Fredrick Ogenga

Is Peace Journalism possible in the 'war' against terror in Somalia? How the Kenyan *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* represented *Operation Linda Nchi*

Kurzfassung: Aufgrund ihrer Nähe zu bedeutenden Konflikten sollte in Afrika die nicht-westliche Presse die besten Voraussetzungen für die Umsetzung von Friedensjournalismus besitzen. Nichtsdestotrotz ist es der kenianischen Presse bei der Berichterstattung über den Krieg gegen den Terror bisher nicht gelungen, die ideale Gelegenheit für ein solches Experiment zu nutzen. Kenias Presse operiert immer noch im Rahmen des Kriegsjournalismus. Der vorliegende Aufsatz beruht auf einem theoretischen Zugang, der Theorien der Medienrepräsentation im Mainstream-Journalismus mit den Konzepten des Friedensjournalismus verbindet. In methodologischer Hinsicht folgt er den Prinzipien der Triangulation und verwendet sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative Inhaltsanalysen um die Darstellung der *Operation Linda Nchi* in den kenianischen Zeitungen *Daily Nation* und *The Standard* zu untersuchen und eine kritische Würdigung der Möglichkeiten des Friedensjournalismus in der Berichterstattung über den internationalen Terrorismus in Afrika zu erarbeiten.

Abstract: This paper concludes that in Africa the non-Western press may have the best chance to employ peace journalism, given its proximity to major conflicts. Nevertheless, the Kenyan press has so far failed to take advantage of an ideal opportunity for such an experiment in reporting on the war against terror. Kenya's press still operates within the war journalism framework. This paper employs a theoretical approach that combines theories of media representation in mainstream journalism with the concepts of peace journalism. Methodologically, it adopts a triangulating approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative content analysis to study the representations of *Operation Linda Nchi* by the Kenyan *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* and thereby offers a critical appraisal of the possibility for peace journalism to cover international terrorism in Africa.

Introduction

This paper critically examines the possibilities of peace journalism (PJ)[1] for reporting on global and national terrorism. It raises questions about the extent to which peace journalism can compete with mainstream journalism, based on a conviction that the latter has done more to escalate conflicts than to resolve them. Peace journalism is gaining prominence in the scholarly field of journalism and media studies due to the fundamental role it has played in conflict situations. However, it is increasingly difficult to situate PJ in mainstream journalism. This difficulty arises from the ideological characteristics of mainstream journalism or war journalism that distinguish them from peace journalism. Of the many criticisms leveled against peace journalism, the most serious is that it has diluted journalistic 'objectivity' and detachment, because it demands some degree of attachment (see Hackett, 2006).

This paper brings to the fore the challenges faced by journalists, while striving to be objective in situations where they are actually party to a conflict, as in the case of the Kenyan journalists of two selected newspapers with regard to reporting on *Operation Linda Nchi.*[2] The newspapers selected for this study sanitized and supported the operation and thereby shaped 'public opinion' about it. My conviction is that public opinion about the operation has been influenced by the media and their relationships with elites in the economic and political domains. It appears that the Kenyan media had fears similar to those of the political and economic elites about an *Alshabaab* threat to Kenya's political economy. Given these circumstances, Kenyan journalists took a stand favoring a war to protect national interests. Was there any way Kenyan journalists could take a stand for peace in this situation, where their interests were threatened? This paper explores this critical question by examining in detail the roles played by the two mainstream newspapers in Kenya.

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1. Peace journalism is based on a critical-realistic theory about reporting on conflicts. It tries to develop ways of reporting that can help to de-escalate conflicts and supports initiatives to resolve them, using a solution-oriented approach to conflict. This is different from the propagandistic reporting characteristic of 'war journalism', which justifies and legitimates conflict (Lynch, 2006). Peace journalism is regarded as a special type of socially responsible journalism, a frame of journalistic news coverage that contributes to the process of making and maintaining peace and respectively to the non-violent settlement of conflict (Galtung in Hanitzsch, 2007).
2. Operation Linda Nchi was launched by the Kenyan government to help fight the threat of *Alshabaab* militants, who were responsible for a series of attacks on and kidnappings of tourists. *Alshabaab* is an Al Qaeda linked terror network that has gained control of a large area of Somalia, including major towns such as Mogadishu, and Kismayu. *Alshabaab* has also been accused of crimes such as piracy off the Somali coast. The militants claimed responsibility for the Kampala bombings that killed hundreds of people in Kampala, Uganda and were responsible for the deaths of its own people in Somalia and elsewhere. The unfortunate result of *Alshabaab's* ideology (Islamic fundamentalism) is that it understands its identity in terms of the national nature of the current conflict, but projects it across national borders. *Operation Linda Nchi,* which Kenya recently launched, is a result of the character of the Islamic fundamentalism that the group is determined to export across borders into Kenya and beyond. The conflict previously involved the US-backed Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the Africa Union Mission in Somalia (Amisom), composed mainly of Ugandan and Burundi forces, but has since expanded to include the Kenyan Defense Force, Ethiopian forces, and other actors (See http://www.kenyaforum.net).

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Contextualizing the study

This paper begins from the premise that the mainstream journalistic ideologies are derived from Western traditions. It does not wish to generalize the journalistic traditions in Western nations, because they vary. Rather, the paper identifies the prevalent Western ideological traditions of reporting that are problematic here. This tradition is evident across many Western national media when covering events in Africa and has continually constructed the frameworks in which news is conceptualized (Nyamnjoh, 2005). This practice has been replicated elsewhere in the world by mainstream commercial media, where it has been largely accepted as 'conventional journalism' or what constitutes normative journalistic practice. The most important factor that has shaped news production is the idea that news is 'real' and mirrors events unfolding in the 'real world'. Journalism has made claims to reality, warranted and legitimized such claims using photographs and videos and the "see for yourself approach." That being the case, the demand was made that news reportage offer an objective and impartial account of reality with some degree of detachment. Objectivity has emerged as a journalistic panacea, promising that news will be fair and balanced (Bignel, 1997). This paper argues that the Kenyan press *claims* journalistic objectivity for its conventional practices and institutional processes, but does not make genuine attempts to really *be* objective. Such conventional practices have been adopted by the Kenyan media in the way they represent various issues, especially political ones. Due to the mutual relationship the media shares with certain politicians, it is not difficult to pinpoint the ideological position or inclination of the mainstream press in Kenya when covering them. Traditionally, the press has been suspected of inventing and actually creating political enemies. This practice has become normative, and in the case of major events, such as the suddenly initiated 'operation' against terror in Somalia by the Kenyan Defense Force, the local media simply employed the journalism of bandwagoning, copied and pasted from the Western tradition. Such journalism is bound to be a caricature, prescriptive and hardly responsive to the local reality (Nyamnjoh, 2005).

