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The uncertain application of peace journalism: The case of the Turkish Cypriot press

Kurzfassung: Anhand der türkisch-zypriotischen Presse untersucht dieser Aufsatz die Anwendbarkeit der philosophischen und praktischen Konzepte des Friedensjournalismus in journalistischen Kulturen, die vom Mainstream des westlichen Journalismus abweichen. Die Untersuchung des türkisch-zypriotischen Journalismus wirft ein Licht auf einige abweichende Wesenszüge, welche der Friedensjournalismus sorgfältiger in Rechnung stellen muss, wenn sein Paradigma eine effektive Reform journalistischer Praktiken in diesem und ähnlichen Kontexten leisten soll. Mit Fokus auf den andauernden Friedensverhandlungen, die auf eine Wiedervereinigung der Insel als Föderation zweier Zonen und Gesellschaften abzielen, zeigt die Studie einige Hindernisse auf, die der Implementierung des Friedensjournalismus als Mittel zur Verbesserung der Qualität der Berichterstattung und der Rolle der Presse bei der Förderung von Wiederannäherung und gegenseitigem Verständnis der zypriotischen Gesellschaften entgegenstehen.

Abstract: Using the press in North Cyprus as a focal case, this research explores the application of peace journalism's philosophical and practical formulations in journalistic cultures that diverge from Western mainstream journalism. Turkish Cypriot journalism highlights those divergent traits that peace journalism needs to consider more carefully if the paradigm is to offer effective reform of journalism practices in this and similar contexts. Focusing on the on-going peace negotiations aimed at reuniting the island as a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, this study suggests several obstacles to the implementation of peace journalism as a means to enhance the quality of news coverage and the role of the press in promoting rapprochement and mutual understanding between the communities of Cyprus.

1 Introduction

Interethnic conflict between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities, followed by the division of Cyprus in 1974, continues to affect the communication and potential for reconciliation between the two. The border that divides the island is, as Anastasiou puts it, 'not so much in itself an obstacle to communication as it is a symbol of a communication problem that goes far deeper than the physical barriers' (Anastasiou, 2002:581). Recent research shows that, despite decades without violent conflict between them, the two communities continue to mistrust each other and to lack confidence in the on-going peace process (Kaymak, Lordos and Tocci, 2008; Lordos; Kaymak and Tocci, 2009; Sözen, Christou, Lordos and Kaymak, 2010). The media have played a central role in the formation and maintenance of this stasis by acting as vehicles for the dissemination and amplification of nationalist narratives, thus becoming modes of nationalist identity formation in each community. Thus, while formal political peace negotiations continue without noteworthy progress, pro-peace groups have begun to explore the news media as a mechanism for promoting peace and increasing mutual understanding between the bifurcated communities of Cyprus.

Peace journalism, a form of journalism that aims to contribute to peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts (Hackett and Schroeder, 2009; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005), may provide useful insights and context for such an exploration. But, given its grounding in a liberal, pluralistic model of journalism, its reform prescriptions may not apply effectively to news media within social, cultural, and economic milieus that diverge from the normative assumptions of Western democratic societies. This research, using journalism in North Cyprus as a case study, questions the utility of peace journalism's formulations in journalistic cultures that differ from the Western mainstream. Studying a leading newspaper's coverage of the most recent settlement negotiations between the north (Turkish) and the south (Greek) sides of Cyprus between 2008 and 2010, it explores the challenges to implementing peace journalism within the Turkish Cypriot news media.

2 The North Cyprus context

The Cyprus problem

The root of the Cyprus problem is the development of conflicting nationalisms (Bryant, 2004; Kızılyürek, 2002; 2003). The identities of the two major communities on the island were constructed around ethno-nationalisms derived from the so-called motherlands of Greece and Turkey, precluding the creation of a single, common Cypriot identity. The two communities saw themselves as part of their 'mother' nations and sought unification with them (Kızılyürek, 2002; Papadakis, 1998; Ross and Alankus, 2010). Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) in 1960 as an independent state, with Greece, Turkey, and Britain as its guarantors, did not halt the nationalist ambitions of the two communities, and inter-communal violence erupted. Turkey's military intervention in the name of protecting the rights of Turkish Cypriots in 1974 divided the island into northern and southern parts in which Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, respectively, live separately until today.

While Greek Cypriots retained the administrative structure of the ROC, Turkish Cypriots established their own state, the

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983. Although the TRNC claims to be an independent, legal state, it is unrecognized by the international community, which views its territory as part of the ROC that is illegally occupied by Turkey. Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, having withdrawn in 1963 from all structures of the ROC, claim that the ROC represents only the Greek Cypriot community, illegally disenfranchising Turkish Cypriots.

Seeking resolution

The search for a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem is as old as the division itself. The latest international iteration, in November 2002, came in the form of a UN settlement plan, also called the Annan plan, which sought to reunite the island as a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation. Greek Cypriots rejected the plan in a public referendum in April 2004, resulting in its failure. The ROC entered the European Union in 2004 as the legal representative of the whole island, but North Cyprus is excluded from EU regulations and benefits until a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem is found. Meanwhile, in April 2003, the Turkish Cypriot side relaxed border-crossing policies, allowing Cypriots from either side to cross more freely to the 'other' side.

