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ABSTRACT

Purpose:
This dissertation assesses the power of motion media, and discovers to what extent video has been (or is being) used in peacebuilding activities and analyses the effectiveness of such application.
In addition, it makes a recommendation of a new way that video could be applied within a conflict context.

Method:
This is a desk-top study based on a literature review and thorough web and publication research.
Taking theory and findings from a number of motion media and conflict analysts, the dissertation examines the work and outcomes of a number of video-based peacebuilding projects.

Conclusions:
The research finds that motion media does indeed have considerable power to influence its audience.
Most peacebuilding organisations do not utilise the latest motion media and communications technology despite successes of traditional media usage in their activities.
Where video has been utilised, the effects are wide-ranging and significant in their ability to alter opinion and behaviour in conflict situations.
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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

## ACRONYMS

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<tr>
<td>3G</td>
<td>Third Generation</td>
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<tr>
<td>AoCMF</td>
<td>Age of Civilisations Media Fund</td>
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<td>ASTEP</td>
<td>Africa Sports and Talents Empowerment Program</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPOR</td>
<td>Capacity Building for Post-Conflict Reintegration project</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICS</td>
<td>Centre for International Cooperation and Security  (part of the University of Bradford’s Department of Peace Studies)</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>Co-operative Problem Solving</td>
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<td>CRISE</td>
<td>Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity  (DFID-supported research centre at the University of Oxford)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Global Peace Index</td>
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<td>IDF</td>
<td>Israeli Defense Force</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>IEP</td>
<td>Institute of Economics and Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDRP</td>
<td>Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBS</td>
<td>Public Broadcasting System</td>
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<td>PCAD</td>
<td>Projet de Collect et destruction d’Armes pour le Développement  (Collection &amp; Destruction of Weapons for Development Project)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Participatory Learning and Action</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rapid Appraisal</td>
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<td>PSI</td>
<td>Population Services International</td>
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<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>Participatory Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>User-Generated Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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TERMS

Without delving into media technicalities too much, I should explain some of the terms used herein.

The Media
The established understanding of existing mass communications platforms. These include television, radio, film, the news, print (newspapers, magazines, etc).

New Media
These include digital media such as online content (video, audio and text), 3G (created by mobile phones and other palmtop devices), games, and non-professional video content.

Video
I use the term video fairly loosely to come under motion media. The term can include material produced for or broadcast on television, and the whole gamut of online and DIY/home (or consumer-produced) video. On a minor technical note – there is a difference between ‘film’ and ‘video’ (the former being celluloid-based, the latter being tape or digital which is not film) but as far as we are concerned with them in this dissertation as communication platforms (rather than technical moving picture formats), I will call them both video even if the source footage originated on film format.

Motion Media
I use this term in order to zero in on exactly what I’m talking about. One can say video but this may mean television or self-made web video. One can apply the term new media but we may not always be talking about video content per se. New media may only be an audio file or an e-book. Motion media describes moving visual content which can encompass more than simply video but be more specific than new media. It could be animation, a computer game, an iPhone app, etc.

DEFINITIONS


Conflict
The pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. Conflict can be caused by any number or combination of factors including economic, social, political, cultural and geographical.

Violence
Quantitative and qualitative life expectancy of individuals or communities is intentionally reduced. Can be visible in the form of: physical violence – armed
combat and property destruction; or psychological violence – intended to produce mental suffering; or less apparent in the form of cultural violence – ideological and political legitimising or facilitating of other forms of violence; structural violence – built into social/civil systems in the form of discrimination, etc.

Conflict Management / Peacemaking
Short term problem solving. Actions might include disarmament or separating conflicting parties to reduce, contain or avoid violence. This does not address underlying causes of conflict. Can create so-called ‘negative peace’.

Conflict Resolution / Peacekeeping
Mechanisms to enable transitions to sustainable peace, such as peace treaties.

Conflict Transformation / Peacebuilding
Root causes of conflict are addressed and forms of violence tackled when identified. The creation of and efforts towards sustainable peace (also known as ‘positive’ peace).

Sustainable Peace
An absence of physical violence. Root causes of conflict are or can be addressed and there is a self-sustained capacity to transform conflicts constructively.

Conflict Prevention
Observing and addressing sources of potential conflict before they trigger forms of violence.
The idea is simple: Why not incorporate video and video making techniques directly into conflict management, resolution and/or transformation processes?

The research, however, was not quite so simple. My initial quantitative desk-based approach struggled to yield the case studies for which I was searching. Whilst there were plenty of peace and reconciliation organisations out there, many with policies on media usage, I found few with clear documented evidence that demonstrated they’d engaged in the specific activities with which this dissertation is concerned. The distinguishing element is this: an organisation with a media strategy is usually one which pertains to existing media, and that meant mostly news media. I was looking for ways to introduce purpose-made video into existing peacebuilding practices.

I remained positive. Digging a little deeper, I made phone calls and visited offices and, where leads to potential case studies came to a dead end, new lines of enquiry opened up. The overall picture that formed was intriguing. Established organisations were media savvy and yet ‘new media’ ignorant. Most had begun to use video and the internet in the last few years, having YouTube accounts and the like, but few as far as I was concerned had truly unlocked the potential of the technology. In some cases, it felt less like innovation and more like received wisdom. I imagined conversations: “So I hear that viral video is good. We should do that!” “Social networking is good. We should do that!” But few really understood what ‘that’ was.

Since producing video for web is my profession which necessarily includes a healthy knowledge of online promotion, I’m naturally very excited by this skills gap in the peacebuilding sector. It gives someone with my skillset something to offer, hence the motivation to write this dissertation.

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1 See Glossary for an explanation of new media.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I’m grateful to a number of people without whom this document would not exist; at least it wouldn’t exist with my name on it.

In chronological order, I’d like to thank Baha Hilo and the Joint Advocacy Initiative for demonstrating that it is possible for people living in the midst of violent conflict to think and act positively and rationally towards peace and justice. It is their light that has illuminated my current path in life.

Thanks to my parents and grandparents for their unconditional support and encouragement in all my endeavours, be they in the realms of activism or academia. Special thanks to Mum, Mike & Brian ‘Poppa’ Walsh for their unprompted financial and emotional assistance during my studies at Oxford Brookes University.

I’d like to extend my appreciation to the following teachers (I prefer this word to any other title and reserve it only for those individuals I believe truly imparted knowledge and/or opinions that got through to me): David Sanderson, for never giving into cynicism whilst maintaining a cool grasp on the difficult realities of development practice, and Nabeel Hamdi whose great vision and great humility form a striking balance I hugely admire and is a lesson in itself. Credit must lastly be given to Simon Fisher, author of Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action and my teacher for just one similarly entitled module, not only for the content and approach to the teaching of said module, but for a five minute conversation on the way to lunch one day in early 2010 which sparked a whole line of enquiry for me within the field of conflict resolution and transformation. This new direction in my study of the subject was, I now realise, staring me in the face for some years but had until that point remained invisible to me.

The following dissertation is the result of taking the first steps into exploring this new and potentially expandable route of both theory and practice.

The aforementioned conversation (abridged) was simple:
“What do you do for a living?” asked Simon.
“I make videos.” I replied.
“What made you take this course?”
“I’m interested in the Middle East.”
“Have you ever thought of combining the two..?”
During my time at Oxford Brookes and even before on various development and/or humanitarian volunteering placements, my job as a videographer had, on occasion, raised questions along the lines of ‘Why don’t you make a documentary about...[insert development issue here]’ or ‘You could make a video for ...[insert name of charity here]’ So it wasn’t exactly the first time that crossover between my professional occupation and my interests beyond it had been suggested.

Simon, though, was getting at something slightly different - a twist on combining video and peacebuilding activities. By suggesting I explore this relatively recent and much narrower spectrum of activities, he planted a seed that would see me reverse my position on combining my media expertise with my academic endeavours, and take a new direction on which this dissertation is based and in which my future lies.
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to examine how video has been used in a peacebuilding capacity. I will explore the relationship between visual motion media and conflict with specific regard to its impact on peaceful outcomes to conflict. I will demonstrate, providing academic research and examples, how the media has a significant influence on the opinions and behaviours of its audience.

This will inform and justify the use of motion media as an aid in peacebuilding processes, and I will explain how recent technological advances in consumer-level communications media have introduced a new dimension to existing theory and uses for visual media within the peacebuilding field.

Through an assessment of various case studies, I will discover how practitioners have used motion media in their work and evaluate their results. By understanding the successes and failures of these examples, I will formulate my own example approach to incorporating video into conflict resolution methods, the description of which will form the final chapters of this dissertation.

This dissertation is not specifically a study of how conflict is reported in the news media nor is it a study of organisations or projects working to alter or regulate how conflict is represented in existing media. Instead, I hope to find and evaluate the activities of organisations that create or appropriate self-produced or commissioned video for use as a tool in addressing conflict.

RESEARCH METHODS

SUMMARY

This work is a research project based on desk-top study of journals, books, websites and videos. I conducted a literature review, firstly to ascertain what research existed in the subject field to decide on the focus for this dissertation, and secondly to gather up-to-date research to inform my writing. This forms the ‘Incentives’ section of the dissertation. Next, I concentrated on gathering data regarding peacebuilding theory and practice and used this to inform my analysis of video use in a variety of examples from the field. This forms the ‘Examples’ section. Lastly, using this analytical study to make conclusions about the successes and failures of
video use in peacebuilding practice, I made recommendations based on what I have learnt. This forms this ‘Innovations’ section.

METHODOLOGY

To form the chapters in what I’ve called the ‘Incentives’ section of the dissertation, I explored existing research on the background of my chosen topic i.e. the effects of the media and how it relates to conflict. To select the specific focus of this dissertation, I examined the research to discover to what degree these had covered the qualities unique to video over that of other forms of communications media such as radio or print. As much work has been produced on societal effects of simulated images of violence in entertainment, I narrowed my search down further by seeking data pertaining to motion media within the context of real peace and conflict situations. This would also improve on my understanding as I built the ‘Examples’ section of the dissertation which looks at video projects addressing real conflicts.

Making up the centre of my study – the chapters of the ‘Examples’ section – was my search for and assessment of video peacebuilding activities. There were two main routes to data gathering and analysis. Firstly, I collected peacemaking and peacebuilding theories and practices from a wide range of publications and organisations. Secondly, either through being cited in publications or through web searches, I found organisations using and producing video as a tool for addressing conflict. These led me to others through either contacting them directly or by following web links. I correlated the two sets of data in order to find theoretical crossover – where existing understanding and methodology was manifested in the activities of these organisations and their video projects.

