

Conflicts and the dilemma of media intervention: An educational information management perspective

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Abstract: Conflicts are inevitable in any human community, despite the fact that they are never desirable. One of the characteristics of the contemporary world is conflict. Different parties participate in disputes (individuals, organizations, and states). When disputes arise, interventionist methods are put into action. Conflicts arise in a variety of ways, such as disagreement, rage, quarrelling, hatred, destruction, killing, or war, because human requirements are diverse. Conflict takes many different shapes, and so do interventions. Individuals, groups (both local and foreign), and governments can all intervene in a conflict. The media and its functions are up for debate among those who mediate disputes. Can the media be seen as intervening in a dispute, or are they merely performing their mandated duties? The diversity of opinions is what drives conversations in peace journalism. In addition, peace journalism promotes media engagement and intervention in conflict situations in order to lessen and end conflict. Media intervention, according to some critics, is not objective journalism because those in charge of educational information management and journalists are not expected to make decisions about the news; rather, they should just tell it as they see it. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine the idea of conflict, the stages of conflict development, interventions in conflicts, and the contentious position of the media in conflicts from an educational information management perspective. Hence, this paper will contribute to the role of educational information management via social media and other new media platforms, which have occasionally been used to hold governments responsible, unite people in protest of violence, plan relief operations, empower people, dissipate tensions via knowledge sharing, and create understanding across boundaries.

Keywords: conflicts; information management; intervention; media; individuals; organizations

1. Introduction

No human society can exist without conflicts, even though conflict is never desirable. Conflict is one of the defining features of the modern world (Puddephatt, 2006). After the Cold War ended, there have been countless conflicts recorded around the world involving the deaths of innocent people, particularly women and children. Many others suffer from the effects of various conflicts. It is simply impossible to quantify in real terms the consequences of conflicts on human society.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), an independent

international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament, reported that in 2018 alone, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide stood at 68.5 million, including more than 25 million refugees. As of 2018, there were active conflicts in at least twenty-seven (27) countries around the world, namely: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, and Yemen (SIPRI, 2019). In the last twenty years, there have been almost three million deaths from conflicts, the majority from state-based violence (UCDP, 2019).

Similarly, in 2018, UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program), an international organization that provides data on organized violence in the world, said there were 76,000 deaths from conflicts, which is a 20% decrease from 2017 and a 43% decrease from 2014 when conflicts in the world peaked (UCDP, 2019; Pettersson et al., 2019). Conflicts have been classified as (1) state-based, in which at least one of the parties is a recognized state, e.g., Saudi Arabia and Yemen, (2) non-state, in which both parties are non-state but organized groups or organizations, e.g., ISIS; and (3) one-sided, in which only one-party initiates and carries out aggression against another party, e.g., suicide bombers, mass killers (UCDP, 2019).

There are various actors in conflicts: individuals, organizations, and states. When conflicts break out, mechanisms in the name of intervention are set in motion. Since human needs are varied, so too do conflicts surface in different forms such as disagreement, anger, quarrel, hatred, destruction, killing, or war (Folarin, 2013; Aidonjio et al., 2023; Adetunji et al., 2022; Ukhurebor and Balogun, 2022). Just as the forms of conflict are varied, so are the interventions. Interventions in conflict can emanate from individuals, organizations (including local and international), and states. Contentious among the interveners in conflicts is the media and its roles. Can media be regarded as interveners in conflict, or are they simply carrying out their legitimate functions? The views are varied, which is the heart of discussions on peace journalism. Peace journalism, propounded by Galtung and Ruge (1965) and further expanded by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) and Lynch (2007), advocates for active media involvement and intervention in conflict situations to mitigate and eradicate conflicts. However, there are critics (Loyn, 2003, 2007; Hanitzsch, 2004, 2007) who posit that media intervention is not objective journalism because journalists are not meant to be interveners but simply report the news as they see it.

Millions of people have died as a result of internal conflicts—fights between factions inside a nation along racial, religious, and/or ideological lines—just in the last three decades (Allansson et al., 2017). Owing to the high recidivism rates associated with these conflicts, they tend to last longer (Allansson et al., 2017). Thus, according to Bruneau et al. (2022), a crucial social problem is comprehending how to support exits from internal conflicts in a way that prevents conflict from returning. How can we promote peace while long-term hostilities persist? Diplomatic action by political leaders is one possible way to resolve internal strife. Even if political figures mediate a peace agreement, it can be challenging to establish and uphold peace without the public's backing.

While direct person-to-person contact is a major component of many debiasing

and conflict resolution initiatives (Bruneau et al., 2022; Mousa, 2020; Paluck et al., 2019; Paolini et al., 2018), it can be logistically challenging for conflicting groups to accomplish these interactions, and they are frequently restricted to individuals who are already sufficiently motivated to meet “the enemy” in person (Bruneau et al., 2022). Technology offers substitutes for interpersonal communication ((Ukhurebor et al., 2023; Hussaini et al., 2023; Asanga et al., 2023). Technology has been utilized, for instance, to enable computer-mediated or virtual contact among members of the rival group (Bruneau et al., 2022; Bruneau et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2021) and to offer “parasocial” or vicarious contact (Bruneau et al., 2022); the latter involves exposing people to live or recorded audio or video media that contains information about the outgroup and its viewpoints (also known as a “media intervention”).

