

The ghost in the (news) room

Peace journalism and its limits in Kenya's complex media environment

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Lisa Weighton

Supervisor: Patrick McCurdy - Associate professor,
Department of Communication

School of International Development and Global Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

This thesis explores how peace journalism (PJ) translates into practice in the Kenyan media environment. Through the personal accounts of practicing reporters in Kenya, this research reveals the challenges and opportunities Kenyan journalist-participants faced while covering the 2013 presidential election. Through their personal experiences, this research reveals reporters were working in an exceptionally challenging media environment; one significantly shaped by the 2007 election and post-election violence. Participants identified numerous constraints that shaped their reporting practices, including structural constraints within their newsrooms and societal constraints in relation to ethnic identity. This thesis concludes that PJ has yet to offer sufficient concrete or practical solutions addressing these influencing factors, largely because of an overestimation of the agency journalists possess. Therefore, this research validates an existing body of research that suggests there is a need for PJ to consider factors outside of journalists themselves, which may constrain their work. The objective of the research is not to discredit the value of the tools PJ offers, but rather draw attention to the notion that those tools alone are insufficient.

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Acronyms

BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence (Waki Commission)
CORD	Coalition for Reforms and Democracy
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSJ	Conflict-Sensitive Journalism
ECK	Election Commission of Kenya
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IREC	Independent Review Commission (Kriegler Commission)
KNDR	Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
MCK	Media Council of Kenya
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
NARA	National Accord and Reconciliation Act
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMG	Nation Media Group
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PEV	Post-Election Violence
PJ	Peace Journalism
PNU	Party of National Unity
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SG	Standard Group
WJ	War Journalism

Introduction

As the messengers who deliver – and shape – the news journalists have a job that is understood by few and criticized by many.

Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 166

In recent years, the Kenyan news media has faced its share of criticism – much of it stemming from coverage following the faulty 2007 presidential election and resulting post-election violence (PEV). Kenya’s Independent Review Commission, which investigated the election, found the media played a role in inflaming or contributing to violence through its coverage and failing to report responsibly by not observing “media ethics and standards.... As a consequence, (the media) ended up not helping Kenyans but added fuel to the flames” (Final consolidated report, 2008, p. 99-100). Five years later, while the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) has largely applauded the media for providing responsible coverage during the 2013 election (Mwangi, 2013), the media has also been accused of self-censorship (ICG, 2013, p. 10), of pushing a peace agenda and for not being sufficiently critical of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and its acquisition of faulty biometric voter identification kits (Mwangi & Bwire, 2013).

Following the 2013 election, conversations about the Kenyan media’s coverage appeared in various reports, news stories and online discussions. However discussions about *the media* as a whole can be quite abstract. The news media is not a singular homogeneous group, but rather the sum of its parts. It is comprised of numerous media houses in broadcast, print and online news. Within those organizations are individual media practitioners whose voices are easily lost within wider discussions about *the media* as a whole. Also lost are the idiosyncratic experiences of those media practitioners who exert their individual agency within the structural constraints of their organizations. It is those media practitioners – editors and journalists – with which this research is primarily concerned. Hanitzsch (2004) laments the dearth of information on the “characteristics and professional views” of reporters who cover violence and conflict (p. 492). In part, this research seeks to fill that gap by drawing primarily on the views of individual print journalists who covered both the 2007 and 2013

elections. In doing so, the research highlights their experiences of covering the 2013 election in order to better understand how larger constraints impacted their agency in 2013.

Research motivation and process

After recognizing the lack of reporters' voices on this topic, my research motivation was simple: to provide reporters with a platform to discuss the opportunities and challenges they faced reporting on the 2013 election. After all, reporters are the ones who have considerable autonomy in selecting news sources, conducting interviews and making decisions about how they frame their stories – or so I thought. It therefore seemed fitting that they should have an opportunity to respond to the criticism they faced during and after the last election. As a former reporter myself, I wanted to tell “the other side of the story” in order to shed some light and provide balance on the intricacies of reporting in potential conflict environments.

In the initial stages of developing this research topic, I read a lot about peace journalism (PJ). Peace journalism (also known as conflict-sensitive journalism or CSJ)¹ is defined as “when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). As I read more, I learned that a number of PJ initiatives including workshops and seminars targeted journalists between 2008 and 2013. In addition, the Kenyan media adopted a set of election coverage guidelines, which call on media practitioners to be sensitive in their reporting during times of conflict. I also learned that journalists operate under a media code of conduct, which governs all media practitioners in the country. In part, the code calls on journalists to present stories with “due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity and peace” (Media Council Act, 2013, p. 14). These factors led me to believe that with the proper training and tools journalists can become PJ practitioners.

¹ A more detailed discussion about the similarities and understandings of CSJ and PJ takes place in sections 1.3, 1.4 and within Chapter 4 and Table 1.

While I went to Kenya to get “the other side of the story,” I learned there were many more sides than I anticipated. After completing just a handful of interviews, I realized participants were working in an environment heavy with historical burdens, ethnic tension and structural constraints – all of which played a significant role in influencing how they constructed their stories. I started to understand that the environment in which reporters operated in 2013 was extremely complex – with a number of push-pull factors at play. Participants did not seem to have as much agency as I thought. I had initially bought into PJ in theory but after speaking with reporters, I began to question their ability to put it into practice. So I went back to the literature to see if and how PJ addresses structure and agency. I found that PJ is largely designed to enhance the individual journalists’ ‘tool box’ of skills in order to better equip her to report non-violent responses to conflict. In doing so, the PJ literature sees individual media practitioners as agents of PJ, failing to adequately consider other factors outside of the individual, which may influence or constrain the application of PJ. I was not the first to question this disconnect. Hanitzsch (2004) rightly asks, “to what extent does the situational context ... prevent or even deter reporters from applying peace journalism to their daily work?” (293). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) contend that content is shaped by a “hierarchy of influences” including a “wide variety of factors both inside and outside media organizations” (p. 9). The authors suggest that “factors external to the communicator and the organization – economic and cultural forces, and audience” also play a role in determining content (p. 7). Similarly, Betz (2011) argues that conflict reporting and the related idea of CSJ “cannot and should not be considered as an isolated activity but rather that the tenants of CSJ are affected by the environment in which it is practiced” (p. 9).

Lynch (2007), a proponent of PJ, says Hanitzsch “is right to draw attention ‘to the many structural constraints which shape and limit the work of journalists’” (p. 10). Still, Lynch (2007) says “journalists – acting individually and/or collectively – can decide to make some degree of difference to their journalism” (p. 2), acknowledging PJ’s implicit presupposition that individual journalists are the primary influencing agent in story production. So I wondered: *How does PJ theory translate into practice for Kenyan journalists who covered the 2013 election?* In order to answer this overarching question – which serves as a guide for this research – this thesis will present a strong understanding of PJ theory while highlighting Kenyan journalists’ experiences reporting during the 2013 election, including the forces they identified as shaping and constraining their reporting practices. In order to fully

understand the media environment in 2013, this thesis also provides a chapter exploring Kenya's political history, including the faulty 2007 election and PEV.

While the PJ literature alludes to the application of PJ "bringing us to a point of journalistic revolution" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. xix), it stops short of offering a road map for doing so. It is outside the scope of this thesis to draft such a road map. The goals of this research are two-fold: to explore the unique opportunities and challenges of reporting on conflict from the perspective of practicing Kenyan journalists; and to identify a gap in the PJ literature, thereby presenting an opportunity for further research. While this thesis primarily attempts to show a disconnect between PJ theory and practice through a case study of practicing Kenyan journalists, it does not intend to infer that PJ and the tools it offers should be disregarded. Indeed, PJ has much to offer in terms of exploring the root causes of conflict. Rather, this thesis draws attention to factors that constrain journalists' ability to put PJ into action – factors PJ has yet to sufficiently recognize.

Research questions

This research will explore the strengths and limitations of PJ in the Kenyan media environment by exploring the overarching question guiding this research: *How does peace journalism theory translate into practice for Kenyan journalists who covered the 2013 election?* Specifically, this research concerns print reporters and editors at both the *Daily Nation* and *Standard* newspapers. In order to answer this question, I developed three research questions and sub questions to guide this study. The first research question seeks to understand participants' beliefs about the role(s) the media should play in terms of influencing conflict dynamics. Asking this research question was significant, as it showed me that participants' ideas about the role of the media are strongly correlated with how they see the power of the media. The second research question deals with the perceived historical and structural constraints under which journalists operated in 2013. Considering the constraints participants identified, this question seeks to understand in what ways PJ accounted for those barriers. The third research question looks at how past events shaped participants' perceived approaches to covering the 2013 election. Together, the following three RQs shaped my research and provided the framework for understanding how PJ translates into practice for participants in this study.

Research Question 1: What roles do Kenyan print journalists and editors at the *Daily Nation* and *Standard* newspapers believe the press should play in terms of influencing conflict dynamics?

SQ 1: How do journalists and editors see the power of the media?

SQ 2: How do journalists and editors define and distinguish between the terms conflict-sensitive journalism and peace journalism?

SQ 3: In what ways did journalists and editors use conflict-sensitive journalism or peace journalism in their coverage of the 2013 Kenyan election?

Research Question 2: What are the perceived constraints under which reporters and editors operated while covering the 2013 Kenyan election?

SQ 1: How does PJ account for these constraints?

Research Question 3: How did journalists' and editors' experiences covering the 2007 election and post-election violence affect their perceived approach to covering the 2013 election?

Value added to the field

As this research concerns journalists and their experiences reporting on peace and conflict, this research contributes to discussions and analysis in both international development studies and in media and communications studies.

Contribution to the field of international development

In the field of international development, we know peace and development are inherently linked. UN General Assembly Vice President, Sofia Mesquita Borges said, “there can be no peace and stability without development and no development without peace and stability” (UN-NGLS, 2014). While it is unclear whether peace is a precondition for development or a result of development, research has shown that a free press is one of the most effective drivers of peace (GPI, 2009). And while the media is just one of the many forces which may have an impact on peace and reconciliation, in Kenya it is a significant one. The Kenyan media is seen as a highly trusted and powerful institution (Wolf, 2009, p. 282), with almost 81 per cent of Kenyan audiences trusting the media to report fairly and accurately (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 55). It therefore presents considerable potential to help people “consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick,

2005, p. 5) which may contribute to building a stable foundation for economic and social development.

Contribution to the field of media and communications

This research makes two important contributions to the field of media and communications: a) it untangles the differences and similarities between three commonly used terms in relation to conflict reporting; and b) it validates an existing body of literature that suggests there is a need for PJ to consider the factors outside of journalists themselves. The first contribution is theoretical as this research compares and contrasts conflict-sensitive journalism with two schools of thought in relation to PJ – “interventionist” PJ and PJ as a mode of “good journalism.” This thesis concludes that PJ (as a mode of “good journalism) and CSJ are the same thing. The second contribution to the field of media and communications is empirical. Using Kenya as a case study, this thesis raises questions about the need to explore unique forms of PJ specific to the environment in which it is practiced. The research describes how Kenyan journalists worked within in a unique reporting environment in 2013 following the PEV and suggests that cultural and historical considerations must be incorporated into PJ strategies in Kenya in order to be effective.

1. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

The media's influence – creating conditions in which violence became more likely, then aiding and abetting it – focused international attention on the role of journalism in conflict, not only as a potential threat but also as a resource for interventions to reduce violence and the likelihood of violence.

(Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 228)

This literature review provides an entry point into my conceptual framework. It begins by providing background about the origins of PJ research, tracing its development over the last four decades. The literature review reveals that the highly contentious concept lacks a single universally accepted definition. Instead, we can see two main schools of thought emerge, which differ in focus and intent. The first is an “interventionist” mode of reporting which calls on reporters to take an active role in conflict resolution. The second school of thought sees PJ as akin to traditional “good journalism” practices, marrying concepts such as balance, accuracy and truthfulness with responsibility and conflict analysis. This mode of “socially responsible journalism” (Hanitzsch, 2007) does not call on journalists to resolve conflict, but rather to alter their professional *values and practices* in such a way as to help audiences *consider* non-violence. In other words, the first perspective calls on journalists to transform conflict, the second perspective calls on journalists to transform themselves.

Aside from the two ‘peace journalisms,’ this review also discusses conflict-sensitive journalism – a mode of conflict reporting that some believe emerged as an alternative to PJ. However, this review shows that the two differ only in name, as PJ (as a mode of “good journalism”) and CSJ share the same scope and focus. Both practices have been criticized for overestimating the agency of individual reporters amid a host of structural constraints within their reporting environments. Therefore, this review concludes with a discussion about the tension between journalistic agency and structure and situates PJ within these debates in order to better understand its strengths and weaknesses.

1.1 Peace journalism: its roots and rise

The roots of peace journalism trace back to 1965, with early ideas emerging in the work of Norwegian sociologist and peace researcher Johan Galtung (Sreedharan, 2013, p. 463). In 1965, Galtung published his important paper, *The Structure of Foreign News*, with Mari Holmboe Ruge (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). By examining four Norwegian newspapers' coverage of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises, Galtung and Ruge (1965) suggest the need for greater balance between negative events portrayed in the media and responses to those events, greater coverage of "non-elite" people, more emphasis on complexity and increased coverage of positive events (p. 85). Galtung's work charts "a course for peace journalism," distinguishing between two paths in conflict reporting: the "high road" and the "low road" (Galtung & Fischer, 2013, p. 96). The low road of war journalism (WJ) depicts conflict as a "battle" in an "arena" or "gladiator circus" where two parties struggle against incompatible goals. The high road of PJ, however, is an opportunity to find creative ways to transform conflict without violence (Galtung & Fischer, 2013, p. 96-97). Galtung describes PJ as a mechanism for "conflict transformation" by focusing on conflict formation and creative solutions to enable its resolution (Galtung and Fischer, 2013, p. 96). He largely sees PJ as a necessary antidote to the damaging practice of WJ, which he describes as a reactive response to violence that focuses on the visible effects of war in a closed space and time (Galtung & Fischer, 2013, p. 98). Famously, Galtung illustrates his PJ model by comparing WJ to sports reporting and PJ to health reporting. Sports reporting focuses on a "zero-sum" game (Galtung & Fischer, 2013, p. 96) meaning that if one side is to win, the other must lose. Health reporters, however, not only describe the symptoms of a patient, but also "a full range of cures and preventative measures" (Lee & Maslog, 2005, p. 312).

While discussions about PJ began with Galtung's early research, it was not until the 1990s that journalists, researchers and academics began to seriously consider the media's role in conflict or post-conflict settings (Betz, 2011, p. 2) – more than three decades after the publication of *The Structure of Foreign News*. The presence of dangerous speech and hate media, which contributed to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, as well as the war in the Balkans, gave immediacy to the subject of the media's role in conflict and peacebuilding (Betz, 2011). In addition, coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 and the international media attention paid to the war in Kosovo put the media's role in covering conflict in the spotlight (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Then came the Rwandan genocide. The media's influence – creating conditions in which violence became more likely, then aiding and abetting it – focused international attention on the role of journalism in conflict, not only as a potential threat but also as a resource for interventions to reduce violence and the likelihood of violence. (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 228)

In 1997, Galtung officially “launched” PJ at a residential summer school in England, where he presented PJ as an alternative to the dominant practice of WJ (Lynch, 2013, p. 15).

Inspired by Galtung, journalists Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick developed PJ into a practical “set of tools” to help journalists think critically about their role when covering conflict. In 2002, Lynch published *Reporting the World*, a “checklist for the ethical reporting of conflicts” developed by a UK-based PJ think tank of the same name. The next year, Howard (2003) published his CSJ handbook, based on *Reporting the World*. In 2005, Lynch partnered with McGoldrick and published *Peace Journalism*, a comprehensive text that combines both theoretical debates and practical tools for conflict reporters. Today, while PJ has not gained widespread acceptance, a number of sources indicate PJ is gaining ground, especially in developing countries, (Hackett, 2011; Mwangi & Bwire, 2013; Onyebadi & Oyedeji, 2011). Indeed, some of the loudest voices calling for PJ are coming from the Global South –including Kenya – where many believe journalists have a duty to keep peace or at least have a responsibility to refrain from publishing material that may aggravate conflict² (e.g. MCK, 2012a; Obonyo & Fackler, 2009; Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010). However, more than four decades after PJ discussions first emerged, journalists, academics and researchers have yet to agree on exactly how to define the practice.

² In fact, this responsibility is enshrined in law. Article 33 of The Constitution of Kenya (2010) protects freedom of expression except pertaining to hate speech or the incitement of violence. In addition, the National Cohesion and Integration Act (2008), criminalizes the use of speech that is “threatening, abusive or insulting” and where this behaviour intends to “stir up ethnic hatred” (p. 13). In addition, the Act states that media houses which incite “hatred” or “hostility” against a person or a group can be held liable (p. 27).

1.2 Peace journalism: two schools of thought

In recent years, a growing body of research has contributed to discussions and debates about the role of the media in conflict situations. While there is no “universal concept of peace journalism” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 2), within the PJ literature, both Hanitzsch (2007) and Ross (2006), draw attention to two divergent schools of thought. The first relates to the oft-criticized practice of advocacy journalism³ where journalists take on an activist-like approach to covering conflict (Ross, 2006). The other reflects traditional practices of “good journalism”⁴ (Hanitzsch, 2007) while including “under-represented perspectives to provide deeper and broader information” (Ross, 2006, p. 1). This section discusses each school of thought and shows that despite sharing the same name, the two ‘peace journalisms’ differ in scope, focus and conceptualizations of the role of journalists.

Interventionist reporting

The first school of thought can be understood as “interventionist reporting,” or a form of journalism that “actively promote(s) peace through means of public communication” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 1) by envisioning or portraying a conflict-free society (Ross, 2006). This school of thought has often been associated with conflict resolution and advocacy (Aslam, 2011) and tends to focus on taking an active role in finding solutions to conflict or even adopting a conscious agenda for peace. Peleg (2006) describes how this form of PJ can take on a mediation role in conflict:

Peace journalism allows the rivaling sides to get to know one another to uphold understanding and empathy, to focus on creativity and human ingenuity to resolve conflicts and to emphasize truth-oriented, people-oriented and solution-oriented journalism to expedite peace. (p. 2)

³ Peace journalism is often lumped together with other terms, such as “advocacy journalism” or “journalism of attachment” (Shinar, 2007). “Advocacy journalism” envisions a society not marred by conflict (Ross, 2007), and “attached” journalism attempts to create reality by calling for change (Hanitzsch, 2007).

⁴ Although “good journalism” is a rather vague term, it is generally accepted to mean a form of reporting that is committed to truthful, responsible, accurate and balanced coverage which seeks out voices from all sides and provides opportunities for multiple and conflicting parties to air their views.

Proponents of this school of thought often see the media as having an ethical duty in preventing, resolving or minimizing the negative effects of violence by “creat(ing) reality, set(ing) examples and call(ing) for change” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 3). Indeed, Melone, Terzis and Beleli (2002) argue that in conflict situations, the media “cannot be neutral towards peace” (p. 2). In the Kenyan context, this is true for Onyebadi and Oyedeji (2011) who argue that journalists not only can play an active role in conflict resolution, but they “should be society’s moral witnesses, not ‘objective’ bystanders who watch and report on the collapse of humanity” (p. 215). Similarly, in East African conflicts where peace is “tenuous” (p. 4) Obonyo and Fackler (2009) accept PJ as an “interventionist” mode of reporting:

Peace journalism is the approach to the practice of the trade with an underlying philosophy to bring about the reduction of violence, especially when tensions flare between ethnicities, to moderate the politically stifling impasse, and to promote dialogue between antagonists where embedded suspicion threatens to disrupt already fragile communities. (p. 2)

“Interventionist” PJ seems to adopt a direct effects approach, with the view that the media is a “powerful instrument that could be used for evil or for constructive social purposes” (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 31). By creating space for conflicting parties to communicate, “interventionist” PJ seeks to increase “the prospects for resolution and reconciliation by changing the norms and habits of reporting conflicts” (Peleg, 2006, p. 1). While the objectives are laudable, this mode of reporting has garnered significant criticism. Hanitzsch (2007) argues that journalists teeter dangerously between journalism and public relations if they actively engage in conflict resolution. David Loyn (2007), fervent PJ critic and journalist, notes that, “reporting and peacemaking are different roles,” adding that reporters who give undue prominence to passing peace plans or search for peacemakers, distort their craft and do not serve their audience” (p. 3). The idea that PJ may cause reporters to cross the line from journalism to PR has caused suspicion among both media practitioners and academics, causing many to disregard PJ entirely (Kempf, 2007).

Peace journalism and ‘good journalism’

While PJ has in the past been linked with conflict resolution and advocacy (Aslam, 2011), the second school of thought in defining PJ relates the practice more closely to traditional notions of “good journalism” as opposed to “peace PR” (Hanitzsch, 2007). This

understanding of PJ is still committed to responsible journalism practices like giving a voice to all rivalling parties, providing background and context, truthfulness and reporting on the damaging effects of war and suffering on all sides (Hanitzsch, 2007 p. 7). However, this mode of reporting calls on reporters to consider the “impact and consequences” of what they write or broadcast (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 242) and does “not involve any radical departure from contemporary journalism practice” (Ross, 2006, p. 12). While “interventionist” PJ relates to human communications theory, or how audiences respond to messages, this mode of PJ more closely relates to mass communications theory as it deals with the production of media messages (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 31). PJ conceived in this way can be seen as an improvement on journalism best practices “as well as a means for ameliorating conflicts and opening up new opportunities for their peaceful resolution” (Hackett, 2006, p. 2). This mode of PJ can be defined as “when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). However, this does not mean only reporting ‘good news’. In line with traditional tenets of good journalism, Lynch (2007) argues that peace journalists should report the facts fully. Where PJ goes further, he argues, is that it calls on reporters to reflect on how they come to meet particular facts “as distinct from a practically infinite number of others ‘out there’” and how those facts come to meet them (p. 3). By calling on journalists to question how the facts they present will affect audiences’ understanding of a conflict, providing context and critical self-awareness, Lynch (2014) argues, “PJ embodies an approach to reporting conflicts that can be regarded as good journalism” (p. 51).

Like Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), Shinar (2007) sees PJ as a critically self-aware form of journalism, defining it as “a normative mode of responsible and conscientious media coverage of conflict that aims at contributing to peacemaking, peacekeeping and changing the attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace” (p. 2). To him, PJ is akin to a “public service.” Peace journalism is:

a fairer way to cover conflict, relative to the usual coverage, and suggests possibilities to improve professional attitudes and performance; strengthen human, moral and ethical values in the media; widen scholarly and professional media horizons and better public service by the media. (Shinar, 2007, p. 2)

According to Aslam (2011), better public service results in greater audience awareness and understanding of conflict. “The value of peace journalism lies in the possibility of it bringing a positive change in the media’s coverage of conflict situations and a better understanding to the people as to why do they happen” (Aslam, 2011, p. 137).