To build on my conclusions and formulate my own thinking, in the chapters within the ‘Innovations’ section of this document, I analysed the correlations between peacebuilding theory and the video practices found in the previous section to examine their effects and judge successes and failures. In addition, I explored further theory in order to make informed recommendations for improved or innovative use of video based on my findings, testing them against known development project design evaluation methods.
SECTION 1: INCENTIVES

1.1 WHY CONFRONT CONFLICT?

Before looking at new ways to tackle conflict, we should establish why it is desirable or necessary to do so by examining the context in which both the motivations for reducing or altering conflict become clearer, and crucially how these are not unrelated to one another. In fact, far from the realms of altruism, the desire to address conflict is often expressed as a need, owing to its connection to development and aid in general.

1.2 CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT

‘The rationale for transforming conflict situations and establishing a stable peace is not purely altruistic... Instability and violence in any part of the world will have an impact on neighbouring countries.’

This impact is not merely political. The effects can be very physical too, in the form of refugees and outbreaks of disease, not to mention economic fallout. So managing conflict is the key to minimising or containing such consequences, but peacebuilding – that is to address underlying issues and form sustainable peace – is the key to enabling development long-term. Conversely, conflict and violence are inhibitors of development.

Since the end of the Cold War era, the key characteristics of violent conflicts around the globe have changed. On the whole, more civilians are killed or injured in modern conflicts than military personnel. Additionally, there have been more internal conflicts within states than between countries. Many of these cases are less economically developed nations (Cairns, 1997; Doyle & Sambinis, 2000; Collier, 2008). From these late 20th and early 21st century trends, we can see emerging a space in which humanitarian aid agencies and non-governmental organisations, as opposed to exclusively state-run entities, are key components in a development structure. Conflict and post-conflict regions, therefore, lend operational validity to civilian organisations dealing with civilians in areas where the state is failing or simply non-existent.

Consequently, there is a role to play for such organisations when present in

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conflict zones. When considering civil war, still the overriding form of conflict in developing countries, actions must be informed by examining what factors contribute and ultimately trigger violent conflict.

These factors are numerous and not unconnected with one another, nor do they constitute the cause of conflict solely, and it is often interconnected elements or combinations thereof which can lead to outbreaks of violence. Of the reasons, the economic stability and development of a nation is cited as a major factor in proneness to conflict (Collier, 2008). Countries with low income and slow growth rates are more prone to civil war. Additionally, it is also true that civil war can reduce income and slow down growth rates. This cycle of poverty and risk of internal conflict has been called the ‘conflict trap’³. Paul Collier (2003, 2008) of the University of Oxford, working with empirical data, claims that there are various ‘traps’ into which countries that fail to develop at the same pace as others can fall. By virtue of its ‘catch 22’ nature, the conflict trap is difficult for developing countries to escape from. According to Collier and the World Bank’s observations⁴, poor states that do achieve some level of peace after a civil war are statistically highly likely to return to violence within a decade. Furthermore, states in economic decline during a post-conflict period are weaker and thus a more vulnerable to insurgencies striking again. Conflict, therefore, should be addressed because doing so aims to break this cycle and therefore encourage development but there are problems that come with this responsibility which should be carefully considered.

It is important to note that whilst development is linked to conflict, development agencies working in conflict scenarios should be fully aware and practice conflict sensitivity in order to avoid exacerbating conflicts. If we look briefly at an example case, we can see a dual dynamic at play. In the latter part of 2001, following the breakdown of peace talks between Maoist rebels and the government in Nepal, violence escalated. Acting on the premise that governmental capacity building was required, aid was concentrated amongst a small number of agencies and controlled by state actors, rather than reaching impoverished communities. The lack of direct benefits to the poor and the failures of aid and the government resonated in conflict sensitive areas.⁵ The Department for International

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⁴ Collier, et al. (2003)
⁵ Segal, M. (2008) OECD DAC GOVNET Governance Assessment Conference, Case Study 4A Nepal
Development (DFID) commissioned an assessment of the key factors in the conflict. It claimed that: ‘whilst poverty and social exclusion were critically tied up with the causes of conflict, the actions and behaviour of the elite-dominated government, bureaucracy and aid donors were intrinsically part of the problem.’

The report showed that development agencies & their donors were partially responsible for the continuation of violence that aid supplies were designed to prevent. The two factors that formed the dynamic of conflict in this case were a backdrop of poverty and social exclusion of certain groups, and the interactions of the development community, the presence of whom was intended to improve the situation rather than aggravate it. Consequently, DFID has now identified four objectives which, if met, can achieve ‘positive’ peace. One of which is to ‘support inclusive political settlements and processes’. This more even spread of power is understood to reduce the risk of conflict (Reynal-Querol, 2002) and in later chapters we will look at ways that video is democratising power and thus could be built into a peacebuilding project with the same goal.

The amount of attention placed on assessing common factors underpinning conflict, and the links between aid within conflict zones or that which is specifically introduced to reduce conflict, is not incidental. DFID cites conflict as an obstacle to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, and this is especially the case for those countries furthest from reaching them. In addition to recognising the importance of, for example, economic growth and a fully inclusive political process, it also champions the strengthening of what it calls ‘core functions of the state’ in order to deliver a ‘peace dividend.’

These recommendations for programme design carry with them the hope for tangible developmental benefits as a return on an investment in peace. So we can see a recognised understanding that peace and conflict are inextricably linked to development and poverty in countries that are most troubled by these factors. We can therefore see, in effect, sustainable development as a form of conflict prevention and conflict transformation as providing opportunities for development.

Overall, of course, it is not one factor (such as economic reasons) which alone causes armed conflict. In an ongoing study, the Centre for Research on

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6 DFID Research 2009–2010: Providing Research Evidence that Enables Poverty Reduction
7 Building Peaceful States and Societies - A DFID Practice Paper (2010)
8 Building Peaceful States and Societies - A DFID Practice Paper (2010)
Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) at the University of Oxford claims that ‘conflict is more likely to occur in areas where economic, social, political and cultural status inequalities occur simultaneously, and where some groups are deprived across every dimension.’ The same report also links media to conflict by concluding that the media is influential in forming public opinion and that this can spark conflict based only on media-driven perceptions despite facts on the ground.

1.3 THE MEDIA

The multi-dimensional, multi-directional relationship between the media and viewer is not straightforward. In otherwise stable or peaceful societies, wider discussions about mass media often entail arguments centred on the notion that violent content in television programmes and feature films contributes directly to acts of real violence in communities. Such polarised debates are either attested or contested with fervour, usually through the same media channels charged with supplying this gruesome imagery. Whilst that would be a topic for a different thesis, the fact that these debates rage on highlights a more consistent truth which lies at the heart of the real issue: In the Information Age, the media has an influential role in public discourse and furthermore, in the 21st century, public discourse is itself expressed and negotiated through mass media and information technology.

In these chapters I will examine the power and position of motion media and explain why it is of concern to peacebuilders and extremely useful to those who wish to use it constructively in the pursuit of peace.

1.4 THE POWER OF THE MEDIA

There is an analogy that compares the media to a hypodermic syringe which without alteration or contamination injects the messages imbued in the cultural products that it delivers directly into its audience. It may be tempting to scapegoat the umbrella term of ‘the media’ but the hypodermic needle paradigm is not an accurate representation of how media consumption works (Hart, 1991; Abercrombie, 1996).

There is a negotiation between the messenger and the recipient, often with

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many links in the chain so that the original message is negotiated and re-appropriated many times as it passes from recipient to recipient. It is these so-called negotiations that alter the cultural product in the mind of each consumer, as they interpret what is being relayed. It is not simply a case of ‘monkey see monkey do.’ The power of the media is not based in the crude notion of an immediate behavioural replication of on-screen violence consumed through mass media. The potential of its power is more complex. It affects our thinking, which informs how we construct meaning and comprehend our world and our relationships. It influences our responses which, when other conditions apply, can alter our behaviour.

Existing broadcast media is a colossal landscape of messages competing with one another and the online media world has exponentially added to this. You cannot predict exactly how an individual consumer is going to receive and respond to a media product, despite explicit intentions embedded within it by its producers. However, we can examine overall audience reactions in order to form an understanding of the impact of the media, and analyse the content of the media in correlation.

With regards to peace and conflict and the power of the media, an excellent testing ground to assess its influence on audiences is television news’ coverage of war.

1.4.1 THE NEWS

Motion media provides news for the world’s population with large corporate media infrastructures delivering television and online news around the world. Whilst there is an increasing trend amongst young people to get their news online, in the UK and the US the majority of people watch the television to find out the news.\textsuperscript{11}

The agenda-setting abilities of television news are long established. That is to say that the news can influence what the public is thinking about but the ability to influence exactly how the public thinks is less understood (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). However, in a study produced by the University of Maryland (UoM) in the United States, the power of the media to shape simple facts and create misperceptions in the minds of its audience specifically during times of conflict was revealed.

\textsuperscript{10} This theory dates back to the 1920s and The Frankfurt School.
\textsuperscript{11} \url{http://people-press.org/report/689/} and \url{http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/tv-}
Eighty percent of respondents said they got most of their news from television and radio sources, as opposed to print media. According to the report, the polling of all its respondents highlighted three key misperceptions – areas in which the opinions expressed or the beliefs held by those polled ‘were at odds with the dominant view in the intelligence community’ or their grasp of facts demonstrably incorrect. The study went on to identify the specific sources of news consumed by those polled. It found that viewers of Fox News were those who held the most of the three commonly identified misperceptions and viewers of PBS the least. According to the study’s figures, eighty percent of the Fox News viewers polled held one or more of these misperceptions and were more than twice as likely to hold all three than viewers of the nearest network.

Importantly, the poll distinguishes between various demographics placing them into sub-groups within each network’s audience. The results show that the source of respondents’ news was ultimately the defining factor in their perceptions, as respondents with similar political persuasions (for example, Democrat or Republican voters) but different news viewing habits fit the overriding trend, e.g. Democrats viewing Fox held more misperceptions than PBS viewing Democrats. This suggests that the figures do not simply highlight differences in the viewer demographic that each network attracts but demonstrate empirically that, depending on the television news channels they watched, viewers would hold different opinions about current conflict affairs. The report indicates that television news shapes our opinions and, even taking into account our existing political and social beliefs, can influence and persuade us to think in certain ways about a particular military campaign.