Media interventions are especially well-suited for war or post-conflict environments because of a number of their characteristics. They can reach beyond the group of individuals who have the drive and resources to meet “the enemy” (Bruneau et al., 2022; Murrar and Brauer, 2019). Additionally, individuals can interact with media interventions in relaxed environments (like their homes), avoiding the anxiety that accompanies (and possibly thwarts) in-person interactions (Bruneau et al., 2022). Additionally, media interventions can be tailored to specifically target psychological processes. For instance, it has been demonstrated that reading or listening to stories about the struggles faced by people who are elderly, disabled, homeless, or in some other way marginalized increases affective empathy for the target and positive affect for the group that the target people belong to (Bruneau et al., 2022).

Beyond emotion, media interventions can also target other psychological processes. For instance, in Rwanda, a radio soap opera portraying imaginary tribes participating in peaceful activities changed societal norms regarding deference to authority, which is believed to have played a role in the genocide there (Bruneau et al., 2022). Targeting certain views about the ingroup, the outgroup, or the conflict is another purpose for media interventions. Videos, for instance, have been used in previous research to successfully refute claims that Muslims as a whole bear responsibility for the acts of individual extremists (Bruneau et al., 2019), that Palestinians are innately violent (Bruneau et al., 2017), and that the Israeli ingroup is especially morally superior to its adversaries in Palestine (Hameiri et al., 2016). It has also been demonstrated that radio programs in the Great Lakes region of Africa lower psychological obstacles to conflict resolution, such as the propensity to compete over victimization claims (Bruneau et al., 2022; Bilali et al., 2016). All things considered, the research to date indicates that media interventions can effectively target a variety of psychological processes, ranging from modifying certain conflict-related norms, attitudes, and mindsets to raising favourable attitudes toward an outgroup (Bruneau et al., 2022).

While politicians negotiate peace agreements, it is up to the people to support and maintain peace. People may find it difficult to support making amends and reintegrating with old foes due to the legacy of past fights (Bruneau et al., 2022). Evidently, there are certain conflicts as well as the dilemma of media intervention from an educational information management perspective. Hence, in this article, the concept of conflict, phases of conflict development, intervention in conflicts, and the contentious role of the media in conflicts will be espoused from an educational

information management perspective. Consequently, this paper will contribute to the role of educational information management via social media and other new media platforms, which have occasionally been used to hold governments responsible, unite people in protest of violence, plan relief operations, empower people, dissipate tensions via knowledge sharing, and create understanding across boundaries.

2. Description of conflict

Conflict has been understood from different perspectives. Conflicts exist when two or more parties do not have an accord and try to pursue incompatible goals (Folarin, 2013). In other words, conflicts for Folarin (2013) and Diez et al. (2006) depict the idea of two or more parties who are on a collision course because they have opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, goals, stands, or positions. Conflicts can also be understood as an existing state of disagreement or hostility between two or more people (Nicholson, 1992; Varghese, 2010). Conflicts can be subtle, but they can also become violent. In this context, conflicts exist when two or more groups engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power, and resources in which the opponents aim to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals (Jeong, 2000). **Figure 1** shows deaths from conflicts around the world (Middle East, America, Africa, Europe, Asia and Oceania) as of 2016, as adopted from UCDP/PRIO (2016).

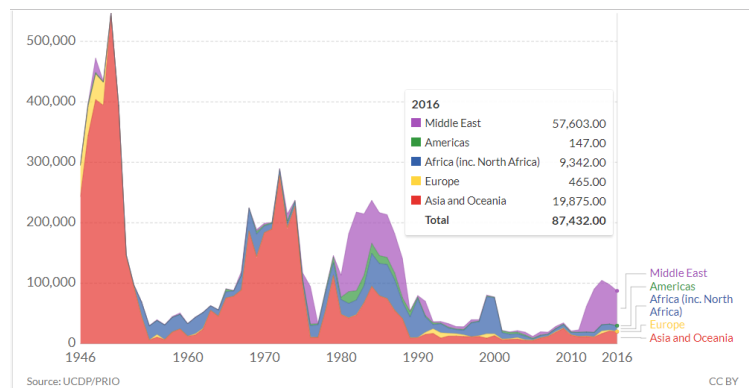


Figure 1. Deaths from conflicts around the world as of 2016.