The peace process, which was halted after the referendum, resumed in 2008 between Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat and Greek Cypriot Demetris Christofias. Christofias and Talat, both moderates who campaigned on a stated commitment to reach a settlement on the island, again raised hopes for a solution. Peace negotiations are still underway in 2011 but involve the new, less moderate Turkish Cypriot president Derviş Eroğlu, who replaced Talat in April 2010.

Turkish Cypriot news media

Since the outbreak of inter-communal conflict roughly 50 years ago, the media in the north have been used by Turkish Cypriot authorities as their mouthpiece (Baillie and Berberoğlu, 1999; Dedeçay, 1989). Through the media, Turkish Cypriot authorities played on and played up a fear of Greek Cypriot domination of the island to convince their people that they faced a serious threat from the south. This ideological control mechanism (similar to the anticommunism filter expounded by Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model) helped the Turkish Cypriot leadership justify curtailment of individual and press freedoms to silence challenges or criticism directed at its policies (Kızılyürek, 2002).

The media were subject to overt and covert political pressures. Journalists who challenged or criticized state policies were publicly branded as traitors, threatened, jailed, or even killed.¹ These pressures produced media institutions that actively avoided criticizing authorities and became extremely dependent on those authorities as the primary and unquestioned source of publishable news (Azgin, 1998). Today, long after the end of violent conflict, journalistic practices remain largely unchanged.

3 Peace journalism

Peace journalism is a reform movement (Hackett and Schroeder, 2009) that aims to improve journalism by redefining its role in conflicts and developing a new approach that encompasses peaceful resolution within its sphere of conflict coverage (Shinar, 2007; Spencer, 2005). It questions existing attitudes and behaviors in media coverage of conflicts and highlights problems with journalism practices and representation of conflicts.

According to Galtung (2002), peace journalism encourages a journalism that is peace, truth, people, and solution oriented. According to his model, journalists should: give voice to all parties involved in a conflict, rather than portraying it as a tug of war between two polarized sides; broaden their sources to include people outside official and political elites; focus on the effects of violence, such as trauma, damage to structure, and culture, rather than just the number of dead or wounded; and expose untruths and cover-ups on all sides (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2007; Shinar, 2009). The argument is that such journalism would provide more balanced, fair, and accurate accounts of conflicts and offer a greater resource from which to build shared understandings and collaborative problem-solving.

Peace journalism is not free from criticism (Ross, 2006). Two types of criticisms are frequently expressed. One is related to peace journalism's approach to principles of news reporting, such as objectivity and neutrality, and argues that active promotion of peace leads to the abandonment of the founding principles of journalism (Lyon, 2007) and diverts political

1. For example, the murder of Kultu Adali, a Turkish Cypriot journalist, in 1996 was believed to be a response to a story he had been working on about Turkish military officers in North Cyprus. In another example, Şener Levent, the editor-in-chief, and Memduh Ener, a journalist, of *Afrika* newspaper, were sentenced to six months in prison in August 2002 for criticizing the president in an article titled, 'Who is the No. 1 traitor?' On appeal in October 2002, the court reduced their sentences to six weeks. In 2006, Serhat İncirli, another journalist, was sued by Turkey's General Attorney for criticising Turkey's position in Cyprus.

responsibility from policy makers to journalists (Hanitzsch 2004b). Second, peace journalism fails to take into consideration the structural constraints of journalism; it relies on the initiative of individual journalists without addressing the systemic influences of news production, media structures, capitalist incentives, and professional norms (Fawcett, 2002; Hanitzsch 2004a; Hanitzsch, 2004b; Hanitzsch, 2007).

In response, its proponents argue that peace journalism acknowledges its intentions to affect political outcomes but emphasizes moral concerns as well as journalistic responsibilities (Spencer, 2005). Advocates of peace journalism recognize a necessity for structural change and highlight the need to develop a comprehensive strategy based on news production dynamics as the basis for effective implementation of peace journalism (Blasi, 2004; Hackett, 2006).

4 This study

This research focuses on news coverage of the peace talks between the two community leaders, Talat and Christofias, in *Kıbrıs*. *Kıbrıs* is a popular, commercial, daily paper with the highest circulation¹ in the TRNC. It is a member of the largest media group in the North Cyprus, *Kıbrıs* Media Group; has published steadily since its founding in 1989; and is one of the few media organizations with a well-established newsroom with a team of journalists and editorial staff. It has a tabloid format and employs large headlines and dominant, colorful pictures.

This critical analysis of *Kıbrıs*'s news texts, informed by peace journalism precepts, seeks to uncover the norms and characteristics of journalism made explicit in news content in North Cyprus. This study therefore focuses on the inclusion (or omission) of specific individuals and categories of sources from news coverage and studies the representation of the 'other' and the peace process. Due to the inherent nature of a peace process, which is complex, lengthy, and with a need for diplomatic secrecy, journalism practices may diverge from normal routines. Moreover, peace processes offer a unique and highly significant opportunity for exploration of the potential benefits or deficiencies of peace journalism's recommendations.

The authors examined online issues of *Kıbrıs* between 9 September 2008 and 30 March 2010, the entire period during which Christofias and Talat engaged in publicly reported negotiations on the Cyprus problem. The meetings between the leaders ceased after 30 March 2010 when Derviş Eroğlu replaced Talat after the April 2010 presidential elections in North Cyprus. *Kıbrıs* published more than 1,000 articles that mentioned the peace negotiations during this period. A composite data sample was constructed by studying every sixth full week of *Kıbrıs* coverage. A total of 14 weeks of coverage generated a total of 211 news articles that appeared in the home news section as the basis of this study.² Therefore, only the Greek Cypriot stories on the negotiations that appeared in this section (not Greek Cypriot media stories in other sections of the paper) were included.³

5 Findings

Stenographers or journalists?