The results of this report are consistent with the findings of a number of studies within this field. Indeed, media analysts in the United States have claimed links between the dominant messages of news media and building public consensus for military action in Iraq (McChesney, 2004; Tumber, 2004). However, we should keep in mind that this research concentrates on news media which by definition sets the agenda of public discourse and initiates our opinion making. What research, then, has been done into the capabilities of motion media in general to influence our

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1.4.2 NOT IF BUT HOW

Existing psychological theories relating to how we form opinions and make judgements that influence our behaviour have been demonstrated in experiments involving participants’ responses to video in a recent study funded by the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund (AoCMF)\textsuperscript{14}. This study charged analysts at MIT, Harvard and the New School for Social Research with the task of examining not if the media can influence audiences’ thought responses and actions so much as how, in relation to inter-group relations, self-identity and perceptions of wider social contexts. This makes the findings very useful to video peacebuilders.

The report touched on existing social cognition theory and media understanding and related it to the results of their tests regarding participants’ responses to the videos they were shown. Two theorems covered were ‘priming’ and ‘accessibility’. In the ‘Examples’ section of this dissertation we will examine the effectiveness of one particular video project produced by Common Ground Productions in relation to this research.

Priming is the name given to a process in which, through any means, our minds are activated by one ‘script’ or construct of a given situation into thinking of other things which we associate with them (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). These constructs make up our everyday experience, our social learning over time. The media also creates such constructs from its imagery in many forms and narratives even in news programmes. ‘When particular concepts are portrayed in a relatively consistent and formulaic way - as they are in television programs and films - they provide ‘scripts’ for the viewer.’\textsuperscript{15} For example, without ever having witnessed one first hand, we know what a car accident might look like. Furthermore this can prime us to think, for example, of someone being rushed on a stretcher through hospital corridors to an operating theatre. Or, in another more potent example of the same process, television may prime us to connect a criminal act with a particular racial or social profile or group.

The Accessibility Principle is a theory that suggests that out of the information

\textsuperscript{14} Through a merger, the organisation’s name has now changed to Soliya.
needed by our minds to make a judgement, it is often the most readily accessible or most memorable information (accurate or not) that will be used to form these judgements (Higgins, 1996; in Argo, Idriss & Fancy, 2010). This means, in normal everyday circumstances, we are less likely to dig deeper into our memory bank of learned knowledge and experience and use it to test the accuracy of information that comes more easily to mind, in order to make a reasoned judgement. Again, it is suggested that motion media is able to provide us with easily digestible and therefore easily recalled information which we may use to form our opinions.

The findings that came out of the AoCMF/Soliya study in particular were the results of a number of different tests in which subjects were shown a range of imagery, given brain scans, and interacted with ‘discussion partners’ so analysts could find out more about their emotional reactions and reasoning processes, and the effects of motion media and social negotiation on them. Amongst these findings was the following:16

‘We have learned that media’s ability to change attitudes and stereotypes is often indirect - media consumers are vigilant against explicit attempts to persuade them. Instead, they are more likely to be influenced implicitly, via emotions and via media that influences their views of social norms.’17

The initial conclusions of this most up-to-date research have provided much in the way of my understanding of why it is that certain video peacebuilding projects that I have examined have been successful and not others. As mentioned, this AoCMF/Soliya lab research will inform the assessment of a case study of a Search For Common Ground (SfCG) project featured later in this dissertation, as it will a Soliya video peacebuilding project, hence the focus on it here.

As a body of research, it also confirms that it is not only television news programmes in particular that have the ability to influence audiences but any imagery and, additionally, that we interact with such imagery socially, mentally and emotionally. This is critical information to video peacebuilders, especially those using new media, as we shall see in later chapters.

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17 For more on this excellent study: www.soliya.net
1.5 THE POSITION OF THE MEDIA

We have looked at the power of motion media and studies have shown that it can be an effective tool to direct public discourse and influence thoughts and feelings in viewers. Now we shall explore the content of motion media within a conflict context to assess what is on our screens and what this tells us about the ideological positions of existing motion media. Again, as before, we turn to television news as a testing ground. Aligning it to our earlier observations, it also represents a readily available and wide ranging motion media form, concerned with peace and conflict and can be qualitatively and quantitatively monitored.

There is a phrase familiar to journalists: ‘If it bleeds, it leads’. Global conflict, in a variety of forms, be it cultural, political or physical, is big business for the world’s media outlets. So how much of this content is focussed on conflict management or peacebuilding efforts and what does this tell us about the political position of mainstream news media?

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), with global media monitoring group Media Tenor, recently published a report based on statistical data taken over the period 2008 – 2009 that charted correlations between the peacefulness of a country according to the Global Peace Index (GPI) and the number of television news reports covering violence. The report found that the ‘ten least peaceful countries are reported on far more frequently than the ten most peaceful countries.’ Crucially though, of all the conflict and violence news stories analysed, just 1.6% had a ‘positive peace’ angle. The report also found a disproportionate percentage of violence-based stories coming not from the most conflict-stricken countries in the world (as rated on the GPI) but from the UK and the US. Eight of the ten news programmes which featured the most amount of violence-related coverage were from the UK and US. This was attributed to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, in which the UK and US audience would have a vested interest, and yet it is notable that Iraq and Afghanistan’s domestic news coverage was not the most violence-saturated. The GPI covers what it terms as the ‘structures of peace’ and has categorised these (they include things like education, functioning government, and relationship with neighbouring countries). According to the IEP, ‘it follows that

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20 http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2010/scor
if a media organization covers them then it is more likely to focus public opinion on what is important in creating peace.\textsuperscript{21}

The question is whether the news is intended to be an accurate reflection of the overall state of a nation, or is it there to relay only breaks in the norm to its viewing public? This is an important question given the influential nature of the medium that we have established. If it is the former, then it should report more stories with a peace narrative to more closely represent the level of peace within the country. If it is the latter, does this constitute a stance – a position taken by the media, and should audiences be made more explicitly aware that the events they are viewing represent an exception to the normal rather than a true mirror on reality of life in the subject country?

The report shows that television news is not wholly objective with regards to peace and conflict, not necessarily in its reportage but in the time broadcasters allot to conflict over peace. The hallowed objectivity supposedly inherent in public services like television news, it could be argued, should allow for more editorial balance, not just within a news story itself and how a journalist conveys the narrative but from the wider perspective of a news programme’s overall output. Even if we assume that peace is the norm and breaks in peace constitute a story, we must accept that time constraints endemic to television news formatting will limit the amount of analysis and context given to a news story. So to achieve true balance, reporting on breaks in conflict is equally important in order to avoid creating a disproportionate representation of the overall state of global peace in the media. In fact, television news editors could legitimately accept that, during wartime, conflict is the norm and so breaks in the conflict constitute a newsworthy item. However, the figures of the IEP report reveal that even such alterations to a conflict norm, i.e. an important shift toward peace, receive less coverage with far fewer news stories dedicated to the GPI’s biggest overall improvers like Angola which has seen a significant decline in conflict in recent years.

The controversy surrounding this issue lies principally in the notion that news media should not take a position on what it reports. Traditionally, the television news, regarded from its inception as an essential public service, is intended to be a neutral platform. The news is considered to be an absolute and that which is reported to the viewing public simply the facts, as attested by Guardian journalist Maggie Brown

quoting a woman interviewed by an ITC\textsuperscript{22} researcher: ‘What do you mean, what should (journalists) cover? They cover the news. What has happened, what is going on, there is not a lot of deciding to do about it.’\textsuperscript{23} The documents produced by the IEP and UoM reveal a failure on what and how the television news is reporting. What the IEP study shows is that the news media, contrary to tradition or self-perception, is taking a political and moral position (even if broadcasters or journalists individually may not intend to do so) by focussing almost exclusively on acts of violence during conflict, and conflict during war. This tells us that this problem is systematic, and so it is worthy of attention and thus merits efforts to counter its effects.

As an organisation, the IEP emphasises that the media can be utilised in a way that creates more public awareness of the structures of peace rather than conflict and how to successfully build them which, it argues, can affect public discourse in a manner that forms consensus for peace and directs societies towards it.

1.5.1 PEACE JOURNALISM

Back in 2001, BBC News producer and cameraman Darius Bazargan speaking at a round table seminar organised by Peace and Conflict Forums, said of large demonstrations that ‘almost every (news) story says ‘a violent minority distracted attention from the vast majority of people demonstrating’.’\textsuperscript{24} He went on to observe that the majority of the picture coverage in those news reports then shows the violent minority, in effect doing the same thing - distracting from the peaceful majority. We can see a clear example of this happening more recently in 2010, with television news coverage of the student-led tuition fees protests in the UK.

The result is that public discourse on these events is disproportionately focussed on the actions and sentiment of a minority. We must realise that parties to violence and conflict are savvy to the media response of their actions and the media’s actions in turn influence said parties’ future actions (Lynch 2002). If the destructive riot of the few did not garner the same massive attention, would it remain such a popular tactical method of demonstration? To this end, we can

\textsuperscript{22} Independent Television Commission, now Ofcom, the UK communications industry regulator.
\textsuperscript{23} Lynch, J. (2002) p.21
\textsuperscript{24} Lynch, J. (2002) p. 21
assume that visual motion media might play a similar role in stimulating the opposite end of the spectrum – peace.

Peace journalism as defined by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) is ‘when editors and reporters make choices of what stories to report and how to report them which create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict.’

This school of journalistic practice is a response to what Galtung and Vincent (1992) observe as ‘war journalism’ – that is news that is predisposed to report in a way that favours and even promotes war. Peace journalism rejects, amongst other things, the notion of objectivity in dualism - that is to say - it contests a news media convention which assumes neutrality by reporting the views/positions of either side of a conflict. This, it theorises, doesn’t allow room for multiple positions/stakeholders or alternative routes out of conflict by framing new stories with ‘sides’ and a ‘win or lose’ narrative.

Working directly in the field, reporters in conflict zones can’t realistically maintain the facade of an uninvolved party. It is not a case of impartiality achieved through sufficient distance from all stakeholders. Instead, responsible peace journalism would maintain an equal distance between each of the various actors in a conflict (Pouligny 2006).

To summarise, we have examined the research that indicts news media globally and highlights its failures to accurately convey or even report at all the multi-faceted dynamic of peace and peacebuilding. This is pertinent to this dissertation because what it demonstrates is, whilst there is clearly cause for peacebuilding organisations to have strong media policies that relate to existing mass media structures, the trends that we have observed will be difficult to reverse. In the next chapter, I will begin to build a case for proposing that it is, in fact, new media - not existing mass media or news outlets – that could provide the solutions to these problems for video peacebuilders.

So, before we explore the nature of the technology itself and its applications, let’s look at it in context. How has new media become an important part of the media landscape and why is it relevant?