1.3 Conflict-sensitive journalism: a matter of semantics

In his publication, “Conflict-sensitive reporting: state of the art,” Ross Howard (2009) acknowledged that “as early as 2003, it was evident that the debate about journalists’ relationship to conflict resolution, while healthy, was not going to be resolved easily” (p. 11). Media development NGOs began talking about “how to define (a) media practice that contributes to a community’s conflict resolution while adhering to the media’s core role of providing accurate unbiased information” (p. 11). That same year, Howard (2003) offered an approach he calls conflict-sensitive journalism (CSJ), detailed in his handbook of the same name. Betz (2011) sees CSJ as an alternative to PJ – which she understands in the interventionist form:

Peace journalism advocates that journalists take a more active role in finding solutions to conflict ... such a role, however, meant that journalists would rather become advocates for peace ... rather than borrowing from the traditional journalistic values of accuracy, impartiality and responsibility.... And so, ‘conflict-sensitive journalism’ came about. (p. 3)

While Howard (2003) recognizes prominent PJ critiques, he has never presented CSJ as an alternative model to PJ as Betz (2011) suggests. In fact, he writes that PJ “largely echoes CSJ” (Howard, 2009, p. 49) and credits much of the work in his handbook to PJ advocates Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick (Howard, 2003, p. 5). Betz (2011) understands PJ in the “interventionist” sense, while Howard sees PJ, and therefore CSJ, as a complement to “good journalism.” This is evident from his writings as he calls for better, socially responsible reporting to educate audiences with the information needed to make critical decisions in their lives. Likewise, Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) say the methods presented in their book give “a new set of terms for the everyday work of a journalist” (p. 240). In addition, both Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) and Howard (2003) emphasize “responsibility” in their methods. Howard (2003) notes, “some journalists say it is not our job to take responsibility for what happens when we report the news. We just report the conflict

the same way we report a soccer match – we just describe it. But that is not enough for conflict-sensitive journalism” (p 15). Compare this to how Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) see PJ: “there is no ‘just the facts’ – PJ is about taking responsibility for the impact and consequences of our reporting” (p. 242). Therefore, PJ, like CSJ, holds that traditional journalistic practices are insufficient in conflict coverage. Conflict reporting requires reporters to not only report on conflict, but understand it as a “social process” as opposed to an event (Howard, 2009, p. 3).

1.4 Conflict-sensitive journalism or peace journalism?

When understood as an extension of ‘good journalism’ the discussion above shows that PJ is akin CSJ. While PJ and CSJ really differ only in name, there is one key difference: how both terms are understood. Peace journalism is often rejected on the basis that it advocates reporting only “good news,” minimizing or censoring conflict, or asking journalists to become advocates for peace. For that reason, Hanitzsch (2007) calls it a “mistitled” concept “as it obviously misleads people to conclude that its very intention is the advocacy of peace” (p. 7). Hoffman (2012) agrees that ‘peace journalism’ is a rather unfortunate “choice of terms” as it has “invariably nurtured the critique of confusing journalism with peace activism” (p. v). This misinterpretation undoubtedly stems from “interventionist” understandings of PJ, as opposed to conceptualizations of PJ as a mode of “good journalism.” Understood in this way, this research sees CSJ and PJ interchangeably. Clarifying the terms and identifying misunderstandings of how PJ is defined is significant as both terms are used in Kenya (Mwangi & Bwire, 2013) but are more often than not, understood very differently by reporters on the ground.

In order to simplify my understanding of the above discussion, Table 1 outlines the key similarities and differences between “interventionist” PJ, PJ as a mode of “good journalism” and CSJ. While “interventionist” PJ calls on reporters to alter the course of conflict, both CSJ and PJ as a mode of “good journalism” call on journalists to change themselves. While the focus is on reducing violence in interventionist reporting, the focus in the other two groups of conflict reporting is not on altering the conflict itself, but how that conflict is portrayed.

Table 1: Comparisons and contrasts of conflict reporting terms

<p>“INTERVENTIONIST” PJ</p> <p>PUTS THE BURDEN ON JOURNALISTS TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF CONFLICT</p>	<p>PJ AS “GOOD JOURNALISM”</p> <p>PUTS THE BURDEN ON JOURNALISTS TO CHANGE THE WAY THEY COVER CONFLICT</p>	<p>CSJ</p>
<p>JOURNALISTS ADVOCATE FOR PEACE</p> <p>Journalists focus on reducing violence by taking on an “activist” role (Ross, 2006, p. 1). “Other peace journalism techniques include preventative advocacy approaches through editorials and columns urging reconciliation” (Lee, 2010, p. 366)</p>	<p>JOURNALISTS UPHOLD TENANTS OF “GOOD JOURNALISM” (IE: ACCURACY, BALANCE AND FAIRNESS)</p> <p><i>This mode of PJ provides “quality, objective journalism that includes under-represented perspectives to provide deeper and broader information” (Ross, 2006, p. 1)</i></p>	<p>JOURNALISTS UPHOLD TENANTS OF “GOOD JOURNALISM” (IE: ACCURACY, BALANCE AND FAIRNESS)</p> <p><i>“Professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced” (Howard, 2003, p. 8)</i></p>
<p>JOURNALISTS ATTEMPT TO DISARM CONFLICT</p> <p><i>“Peace journalism allows the rivaling sides to get to know one another to uphold understanding and empathy, to focus on creativity and human ingenuity to resolve conflicts and to emphasize truth-oriented, people-oriented and solution-oriented journalism to expedite peace” (Peleg, 2006, p. 2)</i></p>	<p>JOURNALISTS DISARM CONTENT</p> <p><i>Avoids “demonizing” adjectives like “vicious” and “cruel.” Avoids labels like “terrorist” and “extremist” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 30)</i></p>	<p>JOURNALISTS DISARM CONTENT</p> <p><i>“Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians. Soldiers and policemen are not massacred. Genocide means killing an entire people. Do not minimize suffering, but use strong language carefully” (Howard, 2003, p. 16)</i></p>
<p>JOURNALISTS ACT LIKE MEDIATORS</p> <p><i>This mode of PJ has an “underlying philosophy to bring about the reduction of violence” while promoting “dialogue between antagonists” (Obonyo & Fackler, 2009, p. 2)</i></p>	<p>JOURNALISTS EXPLORE CONFLICT FORMATION</p> <p><i>Peace journalists explore “backgrounds of conflict formation, and (present) causes and options on every side so as to portray conflict in realistic terms, transparent to the audience” (Shinar, 2007)</i></p>	<p>JOURNALISTS EXPLORE CONFLICT FORMATION</p> <p><i>Conflict-sensitive journalists “consider what caused the conflict to become violent.” Root causes of conflict may include: scarce resources, communication breakdown, unresolved grievances and unequal power distribution (Howard, 2003, p. 6)</i></p>
<p>PROBLEMATIC BECAUSE IT LEAVES THE REALM OF GOOD JOURNALISM FOR ‘PEACE PR’ (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 7)</p>	<p>PROBLEMATIC BECAUSE THIS APPROACH “ADDRESSES JOURNALISTS AS INDIVIDUALS, WHEREAS THE STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS OF NEWS MAKING FADE FROM THE RADAR” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 7)</p>	

1.5 Structure and Agency

The context in which a conflict takes place is significant and unique to each conflict environment. So too is the reporting environment in which journalists gather information, produce stories and distribute the news – often finding themselves balancing their individual agency with structural reporting constraints. This research seeks to understand not only the historical and structural constraints under which reporters operated while covering the 2013 election, but also the ways in which these constraints shaped reporters' perceived approaches to covering that election. Inherent to this subject is the tension between structure and agency. Therefore, we cannot adequately understand the strengths and limitations of PJ without first considering how it relates to both the structures in which reporters work, and the agency they exert within that environment. Indeed, as Lynch (2013) notes, “opportunities to implement PJ cannot be removed from context, including the densely woven web of relationships in which a complex discursive practice, such as daily news, is unavoidably embedded” (p. 19).

Simply put, “structure suggests constraint on human action” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2014, p. 21). Croteau and Hoynes (2014) note that structure does not exist physically, but rather describes a pattern of behaviour. In terms of the media, there are many structures that may shape the work of journalists. Some of these exist within the media organization, such as media routines, “time and material resources” and “editorial procedures” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 1). Others exist outside of the media organization, including government control, ownership or advertising (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) note that both media owners and advertisers exert considerable constraints on the news media as “owners have the final say in what the organization does” (p. 155) and advertisers may “delete or shape ... content by specifically withdrawing advertising support from objectionable content” (p. 259).

But as Croteau and Hoynes (2014) note, media practitioners “are not simply mindless cogs in a media machine.” Despite the media structures they work within, journalists “do not churn out products precisely in accord with what our understanding of social structure tells us they should” (p. 113). That is because to at least some extent, journalists hold a degree of agency within their media organizations.

Structural constraints will influence behavior by making some choices more attractive. Some more risky, and some almost unthinkable. Despite working within certain constraints, professionals who help create media

products make a series of choices about what to make and how to produce and distribute the final result. (p. 113)

Similarly, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that while journalists may be constrained by a “hierarchy of influences⁵,” they “still have latitude in their behaviour,” meaning they are not entirely regulated by external factors (p. 261). Agency refers to “intentional and undetermined human action” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2014, p. 22), or as Block (2013) puts it, agency refers to the ability of the individual to “act on, control and even transform the social worlds that envelope him/her” (p. 129). Aslam (2011) argues that oftentimes, debates about ‘the media’ focus too much on ‘journalism’ in general, therefore excluding “the journalist as an individual” (p. 124), who she sees as carrying enormous power.

After defining both structure and agency and outlining brief discussions about how each manifests in the news media, we can now consider how PJ fits within those debates. As Lynch (2013) rightly notes, there has long been the assumption that reporters and editors “could change the content of the news they produce about conflict, if only they were sensitized to peace perspectives, and assisted in developing critical self-awareness, through exposure to advocacy and training” (p. 15). Yet this assumption “begs to be examined” in light of other influencing factors such as “the economic circumstances of news production” and the “overarching ideological and political contexts in which journalism is written, disseminated and consumed” (p. 15).

Peace journalism and agency

Peace journalism is inherently individualistic, focusing on the agency of individual reporters. This is evident from Lynch and McGoldrick’s (2005) definition: PJ “is when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (p. 5). Significantly, Aslam (2011) notes, it is individual reporters who have led the “call for peace journalism” as they are the ones who have “witnessed conflict situations and found the traditional media approach lacking” in terms of increasing audience understanding

⁵ The hierarchy of influences model consists of five ideological influences on media content: the ideological level, the extramedia level, organization level, media routines level and the individual level (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 214).

of conflict (Aslam, 2011, p. 121). Proponents of PJ argue that the strengths of PJ lie in its ability to offer reporters insights into conflict analysis, allowing them to create richer, more complex stories to enhance audiences' understandings of conflict. While Lynch (2013) acknowledges that journalistic agency must be considered in concert with structural constraints, PJ still largely overestimates journalistic autonomy and underestimates the forces that limit it.

Peace journalism and structure: the missing piece of the puzzle

(Peace journalism literature) seems to suggest that journalists only need to change their attitudes and behaviours, and as a result, they will produce conflict coverage that embraces the values of peace journalism. But this is an illusion.

Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 5

The idea that PJ is a “tool box” of skills, accessible to every reporter with the right knowledge and training, has been the subject of great debate. While PJ advocates argue that individual journalists hold the key to the successful implementation of PJ (Aslam, 2011) conceptualizing PJ in this way has garnered significant criticism. Hanitzsch (2007) sees the perspective as “overly individualistic” (p. 5), unconvinced that if journalists change their approach, PJ will follow:

Peace journalism ... ignores the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists: few personnel, time and material resources; editorial procedures and hierarchies; textual constraints; availability of sources; access to the scene and information in general – just to name a few.... To have any impact on the way news is made ... the advocates of peace journalism must address the structural constraints of news production. (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 1)

Kempf (2007) argues that external constraints like deadlines, financial resources and organizational expectations serve to shape and limit the content journalists are able to produce. Hyde-Clarke (2012) shares similar reservations:

It may not be enough for journalists to alter existing news frames. Consideration must additionally be given to audience mindset and reception, to commercialization of the media itself, and to both the

duration of the event and the political-social environment that surrounds it. (p. 33)

Hyde-Clarke (2012) notes that in order for PJ to realize its full potential, it must be carried out by “all levels” of an organization – not just via a select few (p. 26).

Peace journalism proponents have not altogether failed to consider the structural constraints reporters face (Hackett, 2006). In fact, in recent publications, Lynch acknowledges those constraints in some detail. In light of these constraints, Lynch (2013) recognizes that “the relative degree of influence seen as stemming from the individual preferences of reporters ... over the substantive content of the journalism they write, commission and produce, has diminished” (p. 16). Similarly, Betz (2011) notes that in conflict situations, structural constraints restrict journalists within their environment. “Not only are journalists working in a highly charged, politicized and violent environment, but they must continue to answer to their editors, managers and media owners who may have their own stakes in the conflict and/or its outcome” (p. 6). However, PJ offers few tools to journalists dealing with these constraints. Lynch and McGoldrick’s (2005) publication, *Peace Journalism*, largely focuses on what Hanitzsch (2004) calls “micro-level” analyses concerning the individual agency of reporters as opposed to “macro-level” factors, which deal with the relationship between journalism and its environment (p. 492). In Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) “hierarchy of influences” model, five factors serve to influence media content – of which, the individual is just one. Other influencing factors include media routines, organizational influences as well as ideological and extramedia influences – factors Hanitzsch (2007) argues “cannot be modified from the position of the individual journalist” (p. 7). Therefore, Betz (2011) argues in favour of developing a “holistic framework” as “CSJ (PJ) has largely been treated as a tool largely on its own with little or no consideration of its place in media development of conflict situations as a whole” (p. 4).

1.6 Conceptual framework

This literature review traced of the origins of peace journalism and provided critical definitions and debates within the literature. As shown in Table 1, this chapter has clearly distinguished between the terminologies used to define three conflict-reporting practices. Given the similarities between CSJ and PJ (as a mode of good journalism), this thesis sees the

terms interchangeably. This chapter has also considered the relationship between PJ and journalists' personal agency and the structural constraints of their environment. Considering the debates, this thesis understands PJ as a mode of "good journalism" which can be used as a means to provide context through storytelling in order to enhance audiences' understandings of conflict formation. This understanding of PJ does not discard tools such as accuracy, fairness and balance. Rather, it builds upon those tools by adding elements of conflict analysis and focusing on journalists' responsibility in relation to the production of conflict coverage. This thesis supports the view that journalists can play a critical role in providing insight into conflict formation, which then may contribute to conflict transformation (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). It also recognizes that journalists have agency within their work and are not entirely regulated by outside forces (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). However, it also acknowledges that organizational routines, social pressures or structural forces play a role in shaping how much of that agency journalists are able to exert (Betz, 2011; Bläsi, 2009; Hanitzsch, 2007). As Hanitzsch (2007) points out, it is unlikely that journalists can alter those constraints alone. Therefore, in addition to using the definition above, this thesis recognizes the need to consider issues of structure and agency within journalists' working environments.

After reviewing the literature and establishing my conceptual framework, the next chapter explores how the events of the 2007 election were rooted in Kenya's social and political history. In order to understand the relationship reporters had with PJ in 2013, it is important to discuss the context surrounding Kenya's 2007 election and the resultant post-election violence. Chapter 2 situates that violence within a broader conflict, showing that violence stemmed from a complex web of deep-rooted social issues, not from the election itself.

2. Topic Background and Historical Context

Violence is a process, not an event. Violent acts may be spontaneous, but they are more often the product of a longer sequence of historical decisions and political actions.

Anderson and Lochery, 2008, p. 328

This chapter examines the historical context and events that contributed to Kenya's 2008 PEV. It is divided into five sections. Section 2.1 provides a summary of the 2007 election and the events that immediately followed. Section 2.2 situates the conflict within Kenya's complex history of colonial land grievances, economic inequality and political exclusion. This section adds significant historical context important to understand reporters' perceptions and practices of using PJ during the 2013 election. After providing a foundation of critical PJ definitions and debates in the previous chapter, section 2.3 briefly looks at the 'peacekeeping' and 'peace threatening' roles of the print media in 2007-2008, while section 2.4 provides a background of the roots of the contemporary media environment in Kenya. Section 2.5 outlines some of the reforms that have taken place in Kenya which aim to rectify historical and institutional injustices that contributed to the violence. Media reforms, which influenced the media environment in which journalists operated in 2013, are also discussed in this section.

2.1 The 2007 election and post-election violence

Irregularities following Kenya's presidential elections on 27 December 2007 triggered longstanding tensions between different political groups – groups often synonymous with the tribal⁶ identity of their leader. While there was consensus among observers that voting day remained relatively peaceful (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009) violence erupted following a dispute between the Party of National Unity's (PNU) incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki and opposition party leader, Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) (Kanyinga, 2011). Due to a tradition in Kenya of "ethno-regional voting patterns"

⁶ The Kenyan population consists of roughly 42 ethno-linguistic communities, which are generally known as "tribes."

(Kanyinga, 2011, p. 90), Kibaki's PNU supporters largely came from his ethnic Kikuyu group as well as from neighbouring Meru and Embu communities in the Mount Kenya region (Kanyinga, 2011). Odinga's ODM camp received most support from the Luo and Luhya tribes in Western Kenya as well as the Kalenjin in the Rift Valley and the Mijikenda on the coast (Kanyinga, 2011).

At first it appeared Odinga would win, which would make him the first Luo president elected in Kenya (Snow, 2009). Odinga had a strong lead in vote counting the day after the election (Boru Halakhe, 2013; Kagwanja & Southall, 2009) and Kenya's *Daily Nation* preemptively reported, "Mr. Raila Odinga is poised to win the presidency" (Somerville, 2009). Odinga announced his victory (Mäkinene & Kuria, 2008) just before the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) declared Kibaki had won by a narrow margin of 231,728 votes or just 2.3 per cent more than Odinga (Cheeseman, 2008), making it the closest election Kenyans had ever seen (Wolf, 2009). Odinga, who had been leading in opinion polls, immediately denounced the election as fixed (Wolf, 2009). Meanwhile, on 30 December 2007, Kibaki was sworn in at a swiftly organized ceremony at State House shortly after the results were announced (Onyebadi & Oyedeji, 2011). The late chairman of the now defunct ECK, Samuel Kivuiti⁷, stated that when he arrived at State House to deliver Kibaki's official re-election certificate, the Chief Justice was already there, ready to swear him in, raising suspicions the judiciary was in the pocket of the executive (Cussac, 2009).

Immediately after Kibaki was sworn in, Odinga alleged electoral fraud to a room of reporters (Boru Halakhe, 2013.) As allegations of vote rigging ran rampant, violence erupted in ODM strongholds such as Nairobi's large slums where PNU supporters living nearby were targeted for "stealing" the election (Kanyinga, 2011). In some constituencies, there was a considerable difference in the number of total votes cast for the parliamentary election and the presidential election in the same constituency (Kanyinga, 2011, p. 91). Kanyinga (2011) notes that since voting for civic, parliamentary and presidential elections happened at once, total votes cast should have not varied much and historically, they had not done so. The violence

⁷ Just days after declaring Kibaki president, Kivuiti said he was aware of voting "irregularities," and admitted not knowing who had actually won the election (Snow, 2009). A later report of ECK figures revealed rigging on both sides (Cheeseman, 2008).

spread and quickly assumed an “ethnic dimension” (Kanyinga, 2011, p. 85). “The perpetrators included individuals, militias and police with victims often targeted on the basis of an assumed connection between their ethnicity and support for a particular candidate” (Boru Halakhe, 2013, p. 5). Alleged irregularities and concerns were raised on both sides only three days after the election. The country became “polarized” (Kanyinga, 2011, p. 91). Pockets of protests targeting the ECK to release the “true” results (Rutten & Owuor, 2009, p. 318) gave way to approximately 1,150 deaths between January and March 2008 and an estimated 300,000 people were internally displaced (Final Consolidated Report, 2008, p. 3).

Kenyans’ faith in the judiciary was at an all-time low. ODM supporters lacked confidence in the courts, believing judges functioned according to the will of the executive, led by President Kibaki (Oloo, 2013). Kibaki refused to resign and Odinga refused to accept his win. The fighting continued until the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) mediation team, headed by former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, negotiated a coalition government between the two. Kibaki would remain president while the constitution was revised so that Odinga would become prime minister in a newly created post (Hornsby, 2012). While Kenya settled into uneasy “peace,” the country climbed from the 26th spot on The Fund for Peace’s Failed State Index in 2008, to 14th the following year. Kenya was in the company of other fragile states like Haiti, Myanmar and Nigeria. According to a number of social, economic and political indicators, Kenya fared poorer than even North Korea (Failed States, 2012).

2.2 Root causes of violence

The botched election was only a spark to a heap of kindling of historical frustrations.

Obonyo and Fackler, 2009, p. 26

Weak institutions

The contested 2007 election results were not the cause of the violence, but the catalyst for much deeper social issues including historical land grievances, economic inequality, political exclusion and weak institutions (Cheeseman, 2008; Kagwanja & Southall, 2009; Rutten & Owuor, 2009). Therefore, Mueller (2008) argues the violence was not altogether surprising. “Kenya was precariously perched and poised to implode even prior to the election”

because of a decline in the state's "monopoly of legitimate force," weak institutions, and political parties that had a "winner-take-all" view of political power (p. 202).

Orvis (2006) argues Kenya's institutional inheritance following its colonial experience moulded its democratization process. Kanyinga and Long (2012) agree the course of Kenya's institutional development was set during colonization as "the economic interests of colonial settlers influenced the institutions of governance and political life" (p. 37). "Material interests defined political preferences; institutions were created and forged to advance economic interests of particular groups" (Bates 1989, as cited in Kanyinga & Long, 2012, p. 37). Elitist institutional control influenced a certain form of politics while political interests developed certain economic institutions (Kanyinga & Long, 2012).

While Kenya gained independence in 1963, the quest for economic gain through political power did not stop when colonial powers relinquished control. Kenya's first and second presidents, Jomo Kenyatta (1964-1978) and Daniel arap Moi (1978-2002) continued to weaken existing institutions for personal gain.

They increased the power of the presidency and reduced that of other arms of government, including the judiciary, parliament and various parts of the civil service. Furthermore, many of the checks and balances normally characteristic of democracies were abandoned both formally and informally. (Mueller, 2011, p. 104)

The deliberate weakening of these institutions set the stage for Moi's oppressive regime and the corruption that followed in the 1980s and 1990s (Mueller, 2011). In 1998, Moi amended the constitution so that the attorney general would no longer have security of tenure and judges could be fired at his will (Gimode, 2007). Many began to see the courts as favouring state interests over those of the people. The 2008 Kriegler report that investigated the PEV concurred that the weak judicial system ultimately played a key role in precipitating the events that took place following the 2007 election (Final Consolidated Report, 2008).

Land grievances

Weak institutions were just one factor that played a role in the violence. The contested 2007 election results were not the cause of the violence, but the catalyst for much deeper social issues. And while some suggested the violence occurred spontaneously (Kanyinga, 2011), Anderson and Lochery (2008) contend that "violence is a process, not an

event” (p. 328), adding that acts of violence may be spontaneous, but they are often the result of longer political and historical processes. Kenya’s case is no exception. The effects of colonization are still evident in Kenya’s social, economic and political fabric. For example, in 1902 the British colonial power declared that all unoccupied land was crown land. Traditional understandings of land ownership were therefore erased (Rutten & Owuor, 2009). The British aristocracy settled in the fertile highlands of the Rift Valley, interfering with the traditional homelands of numerous ethnic tribes in Kenya (Rutten & Owuor, 2009). Many groups lost a substantial amount of land, which deeply affected livelihoods. The loss was especially significant for the Maasai, who rely on fertile grazing land for their cattle. Increased competition for land established inter-tribal competition for resources.

Past colonial efforts of ‘divide and rule’ helped create and reinforce future ethnic cleavages. Tribal divisions established in the colonial period carried over into independence as well (Linee, 2008; Somerville, 2009). As Kenya began the process of decolonization from Britain in the 1950s, Anderson and Lochery (2008) describe the impact the Million Acre Scheme had on the country. The Scheme was created to transfer land from European to African ownership. Initially, it intended to allow local communities to ‘take back’ land they had claimed before colonization. But the land was not given back freely. It was sold at market prices on the basis of willing-buyer-willing-seller. But many groups refused to buy back land in the ‘White Highlands’ that had originally belonged to them (Rutten & Owuor, 2009). “Jomo Kenyatta soon undermined the militant nationalists and stated that land should be purchased so that property rights would be respected. This statement aggrieved many and until today pastoral groups have claimed the return of their land in the Rift Valley” (Rutten & Owuor, 2009, p. 310). Resentment issues became politicized in the 1970s and developed into violent backlashes in the 1990s. Anderson and Lochery (2008) show how “specific political grievances can be exploited in more dramatic ways as circumstances alter. After 30 years of peaceful settlement in the Rift Valley, those on the schemes have now experienced nearly 20 years of violence and displacement” (p. 338), providing the political elite with the means to rip open old wounds that never had the chance to heal in the first place.