Consequently, journalistic conventions exert a significant level of pressure that eventually influences news constructions about the operation. Such inevitable factors have fractured the ideological foundations of mainstream journalism, eroding journalistic objectivity and thereby presenting a perfect opportunity to experiment with innovative reportage approaches like peace journalism. The obstacle is that most of the factors influencing news production are so deeply embedded within broader societal structures informed by capitalism and commercialism that they are simply taken for granted and accepted as 'normative.' The assumption has been that such ideological structures are immutable, even though it is quite clear that they can be transformed. Peace journalism already plays a significant role in such transformations. Hackett (2006: 2) points out that, "It is not that PJ proponents have altogether ignored the question of how to transform journalistic practices in the context of news structures." War journalism is deeply entrenched in the political economy of the media industries. Lynch and McGoldrick further maintain that:

„If there is to be journalistic revolution, does it mean taking over the commanding heights of the media economy? Not necessarily. In one sense, both government and commercial media have their own interests in creating images of the 'self' and 'other' – to command allegiance, and to sell products and services, respectively." (Lynch and McGoldrick in Hackett 2006: 2).

How the two newspapers took sides in *Operation Linda Nchi* is well established, as discussed in the findings section below. There was a desire for the press to serve the cultural needs of Kenyan audiences by giving them news that would show Kenyan soldiers winning the war on terror in the operation: This would also help to sell newspapers – by presenting what Kenyan audiences really wanted to read. The fact that Kenyans were interested in such news is confirmed by reports in the online version of one of the mainstream newspapers, *The People,* entitled "Director of Defense should resume media briefings" (Njaramba, 2012). The story appeared on the editorial page, written by the chief sub-editor, whose arguments seemed to lean towards an ideological position dictated by economic considerations. The latter worked to shape the newspaper's goals – a market-driven approach to news that conceptualized the audience as a market. The story argued that, "Every media house is duty-bound to keep the story alive for its readers and audience. The sooner the military information wing wakes up to this fact, the better for the smooth flow of facts that Kenyans keenly want to keep track of" (Njaramba, 2012: pp. unknown).

We can maintain that the media seized the opportunity to serve the needs of the local audience by presenting narratives of the war (war journalism) in a coherent, organized and familiar way. *Operation Linda Nchi* was, therefore, linked to common phrases such as "war on terror," already familiar to local audiences through the global 'war on terror', as championed by the United States and the United Kingdom. Hall (in Gurevitch *et al.,* 1986) argues that media use *myths* in order to present new and unfamiliar events to audiences in a way that is as familiar as possible. Myths are ideologies that organize meanings, responding to cultural needs for narratives that make sense of the surrounding reality. Fiske (1987) shows how texts create meanings through intertextual associations with other texts. Linking *Operation Linda Nchi* to the 'war on terror' served to justify the operation by influencing public opinion with common narratives of fighting terrorism, just as was done elsewhere, in the United States, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan, etc.

The Western media did not improve the Kenyan situation. No reports appeared about recent developments in the operation. It seems as though the Western media were waiting for a threshold to be crossed, that is, for an event with a significant

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impact that would capture the interest of their audiences (See Galtung and Ruge, 1965). However, this is not to argue that Western media coverage of the situation could have 'rescued' the operation in any way. Most media, including the local ones, would naturally wait for 'the big story', for obvious journalistic reasons related to selling the story, and therefore we should not single out the Western media as the sole miscreant. Nevertheless, CNN represented *Operation Linda Nchi* as a diplomatic blunder, while the BBC assigned *Alshabaab* the main responsibility for the conflict in which Kenya's security was allegedly being threatened. An opinion piece by Wilkinson (2011) echoed this: "Will the Kenyan Battle with Islamists in Somalia Succeed?" It quoted security experts as sources to frame the idea that the operation was a mistake. See the excerpt below:

„Any foreign intervention in Somalia is a big risk, say experts who point to recent history as proof, in particular America's ill-fated "Black Hawk Down" mission in 1993... "If there is anything we have learnt in the last couple of decades it is that foreign intervention, especially military intervention, doesn't work in Somalia." Most governments believe sending troops into Somalia is not a good idea... "Their reasoning is that Kenyan forces could be stuck in Somalia for ages, or there could be an insurgent campaign in Kenya itself. It could go horribly wrong – who knows?" (Wilkinson, 2011: Opinion Page).

Although to some extent the above arguments are true, since Nairobi has been faced with a series of insurgent attacks using grenades, the key question is whether or not one could justify a war on terror fought by a non-Western nation. Would Kenyans have something to celebrate if they succeeded in a mission that America could not complete in 1993? Is there an American hand in the Kenyan operation, considering the recent American policy shift in international relations that demands that it lead from the rear? America's denial of involvement in the conflict, as portrayed by various sources like Scott Gration, the US ambassador to Kenya, was challenged by reportage that exposed its true interests.

To capitalize on the idea of 'good journalism', at least for Kenyan audiences, the Kenyan press reported exclusively to fill in the gaps caused by the international media blackout and counterbalance their reports. The press did so, because it realized that the conflict had direct implications for its interests. Lynch and McGoldrick (in Hackett, 2006: 3) argue that, "the media is part of a structure, the latter usually understood as a system of political, economic and social relations that create barriers that people cannot remove an invisible form of violence, built into ways of doing and ways of thinking." Becker (in Hackett, 2006: 3) states that, "media are embedded in, and help to reproduce, relations of inequality within and between nations." He further explains:

„In mass media reception as well as production are at once expression and motor of structural violence, if communications technology can be understood, historically only as an integral part of a military industrial complex; if the access to and power over the mass media are unequal and unbalanced...then the mass media can fulfill their original hoped for function as "peace-bringers" [only] under rare and exceptional circumstances. The representation of violence in the mass media, then, is part and parcel of the universal violence of the media themselves." (Becker in Hackett, 2006: 3).

Consequently, there are specific structural relationships that can help explain the persistence of war journalism within the Kenyan media, as in any other media in the world. While economic factors are significant aspects of this structure, ensuring that audiences are conceptualized as a market, there are several other factors related to the psychological traits of individual journalists, cultural issues, institutional mechanisms, politics and social contexts, as held by Becker (in Hackett, 2006) above.

Peace journalism or war journalism? *Operation Linda Nchi*

Galtung's (2002) PJ model and Shinar's (in Kempf and Shinar, 2007) summary on de-escalating conflict are useful starting points for analyzing the possibilities of situating peace journalism in mainstream journalism. Galtung's (2002) model, on one hand, specifies the dichotomy between war journalism and peace journalism. There are four main points in the dichotomy, namely: War journalism is violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented, and is often linked to the escalation of conflicts, while Peace Journalism is solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented and aimed at the non-violent de-escalation and resolution of conflicts (Galtung, 2002). Peace journalism considers the fact that the media are involved in propaganda and therefore present conscious choices and options for readers (Galtung, 2002). In contrast, one thing that emerges clearly in war journalism is the double standard, consonant with elite perspectives, that portrays "our" side as moral and righteous and "their" side as evil and aggressive. On this basis, Shinar (in Kempf and Shinar 2007) presents a summary of the possibilities for de-escalation oriented conflict coverage.