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1.6 OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW MEDIA: CHANGES IN THE POWER AND POSITION OF THE MEDIA

The considerable power and influence demonstrated by motion media’s relationship with its audience is abundant. It is a persuasive tool but traditional platforms such as television are systemically prone to providing viewers with potentially detrimental conflict narratives over and above content that could stimulate peace and peace-thinking. However, in just the last five years the entire media landscape has changed dramatically. The impact of video on its audience has not waned but there have been significant shifts in the way audiences view video and in who is making the videos they are viewing.

Television continues to be an ever more fragmented platform and, with the increase in take up of digital and on-demand services, traditional terrestrial viewing has been in steady decline. Satellite channels and internet viewing have become the dominant trend in the past few years with people turning to these for their fix of video content and news. The form of much regular broadcast television output has altered dramatically in response, with a whole raft of programmes made which either feature content taken directly from the internet (from video sharing websites like YouTube) or mimic the forms, styles and even durations of visual media made for the internet.

The important part to note here is that not only is the internet taking over as the motion media platform of choice amongst ever increasing audiences, but that the demographic of these audiences are considered important too.

Media studies students in colleges will learn that the programmes on television are not the important part, in as much as they are not the reason that broadcasters exist. The programmes are there only to generate audiences for the adverts that go in between them. In this sense, television does not aim to entertain – it seeks to sell. Certain demographics of audiences are highly prized to advertisers, and young men (aged 16 – 35) who form one of the most profitable demographics are today also those who watch the least amount of television and consume ever larger quantities

26 http://www.thinkbox.tv/server/show/nav.989
27 Examples include Robert’s Web (Channel 4), and Tim and Eric Awesome Show Great Job! (Adult Swim).
of media online.\textsuperscript{28}

Undoubtedly, a large slice of online media content is peer-generated – it is television and film simply watched over the internet rather than via a TV. However, as an indicator of the prominence of user-generated online video content and its popularity over that of professionally produced televised content, we have only to look again at YouTube. Just four years after its launch, by June 2009, YouTube launched ‘YouTube XL’ – a simplified version of the website designed specifically for use on standard television sets. Internet video is now so popular that there is demand for it to be viewable on regular TVs. The technology had gone full circle. By May 2010 the website was achieving over two billion views of videos per day – ‘nearly double the prime-time audience of all 3 major US TV networks combined.’\textsuperscript{29} Video, mostly home-made online video, has taken over as the dominant visual motion medium on the planet.

The internet is filled with video material made by and broadcast to billions of ordinary people. Crucially, content makers no longer require vast media industry resources to produce, distribute and exhibit media products to the world. What this means is that the power structure of the media oligopoly, for decades the source of academics’, critics’ and ombudsmen’s concerns, has been undermined, side-stepped, ignored. Almost anyone can shoot high quality video, upload it to the internet instantaneously and have it ready for the world to view in seconds. The World Wide Web truly has come of age as the revolution in communications technology it was always touted to be.

Significantly, for the first time in history, consumer communications technology has converged with advances in the new media platform and an all-time high in internet popularity and access. In short, we now live in a world where the process described above (shooting, uploading and promoting video) can be completed on a single portable device. Without requiring multiple pieces of video production equipment and a crew to operate it, nor even a mains electricity connection or wired internet, nor your own website or TV channel, you can single-handed create high definition video and show it to almost anyone anywhere. It is the perfect time for innovations in video peacebuilding practice.

\textsuperscript{28} http://www.thinkbox.tv/server/show/nav.914
\textsuperscript{29} http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2010/05/at-five-years-two-billion-views-per-day.html
1.7 A NEW MEDIA TOOLSET

We have established that there is a significant increase in new media usage. Let’s now focus more on the applications of this in the developing world – where peacebuilding and development practitioners alike are working, before moving on to the individual case studies section.

Editing, camera angles, special effects – all these techniques are a staple in professional videography and yet in the user-generated video world of the internet these elements are less common. Surprisingly, this has had a positive effect in counteracting the problematic aspects of existing motion media to which we have alluded in earlier chapters. Even when, for example, videos are edited, in the vast majority of user-generated content (UGC) the user maintains editorial control. This is a huge advantage of online video production and has not gone unnoticed by viewers looking for unfiltered footage, especially in their news sources. Compared to the internet as a broadcasting platform, space on standard broadcast airwaves is very expensive resulting in an over-reliance of traditional media on stereotypes and soundbites. Simplicity is required when time is in short supply. Nevertheless, much mass media maintains the illusion of being a mirror to society as opposed to a mediatised replication of real life but audiences online can find (and today even expect) content with fewer distortions.

One notable example of new media’s use in a conflict zone to connect it uncensored with the outside world came in September 2007 during demonstrations in Burma/Myanmar. An organisation called the Democratic Voice of Burma began gathering and broadcasting video footage of protesters and the military action against them. This material was filmed by undercover journalists and amateurs using handheld cameras, filling the void left by official press restrictions in the region. The footage brought uncut images to a global audience raising awareness of the situation in Burma in an unprecedented manner – bypassing traditional reportage mechanisms to communicate around the world and broadcasting on its own independent channels within Burma.

Why, then, is new media and its latest advances of concern to this study within the context of its usefulness to peacebuilding practitioners? Though as a percentage of the overall global population internet use still has some way to go, developing countries are now a recognised mass market for communications
technology with an astonishing 3.8 billion mobile phone subscriptions (that’s 73% of global subscriptions) in the developing world.\textsuperscript{30} Significantly, an estimated 85% of the handsets shipped this year (2011) will have mobile web capability,\textsuperscript{31} and as use of mobile internet overtakes that of desktop-based globally, most people in developing countries already access the web only via their mobile phones.\textsuperscript{32} We are now witnessing a brand new phase in information and video sharing. For non-mobile web browsers, options are opening up too: It was only in 2009 that East Africa saw its first broadband cable landed, connecting it to the world with faster internet speeds than ever before. The trend is set to continue and has positive implications for video peacebuilders in these regions. Consumer communications technologies such as mobile phones have become a noteworthy tool to video practitioners for the first time.

With the advent of video and camera phones too, more and more of the video content seen on the web is being filmed using a mobile phone. Whilst the technology was in its infancy, purpose made video equipment such as camcorders remained at the forefront. These devices have been getting smaller and cheaper but now the video phone is making its mark. For the first time ever, millions of mobile phone users have the capability to shoot high definition video, upload it to the internet and then promote it worldwide using blogs and social networking websites – all from one low-cost handheld device.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats
\textsuperscript{31} http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=1328113
\textsuperscript{32} http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats
\textsuperscript{33} Relatively-speaking: most devices cost less than £100, and internet ready mobile phones starting at £10.
SECTION 2: EXAMPLES

From my literature review it was clear that there was a great deal of work exploring the media and its effects on society, and that most of this was concerned with either on-screen violence or television news output. Out of the work focussed on peacebuilding and media, much of it covered radio and its use for conflict (e.g. RTLM in Rwanda) or peace (SfCG in Rwanda). Concentrating on motion media only, I found that video projects would most often be educational or in the form of social marketing (e.g. HIV awareness TV campaigns by PSI in Kenya\textsuperscript{34}) and even when they were within a conflict context, the videos produced were rarely part of specific conflict resolution or transformation practices (e.g. mine risk education (MRE) videos by INTERSOS in Iraq).\textsuperscript{35}

These case studies focus on video made by organisations specifically for the purpose of peacemaking or peacebuilding within a conflict setting.

2.1 THE RESOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED

This adaptation of the famous Gil Scot Heron quote forms the basis of the argument for this work. From the research I have compiled and examined, it is clear that visual motion media can be used as a catalyst for change. Furthermore, recent advances in technology have made it possible for individuals to be their own producer and broadcaster in one, with relatively little cost. It is these qualities combined with the negative aspects of existing mainstream media networks that I suggest establishes new media as a powerful and innovative tool. It can provide solutions for practitioners willing to use video in ways that produces results in cases where traditional media fails to do so.

From the following case studies, we shall now see how peacebuilding practitioners, as well as activists and commercial media organisations, have used video explicitly in the interests of initiating or sustaining peace.

Before we get to the case studies though, I feel I should make a short disclaimer of sorts. This particular dissertation looks at ways video has been used more directly in the pursuit of peace and how it can be incorporated into existing

\textsuperscript{34} http://www.psi.org/multimedia/video/hiv-and-concurrent-partnerships
\textsuperscript{35} http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/9.1/Focus/crini/crini.htm
techniques for conflict management, resolution, transformation and/or prevention. There is huge potential for practitioners to use the latest consumer technologies in new ways that exploit the unique qualities of today’s new media and its interactivity to achieve their goals. I do not, of course, endorse the abandonment of the use of other forms of media in peacebuilding. Rather, I offer up yet another tool at our disposal. It seems a wiser course of action to look at the broad spectrum of media (including non-motion media such as print and radio) and discover or invent ways to incorporate them all, and in conjunction with one another or in substitution for one another where appropriate, to the cause of peace.

So, returning to the world of purpose-made, DIY video, let’s look at the pros and cons of its usage within some example peacebuilding groups and projects.

2.2 CASE STUDIES

In this section I will be drawing on my own field of professional expertise as a video practitioner and combining it with theory and understanding of peacebuilding to assess the successes and failures of a number of video-based initiatives.

I have identified particular aspects worthy of careful consideration in peacebuilding or conflict management programme design and observed how these have affected and/or informed the following projects.

2.2.1 ALTERING PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL NORMS

As we have noted in previous chapters, there has been much work already which has accumulatively built up a body of data demonstrating the media’s influential capacity in a social cognitive sense. Though the following example of a successful peacebuilding video project pre-dates the latest research by AoCMF/Soliya (see Chapter 1.4.2), it has tapped into the same phenomena that research observed.

As we touched on in Chapter 1.4, the media has the power of influence, though not in directly controlling our behaviour in a copycat fashion but in its influence over our opinions which can, in turn, alter our responses and behaviour.
Nevertheless, this is a negotiated process the extent of which varies.

The AoCMF study concluded that both priming and accessibility were subject to the presence of real-world experience. That is to say, in controlled experiments, that the influence of media constructs consumed by participants was consistently overshadowed by that of first-hand experience in real life. The studies reveal many interesting psychological and psycho-social aspects at work during audiences’ interactions and negotiations with the media they consume. The study highlighted particular findings which are pertinent to media-using peacebuilders. Among them was the following: ‘Assumptions about social norms predict our behaviour more than our own stated beliefs or values do.’\(^{36}\) In the experiments, explicit attempts to change participants’ beliefs and preconceptions using media imagery were met with resistance. However, participants’ responses were found to be influenced by how they thought their actions might be perceived, i.e. their understanding of social norms. Or as the report put it: ‘if you want to change people’s behaviour, attempting to address their attitudes or beliefs directly may not be as effective as convincing them that other people’s attitudes and behaviours have changed.’\(^{37}\)

### 2.2.2 SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

In an interesting interplay of all the above theories and factors, the following example of a video peacebuilding project has met considerable success. Search for Common Ground (SfCG) is a well-known peacebuilding organisation based in the USA. It has projects operating around the world and has been at the forefront of many pioneering conflict transformation practices. Its use of motion media is no exception. In fact, its has its own media production arm called Common Ground Productions.