Kıbrıs reporters generally simply record and repeat verbatim the information they receive without much editing or further detail or information from additional sources. They rarely if ever engage in enterprise reporting or standard Western journalistic procedures of fact checking, investigation, and rewriting. This means important stories are missed, crucial information may be omitted, and errors of fact go unchallenged. For example, when Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister Ferdi Sabit Soyer issued a statement criticizing Christofias for remarks about Talat, the newspaper simply reproduced Soyer's statement. The paper quoted him, in a headline, as urging Christofias to 'Focus on the negotiation process rather than making improper remarks about Talat' (21 October, 2008). Yet, the story failed to include any information about precisely what Christofias had said, or when and where. This was not an isolated case; many news texts similarly reproduced officials' comments without providing the exact comments, the context, or the facts behind them. During the entire period analyzed,

1. In North Cyprus, circulation rates released by newspapers may not always correspond with the actual figures. Even the results of a recent independent survey on newspaper reading habits in North Cyprus were interpreted differently by the media, presenting the public with conflicting figures. Yet, in each version, *Kıbrıs* was reported to have the highest newspaper readership in the TRNC, with figures changing from 87.5 % to 92.1%. The paper that followed it had only 22.1% (or 18.1%) readership.
2. Coverage was examined for the following weeks:
8-14 September 2008 23 Feb-1 March 2009 10-16 August 2009 25-31 January 2010
20-26 October 2008 6-12 April 2009 21-27 September 2009 8-14 March 2010
1-7 December 2008 18-24 May 2009 2-8 November 2009
12-18 January 2009 29 June-5 July 2009 14-20 December 2009
3. Appearance of some Greek Cypriot stories within the home news section indicates the significant news value given to them as compared to the other Greek Cypriot news items.

Kıbrıs published no exclusive or investigative stories about the peace talks, and only nine stories, or less than 5 percent, carried a journalist's byline, which generally signals more reportorial enterprise.

Kıbrıs coverage routinely demonstrates overdependence on officials and other powerful elites as credible and authoritative sources. These sources not only shape and frame (Entman, 1993; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989) the news for Turkish Cypriot media but also supply the media's steady demand for information, effectively setting the media agenda (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Among the 211 discrete news stories sampled across the 18 months of active peace negotiations, more than half of them (110) relied upon Turkish Cypriot government authorities and political figures as their primary, and often only, source.¹ *Kıbrıs* obtained the information from press releases, press conferences, and public announcements, all of which are expressly designed to attract and shape media coverage. The reporting was limited to verbatim accounts of who said what. For example, when the Foreign Minister issued a press statement on the topics considered non-negotiable by Turkish Cypriots, the report simply reproduced the official announcement:

Foreign Minister Hüseyin Özgürkün, emphasizing that the Turkish Cypriot people will never give up Turkey's effective and active guarantee, said "Turkey's effective and active guarantee is the Turkish Cypriot people's red line and a vitally important issue which will definitely not be allowed to be negotiated."

In his written statement Minister Özgürkün responded to the claims in the Greek Cypriot press that Alexander Downer, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Cyprus, would bring up the issue of guarantees during his visit to Ankara and ask Turkey to make some concessions on this issue.

Özgürkün stated that although they knew that the overall agenda of Downer's visits to Ankara and Athens is the negotiation process, they did not know the details of his agenda. He also remarked that "it is useful for Downer and everyone else to know that the Turkish Cypriot people will not give up on Turkey's effective and active guarantee. We would like to stress once more that Turkey's effective and active guarantee is the Turkish Cypriot people's red line and a vital issue that will definitely not be allowed to be negotiated" (19 May, 2009).

Nearly 70 percent of *Kıbrıs's* stories concerning the peace negotiations during a year and a half of almost daily coverage reported from only one source and simply repeated that source's views. TRNC official sources accounted for 64 of the 146 single-source stories,² representing 30 percent of the newspaper's entire coverage of the talks. For example, reporting on the contentious negotiations on the property issue (related to payment for or reinstatement of formerly owned property), the newspaper included only statements by Talat, Christofias, and Turkish Cypriot Deputy Minister Turgay Avcı, which were published in separate news articles. Such reporting clearly aligns with the peace journalism critique that news media represent peace as a government process, untainted by the needs and interests of the people whose welfare is at issue. It also confirms media's myopic focus on the nationalist, 'home' perspective of conflicts and excludes other perspectives, falls far short of providing a wide range of contributors to the peace dialogue, skews public understanding of how peace can be achieved, and magnifies the power of government officials.

Such coverage also helped to discursively [re]produce separation between the 'sides' of the Cyprus problem. *Kıbrıs* coverage of the negotiations included comments and perspectives from 92 TRNC officials, as compared to 32 ROC officials, for a ratio of nearly three to one. The disproportionate reliance on TRNC sources solidifies 'our' perspective as the majority view, reinforces us/them representation of the negotiations, and offers little discursive common ground upon which the leaders could build a lasting peace.

