COVERING DIVERSITY

A RESOURCE AND TRAINING MANUAL
FOR AFRICAN JOURNALISTS

nationalism have been a feature of political life for most of the century, opposition to racism is deeply embedded in journalism. But the use of journalists to provide political propaganda means media can still become weapons of intolerance.

The outbreak of war in 1992 in the Balkans, genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and simmering conflicts on every continent demonstrate that laws, journalistic codes, and good intentions are of little consequence in the face of ruthless political leaders bent upon waging war.

It is not unusual in war to find mass media manipulation.

However, it is not only in times of war that media face the challenge of intolerance. Racial violence in urban communities often characterized terrorism, a rise in influence of extremist right-wing political parties, the reemergence of anti-Semitism, and widespread religious intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination against national minorities on the basis of language and social status is all part of the landscape of daily news reporting.

Too often ignorance and a lack of appreciation of different cultures, traditions, and beliefs leads to media stereotypes which reinforce racist attitudes and strengthen the appeal of political extremists.

At the same time media and journalists continue to be victims of undue pressure. Some pressure comes from tense and competitive by conditions in the media market, and some is applied by political players, either governments directly or by powerful special interest groups.

PRIME TIME FOR TOLERANCE

Journalists are rightly wary of outsiders interfering in journalism, but many are conscious, too, of internal weaknesses which compromise journalistic standa

rds.Since the mid-1980s, the number of newspapers and magazines has grown rapidly in Nigeria. Between the end of the Second Republic in 1983 and the final days of the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida ten years later, seven reliable because the rates of growth and re far from stable.

About the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media

The Center for War, Peace, and the News Media is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to supporting journalists and news organizations in their efforts to sustain informed and engaged citizenries worldwide. The Center is headquartered at the New York University Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, where it was founded in 1985. The Center's goals are:

- To promote those norms and practices which independent journalism requires to operate effectively in diverse political, social, and technological environments;

- To strengthen those economic, legal, and educational institutions necessary to support fully functioning media sectors in emerging democracies; and

- To explore the role of the media in the dynamics of war, peace, and conflict, and to create media-based initiatives to transform conflict and help manage its consequences.

The Center's activities for 2000 – 2001 are concentrated in three areas: assisting American and Asian journalists in their coverage of international affairs and global security issues; aiding Russian journalists and news organizations in the process of developing a professional, democratic, and economically sound media sector; and initiating projects and research that explore constructive roles for the media in ethnic, civil, and other intra – and international conflicts. Funding for Center programs comes primarily from private U.S. foundations, with additional support from several governmental and international agencies for work in Europe and Russia.
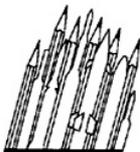
The Independent Journalism Centre [**IJC**] of Lagos, Nigeria, is a not-for-profit, freedom of expression organization, founded in 1996 and dedicated to training, research, documentation and advocacy on media affairs. It publishes the Media Monitor, an authoritative weekly online digest of events in the Nigerian media and the Green Monitor, dedicated to environmental reporting.

IJC also conducts a "French for Journalists" program, training in political and electoral reporting, and a computer assisted research and reporting [CARR] training to enable media practitioner make the transition to the digital workplace.

IJC is the first private media resource institute of its kind in Nigeria and receives support from the Frederich Ebert Foundation, the Alliance Francaise, the Goethe Institute, The Ford Foundation, the Freedom Forum, and the National Endowment on Democracy. It is one of three members of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) sponsored by UNESCO in the English-speaking West Africa sub-region.

Recently, the IJC has received funding from the Office of the Transitional Initiatives [OTI] of the United States Government in its media Telecenters project.

COVERING
DIVERSITY

A RESOURCE AND TRAINING MANUAL FOR AFRICAN JOURNALISTS

COVERING
DIVERSITY

I

INTRODUCTION

Covering Diversity: A Resource and Training Manual for African Journalists is a tool to help strengthen professional standards and reporting practices on inter-communal, inter-faith, minority, and other diversity issues in Nigeria in particular, but also elsewhere on the continent. Its central purpose is to help journalists and editors meet the unique challenges posed by reporting diversity-related issues in complex, multicultural societies. The manual is designed to assist media professionals in examining the assumptions they bring to the news and editorial process – for example, to be mindful of how these assumptions may inadvertently incorporate stereotypes into the process of news reporting and unconsciously marginalize "the other." In doing so, it can help the media overcome bias and prejudice and thus support the accurate and balanced reporting that responds to the highest standards of the profession.