Conflicts can result from social, religious, economic, environmental, and political causes. However, conflicts are primarily caused by incompatible goals driven by greed, covetousness, self-centeredness, discontent, envy, arrogance, rudeness, impunity, jealousies, personality clashes, role definitions, and power and favour struggles (Hocker and Wilmot, 1985; Coser, 1956; Folarin, 2013; Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

Conflict is not always characterized by violence but can escalate and become violent if not checked. In this sense, conflicts lead to destructive consequences, particularly when physical violence is employed, which in war situations can even be accepted as legitimate. However, conflicts can also be positive and productive if the parties involved can deal with their incompatibilities meaningfully and amicably, and thus a new social or political organization can be birthed or achieved (Pia and Diez, 2007). Conflict is also present in situations of peace, which can be described as the phases of non-violent conflicts. In this case, conflict can be (a) confined to isolated

instances and thus not take on societal significance, (b) clearly defined within observable societal rules, or (c) productive when it generates a new form of a socio-political organization through peaceful change (Pia and Diez, 2007).

2.1. Types of conflicts

There has been confusion amongst scholars of conflict as to the proper designation of conflict types. Some scholars have preferred to label the types of conflicts as “types” (Evans, 2013; Allwood, 2013; Folarin, 2013) to include intrapersonal (within an individual), interpersonal (between individuals), intragroup (within a group), intergroup (between groups), and intraorganizational (within organizations); others use the designation “levels of conflict” (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014; Rummel, 1976). However, the designation “levels of conflicts” creates even further misunderstanding because while Omisore and Abiodun (2014) conceptualize levels of conflicts similar to those who designate them as “types” (Evans, 2013; Allwood, 2013; Folarin, 2013), the ideas behind the level are explained by Rummel (1976) to include potentiality (the space of possible conflicts), dispositions (the activation of opposing tendencies), and manifestations (the manifestation of conflict). For the above reasons and to avoid such confusion, our preferred designation for this discussion will be types of conflicts.

The types of conflicts have been clearly outlined by Folarin (2013), Evans (2013), and Omisore and Abiodun (2014) to include: (i) intrapersonal (within an individual), (ii) interpersonal (between individuals), (iii) intragroup (within a group), (iv) intergroup (between groups), and (v) intra-organizational (within organizations).

2.1.1. Intra-personal conflict

Intrapersonal conflict is the conflict that occurs within an individual. It is a kind of implosion in an individual, shaped by the state of mind, in other words, “man against himself” (Lamb, 2008). Such a state involves some form of goal conflict. Goal conflict exists when the behaviour of individuals will result in outcomes that are mutually exclusive or have compatible elements that are largely determined by circumstances around them. For example, when an individual has to choose between two positives, e.g., a choice between two good jobs (positive-positive), when he needs to choose between two negatives, e.g., the risk of demotion at work or travelling to an area where he must see dead bodies, both of which he dislikes (negative-negative), or when an individual needs to choose between a positive and a negative, e.g., taking up a lucrative job in a bad location (positive-negative).

Intrapersonal conflict is psychological, involving an individual’s thoughts, values, principles, and emotions, and can lead to anger, depression, confusion, and frustration, which could again lead to aggression, erratic behaviour, addiction, and, in extreme cases, suicide (Ross, 1993).

2.1.2. Interpersonal conflict

This kind of conflict occurs between two individuals and is described as a “man against man” conflict (Folarin, 2013). Interpersonal conflict results when the varied personalities of two or more people clash, particularly as a result of incompatible choices and opinions. Such conflict can be subtle (Nikolajeva, 2005) in the sense that it is invisible to a third party but understood by the “conflicting” parties, which Folarin

(2013) has tagged “cold attitude” or “implicit hostility”. Interpersonal conflict can also become physical and violent, involving the exchange of blows and gunfights with the risk of minor to serious injuries and even death.

2.1.3. Intra-group conflict

This type of conflict occurs among individuals within a team or group, usually caused by incompatibilities and misunderstandings among members of such a group. Such conflicts could be a result of interpersonal disagreements (e.g., team members having different personalities) or differences in views and ideas (e.g., differences in opinions of members in the course of executing a common task). Conflicts within a group can be positive when they help the members eventually arrive at decisions that benefit the whole group, or they can be negative by making it practically impossible for the set goals of the group to be realized as a result of the irreconcilability of viewpoints and personalities.

2.1.4. Inter-group conflict

This is the conflict that arises due to disagreement or a feud between two or more communities, ethnic groups, interest groups, or religious groups. Generally, it has to do with conflicts that border on conflicts of interest within certain concerned parties or groups.

Intergroup conflicts are generated, promoted, and advanced based on ethnic, religious, and racial differences. Examples of intergroup conflicts are found around the world, from the genocide and mass killings in Darfur to the political and religious divisions in Northern Ireland to the heated tensions between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka to the intermittent outbreaks of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza (Tropp, 2012). In Nigeria, Folarin (1997) and Folarin (2013) have documented several outbursts of conflict between Christians and Moslems since the 1980s, which are classic examples of intergroup conflicts based on religion. These conflicts include: the Maitatsine riots in Kano; the Bulumkutu crisis in Maiduguri; the Sokoto University campus riots over the use of Othman Dan Fodio’s daughter’s name in a pageant; the Cross vs. Crescent crisis at the Ibadan University; and the Boko Haram Islamist terrorist onslaught against Christians and the Nigerian State since 2009 (Folarin, 1997; Folarin, 2013). Similarly, several ethnic-based conflicts in Nigeria are worthy of mention, namely: the Igbo-Hausa feud that culminated in the Nigerian Civil War of 1967; the Efik-Ibibio conflict; the Tiv-Jukun debacle; Fulani-Birom clashes; and the Itsekiri-Urhobo-Ijaw conflict in the Niger Delta. Intra-ethnic or inter-community conflicts would include Ife-Modakeke, Umuleri-Aguleri, Andoni-Ogoni, and Egba-Awori (Ota) clashes (Folarin, 1997; Folarin, 2013).