The Kenyan 'intervention' was supported largely by the elitist discourse of the struggle against terror, while the outrages of insurgents such as *Alshabbaab,* which appear legitimate in the cycles of political Islam, were de-legitimated in the Western-defined normative framework of legitimacy. Insurgency everywhere in the world transcends the acceptable thresholds or boundaries within which societies are able to tolerate disruptive actions. Therefore, it is often a cause of moral panic, and action is usually called for as a means of returning to normalcy (Hall et al., 1978). Advocates claim the latter can be achieved through coercive sanctions imposed by the state, which by virtue of its legitimacy has a monopoly of violence.

The state has been granted the power to guarantee national security by international consensus and principles, resolutions or treaties (international laws) crafted, e.g., by unions of nations, such as the United Nations. Therefore, the Kenyan state had the right to pursue an attacking 'enemy' across the national border in *Operation Linda Nchi*, invoking UN Article 51. Kenya thus cited the UN article that designates self-defense as an inherent right, which meant that the government felt it could do whatever it regarded as necessary to secure its borders (*Sunday Nation*, October 16, 2011). A representative of the government (Kenyan Defense Minister Yusuf Haji) argued, "If you are attacked by an enemy, you have a right to pursue that enemy where he is, and they [*Alshabaab*] will be pursued." Article 51 was quoted in the story, which states that:

„Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of an individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security." (*Sunday Nation*, October 16, 2011)

Kidnappings of tourists on Kenyan territory by armed gangs perceived to be members of the illegal militia group *Alshabaab* is a national security issue. Several other crimes, including piracy and terrorism, posed serious security threats that warranted attention. This is all familiar, but what do we know about terrorism? Who are the terrorists who call themselves *Alshabaab*? Kenya is familiar with the *Al Qaeda* terrorist network responsible for twin bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1997, but since then there has been relative calm in those countries. Hackett (2006: 3) argues that, "in the war against terror, the term terrorism typically referred to the 'retail terror' of left-wing insurgent groups and not to the 'wholesale' or clandestine violence of states – except sometimes those hostile to the US." The Kenyan government categorically stated that it was not at war with Somalia, but rather with *Alshabaab.* The latter is an extremist ideological insurgent group that is determined to impose *Sharia,* or Islamic Law.

Is the 'war on terror' just Western propaganda?

Since it is generally impossible to identify terrorists merely from their outward appearance, who are the 'real' terrorists, and therefore the targets of the war on terror? Even though we have seen a lot of propaganda in the war against terrorism, we cannot simply argue that the war on terrorism is mere propaganda. This is because political Islam is an ideology that has given rise to subjective experiences that are 'real' in many parts of the world. In other words, the physical reality of terrorism is real to Kenyans and citizens in many nations, and its threats are very real. However, what scholars must focus on are the reasons why ideology is gaining ground globally, particularly among Muslims. It is not enough to assume that ideologies can be defeated by simple measures such as military incursions, operations and media propaganda. The failures of the US, for example, in eradicating terrorism, even after the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the killing of Osama Bin Laden, provide excellent examples of the complexities of fighting ideologies with military operations. For Kenya to exert solely physical force against an almost 'invisible' armed force under the rubric of the 'war on terrorism' – against violence committed by a non-state armed group – is tantamount to ignoring the underlying structural formations, ideologies and motivations behind that group. The latter are what should be addressed. If we accept that Kenyan media representations tend to favor *Operation Lind Nchi,* this is due to the complexities embedded in journalism as a practice, and not to a genuine conviction that the problem of terrorism can be fully solved or that terrorism can be completely defeated. Journalistic conventions often provide a receptive vehicle for representing such groups and their activities in a de-contextualized manner and therefore demanding and justifying a response that disregards contextualization. As a result of the broader ideologies and structures that sanction journalism itself, such conventions are therefore attempts to report on violence in the context of the 'war on terror' that become even more problematic because such representations do little to improve the situation.

Theoretical conceptualization

The theoretical framework used in this paper is a complementary approach that combines theories of media representation in mainstream journalism with the concepts of peace journalism. This approach positions peace journalism within conventional journalism in order to identify the fractures and ideological erosion that can provide opportunities for implementing new approaches to journalism (Lynch, 2006, Hackett, 2006; Hanitzsch, 2007). Theories of media representation go beyond the 'text' to explore the ways audiences respond to media texts. The focus here is on political economy, theories of news production, and cultural studies (MacNair, 1998; Manning, 2001; Ogenga, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Political economy is concerned with the *macro*-level factors that influence representations, such as broader political ideologies, media ownership and control, advertising, the perception of the audience as a market and news as a product (or commodity) with commercial value. Theories of news production, in contrast, are concerned with the *micro*-level factors that influence the process of news production, such as institutional roles and the conventions and ideologies of journalism as a profession – these are some of the factors that peace journalism has been accused of taking for granted.

Peace journalism, therefore, sets precedents and, in fact, presents an opportunity for the radical transformation of such structures. Cultural studies examine the potential for multiple meanings resulting from the polysemic nature of language.

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Here I complement these theories with peace journalism concepts (see Galtung, 2002; Galtung, 2009; Shinar in Kempf and Shinar, 2007), forming a triangulating approach that critically analyzes the roles played by the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* in representing *Operation Linda Nchi* (see Galtung in Hanitzsch, 2007). The important aspect that the theories help to elucidate is the language used in news stories, since language shapes media representations, resulting in the possibility of a multiplicity of meanings (Hall et al., 1978). Notably, the Kenyan newspapers adopted a particular tone and a familiar language in representing the Somali 'incursion'. Reports about the latter appearing in the first two editions that covered the onset of the operation were carefully examined using peace journalism concepts to identify aspects in the news narratives or framework that qualified as war journalism. They were subjected to detailed analysis, and alternatives were suggested that are embedded in the former (PJ) (Galtung in Hanitzsch, 2007).

Critical political economy of the media

The critical political economy of the media is primarily concerned with broader structures of media production and the complex networks of power relations in which Kenyan media are situated (Curran, 2000b). I treat the external political-economic and cultural environments in which these newspaper organizations operate as variables in the news production process, in order to avoid a more media-centric internal approach to news production. The relevant social structures include differences in the political influence and credibility of news sources and their capacity to control information, the importance of particular structures of ownership and control, together with the market-driven nature of mass news communication, and also the extent to which the broader ideological climate may affect the thinking of journalists, editors and news sources alike (McNair, 1998). The critical political economy of the media takes into consideration the above-mentioned macro-level influencing factors that affect how the selected Kenyan newspapers represented the operation.