The manual is an important component of a more comprehensive, sustained program by partner organizations to build bridges across ethnic and other lines that divide communities. It is a product of a collaboration among The Panos Institute, Washington, DC, an international nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that works with grassroots journalists to provide them resources to cover critical issues responsibly and in-depth; the Independent Journalism Centre, Lagos, an independent, nonprofit, media rights, training, and documentation organization; and the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media, New York University, a nonpartisan, nonprofit group expert in working constructively with media on issues of conflict and diversity in the ethnically-troubled states in the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and beyond.

These institutions, each with different expertise and a rich history of collaboration, joined forces in late 1999 to undertake extensive fact-finding with Nigerian journalists and then to analyze the interconnected and potentially explosive problems of identity, conflict, and diversity in Nigeria and the Nigerian media's impact on those problems. Our institutions all recognize that the media in Nigeria – as in other conflict areas around the world – can play a critical role in sustaining and exacerbating inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict. In the best of circumstances, the media's propensity to rely on negative images of minorities and groups seen as "other" substantially inhibits mutual understanding and cooperation. In the worst, the media contribute directly to violent conflict.

And yet the media are capable – given a rare mix of vision, skills, and consensus across professional groups – not only of avoiding inflammatory reporting but even of lessening tension, averting violent conflict, and offering common vision.

Covering Diversity: A Resource and Training Manual for African Journalists is designed to be used in several ways. Primarily, it is a "textbook" and primary resource for training programs that our Nigerian colleagues and we will offer to working journalists. It can be used as well to prepare trainers to conduct other courses and curriculum development workshops for journalists and representatives of journalists' organizations. It will be helpful to journalism educators in introducing diversity training into the classroom and for those reporting on human rights, be they journalists or other information providers. Working journalists can also use this manual by themselves, without attending a workshop.

While the manual offers a foundation for training initiatives, it will also serve as a catalyst for discussion and further development of diversity reporting techniques and strategies. To this end, the manual includes case studies illustrative of the different ways that the media in Nigeria, as well as internationally, have addressed diversity and ethnic conflict and their responsibility within those contexts. Important principles and issues relating to diversity, human rights, journalism, and the role of media in society are also discussed.

Journalists looking for guidance and new ideas can utilize the "Tool Box," where we have compiled checklists, tips, and techniques written by their peers to share wisdom and experience. Reference sections provide relevant national and international laws, standards, and codes plus a guide to organizational and on-line resources for journalists on ethics and diversity.

The partners' analysis of the issues of the media, identity, conflict, and diversity in Nigeria and the subsequent publication of this manual would not have been possible without the active participation of some one hundred Nigerian media and human rights leaders and, most especially, the dedication and hard work of the senior Nigerian journalists, editors, and media association leaders who formed the Reporting Diversity Working Group in January 2000. Group members are listed in the appendix.

Working group members have contributed articles to the manual, organized media roundtables for working journalists to introduce the manual and discuss its contents, and committed themselves to help promote its use in a variety of programs, including those to strengthen the curricula in Nigeria's 45 schools of journalism.

We are most grateful to them, and to The Ford Foundation and the United States Institute of Peace, who provided funding for this project.

For all the partners,

Dapo Olorunyomi
Director of Africa Programs
The Panos Institute, Washington, DC

November 2000

Dr. Bala Mohammed, Dept. of Mass Communications, University of Maiduguri

Mr. Adesuwa Onyenokwe, Producer, Newsline/One-on-One, NTA Lagos

Dr. Albert O. Isaac, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan

Mr. Ifeanyi Uddin, Editorialist/Financial Analyst, First Bank, Lagos

Ms. Angela Agoawike, Editor, Post Express [Sunday Edition], Lagos

Mr. Lanre Arogundade, Coordinator, International Press Center, Lagos

Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, Media Historian/ Political Analyst, Abuja