2.1.5. Intra-organizational conflict

Intra-organizational conflicts fall out of organizational design. An organizational design is the particular arrangement of people and tasks into subsystems, namely units, departments, and divisions, and their integration into the overall organizational goals of such an organization. Intra-organizational conflicts, therefore, are offshoots of an organizational design in which individuals and groups within the subsystem clash as a result of differing goals, norms, policies, and values. (Rahim, 1979).

Minakshi (2019) has identified three intra-organizational conflicts, namely:

vertical, horizontal, and line-staff.

Vertical intra-organizational conflict: These are conflicts that occur between superiors and their subordinates. It usually occurs with respect to tasks that should or should not be performed, for example, between the general manager and the head of the works department. Such conflicts could arise as a result of tasks, goals, deadlines, and reports.

Horizontal intra-organizational conflict: these kinds of conflicts occur between persons or groups that operate on the same hierarchical level, e.g., between managers in the same position with similar tasks. Conflicts of these kinds can arise from goal compatibility, scarcity of resources, or even interpersonal reasons.

Line-staff intra-organizational conflict: These are conflicts that arise as a result of disagreements between line and staff on issues bordering on organizational goals and their specific functions. This conflict can arise, for example, between the president of a country (line staff) and his national security adviser (or adviser on security matters) on whether to go ahead with war with another nation.

2.2. Sources of conflict

Many scholars, such as Rapoport (1960), Kihlman and Thomas (1977), and Friberg (1990), as cited by Allwood (2013), Fink (1968), and Mack and Snyder (1958), have classified the sources of conflicts. However, Katz (1965), as cited by Fisher (2000), has created a typology that distinguishes four main sources of conflict: economic, value, power, and ineffective communication.

- **Economic conflict:** This involves competing motives to attain scarce resources. It is such that each of the two parties strives to get the most that it can, and the behavior and emotions of each party are directed toward maximizing its gain. In an organization, conflicts between workers' unions and management are a result of incompatible goals about how to slice up the "economic pie".
- **Value conflict:** this involves incompatibility in ways of life and ideologies—the preferences, principles, and practices that people believe in. International conflict (e.g., the Cold War) often has a strong value component, wherein each side asserts the rightness and superiority of its way of life and its political-economic system.
- **Power conflict:** This occurs when each party wishes to maintain or maximize the amount of influence that it exerts in the relationship and the social setting. One party can't be stronger without the other being weaker, at least in terms of direct influence over each other. Thus, in a power struggle, victory or defeat is usually the end goal. Power conflicts can occur between individuals, between groups, or between nations whenever one or both parties choose to take a powerful approach to the relationship. In general, power conflict is present in all conflicts since the parties are attempting to control each other. There is generally no clear-cut line between the different sources of conflicts, as some conflicts may reveal elements of the presence of one or more sources of conflict. For example, union-management conflict typically involves economic competition but may also take the form of a power struggle and often involves different ideologies or political values. The more sources that are involved, the more intense and intractable the

conflict usually is.

- **Ineffective communication:** Miscommunication and misunderstanding can create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. In addition, parties may have different perceptions as to what the facts of a situation are, and until they share information and clarify their perceptions, a resolution is impossible. Self-centeredness, selective perception, emotional bias, prejudices, etc., are all forces that lead to parties perceiving situations very differently, and such a lack of skill and clarity in communicating clearly and respectfully often results in confusion, hurt, and anger, all of which simply feed the conflict process. It is possible that the conflict has an objective source or is due only to perceptual or communication problems, but it is nonetheless perceived as very real by the parties involved and thus an active source of conflict.

3. Conceptual framework

3.1. Conflict theory

Most modern theories of conflict can be traced back to Max Weber, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, and Adam Smith (Varghese, 2010). This has, therefore, led to different theoretical approaches to understanding conflict. While psychologists have dwelt more on intrapersonal conflicts, social scientists have focused more on inter-personal and inter-group conflicts, economists have concentrated attention on economic competitions, labour negotiations, and trade disputes, and political scientists have specialized in political and international issues.

However, Wright Mills has been called the founder of modern conflict theory (Knapp, 1994; Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). For Mills, social structures are created through conflict between people with differing interests and resources, which, coupled with the unequal distribution of power and resources in society, influences individuals and society (Knapp, 1994). Mills, according to Knapp (1994) cited by Omisore and Abiodun (2014), posits that the interests and policies of elites are opposed to those of the people, symbolised in the inequality that pervades most societies and produces conflict rather than order and consensus (Sears, 2008). Such policies of the power elites would result in “an increased escalation of conflicts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and possibly the annihilation of the human race” (Knapp, 1994).