Political exclusion

Höglund (2009) argues that ethnically divided societies like Kenya are at greater risk of political violence as winning elections are often crucial to the well being of entire

communities⁸. “For instance, in ethnically divided societies, where communal or ethnic identities have become politicized, winning an election can be a matter of survival in the eyes of the parties competing for power” (p. 422). The consequence is that political actors use intimidation and violence to “exacerbate ... fears to win support” (p. 422). If the losing party rejects the results after they are released, new threats of violence emerge (p. 422). Grievances are often seen as a key factor leading to conflict (Regan & Norton, 2005 as cited in Desrosiers, 2011, p. 13).

[Grievances] are, in essence, injustice frames. Ethnic injustice frames may draw attention to unrecognized or infringed upon collective entitlements to land or resources. They may emphasize resource or power inequalities. Or ethnic groups may stress violations of their rights by institutions or another group. (Desrosiers, 2011, p. 13)

Indeed, Odinga, at the helm of ODM, suggested the Kikuyu had benefited disproportionately from Kibaki’s previous five years as president, while Kenya’s 41 other ethnic groups were cast aside (Boru Halakhe, 2013). Desrosiers (2011) argues these grievances can “exaggerate differences between ethnic groups” while demoralizing and dehumanizing the ‘other’ (p. 14). Indeed, this was the case in 2007 as unresolved issues of inequality, power and land were brought to the fore. The potentially volatile issue of land ownership was and is a contentious issue “because of the limited availability of arable land and a tenure system that is inconsistent with the country’s rising population” (Boru Halakhe, 2013, p. 7). Therefore, “ODM’s anti-Kikuyu messaging resonated in areas with a history of serious land disputes” including the Rift Valley, the Coast and Nairobi’s informal settlements (Boru Halakhe, 2013, p. 7). While the 2007 presidential election magnified historical grievances and provided a platform for violence, it is clear the foundation for conflict in Kenya had been laid long before any ballots were cast. The election merely served as the “spark to a heap of kindling of historical frustrations” (Obonyo and Fackler, 2009, p. 26).

⁸ Historically, those in power tended to favour their ethnic group at the expense of others. Those communities saw it as their “turn to eat,” which created tension with other groups (Boru Halakhe, 2013). In order to reduce these conflicts, the new constitution of Kenya (2010) introduced a number of reforms, one of which is to ensure power is divided more equally by decentralizing presidential power and distributing power to county governments.

Economic inequality

High rates of poverty and youth unemployment continue to make Kenya vulnerable to conflict (ICG, 2013). An International Crisis Group (2013) report pegs Kenya's unemployment rate at 40 per cent, with young people comprising the vast majority of this group. The report notes that much of the violence that followed the 2007 election was triggered by longstanding social and economic factors. Therefore, there were a number of young, idle men with time on their hands. In conjunction with poverty, youth unemployment means "a steady flow of recruits for criminal groups and militias that can be mobilized to intimidate opponents and their supporters or protest results, as they have in the past" (ICG, 2013, p. ii).

2.3 Kenya's post-election violence and the media

After discussing the historical context of the 2007 PEV, this next section briefly discusses the Kenyan media's approach to covering election-related events. Most of the literature recognizes that the media played multiple roles during the PEV. Some praise the print media for achieving "unprecedented professional unity" for acting as both "information provider" and a "campaigner for moral issues" (Rambaud, 2009). Others are more critical of the media for publishing material that fluctuated between "peacebuilding" and "peace threatening" modes (Ojwang, 2009, p. 23). While some of the discussion that follows looks at the media in general, the majority concerns the print media, specifically that of the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* as these publications are the leading print newspapers in the country. In addition, analyses of these newspapers' approaches to covering the 2007 election and the violence that followed will serve as an interesting comparison to findings discussed later, which outline print reporters' perceptions and practices of using PJ during the 2013 election.

Threats to peace

In the first phase of the violence, which Ojwang (2009) indicates was the first two weeks of January 2008, the print media "highlighted stories that portrayed heightened apprehension, mistrust and little hopes for the restoration of peace" (p. 28). He points out that the *Standard's* daily running head in this period was "Kenya Burns," while reports of the prospect of civil war, and achieving failed state status were common in print media:

The descriptions of Kenya as a burning place evoked a sense of helplessness and self-destruction that could scare away investors and tourists, since no one would be interested in entering a burning house. This was a threat to peace because it could fuel violence through revenge and counter-attacks. It also implied that the Kenyan conflict had reached a point of no return. (Ojwang, 2009, p. 28)

Obonyo and Fackler (2009) also criticized the media's initial "divisive" coverage, although their analysis encompasses pre-election coverage as well. Leading up to the vote, headlines like "Election Victory Talk," "Battle of dirty tactics," and "Standoff" were the norm (p. 23). "Such stories dichotomized the political race and later the ethnic conflict into an either/or reality: either you are for PNU and against ODM, or you are against PNU and for ODM" (p. 23). The authors note that this kind of coverage essentially removes the possibility for cooperation, as both sides are unable to reach a middle ground.

Several vernacular radio stations not only removed the possibility for cooperation, but also campaigned for hatred by perpetuating ethnic stereotypes and hatred (Wachanga, 2011, p. 109). Radio hosts used metaphors as substitutes for past ethnic grievances (p. 109). Several stations were identified as broadcasting "inflammatory material" (Wachanga, 2011) and the Kenya National Commission of Human Rights and the Waki inquiry later indicted at least five stations for incitement or hate speech (Nyanjom, 2012). Talk shows were regarded as some of the worst offenders, as radio hosts failed to prevent callers, leaders and politicians from using hate speech on air (Somerville, 2011, p. 94). Kass FM journalist, Joshua arap Sang, faces charges of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his alleged role broadcasting inflammatory material during the elections. And while he is the only reporter facing charges, it is no secret that newsrooms became divided along ethnic lines. "Journalists were criticized for taking ethnic and political positions" (Mukhongo, 2010, p. 347). NMG Managing Editor, Joseph Odindo lamented the fact that "tribal emotions came into our journalism" (Interview on February 10, 2014). However, as the violence intensified, the print media turned a corner and adopted a distinctly different approach – one Rambaud (2009) lauded for "achieving unprecedented professional unity," and for acting as a "campaigner for moral issues" (p. 85).

Campaigning for peace

Obonyo and Fackler (2009) observed that in the heat of the violence, the Kenyan media's "cut throat" (p. 14) competitiveness took a backseat to "national well-being" (p. 22). Rambaud (2009) notes that both the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* made efforts to publish photos where the two leading candidates appeared together. In addition, both dailies examined historical constructs of ethnicity (Rambaud, 2009). Not only did the papers provide this context, but they also became increasingly aware of language that may incite violence. Instead, Ojwang (2009) notes that they focused more on messages of reconciliation and peace:

In one of the first calls for reconciliation and negotiation, an editor asked Kibaki and Raila: "How many more must die, how much more must be destroyed before you come to your senses?" (*Daily Nation*, January 3, 2008). This portrayed a media that demonstrated social responsibility by directly questioning the moral probity of the leading antagonists. It followed the realization that the media could not simply remain objective and highlight the conflict without contributing to attempts at resolving it. (p. 35)

A content analysis of the *Daily Nation* and *Standard* spanning the two months preceding the election and the month immediately after found that as the violence "raged," half of the papers' front page stories were on peace-building efforts while the other half were on hostilities or other issues (Onyebadi & Oyediji, 2011). Perhaps the media's most prominent effort to draw attention to the need for peace was on January 3, when the joint-headline, "Save Our Beloved Country," appeared on the front pages of six dailies including the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* (Obonyo & Fackler, 2009, p. 22). "I remember our CEO, who is not a journalist, getting very agitated and saying, 'look, we can't watch helplessly and just wait to write stories. We've got to do something,'" said Odindo (Interview on February 10, 2014). Roads had become impassable due to the violence so newspaper distribution routes were also disrupted. "It was decided that we need to bring some credible voices and put them on air, radio and television, to appeal for calm and tell people to stop fighting" (Interview on February 10, 2014). Television stations carried the message "Save Our Country" on the bottom of the screen and radio hosts read editorials from the two leading newspapers on air, using their platform to appeal for peace (Rambaud, 2009).

2.4 The Kenyan Media environment: a brief overview

Bläsi (2004) argues that PJ is only likely to take root “if there are realizable suggestions for how to meet the obstacles journalists face in their daily work” (p. 1). While it is outside the scope of this paper to provide suggestions of how Kenyan journalists can alter their coverage of conflict, it is significant to understand the forces – stemming from both the historical and political climate as well as within media structures – that influence their reporting. A recent study of the media in Kenya found it operates in an “unpredictable and swiftly changing political, social, cultural, economic and technological environment” (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 6). Therefore, in order to put the experiences of reporters into perspective, it is important to briefly map out the media environment in which reporters work and the constraints within that environment.

The Kenyan media environment has improved in recent years, largely because of increased constitutional protection for a “large, independent and active media sector” (Freedom House, 2015). While the Kenyan media enjoys increasing freedom in some areas, concerns remain about the relationship between politics and media ownership in Kenya. Political ownership serves to undermine media independence especially during elections (Nyanjom, 2012) as “media owners tend to influence the editorial content, reporting style, news sources and personalities employed by media houses” (MCK, 2012b, p. 29). In order to understand this relationship as well as the factors which constrain and shape media behaviour, we must start with a brief examination of the history of the press in Kenya. Nyanjom (2012) rightly notes, “only a keen look at the historical perspective will help us to clearly understand the character of contemporary media ownership in Kenya” (p. 17).

The roots of contemporary media in Kenya

European Christian missionaries started Kenya’s first paper, the *Taveta Chronicle*, in 1895. Soon after, the Church of Scotland’s Mission and the Catholic Church started their own publications. In 1901, Asian trader Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee founded the *East African Standard*. Only four years later however, it was bought out by the colonial powers who used it “as a tool for perpetuating settler ideals across the Kenyan protectorate” (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 17). Most of what was being communicated during this phase was “coming from colonial governors, and serving primarily white settlers and Asians” (Mitulla,

2012, p. 1). Indigenous voices were largely absent (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 17). This started to change from the mid 1920s to 1950s as indigenous Africans began pushing for self-rule. Several African-language publications emerged as “vehicles for spreading the liberation gospel among African communities, and ventilating the grievances of African nationalists” (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 17). In 1952, however, local language publications were banned. At independence in 1963, there were two main newspapers, *The Standard* and *The Nation*, (Obonyo, 2011) the latter being launched by the Aga Khan in 1960 (Nyanjom, 2012). Like the colonial powers before them, presidents Kenyatta and Moi kept tight control of the media (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 17). The immediate post-independence period was extremely restrictive and news was disseminated only in national languages (English and Kiswahili), not local vernaculars.

Under the Moi presidency (1978-2002), the country became a one-party state after he barred political parties from competing with the ruling party. The media was not allowed to provide a dissenting voice against the government (MCK, 2012b). This period was “accompanied by harassment of the media ... while journalists were thrown into police cells and detained for either sharing their opinion or being seen as anti-government” (Mitullah, 2012, p. 2). The threatening conditions under which reporters operated promoted self-censorship “where journalists gave certain stories a wide berth if they sensed that they would attract official anger” (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 17). By the 1990s, the restrictions began lifting with the call for government reforms and pressure to return to multi-party democracy (Mitullah, 2012; Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010). After the reintroduction of multi-party politics in 1991, Kenya saw a diversified media ownership base and “bolder” content (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010). President Moi had always opposed the creation of local language radio stations on the grounds that they might be divisive to national unity, but he finally allowed the first non-English or Swahili broadcasters in 2000 (Nderitu, 2008). These new freedoms gained traction with president Kibaki’s victory in 2002 – evident from emerging political and comedy programs, which would have been unthinkable under previous leaders (MCK, 2012b). Following the PEV, it was clear Kenya was in need of serious constitutional reform to prevent a similar situation in the future.

Kenya's new constitution was promulgated in 2010 and with that, media freedom became expressly protected under Article 34 for the first time⁹ (MCK, 2012b).

Ownership and advertising

Although the new constitution brought increased media freedom, Kenya's media environment faces challenges related to increasing media concentration and cross-media ownership (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010). The MCK (2012b) notes that this is an ongoing concern as "media owners tend to influence the reporting style, news sources and personalities employed by media houses" (p. 29). In addition, profit-driven and politically motivated media owners have "spread their tentacles" throughout Kenya's economic landscape and have most recently made the media a platform for "self-enrichment, motivated by potential commercial returns, or likely political harvest" (Nyanjom, 2012, p. 41). For example, prior to the 2007 elections, media owners "took sides," supporting their favoured political parties and candidates. Audiences believed that NMG, Royal Media Services and Capital Group supported Kibaki and the PNU while SG, Radio Umoja and Kass FM were supporting Odinga's opposition party, ODM. "While there is nothing wrong in endorsing a political party and candidate, it is unethical for media owners and their mouthpieces to do so without full public disclosure to their audiences" (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 47). While the ICG reports that wealthy politicians have been reportedly buying up newspapers and TV stations in the mainstream press, political ownership is largely focused around radio stations, particularly those broadcasting in local languages (ICG, 2013). The Independent Review Commission (IREC or Kriegler Commission) supports this, finding that leading news organizations were not "openly biased" (Final, 2008, p. 64). However, there were "discernible preferences shown by the tilt they gave in favour of or against the candidates and their campaign issues" (Dialogue Africa Foundation, 2009, p. 14).

In addition to political influence, advertisers wield tremendous power in Kenya. The media relies on advertising revenue and therefore, media owners have been criticized for protecting the interests of advertisers at the expense of independent editorial content (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 46). Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu (2010) note that

⁹ The previous constitution of Kenya protected freedom of expression, it did not specifically refer to the freedom of the press (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 18).

profit motives can often undermine independence. “Big spenders on advertising such as Safaricom, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and East African Breweries Limited wield immense influence in media houses” (p. 46). This power is so great, the authors note it is rare to see unfavourable coverage of countries biggest advertisers.

So who are these owners anyways? The spiritual leader of Ismaili Muslims, His Highness the Aga Khan, is the principal shareholder (46.66 %) of NMG (Nyanjom, 2012, p. 39). Other shareholders include a number of different individuals and companies – both local and foreign-owned. Nation Media Group operates across a number of platforms including two radio stations, several magazines, NTV as well as seven newspapers (MCK, 2012b) including its flagship title, the *Daily Nation*. The MCK (2012b) reports that former president, Moi, along with his son and former presidential aide Joshua Kulei, own the SG through Baraza Limited. While SG has often been associated with former President Moi, with some estimates approximating his control at 85 per cent of the company, Nyanjom (2012) notes that ownership details in the Nairobi Stock Exchange do not reflect that (p. 42). According to the NSE, Standard Group’s largest shareholder is UK-based S.N.G. Holdings Limited, which holds about 69 per cent of the shares. Other shareholders include local companies and individual as well as other foreign investors.

Some of the confusion can likely be attributed to a lack of transparency of media ownership in Kenya. Oriare, Okello-Orlale and Ugangu (2010) note that media owners are often “largely anonymous” as the Ministry of Information and Communication keep records of media owners but do not share this information publicly. “Lack of transparency, impartiality and fairness in the allocation of broadcast licenses and frequencies during the era of former President Daniel arap Moi led to the secrecy with which the identities of broadcasters were treated” (p. 38). Despite this lack of transparency, many major political players have been linked to various media groups in the country. Raila Odinga has been associated with several Neural Digital radio stations (MCK 2012; Nyanjom, 2012). Current President Uhuru Kenyatta has been associated with Media Max, which owns *The People*, a daily newspaper in Kenya, while his Deputy President William Ruto has links to Kass Media Group (Nyanjom, 2012).

2.5 Reforms following the PEV

After the 2007 PEV, it was clear Kenya could not move forward without major reform efforts. Almost immediately after the violence stopped, the Government of Kenya and ODM agreed to form two commissions: the Independent Review Committee (IREC or Kriegler Commission) and the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence (CIPEV or Waki Commission) (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010). The Kriegler Commission investigated weaknesses in Kenya's electoral system while the Waki Commission was tasked with investigating the root causes and extent of the violence (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010). The findings of the reports inspired three main categories of reform (among others). The first was constitutional reform, which was essential to reverse the damage done after the constitution had been amended some 32 times by 1991 to bolster presidential power (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009). The new constitution was passed in 2010 after a peaceful referendum. There was a 72 per cent voter turnout with more than two-thirds of voters favouring the document (Lanser, 2012). The new constitution enhanced basic rights, reined in executive power and devolved central control by creating 47 new county governments (Lanser, 2012). The International Crisis Group saw the constitution as triumphing after decades of reform efforts. "It resolved – at least on paper – debates overhanging Kenyan politics since independence over devolution and presidential power" (ICG, 2013 p. 4).

The second group of reforms following the post-election violence concerned the electoral process. First, the ECK was dissolved as the Kriegler report found it to have numerous weaknesses, causing the loss of public confidence.

Deep distrust in the ECK meant that opposition politicians suspected it of election rigging and had little reason to believe commissioners would address their complaints fairly. The commission's weakness and lack of credibility could be traced in part to the president's ability at the time to unilaterally appoint its members. (ICG, 2013)

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) was created to replace the defunct ECK. It gained modest public support with 53 per cent of Kenyans saying they trusted the Commission in 2011 (Afrobarometer, 2013a). Recently however, some of this trust was eroded after the IEBC "bungled" the procurement process of costly biometric voter kits – exposing both weakness and inexperience (ICG, 2013). In addition to creating a new electoral

commission, the Kriegler Commission also recommended several significant electoral reforms. These included a new voter register, changes in vote-tallying procedures and strengthening dispute settlement mechanisms (Mueller, 2011).

Perhaps the most significant reform of Kenya's institutions is the cleaning out of the judiciary. Six months after the promulgation of the new constitution, the old Chief Justice was replaced. New Chief Justice Willy Mutunga was recruited from civil society to bring "freshness" to the judiciary while breaking the order of "business as usual" (Oloo, 2013). Just months after taking office in 2010, Mutunga reported, "[w]e found an institution so frail in its structures; so thin on resources; so low on its confidence; so deficient in integrity; so weak in its public support that to have expected it to deliver justice was to be wildly optimistic" (Lanser, 2012). Studies show that in 2011, 60 per cent of Kenyans said they trusted the court "somewhat" or "a lot." Just 44 per cent had this sentiment in 2008 (Afrobarometer, 2013a). In addition, 56 per cent of respondents thought the integrity of the judiciary was "better" or "much better" since the implementation of the new constitution. Only seven per cent thought things were worse (Afrobarometer, 2013a). This growing confidence in the judiciary can largely be attributed to increased transparency, vetting of judicial officers and the hiring of new judges to increase efficiency (Oloo, 2013).

In 2013, Kenya's judiciary responded to Odinga's election petition, which contested the validity of Kenyatta's 2013 election win. After two weeks of nationally televised proceedings, the six judges unanimously voted to uphold the results. Chief Justice Willy Mutunga declared the vote to be free and fair. "It is the decision of the court that the said elections were indeed conducted in compliance with the constitution and the law," Mutunga announced after handing down the decision (Kenya Supreme Court, 2013). He added that the Supreme Court had upheld its constitutional duty and it was now up to Kenyans, political leaders, civil society, the private sector and the media to do the same to ensure unified peace (Kenya Supreme Court, 2013). While Odinga said he did not agree with the ruling, he would respect the Supreme Court decision. He conceded defeat shortly after the announcement (Kenya Supreme Court, 2013).

Media reforms

In response to the media's weaknesses exposed during the 2007 election and aftermath, the government of Kenya and civil society groups played key roles in helping

mitigate the risk of violence in 2013. The people of Kenya voted to enact a new constitution which not only provides for enhanced media freedom and independence, but it also specifically states that freedom of speech does not allow for hate speech (Boru Halakhe, 2013). This is significant as both the Waki and Kriegler Commissions identified hate speech as a serious concern following the 2007 election and made recommendations on how to reform the media's regulatory framework in order to prevent hate speech in the future (Boru Halakhe, 2013; Final consolidated report, 2008; ICG, 2013; Waki, 2009). In response, two acts were passed to address these issues in 2008: the Kenya Communications (Amendment) Act, as well as the National Cohesion and Integration Act. Overseen by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), the Act serves to promote peaceful inter-ethnic relations and eliminate discrimination and hate speech (ICG, 2013).

The NCIC played a critical role in ensuring that hate speech would not play a similar role during the 2013 election. It did so by developing guidelines for journalists and media outlets on responsible journalism, conducting awareness training regarding hate speech, warning that perpetrators would be held accountable should they violate the Act, investigating and hearing complaints regarding hate speech and initiating prosecutions. This, coupled with other programs of the NCIC, prohibited public intolerance between ethnic protagonists. (Boru Halakhe, 2013, p. 10)

In addition, the MCK published new guidelines¹⁰ in 2012, which intended to “promote accurate, comprehensive, impartial, fair and responsible coverage of the upcoming election and to ensure journalists are sensitive to the risk of conflict” (ICG, 2013, p. 37). Various media development organizations like Internews, as well as the MCK and the IEBC, facilitated training seminars for media practitioners in the country in order to educate journalists about the guidelines as well as the mechanics of the election (ICG, 2013).

¹⁰ The Guidelines for Election coverage were developed by the MCK with support from Internews with input from key stakeholders. The guidelines were endorsed by 21 signatories representing various media houses and professional organizations in Kenya and are based on similar guidelines from the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, the African Centre for Media Excellence, the International Centre for Journalists among others (MCK, 2012a).

Widespread media monitoring activities took place during the election to ensure adherence to the election coverage guidelines as well as the new constitution. A number of organizations took part in monitoring news reports appearing in broadcast, print and electronic media. These included the MCK, Internews, the European Union as well as a commissioned media-monitoring agency, Globaltrack (Mwangi, 2013). While the MCK focused its activities on ensuring journalists adhered to the Code of Conduct for the Practice for Journalism in Kenya as well as the election coverage guidelines, Internews focused its efforts on making sure coverage was in line with the new constitution and National Cohesion and Integration Act (Mwangi, 2013). Monitoring happened largely throughout the months of February and March 2013 (Mwangi, 2013).

In light of the events of 2007 and 2008, many media houses re-examined internal policies and organization-specific election coverage guidelines for their reporters and editors. Nation Media Group explicitly states in its editorial policies and guidelines that it will focus more attention on issue-based coverage as opposed to “personality journalism” (NMG, n.d., p. 7). The Group states it is committed to ensuring that when opinion polls are published, they are handled cautiously in a way that allows for “informed public debate” (NMG, n.d.). Prior to the 2007 election, dubious opinion polls were published with many predicting “high numbers for their preferred candidate,” adding to anger and accusations of vote-rigging, when official ECK tallies diverged from these opinion polls (ICG, 2013, p. 38)

2.6 Reflections on the chapter

This section has discussed how historical events and processes in Kenya contributed to the 2007 PEV. It also discussed a number of reform efforts that have taken place in response to the conflict. From the government to ordinary Kenyans, to the media and civil society groups, Kenya has made significant strides in recent years. Significantly, a recent survey shows Kenyans are increasingly developing a shared national identity – a necessary step to reverse past calculated attempts to divide Kenyans from one another. In 2011, a majority of Kenyans (56 per cent) reported they felt closer to their national identity rather than their ethnic group. Almost half (45 per cent) reported they would choose only their Kenyan identity to describe themselves, nearly doubling the number who reported the same in 2005 (Afrobarometer, 2013b). Gthinji and Holmquist (2012) argue that a lack of these shared goals

will result in “narrow personal and local interests” where “politicians remain unaccountable to the nation as a whole” (p. 53).