Political factors

Kenyan media operate in a political culture that shapes and influences their operations. I work on the assumption that Kenya is a liberal democratic country, meaning that there is a low degree of political control of the media and a high degree of tolerance on the part of political elites for the unwelcome and critical topics about which journalists in such systems write and speak (Ogenga, 2008; McNair, 1998). A liberal democratic political system demands journalistic criticism of elites as a condition of its legitimacy, meaning that journalists are expected to be watchdogs of democracy that criticize and warn against the state's tendency to abuse power. Otherwise, they have no reason to exist. In liberal democracies, critical, pluralistic journalism is regarded as a bulwark against the possibility of a turn to authoritarian rule and as a defense against the abuse of political power (McNair, 1998).

Under liberal democratic arrangements, media have some degree of autonomy and freedom to report and even criticize the government, even though there are still certain authoritarian tendencies that find expression in censorship and media control (McNair, 1998; Ogenga, 2008; Ogenga, 2010). Political factors include the power of government officials to manipulate and exercise control over journalists through censorship and media regulation to safeguard national interests or national security and sometimes to serve selfish political interests – the Kenyan media representation of *Operation Linda Nchi* was driven by national security interests. This paper employs the critical political economy of the media as an analytical framework in order to gain an understanding of how politicians can shape media content through state apparatuses and the privileged access they have to the media as official sources. Both the political class and the Kenyan media shared the same agenda of proclaiming a need to protect the nation.

Economic factors

Kenyan media operate as an economic institution in the business of cultural production, where news about the operation is treated as a "commodity for sale" (Williams, 2003). Journalists construct news stories that appeal to readers but can also attract advertisers. To some extent, media owners are in a position to offer the kind of news stories that appeal to their readers' interests, but at the same time do not offend their advertisers. Kenyan newspapers focused on Kenyan soldiers on the battlefield and emphasized their advances towards the "enemy" stronghold. Sometimes the media focused on feature stories accompanied by large photographs of women soldiers on the battlefield. Such stories were meant to challenge Islamic perceptions of the "right place" of women in society. On the other hand, Kenyan television bombarded audiences with frequently repeated visuals of Kenyan fighter jets maneuvering in the enemy's air space, while tanks rolled across the rugged Somali terrain. Kenyan journalists accompanied the soldiers and seemed to report from the 'front' to give an impression of the 'reality' of the situation, as argued above. All these strategies were employed to appeal to a Kenyan audience. The newspapers thus manufactured news as a product with a market value to sell to the Kenyan audience, thus to maximize profits, like any other capitalist business enterprise (Williams, 2003; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). News and investigative reports that journalists produce have a value attached to them for maximizing profits (Chambers, 2000).

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Media ownership and control

Although media ownership is said to influence the manner in which media cover issues, it was difficult to establish how it influenced the newspapers' reporting on the operation. Nevertheless, it is a proven fact that various issues emerging in the media reveal the power of certain individuals or organizations over the news process. Curran (2000a) explains how corporate ownership of media can affect media content. Those who own the media have the ability to influence their content to suit their personal interests. The Kenyan press is privately owned and commercially motivated, and media content is influenced by the ideals of a capitalist free market system – arguably the reason for a change in tactics by *Alshabaab,* which commenced grenade attacks, seemingly threatening the business interests of the Kenyan press. The newspapers selected for this study are right-leaning newspapers of the political establishment that favor conservative political ideologies and the free market. The content of the two selected newspapers usually attracts readership from the potential target groups of advertising, that is, the emerging Kenyan urban middle class. In such a scenario, professional values may be influenced by commercial factors, resulting in particular forms of news presentation. Sensationalism becomes a journalistic tool used to sell newspapers. The *Daily Nation*, for example, is owned by the Nation Media group, with vast media interests in East and Central Africa.

Theories of news production and peace journalism

Theories of news production are analytically or theoretically useful for exploring the factors that shaped the processes of representing *Operation Linda Nchi*. Theories of news production consider media structures as parts of society, focusing on the political, economic, organizational and professional elements that affect news sourcing and production (McNair, 1998; Louw, 2001). Broader social structures and relationships influence media, their choice of sources, and the sources' relationship to journalists, news organization editors, and the competing demands dictated by professionalism. News involves a process of selection and construction (Schudson, 2000), whereby journalists select stories according to journalistic values such as credibility, prominence, novelty, proximity, time and threshold. One theme often linked with the way news about Africa is covered is *negativity*. Africa has long been viewed as a continent racked by conflicts, poverty and diseases (Mudimbe, 1988; Mudimbe, 1994; Ndlela, 2005; Willems, 2005; Ogenga, 2010).

However, that Africa is indeed plagued by often stereotypically thematized problems like 'conflict' is written on the wall and needs no further emphasis. Hanitzsch (2007:1) has written that, "the increasing number of conflicts in Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region, prevents the entire region from politically democratizing." He stresses the importance of public communication about conflict, war and crises, given that media bring conflicts to public attention. He further comments that, "having seen the endless atrocities of war and standing on the brink of professional disillusionment, many journalists started to ask how they can make the world a better place." This approach goes back to the ideas of peace journalism, whereby critical scholars began to promote a vision of "journalistic practice that extends beyond modern mainstream journalism and its enduring values of objectivity, neutrality and detachment." This forms the basis of the analyses presented in this paper.

However, although this paper agrees that peace journalism is an important aspect of journalism studies, like other types such as investigative journalism, it has a critical purpose. It is based on the insight that peace journalism often "rests on sweeping criticisms of current media coverage and ignores the manifold nuances in the media," such as institutional and ideological structures and other factors discussed above that influence news representations or coverage (Hanitzsch, 2007). This paper unpacks such nuances using the political economy of the media, theories of news production and cultural studies. I critically examine how due to these structural constraints peace journalism concepts were swept under the carpet in the Kenyan newspapers' reports on the operation. Galtung and Vincent (in Hanitzch, 2007: 1) assert that: "Peace journalism criticizes the criteria of news selection that prevail in journalism, most notably the news factors related to negativism, personalization and proximity to elite countries and elite persons." The problem is that media direct their attention to conflict only when it is about to break out, which may also help to escalate conflict. The Kenyan press have continually expressed fear of *Alshabaab* attacks on the country, whereby the media became part of the problem. Peace journalism looks for ways journalists could become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. The three Kenyan newspapers should have considered the consequences of the way they represented the operation, even if they were constrained by various structural factors and reportage conventions stemming from journalistic ideologies that perhaps need rethinking.

Methodology

This paper uses triangulation, which works with two or more research methods. This approach is important, because it can arguably suggest lines of action different from those that would be adopted if other methods, or only one, were employed (Denzin, 1978). The units of analysis in this research were 'social objects' in relation to the socio-economic and political

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context of the media. The two methodologies that were triangulated are quantitative and qualitative content analysis. However, qualitative content analysis was chiefly used, because research on media representations of reality is qualitative in nature. A quantitative content analysis served to determine the frequency of occurrence of various units of analysis related to textual narratives representing the operation, and the results were then subjected to a qualitative analysis.