3.2. Intervention in conflicts

Intervening in or resolving conflicts can happen in various ways. Conflicts can, for example, be prevented, pursued, restricted, avoided, managed, or resolved. Ultimately, the goal of all intervention in conflicts is to prevent the existence of conflicts that generate differences and move towards non-conflict situations (Allwood, 2013; Aidonjije and Egielewa, 2019).

3.3. Types of conflict handling

As conflicts vary in type, so will the degree and intensity of the interventions. Indeed, the intervention itself has the potential of becoming a source and means of the conflict itself if it is not properly handled (Allwood, 1976; Allwood, 2013; Odiwo and

Egielewa, 2020). The five conflict interventions by Allwood (1976), Allwood (1993), and Allwood (2013) would be considered here, which Allwood (2013) labels “conflict handling”.

Prevention of conflict: Conflict prevention is the action taken before a conflict develops. It means preventing conflict-generating features from occurring, and this is done by creating and promoting similarities between possible conflict parties. By so doing, the risk of conflicts is removed, and conflicts don’t happen anymore.

Avoidance of conflict: Avoidance of conflict takes place in situations in which conflict parties are braced for a conflict due to the presence of conflict-generating features but which do not happen because the parties agree to prevent it. Conflict avoidance can arise when conflicting parties “agree to disagree” to prevent the continuation of conflict after it has occurred.

Compromise: Compromise is a symmetrically regulated type of conflict intervention in which all potential conflict parties take positions to withdraw from their previously held claims and demands in order to reach mutual compatibility between the claims of all parties concerned. By so doing, the conflict ceases.

Dominance and submission: Dominance and submission occur when conflict is terminated by one of the conflicting parties who believes he is winning and coerces the other “losing” party into submission. This is the case with most wars.

Conflict resolution: A resolution of conflicts takes place if the causes of the conflicts are removed. It combines both the actual cessation of conflict action by concerned parties and the parties’ conviction that no further basis or grounds for conflict exist.

These conflict intervention types are not mutually exclusive, and in many situations, there can be interventions in a conflict situation by combining one or more of the conflict interventions types to resolve conflicts.

4. Media role in conflicts

Many scholars agree that the media play some role in conflicts, but that role is highly contentious. Puddephatt (2006) has distinguished two opposing forms in which the media play their role in the conflict (Nwankwo and Ukhurebor, 2020). Their role is: (1) either the media takes an active part in the conflict with the potentiality of either de-escalating or escalating the conflicts. (2) The media stay independent and out of the conflict, with the possibility of contributing to the resolution of conflict and prevention of violence as media corporate social responsibility (Ngonso and Nworise, 2021; Ngonso, 2021).

How the media intervenes in a conflict depends on some factors, which include the relationship the media have with parties or actors in the conflict and the independence the media have with the power holders in society. However, one basic assumption, according to Puddephatt (2006), is that a strong independent media contributes to the retention or creation of peace and stability in conflict-affected and threatened areas.

Since the genocide in Rwanda and the wars in the Balkans that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia, the role of the media has come under strict scrutiny because, in both conflicts mentioned above, the media played pernicious roles. In the case of Rwanda,

Radio Mille Collines was used to directly incite the genocide, and in the Balkans, the media was used as a vehicle for virulent nationalism in the former Yugoslavia.

Besides, both the Nazis and the Soviet Union used the media in Germany and the Soviet Union, respectively, to create a hegemonic climate that perpetuates the leaders' control over power.

In an attempt to understand the role of the media, scholars have tried to trace the factors that lead to the outbreak of violence in internal conflicts. Many, however, agree that wars between nations are generally caused by the contest for natural resources and a means of resolving disputes over territorial boundaries, etc.

Puddephatt (2006) agrees that the label of significance placed on certain conflicts by the world's powerful nations influences how such conflicts are covered by the media too. Conversely, the emphasis the media places on a conflict can also influence the response of the international community to such conflicts. What is obvious is that in the coverage of a conflict by the media, attention is given to the interests of their respective domestic audiences. In the case of the powerful international media, such audiences would be those of North America and Europe. This is the reason, therefore, why some conflicts (e.g., civil wars in Congo and Angola, internal conflicts in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia, as well as the terrorist crisis in Nigeria, Mali, Kenya, etc.) receive internal attention and others do not (Egielewa and Adejumo, 2021). For example, many of the conflicts in Africa receive little or no attention from the powerful international media. Indeed, there appears to be an economic aspect to certain wars that Kaldor (2012) calls the "institutionalized war economies," in which wars have become self-sustaining with vested interests even at the level of state governments interested in continuing conflicts (Kaldor, 2012; Puddephatt, 2006). Such vested interests' top priority is exercising control over local media.