Government accountability through a series of checks and balances has also shown marked improvement since 2008. The new constitution has decreased executive power while creating a devolved system of government with increased local power. The judiciary and legislature have improved their transparency and have been granted authority that was previously vested with the president. Kenya has a flourishing and vibrant media sector, which now enjoys greater freedom in addition to wide public support (Wolf, 2009), and is therefore adept at keeping tabs on government accountability. And while investigating bodies found the Kenyan media did add “fuel to the flames” while covering the 2008 post-election violence (Final, 2008, p. 100) by publishing overtly partisan stories, dubious opinion polls, and inciting conflict along political and ethnic lines (Kaberia, 2013), professionals in the sector have done some serious soul searching to create space for more responsible journalism that better serves the needs of readers and audiences. Hackett (2011) suggests that the media’s role in “heightening tensions” may have created a stronger foundation to strengthen peace journalism in the future. While systematic research is scarce, he notes that the potential for PJ to take root in media environments is greatest in “societies where the media is perceived to have contributed to socially destructive internal conflict” (p. 45). This has been the case in the Philippines, Indonesia and some countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Hackett, 2011).

In Kenya, civil society groups and international donors are helping carve this foothold even deeper. A 2010 media vulnerabilities study called for the strengthening of peace journalism by integrating conflict management and peace journalism into training programs. The report also encouraged building capacity for community and ethnic media organizations as a way to nurture a culture of peace journalism (Oriare, Okello-Orlale, & Ugangu, 2010). International NGOs like Internews and Search for Common Ground are pursuing this strategy. Internews responded to the post-election violence by initiating the “Land and Conflict Sensitive Journalism” program through USAID’s “Reporting for Peace” initiative. The \$2.9 billion project provided training on how journalists can take a conflict-sensitive approach to their work (Internews, 2011; USAID, 2011). Search for Common Ground partnered with Media Focus Africa to produce the radio and TV drama, *The Team*, in order to

change attitudes and conflict dynamics while promoting ethnic inclusion and tolerance in Kenya (Abdalla & Gaylor, 2010).

Despite growing investments into media intervention programs in conflict-ridden societies, evidence-based research on peace journalism is still in its infancy. There has been far greater attention to the media's ability to inflame conflict in countries like Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, perpetuating stereotypes of the African media being "advocates of mayhem" as opposed to playing a role in "crisis control and management" (Onyebadi and Oyedeji, 2011, p. 224). And while the theoretical debate continues about whether journalists *can* or *should* apply PJ in conflict situations, Kenyan journalists *are* exploring what PJ means to them and how they might apply it in practice. Therefore, while much more research is needed to explore the kind of impact the media can have on peace-building processes, this research attempts to fill a critical gap in the literature in order to explore journalists' perceptions and practices of reporting on conflict.

3. Methodology

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way that you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?

Spradley, 1979 as cited in Kvale, 1996, p. 125

This chapter outlines the overall research design and methodology of the study. It is organized into five sections. Section 3.1 discusses the overall research framework used to answer the research questions. Section 3.2 outlines data collection sources and methods while section 3.3 outlines how participants were recruited and selected for the study. Section 3.4 of this chapter describes the coding methods and process used to analyze the data while section 3.5 outlines the limitations and dissemination of the research.

3.1 Research framework

Given the nature of my research questions, which seek to uncover selected print reporters' experiences and decision-making processes while covering the recent presidential elections in Kenya, this study takes a social constructivist epistemology. According to this approach, the social world is not "something 'out there' that exists independent of the thoughts and ideas of the people involved in it" (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 164). Instead, the social world is made up of "thoughts and beliefs, of ideas and concepts, of languages and discourses, of signs, signals and understandings among human beings" (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 165). Therefore, this study is interested in interviewees' experiences as media practitioners and how those experiences have informed their perceptions of their role in times of conflict. As indicated in Chapters 1 and 4, this research found that PJ is not something 'out there' which exists independent of practitioners' understandings of it. Rather PJ is dependent on practitioners' understandings of it. In later chapters, we will see there is little consensus of what the term actually means – something this research found is true both in the academic literature and on the ground in Kenyan newsrooms.

This study used a qualitative design in order to understand the perceptions of Kenyan media practitioners. Qualitative analysis allows for “holistic understanding of complex issues” while capturing “underlying meanings” (Mayoux, 2006, p. 120). While quantitative analysis requires a clear hypothesis, this design can result in an “a priori focus [that] may miss relevant questions and issues” (Mayoux, 2006, p. 120). Therefore, quantitative analysis could not offer the tools needed to understand of media practitioners’ perceptions and relationship with PJ.

I felt the case study was the best framework to use. According to Schramm (1971) “the essence of a case study ... is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 17). While the case study provides “little basis for scientific generalization,” (Yin, 2009, p. 15), it enabled me to use a “micro-level” analysis (Hanitzsch, 2004) of real-life phenomenon while situating it within its context (Yin, 2009). Micro-level analysis deals with journalists as individuals. While Shoemaker and Reese (1996) note that much of communications research has focused on the micro-level in the past, Hanitzsch (2004) states this level of analysis is precisely what is lacking in current peace journalism literature. “Despite the ever-mounting literature on crisis communication and conflict resolution, it is surprising how little we know about the characteristics and professional views of war journalists” (p. 492). Therefore, the research describes the types of decisions participant reporters made, the factors that influenced their approaches to election-related coverage and the barriers reporters said inhibited their ability to incorporate PJ techniques in their stories. I chose to use case study methodology because it allowed me to situate reporters’ experiences within Kenya’s unique historical context, which as my findings show significantly influenced the media environment during the 2013 general election.

3.2 Data collection sources and methods

This case study used multiple data sources in order to strengthen findings and understanding. Semi-structured individual interviews were used as the primary data collection method.

Semi-structured interviews

I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews in order to keep discussions focused while allowing “participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire(d)” (Turner, 2010, p. 756). Semi-structured interviews also enabled me to ask probing questions to follow up on topics that emerged from the discussion. Semi-structured interviews allowed “a sequence of themes to be covered” yet still retained “an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects” (Kvale, 1996, p. 124).

My research is based on interviews with 22 participants, which took place between January 31 and April 11, 2014. Given that my research questions primarily seek to understand print journalists’ experiences of conflict reporting, the majority of respondents are media practitioners. I conducted a total of 16 interviews with staff reporters, correspondents and editors who participated in covering both of the most recent presidential elections. In addition, I also interviewed NMG’s Editorial Director as well as the Chief Editor/Assistant Director for SG. More detailed information about respondents can be found in section 3.3. In addition, Appendix 2 (p. 95) and Appendix 3 (p. 96) provide tables outlining participant information and participant identifiers. Appendix 5 (p. 102) shows the duration of each interview conducted.

In order to structure my conversations with participants, I created three separate interview guides: one for journalist participants, one for civil society participants, and one for media managers. Interview guides can be found in Appendices 4a, 4b and 4c. Questions for journalists were designed to gather information about their personal experiences reporting on the 2007 and 2013 elections. In light of their experiences, I asked participants how they see their role as media practitioners. Respondents agreed that the media has a responsibility to be conflict-sensitive and a duty not to inflame tensions through its reporting. Others went a step further and said journalists should set the agenda for national reconciliation and peace. While participants articulated these roles in many different ways, the discussion that arose is interesting as it captures journalists’ own versions of how they see conflict and peace reporting.

Questions for civil society participants focused on the need for election coverage guidelines and how the guidelines were developed. Ida Jooste, Country Director of Internews-

Kenya (hereafter referred to as Internews) was able to provide insights into the way coverage was framed differently in 2013 as compared to 2007-2008. Jooste also reflected on media interventions and responses to the post-election violence and described the need for those responses. These interventions included training journalists on land, conflict and media, conflict-sensitive journalism, how to cover the mechanics of an election as well as how to avoid broadcasting or publishing hate speech. Jooste helped me understand reporting issues that emerged during the 2007 election and subsequent violence, which then informed my later understanding of reporters' perceptions and practices of covering the following election. I also used semi-structured interviews to guide conversations with Victor Bwire, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Programs Manager for the Media Council of Kenya, a body created in 2007 under the Media Act. The MCK is responsible for regulating the media industry in Kenya with a mission to "safeguard media freedom, enhance professionalism and arbitrate media disputes" (MCK, 2013b). One of the ways they contributed to this mission was to work with stakeholders to create a document outlining guidelines for election coverage. The guidelines state, "media have a responsibility to their audiences and the society" and therefore should adhere to principles of conflict-sensitive journalism (MCK, 2012a, p. 13). I wanted to understand how the MCK understood CSJ, and what the intentions were of publishing the guide. In addition, I interviewed professor Levi Obonyo, the Dean of the School of Communication, Media and Performing Arts at Daystar University in Nairobi and Dr. Patrick Maluki, lecturer and consultant on diplomacy, media and peace at the University of Nairobi. Interviews with academic participants helped strengthen my theoretical analysis by offering a preliminary assessment of themes, which had emerged from my other interviews. Discussions with media managers focused on how SG and NMG trained reporters prior to the 2013 election as well as how their organizations implemented the election coverage guidelines.

Using semi-structured interviews with these groups allowed me to compare and contrast the experiences of media practitioners with those of civil society members familiar with the Kenyan media environment. Respondents were invited to bring up other topics of interest throughout their interviews. At the end of each interview, I always asked the same question: "Is there anything else you would like to add?" or "are there any questions I did not ask?" The combination of structure and flexibility provided by semi-structured interviews was significant for this research. The method allowed enough continuity for thematic coding without sacrificing participants' unprompted responses.

Interviews were selected as the primary research method because of their versatility in the range of information that can be obtained. Interviews provide “an opportunity to examine processes, motivations and reasons for successes or failures” (Willis, 2006, p. 146). While interviews are also a means to gain factual information, this research saw interviewing as the best method to “provide explanations for patterns or consider attitudes and opinions” (p. 146). Questionnaires are useful tools for gathering basic information from large participant samples, however, the questionnaire is a weak tool for understanding behaviour, underlying beliefs, and “strategies and constraints which had shaped that behaviour” (p. 146). In addition, the personal nature of interviews allowed for “insights into individuals’ lives which go beyond observations and questionnaires surveys,” producing richer analyses than could not be produced with alternative methods (Willis, 2006, p.151).

I selected my sample of reporters from Nation Media Group and Standard Group because their respective English-language dailies, *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard*, are the two most widely read newspapers in Kenya (MCK, 2012b). Unsurprisingly then, the papers have the highest market share of print media in circulation (Kenya Media Program, 2011). But not only have the papers achieved success in terms of quantity, they have gained a reputation of providing quality content as well – being described as Kenya’s “leading news organizations” with a “high level of professionalism” (Oriare, Okello-Orlale, & Ugangu, 2010, p. 28). Each shares a long history and similar status and respect in Kenya. I selected print reporters who covered both the 2007 and 2013 elections in order to understand what it was like to cover each election from their perspectives. The research used an “open phenomenological” approach in order to promote understanding. Spradley (1979) summed up why researchers do interviews in this way:

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way that you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand? (as cited in Kvale, 1996, p. 125)

I used this same approach to conduct interviews with the four civil society members who participated in this research.

While structured interviews make coding resultant data easier during data analysis, this research used the semi-structured approach as open-ended questions leave room for more “spontaneous, lively and unexpected answers from the interviewees” (Kvale, 1996, p. 129). In order to strike a balance between ease of coding, and collecting colourful personal reflections from interviewees, I used semi-structured interviews that shared similar questions while leaving room for conversation to emerge and for participants to play a role in guiding the discussion.

Interviews were conducted in English and digitally recorded. The audio was saved on my personal computer. I transcribed each interview verbatim (including researcher questions). In many cases, I omitted repetition, stuttering and conversational fillers such as ‘ums’ and ‘ahs.’ I made an effort to ensure these omissions helped increase clarity and not detract from the intended meaning of participants’ responses. I transcribed some interviews during the research period. However, due to time constraints, many were transcribed once I returned to Canada. The combined interviews resulted in 272 single-spaced pages of transcription, and approximately 134,000 words (including researcher questions). In total, I transcribed 16 hours and 20 minutes of interviews. Twelve of those hours were of interviews with journalist participants. The average length of interview was 45 minutes and lasted between 24 and 71 minutes. I transcribed 4 hours and 20 minutes of interviews with civil society participants. The average length of interview was 43 minutes. The shortest lasted 16 minutes and the longest was 68 minutes. I also informed my analysis with field notes and observations which were based on both interview and pre-interview discussions. I handwrote field notes as soon as possible after interviews and later typed them on my computer. My field notes resulted in a 39-page document of about 13,500 words.

3.3 Participant recruitment and selection

I used “purposive sampling” (Mayoux, 2006) to identify journalists who were willing to reflect on their role in reporting on both the 2007 and 2013 elections. Since my research is concerned with the perceptions and practices of a select number of print journalists who covered both recent elections, “purposive sampling enables close focus on cases and issues of interest” (Mayoux, 2006, p. 120). Participants were identified through published bylines, “snowball sampling” (Willis, 2006), visits to newsrooms and regional bureaus, as well as from journal articles (prof. Levi Obonyo) and from the MCK Guidelines for Election

Coverage (Joseph Odindo and John Bundotich). Creswell (2007) emphasizes the importance of careful candidate-selection when identifying the most suitable participants. This includes those most willing to candidly share their stories. Therefore, in most cases, I scheduled an initial coffee or lunch meeting with participants in order to provide more information about my research and answer their questions. This enabled me to confirm whether the participant met the criteria outlined for the research and provided an opportunity to schedule an interview and sign the consent form. This was the case for most of the participants from Nairobi, where my research was based. For those who worked in one of the country's regional bureaus (Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu and Mombasa), time constraints due to travel did not always allow for this initial meeting. Therefore, participants were identified, contacted and additional information was provided if necessary over e-mail or on the phone prior to the interview. Interviews took place at a variety of locations depending on convenience for participants. Many took place at the participant's place of work (their newsroom, organization office or university), while others took place at cafés, hotels and in one case the participant's personal residence and in another case, the researcher's personal residence.

Information about the respondents

As indicated in Appendix 2, a sample of 16 journalists, two editorial directors, one representative from Internews, one representative from the Media Council of Kenya and two academic sources informed the overall research findings, for a total of 22 participants. I recruited 10 reporter-participants from NMG and six from SG. I aimed to attract a diverse range of reporters in terms of sex, age, ethnicity and geographical location from the two selected media houses. Therefore, in addition to interviewing participants in Nairobi, I also travelled to Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu and Mombasa. I wanted to interview participants from some of the papers' regional bureaus in order to collect perspectives from outside the capital. Participants have diverse ethnic backgrounds and range in age from those who were recent university graduates when they covered the 2007 election, to those who have worked in the industry for more than a decade. One respondent reported covering every election and referendum since the beginning of multi-party politics in Kenya in 1992.

While 22 interviews inform this research, I conducted a total of 24 interviews. I omitted two interviews from the final analysis, however. One of the interviews was omitted because of time constraints. The participant was late and was eager to get to another

commitment on time. The interview was therefore incomplete. I omitted the other interview because the participant seemed guarded. While he was very open in the pre-interview, he was not as forthcoming with his responses after I put the microphone on him. This participant shared similar perspectives with other respondents. Since his interview was not as strong as the others, I decided to omit it.

Despite efforts to recruit female participants, all reporter participants in this study are men. While the lack of women's voices in this thesis can be seen as a weakness, their absence is indicative of the more general and systematic lack of women's voices reporting on political news in Kenya. A recent report published by the African Woman and Child Feature Service shows that male bylines, voices and opinions overshadow those of women in the Kenya media. The study analyzed media content published and broadcast over a 15-day period in April and May, 2013. Alarming, the report shows that only nine per cent of print journalists who reported during the study's time frame were female compared to 72 per cent male. The names of the authors of the remaining 19 per cent of stories were not identifiable by sex (Okwemba, 2013). Despite there being few female reporters who met the criteria for my research, I did find two women who agreed to participate in the study. Unfortunately, one did not meet the criteria due to primarily being a desk-based journalist as opposed to reporting in the field. I was unable to meet with the other due to interfering travel plans. There was one other female reporter who I wanted to speak with for the study. While I sent her letters of information and she initially seemed interested, she did not respond to further requests to meet. Therefore, while I intended to gather responses from both male and female reporters, the gender imbalance inherent to political reporting in Kenya made this task extremely difficult.

There is also a deliberate imbalance between the number of reporters selected for the study as compared to civil society participants. Since my case study is primarily concerned with reporters' experiences covering election related stories from 2007 and 2013, I selected significantly more reporter participants than those from civil society or academia. That is because each journalist has unique insights given his individual experiences. Internews and MCK participants, however, were more likely to speak from the perspective of their respective organizations and adding more voices would have been unlikely to add richness to the research beyond the one participant.

In order to protect journalists' livelihoods and ensure they were able to speak freely, the researcher assured reporters their names would not appear in the final report or subsequent articles that may result from this research. Very general information about these reporters is outlined in Appendix 3. The information chart includes their participant identifier, and their location during the 2013 elections¹¹. I have deliberately omitted their affiliated media organization from the chart in order to further shield their identity from deductive disclosure by those with intimate knowledge of the Kenyan media. The number of participants recruited from each media organization is located in a separate chart, which can be found in Appendix 2. In addition, I made efforts not to identify reporters by their tribe. Many made reference to their tribal group in discussion. However, I only included this information if volunteered by the participant and if it was integral to the meaning of their experience. Civil society participants and editorial directors were made aware that they would be identified by name, position and organization in the report as these individuals were already actively and publicly engaged with this topic.

3.4 Data analysis

After transcribing the interviews, I used Attride-Stirling's (2001) guidelines for thematic network analysis as a tool to organize my data. While Saldaña (2012) defines a theme as "an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means" (p. 175), Attride-Stirling (2001) goes a step further, suggesting these themes can be organized into three separate categories for qualitative analysis: basic themes (lowest-order theme); organizing themes (middle-order theme that organizes basic themes into related clusters); and a global theme (high-level theme that encompasses the "principle metaphors in the data as a whole") (p. 389).

Thematic Network Analysis

The research used thematic coding to analyze data as it allowed categories to emerge from the data, unlike other forms of content analysis, which rely on predetermined codes

¹¹ The Kenyan media is known for its high turnover rate of staff and reporters. Indeed, many of the reporter-participants in this study reported for a different publication in 2013 as they did in 2007. I have therefore classified journalists by the organization and location they were affiliated with in 2013, although in some cases, they no longer worked for that same organization.

(Saldaña, 2012). In addition, Attride-Sterling (2001) offers step-by-step instructions of thematic analysis for textual data. Such detail is a rarity in qualitative research literature.

The first step of thematic coding was to code the material. I read each interview transcript, making notes of potential themes in the margins. This step resulted in several dozen codes. After reviewing the terms and phrases I had noted, I merged similar codes as there was some overlap. I wrote the resultant codes on sticky notes and arranged them with other similar codes. I was then able to identify each group of codes by a thematic heading and illustrate these codes in a chart on my computer. This document became my coding framework. The coding framework had about 50 codes arranged under seven themes. I went back to my material and used the framework to extract more text while refining my themes and codes further. I created seven separate documents, all labelled with a theme. I then pulled text that corresponded to my codes and pasted it into the relevant document or documents as there was some overlap between themes. I then began constructing my thematic networks, or “web-like illustrations (networks) that summarize the main themes constituting a piece of text” (Attride-Sterling 2001, p. 386). As shown in Appendix 1, I arranged previously identified themes into three thematic networks. I found it useful to illustrate thematic networks that related to each of my research questions.

After identifying and exploring the thematic networks, I went back to the PJ literature in order to situate PJ in practice within the larger theoretical debate. Doing so allowed me to develop an overarching question, which would guide the analysis of my research questions: *How does PJ theory translate into practice for Kenyan print journalists who covered the 2013 election?* I used this overarching question as a guide while writing and organizing my research findings.

3.5 Limitations and Dissemination

Limitations

While journalist-participants’ perceptions and practices of using PJ *may* be shared with other media practitioners in Kenya, this study does not attempt to present results found here as generalizable across Kenya’s media environment or even among those working in Kenya’s print media. The Kenyan media is not homogeneous and therefore, journalists’ perspectives are unique. Participants’ views and experiences are their own and do not

necessarily represent the perspectives of others in print media, television, online or radio. In addition, this research was based solely the perspectives of a select number of English-language print journalists. While the structural barriers to news production are likely similar for reporters who write in Kiswahili or other vernacular languages, this research recognizes that the experiences of Kiswahili-language reporters may have different opportunities and constraints than their English-language counterparts. Therefore, this study does not claim to provide a comprehensive account of Kenyan media practitioners' perceptions and practices of covering the 2013 election.

The strength of this study lies in its "micro-level" analysis, investigating journalists' *individual* choices and perceived outside influences that shaped their stories. It is outside the scope of this research to provide a comprehensive "meso-level" analysis, which would address the "process of organized news production" (Hanitzsch, 2004, p. 492) or address "macro-level" concerns, which Hanitzsch (2004) describes as the "the interrelation between journalism and its environment," in any depth (p. 492). However, these are two areas of future research, which would enhance understanding of why and how the media covered the 2013 elections in the way that it did. While this analysis focuses on the "micro-level," it acknowledges Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) point that just "because we can and do measure the behavior of individuals, we must not conclude that individual-level factors are the sole causes of behavior" (p. 18). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) note that no single level of analysis can present a holistic picture of what affects media content. However, individual journalists do have "latitude in their behaviour" and while they may be constrained by meso and macro-level forces, journalists' actions are not entirely regulated by them (p. 261). Therefore, while this research does not provide a comprehensive account of the structures and forces that may provide barriers to applications of peace journalism in Kenya's print media, it offers a window into the insights of frontline reporters while providing an academic platform on a subject where little research has been done.

In addition to the above-mentioned limitations, it must be noted that I have a past relationship with one of the organizations represented in the study. In 2010-2011, I participated in a placement with NMG where I worked as a reporter for eight months. As indicated in Appendix 2, more reporter participants were recruited from NMG than from SG. I believe I had greater access to the pool of reporters at *The Daily Nation* than at *The Standard*

due to my past experience at the paper. I believe this was because I acquired the trust and confidence of potential NMG participants quicker because I had formerly worked in the newsroom. However, the potential for bias is limited. I was never paid by NMG and do not currently work there nor did I during the study period. I made every effort to be impartial in my interaction with NMG and its staff, and despite my past affiliation with NMG, decided that it could not be excluded from the research as it has an extremely influential position in the media sector, as it is the largest and one of the most respected media houses in East Africa. In addition, this research does not seek to compare or contrast either the coverage produced or the experiences of reporters at their respective media organization.

Furthermore, I recognize the fact that qualitative analysis presents certain limitations that may not present in quantitative studies. For instance, I initially planned to carry out quite an ambitious plan that involved qualitative analysis as well as a sizeable content analysis. A content analysis would have provided material and insights, which would have served as an interesting comparison to journalists' perspectives. I concluded that such a content analyses would say more about journalistic *outputs* rather than journalistic *inputs*. This research is primarily concerned with journalists' experiences and their personal perceptions. Given that news stories are edited and changed by multiple parties prior to publication, and due to time and resource constraints, I decided to forgo the content analysis and focus on reporters' own rich and varied perspectives. Therefore, research findings are limited by the individual personal perspectives of a small number of media practitioners in Kenya. These factors do not diminish the value of this research, however. In the early stages of my research I noticed that individual reporters' voices were largely absent from discussions about PJ in Kenya. Therefore, this research should be seen as adding a critical voice to existing research on the topic.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this research has been conducted to the best of my ability given the time and resources available to me. Due to my unique experience working alongside Kenyan reporters in NMG newsrooms, I think I was in an exceptional position to carry out this research. I think participants recognized my commitment to this topic due to my familiarity with Kenyan culture, the Kiswahili language, Kenyan history and the media environment. Because of this, I was able to gather a wealth of information and

insights from participants with whom I spoke. Despite any other limitations, their voices are the ultimate strength of this work.