Stories about the peace talks based entirely on a single TRNC official's comments blurred the distinction between news coverage and governmental public relations/propaganda. They empowered the authorities to portray the talks ideologically, present the demands of the TRNC as just and reasonable, and characterize the expectations of the ROC as manipulative and unreasonable. Such reports placed the blame for lack of substantive progress or for new disputes on the 'other' side. In one representative example, the paper reproduced a state news agency report³ in which Talat was quoted as overtly blaming his Greek Cypriot counterpart for lack of progress in the process:

We have set the middle of next year as a target and no objection came from the other side. However, now with this pace, this target is difficult to meet. In addition to starting without a basis, the meetings are held with many intervals. I said: "Let us leave all our affairs and give all our energy to continue negotiations. If needed, let us meet every day." Christofias objected to this and said: "I have other obligations." He is continuously holding visits abroad. It is difficult to achieve the target we have set with this speed (5 December, 2008).

Similarly, reporting on the presidential spokesperson's weekly press conference, *Kıbrıs* cited him as saying that 'Greek Cypriot spokespeople are telling certain things not in the exact way but by adding or decreasing them. Furthermore, they do not present this as a solution they desire but a solution that both sides have agreed' (22 October, 2008). The imprecision

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1. The total number of stories that used authorities and other political elite figures as sources is 176, or more than 83 percent. 38 of them included Greek Cypriot sources, 110 Turkish Cypriot, and 51 official sources from other countries such as the UK, Turkey, or international organizations such as the UN or the EU. Some of the stories included two or three of these sources.
 2. There were 146 single source stories of which 23 of them were Greek Cypriots, 26 were Turkish Cypriot sources other than officials and 33 of them were from other countries such as the UK, Turkey, or international organizations such as the UN or the EU.
 3. Lack of content editing is demonstrated by publication of the same item in multiple Cypriot newspapers.

of such accounts empowers readers to ascribe their own content to the Greek Cypriot message and to interpret the Greek comments as manipulative or dishonest. Such framing is constructed both in individual stories and in the composite coverage of *Kıbrıs*, wherein 44 articles (or fully one-fifth of the coverage) expressed criticism of the ROC position or the Greek Cypriot leader's conduct in the negotiations while only 18 reports (or 8 percent) criticized the Turkish Cypriot leader or the TRNC behavior.

When government officials themselves do not dominate news coverage, the official state news agency, *Türk Ajansı Kıbrıs* (Turkish Agency Cyprus or TAK) controls the flow and focus of information on the peace negotiations. TAK provides the bulk of news information about the island and also supplies state-sanctioned (i.e., non-problematic for the outlet) news and information to all North Cypriot media. While reliance on material supplied by news agencies is commonplace for media worldwide, *Kıbrıs* employs agency copy almost to the exclusion of other sources of news. During the period studied, 88 percent of news articles in *Kıbrıs* came from TAK and were printed with little editing, as is confirmed by the publication of identical stories in multiple North Cypriot newspapers (Şahin, 2010). For example, reporting on a meeting between the Turkish Cypriot President and the UN Secretary General's Special Adviser for Cyprus, Alexander Downer, *Kıbrıs* reprinted TAK's version: 'Downer, despite saying "as usual I have very few things to say" in an answer to Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot journalists' questions, gave one of his longest statements on these meetings' (*Kıbrıs*, 9 April, 2009 and TAK, 8 April, 2008 item 76). *Kıbrıs* also reported on a public opinion survey by repeating TAK's interpretation: 'According to a survey conducted in the TRNC and South Cyprus, both sides have a "strong desire for a solution" but "low expectations" of it' (*Kıbrıs*, 19 December, 2009 and TAK, 18 December, 2009, item 47)¹. The high percentage of news on the talks provided exclusively by TAK biases news coverage toward what one TAK reporter described as 'officially approved news' (Şahin, 2008). Accordingly, TAK-sourced stories might accurately be viewed as an extension of the previous category of TRNC official-sourced reports.

The coverage examined here provides further evidence of the North Cypriot news media's obsession with the concerns and articulations of elite and official sources whose perspectives and comments filled 92 percent of the stories. Out of the 211 news articles examined in this study, only 17 (of which two expressed public opinion and three represented Greek Cypriot views) reflected the voices and opinions of any other group, such as women's organizations, average citizens, trade unions, chambers of industry, or business owners. Only three stories included women's opinions in relation to the negotiations. These reports covered demonstrations organized by Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women's groups and the statements they issued in support of the peace process. Such extremely limited access to news columns may be an indication that women must form groups and stage events to attract media attention. The existence of such stories, however, makes clear that reporters do have access to and knowledge of alternative sources for news coverage. Even such limited coverage of the views of non-officials and 'outsiders' also provides the news media with a ready defense against claims that North Cypriot journalists fail to convey the full spectrum of voices and ideas about the peace talks to their readers. At the same time, however, the scarcity of these stories makes any alternative views they present easy to dismiss and undermines the power of these sources. As such, these exceptions to the nearly exclusive focus on official news – the rare and tiny life raft adrift in a sea of official-sanctioned news accounts – serve to reinforce the powerful control of the news by male government officials and political elites.

These findings make clear that *Kıbrıs* reported the peace process as occurring only in the political arena; discussions were not broadened to include other publics or parties whose concerns were deemed un-newsworthy and rendered invisible. Members of the public were reduced to mere spectators, not only by the political elite but by the news media that left them outside the forum for discussions of peace.

Who 's in control, journalists or sources?