This means that the textual context in which the quantitative units of analysis appeared was more important than the mutually exclusive numbers of occurrences. Numbers alone do not have any significant meaning beyond themselves. The context of the units provided a discursive framework that was examined using discourse or ideological analysis. The qualitative method adopted thus involved thematic or qualitative content analysis, as well as ideological analysis. The analysis was performed on a total of 26 main headlines in 26 newspaper editions between October 16 and November 21, 2011. This time period was selected because it coincided with the military operation, and the two newspapers extensively covered the operation. The analysis focused only on the headlines, because with headlines, "editors have the power to signal to the reader what is important and what is less important" (Dor in Media Monitoring Unit, 2009: 22). Headlines are windows that attract readers to a story and thereby help to sell newspapers.

Sampling procedures and analytical categories

The newspapers were chosen randomly from the period of the study. *Purposive sampling*, which is a random sampling technique, was necessary, because it gave the objects of research greater chances of inclusion. This meant that the selected articles or samples were those that served the purposes of the study. The analytical categories or themes studied were: *Alshabaab*, *Operation Linda Nchi* and "War against Terror." The themes were quantitatively analyzed to assess their frequency of occurrence in various stories. This is because one way in which a representation manifests itself is through *repetition*. However, since little can be said beyond the numbers themselves, qualitative analysis was needed to identify and explain the meaning behind the frequency of occurrences. Thus, the context in which the three themes were used was qualitatively analyzed to explore the deeper meanings and motives behind the operation.

Data presentation and findings

The findings and analysis section explored the possibility for the Kenyan newspaper to apply peace journalism, as understood by (Galtung, 2002) and presented in Shinar's summary (in Kempf and Shinar, 2007). In the relevant period, several headlines appeared that actually praised the Kenyan 'incursion' into Somalia. On the first day of the operation, October 16, 2011, the following headlines appeared in both the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard*. "Kenya troops off to war" (Ngirachu, 2010) and "Action begins" (Ongeri and Ombati, 2010), respectively. These headlines were war-oriented rather than peace-oriented (Galtung, 2002). They set the pace and provided the benchmark for what came to characterize the local newspapers' reportage on *Operation Linda Nchi*. The headlines represented Kenyan troops as powerful and quite capable of defeating the enemy, *Alshabaab*. They were supplemented by photographs of tanks and soldiers en route to the front. While the *Standard* did not include any captions for the photographs used, the *Daily Nation* had a caption that completely contradicted the headline. At the onset of the operation, one would have expected the photographs to show Kenyan soldiers actually going "off to war," as claimed in the headline. This, however, was not the case. This is what Galtung (2002) calls the *propaganda*-oriented reporting of war journalism, as opposed to the *truth*-oriented reporting of peace journalism. The caption was: "Kenya army tanks roar by during the proclamation of the new constitution at Uhuru [freedom] park last year." Nothing was reported about the other party to the conflict. This kind of reportage goes against Shinar's conceptualization of the press's role in conflicts (in Kempf and Shinar, 2007). For them, the press should explore every side of an issue in an effort to portray conflict in comprehensive, realistic terms, transparent to the audience.

Dor (in Media Monitoring Unit 2009: 16) discusses *Editing Parameters and Tools for Critical Media Consumption.* He focuses on the placement of newspaper stories, headlines and the extent to which they reflect what is presented in the story. He points out that, "while news readers and consumers would think that what is placed in the headline is what appears in the story, and is in fact a short summary, this is not the case... headlines refer to selected information within an article and highlight that information over others" (Dor in Media Monitoring Unit, 2009:22). He further explains that:

„A meticulous investigation of news material reveals that the aspects that the editors choose to highlight in the headline are not necessarily obvious choices. Other information could just as easily be promoted to the headlines, in which case the news would be perceived quite differently. In many cases, headlines actually distort what is said in an article. In more than a few cases the connection between a headline and an article is almost incidental. The fact that most news consumers "scan the headlines" and do not read every word in an article underscores the significance of this criterion." (Dor in Media Monitoring Unit, 2009: 22).

Several headlines seemed to fit with a newspaper reportage agenda inclined to support the war (war journalism). This diverged from the Peace Journalism approach that requires the press to pay attention to stories that can encourage peace

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rather than conflict (Shinar in Kempf and Shinar, 2007). The following headlines, included in the study from both *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* newspapers, attest to this contradiction. They point to the differences between war and peace journalism:

The headlines appearing in *The Standard* were:

The Standard Monday October 17, 2011 "Action begins"
The Standard Wednesday October 18, 2011 "Kenya closes in on second Key town"
The Standard Wednesday October 19, 2011 "inside the battle zone"
The Standard Thursday October 20, 2011 "strategy unfolds"
The Standard Tuesday October 25, 2011 "Fighting the enemy within"
The Standard Tuesday October 25, 2011 "Deadly explosions"
The Standard Wednesday October 26, 2011 "How daring elite GSU unit uncovered 13 grenades"
The Standard Friday October 28, 2011 "Troops fierce gunfight as new grenade attack kills 4"
The Standard Wednesday October 29, 2011 "Kibaki: Why there is no turning back"
The Standard Wednesday November 2, 2011 "Arms haul for *Shabaab* linked to Eritrea"
The Standard Tuesday November 8, 2011 "Kenya's fearsome arsenal in offensive"
The Standard Thursday November 17, 2011 "Presidents talk tough"
The Standard Monday November 21, 2011 "Kibaki woos Emirates to back assault"

The headlines appearing in the *Daily Nation* were:

Sunday Nation, October 16, 2011 "Kenyan troops off to war"
Daily Nation Monday October 17, 2011 "Kenyan forces go after raiders inside Somali"
Daily Nation Tuesday October 18, 2011 "Army in for mother of all battles"
Daily Nation Wednesday October 19, 2011 "Kenya, Somali seal pact to hit *Shabaab*"
Daily Nation Thursday, October 20, 2011 "Jets hit Al *Shabaab*, as rains delay march"
Daily Nation Monday October 24, 2011 "Jets pound Kismayu as forces gear up for clash"
Daily Nation Wednesday October 26, 2011 "Police seize grenades and guns in city raids"
Daily Nation Friday October 28, 2011 "9 *Al-Shabaab* killed as Kenyan forces advance"
Daily Nation Saturday October 29, 2011 "The new face of *Al-Shabaab*"
Daily Nation Monday October 31, 2011 "Somali PM jets in for talks as battle looms"
Daily Nation Tuesday November 1, 2011 "*Shabaab* Chief could be probed by Ocampo"
Daily Nation November 17, 2011 "Joint Africa force to hunt militants"
Daily Nation Friday November 4, 2011 "Kismayu residents forced to bear arms"
Daily Nation Tuesday November 8, 2011 "*Al-Shabaab* on the run in South Zone"
Daily Nation Thursday November 10, 2011 "*Shabaab* parade in stronghold"
Daily Nation Friday November 11, 2011 "Troops gear up for fresh *Shabaab* raids"
Daily Nation Saturday November 12, 2011 "Women soldiers in the frontline"

All these headlines reduced the parties involved in the conflict to two, that is, the Kenya Defense Force versus *Alshabaab*, and in the event, only one party had a voice – the former. The newspapers therefore risked portraying the rival party as losing. The fact is that the conflict in Somalia involved more than two parties,[1] but often the newspapers played down the other conflict parties by mentioning them only in passing. Shinar (in Kempf and Shinar 2007) argues that exposing lies, cover-ups and suffering on all sides is an important step towards de-escalating conflicts. The headlines appearing in the two mainstream newspapers for more than a month favored the KDF and eventually served to escalate the conflict, so that an opportunity was missed to employ peace journalism.