Dissemination

In addition to being published in the University of Ottawa database, all participants will be offered access to this report and/or a summary of main findings.

4. Findings

I think what that violence did was it became the ghost in the room that kept telling you, don't do anything that would strike the match – don't do anything that you would regret later.

- Journalist 2, Nairobi

Interview on February 8, 2014

This chapter deals with the findings of the research, which were gathered through individual interviews with reporters, media managers, academics and civil society members¹². Findings are divided into five sections. The first three sections relate to RQ 1 and its sub-RQs. Research Question 1 deals with reporter-participants' understandings and conceptualizations of PJ (4.1), media power (4.2) and perceptions about their role in conflict dynamics (4.3). Section 4.4 relates to RQ 2 and deals with the structural and societal constraints participants reported experiencing in their 2013 election coverage. Section 4.5 (RQ 3) discusses the events of 2007 and 2008 and the burden participants carried forward from that election into the next. An illustration of the main themes that emerged from each of the research questions can be found in Appendix 1. A brief outline of the study's main findings is outlined below.

Main findings

- Participants favoured the term 'conflict-sensitive journalism' over the term 'peace journalism.'
- Journalist-participants reported having a certain degree of agency in their work. However, many described being hampered by both structural and societal constraints in their 2013 coverage.
- It was not clear exactly how media ownership structures or advertising pressures influenced reporters' stories. However, participants said they were careful not to step on

¹² While research findings are qualitative in nature, the number of participants who shared certain beliefs or opinions is enumerated in some cases in order to give a rough indication of participants' sentiments towards certain values or practices. While an interview guide was used for discussions with participants, interviews were largely conversational and therefore reporters were not asked all the same questions. Therefore, figures presented in this chapter are not necessarily representative of the research sample as a whole.

the wrong toes or write stories that they felt might offend media owners, advertisers or the commercial or political interests of their media organization.

- Societal constraints weighed heavily on journalist-participants covering the 2013 election period. Interviews revealed that tribalism, ethnic identity and perceived societal expectations relating to journalists' ethnic identity were often unspoken but permeated newsrooms.
- Reporters shouldered a burden stemming from their experiences in 2007. This burden was three-fold: they witnessed violence, their profession as a whole was accused of inflaming violence and their collective guilt created a very challenging environment in which they worked while covering the 2013 election.
- Participants overwhelmingly perceived their words and stories as having immense power and influence on audiences.
- Participants struggled to reconcile their role to be information providers with their desire to avoid contributing to conflict. They believed they might risk contributing to conflict by simply informing the public on certain events, while, to them, contributing to peace or conflict reduction meant a stark abandonment of the 'truth.'

Together, these findings contribute to answering the overarching question of this thesis, which asks: *How does PJ theory translate into practice for journalist-participants who covered the 2013 election?* Discussion and analysis of the findings takes place in Chapter 5. In doing so, this thesis seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between PJ in theory and in practice in Kenya.

4.1 Understandings of PJ and CSJ

Given that this research is interested in PJ, it is important to begin by establishing what the term means to participants. While doing my field research, one of the first questions I asked participants was if they were familiar with the terms, 'peace journalism' or 'conflict-sensitive journalism' and if so, what it meant to them (see Appendix 4 for interview guides). Before long, I realized three important things. The first was that while reporter participants had heard of PJ, few embraced the term fully. None of the journalist participants were explicitly familiar with the PJ literature but it seemed they had heard of PJ through workshops, discussions with colleagues, or in the course of their work. Secondly, I learned they preferred the term 'conflict-sensitive journalism.' While I often introduced the terms into our discussion, as this was one of the first questions I asked, it was clear the terms were not

new to participants. The term is widely used in Kenya and appears in the Guidelines for Election coverage in Kenya (MCK, 2012a). The third thing I realized was my understanding of PJ based on the academic literature was not congruent with participants' understandings. Despite the fact that PJ was understood in a variety of ways, many participants did buy in to the spirit of PJ – irrespective of what they called it. These perspectives and understandings are articulated below.

4.1.1 PJ: insights on the ground

Five of the 16 journalist-participants viewed PJ negatively¹³. Journalist 1, a Nairobi-based reporter who has worked at both SG and NMG, recoiled at the idea of PJ. “I would say peace journalism would be peace at all costs – forget the truth” (Interview on February 12, 2014). According to Journalist 1, he has a duty to inform, educate and be a watchdog for the public – roles that do not correspond with ‘forgetting the truth.’ Journalist 9 felt similarly. He did not see PJ as aligned with traditional standards of ‘good journalism.’ Instead, he thought PJ entailed approaching stories of conflict with a ‘closed mind’ and a pre-conceived idea of framing stories towards peace. PJ does not mean, “let me go and find out what is happening,” he said. “You have a story in your mind before ... and (you think) ‘I’m going to do it because I feel it is my duty to promote peace’” (Interview on March 11, 2014). Journalist 4 very clearly articulated his reservations about PJ. “I have been very reluctant to buy into those things like peace journalism,” he said. Journalist 4 understood PJ to mean refraining from reporting on conflict and “preaching peace.” Instead, he said PJ should be abandoned for traditional notions of ‘good journalism,’ including fairness, objectivity and balance. “These other conversations are largely academic,” he said. “If we stick to the ‘abc’s of journalism, we will be peaceful” (Interview on February 28, 2014).

These journalists distanced themselves and their work from their idea of PJ – an understandable reaction considering they largely believed PJ to mean promoting “peace at all costs” at the expense of the truth. Others, however, did not see PJ as akin to the “peace PR” so

¹³ Out of the remaining journalist participants, five had positive reactions to the term while four participants were either vague in their understandings or were unsure what the term meant. The term, “peace journalism” did not come up in two of the interviews. Only one participant felt negatively towards the term, CSJ. However, he was also sceptical of PJ.

reviled by Hanitzsch (2007). Five journalist-participants saw the idea as integral to their role as Kenyan journalists. None articulated this point more fervently than Journalist 12. Although the Nakuru correspondent had not attended university, nor had he read much about PJ, his understanding was consistent with the literature. “Journalists are supposed to redefine the cause of conflict” (Interview on February 8, 2014). Journalist 12 supported the position that journalists must provide insight into how things come to be the way they are before they can change (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005):

Journalists are supposed to go beyond what we are told every day; that a journalist is a mirror. We are no longer mirrors to society. We are headlamps of a vehicle where you are supposed to shed light on this issue and that issue. (Interview on February 24, 2014)

Journalist 12 said he incorporates PJ into his election reporting by prioritizing “the peoples’ needs” in his reporting. “I avoid the aspirants themselves and go to the people,” he said. “When I go to the people, I ask them about their needs. The next question I ask them is who do they think will best serve those needs? Thirdly I asked them, ‘and why have those needs not been met before?’” (Interview on February 24, 2014)? In doing so, Journalist 12 said he is able to write issue-focused stories that matter to Kenyans, as opposed to simply reporting on political rallies and campaign promises. In addition, the reporting technique he described allows his stories to focus on issues as opposed to tribal affiliations. It also guards against focusing on the political mudslinging between party leaders that can happen during election campaigns.

Journalist 11 also had a strong understanding of PJ, although admitting he was unable to define the concept in detail. Still, it was clear he was a PJ practitioner despite not being fully aware of what the concept meant. Journalist 11 said journalists must understand the root causes of a conflict as opposed to focusing on the conflict arena – something essential to PJ proponents Lynch and McGoldrick (2005). “If you don’t understand the conflict and then write about it, you might end up messing the whole thing and even provoking violence,” he said. Journalist 11 cautioned against just writing what is happening on the ground in areas of conflict. “The first thing when you start writing that story, understand the conflict and then talk to people. Do as many interviews as possible. Don’t rush to publish a story without understanding the conflict” (Interview on February 23, 2014). Journalist 11 said a journalist’s

understanding of a conflict is necessary in order to increase audience understanding. In that sense, Journalist 11 and Peleg (2007), a PJ proponent, are of the same opinion that “peace journalism is about supplying background for questions rather than furnishing answers” (p. 7).

4.1.2 CSJ: a preference for the practice

Those participants who believed PJ to involve hiding the truth and promoting “peace at all costs,” were more comfortable with a harm reduction strategy they referred to as conflict-sensitive journalism. This was also true for Internews Country Director, Ida Jooste as well as SG’s John Bundotich. In addition, the term, CSJ is used in both training manuals in Kenya as well as in the MCK’s Guidelines for Election Coverage (2012a). Like those in the sample who support PJ, these participants also saw the media as having great power. However, they largely saw CSJ as “disarming the news” from content which may incite, as opposed to a tool which may contribute to reconciliation between conflicting groups. While these journalists said it is outside their scope of practice to promote peace in society, their definitions of CSJ still suggest they feel they have a role to play in reducing the potential of conflict in Kenya. Journalist 9 described CSJ as a tool that allows reporters to balance their information role with responsibility over what they write. “You may cover the conflict, yes, but in a very sensitive way. In a way you don’t ignite – you don’t spark it into violence” (Interview on March 11, 2014). Six reporter-participants said using neutral language, such as referring to “members of a certain community” as opposed to naming them specifically, are less emotive:

We try to avoid the issue of tribal names. Because when we say this is a group of *this* particular community, you might injure the rest of the community so ... [we have tried] to come up with those rules to avoid conflict amongst the people. (Interview on March 19, 2014)

Journalist 16 also defined CSJ as a tool to regulate what media practitioners must leave out of their stories. To him, CSJ means you “don’t report something that will create conflict” (Interview on March 19, 2014). Participants like Journalist 16 who subscribed to CSJ expanded on the idea of doing “no harm,” arguing that censoring or underplaying some facts or details of a story is justified when done in the interest of the public good. Many cited the events of 2007 and 2008 to justify this harm-reduction approach. This idea of journalistic restraint done in the interest of the public good is explored further in section 4.5.2.

4.1.3 PJ: What's in a name?

In section 1.4 of this thesis, I argued that PJ and CSJ are really the same thing. Hanitzsch (2007) argued that PJ is a “‘mistitled’ concept as it misleads people to conclude that its very intention is the advocacy of peace” (p. 7). In Kenya, I found participants in my study had similar misconceptions. It is significant to note that this conceptualization of PJ – which relates to the idea of interventionist reporting – is not congruent with how this researcher understands the concept. PJ proponents Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) acknowledge the term ‘peace journalism’ can be problematic – prompting some to misunderstand it as a call to advocate for peace (xxi). On the contrary, the authors state the point is not to “adopt” or “advocate” for any particular initiative or solution. The point is “to help readers and audiences assess for themselves the claim that there are only two possibilities – violence or inaction” (p. 144).

Despite the fact that the *term* ‘peace journalism’ did not sit well with participants, I found that many connected with the *spirit* of PJ in various ways. This understanding was evident through participants’ articulations of their roles as media practitioners. These roles are explored below. However, before discussing if and how participants believe they should contribute to influencing conflict dynamics, we must first explore their perceptions of the power of their craft.

4.2 Media has power: proceed with caution

(The media) has a big role to play considering the press is one of the most trusted institutions in the country and it's a key opinion shaper. It drives the public agenda: what people discuss, how they perceive issues, and so anything that appears in the media is likely to have major implications of how people view, think and how they are going to react in certain situations. So the media should and must exercise their freedom responsibly.

- Journalist 10, Nakuru
(Interview on February 24, 2014)

Interviews with participants revealed that they overwhelmingly see their words and stories as having extreme power and influence. Participants believe Kenyan audiences have a great deal of trust in the media, therefore increasing the power and credibility of published stories and opinions. Journalist 10 said the media is a “key opinion shaper” in the country because of the immense trust audiences afford to it. The media “drives the public agenda – what people discuss, how they perceive issues,” he said. “So anything that appears in the media is likely to have major implications of how people think and how they are going to react in certain situations” (Interview on February 24, 2014). Journalist 4 agreed, saying the media is “very influential in shaping opinions in this country” (Interview on February 28, 2014). Journalist 13 said a quick visit to any mall in Kenya will show you how much Kenyans value the news. “You go to shopping centres and it reaches 7 o’clock and people cram around television sets to watch news” (Interview on February 26, 2014). Indeed, reports have shown that not only has the demand for media products increased, so has consumers’ trust (Kenya Media Program, 2011). Almost 81 per cent of Kenyan audiences trust the media to report fairly and accurately (Oriare, Okello-Orlale & Ugangu, 2010, p. 55).

Because of their concept of media power, journalist-participants articulated a profound duty to exercise great responsibility over what they report. Journalist 9 said responsibility is the common thread that must be woven through all published work. “If you don’t entertain responsibility in terms of what you are broadcasting, then you are very much likely to cause a major conflict, a mass problem; you are likely to ignite the entire country, through your spoken words or your written ones” (Interview on March 11, 2014). Journalist 16, who is a reporter in Mombasa, said he felt a great responsibility to not only reduce the potential of violence through his reporting, but also increase opportunities for reconciliation and peace. “Indeed I have a responsibility to inform the public but also I have a responsibility if I know that that story I’m going to do is going to endanger that same public” (Interview on March 19, 2014). In his election coverage, Journalist 16 said his main objective was to ensure there was no conflict, as the coastal city is prone to strained relations between a largely Muslim population in an otherwise Christian nation. “So I also made sure that I was talking to the Muslim leaders and the Christian leaders to bring these two groups together” (Interview on February 8, 2014). John Bundotich of SG said the media’s responsibility as information provider is both a moral as well as a professional duty. “We all have a duty to our country not to burn the country,” he said. “We have seen many countries in Africa who have failed in that

respect” (Interview on February 13, 2014). In 2013, Bundotich said SG’s main aim was to keep tensions at bay. However, keeping tensions down did not mean turning from media watchdog to lap dog, he said. “Of course, if there were issues, certain issues that needed to be brought to the fore, we would, but in a responsible way” (Interview on February 13, 2014). Although journalistic “responsibility” was a running theme throughout interviews, six journalist-participants explicitly said that exercising responsibility over what they wrote meant recognizing that certain words or details in a story have the power to trigger violence. Therefore, they believed they had to avoid these words in their stories – exemplifying their definition of CSJ that we saw earlier.

4.3 Peace journalism: the spirit in practice

Now that we have established how reporter-participants perceive the power of their craft, we can begin to analyze participants’ responses to RQ 1, which asks: “What roles do media practitioners believe the press should play in terms of influencing conflict dynamics?” As Norris and Odugbemi (2010) point out, journalistic roles are learned from many sources, including: personal experience, professional education, professional routines and practices as well as from co-workers or professional guidelines (p. 13). My research suggests this was true for participants in this study as well. Reporter-participants’ perceived roles often reflected the MCKs’ guidelines for election coverage. Past and professional experience was also linked to how participants’ perceived their roles as journalists. When speaking to reporters about their thoughts on their craft, three major themes emerged: that they should a) mirror society, b) do no harm, or c) change society. Specifically, reporters largely saw their roles as watchdogs, gatekeepers and agenda setters. Apart from these prominent functions of the press, two reporters also saw their role as a force to increase a shared national identity. While some participants felt more strongly about one role over the others, these themes were not mutually exclusive. Participants often supported multiple roles, which supports existing research that suggests journalists see their job as compatible with serving a number of different functions (Norris & Odugbemi, 2010). For example, all reporters felt strongly about reporting “the facts.” Yet while recognizing their duty to inform, six reporters explicitly expressed their desire to contribute to national unity and peace. Three of those reporters said they struggled to balance their information role and their role as peacemakers. Another four, separate from the previous six, did not explicitly state that they wanted to contribute to peace but felt it was a

delicate balance to maintain their information role without fanning animosities. Journalist 2 said he was “conflicted” about balancing these roles. “You can’t help telling the truth but then what do you do if that truth inspires someone else to do something bad” (Interview on February 8, 2014)? Participants often believed they might risk contributing to conflict by simply informing the public on certain events while to them, contributing to peace or conflict reduction meant a stark abandonment of the ‘truth.’

4.3.1 Journalists should mirror society (with responsibility)

The Media Code of Conduct outlines that when covering conflict, “proper verifications of facts” must be published “in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity and peace” (Media Council Act, 2013, p. 14). Journalist 15 said that influencing peace is not a journalists’ job. He said a commitment to the facts is paramount and that the media should mirror society. Journalist 15 said his primary role as a journalist is to inform audiences what is happening. “As a media person, you are not supposed to guard what you are saying,” he said. “Our business is to see what is happening there and to put it down as you have seen it or heard it. That is our job” (Interview on March 19, 2014). Like Journalist 15, Journalist 4 argued that reporters should relay information so that audiences can make informed decisions about their lives. However, Journalist 4 argued reporters must bear a great deal of responsibility considering Kenya’s unique environment:

I believe that if journalists remained objective, if journalists stuck to facts, and this is a delicate one – understood, appreciated and had a strong sense of the environment in which they operate and in terms of the sensitivities of the communities in which they operate ... we should be able to do good stories that capture the situations we are reporting in without inflaming or without causing any trouble. (Interview on February 28, 2014)

Journalist 9 also emphasized the importance of responsibility in Kenyan newsrooms. “Other than the cardinal principles of a journalist, other than the usual informative, entertaining, educating, so on and so forth, today’s journalists must also bear what is called responsibility over what they write, over what they broadcast” (Interview on March 11, 2014). This idea of responsibility is central to PJ. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) say like it or not, journalists are inescapably involved in the conflicts they cover (p. 34). “There is a larger ethical dimension

to the way a conflict is reporting, some sense of responsibility for its possible influence over the course of events” (Lynch, 2002, p. 8). This reality was not lost on participants. And while those like Journalist 9 did not explicitly subscribe to the term PJ, they followed its practices without knowing it.

4.3.2 Media power should be used to change society

Other participants explicitly stated that during times of conflict, the media’s role is to influence change. Not only did these participants feel they had a role to play in decreasing violence, they also believed they had a role to play in changing society for the better. “Ultimately, we are the people’s watchdog,” said Journalist 1, “and the bottom line is a journalist has to tell a story and that story must change lives” (Interview on February 12, 2014). That means adding value to readers’ lives by educating them or influencing policy, he said. While Journalist 1 felt that given the power of the media, journalists should be sensitive to conflict in order to limit the potential harm their stories may cause. While he did not see influencing peace as part of his job, like Journalist 9, Journalist 1 did embrace elements of PJ in practice. Journalist 1 noticed that in the run-up to the elections, much of the media’s attention was focused on the two likely victors – Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga. But he also knew there were six other presidential candidates. “Everyone else was focusing on frontrunners,” he said. “There was a presidential candidate – someone who people did not know about – and he came to present his papers ... and everyone just mentioned him as a footnote.” It was Mohamed Abduba Dida. Journalist 1 was intrigued.

It is interesting that some guy who is not known, some guy who has not been a politician ... just wakes up and decides I’m going to vie. And he’s a teacher, a high school teacher, and he knows that he has no real shot at the presidency but he still pays 200,000 (Ksh)¹⁴. (Interview on February 12, 2014)

Journalist 1 decided to write a prominent feature story on Abduba Dida. While Journalist 1 did not self-identify as a proponent of PJ, he inadvertently “cut across familiar narratives” (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005, p. xix) by highlighting the voice of a relatively unknown

¹⁴ The fee for candidates to submit presidential nomination papers is 200,000 Kenya Shillings or about \$2,700 CAD.

candidate. In addition, he contributed to shifting attention away from framing the election as a two-horse race, which is characteristic of war journalism. Journalist 13 struggled to think of anything more important when covering elections. Journalist 13 said the “underdogs” often have the best ideas. “Sometimes the good ideas that would propel this country to other heights are not the people of these big parties. Sometimes you will find that the smaller parties have better ideas than the bigger ones” (Interview on February 26, 2014). Journalist 13 said the dominant parties spend the majority of their time in the public eye fighting each other, but the smaller parties have no one to fight, leaving room for public discussion about “realistic solutions” to Kenya’s problems (Interview on February 26, 2014).

Journalists should set the agenda for national unity, peace and reconciliation

Finally, some journalists were very explicit about their role in setting the agenda for peace in Kenya. Journalist 6, for example, sees the media as a very powerful tool. Likewise, outside of his information role, he said the media has a particular responsibility to campaign for peace:

Apart from informing, you also educate. Apart from educating, you can also do what we call, campaign.... Like the last election, the theme of media houses was: peaceful election – we all want a peaceful election. So even journalists, we carried that ... we also had a particular responsibility to tell people there’s no need to have violence, whatever way the elections go, remember, we have a country to build. (Interview on February 21, 2014)

As noted earlier in this chapter, Journalist 10 described the media as a “key opinion shaper” in the country. He also believes media power should be exercised in a way that promotes peaceful coexistence. Journalist 10 said that many Kenyans, especially those with low levels of education or literacy levels, believe that what they read in the news is the “gospel truth.” Therefore, “the media should and must exercise its freedom responsibly,” while playing a role in preventing violence (Interview on February 24, 2014). Journalist 10’s position is actually built into NMG’s editorial policies said Joseph Odindo, Managing Editor of NMG. He said the media is an agent for change, development and peace:

This being Kenya, you also want to be a factor in helping to reform the big things that threaten our nationhood or influence our nationhood. That’s

really about peace, about getting communities to live together.... So we want to be a major player in promoting cohesion and encouraging understanding between communities and in championing policies that secure the future of the country. (Interview on February 10, 2014)

Journalist 13 said one of the ways the media can be an agent of change is to engage in discussions about long-standing issues and historical injustices – some of which were outlined in Chapter 2. In this sense, Journalist 13 sees the media as a platform for national healing and reconciliation. At the time of the interview, Journalist 13 said he had seen a number of stories featured in various media profiling key moments in Kenya’s history. “So they’ve been going back, highlighting stories and bringing people to understand where the country has come from and when I saw that, I said to myself, ‘that is one way of taking the country back to when the rain started beating us’” (Interview on February 26, 2014). However, Journalist 13 lamented the fact that these stories were done in order to celebrate 50 years of independence as opposed to igniting a national conversation about healing:

So if the media can take a decisive role and dig up those injustices in a sensitive way, in a conflict-sensitive way and report them to enable the country to have a conversation about these issues in order to resolve them, I think that can work. (Interview on February 26, 2014)

Journalist 10 said the media “plays a big part in determining how society coexists” (Interview on February 24, 2014). Interestingly, as we saw earlier, Journalist 9 took issue with the idea of PJ and stressed the importance of maintaining the media’s information role. However, he did subscribe to the spirit of PJ, saying that the media is “the best tool” for increasing national harmony. “Rather than concentrating so much on issues and matters that divide us so much, there are also many other stories we can do either to go towards national cohesion and uniting Kenyans” (Interview on March 11, 2014). However, while participants said they had multiple roles, they did not always see those roles as compatible.