The relationship between journalists and their sources plays a key role in shaping news content and its impact on public understanding of issues (Davis, 2009, Berkowitz, 2009). Whether journalist or source exerts the greater influence in shaping the news has been one of the main questions concerning the interaction between the two. Berkowitz (2009) makes the case that the relationship between the two represents more than just a daily battle to sway public opinion but, in the longer term, contributes to the shaping of dominant ideological positions and common sense understandings of individuals, institutions and occurrences. If alternative frames for an issue are rare or unobtainable, then the presented news frame becomes the hegemonic perspective for the understanding and construction of a particular social reality (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005). Therefore, whose reality is represented becomes an important issue.

The findings highlight that, in the case of *Kıbrıs*, official sources have control over the news production. They show how officials dominate the public sphere with their discourses and perspectives, influencing popular understanding of the issue. They also demonstrate that these sources have the power not only to determine what information is disseminated publicly

1. The *Kıbrıs* headline misrepresented the main finding of the survey, which was that the 'desire for solution is low'.

but also how this information is framed, leading to official control of information and the production of propaganda. Whether the source is a government official or the state press agency, TAK, the news is aligned with state ideology and almost entirely uncritical of state policies. Predictably, this creates a bias in favor of the authorities. As heavy reliance on the agency is not limited to *Kıbrıs* but applies to all the Turkish Cypriot news media, it also leads to centralization and homogenization of information. The overwhelming predominance in *Kıbrıs* of verbatim, official accounts of the peace talks raises serious questions about whether journalism in North Cyprus is merely an exercise in recording what officials say, without processing and contextualizing the information, and thereby justifying the pejorative label of 'stenographic journalism'. It also suggests that while peace journalism concepts offer fertile critical perspectives on North Cypriot journalism, they may prove ineffective in transforming or reforming a press that is private and independent largely only in name.

Double mediation

The Turkish Cypriot news media routinely print daily news summaries of extracts from the Greek Cypriot press.¹ Turkish Cypriots depend primarily on this information conveyed through the media to construct Greek Cypriot identity, ideologies, and policies (Howarth, 2006: 7). Among the Greek Cypriot news stories that were reported in *Kıbrıs*, 54 appeared within the home news section. Yet, only two of these involved news gathered by Turkish Cypriot journalists talking to Greek Cypriots. One of these exceptional stories involved a *Kıbrıs* report on an interview with a Greek Cypriot trade union representative by *Kıbrıs* TV, a station owned by the same company as *Kıbrıs* (10 September, 2008). The other was a report on Greek Cypriot leader Christofias' speech during an event in London (21 September, 2009). All other information concerning the views and actions of Greek Cypriots, a category that in *Kıbrıs* pages encompasses only Greek Cypriot officials and politicians, came from the Greek Cypriot media. Rather than initiate independent coverage, *Kıbrıs* engaged in a recurrent act of double mediation; the stories on Greek Cypriots were simply lifted and translated from the Greek Cypriot media. That is to say, any views or accounts given by Greek Cypriots were re-reported in the Turkish Cypriot media after they had been broadcast or printed by the Greek Cypriot media. For example, the reporting of press conferences held by Greek Cypriot leader Christofias following negotiations with his Turkish Cypriot counterpart consisted of a reproduction of news items by the Greek Cypriot public radio station, Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) (11 April, 2009 and 3 July, 2009). In these stories, the paper first gave Talat's statements at length and then presented Christofias', usually in a shorter form.

Stories from South Cyprus were usually political stories related to the Cyprus issue, peace process, and ROC-Turkey affairs. Some news items that appeared in the Greek Cypriot media concerning the Turkish Cypriot side were also included in the news from the Greek Cypriot side, but they were reported without context, investigation, or confirmation from the Turkish Cypriot authorities. Like the representation of Turkish Cypriot viewpoints, the representation of Greek Cypriot perspectives focused exclusively on male officials and elites. Ordinary Greek Cypriots were nearly invisible. There were only three examples of any Greek Cypriot group other than political elites receiving coverage in the Turkish Cypriot media. Two of them involved the joint Turkish Cypriot /Greek Cypriot women's peace activities (9 September 2008 and 20 October 2008), and the other was a story from a right wing Greek Cypriot daily reporting on a group calling on the Greek Cypriot leader to discontinue the talks (10 August, 2009). The republished Greek Cypriot news was selected, translated, and distributed by TAK, and thus may be viewed as part of TRNC management of the news. In fact, 89 percent of the *Kıbrıs* stories related to the Greek Cypriot side were channeled through the official news service, TAK.

Representation of the bilateral talks

Kıbrıs did not attach the term 'peace' to the ongoing process engaged in by TRNC and ROC officials. Rather, the talks were consistently, and ambiguously, called simply 'negotiations' (*müzakere*). Similarly, the stated aim of these negotiations was a 'solution' to the 'Cyprus problem' rather than peace or an end to the conflict. The phrase, 'comprehensive negotiations that started with the aim of finding a solution to the Cyprus problem' was repeated frequently in the reports on the leaders' meetings, but subsequent sentences failed to elaborate on the meaning of 'comprehensive,' 'solution,' or 'problem'.