The other salient issue about the headlines used to represent the operation is the way they seemed to justify the 'intervention'. Such coverage tends to make the impression that the press was determined to defend Kenya's political economy.

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1. The conflict in Somalia is a battle for political and economic stability and the establishment of a democratic central government. The actors in the conflict include the US backed Transitional Federal Government that gained power after the defeat of the Islamic Court Unions (ICU) by Ethiopian soldiers. The TFG is faced with one major obstacle from remnants of the ICU ideology promoted by its militant wing, *Alshabaab,* which is linked to Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen. The group has been blamed for the recent disappearance of a French and a British tourist off the coast of Kenya and linked to piracy off the Somali coast, as well as terrorist activities in Nairobi and Kampala. The recent disappearances of tourists on Kenyan soil were seen as violating its territorial integrity and a threat to national security, prompting the government to launch retaliatory attacks in operation Linda Nchi (Cf. Senlis Council Report, 2009).

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The press was convinced that relatively stable and peaceful conditions serve political and economic interests. The latter, it would seem, are a prerequisite for democratization. This being the case, Kenya believed that it had initiated a 'necessary' operation that it presumed had the backing of the international hegemonic consensus on human rights and democracy. This was evident on occasions when references were made to the chief prosecutor at The Hague – The latter is regarded as the custodian of the international neo-liberal consensus, a controversial role, especially in the view of many African countries. The presumed role of The Hague was captured in the *Daily Nation* headline of Tuesday, November 1, 2011, "*Shabaab* chief could be probed by Ocampo" (Barasa and Khalif, 2011). Some of the headlines also expressed the general fear of the radical nature of Islamic fundamentalist ideology and its potential threats – which exceeded the capacity of the Kenyan government to address on its own. There seemed to be a larger consensus that the nature of the ideology and its unforeseen effects have repercussions across national borders, and therefore many countries must work together to defeat it.

This being the case, Kenya saw the need for diplomatic efforts in which other nations would be asked to support the 'necessary' war to defeat the common enemy. A key strategy to achieve this was to gain the cooperation of the Arab world by persuading Saudi Arabia (the heart of Arab and Islamic civilization) to support the operation and to work in tandem with the Somali Transitional Government (TFG). The latter would lend more weight by legitimizing the operation and guaranteeing grassroots support. This strategy worked to manipulate public opinion among Muslims and allay their fears that the operation was specifically targeted against Islam. This was evidenced by headlines such as the *Standard's* Monday, November 21, 2011 "Kibaki woos Emirates to back assault" (Standard Reporter and Agencies, 2011) and the *Daily Nation's* Monday, October 31, 2011 "Somali PM jets in for talks as battle looms" (Bocha and Khalif, 2011). Implied was that the *Alshabaab* threat in the region warranted some form of joint effort to combat it. The *Standard* Thursday, October 20, 2011 story entitled "strategy unfolds" (undated, 2011) explained that the Kenyan alliance with its Somali neighbors was intended to shore up regional support for the operation. Thereby the joint forces were claimed to be targeting the port of Kismayu, in order to reassure the news audience and/or citizens of their security.

News about the operation vs. 'Reality'

The headlines appearing in the two newspapers seemed to justify the use of force, and skeptical readers could question the underlying motives even without reading the whole story. Did these headlines really mirror the reality of the operation? In an attempt to discuss such a complex question, this study refers back to the first two newspaper headlines and unpacks the narratives behind them. As discussed above, the two headlines reported on the first day of the operation and set the tone for other reports. They set the agenda and shaped the discursive framework in which the operation was reported on in subsequent stories and in other newspapers, as I show below by unpacking their overall meaning. But first – what was the real motive behind the narratives presented below the two headlines? The media seem to have sympathized with the political and economic class fears of imminent threats and possible terrorist attacks in Kenya. In addition, there was a general consensus that *Alshabaab* was threatening the security of tourists and the tourism industry, indispensable for Kenyan prosperity. The media seemed to have bought into this consensus, considering the arguments advanced above about structural factors and how they impact on media agency. Critical political economy draws attention to the complex relationships between political and economic structures and what they imply about media agency and operations.

On one level, Kenyan media were caught up by the need to protect the system that ensures that it can operate and make a profit and, on another level, by the need to act as a societal watchdog to protect national interests in the name of patriotism and allegiance to the Kenyan nation. But were there other ways in which the media could have done this and helped further peace? This is a difficult question, given that no amount of media silence or peace reporting could have stopped *Alshabaab* from 'threatening' Kenyan national security. *Alshabaab* appeared determined to deliberately destabilize the country through various outrages, including rampant piracy, kidnappings and killings (See Senlis Council Report, 2009). The question is equally difficult, because it would naturally lead this discussion to the main criticism against PJ, especially the attempts to situate it in mainstream journalism. The idea that comes to mind is the sensitivity of journalistic *detachment* in mainstream journalism, as opposed to that of *attachment* in PJ. How could Kenyan journalists remain detached in a conflict that directly involved them and threatened their interests? Hanitzsch (2007:3) maintains:

„Journalism should not only report reality 'as it is', rather it should create reality, set examples and call for change. This form of advocacy journalism, 'journalism of attachment' that will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor is problematic because journalists presume power to identify victims and perpetrators... Peace journalism is closely related to the tenets of good journalism ... this form of journalism is not to replace war propaganda with peace propaganda, but it does imply dismissing simple antagonism between good and evil." (Hanitzsch, 2007:3).

Hanitzsch (2007) further proposes neutrality, detachment and objectivity – win-win frames that are actually a good idea, but this depends on the nature of the events covered and the context, and also on considering journalists together with their background. It would be difficult to see how Kenyan journalists could apply the concept of "win-win" frames of conflict in regard to *Operation Linda Nchi,* because they were directly involved in the conflict, which targeted an elusive militia

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group, and it appeared that the Kenya Defense Force was fighting an invisible foe. There was an incident where the Kenyan navy fired on Kenyan fishermen with live ammunition, claiming afterwards that they were either *Alshabaab* fighters or their sympathizers. The navy argued that it had reached the decision because it had ordered the fishermen to stop, but they ignored the order. In Peace Journalism, the media has a political obligation to participate and stand up for peace, but it can be difficult for peace journalism to succeed in cases where the 'enemy' on the battlefield is invisible and at the same time lethal. This means that it would be in the interest of Kenyan journalists for the 'enemy' to be defeated, since they also feel threatened.