Reconciling multiple roles

Like Journalist 9, five participants shared his struggle to reconciling their information role with a desire to contribute to national harmony. Few fit neatly into one of the three categories above. For example, Journalist 14, a veteran reporter in Mombasa, said there was value in reporting stories straight. He emphasized the need for reporters to gather information

about what transpired and approach official sources for comment. But as a human being, he said some stories make it difficult to be so robotic:

You see, now you are in a catch 22 situation. You don't know now in a certain situation what should I do? Should I tell them not to fight? Or should I just take whatever I see? So it becomes a bit difficult to know what to do. (Interview on March 19, 2014)

Journalist 16, also a Mombasa reporter, said he had an internal struggle over what to include or exclude from stories. In addition, he said there was also an external struggle to meet editors' expectations:

There's also pressure from the editors (to) bring (them) that story the way it was and you're trying to decide should I write (it) the way it was or should I write and censor some facts? But there are editors who will tell you 'no, it is our responsibility to just bring the story the way it was.' So there was that challenge. (Interview on March 19, 2014)

In speaking with reporters about the role(s) they believe they should play in conflict situations, two things became clear. The first is that there is no clear consensus among participants about what this role is or ought to be. The second thing that became evident is that reporters largely see their information role and their role of influencing peace as mutually exclusive. Often, they perceived the two roles to be incompatible, unable to coexist within a single story; either one must maintain peace and hide the truth or else tell the truth and risk contributing to or igniting conflict. Journalist 15, the Mombasa reporter who says a journalist's job is to 'tell it like it is,' is a prime example. "Do we do the story as it is supposed to come or do you ... go by the responsibility and forget about your job as a journalist" (Interview on March 19, 2014)? He said in 2013 questions like this arose daily. According to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) however, PJ does not entail abandoning your job as a 'good journalist.' Nor does it call on reporters to ignore violence. "Show it, but show also images and statements which provide an explanation for it other than the violence itself" (p. 241). Between episodes of direct violence, rather, the authors call on reporters to look at how the violence affects everyday people and their lives. Furthermore, Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) argue that perceptions that PJ implies only reporting 'good news,' are flawed. Like all kinds of journalism, peace journalists report on what is new, recognizing that "'something new' in a conflict may be brought about by, for instance, people working to promote

understanding at the grassroots as well as by men firing guns and leaders negotiating” (p. 241).

It would seem then that PJ – save for the name – is a particularly good fit in Kenya. Ideas about responsibility and the power of the media largely seem to be consistent both in theory and on the ground. In exploring how PJ theory translates into practice for Kenyan journalists however, I found that PJ theory does little to address the structural, historical and tribal constraints reporters face. In the Kenyan context, I found that PJ theory overestimates reporters’ individual agency while underestimating the forces that shape and constrain their work – forces that journalists cannot overcome on their own. From the history of the PEV to tribal expectations to the pressure to meet the expectations of media owners and advertisers, participants stated these various constraints limited their freedom to do their work and caused them to fear for their jobs or safety. These constraints are explored below.

4.4 Reporting constraints

Interviews with participants revealed reporters faced a number of constraints that impeded their reporting or made their experience during the 2013 election challenging. These constraints are divided into two groups: structural and societal. *Structural* constraints are built in to the operations of media organizations. Eight reporter-participants said at least one of the below structural constraints, described in section 4.4.1, challenged their independence as journalists. The second group of constraints participants identified were *societal* constraints. As is described in section 4.4.2, participants identified constraints in relation to *ethnic identity* as prominent constraints to their reporting.

4.4.1 Structural constraints

According to Bläsi (2009), the individual journalist is just one of six factors that influence news production. The others consist of the journalistic system including organizational norms and routines; propaganda; the specific conditions of the conflict area including security and personal safety; the publicity of the conflict and audience expectations (p. 1-2). Participants in this study reinforced Bläsi’s (2009) work, as they indicated that many of these factors influenced their stories while covering the 2013 election. Participants identified three main structural constraints influencing their work: a) ownership constraints, b) advertising constraints and c) financial and transportation constraints. These three are outlined

below. Societal constraints such as tribal pressures and audience expectations are discussed in section 4.4.2.

Ownership constraints

Chapter 2 of this thesis looked at the relationship between media ownership and politicians in Kenya. This relationship, and the significance it implies, was not lost on participants. Victor Bwire of the MCK said it is difficult to distinguish between businesspeople and politicians in Kenya. “They are the same guys,” he said, adding that the people who practice politics in Kenya are often those who own or have a stake in the media industry (Interview on January 31, 2014). It is not clear how ownership structures specifically affected reporter-participants in 2013. Many spoke broadly about media ownership in their organization, or they spoke about media ownership in Kenya in general – perhaps unable or unwilling to speak in more concrete terms. It is therefore difficult to discern how ownership structures specifically constrained reporters in 2013. What is clear, however, is that participants were keenly aware of the power media owners could exert over their stories and their jobs. Journalist 13 said what he learned in journalism school about journalistic independence was a stark contrast to what he found in reality. “You are taught that Kenya is one of the countries where media freedom is there, but when you get into a media house you find that the owners of the company would like you to do certain stories. So there’s no freedom there” (Interview on February 26, 2014). He said that conforming to these pressures is often necessary in order to “survive” as a journalist in Kenya. He went on to note, however, that he did not feel pressure to avoid certain stories or slant stories in any particular way while covering the 2013 election. Journalist 9 said that media owners often “dictate” the editorial direction of the newspaper (Interview on March 11, 2014). Journalist 1, however, said the pressure from media owners is not always so direct. He did not reveal how media ownership specifically affected his work in 2013, but he said it is always something in the back of his mind. “Nobody will tell you but you just have to be smart and know who not to touch” (Interview on February 12, 2014). Journalist 1 reported feeling it necessary to be careful not to do “anything to rattle the media owners” in his 2013 coverage. “You do not know their allegiance” as owners are “so intertwined with the politics of the country” (Interview on February 12, 2014). Interviews with participants revealed that journalists experience both direct and indirect pressure from media owners within their organizations. While owners may

explicitly ask journalists to do certain stories, journalists indicated that implicit pressure to align editorial decisions with owner interests curtails both media freedom and independence.

Advertising constraints

Apart from media ownership, participants said they operated under constraints relating to advertising pressure and profit motives. Some respondents noted a specific conflict of interest regarding advertising revenue from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The IEBC carried out civic education prior to the election and was one of the biggest advertisers prior to the 2013 election. Levi Obonyo, Dean of the School of Communication, Media and Performing Arts at Daystar University in Nairobi, said that around election time, he noticed the IEBC had bought upwards of 30 pages in any one newspaper – meaning the IEBC was a huge revenue source for media houses. “So you didn’t want to cross the IEBC the wrong way so as to stop advertising in your media” (Interview on April 1, 2014). Journalist 6 said that in 2013, IEBC advertisements were so lucrative that every media house wanted a piece of the advertising pie. “The electoral commission was doing pamphlets or even some write-ups and put them as adverts in the newspapers,” he said. “So *The Standard* can be given a contract of printing ... those magazines or pamphlets then inserting them” (Interview on February 21, 2014). Knowing your media house has been awarded such a contract constrains your reporting, said Journalist 6, adding that writing a story critical of the IEBC would not be received well. “Your editor might not tell you that but the following day you might find your story has been mutilated” (Interview on February 21, 2014). Journalist 9 described this practice as being “gagged” in order to appease advertisers that bring in a lot of money for companies (Interview on March 11, 2014). Journalist 6 said this practice of “gagging” is not explicit but it is implied:

You do a story about a political party – and remember, the political class in this country, they own institutions in terms of the businesses so these politicians will call using now the company he or she owns and says, ‘I’m pulling out my advert; you are writing bad stories about me. So for me to agree ... to continue advertising with you, you have to fire this guy.’ So sometimes you are also working to protect your job.... It’s an unwritten language but if you work in Kenya, you understand it. (Interview on February 21, 2014)

John Bundotich, Group Chief Editor at SG acknowledged that advertisers try to influence editorial decisions, but says most often, he tries to educate them:

For us as a media house, we have integrity (and) a job to do. (If) we begin selecting and say(ing) we cannot carry this because it is from an advertiser ... it will dent our credibility. So what we do is we'll carry the story with the other side of the story. We just balance the story. Some of these battles we'll fight, we'll win – mostly. (Interview on February 13, 2014)

Still, Victor Bwire of the MCK said reporters have very little control over their stories after they are filed. Even editors' hands are tied at times, he said. "Sometimes page one stories are determined by (the) advertising department, not necessarily (the) editorial department. They are thinking, 'will it sell'" (Interview on January 31, 2014)? Journalist 13 said profits are at the heart of many editorial decisions. "Media in Kenya is all about profits," he said. "Because even now in newsrooms the conversation is: 'you're coming up with this idea. Would it increase sales? Would it increase advertising revenue'" (Interview on February 26, 2014)? If the answer is 'no,' the message that Journalist 13 gets is that his story will most likely end up on the cutting room floor.

Financial/transport constraints

The third category of structural constraints is financial constraints and those relating to transportation (or lack thereof). Only one reporter specifically spoke to this category of constraints. I included his voice because he was the only participant who was a correspondent. Financial constraints are specific to correspondents as they have less access to resources than staff reporters. In addition, according to the Editorial Director of NMG, Joseph Odindo, it is common practice to "beef up" your reporting team with correspondents during elections in order to ensure a countrywide presence (Interview on February 10, 2014). That means that during elections there is an increased number of reporters who likely face this particular challenge. Journalist 12 is one of them. He is paid per story as opposed to a regular salary, and said lack of pay and limited means of transport affect his reporting to the extent that in 2013, he had to take measures to protect his independence as a journalist. Journalist 12 works in Nakuru; a town situated about 160 km northwest of Nairobi. While he has worked as a reporter for two decades, he has never been hired as a permanent staff reporter because he did

not attend post-secondary school. He said being a correspondent during the election posed many logistical problems. “We needed to move from point A to B, covering this or that function,” he said. “During that time, the President and the rest were moving using choppers while we were using *matatu*¹⁵” (Interview on February 24, 2014). At times, he said he would find himself without transportation while on route to cover an event or function. The only option was to be given a ride from an aspirant. “That one affects what you write because next time you need the same person to give you a lift. So what you end up writing is not what you believe in but you want to secure a seat in the next trip” (Interview on February 24, 2014).

Like all correspondents, Journalist 12 only gets paid per published story. And while he relies on his stories to support his family, he said in 2013 he would only cover meetings he could travel to independently. For that reason, he said he did not attend all the meetings he should have. Victor Bwire said the danger is that lack of transportation and low remuneration for stories published creates an environment where correspondents may be tempted to “create stories” even when they were not able to attend the meeting or press conference. “The problem is the tendency of media houses wanting to rely on correspondents,” Bwire said. “Media houses should just employ them. Also, newsrooms must set aside some money for election coverage because the issue of depending largely on lifts from politicians to go and cover events sometimes compromises” them (Interview on January 31, 2014). Journalist 12 said that media houses should pay correspondents a fair and consistent salary. If they don’t, journalists will “go out there to listen to leaders who will tell them, ‘write this, write this,’ of course (to support) their own interests, not with the interests of the people at heart” (Interview on February 24, 2014).

4.4.2 Societal constraints

Societal constraints also weighed heavily on reporter-participants covering the 2013 election period. Interviews revealed that tribalism, ethnic identity and perceived societal expectations relating to journalists’ ethnic identity were often unspoken but permeated newsrooms and some reporters’ stories. For the most part, respondents noted that tribalism existed within newsrooms but was problematic for *other reporters*. Participants largely denied

¹⁵ A *matatu* is a public minibus in Kenya. While taking a *matatu* is a very affordable mode of transport for many Kenyans, the vehicles are often overcrowded, dangerous and slow as they stop at every opportunity to pick up more passengers.

their tribal identity had any negative bearing on their own reporting, however. Instead, some said they had developed strategies to remain objective.

“The shadow in the background:” Tribalism, ethnic identity and perceived societal expectations

The majority of journalist-participants said tribalism had little bearing on their own reporting. Some participants, as will be made clear below, described working very hard to “shake off” their political or tribal views in order to objectively carry out their professional obligations. Journalist 10 said it is not easy, but he constantly tries to “detach” himself from his political sympathies:

It’s not simple because you still go to some political rallies and you see some of your colleagues are getting carried away. But for me, what I usually do is detach myself now from whatever is happening at that moment. But if we meet at social place then I’m going to talk politics and the politicians that I support or I oppose but once it comes to my work, I’m going to make sure that I’m very objective. (Interview on February 24, 2014)

Journalist 10 said including multiple voices in his stories helps guard against bias. “In Kenyan politics, tribe is a key determinant, so you make sure that if you interview from this community and this community supports a certain coalition, I will make sure that I also go to the other side” (Interview on February 24, 2014). Journalist 8 said he did not have to work quite so hard to remain objective. He is a member of a very small tribe in Kenya, which carries little political weight. “I’m in a good position because I don’t belong to any political camp,” he said. “My tribe is small, so I’m neutral in this game” (Interview on February 3, 2014).

Appearing neutral so as to best serve his audience was of particular importance to Journalist 2. However, he said achieving neutrality was particularly difficult despite his best efforts because of audiences’ pre-conceived perceptions of him. Journalist 2 said that readers would assume he supports the political camp his tribe is affiliated with. He said knowing that perception was there influenced his reporting. Before the elections, Journalist 2 was working on comparing the manifestos of the two main political coalitions, CORD and Jubilee. He said he resisted criticizing what he saw as legitimate issues within those manifestos because doing so would only serve to enhance pre-conceived notions of his loyalties and discredit his

reporting. “There were things that I would read in a manifesto (that) I would think are not practical,” he said. But Journalist 2 was hesitant to criticize those things because he thought it might make him appear to be supporting one side over the other. “It’s not somebody coming and telling you, ‘don’t do this.’ It’s you always thinking that ‘if I do this, what perception will there be?’ So there is a shadow in the background, looking over your shoulder, which you’re afraid of” (Interview on February 8, 2014).

Journalist 3 also recognized that audiences might make certain assumptions about him due to his last name. Kenyan surnames often give a clear indication of what tribal group people come from. “At times, someone would look at your name as a reporter and say, this guy belongs to CORD, which is not true,” he said. Journalist 3 said that while that perception may be there, it did not affect his reporting one way or another. “My reportage was fair. When I covered Uhuru Kenyatta and (William) Ruto, I gave them my all. When I covered Raila (Odinga) and his troop, I gave them my all.... Because I’m Luo does not mean that I support Raila.... That perception is there. It will not go away. But it really does not affect how I report” (Interview on February 15, 2014).

While participants said they managed to avoid tribal biases for the most part, Patrick Maluki, lecturer and consultant on diplomacy, media and peace at the University of Nairobi, said tribalism is very much still an issue in Kenyan newsrooms. Maluki said that discussions about PJ in Kenya must occur within broader discussions about “societal aspects” which “impeded the practice of professional journalism ... one of them being ethnic identity.” To a large extent, “the Kenyan media is still characterized by the individual ethnic background of the journalist,” he said. When covering stories or events in which their tribe is a party, “ethnicity sometimes colours them” (Interview on March 12, 2014).

Journalist 11 was very much aware that reporters in his bureau could be coloured by their tribal or political identities. In 2013, Journalist 11 was often tasked with editing stories at his bureau in Nakuru. He not only corrected spelling and grammar errors, but he also checked them for any implicit or explicit biases. “I would go through all of them,” he said. “Because of course, you know, people are normally influenced by their tribal emotions.” Journalist 11 explained that reporters are often hesitant to say anything critical against their tribe “especially when you know the story you have written is going to appear under your byline” (Interview on February 23, 2014).

Like many participants, Journalist 4 did not specifically speak about how his tribal background might affect his reporting. He did say that tribal divisions exist within newsrooms, however, despite often flying under the radar. “You can’t see it, but we practice it in some way.” He went on to say that politicians try to harness the power of the media by aligning themselves with reporters who share their ethnic identity. “Politicians usually seek to buy this influence during elections or use this influence to their advantage in some way.... What they do is they call (a certain reporter) and tell her, ‘you’re a member of our tribe. We are going for the presidency. Take care of our interests in the media.’” In 2013, Journalist 4 said all this was happening as “we wore our coat of professionalism” (Interview on February 28, 2014).

According to Levi Obonyo, Dean of the School of Communication, Media and Performing Arts at Daystar University in Nairobi, tribalism in newsrooms is a microcosm of tribalism in society as a whole. He said Kenyans are brought up with certain beliefs about their tribe in relation to others. “So when it comes to the newsroom, (they can’t) shake (it) off,” he said. “It’s part of early socialization so journalists, too, have been socialized, and that socialization has been ethnic in some aspects” (Interview on April 1, 2014).

But overcoming the expectation to lean one way or another is not without its consequences. Journalist 11 received death threats in relation to his reporting following the 2007 election. “There was an e-mail that was circulating all over and it was warning journalists and politicians who were accused of betraying their communities and I was among the group” (Interview on February 23, 2014). Because of his last name, Journalist 11 said he was perceived to be a supporter of former president Mwai Kibaki. Journalist 11 said he wrote a number of critical stories of how Kibaki’s party was conducting their campaigns. “So then I found myself in a predicament,” he said. “When you are reporting about somebody from your community, people expect you to report positively. They don’t expect anything negative.... There was a group of an organized criminal gang saying that they have to get our heads. You know, it causes a lot of concern, even to my family” (Interview on February 23, 2014). Journalist 9, a Nairobi reporter, said that politicians from his community expect positive coverage from him as well. “There are instances when I met politicians and they say, ‘hey, I thought you were one of us, I thought you belonged to our camp,’” he said. “And do you

know, I feel happy when that happens, I really do. When that happens, it tells me, ‘look, I overcame my affiliations’” (Interview on March 11, 2014).

Interviews with reporters revealed that ethnic identity was most certainly a “shadow in the background” of their reporting in 2013. While participants did not speak specifically about how their ethnic identity may have coloured their reporting, many noted serious efforts to detach from their own political or ethnic sympathies. As Journalist 2 pointed out, however, doing so may have implications for how reporters frame their stories.

4.5 The burden of 2007

In addition to the weight of ethnic identity, participants also reported shouldering a burden that stemmed from their experiences in 2007. Thematic analysis showed that this burden was three-fold: (1) they witnessed violence; (2) their profession as a whole was accused of inflaming violence and (3) their collective guilt then created a very challenging environment in which they worked while covering the 2013 elections. Each of these burdens are detailed below, illustrating the emotional weight journalists were under in 2013.

4.5.1 Reporters witnessed violence

Trauma/memory of violence

Many participants reported either witnessing, being threatened with or reporting on violence during the 2007 PEV. Some reporters were even threatened with death. Understandably, participants who experienced these events reported them being very traumatic – a burden they carried from 2007 through the 2013 election. Journalist 6 recalled the events that almost cost him his life with such clarity; it was as if they had just occurred. In reality, it had been more than five years. Journalist 6 told me how he was almost killed by a mob of “rude boys” in Mathare during the PEV while working on a story. Mathare is an informal settlement in Nairobi. It was also one of the “hot spots” for violence following the 2007 election. While riots in Mathare were initially “ethnically motivated,” they later gave way to “blind destruction” with “gangs taking advantage of the crisis to loot and rape” (Lafargue and Katumanga, 2009, p. 14). “I was confronted by mobs wanting to know which tribe I come from,” Journalist 6 said. “Because in 2007, the question was, ‘are you Kikuyu or are you Luo?’” Journalist 6 recalled exiting a *matatu* before seeing someone approach him

with a large stone. “The most scary was that stone because that stone was heavy.... I could see that guy was struggling to hold it. That’s when you see death. You stare at death and you just walk away from it. You thank your God that your day has not come.” For some reason, perhaps because he proved he was a reporter, Journalist 6 was spared when two individuals appeared to escort him to safety – two “good guys,” or so he thought. With their arms around his shoulders, they vented their frustrations to him, hoping to be heard. Then they became aware there was someone from the “wrong tribe” in their midst. “They left me there and they went and started slashing someone as I was watching,” Journalist 6 recalled. “They pulled machetes (from their sleeves) and they’re cutting someone into pieces because that guy was Kikuyu” (Interview on February 21, 2014).

Journalist 8, who is also a seasoned Nairobi reporter, received death threats during the PEV. He was working on covering events in the Rift Valley at the time, one of the most volatile areas in Kenya during the violence. “There was a place I went and the Kikuyus thought I am a Kalenjin because I am slim and they wanted to kill me,” he said. His driver and photographer pleaded with the individuals to leave him alone. They assured the men that he was not Kalenjin, but just a reporter there to do his work without favouring any group. “I was told just to stay in the vehicle. I was told if I leave that vehicle to cover the story I would just be killed. So at that time, I shook a lot” (Interview on February 3, 2014).

Journalist 13 reported on both of the last elections from Eldoret in Western Kenya. He remembers how one of the news bureaus there was converted into a makeshift “IDP (internally displaced person) camp” for journalists. “They came there and were bringing mattresses and they were sleeping on the floor,” because journalists from non-dominant tribes in the region feared for their safety (Interview on February 26, 2014). Journalist 16, a Mombasa reporter on the other side of the country, feared for his safety there as well. Immediately after the 2007 elections, Journalist 16 said he was often stopped and questioned by “youths” on his way to town. “It was challenging,” he said – a clear understatement of his situation at the time (Interview on March 19, 2014). He ended up moving from one estate to another because he no longer felt safe at home.

The result of witnessing and experiencing these events and harassment traumatized reporters. “It was an experience I would not want to relive again,” said Journalist 10, who was a correspondent in Nakuru in 2007. He covered the PEV and wrote about those who collected

bodies from the streets. “Things happened that you could not have imagined would happen” (Interview on February 24, 2014). Journalist 7 said the journalists he worked with were “almost in tears. Our own journalists were traumatized. And up to today there are even those who have not recovered” (Interview on February 13, 2014). Journalist 5 said it was not until his news organization’s “post-mortem” meeting that he realized how deeply reporters had been affected. “We realized during that talk that people were hurting,” he said. “Reporters out in the field had gone through traumatic situations that sitting here in Nairobi you might not have realized.” The newspaper reacted by providing counselling services to staff members, which journalists reportedly took advantage of, according to Journalist 5 (Interview on April 11, 2014). Clearly, the events surrounding the 2007 election affected reporters deeply. Those memories stayed with them in 2013 – not only because of the violence they experienced, but also because they felt collectively responsible for how the media covered that election.

4.5.2 “The ghost in the room:” Failure to provide responsible coverage in 2007

As described in the historical background chapter of this thesis, it is clear the media played multiple roles during the 2007 election and PEV. The media has been praised for acting as both “information provider” and a “campaigner for moral issues” (Rambaud, 2009) while simultaneously criticized for publishing material that threatened the potential for peace (Ojwang, 2009, p. 23). The Waki report (2009) describes a media, which acted “recklessly and irresponsibly” in 2007. The report goes on to say that that reporters were politically biased and that editors had been compromised (p. 296). And while much of this criticism was directed at local-language radio stations, Joseph Odindo of NMG said the mainstream media was not immune. “Tribal emotions came into our journalism,” he said. “Young and inexperienced reporters were getting so emotional that they were holding back information and they wanted their stories to reflect their political feelings.” He described how in 2007 reporters were “huddling in groups in the corners,” and not talking to those they deemed were suspicious. “Editors were having a very hard time leading a united team” (Interview on February 2, 2014).

While much of this criticism was directed at local-language radio stations and not the mainstream organizations journalist-participants worked for, interviews with participants revealed they shouldered a lot of guilt nonetheless. While only one reporter gave an example

of his role providing less-than-responsible coverage in 2007, the rest largely spoke of their culpability in collective terms. “In 2007, the way we reported, media houses were split,” said Journalist 16, a reporter in the coastal city of Mombasa. “This reporter would write this, the other one would counter ... so we played a big role in that conflict” (Interview on March 19, 2014). Journalist 9, a Nairobi reporter, remembers how Kenya was awash in “negative politics” at the time of the election. “Emotions were triggered and the land issue was blown out and in some instances exaggerated for political reasons.” As a result, reporters found themselves taking sides (Interview on March 11, 2014). Journalist 12, a correspondent from Nakuru, said he had two choices: to write pro-ODM stories or risk not being published:

In 2007, I was in an area that was deemed to be a PNU area. It was the party Kibaki was using. It was the election vehicle. And these other areas we had ODM. Now, most of our senior editors, I’m sorry to be saying this, but most of our editors happened, or they seemed, to favour ODM, which was run by Raila (Odinga). So it meant any article you wrote that was pro-ODM was published. When you wrote anything that was pro-PNU, it was denied coverage. So I ended up earning less. (Interview on February 24, 2014)

Journalist 12 went on to say that things were very different in 2013. “My bosses had realized the mistake they made of taking sides during the 2007 general elections. This time around, they opened up the paper,” he said, meaning editors created space for a number of political views and opinions. “They would write anything that would come in and they tried to sit on the fence and that was very superb” (Interview on February 24, 2014). The majority of participants noted that their papers made real efforts to provide unbiased coverage in 2013, as well. Participants said leading candidates would often appear on the front page together. Perhaps, they hoped, such efforts would ensure “the ghost of 2007 is exorcised” (Journalist 5, interview on February 24, 2014).