One of its current video projects is called ‘The Team’. Active in nine countries including Liberia, DR Congo and the Cote d’Ivoire, The Team is a television programme that revolves around the stories of football teams and explores conflict within and between communities. In each country that the scheme is operating, the show is produced using local crew and actors. It is written by those who have


\(^{37}\) ibid
experience of the conflict they write about and depicts individuals who overcome their perceived differences to unite and win as a successful football team. The project has not only motivated waves of public discussion about the issues it raises, such as tribal disputes in Kenya, but has also encouraged the commencement of many peace initiatives and campaigns to build on its conflict transformation qualities.

If we recall the earlier theory and the AoCMF report, 'The Team' seems to be a great example of how popular entertainment can 'prime' its audience in a positive way. For instance, in one episode in the Ivorian version of ‘The Team’ (L’Equipe), an employer fires an employee (a football player called Napoka) because he is of a different ethnicity. When confronted by the football team’s coach, the boss explains that though he has no personal problem with Napoka, he is concerned that having him work in his shop will aggravate his customers. At the end of the episode, after various conversations, the boss relents and re-hires Napoka. This story provides its viewers with a reference (or prime) as to how differences can be resolved peacefully. The method applied to the production of ‘The Team’ is important here. Its culturally sensitive and participatory techniques create a media construct which has a strong sense of authenticity - a locally-articulated and relevant prime – which make it a strong candidate for accessibility in the viewers’ minds.

Furthermore, as stated in the AoCMF report, ‘television programs about positive intergroup relations appear to have a stronger effect when listeners or viewers perceive that other community members and society at-large accept the behaviour and values being portrayed.’ We also know that in the absence of real-world experience (as opposed to on-screen depictions), mediatised versions can inform our judgements. What makes ‘The Team’ doubly effective in this case is that, as a video, we can see the characters undergoing these processes in the story, which in turn inform the same processes in the audience. So in the above example episode, the boss character has applied his understanding of the perceived social norm (that his customers will object to a worker from a different ethnicity) overriding his own beliefs (which are based on his real-world experience of knowing someone -

38 See www.buildingbridges.co.ke
39 The show has particularly high audience ratings in Morocco and Kenya.
Napoka - of this ethnicity). As a popular television show, it has social weight and at the very least can initiate open discussion about a serious issue (even through the conduit of talking about the show’s characters/plot) and the episode implicitly validates the notion that overcoming discrimination in the workplace is proper and possible.

Therefore, ‘The Team’ gives the viewer a positive construct which opposes discrimination and illustrates peaceful solutions but also delivers this in a way that maximises its effectiveness. The characters in the show are displaying the same response process as is likely to be present in the audience itself (i.e. that which was observed in the AoCMF study). If you sympathise with the subjects of the media construct you’re negotiating, its influence on you is magnified. Instead of simply dramatising an ideal, it authenticates in the minds of viewers an alternative to the social norm explored in the episode, complete with all the doubts the characters themselves must negotiate, and an insight on how to achieve it. For those who relate to the boss character and share his reservations, and to Napoka and the discrimination he faces, ‘The Team’ provides a positive media-given prime that exists as an antidote to negative stereotyping or socially polarising media products, on which they might draw to make judgements in real life.

2.2.3 DISPELLING MYTHS

Hate media, propaganda, can play a part in fuelling conflict. With non-motion media there are a number of examples including the radio station Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) in Rwanda, the operators of which were later imprisoned for their part in inciting the 1994 genocide.\textsuperscript{41} Whilst there may be big differences between real and imagined threats, both can affect us by playing on our fears. Motion media that functions to exploit our self-defence mechanisms can therefore incite xenophobia, racism and other cultural violence. Video can serve to counter this is by creating cultural space free from these deconstructive elements on-screen thus the potential for mass audiences to consider their cultural environment in new and different ways is substantial.

‘The Station’ is a drama produced by Common Ground Productions for

\textsuperscript{41} http://www.unictr.org/tabid/155/Default.aspx?ID=52
Egyptian television. In a similar way to ‘The Team’ in Kenya, the show doesn’t simply present a peaceful view of the world and hope audiences will absorb the ideals. Instead, it recreates on-screen the same psycho-social processes that viewers could well experience when watching it by using the characters and exploring their attitudes and responses in conflict. ‘The Station’ is set in a television news studio which allows for pressing issues facing Egypt to be debated through the device of the show within the show. Referring to the role of journalism in conflicts (not just war – this could be any social, political or civil unrest) the series is designed to focus its viewers on social problems but also give them an understanding of the role of the media in conflict. The characters on the show not only face internal struggle about their own feelings and opinions about the issues they tackle, but the news programme they produce must also battle with the ethics of responsible journalism.

Again, we are seeing multiple layers in how the show has been constructed by Common Ground and therefore in how it is received and understood by audiences. It takes on both societal responses to conflict as well as deconstructing how Egyptian television news can reinforce myths and fuel division or dispel myths and stereotypes and work actively in transforming conflicts. Essentially, it is simultaneously illustrating constructive approaches to social and civil problems and promoting the values and practices of peace journalism (that we looked at in Chapter 1.5.1).

### 2.2.4 ENDORSEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

In the established mass media, in the age of celebrity, it may be popular sports personalities or movie stars who can provide effective endorsement for a product or brand. When the goal is sustainable peace, though, endorsement needs to reverberate at a grassroots level. The endorsement of your project by those it is intended to benefit or by an authoritative body that beneficiaries trust can be all important in the initiation and take-up of your project.

Before pre-production of any video can even begin, we must know for whom and why a video is being made. A confident grasp of this information, even if it is speculative, will shape the video and have a bearing on its success. This is particularly important if the people featured in your video are also its audience. To be effective, the video’s producer(s) must be perceived as credible and ideally
endorsed by a trusted body. In development projects, legitimacy is not necessarily sufficiently afforded in the eyes of a project’s potential beneficiaries as a result of UN or international community backing alone (Pouligny, 2006). Video-based projects and the videos that result from them are no exception. Additionally, there must be a clear line of accountability for the production to encourage responsible practice throughout and to offer redress (should any be required) upon completion and exhibition of the final video.

You are communicating a message. In the case of conflict transformation, your video’s message is promoting peace and this needs to reverberate with the relevant stakeholders in a conflict (or post-conflict) situation. One way of doing this in video production actually reinforces UN mandates, not to mention international human rights standards. That is to ensure an acceptable level of ownership of any peace process and give marginalised portions of society the opportunity to participate in the political system. Participation is a goal, as well as a means, of development. In video, a technique called Participatory Video (PV) provides just this within a media production context by facilitating either beneficiaries of development or aid or conflict addressing projects to create their own media – their own video – their own voice to be heard.

2.2.5 PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

PV came about in the 1990s and conveniently filled a gap in development methodology at a time when it was being identified. Development work for years had maintained ultimate accountability to donors. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) had been carried out by external actors who would report back to funding bodies. Whilst the ethos behind development and aid work had shifted towards a participatory process (Chambers, 1997), donors required data showing the results of their investments. Thinking is changing, and now accountability and final judgements regarding the success of projects are rightly being reserved for and to beneficiaries. The say-so of the beneficiary, in effect, is the information that donors

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42 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
require as opposed to data generated by project designers or monitors. Participatory Video has played a crucial role in this process. In places and situations where beneficiaries have low literacy levels, facilitated video is one solution. In this way, donors and development practitioners alike can really see and hear results and criticisms direct from the source. The value of this can’t be underestimated.

2.2.6 INSIGHTSHARE

This, though, is just one aspect of participatory video that is beneficial for project planners. PV is useful to peacemakers and peacebuilders on a number of levels covering transformative issues. InsightShare is a leading organisation specialising in participatory video, with hubs in nine countries. Insight considers the four cornerstones of PV are participation, reflection, empowerment and positive action.44

Taking the first two - participation and reflection – essentially, stakeholders engage constructively with the process of community video production and are able to self-reflect when watching themselves back in the footage. More importantly though, the creative process itself allows for (or is built around) a period of individual and collective reflection – an important social learning tool. With regards to empowerment, it is not only a confidence boost or a mechanism for lending a sense of validity to one’s views and position in society (important when working with marginalised communities), but PV incorporates the PLA (participatory learning and action) ethos which provides methodological space to use community knowledge, skills and potential to drive a project. Concerning what InsightShare calls ‘positive action,’ a PV project is not only something that can benefit immediate participants. It has wide-reaching repercussions in the form of advocacy, solidarity, direct action, influence over decision making, etc. All of these can be applied to peacebuilding efforts and, within the PV structure, all are inherently peaceful and constructive. I would add another key aspect of participatory video to the list: accountability.

One specific example of InsightShare’s work is set in Eldoret, Kenya. Following controversial elections in Kenya in December 2007, the city of Eldoret was the scene of much violence. Among those injured in the fighting was David Ng’ang’a who

44 A Rights-Based Approach to Participatory Video. InsightShare, 2010.
was shot with an arrow and when InsightShare facilitated a PV project in Eldorat in 2010, he was a key contributor. David’s story, captured on video, describes how his treatment in hospital at the time of his injury was badly delayed which he says was the source of his hatred toward a particular ethnic group who worked there. However, after joining a scheme called LEAP sport (run by Mercy Corps and ASTEP) he was playing on teams with other young people from that same tribe and learnt to forgive and get on with his team mates. His story was one of over a hundred researched and one of the twelve filmed for Insight’s PV project which aimed to evaluate the impact of the LEAP sport initiative. Out of the stories filmed, a final three were chosen by the community to show to leaders, politicians and NGOs.

The project is a perfect example of community-led M&E in which LEAP and its partners (and Insight) are accountable for the impact of their projects directly to the intended beneficiaries. The final videos also act as an effective advocacy tool highlighting the advantages of peaceful conflict transformation and promoting the NGOs involved. This example shows how video can provide not only a deeper level of accountability by hearing evaluations directly from participants but also higher quality data as we can see and hear the people involved giving viewers a better grasp of participants’ attitudes and opinions. This can be a crucial document instructing future decisions by donors and project planners alike.

On another level, contributors noted that re-telling their stories and listening to many others’ enabled them to not only access feelings and realisations about how important peace actually was to them but also unlocked a sense of achievement about the constructive way they had overcome their hate and conflict. As one participant, Peter Gatama, put it: ‘When I first told my story it was difficult, but now that I’ve seen myself, I’ve realised that I’ve changed. I’m proud of myself.’

