reporting about these is a minute that is ignoring other candidates and issues that truly matter.

Peace journalism, the principle that reporters should consider the consequences of their reporting while they better serve the public, offers a prescription for what is election coverage. In Peace Journalism Principles and Practices (Routledge Publishing/fall 2016), I discuss several peace journalism-inspired suggestions for improving election coverage, including concentrating on "issues of importance as identified by the public." I also advise journalists to "avoid letting candidates get away with using imprecise, emotive language. This includes name calling. Instead, hold candidates accountable for what they say, and use precise language as you discuss issues," as well as offering critical analysis of ideas and proposals put forth by candidates. Trump’s border wall, which he insists will be paid for by Mexico, is a clear example of this critical analysis.

Journalists have a responsibility to help produce an informed electorate, and not one fed a diet consisting of junk food like polls, mudslinging, and the latest outrageous utterance. While it’s true that the candidates aren’t making responsible journalism easy, reporters should still take the high road, and produce more thoughtful pieces about the vital issues that we should be discussing this election year.

A Lexis Nexis newspaper database search for Feb. 3-March 3 shows that insult coverage far outstripped coverage of at least two substantive issues. Of the first 1000 hits under "Trump," I noted stories containing the keyword "attacks." Of the first 1000 hits under "Rubio," 296 contained "attacks," while 204/1000 hits under "Hillary Clinton" contained "attacks." In total, 672 of 3000 newspaper stories, or 22%, mentioned the mudslinging attacks.

Compare that to the newspaper coverage of important issues like immigration (discussed in 2.9% of the stories about Trump, Rubio, and Clinton) and jobs (6.8%). An identical March 3-March 3 search, done with broadcast news transcripts, showed that 27% of the stories contained at least a mention of "attacks."

Finally, election coverage is laden with stories about the horse race—the latest polls and who’s ahead. The Lexis Nexis newspaper and broadcast news transcript search