One headline likened the process to bargaining, stating that 'haggling has started' (12 September, 2008). The verb haggle, which usually refers to extended bartering to obtain the lowest price for a desired purchase, conveyed a sense of obstinacy, frustration, and pettiness. The reports also presented the negotiations as a process by and between the 'leaders' of the ROC and the TRNC. A closer examination showed that 'our' leader was identified with the authoritative title of 'president', while 'theirs' was simply the 'leader of the administration'. The newspaper described 'our' side as a 'republic', that is a state that is elected by and responsive to its people. In contrast, 'theirs' was an 'administration', or a collection of managers that direct rather than respond to their people. This distinction in labels positions the leader of the TRNC as the elected head of a nation and demotes the leader of the ROC to the post of bureaucratic functionary; ironic given the respective positions of the TRNC and the ROC in the eyes of the international community. This discourse adopts the official TRNC perspective

1. The same practice does not exist in the Greek Cypriot press.

to frame the 'other side' not as the duly elected ROC government in the south but, instead, only as the Greek Cypriot management. This subtle linguistic turn speaks volumes to an audience primed to distinguish between the current Greek Cypriot administration and the 'real' ROC, which, in their view, would include Turkish Cypriot representation and empowerment.

News reports also explicitly described the Greek Cypriot 'other' as aggressive, unreasonable, untrustworthy, hostile, and disingenuous. One story on the ongoing process to reach a solution reported that the Greek Cypriot side did not want to achieve a united state (1 March 2009). Another described Christofias as 'attacking President Talat with aggressive words at every opportunity' (7 December, 2008). Headlines quoting official statements reinforced this message, sometimes extending the Greek Cypriot threat to the fundamental liberties of Turkish Cypriots. For example, one headline said: 'Turkish Cypriots' basic rights and interests are being attacked' (5 December, 2008), and another said 'They [Greek Cypriots] are presenting the solution *they* desire as the agreed solution' (22 October, 2008, emphasis added). The paper also portrayed 'us' positively and as the misunderstood victim with headlines like, 'We are the side seeking an agreement with good intention, the world should understand this' (23 May, 2009). This practice shifted blame for lack of progress in the negotiations onto Greek Cypriots. The demarcation of 'us' and 'them', with the latter repeatedly being negatively attributed, also occurred through the structure of stories, in the consistent oppositional positioning of speakers, and the specific use of labels to reinforce conflict rather than conciliation. In both subtle and overt ways, by repeating official discourses and through newspaper representations of events, *Kıbrıs*' reporting helped shape perceptions of Greek Cypriots as the threatening 'other' and their participation in the talks as less than wholehearted.

6 Peace journalism in North Cyprus

Despite sharing problems of the media worldwide, journalism in North Cyprus exhibits practices that contravene established Western conventions of the profession. Extreme overdependence on official sources, dominance of official discourse and state-run press agency reports, and the virtual absence of multiple-source stories, fact checking, research, and rewriting of externally produced texts undercut the role of an independent and credible press as they serve the interests of government officials rather than the public. Rather than being exceptional, these practices are the norm and form the basis of a journalism culture distinct from that envisioned as the foundation of peace journalism reforms.

However, in response to public and professional dissatisfaction with this state of affairs, recent reform initiatives have included some efforts to introduce peace journalism in North Cyprus. Some believe peace journalism, as a necessary component of good journalism (Kempf, 2007), can contribute to improving the quality of news reporting in North Cyprus. For example, peace journalism's parameters of peace and solution orientation may be useful, especially in providing balanced and accurate representations of the settlement efforts and offering both sides' perspectives. Already, the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies in one North Cypriot university has added peace journalism to its curriculum, participated in peace journalism training of local journalists, and held an international conference of academics and journalists dedicated to peace journalism. A series of stories about people from both communities who went missing during the interethnic conflict published by *Yenidüzen*, a North Cypriot daily newspaper, is another example of efforts to employ peace journalism. However, these are rather fleeting, individual efforts that cannot be generalized to the news media more widely.

Journalism practices as challenges

Peace journalism encourages journalists to make choices, about what to report and how to report, that create opportunities for the public to consider and value non-violent responses (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 5). Peace journalism suggests that the incorporation of new sources and ideas, in place of the nationalist discourses that now predominate in North Cypriot newspapers, could contribute to reconciliation efforts in Cyprus. Yet, suggesting that peace journalism should simply be adopted in North Cyprus too readily dismisses the difficulty of applying its prescription to a situation in which the dynamics of journalism diverge significantly from the models and assumptions on which peace journalism is based.

In places like North Cyprus, where journalists in some cases may have neither the freedom to make decisions about what and how to report nor a culture that encourages such practices, peace journalism's suggestions may be quite difficult to implement. Recommendations for journalism practices derived from the assumptions of journalism that exist in Western democratic societies present certain challenges for Turkish Cypriot journalists. For instance, reporting on issues and events that involve state authorities may, in some cases, be required for journalists because either the news organizations or state officials demand that their actions be reported. Moreover the nature of this reporting is largely preordained by an entrenched power relationship in which state officials usually retain the upper hand and may, on occasion, reinvigorate their supremacy through overt and covert forms of repression or violence against reporters.