Dr. Yinka Esan, Department of Mass Communications, University of Lagos

Mr. Sunday Dare, The News magazine, Lagos

Mr. Muyiwa Adekeye, Editorialist, International IDEA, Lagos

Ms. Judith Okpeki, Features Editor, Vanguard newspaper, Lagos

Mr. Adeolu Ademoyo, Department of Philosophy, OAU, Ile-Ife

Dr. Victor Alumona, Department of Philosophy, OAU, Ile-Ife

Mr. Joi Yowenki, Legal Practitioner, Port Harcourt

Ms. Miriam Menkiti, Principal Editor, Radio Nigeria, Enugu

Mr. Ozonnia Ojielo, President, CCPRA, Lagos

Dr. Remi Aiyede, Development Policy Center, Ibadan

Mr. Kelvin E. Adinnu, Correspondent, Weekly Trust, Kaduna

Mr. Adewale Adeoye, Assistant Editor, Punch newspaper, Lagos

Mr. Ibim Semenitari, Tell magazine, Lagos

Mr. Osaro Odemwingie, Publication Editor, Media Rights Agenda, Lagos

Mr. Akin Akingbulu, Executive Director, Institute of Media and Society, Lagos

Mr. Jiti Ogunye, Secretary, Committee for Defence of Human Rights, Lagos

Dr. Adigun Agbaje, Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan

Mr. Gbemiga Ogunleye, Editor, The Punch newspaper, Lagos

II
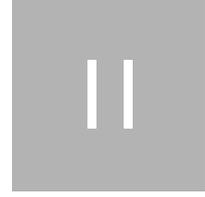
OVERVIEWS

At least a third of the 54 countries in Africa today are currently undergoing some form of social and political convulsion. While the representations of this upheaval are complex, they are chiefly expressed in the catastrophic levels of violence and destruction we have witnessed in the past two decades, the massive and untidy migrations, the enormous humanitarian problems resulting from one war or the other, and the virtual collapse of some states.

In most countries experiencing these conflicts, the main trigger for violence has been the failure to view the management of ethno-cultural difference in society as a source of potential advantage in nation building. To be sure, mismanagement of ethnic and cultural diversity resulting in a culture of extreme intolerance is perhaps the most difficult problem confronting nation-states today. Experience has shown, however, that the creative handling of diversity can and has promoted community strength in many places, even as its mismanagement has been the basis for the great tragedies of the 20th century.

The media cannot be dispassionate about this. The sheer human implications are too acute to accept indifference. In Rwanda, for instance, the 1994 carnage cost 500,000 lives and virtually destroyed the political and economic foundations of the country. The tragedy in Burundi in 1990; the unending crisis in the Great lakes region; the recent and still unfolding scenario in Sierra Leone today–the gross human rights violations against hundreds of thousands of people, mostly children; the Sudan; and Liberia before its recent democratic transition have produced unimaginable numbers of refugees within those states and have had extremely disruptive implications for their neighbors. In addition to provoking profound human concern, these developments also pose great challenges to journalistic practice.

Indeed, from what we now know of the genocide in Rwanda, the media can act as an accomplice to genocide not only through its indifference but also through active collaboration. During the 1994 tragedy, such newspapers as Kangura and the Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines [RTLM] created the context for the bitter ethnic hatred that mobilized the genocide. In every communal or ethnic conflict, the positions of the media can significantly impact the outcome.

To promote instead the emergence of sound public policies, ones that will mitigate conflict and encourage tolerance and better management of diversity, journalists need a depth of understanding of the reality of difference and skills to cover "other" peoples, be they of different ethnicity, religion, region, gender, sexual orientation, or ability, accurately and with sensitivity. They need to appreciate the validity of pluralism, but they also need to value the persistence of ethnic and primordial loyalties in the face of the expanding and detached forces of globalization. To do this well and faithfully, journalists need to acquire the intellectual tools to analyze the tensions between globalization and primordial feelings, between the notions of totality and heterogeneity. They also need to understand how the tensions between these divides generate uncertainties of a political, economic, and cultural nature, uncertainties that are generally disruptive. In light of the devastation that conflicts have engendered on their continent, African journalists, as witnesses and couriers of the news in their societies, have no excuse for careless and shallow representation of ethnic and religious differences.