Collective conscience, guilt and fear of being implicated again

*I felt a big sense of pity on my part that in some way
I may have contributed in this in some way.*

- Journalist 9, Nairobi
(Interview on March 11, 2014)

Media organizations and reporters spent the five years between elections reflecting on their coverage. “There was a lot of soul searching,” said John Bundotich, Standard Group Chief Editor, “a lot of discussion amongst media, ourselves included” (Interview on February 13, 2014). This was especially true for Journalist 9, a Nairobi reporter who worked in the Kikuyu-dominated Central Highland town of Nyeri in 2007. Journalist 9 said his editor at the time pushed him into writing a story with a pre-determined focus in order to “satisfy some interests.” Journalist 9 suspects these interests concerned bolstering support for ODM in a largely pro-PNU area. “The editors I was dealing with at that particular time were very much pro-ODM,” Journalist 9 said. One of the ways of bolstering support was to try to divide what was referred to as the Kikuyu vote by trying to “resurrect” tension between the Kikuyu sub-tribes of Nyeri and Kiambu. Journalist 9 described how after independence, tensions grew between the Kikuyu from these two different communities. “So this was a story I was demanded to do which was purely on this division,” he said. “This was calculated in such a way – I only came to learn later – it was calculated so that the Kikuyus, they can feel offended – to trigger those memories ... (because) at that particular time, there was a block Kikuyu vote. And it was hard to divide them.” Journalist 9 hesitated but said he felt pressed to continue with the story anyway. He found no one to lend their voice to the story and ended up with something “borrowed from history” with no voice and no place in a respectable newspaper. The story headlined the following day, he recalled, with quotes inserted which Journalist 9 assumes were pure fabrications. “I felt a big sense of pity on my part that in some way I may have contributed (to the violence) in some way” (Interview on March 11, 2014).

In 2013, Journalist 2 said all the memories of 2007 came flooding back. “I think what that violence did was it became the ghost in the room that kept telling you, ‘don’t do anything that would strike the match. Don’t do anything that you would regret later’” (Interview on February 8, 2014). There was a journalist facing charges at the ICC (Joshua Sang), widespread media monitoring and several reports implicating the media for its role in encouraging the violence. “I think, collectively,” said Journalist 2, “the Kenyan media was afraid of being the ones to strike the match” (Interview on February 8, 2014).

Memories of 2007 and journalistic restraint

In light of past events, many participants described a culture of restraint within their newsrooms and within themselves in 2013. In some cases, participants described the way they

or their media houses underplayed events in order to keep peace. Some saw this as a positive approach while others said it undermined their role as journalists. Therefore, while some reporters said the memory of 2007 constrained their ability to do their work, others said that given the circumstances, they did the best they could.

Journalist 15, a Mombasa reporter, said the 2007 PEV “plagued” reporters to the extent that they found ways “to report everything positively” in order to prevent violence from reoccurring. “It’s hard, because instead of telling the public what is happening, the journalists themselves were safeguarding information” (Interview on March 19, 2014). Journalist 15 said that a journalist’s primary duty is to inform the public, something the media largely failed at in 2013 in his opinion. “What happened in 2013, you could imagine that there were no media houses in Kenya. Everybody decided to put down their pens to try to avoid a conflict and this is dangerous” (Interview on March 19, 2014). Journalist 4 saw things similarly. “We were removing any element of conflict in stories,” he said. Journalist 4 covered a statement by Raila Odinga’s running mate, Kalonzo Musyoka, in which Musyoka raised questions about the outcome of the election. “The story was done. It never ran,” he said. “We got into a chorus. For the sake of peace, accept results and move on.” Journalist 4 said the PEV weighed heavily on reporters. “The fundamental consequence was that it suppressed a number of stories that were branded as news that could take us back to 2007” (Interview on February 28, 2014).

While some saw this culture of restraint as a departure from the primary role of journalists as information providers, others saw restraint as an indication of responsible reporting, something which they saw as lacking in the 2007 election and PEV coverage. Journalist 16 did not see this level of restraint as a particularly negative thing. While he explicitly said that a journalist’s primary duty is to inform the public, it was evident from the rest of our discussion that he believes this role has limits. He was speaking specifically about what became known as the “Mombasa police killings.” On the eve of Election Day (2013), four policemen charged with keeping peace during the election were murdered in the street. The attackers were suspected to be members of a regional separatist group, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). Journalist 16 covered the story. “There were some facts I did not include in the story,” he said. He deliberately left out descriptions of the scene. “I had that in the back of my mind that if these killings and what this group has done is given prominence,

then people would not go out (to vote)” (Interview on March 19, 2014). He added that he did not believe the media should advance the MRC’s agenda by giving them attention in the newspaper. After the story was sent to Nairobi, it was buried in the paper and not given the prominence it would have received ordinarily, he said. Journalist 7 is an editor in Nairobi and said the media was justified in downplaying the incident. If it had been covered widely, “would we have had an election?” he asked. Journalist 7 added that the news was eventually reported, albeit delayed and “controlled” once it was announced (Interview on February 13, 2014).

Joseph Odindo of NMG said given Kenya’s history, the media had to make special considerations in 2013 for some stories – and they are not the considerations you might expect in Western newsrooms:

It would be, ‘that’s a good story, run it.’ But then, if you sit in an editorial conference, you will hear questions about, ‘OK. Fine, it’s the biggest story of the day. It’s the most interesting, but do you want to play it up on the front? Do you want to go with that wording of a headline?’ (Interview on February 10, 2014)

Odindo said NMG tends to think about the impact published stories will have or how playing up certain photos or quotes might be perceived.

Journalist 10 acknowledged the criticism that the media took an overly “cautious approach,” but maintains that it was justified. “Taking into consideration where we are coming from, I think it was the right thing to do” (Interview on February 24, 2014). Internews Country Director Ida Jooste said it would have been surprising if the media had not taken a cautious approach. “(Journalists) were aware of the power of their words, to the extent of being overly careful, which that in itself has been criticized but I choose to rather see it kind of like a pendulum swing and a healthy one” (Interview on February 6, 2014). What she meant was that the media swung dramatically from one end of the reporting spectrum in 2007 to the other in 2013. Jooste said it was “disappointing” that some journalists failed to ask “more probing” questions. However, given the circumstances of having a journalist at the ICC and a fear of being implicated in election-related violence, Jooste said the media’s approach was understandable:

It's very easy to criticize this in retrospect, but at the time we just didn't know.... So this pendulum swing was there and for me it is something that needs to be worked on so there is more nuance and so the pendulum somehow settles in the middle next time. (Interview on February 6, 2014)

4.5.3 Challenging reporting environment

Interviews revealed that in 2013, participants worked within a reporting environment largely shaped by the events of the 2007 election and PEV. Participants said that working within this environment was challenging for three main reasons – challenges that likely contributed to the ‘culture of restraint’ discussed earlier. 1) Participants said they were working within a very optimistic, nationalistic and patriotic environment. No one wanted to see a repeat of 2007, let alone be implicated for contributing to a new round of violence. People wanted so much to believe in their reformed institutions and the new elections commission, the IEBC, that it made it very challenging for reporters to raise concerns or questions about these bodies. 2) Journalist-participants felt saddled with the burden of “sanitizing” inciting statements. While politicians were more careful with the language they used in speeches and at rallies, many reporters said they witnessed dangerous speech used in public and felt it was up to them to omit these statements. 3) Participants reported struggling with the dual roles of informing audiences while preventing any potential conflict. Each of these challenges are detailed in the following three sections.

Nationalism, optimism and patriotism

It was the first election since Kenya's peaceful 2010 referendum. Kenya had a new constitution and a fresh sense of optimism. The defunct ECK had been dissolved and replaced with the IEBC. Measures had been put in place to safeguard against election manipulation seen in past elections with the manual registration process. This time, Kenyans would register using Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) technology, which uses fingerprints and facial recognition software to identify individual voters. It is little wonder why some reporters felt as if “peace” was the only acceptable message at the time. “If you didn't sing peace you were seen to be anti-Kenyan,” said Victor Bwire, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Programs Manager of the MCK. He said journalists felt immense pressure from the international community, politicians, religious leaders and development partners. “It became like forced peace, you know. Everybody had to sing peace. That was the mood in the country” (Interview

on January 31, 2014). Journalist 6 said peace was the running thread throughout media coverage in the country:

We were pushing for what we call, 'one people, one Kenya.' And then we had government and non-government agencies like the National Cohesion and Integration Commission which was trying to tell us, 'please, Kenyans, we must be united. Let the media help us to unite these people' So even journalists, we carried that and we said we also had a particular responsibility to tell people there's no need to have violence, whatever way the elections go, remember, we have a country to build. (Interview on February 21, 2014)

Ida Jooste of Internews described a "sweeping sense of nationalism" in Kenya around the time of the elections. "It's patriotic to believe that this election will work well, that the institutions are OK" (Interview on February 6, 2014). Journalist 6 said he felt hesitant to publish anything that might reduce Kenyans' optimism in the new constitutions and the reformed institutions it would bring. "The new constitution created what we see as strong institutions," he said. "So the media wanted to nurture these new institutions, they are like our babies" (Interview on February 21, 2014). Despite the peace messages, Levi Obonyo said the journalists found themselves in a "hostile" working environment. "You have the ICC, you have every Tom, Dick and Harry telling you to preach peace and you go to the newsroom and you think Joshua Sang is in The Hague," he said. Coupled with heavy media monitoring and numerous workshops and trainings leading up to vote, Obonyo said journalists were under a lot of pressure (Interview on April 1, 2014).

Burden of sanitizing inciting language

Part of the pressure participants felt was the responsibility to weed out any potentially dangerous language or statements from their news stories. While some respondents said politicians were careful not to use inciting language in their speeches, others said they witnessed politicians using dangerous language and these participants felt it was up to them to ensure these things did not make it into print. "If politicians went out to start giving hate speeches, we did not focus on those things," said Journalist 3. Instead, he described a policy in his newsroom of issued-focused coverage on a number of things like unemployment, land, security and food security (Interview on February 15, 2014). Journalist 14, a seasoned reporter from Mombasa, had similar experiences. "Whatever the politicians would speak on

the podium, you don't go and report it the way they said it," he said, adding that some of the statements in 2013 had the potential to inflame tensions. "If a politician (calls) another politician foolish or a witch, or a wizard do you go and write that?" he asked. "No," he said, answering his own question (Interview on March 19, 2014).

Journalist 4 was critical of the media's decision to simply ignore certain statements or language. He said journalists knew they were expected to write "good stories," stories that did not include "politicians speaking harshly towards each other," or ones that mentioned tribes by name. Journalist 4 said on the streets, people were speaking about tribes. But in the newspaper, journalists were speaking about "communities":

It is us who sanitized the tribes by calling them communities.... There were circumstances where the favourite thing to do was to weed out elements of a story and have a dry story that preaches peace. (Interview on February 28, 2014)

Jooste said something Internews staffers realized was that journalists often did not know if, or how, they should report hate speech or inflammatory language from politicians. "We think that they should but in a sort of meta story," she said, meaning the incident is not the story itself but forms a small portion of a larger narrative. "In the simplest of ways you can report that it was done that shows that (the comment) is not constructive.... It's very tricky because I can completely understand that they just want to leave it alone. But (to) actually watchdog report that he said it without inciting, that's very difficult" (Interview on February 6, 2014).

Reconciling the dual role to inform without contributing to conflict

According to the MCK's Election Coverage guidelines, when covering elections, journalists have a duty to provide voters with information; a duty to provide candidates with impartial coverage; and a duty to work towards unity and reducing conflict in the nation (MCK, 2012a, p. 8). In the post-2007 environment, respondents felt tension between balancing their duty to inform with their duty to reduce the potential for conflict in Kenya. One criticism respondents said they faced was that the media provided insufficient coverage of the IEBC's preparations prior to the election. This criticism came into the spotlight after the IEBC failed to procure the BVR kits in time, resulting in a limited number of days for voters to register. As a result, just two-thirds of eligible voters were able to register due to

delayed procurement and a number of other complications (Bland, 2013, p. 12-13). Journalist 2 said the media did write a lot about the procurement process, but in an environment of sweeping nationalism, everyone – including the media – wanted to believe they were going to work well. “We might have helped build that expectation because we did not cover well enough the preparation of the electoral commission to conduct the election” (Interview on February 8, 2014). Journalist 10 felt insinuating the IEBC was ill prepared would only aggravate tensions among voters:

I think there’s a challenge to tell that story (of an underprepared IEBC) because there are issues that as much as you’d like to bury them under the carpet ... they do exist and as a journalist, you have that responsibility of now telling the world that is happening. So it becomes a challenge because on one hand you want to inform, but on the other hand you don’t want to create problems for society by making people fight. (Interview on February 24, 2014)

Journalist 2 said that after the election, a source from the IEBC told him officials had been trained in “theory” but not on the devices themselves. “So we didn’t cover the build-up to the election well enough” (Interview on February 8, 2014). Journalist 7 said the signs were there that the IEBC was underprepared, but preventing any potential conflict took precedence over fully informing the public of what was going on. “If you were to tell Kenyans, ‘we have these issues,’ and interrogated the way people wanted, would we have had an election? Would we have had an election? That’s the question we ask ourselves” (Interview on February 13, 2014).

4.6 Reflections on the chapter

This chapter has brought journalist-participants’ professional views, experiences and unique reporting challenges to the fore. It detailed participants’ understandings of PJ and CSJ and how they integrate elements of the practices into their stories. This chapter also looked at how participants define their roles as media practitioners. Many reporters saw their roles as watchdogs, gatekeepers and agenda setters with a duty to not only inform audiences, but also to change society for the better. Participants also drew attention to a number of constraints they said affected their ability to fully engage with these roles. These constraints emerged not only from inside and outside the newsroom, but also from within journalists themselves.

Participants said the structural constraints of their news organizations affected their reporting, as did their perceptions of readers' expectations. In addition, participants said the memory of the 2007 PEV was very much alive in 2013, contributing to creating a challenging reporting environment. Through these findings, this chapter has amplified the voices of individual reporters in order to establish their experiences within wider discussions about *the media* as a whole. Only in doing so can we begin to understand the factors that affect their reporting and how these constraints may shape their stories.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Theoretical models of peace journalism should be operationalized and adapted to the complexities of media reality. Otherwise they are likely to inspire at most a few idealistic reporters, but not the critical number of journalists needed to bring about major changes in the production of conflict coverage.

Bläsi, 2004, p. 11

I began this research with a theoretical understanding of peace journalism – believing that with the proper training and tools, journalists can become PJ practitioners. Indeed, that is the message in Lynch and McGoldrick’s (2005) *Peace Journalism* which offers a prescriptive set of guidelines on “doing peace journalism” (p. 28). At first look, PJ seemed like the ‘silver bullet’ for conflict reporting. It offered tangible, practical tools journalists could incorporate into their stories everyday. But in 2013, with the memory of the post-election violence hanging over Kenya like a rain cloud, I wondered: How did PJ theory translate into *practice* for Kenyan journalists who covered that election? In this final chapter, I highlight my main research findings, which contribute to answering this question. I found that PJ is problematic as its individualist approach fails to consider the structural constraints many participants in this study identified, including: a) the history of conflict and past trauma; b) the journalistic system and; c) audience expectations. In light of my findings, this research suggests the need to explore unique forms of PJ specific to Kenya. This research emphasizes the fact that Kenyan journalists work within an environment that exerts very specific constraints upon their agency. Therefore, like others before me (i.e.: Betz, 2011; Bläsi, 2009; Hackett, 2006; Hanitzsch, 2007; Shinar, 2007), I suggest that future research should consider how PJ could evolve in a way that gives more than lip service to “the structural confines of the journalistic setting” (Peleg, 2007, p. 4).

5.1 Literature takeaways

After reviewing a breadth of PJ and conflict reporting literature, I discovered two main things. The first is that there are two different terms for very similar ideas. Most commonly, this idea is referred to as “peace journalism” (Lee & Maslog, 2009; Lynch &

McGoldrick, 2005; Obonyo & Fackler, 2009; Peleg, 2007; Ross, 2006; Shinar, 2007; Sreedharan, 2013). Others, however, prefer to call the practice “conflict-sensitive reporting” (Betz, 2011; Howard, 2009). While PJ is discussed most often in the academic literature, the term “conflict-sensitive journalism” is used more frequently in practical handbooks (Howard, 2003) and in on-the-ground trainings from organizations such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Internews, and International Media Support (Howard, n.d.). After reading discussions about each, I have argued in this thesis that the ideas were so alike (if not identical), that the difference between the two was in name only. Betz (2011) sees CSJ as an alternative to PJ and therefore, she may disagree with this perspective. That is because there are two different schools of thought within the PJ literature: 1) “Interventionist” PJ and 2) PJ as a mode of “good journalism” (Hanitzsch, 2007). The first has an agenda for peace and the second sees PJ as akin to traditional “good journalism” practices (Hanitzsch, 2007). Betz (2011), who subscribes to CSJ, does so in opposition to an interventionist form of reporting – falsely equating PJ with setting an agenda for peace. Howard (2008) acknowledges the fact that some equate PJ with going “beyond journalistic neutrality to peace advocacy.” He says that perspective is more a question of “framing” than anything else; adding that CSJ or PJ does not have an agenda to “turn journalists into intentional advocates of peace” as doing so would “exceed professional standards of independent reporting” (p. 5). This thesis supports Howard’s (2008) position, suggesting CSJ and PJ (as a mode of ‘good journalism’) are interchangeable. As outlined in Table 1, PJ (as a mode of ‘good journalism’) shares the same tools, scope and focus as CSJ. On the ground in Kenya, however, perceptions are somewhat different.

5.2 Results from the ground

Participants supported many of the ideas presented in Lynch and McGoldrick’s (2005) *Peace Journalism* and Howard’s (2003) handbook on CSJ. For example, participants agreed it was necessary to use emotional or sensitive language carefully within their stories. In addition, many participants spoke about the necessity to give equally prominent coverage to opposing political parties or the importance of quoting everyday citizens (as opposed to just elites). Still, the majority of participants had an aversion towards *the term* ‘peace journalism,’ despite implicitly supporting its practices. I found this was for two main reasons: 1) Participants equated PJ with “preaching peace,” and 2) they believed PJ asked them to hide

the truth. Many participants wanted to contribute to peace (or at least non-violence) in the country but had struggled to reconcile that role with their information role. They believed the two were mutually exclusive. Reporter 15 said he struggled with this dilemma a lot. “Do we do the story as it is supposed to come or do you ... go by the responsibility and forget about your job as a journalist” (Interview on March 19, 2014)? Therefore, participants were much more comfortable, and willing to accept the term CSJ. Many defined CSJ as a style of reporting which is careful not to inflame existing tensions. Participants said CSJ meant not naming tribes, downplaying heated stories, or ensuring opposing parties and viewpoints were given equal coverage. Given the history of 2007 and the PEV that followed, participants felt they had a responsibility to keep peace or at least to keep tensions down. Participants believed it was within their power to do so as they perceived their words and stories to wield great power and influence in the country.

However, participants said their power and agency in their field was limited in a number of ways due to constraints within Kenyan society as well as within the media environment. Several key findings of my research indicate that participants’ ability to exercise their own agency over their stories in Kenya is much more limited than I had expected. I found that these limitations were due to a number of societal and historical constraints which became the “ghost in the (news)room” for participants reporting on the 2013 elections – constraints PJ theory has yet to sufficiently address. These constraints are briefly reviewed in the following section, which provides a summary of the answers to my research questions.

5.2.1 Research Questions revisited

I began this research with an overarching question, which sought to uncover how PJ translated into practice for Kenyan journalists. As I spoke with more and more reporters, the answer became clear: PJ theory translates only *in part*. While participants subscribed to the spirit of PJ in many ways (despite rejecting the term) there was a disconnect between the prescriptive nature of PJ in theory and journalists’ ability to apply PJ tools in practice. I found this disconnect to be due to a number of constraints that PJ overlooks, including: a) the history of conflict and past trauma; b) the journalistic system and; c) audience expectations. This section provides a summary of main findings in relation to the research questions this thesis set out to answer.

A heavy burden

One of the major themes that emerged from this research was that the history of the 2007 election and the violence that followed heavily influenced the 2013 election. From the renewed election coverage guidelines, to the national push for peace to a culture of restraint – the memory of 2007 played a starring role in journalists’ minds and their copy. Some said their experiences in 2007 helped them become more responsible and objective journalists. Others said they felt the history of the PEV only served to muzzle them from relaying the news to audiences. Other still said their experiences five years earlier showed them the negative role the media can play in influencing conflict. This time around, they wanted to help champion peace through their stories. Despite the fact that the history of 2007 affected participants differently, they all shared one thing in common: fear. Fear was a recurrent theme in interviews: fear that Kenya would “return to 2007;” fear of the ICC; fear of criticizing the IEBC; and fear of being perceived as biased.

Participants also reported being burdened by the journalistic system they operated in, identifying three major impediments within their organizations: a) media ownership, b) advertising pressures and c) financial and transportation constraints. Participants said these interests affect the content and focus of their stories – content which they have little control over. Since PJ relies on the agency of reporters to put the tools it provides into practice, outside constraints pose a major threat to reporters’ ability to use those tools in their work. By focusing on the agency of individual reporters, PJ fails to account for the political and economic interests of news organizations.

Participants also said they were burdened by societal expectations. In 2013, participants said the country became saturated with peace messages. From billboards to public service announcements the message was the same: ‘let there be peace.’ Reporters were afraid to say anything that might cause audiences to believe they were intentionally stirring up trouble or publishing biased stories. As we saw earlier, Journalist 2 said he felt compelled to overcompensate in his reporting in anticipation of audience perceptions and Journalist 11 said he received death threats after writing stories perceived to ‘go against his tribe.’ PJ does not consider how audience expectations affect the way reporters frame their stories. Neither Lynch and McGoldrick’s (2005) PJ nor Howard’s (2003) CSJ manual offers reporters tools to counter the effects of the “shadow” of tribalism in Kenya. Therefore, Patrick Maluki rightly

notes that discussions about PJ in Kenya must occur within broader discussions about “societal aspects” which “impede the practice of professional journalism ... one of them being ethnic identity” (Interview on March 12, 2014).

PJ in progress

Despite facing a number of burdens in 2013, journalists were not altogether constrained. A number of participants reported using a number of PJ practices in their work, suggesting that participants are not only open to the idea of PJ, but that they are willing and able to practice it. For example, participants spoke about policies in their media houses of writing issue-based stories (as opposed to personality politics) and giving voice to ordinary citizens (not just political leaders). In addition, several participants said it was important for their news teams to understand the root causes of conflict (i.e.: poverty, lack of access to resources, historical injustices, etc.) in order to help increase audiences’ understanding of issues.

For most participants, reporting stories in these ways was of particular importance given their perception of media power. Respondents almost unanimously said they thought the media had immense power and influence over audiences. Believing the press to be one of the most trusted institutions in the country, a sentiment also reflected in opinion polls (Wolf, 2009, p. 282), respondents believed their words and stories were seen as the “gospel truth.” For that reason, participants emphasized the importance of ‘responsible’ reporting practices. However, reporting “responsibly” on conflict meant different things to different reporters, which could be distinguished into three main themes. They said the media should a) mirror society; b) do no harm; or c) change society. These roles were not mutually exclusive. Participants often supported one, two or all three of these roles. As one might expect, everyone noted the importance of maintaining the information role of the press. However, only a couple of respondents said they believed it was necessary to provide this information at all costs. The majority of participants believed that in certain circumstances, withholding or downplaying information was necessary in order to maintain calm. They saw this practice as a way to mirror society with great care. Interestingly, many did not see this practice as a form of censorship but as a responsible and necessary reporting practice. In many ways, this practice epitomized how reporters defined CSJ. As NMG managing editor Joseph Odindo said, these decisions are not taken lightly:

It's a very difficult thing because then of course, you could be leaning towards hiding information. As a journalist, there is a real risk of that, or providing incomplete information. You really have to weigh the responsibility. I think that is also an element of conflict-sensitive journalism. (Interview on February 10, 2014)

Other participants felt their role was to go one step further. These reporters felt they had a responsibility not only to maintain calm, but also to influence peace and change society for the better. Some explicitly expressed a duty to help opposing sides talk to one another and highlight the voices of the “underdog” or ordinary citizens. Odindo said he sees NMG as an “agent of change” which can help different communities coexist peacefully. Many participants echoed this sentiment as they saw the media as having extreme power and influence.