However, as with any PV project, it is the process that makes up the bulk of the work done and it is during the pre-production and production periods when the positive effects are mostly felt (and yet this aspect remains relatively unseen compared to the final video product.) In this example, The key thing to note here, that distinguishes participatory video over all the other case studies, is that the final product (a finished video) is not essential. In fact, it is not even a requirement of a successful PV project, so long as the prior process of getting to that video has been

45 http://insightshare.org/watch/video/thinking-change
46 http://insightshare.org/resources/photostory/leap
beneficial. In this way, video (or more specifically creating videos) is a powerful tool for peacebuilding before it even reaches the screen.

In a second short example from InsightShare, the issues of accountability and advocacy can be observed working in yet another way, facilitated by participatory video. In Sierra Leone, a community in Kono found themselves in a protracted dispute with a mining company after a resettlement deal fell short of expectations. The video project was made to increase accountability not from an aid agency but from the corporate development in the area. In order to drill, the company wanted to move the population and put in place an agreement to build new housing in a new location. However, not enough homes were built after demolition of the existing settlement and, according to the community, the building were unsatisfactory. The video produced by the community aired the many grievances they had about the actions of the mining company and its affiliates and talked about where improvements needed to be made. This was shown to local authority figures who were unaware of the extent of the problems and began a civil process to hold the company to account for its operations in the region.

2.2.7 REINTEGRATION

Through following a number of website links and via a recommendation made to me by Kimberlye Kowalcyzk of Media for Peacebuilding, I came across an organisation called Xchange-Perspectives. Under the umbrella scheme of CAPOR (Capacity Building for Post-Conflict Reintegration), it has run a number of programmes in Southern Sudan, many involving the use of participatory video techniques. For one such video project, facilitator Dominik Lenhert worked with a community in Mugwo, Yei County to produce a short drama based on real events, re-enacted by the affected community members. The story concentrates on the return and repatriation of refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDPs). In this particular area, civilians had fled from the violence and were beginning to return to their home towns and villages where they had land and property. Upon returning, though, many found that their homes had been occupied in their absence. Those seeking to return were subject to violent resistance from the current occupants.
Nevertheless, Lenhert met with community leaders and learnt of the ways in which they had settled differences through land and skills sharing, which benefitted the community as a whole as well as the individuals concerned.

It was decided that a video could be produced that would re-enact this process, written and performed by real community members. This would stand as an accessible and immediate educational tool showing by example how such community conflicts could be overcome, intended to be shown to neighbouring towns and villages experiencing similar social problems. In just two days, a video was put together, titled ‘The Wound’ (or ‘Debara’ in the local language of Juba Arabic).

The issue at the heart of the story is inextricably linked to civil war and conflict transformation, and this case reveals the potential for video use, not only to document events (though in dramatisation) but also to promote peaceful outcomes and the ways they have been achieved to people across a region with an efficient and easily understood tool. The power lies in its implicit message. Rather than overtly teaching people in the region who may be resistant to being told outright how to address similar conflicts affecting them (taking into account the research on explicit attempts at behavioural change), this drama could be watched in the comfort of one’s own village without any obligation or expectation to act, without any teacher-student dynamic at work.

From the video practitioner’s viewpoint, the commendable aspect of this video project is that it uses local cultures and knowledge as the starting point, learning from them and facilitating the creation of a useful video. Rather than negotiating or building cultural elements (in this case, the ability and methods of village authorities to deal with conflict resulting from returning IDPs) into an existing participatory video project template, the Xchange-Perspectives model takes the initiative of the community as motivation and uses local practices extensively. Techniques brought to the field by practitioners in this case do not inform the process through imparting methodology from elsewhere but are two-way and cross cultural in their learning and specifically culturally-sensitive in their outcomes, benefitting the project’s overall effectiveness. In other words, rather than being a prescriptive transfer of knowledge in which cultural universality is assumed, it is elicitive (Lederach, 1995). This process doesn’t ‘add in’ culture as a consideration.

47 http://insightshare.org/watch/video/kono-communities-affected-mining
but uses it as a foundation in a joint discovery and creation of process and product, ultimately leading to ownership of the video and what it depicts by the communities concerned. Thus, the credibility, accessibility and longevity of the project and the advice it essentially promotes is strengthened.

As discussed in Chapter 1.2, civil war itself impedes development but, in a postconflict situation, associated impediments must also be tackled. This video project does so in a targeted grassroots fashion by addressing refugee and IDP reintegration – something crucial to lasting peace and to growth, precisely because the movement of civilians as a result of conflict is closely connected to a number of other problems. Fleeing populations have a detrimental economic effect, creating skills gaps, driving capital flight and drops in GDP per capita in periods immediately after civil war (Collier, 2003; 2008). In addition, camps and other settlements where refugees and IDPs find themselves are commonly troubled by severe public health issues (which itself poses a financial burden to the hosting state in the case of refugees moving to other countries). These arise from bad sanitation and lack of clean water in the camps, and also from the fact that natural immunities that refugees and IDPs have are geo-specific and often do not protect them in the new locations in which they end up. This is coupled with the fact that many people will bring non-native diseases to an area when they arrive, sometimes picked up during difficult transits from place to place, which can affect local populations too.

Knowing this, we cannot consider the Xchange-Perspectives video in isolation but instead as a small component of post-conflict aid within a much bigger picture. Its target may be minutely focussed at one or two communities initially but by addressing a fundamental issue such as refugee and IDP repatriation and integration, it also helps to eliminate these knock-on effects and contribute to the overall improvement of national status and to national development.

In this example, the video highlighted social tensions between civilians. However, we can use this example and apply it to another key demographic within the reintegration and repatriation challenge. In peacebuilding programmes, especially within the context of civil war in a low-income country, we must take into account ex-combatants. The UN has for the last ten years had an explicit mandate to apply so-called DDR into its post-conflict and peacemaking missions.48 This stands for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The ‘R’ of DDR represents a long-
term strategy to aid those directly involved in violent conflict to reintegrate them back into society. This can include ex-militia and former child soldiers who find themselves jobless and uneducated as adults after civil wars have robbed them of childhoods. Though it is understood that the political will must be present in order for a structured DDR programme to be initiated (Collier, et al., 2003), once this is established it can formalise a route to peace within communities devastated by war. Reintroducing former agents of violence must happen in stages but importantly, their ability to reintegrate and the opportunity to do so must be stressed to individuals. It is here we can see an opportunity for video to take a constructive role in this process.

Taking the example of ‘The Wound’, similar videos could be produced to meet both the need to encourage ex-combatants to return home to productive civilian life and also to educate residents in areas with returning ex-militants about the needs and potential benefits of reintegration. Indeed their willingness to do so is key to its success. Strengthening the absorptive capacity of receiving communities is therefore an important part of the reintegration process.49

2.2.8 INCLUSIVE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE

One organisation founded in 2003, is Video Volunteers. Taking techniques based on participatory video, Video Volunteers has built up a network of video producers from and based in poor and marginalised communities across India to create community media. Taking the form of news reportage, each reporter takes issues important to the local population in their area and makes a report to expose or tackle problems, and to celebrate or promote positive stories.

The significance of this is clear, especially in India where so-called slum dwellers have very limited representation in the existing media. As we touched on earlier, the necessity for a political system to include groups right across the social spectrum is written in to international guidelines for peaceful and stable states, and

48 http://www.unhdr.org/iddrs/
so the potentially conflict preventative qualities imbued in this initiative are apparent. This form of community media is effective and important here not just as a form of representation but to empower communities, educate them about their rights and crucially to do so in a way that is culturally specific. This ‘hyperlocal’ media is visual thus overcoming any literacy barriers and overcomes language barriers by being presented in dialects used in the areas concerned, as the videos are community-made.

The project uses video production as a tool for community mobilisation. Development projects, including third party mediation, benefit from community mobilisation (Chambers, 1997) by building capacity amongst local stakeholders for the work to continue without agency control after a declared timeframe. Video Volunteers is self sustaining owing to the training given to each community member involved in the network which allows them to make videos as and when issues arise and a story needs to be told. Importantly, by doing this, the ownership of the project is transferred to the beneficiaries also helping with its longevity and ensuring that community resources and knowledge are utilised and expanded (Erasmus, in Reychler & Paffenholz, 2001).

2.2.9 THE MEDIA AS MEDIATOR

For an early example of motion media performing the function of the mediator, enabling stakeholders to find common ground and explore different perspectives peacefully, we turn to the community live art world. Though peacebuilding organisations have been slower on the uptake of integrated video in their work, the art world has been appropriating the technology since its invention. An interesting example of this is Suzanne Lacy’s ‘Code 33’ from October 1999. Lacy combines art, advocacy and education using various performance techniques within a public or community context. There are many crossovers between the background work and research that went into ‘Code 33’ and community development and appraisal techniques familiar to development practitioners. Having familiarised herself and engaged with urban communities in Oakland on other projects in previous years, Lacy had built a relationship and established trust with the people who would make
Code 33. Over the course of two years, Lacy conducted semi-structured interviews with around four hundred young people and police officers in Oakland, California. Their ideas led the work which culminated in a live performance event – incorporating eight videos played on thirty monitors on a rooftop in the venue in the city.\textsuperscript{51}

The aim was to create a forum in which the city’s police and young people (so often in conflict with one another) could come together and express themselves freely and peacefully in a safe environment. A mass conversation was created where community and police concerns were voiced and listened to. The project proved to be a massive success in which matters were raised that normally would have gone unheard and, importantly in a conflict transformative sense, the participants were able to see from each others’ perspectives enabling greater understanding and community cohesion. The project became a mediator – a space for discussion where the performance and spectacle of the event provided a conduit for exchanges of feelings and perspectives, and the video created for it (of more young people making their statements) provided representation for those who could not attend in person.

In that example, the two ‘sides’ (youth & police) were both willing and able to come together for the project. However, video can accommodate many more sides and many more perspectives whereas face-to-face mediation may be limited in the numbers and those represented. Conflicts are often framed with a notion of ‘sides’ and the fewer the parties to a conflict, the fewer the perceived routes out of it. ‘If people think of a conflict as having only two parties, they can feel they are faced with only two alternatives – victory or defeat.’\textsuperscript{52} In addition, these positions may be fuelled by perceptions of ‘the other’ and in a conflict parties have a tendency to characterise their own actions to be cooperative and those of other parties uncooperative (Thomas & Pondy, 1977). Providing a space to examine assumptions of the other through filming participants and allowing them to express their points of view and watching them back, allows the parties involved to make comparisons. Creating this mental space can afford those embroiled in a conflict much needed reflection and in some cases enough virtual distance to better

\textsuperscript{50} Single performance date, the project process began roughly around 1991 and ended in 2001.
\textsuperscript{51} http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/sl1.html
\textsuperscript{52} Lynch, J. (2002) p. 31
understand different perspectives. These are key qualities in forming a foundation on which peace can be built.