---

[1] Dapo Olorunyomi is director of Africa programs at the Panos Institute, Washington, DC

Sad to say, hardly any African media schools include courses on covering diversity in their curricula. In Nigeria, a country with one of the widest cultural, religious, and social diversities on the continent, not one of its 45 journalism schools has such a course. Nigeria's newsrooms also have no diversity training.

In recognition of the power of the media to promote national identity, democracy, and balanced federalism in multicultural societies, certain professional organizations and schools of journalism and their journals in countries like South Africa, Canada, and the United States are making spirited efforts to promote diversity in the reporting and editorial process and to incorporate strategies for covering diversity into the curricula of journalism schools. The Canadian Newspaper Association (CAN); the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE); the Freedom Forum; the *Ryerson School of Journalism* in Ontario, Canada, and its Ryerson Journalism Review; the Journalism Department of the San Francisco State University and its publication, *Newswatch*; and the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education in Oakland, California, are institutions demonstrating leadership in this respect.

These institutions and journals, as a collective, offer the rest of us useful references in the fitful effort to bring diversity to the heart of the debate among media professionals. ASNE, for instance, has a new program dedicated to diversifying the newsroom in the United States by 2025. Towards this goal, it has set a benchmark to help increase overall newsroom minority employment by increasing the number of minority interns and supervisors and measuring whether newspapers have achieved parity with the diversity of their communities.

The forces of globalization and the increasingly multi-cultural nature of the regions news organizations serve are also driving them to recognize that those with multi-cultural knowledge and language skills will ultimately have market edge. It is significant that in its advertising, an excellent newspaper like the *Seattle Times* stresses its strength in diversity of sources, diversity of staff, and diversity of the issues it covers when it could just as easily point up the strength of its investigative reports and its numerous Pulitzer prizes.

There are those who might argue that a sound recognition of ethical demands in the profession would be enough to drive the problem away. The reality does not support the assumptions upon which this claim is based. Such claims oversimplify the intractable nature of identity politics and the disruption its assertion tends to elicit. It is enough to call up contemporary images from all regions of the world, including societies where ethics are considered central to the daily crisis of professional journalism – places like Northern Ireland/Britain, Spain, India, Canada, and the United States – to understand that a recognition of professional ethics alone will not enable us to respond to the challenges of diversity.

Still, there is a larger way of understanding the relationship of media ethics and the problems associated with covering diversity. Broadly speaking, diversity issues and the editorial environment affect each other in two concrete ways: through external variables like ownership patterns (competition, monopoly, community, etc) and circulation and through internal variables like professional norms, industry codes/standards, and traditions internalized by news organizations. To isolate the problems associated with covering diversity as simple matters of norms is to suggest that only endogenous factors influence the practice of the media. The fact of diversity in concrete editorial terms always assumes a pluralism that also includes the exogenous variables of ownership, employees, content, and sources.

Yet those who overemphasize the question of ethics miss one crucial point that underlies the argument over how and why the media respond poorly to the challenge of diversity. The issue here is that although accuracy in reporting on a community ultimately depends on the media's capacity to regularly portray its diversity, and that failure to do so undermines journalistic credibility, the necessity of reflecting the complex tapestry of community life in the daily practice of media work is, strictly speaking, not necessarily a normative problem.

The practice of marginalizing or inadequately reflecting visible minorities in the daily narrative of a community's unfolding story is more of an ontological problem. Thus the anecdotal references to minorities in editorial productions (news reports, opinion pieces, commentaries, and features) that reflect stereotypes and the selective depictions in broadcast programming, news casting, web casting, and advertising create a situation that can only be corrected by conscious mainstreaming.

Above all, the media's capacity to respond to its own structural weaknesses with respect to the absence of internal diversity, lack of pluralism in ownership, sourcing, contending ideas, and employment tends to strengthen their capacity to better promote tolerance and help manage diversity in the communities they serve and beyond.

In this way, the media can assure the reader that the more they know the less they need fear and help build social and cultural bridges to guide the formulation and evolution of sound ethno-national policies for society.

As the African media become more successful in addressing diversity, they will undoubtedly also become more effective in subjecting public policy to scrutiny and ensuring that balance, fairness, and equity are evident in their evaluation of the political system, state structure, citizenship, language, educational and economic policies, civil and minority right issues, and the secularity of the state. All of these issues are central to identity politics.