The *Daily Nation,* Monday, October 17, 2011 headline "Kenyan forces go after raiders inside Somalia" (Mukinda and Agencies, 2011) was misleading and violated the watchdog responsibility or intention of the newspaper. The paper seemed determined to operate as a 'war monger' for two reasons: First, to win public support regarding the war and, second, to sell the newspaper to sensation-hungry readers. The extensive reliance on news agencies was problematic, because news agencies usually take a Eurocentric view of events in Africa, and it would not be surprising if the news they provided were sensational and superficial (Ndlela, 2005). Similarly, *The Standard* Monday, October 17, 2011 story "Action begins" (Ongeri and Ombati, 2011) celebrated the conflict. This paper focused on the three themes mentioned above for analytical purposes, namely: *Alshabaab, Operation Linda Nchi* and the War against Terror. Using ideological analysis, we studied the context in which the three themes were embedded in a story in order to understand their underlying meanings. The themes were identified quantitatively by actually counting their frequency of occurrence and qualitatively analyzed to unpack the meaning of those occurrences, and the wider implications of the contexts in which they are found. The themes utilized by the narratives under the two headlines appearing in the *Sunday Nation* and the *Standard* at the onset of the operation are listed in Table 1.

Theme	Frequency of occurrence	
	Sunday Nation	*The Standard*
Alshabaab	9	8
Operation Linda Nchi	2	0
War against terror	Occupied an exclusive permanent section	

Table 1: Themes utilized in the *Sunday Nation* and the *Standard* at the onset of the operation

The three themes were inter-linked in the two stories quantitatively presented above, as they were in all the subsequent stories. *Alshabaab*, which had the greatest frequency of occurrence, was framed in the stories as a 'common enemy' that must be defeated by all means, justifying the importance of *Operation Linda Nchi*. The latter was also framed in a manner suggesting that due to the instability in Somalia, all the possible interventions for peace and security in Kenya had been exhausted, making military intervention inevitable – thus the operation was the last and only remaining option. This was well captured in the *Standard,* Saturday, October 29, 2011 in a story entitled "Kibaki: Why there is no turning back" (Agina and Presidential Press Service, 2011). The story reported how the commander-in-chief of the Kenyan armed forces had taken the world stage to explain Kenya's move. The report was really nothing more than a justification of the operation. The story was accompanied by a photograph of heavily armed soldiers of the Kenyan Defense Force, signifying that the operation was underway and "there was no turning back." The "war against terror," as a central theme, occupied an exclusive permanent section in both newspapers, signifying the degree to which both newspapers perceived *Alshabaab* as a threat.

The *Nation*, Sunday, October 16, 2010 headline "Kenya troops off to war" (Ongeri and Ombati, 2011), referred to above, gave a chronological justification for the operation. The main reason was seemingly to secure Kenyan borders and economic interests. The threats and attacks received anecdotal and chronological coverage.[1] They were intended to explain the extent to which the militia group was threatening the country's security and political economy. The country's then top security chief, the minister of internal security, the late Professor George Saitoti,[2] therefore declared war on *Alshabaab,* arguing that Kenya had a right to self-defense as stated in its constitution and the UN Charter.

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1. The threats included the 2009 attack on the Dadajabula police station, the 2010 kidnapping of two nuns in Elwak, an attack on the GSU in Liboi in March 2011, a border violation in Mandera in July of the same year, the September 2011 mine explosions in Madera town, targeting police and the military, where two soldiers were reportedly kidnapped, and the October 2011 murder of a British tourist, David Tebbut, and the kidnapping of his wife, Judith, who was later released after the family paid a ransom, followed by the kidnapping of a French woman, Marie Dedieu, from a hotel on Manda Island, and the disappearance of two members of the Kenyan Navy.
2. The Minister for Internal Security, Prof. George Saitoti, and his assistant, Joshua Orwa Ojode, recently died in a mysterious police helicopter crash on their way to a fundraising event in Mbita (Nyanza province). The cause of the crash is yet to be established. Their deaths are seen as a major blow to reformers in Kenya, including the police, given the ongoing operations in Somalia and the recent terrorist grenade attacks in the country. See the story by Ogenga, 2012, entitled " Euro-copter: Kenyans must not lose sight of ongoing police reforms in honor of Saitoti and Ojode," online at www.tazamamediaconsultants.blogspot.com

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The paradox is that when it comes to representing Kenyan politics the two newspapers, which are traditional rivals, at least ideologically, seemed to report on the operation with a similar tone and from a similar angle. This is a clear case of an instance in which media were influenced by political ideologies and interests. The operation was treated as a national-interest issue, where the local media were obliged to serve the interests of the nation. Therefore, in most of the stories the media downplayed the reasons why *Alshabaab* was fighting within and outside of Somalia. It would make more sense to subject *Alshabaab's* actions to precise analysis than to dismiss them as simple terrorism. This would be more useful if such a process did not serve to marginalize the group, but instead helped to cultivate values like tolerance and inclusion as means to promote peace and security. It is very difficult to imagine how groups that celebrate violence can be defeated violently or how Kenya can really rid itself of Somalis in Kenya. Often, Kenyans have conflated being Somali and being terrorists, and given that the country also has an equal number of Somalis of Kenyan origin, there should have been better ways of handling the situation. The best way would be to use non-violent strategies that involve engaging the groups and finding commonalities that could lead to a shared consensus. The media should be at the forefront of such efforts, as suggested by Shinar's (in Kempf and Shinar 2007) calls for media to develop creative ideas for conflict resolution.

However, for obvious reasons, it would seem very ambitious for the media to play a leading role in conflict resolution. Considering the record of the Kenyan press, such aspirations would perhaps seem self-righteous, since it has frequently been suspected of abuses, e.g., accused of fueling internal political violence along ethnic lines in 2007 (See Ogenga 2010; Ogenga, 2008). Therefore, one would not be surprised that the stories about the operation reported by the two newspapers were accompanied by photographs and captions that seemed to support the war. Dor (in Media Monitoring Unit 2009) also points out that editors often include words, images or metaphors that stimulate emotional reactions. Reportage is sometimes slanted by editorial decisions, not shaped by the events alone. Some of the photographs accompanying newspaper stories on the operation served as 'hooks', while the accompanying texts anchored the meaning. The *Daily Nation,* Saturday, November 12, 2011 story "Women soldiers on the frontline" (Ngirachu, 2011) and the *Standard* story "Troops' fierce gunfight as new grenade attack kills 4" (Jubat, 2011), for example, offered photographs of female soldiers intended to stir readers' emotions and create anxiety about the extent of the conflict. The representation of Kenyan women on the battlefield was also meant to challenge *Sharia* laws that downgrade women and their status in Muslim societies. The message seemed to clash with *Alshabaab's* ambition to entrench *Sharia* law across borders.