Far from being adversarial or even symbiotic, journalism in North Cyprus contributes to the control of information by authorities with the control mechanism embedded within existing journalism practices. Apart from relying on official sources

and reporting them verbatim, dependence on TAK creates indirect control over the news media. Most, or in some cases all, of the Cyprus-related news that appears in the diversely owned news media in the north comes from TAK and generally is printed verbatim without additional comment or reporting (Şahin, 2010). In this situation, neither the individual journalist nor the media institution always has the final say in how events that involve powerful elites are reported. As one reporter with the state news agency noted, if authorities asked TAK not to include information in their reports, they would comply with the request and certain information would never reach the news outlets (Şahin, 2008). While it is clear that elimination of that control and the changing of certain journalistic practices are crucial to effective reform of journalism in North Cyprus, it is difficult to judge how best to achieve those fundamental alterations in journalism structures and practices. As presently articulated, the peace journalism model, which assumes relative autonomy for journalists, fails to offer effective tools to journalists who do not enjoy such freedom.

Peace journalism's criticism of media's focus on only two of the many sides of a conflict also misses the mark when considering Turkish Cypriot journalism. In the Turkish Cypriot media, not even two but usually just one side is reported. This tendency applies to both the reporting of internal affairs and external relations with the 'other' side. Reporting only one side of the story results from a parroting of limited sources rather than journalistic effort. In relation to the Cyprus conflict, it is predominantly Turkish Cypriot perspectives that are reported. The predomination of official and political elite sources, who use the media to justify the Turkish Cypriot position, means that Greek Cypriot views are absent or distorted to conform to Turkish Cypriot ideology, reducing representation to only one side. There is also a lack of communication between Turkish Cypriot journalists and the Greek Cypriot community. Even with increased direct access and potential communication with the 'other' through open public border crossings between the north and the south, the Turkish Cypriot media interact very little with and report scant news gathered directly by themselves from the Greek Cypriot community. Turkish Cypriot journalists are reluctant to contact Greek Cypriots directly to get information, relying instead on excerpts from the Greek Cypriot media to report on issues in the south of Cyprus¹. No Greek Cypriot journalists work for the Turkish Cypriot media, although a number of Turkish Cypriot journalists work in the Greek Cypriot media.²

As a result, peace journalism's general prescription to cover all sides of an issue runs headlong into the wall of government control mechanisms internalized by the media and embedded in the political structure of the TRNC. Moreover, selective reporting of Greek Cypriot perspectives that highlight conflict and antagonism does not contribute to constructive dialogue but rather suggests how more expansive incorporation of alternative voices might aggravate rather than reduce frictions.

Other challenges

Nationalism, which presents one of the biggest challenges to the practice of peace journalism and which is called up with particular virulence in situations of ongoing conflict, so far has been inadequately addressed by peace journalism. Despite being the root cause of conflict in cases like Cyprus, the obstacles to peace journalism practices posed by nationalism and national attachments largely are being overlooked. As Millas says, national identity has become 'a silenced aspect of the peace journalist' (2006: 14). Journalists in these situations, who are members of their national communities and define their identities in national terms, cannot simply step outside of or cast off their nationally determined views on the conflict. Unlike foreign journalists, they are inside that conflict and inevitably affected by it and, therefore, may find it extremely difficult not to take sides. By simply calling for journalists not to be biased toward one side in the conflict, peace journalism fails to provide adequate, effective tools for journalists whose homeland is involved. Journalists like those in North Cyprus may find it hard to challenge nationalist pressures or they simply may accept the acculturated nationalist position. To some extent, they may be effectively blind to any embedded bias in favor of the Turkish Cypriot side in their own reporting.

Establishing a peace narrative is an important step in reconciliation attempts (Hackett, 2006). Yet, as in the Cyprus case, a peace narrative may not necessarily be singular or shared. In Cyprus, peace discourse is closely linked to different interpretations of origins and perspectives on the Cyprus problem, as well as alternate possibilities for resolving it. For some, peace means the reunification of the island as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. For others, such a 'solution' is not progress but disruption of the 'peaceful' coexistence of two autonomous communities on the island. They see unification as the

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1. Several reasons may explain this lack of direct Turkish Cypriot reporting on Greek Cypriots. First, language is a barrier; few Turkish Cypriot journalists have Greek language skills (and vice versa). English is often used as a common language between the two communities, but lack of confidence in language skills may be an obstacle. Second, the established practice of secondhand reporting saves time, labor, and expense. Third, ideological differences caused by nationalism may be a factor. From a Greek Cypriot point of view, the TRNC is an illegal state and all its institutions are 'self-styled' or 'so called' and the land is illegally 'occupied' by Turkey. Such ideological frames may make Turkish Cypriot journalists feel uncomfortable and reduce their desire to speak to members of the other community.
 2. According to Cenk Mutluyakalı, the president of Cyprus Turkish Journalists Union in North Cyprus, the exact number of Turkish Cypriot journalist working in the Greek Cypriot media is not known but estimated to be around 10. (Personal Interview, 31 January, 2010).

inevitable subjugation of the Turkish Cypriot community, and they view peace as the continuation of the status quo of a divided island with full recognition of the TRNC. Alongside different understandings of a solution to the problem, conflicting peace discourses complicate a shared peace narrative. The different peace discourses are conflicting and largely mutually exclusive. Compromise is logically impossible, and achieving 'the' peace means choosing one of the two paths. In the absence of an answer to the crucial question of 'which peace?', journalists are relegated to simply articulating the disparate positions of the political leaders. In fact, promoting a single path toward peace would entail choosing one or the other version and would interject a new form of bias into the news.