Diversity is a condition or instance of being different or having differences. It connotes heterogeneity or dissimilarity. When related to humanity, the word "diversity" refers to differences in sex, cultural practice, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, ideological stance, political leaning, place of habitation, and so on. In other words, diversity becomes a compelling issue in a community where everybody does not have equal social, economic, or political life.

Reasons for diversity in human nature can be divided into two classes: the natural and the situational. Man is a natural being. We were not created to have similar attributes or features. This explains why some are male and others female. Some are ugly and others beautiful. We have the short and tall, the white and black. Each of these two sets is supposed to have respect for one another. A man or woman belongs to a particular place of origin or ethnic group. This is often accidental and not by any design of ours. We did not choose to be what or where we are. Just as we are thankful for being what we pride ourselves to be, we must learn to respect the right of others to be what they are.

There are situational contexts of diversity. A man could acquire the identity of an "alien" by moving from his own cultural world into another. This automatically makes him become a cultural (or even social, economic, and political) minority. This is because he has some characteristics that make him different from members of his host community. He, therefore, becomes a member of the "Yoruba community" in Kano, the "Igbo community" in Ibadan, or the "Hausa community" in Enugu. It is necessary to point out, as well, that a man could become a minority in his community of origin by the political ideology, religious values, or social life he subscribes to. This is why, for example, the Christians and Muslims still isolate the "fundamentalists" in their midst, and the moderate politicians differentiate themselves from the "radicals" or "leftists."

As shown above, diversity promotes a plurality of interests and needs. This is a major asset to the practice of democracy. It enables the society to identify a multiplicity of issues that the democratic process should address. Where such interests and needs are met, the people are happy with each other and, therefore, would easily support the development of the community they share with one another. Diversity could, however, become a liability to the political process. This happens when the contending issues of diversity in the society are not properly mediated. It happens when issues of diversity in the society are politicized or manipulated to satisfy the selfish interest of a group in the society. This kind of situation leads to conflict. The society is thus thrown into a state of confusion. Political order is threatened.

1⟧ **Competition for resources:** When members of the community want the same resources (especially financial assets and political power and privileges) and there are not enough of these to go round, or when what is available is not judiciously distributed between the contending groups in the community.

Diversity could lead to a conflict on three grounds:

2⟧ **Psychological needs:** Some conflicts occur, not as a result of competition for resources, but because one or all of the parties just feel like making trouble. This trouble starts when one or all parties exhibit certain "arrogant" behavior that could ignite the anger or repulsion of the other party. The drive here is towards showing that one of the parties has more power, influence, or clout

than the other. In the process of this kind of "ego trip," society is thrown into a state of conflict. Conflicts based on psychological needs are often difficult to understand as the issues said to be behind the conflict are seen by members of the public to be too trivial.

3 **Values:** Values shape human personality and belief systems and are, therefore, difficult to change. One's values determine the community (or world) to which one belongs. Such values could include religious beliefs, transparency, honesty, fairness, and equality. Parties involved in conflict over values often find it difficult to understand the standpoint of others. This type of conflict is more likely to be resolved when the parties understand and respect each other's values.

Nigeria's formal identity was forged with the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914. The unification of this territory reflected the form and manner by which the British came to conquer, consolidate, and administer the various peoples included in the Nigerian state. The process of subjugation and incorporation of the more than 250 ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria was protracted, piecemeal, and uneven. In 1914, three large groups predominated: the Muslim Hausa Fulani of the north, the predominantly Christian Igbo in the southeast, and the religiously bicommunal Yoruba in the southwest. The rest of the population was made up of more than 200 ethnic minorities whose size ranged from several thousand to a few million and included a mixed bag of religious adherents. The modernization process has been uneven, owing largely to the indifferent administration under colonial rule. This has generated inequalities and sowed the seeds of distrust in the march toward national integration. The absence of trust, justice, and peace has made constitutional arrangements difficult to attain. Controversy over the nature and state of the union has persisted since 1922 when the country adopted its first constitution. Controversies have raged over the ratio of representation in the central legislature and the timing of self-government. Back in the 1950s, inter-ethnic clashes and separatist tendencies emerged. These controversies informed the adoption of a federal constitution with autonomous regions by the British authorities in 1954. Indeed, a major bone of contention in the 1954 Constitutional Conference was the question of whether or not any region should be granted the right to secede. Eventually, no secession clause was included in the 1954 Constitution, and the country trudged on to independence in 1960.