4.1. Media and the international community

At the international level, the media's role in conflicts is under scrutiny. Puddephatt (2006) explains the situation of how the Kurdish rebellion under Saddam Hussein gained little international attention until the media, encouraged by NGOs and civil societies, started covering the dire refugee situation of the Kurds at the Turkish border, which then drew a response and intervention of initially unwilling and reluctant western powers, particularly the United States, Britain, and France, to intervene, first by declaring a no-fly zone and carving out a semi-autonomous Kurdish community in Northern Iraq that still endures to date.

Similarly, during the Bosnian War, many journalists found their traditional "objectivity" tested to the limit because of the atrocities they were witnessing and felt it would be irresponsible of them not to use the influence of the media at their disposal to secure a particular outcome for the war. Christiane Amanpour, reporting for CNN on the Bosnian conflict, said that the Bosnian war was "the war of our generation; this was our Vietnam".

The instances above have the consequence of making the international media actors in the respective conflicts. Nonetheless, international media can also complicate or even hinder efforts to resolve conflicts, as their actions can engender resentment among local people and even lead to an escalation of the conflicts, given that they have

a pro-Western agenda, which many non-Western countries are wary of. This is otherwise known as the agenda-setting role of the media (Ekhareafu and Ngonso, 2013).

4.2. Media and the local community

The local media's role in conflict cannot be overemphasized. Local media, because of their unique position of advantage as the closest media to the people and happenings at the local level, cover and shape developments of conflicts at the local level. As a matter of fact, many indigenes depend on the local media for news information, possibly because of the use of local languages and coverage of issues bothering their local environment (Ngonso and Chukwu, 2021).

In the former Yugoslavia, for example, local media aided and abetted the destruction of Yugoslavia; they supported the rise to power of extreme nationalism and the forging of a conflict between groups of people who had lived together peacefully all their lives (Puddephatt, 2006; Thompson, 1999). It demonstrated how media aided by fear changed public opinion, set the stage for the war, and led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. All the actors in the war were desperate to use the media to their advantage, and the local media provided them with that platform. The international media played into their hands by covering the war from the human angle (the effects on innocent women and children), which is exactly what the gladiators of the war wanted the world to see: publication of their maximum strength.

In the Middle East, precisely on 13 May 2004, Nadia Matar, a radio commentator at Settler radio Arutz-7, called for large-scale military action against "the Arab Nazi murderers" following the deaths of Israeli soldiers and settlers in the Gaza Strip, stating thus: "We should have erased the whole Arab village from which the Nazi murderers who carried out this massacre had come".

Similarly, a claim by Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Abdallah Bin-Abd-al-Aziz, that "Zionists" were to blame for an attack on the offices of a petrochemical company in the Red Sea port of Yanbu, which killed six Westerners and a Saudi citizen, was reported in the official Saudi news agency SPA, thus: "Crown prince says Zionism is behind terrorist actions in the kingdom" further demonstrated how powerful the media can be in influencing public opinion for a cause.

4.3. The role of the media in conflict resolution

Some scholars (Schoemaker and Stremlau, 2014) have argued that there is not sufficient empirical evidence to confirm or reject claims that media promotes or prevents conflict. Such scholars believe that the media have had positive impacts on democracy, governance, and accountability. However, other scholars (Deane, 2013; Puddephatt, 2006) opine that just as the same media are seen as powerful in promoting conflicts, scholars have been concerned as to how the media can also play a reconciliatory role in mediating and resolving conflicts. The difficult question revolves around the question of whether journalists should stay detached during conflict or whether they should take a position and be identified with a cause, particularly if it may lead to peace.

The danger with such a position is the possibility for the journalist to take sides

in a conflict, and this has consequences for the professional ethics of journalism (Egielewa, 2022a): professional independence becomes impossible to maintain, access to the other party to the conflict becomes increasingly difficult and diminishes, and the exposure of journalists to becoming active targets by the opposing parties when they perceive that the journalist's supposed involvement promotes the cause of their opponent or rival (Puddephatt, 2006; Egielewa, 2022b)

Puddephatt (2006) is of the view that since journalists report on conflicting parties, they input their views and interests, which thus makes him an “actor”. Such a position can be seen more conspicuously in editorials or when the report focuses on certain areas of the conflicts, e.g., on the effect of war on the families of the killed victims. Puddephatt (2006) believes that it will be misleading to think that journalists “sit outside of the events they are covering” and that the media during conflicts are “actors” or “agents” in the conflicts, and how they carry out these tasks can affect the way the conflicts develop. In a nutshell,

“...the media constitute a space in which the conflicts of a society can be articulated and are inevitably actors in that conflict. Moreover, the combatants in a conflict will usually relate to each other either on the battlefield or through the way they are represented in the media—and the latter, as is evident in many recent conflicts, may often be more important to them than the battlefield. To use sociological terms, the media have both structure and agency. The idea, therefore, that they can be simple instruments of any point of view—state or non-state—is profoundly misleading, and policy towards the media in conflict has to take into account the sense in which they play both interwoven roles.”