2.2.10 AUDIENCE AS PARTICIPANTS

As we have established the potential to reach a global audience defines the internet. To rely on other media channels to broadcast your message when you can do so, uncompromised, by creating your own video and posting online is surely an error. The nature of the internet itself as a way to connect to literally billions of people across physical boundaries, state lines and military obstacles was the principle behind the ‘Internet for Peace’ campaign, started by Wired Magazine in November 2009.

Taking the power of the internet and video together as the foundation of the campaign, it invited the public to make short videos to illustrate why they believed the internet was a tool for peace, culminating in a drive to have the internet itself nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The first ambassador of the campaign was former Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian human rights activist and lawyer. She noted that the campaign had poignant timing for her as in Iran only five months prior to the campaign, public protests over election results had been largely documented and distributed by protesters and amateur journalists by posting videos on social networking websites and streaming them over the internet for the world to see. This was done in response to Iranian government crackdowns on both foreign and domestic journalists and mobile phone networks.\(^53\) She argued that the internet was a tool for free speech.

The added bonus of engaging vast audiences online with new media is not just about numbers. Audiences aren’t merely receptors but can interact with the media. The Internet for Peace campaign was mainly facilitated through the use of YouTube. Users made and watched videos, commented on them sparking long discussions and motivated members of the public, some living in conflict zones, to promote peace in a variety of visual styles and on a range of subjects.

\(^{53}\) http://www.youtube.com/internetforpeace#p/u/34/-N1MR5-aK1Y
CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In one of the clearest examples of innovative use of new media and the internet to address conflict, we turn to an organisation called Soliya. Merged with the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund sponsored by the UN, Soliya’s remit is to utilise new media technology to address conflicts across international borders using the internet.

In its latest project, ‘Terana’\textsuperscript{54}, students and young people are addressing something of a public opinion conflict, one which has become a polarising issue since the ‘war on terror’ entered public discourse. The project enables participants in ‘Western’ nations (such as the United States and countries across Western Europe) to communicate face to face via webcam and instant online chat with predominantly Islamic countries. Participants are given raw news footage of conflicts (such as armed violence in the Gaza Strip) and then edit together reports of their own about the event. Very often, the stories they construct about the same event differ greatly. Participants are then asked to talk to each other to explain the choices they made and to try and understand the perspectives of others.

According to Soliya, the percentage of participants who “strongly agreed that they had a lot in common with their counterparts in US & Europe/Middle East” rose from just under 50% before taking part in Terana to just under 80%. The project serves to highlight common ground that connects us as human beings and cultural differences that distinguish us in a positive light.

The interesting aspect of this project is how it uses new media to tackle the problems of ‘old’ media by getting participants to edit news footage and exchanging the results online, thus demonstrating to participants how media products can distort facts and alter our opinions of others. It is also noteworthy for its use of webcams to enable face-to-face contact with people from other cultures which aids participants’ ability to negotiate mediatised stereotypes that they may encounter about said people by providing real-life experience from which to form their understanding.

\textsuperscript{54} \url{http://www.terana.com}
2.3 PROBLEMS

In this section we will go into some of the potential pitfalls of video usage within a conflict or post-conflict setting.

In the first and perhaps most obvious concern about introducing visual media into conflict zones, we will explore how video must be applied carefully to avoid making matters worse, whether in the form of social tensions or contributing to an escalation of open violence. We have already looked at the existing news media and its potential to both create and maintain peace or to fuel conflicts. The role of peace journalism is becoming ever more accepted within the political landscapes of conflict-stricken areas and by organisations charged with tackling conflict.

During conflicts, the media has been blamed for inciting further violence or enflaming attitudes. As explored in the next case study, this can take the form of polarisation and can further entrench perceived sides of a conflict.

2.3.1 VICTIMISATION AND POLARISATION

When committing a conflict and parties thereof to video, careful consideration must be given to the way those parties are presented. Simplistic characterisations of groups and individuals can reinforce stereotypes fuelling further misperceptions between actors or can trigger those who relate to the depicted to further entrench themselves within a conflict, aligned mentally perhaps socially to their perceived cause.

One of the most potent examples of polarisation through new media and video comes from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) chief spokesperson Avital Leibovich ‘The blogosphere and new media are another war zone. We have to be relevant there.’ In October 2008 the Israeli Foreign Ministry even hired a public relations company to improve the country’s image in the media. Two months later, following the start of the Operation Cast Lead military offensive in the Gaza Strip, the IDF set up a YouTube channel featuring

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55 Their spelling.
56 http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=126931
57 http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/oct/11/israelandthepalestinians-middleeast
footage of bombing raids and attacks on its soldiers. By January, it was reported that Hamas had launched its own YouTube equivalent called PaluTube.

The interactive nature of online video encourages comments and discussion wherever videos are posted. However, these are not mediated platforms in the conflict resolution sense but virtual spaces in which many thousands of people geographically (or otherwise) separated from the conflict engage at an emotional level motivated by the imagery they see. This invites users to take sides and verbally attack the other.

2.3.2 IMBALANCE

If we take the earlier example of the Video Volunteers project ‘Unheard India’, whilst it certainly is confidence-building for marginalised people and groups suffering discrimination, we can also see serious problems. The format of the project is that of ‘hyperlocal’ news reports and as such we can identify problems.

If we look at one video in particular called ‘Caste Violence in Haryana’ we can observe some fundamental mistakes being made. The video reports on an arson attack on a community and contains short statements given by victims and witnesses from the victim’s caste. Blame is pointed squarely at a particular caste community and the failures of the authorities to act. However, the video is entirely one-sided in its selection of interviewees and creates a strong victim narrative without any exploration of the potential to resolve the cultural and social conflict.

If we refer back to the problems that have been identified in television news in Chapter 1.4.1, we can see the same elements at work in this case. The approach is perturbing from a conflict resolving perspective. Peace journalism methods encourage all stakeholders in a dispute to have adequate and equal representation in the story, plus interview questions could be phrased in such a way as to prompt transformative discourse (both in audience and interviewees) but in this instance viewers from the communities involved are likely to be further angered or have feelings of victimhood enhanced.

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58 http://www.youtube.com/user/idfnadesk
60 http://indiaunheard.videovolunteers.org/amit/caste-violence-in-haryana/
2.3.4 UNWANTED EXPOSURE

Now though, we will look at an example from DR Congo of how video has been used in an early post-conflict setting, and what potential there is for exacerbating the very conflict that the video has been specifically created to help resolve.

The Centre for International Cooperation and Security (CICS) produced a study of a joint nation project with World Bank support called the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), which aims to “support demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in seven countries of the Great Lakes region”\(^{61}\) including the Republic of Congo. During the disarmament phase, known as PCAD\(^{62}\), mechanisms were in place at community level to remove small arms, or more accurately to award points for various small arms, explosives and munitions which could be collected and exchanged for farming equipment, homeware, etc. Media campaigns were initially considered as a way of publicising the scheme and inviting people to submit any weapons they had to be destroyed. It was decided, after discreet talks with community leaders, that this would have the opposite of the desired effect. In this instance, it was believed that any media campaigns (television or radio) would create too much exposure of this difficult subject and would scare off those with concealed small arms altogether. The organisation took on board the understanding that “guns don’t like noise” and that the more quietly the scheme could be undertaken, the more confident people would feel to come forward and hand in their weapons in a manner that wouldn’t garner so much attention from their neighbours. So rather than going down the mass media route, the PCAD team ‘instead used village elders, chiefs, religious leaders to quietly pass on the message to their communities and congregation.

2.3.5 POORLY MANAGED POWER

Another way that video peacebuilding projects can exacerbate a conflict is by introducing the power of video to marginalised communities where latent conflicts...
exist and any unanticipated consequences that come with this. One serious problem encountered in an InsightShare facilitated participatory video project in South Africa showed how easily a positive can become a negative. In an informal settlement around Durban, inhabitants were involved in a PV project intended to outline health issues plaguing the community but which developed (by the direction of participants) into a piece about housing and sanitation. Facilitators identified that whilst residents had been asking for help with this issue claiming needs for clean water for example, they were in fact entitled to adequate sanitation as a human right. This simple observation rearranged the entire dynamic of the project and incited emotionally charged dialogue from participants which was duly recorded for the video. ‘The unplanned and unstructured introduction of a rights-based paradigm into the process unleashed explosive levels of frustration and anger amongst the participants.’ Residents recorded themselves threatening government with strikes which were met with jubilant screams or fear and discomfort from audiences. Clearly incitements to confrontational action had moved the project beyond its constructive and peace-orientated beginnings.

The issue at the centre of all this is a conundrum of sorts and presents those involved with a difficult balance. In this case, unsatisfactory living conditions and a sidelining of people’s human rights have been the cause of latent conflict between duty-bearers (the relevant housing authorities) and a community living in an informal settlement. By invoking the notion of ‘rights,’ facilitators of the project have inadvertently triggered aggression and the video is then completely redirected by participants and used by them to rant on camera. Here, the video has provided the motivation, the justification and the conduit of rage. In one positive sense, the video has achieved giving the community members a feeling of empowerment and yet we can see how reservations may be held about the way this has been expressed and the potential negative consequences of this.

We should bear in mind that conflict is not, of course, synonymous with violence and therefore conflict can be a positive – a catalyst for change. Conflict transformation therefore, and this is what peacebuilding video practitioners should be aware of, is the channelling of this conflict peacefully into positive change (Lederach, 1996). A good visual aid for understanding this and seeing the process in

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order to better anticipate issues before they manifest, comes in the form of this diagram which I’ve adapted from Lederach (1996) who adapted it from Curle (1971):

Note that if confrontation is violent, then the negotiations are managing the conflict and underlying tensions remain, making peace unsustainable.

If confrontation is non-violent and underlying issues addressed by making the necessary changes, confrontation and negotiation become conflict transformation resulting in sustainable peace.
SECTION 3: INNOVATIONS

What have we learnt from the various ways video has been used in the above examples? Clearly, in the current new media world, video is more than moving images. It is more than the documentation of an event. We have learnt how video can transcend borders and obstacles, both the physical and the psychological. From a development practitioner’s perspective, a video need not be just the end product of a creative process but can be about the process itself. Used in conjunction with the internet and mobile technology, it can be disseminated globally and interact with individuals, sending the medium into a new era of application to peacebuilding methodology.