Independence did not put to rest the tensions of the Nigerian union. Actual or perceived injustices made the renegotiation of the union a persistent question. The AG-intra-party crisis of 1962, the 1963 census controversy, the general atmosphere of the 1964 federal election coupled with the escalation of violence during the western regional election of October 1965, the resort to thuggery and strong-arm politics by party leaders, and the tendency of political parties to be ethnic-based returned the issue of secession to the center stage of national discourse. Tension had become very palpable when the military overthrew the civilian government on January 15, 1966. The military's aim was to put an end to the confusion and crisis generated by the politicians.

However, because the military was largely of Igbo extraction, the event was perceived in ethnic terms. The declaration of a unitary state through Decree 34 of 1966 heightened the fear of Igbo domination in the north. Igbos were massacred, and then a counter-coup ensued. The country eventually drifted into a civil war between 1967 and 1970 when the Igbos attempted secession.

The end of the civil war was marked by spirited efforts to promote national integration. Measures taken included the "no victor, no vanquished" philosophy that informed the post-war reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction effort; the creation of states by geographical fragmentation; and the federal character principle. Territorial fragmentation created states neither too big nor too powerful to hold the entire country to ransom. Meanwhile, the federal character is a formula designed to ensure equity and justice in the distribution of national resources. Successive Nigerian governments have also invested heavily and directly in symbolic engineering of national unity. Among these

integrative national symbols are the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), the unity schools, the national language policy, and direct political education programs. Direct political education has involved rallies and workshops. The aim has been to enable Nigerians to identify and reject acts which threaten the identity, integrity, and solidarity of the nation and engender a sense of belonging among citizens regardless of ethnic origin. The Directorate of Social Mobilization, originally the main agency for this purpose, was replaced by the National Orientation Agency in recent times. However, these programs have been abused by military and civilian leaders, rendering the achievement of a cohesive nation-state a tall order.

Resentment over the dominance of the federal government by one section of the country reached its zenith in the annulment of the presidential election of 1993, apparently won by a southwestern candidate. The action threatened to disintegrate the country and renewed calls for the renegotiation of the Nigerian union. The Constitutional Conference of 1994-95 introduced a federal character commission and rotational formula for all major offices at the national and state levels. The formula institutionalizes the rotation of political offices between the north and south and among the six geo-political zones. Power sharing in Nigeria is usually not applied to political power alone but also to equity, fairness, and justice in the allocation of the fundamental indices of power: economic, military, bureaucratic, media, and intellectual. In spite of this, discontent continues to be expressed in the form of claims and counter claims of marginalization by ethnic groups and the rise of militant ethnic youth movements. Also important are the violent struggles of minority oil-producing communities over neglect and environmental degradation caused by multinational oil companies and the Nigerian state. The ascendance of inter-ethnic clashes across the country as well as religious violence has reinvigorated calls for a Sovereign National Conference to redefine the conditions under which the diverse nationalities in Nigeria are to live together.

Introduction

In a world where ethnic conflict, racial strife, and terrorism linked to extreme nationalism have been a feature of political life for most of the century, opposition to racism is deeply embedded in journalism. But the use of journalists to provide political propaganda means media can still become weapons of intolerance.

The outbreak of war in 1992 in the Balkans, genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and simmering conflicts on every continent demonstrate that laws, journalistic codes, and good intentions are of little consequence in the face of ruthless political leaders bent upon waging war.

It is not unusual in war to find mass media recruited to support political objectives, often at the expense of professional credibility. Indeed, this holds true for almost all wars. Notions of press freedom and editorial independence can become compromised anywhere when journalism is the victim of political manipulation.

However, it is not only in times of war that media face the challenge of intolerance. Racial violence in urban communities often characterized by incidents of terrorism, a rise in influence of extremist right-wing political parties, the reemergence of anti-Semitism, and widespread religious intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination against national minorities on the basis of language and social status is all part of the landscape of daily news reporting.