Through this study of the Cyprus example, we hope to draw attention to the need for peace journalism proponents to clearly articulate what is meant by peace or peaceful resolution, especially in long-standing, non-violent conflict situations. If peace means simply nonviolence or absence of war, then peace has been achieved in Cyprus, which would argue for representation of the status quo as a peaceful outcome. Yet, this version of peace fails to include efforts toward rapprochement between the communities that overcomes nationalism. At the same time, it suggests that journalists who represent the two-state solution as peace are fulfilling this precept of peace journalism. This contravenes reality.

The fact that peace negotiations continue indicates that the existing situation is not acceptable to a significant number of the residents of Cyprus and that there is a will to find solutions to the problems caused by the conflict. Yet, if the situation in Cyprus is understood as a form of conflict comprised of verbal pressure, inequality, threats of violence, and the imposition of economic sanctions (Blasi, 2009), the effective and productive implementation and practice of peace journalism seems unclear.

Positive points

Journalism in North Cyprus also has certain characteristics that may help in the adoption of peace journalism. The usual assumption that there is a contradiction between news values and the nature of peace processes (Hanitzsch, 2004b; Wolfsfeld, 2004) may not apply to Turkish Cypriot journalism. Reporting of the processes of the Cyprus problem has a high news value. The media ascribe great importance to it and daily report it as the most important topic on the news agenda. While, in broadcast news, it always occupies the first item, in print media there is always a front-page story on the issue. Some newspapers, and *Kıbrıs* is one of them, even have pages set aside for stories on this issue. Regardless of whether they give any new information, statements made by officials, political figures or foreign diplomats concerning the Cyprus problem are always reported as news. The Cyprus issue is regarded as so newsworthy that if a political figure makes a speech on this topic during an event, not the event itself but the politician's words on the Cyprus issue will be highlighted in the news. For example, when President Talat delivered a speech at the inauguration of a university, his comments relating to the negotiations were given lead position in the newspaper and the event itself was reported lower down (21 October 2008).

The Turkish Cypriot news media's interest in covering peace negotiations, which involve lengthy and complicated negotiations, suggests a focus away from media's well-documented attention to events with immediacy, drama, and simplicity (Hanitzsch, 2004b; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Therefore, Turkish Cypriot press values may find no contradiction between peace processes and news values. That is to say, the Turkish Cypriot form of journalism that is extremely elite-centered and reliant upon the verbatim statements of officials generally fails to place priority upon values such as immediacy and drama. Such a difference in news values may actually aid the implementation of peace journalism.

7 Conclusion

This study focused on journalism in North Cyprus to draw attention to divergent traits and approaches to news that peace journalism should consider in order to offer an effective reform of journalism practice in such contexts. The aim was to highlight how particular political and structural conditions may limit the ability of peace journalism to offer guidance and practicable suggestions to journalists in such cultures – guidance without which the model of peace journalism may be difficult to implement.

There are two main conclusions to be drawn from this research. First, the Turkish Cypriot news media's preoccupation with powerful and elite groups and failure to take other views and discourses into account makes them instruments of centers of power. Focusing on *Kıbrıs* coverage of the latest peace process in Cyprus as representative of dominant characteristics of journalism in North Cyprus, the findings identify the predominance of 'stenographic journalism', with practices similar to public relations, and a news culture dominated by official nationalist discourses that offers little space for alternative voices. These characteristics are similar to many media practices around the world, but there is a difference of degree. It is their frequency and intensity within the Turkish Cypriot media that make them distinct and alarming. And it is their vigor that raises special challenges to the practice of peace journalism even as it makes clear the absolute need for journalism in North Cyprus to rethink its relationship with power and its established practices.

Second, peace journalism requires clearer formulations or even re-theorizing to improve its performance and acceptance by a wider range of journalism cultures outside of Western journalism. For example, peace journalism provides limited concrete help to Turkish Cypriot journalists mainly because its underlying assumptions, which are based on a liberal and pluralistic understanding of journalism, are not always applicable to the news culture in North Cyprus. With its particular dynamics of news production, source-journalist relationships, and the information-control mechanisms embedded within journalism practice, Turkish Cypriot journalism exhibits different characteristics from Western journalism. These problematic traits – exacerbated by pressures from nationalism and national identities, conflicting discourses of peace, and a lack of communication between the sides—present serious questions about the implementation of peace journalism in North Cyprus to which current articulations of the peace journalism model do not offer satisfactory answers.

For peace journalism to be effective in different news cultures similar to that exhibited in North Cyprus, it needs to develop a comprehensive strategy that takes into account all the relevant factors that influence news production, including political, historical, cultural, and geographical conditions (Blasi, 2004). As this research shows, these factors play a crucial role in shaping the news in North Cyprus. Therefore, especially in the case of North Cyprus, 'peace journalism must embrace awareness of the varied identities and realities of parties to a conflict, the subjective and contextual nature of root causes, and the trap of dualisms' (Ross, 2006: 1) if it is to offer a truly effective strategy for improving journalism in geographies and cultures that diverge from the Western model.

There is an awareness of and willingness to adopt peace journalism in North Cyprus in an effort to reform journalism,¹ increasing the chances for its implementation there. This openness to peace journalism mostly comes from groups that support peaceful attempts at a re-unification of the island, yet it shows that there is some incentive to reform journalism. However, there is a need for clearer formulations and suggestions that are relevant to the realities of the island. Such clarification of the peace journalism model would not only help encourage its adoption and contribute to peace-building attempts there but would also further peace journalism's theoretical and operational principles.

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