Hurdles to overcome

While journalists were not altogether governed by outside forces, due to the constraints mentioned earlier, some said they did not have as much agency as they would have liked. While Peleg (2007) maintains that PJ is “thoroughly cognizant of the structural confines of the journalistic setting” (p. 4), this research validates an existing body of research (Betz, 2011; Bläsi, 2009; Hackett, 2006; Hanitzsch, 2007; Shinar, 2007) that suggests there is a need for PJ to consider the factors outside of journalists themselves, which may influence or constrain their work. Therefore, this research supports Bläsi’s (2004) view that:

Theoretical models of peace journalism should be operationalized and adapted to the complexities of media reality. Otherwise they are likely to inspire at most a few idealistic reporters, but not the critical number of journalists needed to bring about major changes in the production of conflict coverage. (p. 11)

It is not that conflict-reporting literature has completely ignored the challenges of the “journalistic setting.” Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) acknowledge that journalists’ “physical and emotional” states exert a “powerful” and “growing influence” on news production. However, PJ theory has yet to provide a framework for dealing with these traumatic experiences – experiences, which participants said shaped the way they approached their stories in 2013. Bläsi (2009), Shinar (2007), Hanitzsch (2007) and Hackett (2006) rightly

draw attention to structural constraints that affect journalism, raising the question of “who or what has to be changed in order to implement peace journalism for a broader audience” (Bläsi, 2009, p. 1)? Bläsi (2009) asks if it is the individual journalist who must change, or does the issue lie in the media’s norms and routines? Perhaps the economic foundation of the media is the problem or even the audience itself (p. 1). Peace journalism proponents Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) largely focus on journalists themselves. Recall their definition of PJ: “Peace journalism is when *editors* and *reporters* make choices – of what stories to report and how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (p. 5, emphasis added). However, this individualist approach to PJ is problematic as it fails to consider the structural constraints many participants in this study identified. Others have recognized this weakness as well. Hanitzsch (2007) argues that PJ overestimates journalistic influence:

Peace journalism is, to a considerable extent, based on an overly individualistic perspective and ignores the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists.... All this suggests that the conduct of peace journalism is not a matter of individual leeway, and media structures and professional routines cannot be modified from the position of the individual journalist. (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 1)

According to Bläsi (2009), the individual journalist is just one of six factors which influence news production. The others consist of the journalistic system including organizational norms and routines; propaganda; the specific conditions of the conflict area including security and personal safety; the publicity of the conflict and audience expectations (p. 1-2). Participants in this study reinforced Bläsi’s (2009) work, as they were acutely aware of the factors that influenced their stories. These included audience expectations, the history of past conflict and organizational constraints. Peleg (2007) recognizes that journalists work within an environment with structural limitations but also says that individual journalists are “agents of change” (p. 4). Peleg (2007) suggests journalists must adhere to the principles of PJ in order to “tame” the structural environment in which they work. However, Hackett (2006) Shinar (2007) and Hanitzsch (2007) question whether journalists have sufficient autonomy within their media organizations to put PJ into practice. Given the complexities of the Kenyan media environment and the numerous constraints journalists contend with, this study advances similar doubts. Unless a “holistic” (Betz, 2011), context-specific mode of PJ

is implemented in Kenya, it is likely PJ will continue to translate in part and not in the ways “needed to bring about major changes in the production of conflict coverage” (Bläsi, 2004, p. 1).

5.3 Future research

Currently, PJ largely focuses on training journalists and editors to increase responsible reporting, decrease dangerous speech and increase audience understanding through balanced coverage (Howard, 2003; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). These skills are central to reliable, balanced and insightful conflict coverage. However, in order to fully make the leap from theory into practice, PJ must acknowledge and account for the constraints that affect news production. While they do not specifically discuss PJ, Norris and Odugbemi (2010) argue that journalistic training programs “have a reduced effect when individual journalists are limited from effectively fulfilling their roles as watchdogs, agenda setters and, and gatekeepers” (p. 25). Future research may explore ways in which PJ can adapt to Kenya’s complex media reality by accounting for the various constraints both within and outside Kenyan newsrooms. Given the complex reporting environment in Kenya, this research suggests the need to explore unique or “holistic” forms of PJ specific to Kenya. Betz (2011) made this argument in her paper, exploring the need for a “holistic framework” for CSJ¹⁶:

While it is clear that the media can serve as an agent of change, they usually cannot do so without a host of other factors. Conflict sensitive journalism faces the same constraints – while it is a good start and directly addresses capacity building of journalists, it is not clear how much can be achieved without consideration of other factors. (p. 4-5)

Betz (2011) underscores a number of factors that influence the way journalists operate in times of conflict, many of which participants in this study identified as well. These include: structural limitations imposed by editors, advertisers and media owners; as well as the role people play (i.e.: audiences) in influencing what makes it into print. In conflict situations, “not only are journalists working in a highly charged, politicized and violent environment, but they must continue to answer to their editors, managers and media owners

¹⁶ While Betz (2011) chooses to use the term “CSJ” in her work, her concept of CSJ is congruent with the way PJ is conceptualized in this thesis.

who may have their own stakes in the conflict and/or its outcome” (Betz, 2011, p. 6). In addition, participants in this study were also dealing with traumatic experiences from 2007, they were fearful of being implicated again and were steeped in an environment awash with peace messages. Therefore, this research suggests that cultural and historical considerations must be incorporated into PJ strategies in Kenya in order to be effective. Furthermore, the research calls on PJ to not only consider the agency of reporters, but also the structures they work in which shape and constrain their work.

In particular, future research should consider how PJ could evolve in a way that gives more than lip service to “the structural confines of the journalistic setting” (Peleg, 2007, p. 4)? How can PJ recognize the agency of individual reporters while carefully considering the “macro-level” (Hanitzsch, 2004) forces that influence media “norms and routines” (Bläsi, 2009)? As Hanitzsch (2004) states, more attention must be paid to the “interplay between journalism and other social systems,” including audience expectations and the economic interests of media organizations (p. 492). As mentioned earlier, different reporting environments pose unique challenges, opportunities and constraints to reporters. Therefore, while this research has focused on the Kenyan media environment, future research may consider reporters’ perspectives in other countries, thereby uncovering the specific reporting needs and views of conflict reporters elsewhere.

5.4 Final thoughts

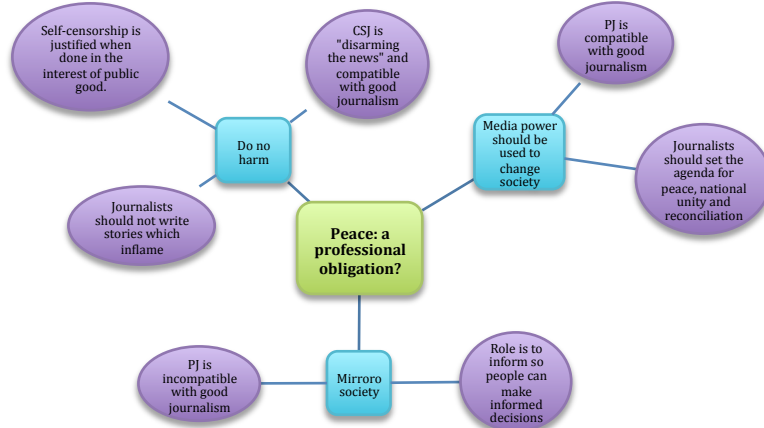
There is considerable potential for PJ to not only take root in Kenya, but also to grow, branch out and bear fruit. Given the trust Kenyans have in the media, journalists are in an ideal position to facilitate meaningful dialogue on issues of conflict and peace. While journalists may not buy into the term ‘peace journalism,’ they support its spirit. And in many ways, journalists are already practicing PJ, no matter what they call it. With increased press freedoms now enshrined in Kenya’s new constitution, the potential for increased peace and development in Kenya has never been greater. We know that a free press is one of the most effective drivers of peace. And increased peace brings with it opportunities for stability, as well as social and economic development.

However, the media in Kenya still faces a number of significant challenges that prevent it from realizing its tremendous potential, including: the blurring of the editorial and

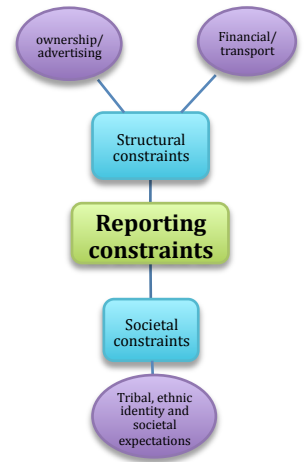
business sides of news, inadequate compensation (especially for correspondents) and societal pressures in relation to ethnic identity. I prefaced the introduction to this thesis with a quote from Shoemaker and Reese (1996), which stated: “As the messengers who deliver – and shape – the news journalists have a job that is understood by few and criticized by many” (p. 166). In essence, this quote summarizes the main objective of this research – to provide a platform for journalists to share their experiences. In the course of this research, I learned that many reporters felt burdened, traumatized and constrained by the events that followed the 2007 election and those events – the ghost in the newsroom – played a considerable role in their reporting. The result was that many reporters attempted to make amends for the media’s past collective mistakes, leading to what many deemed overly cautious reporting. It is easy to say the media failed in its watchdog role, or that journalists were too soft on the IEBC in 2013. However, such criticism is unhelpful without adequately considering the circumstances journalists found themselves in. In 2013, journalists worked in an extremely challenging reporting environment; second only perhaps to the one they found themselves in, in 2007. There was the feeling of collective guilt, fear of doing or saying the wrong thing, the threat of the ICC and widespread media monitoring. In addition, some journalists felt like they were in a tug-of-war between their tribe and their profession, perhaps feeling pressure to pledge allegiance to both. Steeped in a country awash with peace messages, no one wanted to see things return to 2007. It is little wonder why caution was on everyone’s minds. With these findings in mind, it is hoped this thesis reinforces an existing body of research that suggests there is a need for PJ to not only consider journalistic agency, but also the factors that shape how much agency journalists are able to exercise.

Appendix 1: Themes and Findings

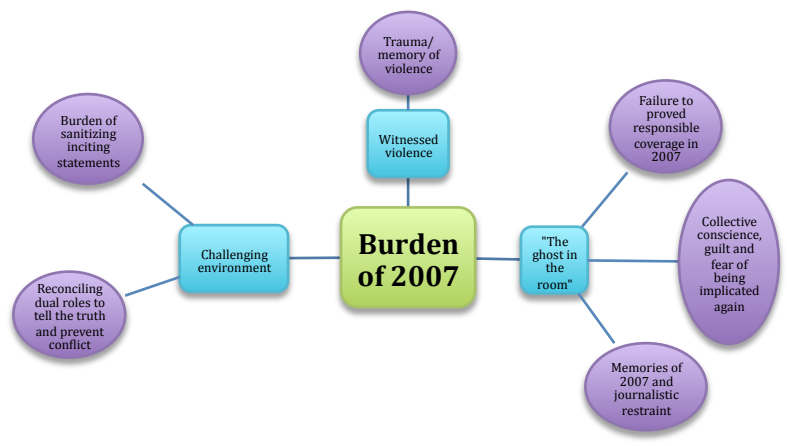
RQ 1



RQ 2



RQ 3



Appendix 2: Research Participants

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	ORGANIZATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
JOURNALISTS		16
Journalists	Nation Media Group (NMG)	10
Journalists	Standard Group (SG)	6
MANAGING EDITORS AND DIRECTORS		2
Joseph Odindo	NMG, Editorial Director	1
John Bundotich	SG, Chief Editor/Assistant Director	1
CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPANTS		4
Ida Jooste	Internews-Kenya, Country Director	1
Victor Bwire	Deputy CEO and Programs Manager, Media Council of Kenya	1
Professor Levi Obonyo	Daystar University; Dean-School of Communications, Media & Performing Arts	1
Dr. Patrick Maluki	University of Nairobi; Lecturer/consultant on diplomacy, media and peace	1
TOTAL		22

Appendix 3: Participant Information

PARTICIPANT IDENTIFIER	LOCATION ¹	OTHER INFO
Journalist 1	Nairobi	Reported from election tallying headquarters (Bomas) in 2013
Journalist 2	Nairobi	Reported on the 2013 election from Kiambu county, just outside Nairobi
Journalist 3	Nairobi	Was based at Bomas during the election tally
Journalist 4	Nairobi	Was in Nairobi for both of the last elections
Journalist 5	Nairobi	Very involved in both of the last elections
Journalist 6	Nairobi	Has worked for several media organizations. Reported on the 2013 elections in Nairobi.
Journalist 7	Nairobi	Covered the last three elections from Nairobi
Journalist 8	Nairobi	Reported on 2007 PEV and reported on 2013 election from Nairobi
Journalist 9	Nairobi	Has worked for both SG and NMG
Journalist 10	Nakuru	Was based in Nakuru for both of the last elections but has reported from Naivasha as well
Journalist 11	Nakuru	Was based in Nakuru for both the 2007 and 2013 elections
Journalist 12	Nakuru	Is a correspondent and has been a reporter for almost 20 years.
Journalist 13	Eldoret	Covered 2007 and 2013 from Eldoret
Journalist 14	Mombasa	Very experienced political reporter
Journalist 15	Mombasa	Has worked for both SG and NMG. Reported on 2007 and 2013 elections from Mombasa
Journalist 16	Mombasa	Has worked for both SG and NMG. Reported on 2007 and 2013 elections from Mombasa

¹ Reporter-participants were largely based in Nairobi as that is where media headquarters are located and where the majority of reporters reside. I also travelled to meet participants from NMG's and SG's bureaus in Nakuru, Eldoret, Mombasa and Kisumu. However, I was unable to connect with any reporters who were in Kisumu for the 2013 elections. Therefore, none appear on the list.

Appendix 4a: Journalist interview guide

WARM UP QUESTIONS	PROBES/FOLLOW-UP Qs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What media house do you work for? • Where else have you worked? • Where have you worked during the last two elections? • How long have you been a reporter? • In the last five years, have you taken any journalism courses or gone to any seminars? Which ones? 	
PART A: VIEWS AND BELIEFS ABOUT JOURNALISM / JOURNALISTS IN KENYA	
<p>What roles do you think journalists should play in Kenya?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How independent should journalists be, not just in terms of independence of the government but also in terms of how much freedom journalists should have within their own media organization? • How does this compare with the reality in your media house?
<p>Next, can you tell me a little about who you think is the best journalist/reporter in Kenya? This could be someone you work with or someone from another media house.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think he/she is such a good journalist? • What do you mean by “good journalist?” • What kinds of things does he/she write about? • What impact do you think his/her stories have on readers?
<p>Have you heard of ‘peace journalism’ or conflict-sensitive reporting?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do these terms mean to you? • How would you define them? • Are you aware of academic scholarship in the area of PJ?
PART B: ELECTION/CONFLICT REPORTING PRACTICES	
<p>Tell me about your experience reporting in 2007.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were you based? • What was it like for you to cover that election? • What were the challenges? • How did they affect your reporting? • What did you learn from that election?
<p>As a reporter, did you feel prepared to cover the 2013 election? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you receive training on election coverage? Or attend any seminars on covering elections? What did these workshops entail? What made you decide to attend? Any of CSJ?
<p>In preparation for the 2013 election, the MCK issued election coverage guidelines in consultation with stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you familiar with these guidelines and were you made aware of them prior to the election? How? • Did your media house develop internal election-reporting codes or policies in addition to the guidelines? • Did you feel you had adequate training to fulfill the obligations required by the guidelines? • Did these guidelines help shape your coverage of the 2013 election and events? How?

How did you select the informants and/or sources for your stories?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you verify the accuracy of this information before publication?
In your election coverage, have you ever written a story that either did not include or underplayed an event, speech or remark in order to mitigate the risk of violence? If so , tell me about the reporting and editing processes involved with publishing this story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the benefits? What was the cost? Was this “self-censorship” justified? Why? What was the intention of these omissions or suppressions? In your opinion, did you achieve these goals? How do you respond to those who say the press promoted “peace at all costs” at the expense of public interest? How do you feel about self-censorship whether it’s formal or informal?
Some allege the press suppressed or underplayed the Mombasa police killings on the eve of the election; Kalonzo Musyoka’s statement that the election was rigged; the Tana River clashes, and the protests in Kondele, Kisumu and Kibera following the Supreme Court’s verdict. Did you report on any of these stories? If so , which ones? How did you report on these stories? What informed your decision to report on them the way you did? If not , how <i>would</i> you have reported on these stories?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you think censorship was involved, what do you think the intention was of this censorship? Do you think this intention was achieved? What do you think the benefits were of these omissions? What was the cost?
Following the events of 2007-2008, there was a fear that the election could aggravate ethnic or political divides. Did these concerns influence your coverage? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did your approach differ, if at all, from your regular approach to political reporting?
PART C: PERCEPTIONS OF CONFLICT REPORTING	
What role(s) do you think the press should play in influencing conflict dynamics?	
If you believe the press should play a role in influencing conflict dynamics, what barriers may reduce your capacity of applying “peace journalism” or “conflict-sensitive journalism” in your work?	
As a journalist, what did you want to achieve through your coverage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think you realized these achievements? Why or why not?
If you were to do it all over again, would you do things differently? How?	
Is there anything we discussed today you would like to clarify or provide additional details on?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any questions I didn’t ask you believe are important to address? Do you have any questions for me?
THANK YOU!	

Appendix 4b: Civil society participant interview guide

WARM UP QUESTIONS	PROBES/FOLLOW-UP QS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your title? • Where have you worked during the last two elections? • How long you have worked here? • According to your organization, what are the tenets of ‘good journalism?’ • What makes a good journalist? 	
PART A: 2007-2008 COVERAGE OF ELECTION AND EVENTS	
<p>Take me back to 2007-2008. How would you characterize the approach large national print dailies took to covering the election, contested results and violent aftermath?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think this approach was taken? • We have seen that investigating bodies found that the media “added fuel to the flames” during the PEV. But we can also see that the media later took a distinctly “peace” approach as the violence continued, with six newspapers, including the <i>Standard</i> and <i>Daily Nation</i>, sharing the joint headline, “Save our beloved country.” What do you think accounted for this shift? • What is the impact of this approach?
PART B: MEDIA INTERVENTIONS BETWEEN 2008 AND MARCH 2013	
<p>I understand that trainings and guidelines for election coverage included educating reporters about ‘conflict-sensitive reporting’ or what I have been referring to as ‘peace journalism.’ Could you define these terms for me?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the difference between these terms?
<p>Tell me about the process involved in developing the election coverage guidelines?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long did the process take? • What challenges did you encounter? • Did any such guidelines exist in 2007?
<p>What other media interventions (i.e.: training/seminars) was your organization involved with between 2008 and 2013?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many people participated? • What were the goals of these interventions? • What do you believe the impacts of these interventions were on resultant coverage?
PART C: ELECTION COVERAGE	
<p>How did the type of coverage published in the large print dailies differ in 2013 as compared to what was published in 2007/2008?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What accounted for this difference? • What had changed in the media environment that enabled this change (i.e.: was it training workshops that made a difference, fear of prosecution from the ICC, MCK guidelines, other factors or a combination?) • How would you characterize the type of coverage produced? (i.e.: violence promoting/violence preventing/neutral/conflict-sensitive/PJ?)
<p>What was the intention of this approach to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did it have the desired effects?

covering the 2013 election?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there unintended consequences? What were they?
PART D: POST-2013 ELECTION REFLECTIONS AND SOLUTIONS	
Now that we have some perspective on the 2013 election, do you think the print media was successful in meeting the guidelines outlined by the MCK? Why or why not?	
Media coverage in 2013 had some obvious successes. Yet despite this, there is still room for improvement and reflection leading up to 2017. How could media practitioners: increase the quality of coverage, maintain accurate and informative stories for readers and be sensitive to conflict dynamics in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What practical tools or resources are accessible to journalists in order to improve future election coverage?
Is there anything we discussed today you would like to clarify or provide additional details on?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any questions I didn't ask you believe are important to address? • Do you have any questions for me?
THANK YOU!	

Appendix 4c: Managing editor interview guide

WARM UP QUESTIONS	PROBES/FOLLOW-UP Qs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your title? • Where have you worked during the last two elections? • How long you have worked here? • According to your organization, what are the tenets of 'good journalism'? • What makes a good journalist? 	
PART A: PRE-ELECTION PREPARATIONS	
Tell me about the process involved in developing the election guidelines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long did the process take? • What challenges did you encounter? • What was the goal of the guidelines? • Why were they necessary? • Did any such guidelines exist in 2007? • If not, did your media house develop internal election-reporting codes or policies in addition to the guidelines? • Did your organization develop internal guidelines in 2013? What did they include?
How were reporters and editors educated about the guidelines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you run workshops or seminars? • Did any other organizations run workshops or seminars?
I understand that trainings and guidelines for election coverage included educating reporters about 'conflict-sensitive reporting' or what I have been referring to as 'peace journalism.' Could you define these terms for me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a difference between these two practices?
PART B: ELECTION COVERAGE AND GUIDELINE IMPLEMENTATION	
Do you think election coverage lived up to the expectations outlined in the guidelines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways did it meet the conflict-sensitive journalism guidelines? Why do you think this was? • In what ways did it fall short of the conflict-sensitive guidelines? Why do you think this was?
The guidelines were developed in order to facilitate free and fair elections while balancing the importance of media freedom with media responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they have the desired effects? • Were there unintended consequences? What were they? • How do you respond to those who say the press promoted "peace at all costs" at the expense of public interest?
PART C: POST-ELECTION REFLECTIONS/LESSONS LEARNED	
Media coverage in 2013 had some obvious successes. Yet despite this, there is room for improvement and reflection leading up to 2017. How could media practitioners: increase the quality of coverage, maintain accurate and informative stories for readers and be sensitive to conflict dynamics in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What practical tools or resources are accessible to journalists in order to improve future election coverage?
Is there anything we discussed today you would like to clarify or provide additional details on?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any questions I didn't ask you believe are important to address? • Do you have any questions for me?
THANK YOU!	

Appendix 5: Duration of interviews

PARTICIPANT IDENTIFIER	INTERVIEW LENGTH
Journalist 1	1 hour 4 minutes
Journalist 2	1 hour
Journalist 3	38 minutes
Journalist 4	45 minutes
Journalist 5	31 minutes
Journalist 6	1 hour 11 minutes
Journalist 7	24 minutes
Journalist 8	1 hour 9 minutes
Journalist 9	1 hour 10 minutes
Journalist 10	26 minutes
Journalist 11	35 minutes
Journalist 12	43 minutes
Journalist 13	42 minutes
Journalist 14	45 minutes
Journalist 15	26 minutes
Journalist 16	32 minutes
TOAL	12 hours
AVERAGE INTERVIEW LENGTH	45 minutes

PARTICIPANT NAME	INTERVIEW LENGTH
Ida Jooste	53 minutes
Joseph Odindo	1 hour 8 minutes
John Bundotich	16 minutes
Levi Obonyo	42 minutes
Patrick Maluki	36 minutes
Victor Bwire	45 minutes
TOTAL	4 hours 20 minutes
AVERAGE INTERVIEW LENGTH	43 minutes

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