Too often ignorance and a lack of appreciation of different cultures, traditions, and beliefs leads to media stereotypes which reinforce racist attitudes and strengthen the appeal of political extremists.

At the same time media and journalists continue to be victims of undue pressure. Some pressure comes from tense and competitive by conditions in the media market, and some is applied by political players, either governments directly or by powerful special interest groups. Journalists are rightly wary of outsiders interfering in journalism, but many are conscious, too, of internal weaknesses which compromise journalistic standards.

The Bilbao conference, held during the celebrations for World Press Freedom Day, provides a historic opportunity to consider how journalists can confront the challenge of intolerance. In this paper we look at some contemporary problems, we review existing legal standards, international conventions, and ethical codes of journalism. The last section outlines some suggestions for future action.

Finally, the International Federation of Journalists wishes to thank all of those organizations and individuals who have contributed to the organization of the World Congress. In particular, we acknowledge the contribution of the Basque Regional Government, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and the IFJ member union, ELA-STV.

Aidan White
General Secretary

---

[1] International Federation of Journalists, World Congress of Journalists, Bilbao, 2-4 May 1997

Challenges to Media

a] **Media As Weapons of War** "The real culprits in this long list of executions, assassinations, drownings, burnings, massacres and atrocities furnished by our report are not, we repeat, the Balkan peoples... The true culprits are those who mislead public opinion and take advantage of the people's ignorance to raise disquieting rumours and sound the alarm bell, inciting their country..." [1]

This conclusion of an inquiry into the Balkan conflict 70 years ago was echoed by United Nations envoy Tadeusz Mazowiecki in his report in 1995 on the role of media in the origins of the recent Balkan war. His finding was that media were guilty of inciting community hatred and war-mongering.

Media, we all know, can be unfair, but they become something much worse when they are conscripted by undemocratic politicians to inspire, provoke, and underwrite national fears and hatreds as has happened in Serbia and Croatia in recent years. Fundamentally, journalists who lend themselves to this process abandon their professional status and become propagandists.

The problem is that journalists who lack a tradition of independence – whether in eastern Europe, Africa, or Asia – can be the most vulnerable to political pressure which leads them into the twilight world of political propaganda. Often they find themselves confronted by the demands of political leaders and community leaders who call for "committed" journalism in support of "the national interest". This call is familiar to journalists – in Africa, Asia and Europe – which have recently made the transition to democracy.

This question gets to the heart of political commitment to democracy. It is a test not only of media professionalism, but also of a nation's faith in human rights and freedom of expression. During the past decade journalists - throughout the world have come to identify a common set of principles and beliefs associated with journalistic freedom, but political turbulence continues to undermine relations between media and government.

Part of the problem is the revival of nationalism and community rivalries in many corners of the world accompanied by a fragmentation of national politics. Referring to this phenomenon, the late Stephen Spender said that in an era of fragmentation censorship is likely to be local:

"It is liable to be one of the phenomena connected with ethnic conflicts in which one group, aware of itself as a people, shuts itself off from other groups–the Serbs from the Croats, the Croats from the Muslims." [2]

This wilful exclusion of one community from another is a dangerous step along the road to censorship and conflict. In some countries current political tensions mean that journalists are discouraged from reporting negatively on their own communities, and there are appeals to notions of citizenship which compromise ethical responsibilities. Journalists find themselves facing the grotesque choice of respecting their professional commitment to truthseeking or risking being branded a traitor. They are often subject to grandiose appeals or crude threats to put patriotism before professionalism.

Journalists never prove citizenship by succumbing to manipulation and distortion. A good journalist, one who has respect for the truth and who works

---

[1] Report of International Commission into Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 quoted by Mark Thompson, *"Forging War,"* Article 19, 1995

[2] Stephen Spender, *Index on Censorship*, 1/2 1994

according to ethical and professional standards, will always be a good citizen. A good citizen does not lie, twist the truth, or deceive with bogus information and cynical propaganda.

What is important is that journalists are aware of how deeply rooted fears and apprehension of civil strife in society are. They need to know the potential impact of their words and images, whatever the mode of transmission.

The challenge to media is well put in a report from the United States following race riots in a number of cities in the 1960s:

"Those who report and disseminate news of racial trouble and threats of racial conflict must be conscious of the background of anxieties against which their stories are projected.