Another important technique used by the two newspapers is related to news sources. The Kenyan government, through a military spokesman (Major Emmanuel Chirchir), controlled the images and information made available to the press about the operation. This controlled sourcing of information was used to frame stories about the war. The Kenyan Defense Force (KDF) spokesman was the only official source allowed to release information about the operation to journalists, propaganda being a powerful weapon in any conflict (Galtung, 2002). In a *Daily Nation,* November 12, 2011 story in the section on "War on Terror," entitled "Women at the front playing their role in anti-*Shabaab* war" (Ngirachu, 2011), Major Chirchir was quoted as announcing that:

„It has been observed that as a new propaganda tactic, the *Alshabaab* will stimulate an attack engagement and then exaggerate it by peddling lies to the media that KDF and TFG forces were engaged in combat and as a result, some of our soldiers have been hurt or killed and their equipment confiscated." (*Daily Nation,* November 12, 2011: 17).

While this might simply be dismissed as propaganda, it is difficult to accept the claim that Kenya has yet to suffer a major casualty. According to the KDF military spokesman, it seemed there were no further deaths apart from the casualties following the helicopter crash on the first day of the operation. However, such a position is hard to sustain, for in recent months the KDF has admitted to having lost several other soldiers. The interesting point is that both *Alshabaab* and the KDF traded accusations and counter-accusations about the nature of the conflict, with both sides accusing the other of propaganda – a typical way in which propaganda works. The journalists were usually faced with pressure to release breaking news to audiences/markets and would on some occasions even file inaccurate stories. So why did the Kenyan media tread carefully when releasing stories about the operation? First, they were parties to the conflict and therefore attached, rather than detached, so that news was not just offered for the purpose of selling their newspapers – broader interests were threatened. Second, they were warned and alerted by the Kenyan government through the KDF of the danger of selling propaganda stories and therefore "hurting the morale" of Kenyan soldiers in the operation. Lynch (2006:74) states that, "Peace Journalism is a critical realist theory about the reporting of conflict." In reporting on the latter, the relationship between the recipient and the report should be carefully examined. News should be conceived of as a representation of something other than itself – 'a report of the facts'. Wright (in Lynch 2006: 74) further explains that:

„Facts are readily-mediated by the time journalists, let alone readers and audiences, come into contact with them...inevitably, there are more facts than can be fitted into the reports...so considering the nature of dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known, it is the criteria on which choices, or 'gatekeeping decisions', are made – as to which facts to include, and which to leave out – that are the salient issues." (Wright in Lynch, 2006: 74).

Given that in any conflict situation the process of accessing facts in representations is usually textual or intertextual, proper scrutiny should be given to how power is exercised over and within these representations. Propaganda is employed delib-

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erately, "to shape public perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behavior to achieve a response that captures the desired intent of the propagandist" (Lynch, 2006: 75). That Major Emmanuel Chirichir was the only person legitimated as having reliable or official information on the conflict, and the continued reliance of the two newspapers on his statements is a testimony to the symbiotic relationship between the media and politicians or government officials (McNair, 1998).

In the *Daily Nation*, Friday, November 11, 2011 a continuing story entitled "troops gear up for fresh *Alshabaab* raids" (Leftie and Khalif, 2011) constituted agenda setting in war reportage. This controversial story was a further installment of the propagandistic allegations regarding the operation, whereby the Kenyan government accused Eritrea of arming *Alshabaab*. The source of the story can be traced to diplomatic relations between the USA and Eritrea. The *Nation* reported that, "Talks about Eritrea supplying arms to *Alshabaab* reeks into the US poking its nose into our country's noble cause" (*Daily Nation* Friday, November 11, 2011: 4). *Operation Linda Nchi* was regarded by the media as a 'noble' cause that should not be allowed to fail by anyone, not even the proponents of the "war on terror" – the USA. The writer of the story appearing in *The Daily Nation* argued:

„America should confine its assistance to logistical support, intelligence and drone strike (something the USA has openly refuted) targeting *Alshabaab* command centers and other high value targets not easily accessible to the Kenyan air force.... quarreling with Eritrea will only ignite unnecessary hostilities in an already volatile region...Ethiopia must be gleefully watching this unfolding drama. Kenya's move against *Alshabaab* should not be used to settle other nations' old scores." (*Daily Nation* Friday, November 11, 2011: 4).

An interesting fact about the above story is that it was written by a retired major general, Immana Laibuta. He is a former Kenyan army officer, presently running a security consulting agency in Southern Sudan. This underscores the previous discussion on the utilization of official sources for gate-keeping and the framing of issues, whereby 'facts' are selectively assembled to construct news.

Conclusion

As long as the Western ideologies of mainstream journalism prevail, it will be difficult to realize peace journalism. This can be compounded in situations where journalists are parties to the conflicts they seek to report on, as in the case of Kenyan newspaper coverage of *Operation Linda Nchi*. However, journalists must use their own individual journalistic value judgments, which should not be divorced from the prevailing realities on the ground. These value judgments are somewhat problematic, because they are shaped by the psychological dispositions of journalists and influenced by their cultural background. However, this bias can be overcome by a broader universal moral consensus that cuts across ethnic identities and cultures (cultural relativism) that can help form the basis of such judgments. Such considerations should not be taken for granted when representing events. Despite arguments for cultural relativism, it is reasonable to think that human rights, democracy, peace and security are universal values, since they define common predicaments of all mankind.

Even though Kenyan journalists focused on and highlighted imminent *Alshabaab* threats to Kenyans, such as grenade attacks, kidnapping and piracy, their reportage served to downplay the repercussions of the operation for ordinary, innocent Somalis. Since the operation began, the number of refugees streaming into Kenya from Southern Somalia has increased. Often, these refugees, mostly women and children, got a rather cold welcome and were poorly treated by the Kenyan authorities and, in many cases, detained by border patrols. To sanitize the negative implications of the operation, news was sometimes dominated by the humanitarian initiatives of the KDF. These news stories were accompanied by visuals of soldiers helping sick and starving women and children in Somali villages with food and medicine. Peace Journalism advocates argue that in any conflict situation journalists must highlight suffering on both sides and seek any remote possibility of a peaceful resolution. The manner in which the two newspapers covered the conflict, discussed in this paper, sadly shows how the Kenyan press missed a perfect opportunity to employ PJ in a conflict-prone region of Africa (Horn of Africa), leaving the hopes of pursuing this noble ideal further from realization. This conclusion is not surprising, since even the most outstanding scholars in Peace Journalism, such as Kempf (2003: 10), concede that journalists need training in order to implement "the model of de-escalation oriented and/or solution oriented conflict reporting," as conceptualized in PJ. Such training should emphasize the social psychological aspects that influence individual journalists, the institutional structures and processes that influence and sanction their work, and their role in representing reality.

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