4.4. How objective can objectivity be in the media

Generally, journalists started to use the word “objective” to describe their work only after the 1920s (Streckfuss, 1990) to mean a rigorous reporting procedure that grows out of the broader cultural movement of scientific naturalism. Then, the term was less understood as a vehicle for neutrality and more seen as an antidote to the emotionalism and jingoism of the conservative American press. Today, the term is used interchangeably with neutrality. However, the word “objectivity” means more than mere neutrality. Originally, “objectivity was used to mean “unbiased” and “uncolored” (Streckfuss, 1990). In modern times, there have been several attempts to explain “objectivity”, many of which have departed from the original ideas (Streckfuss, 1990; McMaken, 2019; Egielewa, 2022b).

Walter Lipmann is the pioneer of the idea of journalistic objectivity in his 1922 book titled “Public opinion”. To justify the idea of journalistic objectivity as a need required by the nature of citizenship, Lipmann (as cited in McMaken (2019)) said:

“...the general population had neither the time, the ability, nor the inclination to inform itself on important questions. Society was too complex, the power of stereotypes was too great, and man's immediate environment was too dominant. The remedy had to be a board of experts who could distil the evidence and offer the residue facts.”

Westerstahl (1983) had therefore defined objectivity as “adherence to certain norms or standards,” which he elaborated on in **Figure 2**.

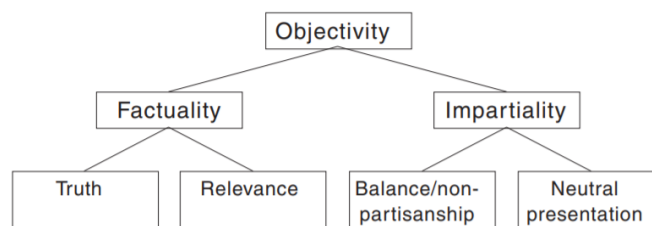


Figure 2. Westerstahl’s objectivity concept. (Reproduced from Wien, 2018).

What the diagram (**Figure 2**) illustrates is that for any journalistic write-up to be labelled “objective,” it must go through four steps or stages, namely: (i) it must contain true assertions; (ii) it must not be misleading; (iii) it must contain essential assertions; and (iv) it must be thorough. The difficult challenge in Westerstahl’s schema is: who determines whether the assertions are true, whether the journalistic product is misleading and contains essential assertions, and whether it is thorough? This definition also points back towards a positivist mindset, where a journalistic product must be judged non-objective if even a single one of the above-mentioned criteria is not fulfilled. Journalists try to be objective, and when that seems impossible, they try to be fair and balanced, but most journalists and editors opine that objectivity is impossible and try to settle instead for “fairness,” which some scholars believe is now synonymous with objectivity (Wien, 2018). In defence of journalistic objectivity, it is argued that journalists merely communicate information, making it digestible for the common man, and telling the readers, listeners, and viewers all the most important information about a topic (McMaken, 2019).

Many scholars (McMaken, 2019; Taibbi, 2015; Harwood, 1992) have argued that journalistic objectivity is either impossible or it is simply an illusion. They argue that through the process of framing and agenda-setting, objectivity is not possible because those two approaches mean that reality is manipulated from the journalist’s point of view and understanding, and thus conclude that “objectivity has never existed.” McMaken (2019) even goes to the extent of calling journalistic objectivity a myth, using the “increasing attack (and) mass media’s continued hostility to the Trump administration”.

Lippmann argued that since the real effects of most laws are subtle and hidden, they cannot be understood without controlled reporting and objective analysis. This “objective analysis”, in Lippmann’s view, lies in making journalism more scientific and in making facts “fixed, objectified, measured, and named” (McMaken, 2019).

Thus, in discussions on media intervention in the crisis and even on the wider issue of whether journalists can be objective in the sense of whether or not journalists can take sides in a crisis, both proponents and opponents have once again met on a new battleground, a new sub-field within journalism called peace journalism. Does peace journalism justify media intervention? What argument does peace journalism put forward to justify the legitimacy or otherwise of journalists actively intervening (and in what forms) in crises?

4.5. Does peace journalism justify media intervention in conflicts

The concept of “peace journalism” was developed by Galtung and Ruge (1965) to justify how the media can indeed intervene in conflicts to bring about peaceful

resolution, but from its inception, the idea has been a source of concern for many journalists for the major reason that the idea of “peace journalism” seeks to “compel” journalists not only to cover stories but also to be part of the stories (Puddephatt, 2006; Egielewa, 2019). They also worry that, since society needs information and the exchange of ideas and opinions in the public sphere, the media must be free to carry out that task without coercion to fulfill that obligation. In other words, many scholars have either supported the idea (Lynch, 2007; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005; Egielewa, 2019) or have been very critical of the idea (Loyn, 2003 and 2007; Hanitzsch, 2004, 2007).