3.1 A WINNING FORMULA

Community media organisation ‘Video Volunteers’ highlight some of the advantages of video in its role as a tool in education, fundraising, networking and advocacy – all of which are important in resolving conflict:

- It communicates in the medium most appealing to people today.
- It breaks the literacy barrier.
- It is the most cost-effective way to reach large numbers of people if distributed strategically.
- It expands an NGOs’ reach and scale.
- It promotes behaviour change.
- It gives a voice to the poor to communicate their needs and knowledge to the outside world.
- It provides a platform to demand accountability and transparency from those in power.
- It acts as a forum for communities to discuss critical but unspoken social issues.
- It encourages ‘people’s led development’, where the call for change is coming from within the community.
- It develops grassroots leaders and communicators.
- It provides livelihoods.\(^4\)

We can see all these elements demonstrated in the previous chapters and together they form a compelling set of reasons why any development practitioner, including those working on or in conflict, should consider incorporating this technology into their work. I would update this list by adding that the latest
technologies and their penetration in developing countries has also sidelined a
dependency on the presence of televisions or electricity in locations where projects
take place. With battery power and longevity increasing for palmtop devices each
year and now with brand new devices such as handheld projectors that connect to
video mobile phones, the shooting and screening of video is now easier than ever.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter I’d like to expand on some of the case studies we’ve already looked
at and suggest further action that could improve these video-based projects. In
addition, I shall make a recommendation for a new application of video in peace
practice.

3.2.1 READINESS ASSESSMENTS

Taking the example of participatory video and it uses in monitoring and evaluation,
can we appropriate it to a conflict resolution or even prevention model?

Rather than using PV in a post-project context, we can apply it to current
conflicts by combining it with an activity known as readiness assessment.
Conducting community-led informal interviews to address present conflicts can be
beneficial for two reasons. Firstly, facilitated by PV, communities can talk with
communities (either internally or between communities depending on the situation)
to assess willingness to enter into negotiations/peace talks. Secondly, by opening
this line of inquiry, stakeholders can be prompted to identify any associated risks of
such activity and develop strategies to minimise those risks. There are advantages
that come with participative videoing of this procedure: Self-assessment may be
less inhibiting and more likely then to produce good results and better information.
Peacebuilding organisation Search For Common Ground consider readiness
assessments to be a good pre-cursor to ‘Co-operative Problem Solving’ (CPS) – an
interests-based system that normally requires conflicting parties to be willing to

64 www.videovolunteers.org
engage in the process in order for it to work. If videoed readiness assessments can provide evidence of stakeholders' motivations, they could be viewed by each other to encourage the CPS process. In other words, if parties want to engage in dialogue and can see proof that others do too, it can move peacemaking action forward.

3.2.2 SIMULATED ROLE REVERSAL

If we take one of the examples from the Chapter 2.2.7, that of the Xchange-Perspectives video. We can see participatory methods being used to engage with conflict-affected communities in an active and productive way. By re-enacting the community conflict (the case of IDP reintegration), we can see a method which allows participants to explore the issues whilst maintaining distance. By playing characters or versions of themselves in a dramatisation, they are less vulnerable than if the video had taken the form of a talking heads documentary for example, and thus freer to unpack the issue safe in the distance afforded through this device of simulation. In that chapter, I have already suggested that a similar project could be initiated for ex-combatants (rather than civilian IDPs) as part of a DDR structure but can the method be taken further, perhaps applying it beyond post-conflict situations?

We know conflict can arise and be sustained through a difference (or perception of difference) of values and poor communication (Galtung 2000). One way to tackle the misperceptions stakeholders may have of each other is to explore the other parties' perceptions of the conflict by intellectually reversing roles (Fisher et al 1994). In a slight twist on the Xchange-Perspectives video, participants play not themselves or people with whom they easily relate but the roles of those who are perceived to have incompatible goals to themselves. Video is an ideal tool for this giving participants an appropriate context in which to act roles with the advantage of being able to watch themselves back immediately. Such a process is helpful in terms of offering a space in which to more fully comprehend a conflict from one’s supposed opponents’ points of view. Even if one fails to sympathise with this different position, having a better grasp on the motivations of others in a conflict can inform more reasoned approaches to debate. This has the potential to open new avenues of problem solving. By embodying somebody with a different perspective of a conflict to which you are a party, you are in a unique place from
which to generate new ideas to resolve it. Being both the acted role and still yourself underneath, the agendas of both parts of you work in your mind enabling you to become an agent for compromise as you subconsciously or otherwise attempt to appease both your own concerns and those of person you’re role-playing.

3.2.3 CREATING NEW APPROACHES

By combining these alterations and expansions to existing techniques and projects with each other, we can formulate innovative approaches to video peacebuilding practice.

Let’s create one example of this now. We can envision a project design, for example, that incorporates what I shall call PRAV (Participatory Readiness Assessment Video) as stage 1, developing into a CPS session elicited through videoed role reversal activities in stage 2. Here, we are combining practices to meet overall objectives in a multi-stage strategy.

In stage 1, video helps to increase the effectiveness of readiness assessments making them workable in situations where they may have not been considered otherwise. As videoed documentation, they enable and can initiate responses that further conflict resolution bringing participants to stage 2. In this stage, we integrate existing practices (CPS in this case) but add a new dimension to maximise effectiveness. The ethos behind CPS is to ‘attack the problem not the person’. Normally it relies on the stakeholders’ ability to consider the causes of conflict placing blame on the issues rather than on those they are in conflict with. Where CPS fails is when stakeholders can only identify that the problem is other stakeholders. By using video in conjunction with the technique, we counter this tendency. The frame of video production (in whatever form from creating a television series to filming people in a room) provides an acceptable context to use role reversal techniques that may have otherwise been rejected. Simulated on video, role reversal puts stakeholders in each others’ shoes, figuratively speaking, which puts them in a better position to analyise what it is that ‘the other’ is doing and why. This is a good way of generating alternatives to a win-lose scenario that can be the beginnings of lasting peace.
Practically, I’m not able to test this example but we can do so theoretically using SWOT – a tool familiar to development practitioners.

Project Title:
PRAV-CPS+
(Participatory Readiness Assessment Video and Co-operative Problem Solving Plus)
A two-stage video-based project combining PV with Readiness Assessment in Stage 1 and PV with role reversal techniques and CPS in Stage 2.
Stage 1: to evaluate willingness and capability to engage in efforts to resolve conflicts.
Stage 2: to initiate peace negotiations and generate ideas for acceptable settlements based on interests of all parties to a conflict.

Strengths
Provides a platform for communities or social groups who desire peace but may be excluded from official channels to make their position known to a wider audience.
Validates the opinions of marginalised voices.
PV enthuses both participants and non-participants to be active in the process, engaging where they may have otherwise been reluctant.
Participatory element drives the outcomes and ensures culturally specific design.
Participatory element invites adaptation to suit different needs in different situations.
Accountability ensured as statements and testimonies are committed to video and production crew are credited.

Weaknesses
Could be edited in such a way as to manipulate consensus.
If intended audience does not share a language, translation will be required and may contain inaccuracies.
Progression to stage 2 of the project depends on the stage 1 finding positive readiness to enter stage 2.
Opportunities
System builds capacity ensuring participants can replicate it to address future needs.
Video may also work as a standalone product that can be shown nationally or internationally to build consensus and promote peaceful engagement.

Threats
Process may be ‘hijacked’ to exhibit unconstructive behaviour and/or sentiment.
Costs of equipment, or other operational costs, may be prohibitive.

3.3 FURTHER RESEARCH
JUSTICE & VIDEO TESTIMONIES

Within the realms of peacebuilding, one of the identified sources of conflict can be data (Isenhart & Spangle 2000). For example, stakeholders may disagree on the reliability or credibility of information in a dispute. Through the use of PV techniques stakeholders can either see or be those providing the information and so the process has a transparent quality. This is one way of proving the trustworthiness of information but international authoritative bodies also use video in the pursuit of lasting peace by addressing grievances which may result in or from open conflict. I’m referring to the weighty issue of justice.

We should note that peace and justice go hand in hand but that the nature of and form that justice should take is not straightforward (Huyse, in Reychler & Paffenholz, 2001). Providing video as evidence is not simply a litigious exercise, but can be included in court trials at many levels as part of a wider peace process hinged around reconciliation through justice served. In the very first trial of the International Criminal Court, video was used by the prosecution in its accusations of the use of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo against defendant Thomas Lubanga. Testimonies from witnesses were presented in court via live video link up65 between DR Congo and the Hague and lawyers used video footage

65 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alz7P0rljak
showing child soldiers in training to prove the visibly young age of combatants. Video has been incorporated into the justice system. Article 69 of the Rome Statute allows for ‘viva voce’ (vocal) testimony to be delivered via video.

Nevertheless, my research indicated a number of concerns about this procedure. There are difficult challenges facing prosecutors bringing witnesses into session for this case. For example, some witnesses will, in a case about child soldiers, be children. Now consider this child is a young girl who has been forced into soldiering and been sexually abused by her commanders. She has a very poor literacy level, if she’s received any education at all, and has never been outside the region she is from in DR Congo. To prep and facilitate communication between this girl and an international court room full of lawyers in the Netherlands asking difficult and potentially distressing questions of her in a formal manner, via video is surely an epic challenge. To do so sensitively, accurately and efficiently though is essential for the very serious level of international justice exercised. The communication gap is as culturally vast as it is geographically. Could experienced participatory video practitioners have a role to play here? Partnering with relevant experts (child support, etc) could video peacebuilders provide a better level of support at the witness end to ensure the witness is mentally prepared and the given evidence secure and reliable?

3.4 CONCLUSION

‘The media’s role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is significant and likely to spread in years to come as it becomes recognised as another tool available to help prevent, limit or solve problems.’ This quote from Gardner (in Reychler & Paffenholz, 2001) was written ten years ago. The power of the media was established and even then the potential for it to dramatically improve peacebuilding efforts was understood. Nevertheless, so much has evolved in the world of video and communication technology since then and the expansion of video-based participatory methodology legitimised its use in the field.

Many of the elements that video can bring to a project as highlighted above are familiar to development practitioners with a working knowledge of participatory

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66 http://hub.witness.org/en/Lubanga/TrialOverview
methods (e.g. community empowerment) but what I have discovered is that video is able to magnify results and promote them to larger audiences. I have learnt that we can apply these as mechanisms to address conflict in places where this is most needed.

Furthermore, other aspects of video, especially when combined with the internet, are unique and can be used in new ways to build peace (e.g. involving audiences as participants too).

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