Peace journalism has been defined as a normative theory that claims that the media ought to play a positive role in promoting peace (Irvan, 2006). Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), who have researched extensively on peace journalism, define it thus: “When editors and reporters make choices—of what stories to report and about how to report them—that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict”. Peace journalists argue that if contemporary media tend to play a negative role in terms of increasing the tensions between and among the sides of a conflict, they can also play a positive role by promoting peace and reconciliation.

According to media organizations, “The very practice of good professional journalism is itself a form of conflict resolution or close to conflict resolution. “Johannes Botes, cited by Puddephatt (2006), a journalist and conflict resolution trainer, in trying to establish the similarities between the work of journalists and conflict resolution experts, identified the following:

- Both give combatants a voice;
- Both approach a conflict with an open mind and the ability to summarize vague aspirations in more concrete terms;
- Both spend time analysing the conflict and try to understand motives and possible outcomes;
- Both try and give objective views of the causes of the conflict.

In a period of conflict, there is the danger of information being hoarded by the main conflict actors. International and local media scramble to find information and share it, which can be herculean at times. Due to such an information vacuum, the mills of rumour and propaganda come into full force and worsen the already bad situation. In such a vacuum, conflict actors try to use the information to the detriment of their opponents.

Peace journalism has, therefore, generated confusion between those who say peace journalists can intervene in a conflict and those who say intervention is an imposition of “foreign” roles on journalists. Those who argue for peace journalists’ right to intervene posit that good journalism must ultimately lead to and at least aid peaceful resolution of conflicts. On the other hand, opponents opine that it is not the role of journalists to intervene in conflicts and that their duty ends by simply informing the people how a crisis occurred and has progressed. How then should the media play its role in such a way as to promote peace without at the same time falling into the danger of taking on “foreign roles”? Betz (2017) provides an answer by listing the various roles and explanations of media intervention in the crisis (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. The various roles and explanations of media intervention in the crisis.

S/No	Role	Explanation
1	Brings together different groups to discuss issues	The media can be an effective tool to build relationships. It can support greater understanding and cohesion between people who consider themselves different from one another. It can give voice to the most marginalized in society. It can serve as a mediator between political parties, especially in situations where there are no other means of communication, particularly during conflict and post-conflict reconciliation.
2	Helps improve governance	Fact-based, independent, transparent, accountable and impartial reporting can serve to hold officials accountable and make public administrations more transparent. It enables citizens to be active stakeholders, understand policies and use the impartial information provided to exercise their human rights. All of these are critical for conflict prevention.
3	Increases knowledge of complex issues	These include issues such as corruption, political injustice, marginalization, lack of economic opportunity and struggles with an identity that may drive violent extremism. It can help people critically think about and discuss these issues.
4	Provides early warning	Media can provide early warning of potential conflicts and possibly create pressure to address the conflict.
5	Media can allow people to express their fears and frustrations and share experiences and advice with others. It can also link people with power holders, enabling open communication and dialogue.	#BringBackOurGirls mobilized emotional responses to the kidnapping of nearly 300 girls in Nigeria by a militant Islamist movement, Boko Haram. Celebrities, politicians, and citizens were brought together by their online demands for the girls to be returned while airing their dismay at the radical group's actions.
6	The media can motivate people to take action and participate in community events. But the media's impact on behaviour change is complex. It is more likely to work on attitudes and opinions that shape behaviours rather than directly affecting people's actions.	Through social media monitoring technology, developed by iHub in 2013, the Kenyan government was able to foster civic participation, transparency and accountability during the elections. Non-governmental initiatives bolstered the reporting process, while citizens were involved in proactively disseminating information and messages of peace using SMS, Twitter and the internet. In Nigeria, one media support project involved both traditional and social media to influence public awareness and educated voters encouraged participation in the electoral process and served as an advocate for peaceful acceptance of the results. On the eve of the 2015 presidential elections, in an unprecedented Media Peace Day, every radio station in the country contributed air time for peace messaging.

5. Conclusion

Those in charge of educational information management and journalists are humans with emotions. When they cover conflicts, they do so as humans. They sometimes try to work to end a conflict, as normal humans would naturally want to do. The ethics of their profession say they must be “objective”, detached from the stories they cover. However, many scholars have punctured the position that journalists can be “objective,” claiming that “objectivity” is an illusion. In recent years, peace journalism has come to further promote the need for journalists to intervene for the sake of peaceful resolution of conflicts. While this position is highly controversial, these authors align with the proponents of peace journalism, who believe that journalists can be good journalists by reporting stories in a fair and balanced manner at all times, but when the situation calls for it, they should intervene to promote peace because, in the end, even the journalist needs peace to function effectively. Hence, this paper will contribute to the role of educational information management via social media and other new media platforms, which have occasionally been used to hold governments responsible, unite people in protest of violence, plan relief operations, empower people, dissipate tensions via knowledge sharing, and create understanding across boundaries.

In conclusion, by utilizing methodological approaches from the fields of psychology and communications and utilizing the partnership between scientists and filmmakers, we created a media intervention and proved its efficacy in fostering peace following years of violent conflict for proper educational information management.

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