"This does not mean that the media should manage the news or tell less than the truth. Indeed, we believe it would be imprudent and even dangerous to play down coverage in the hope that censored reporting of inflammatory incidents somehow will diminish violence. To attempt to ignore these events or to portray them as something other than what they are can only diminish confidence in media and increase the effectiveness of those who monger rumours and the fears of those who listen. . . .

"To live up to their own professed standards, media simply must exercise a higher degree of care and a greater level of sophistication than they have yet shown in this area, higher perhaps than the level ordinarily acceptable with other stories." [3]

In almost every corner of the globe there is a fear of social conflict between different groups in society. Media have a responsibility to respect these anxieties and to avoid becoming blunt instruments of propaganda.

b⌉ **The Dilemma of Hate-Speech**   Most countries have laws which outlaw "hate-speech"—the expression of despicable and harmful opinions which are designed to incite community hatred and violence. This issue touches the core of journalism and its relationship with democracy. Should we allow the enemies of democracy to attack in words specific groups of people within society? Should media be permitted to reproduce the violent language of hatred and confrontation of political extremists?

Some countries have no doubt and have already decided the issue. They have enacted edicts, laws, and regulations forbidding not only acts of racism, but expression of it.

Many journalists are uneasy about the legal and regulatory framework in which these laws have framed our approach to expression of unpleasant and uncomfortable opinions. Some see it as an abridgement of freedom of speech which undermines freedom of expression. In the United States the First Amendment is a bedrock principle of democracy. The federal government may not prohibit the expression of an opinion simply because society finds the opinion offensive.

However, other traditions, in Europe and Africa for instance, are based upon different approaches. The European Convention on human rights, for example, dates from 50 years ago and the devastation of a war fuelled upon theories of race hatred which were put into practice and which cost millions of lives. Other regions have framed their approach according to their own historical tradition, often in the context of liberation and independence from colonial powers. Within these perspectives is found the notion that society does have a legitimate interest in the suppression of opinions which incited racial hatred.

---

[3] *U.S. Report of the Commission on Civil Disorders,* 1967

The disturbing question of how we limit free speech is simplified by Umberto Eco, who argues that, "We must define the limits of tolerance and to do this we must first know what is intolerable." [4]

The definition of what is intolerable varies widely across the world. In many countries journalists enjoy virtually unlimited freedoms', in others newsrooms groan under the weight of intimidation or legal actions brought by politicians and powerful individuals who use the law to suppress critical media comment and to curb legitimate journalistic inquiry.

While incitement to racial hatred and war is a criminal offence in many countries, the dilemma facing most journalists is based on ethical, not legal, considerations.

Codes of ethics, which are dealt with later in this paper, normally place three duties upon journalists—to seek after truth; to be independent; to minimize harm. The issue of hate-speech forces journalists to balance the first of these duties against the third. Journalists must always seek the truth, but it is a finely judged decision about whether to pursue that objective if the consequences may be unduly harmful.

To confront the hate-speech dilemma with confidence, journalists need to be as free as possible from pressure to follow a particular line. The line journalists should follow is that dictated by their own conscience.

Stereotypes in the Newsroom   Open forms of prejudice and discrimination against ethnic and racial groups which constitute incitement to racial hatred are not a feature of mainstream media coverage in most parts of the world. Overt expressions of prejudice and incitement are punishable by law.

However, mainstream media do provide many examples of subtle and indirect prejudice which may reinforce intolerance.

The popular or mass circulation tabloid press are often guilty of negative portrayal of ethnic, religious, or cultural minorities. This becomes routine when there are long established and unresolved political problems as in the Middle East or in the simmering disputes of South Asia and Africa. But the problem can be found almost anywhere. Former President of the British National Union of Journalists Jim Boumelha has summarized the problem in a UK context:

"Since the arrival of the first sizeable wave of immigration of black people to the UK 30 years ago, Britain's black community has tended to be depicted in terms of stereotypes and within a negative context involving conflict, drama, deviancy and controversy." [5]

The stereotyping of the black community, he argues, reflects two themes: the media stereotype of black as a "problem" within society or as a "victim." In each case the image is negative.

There is a tendency for media to underplay the reality of people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. A distorted image of the Muslim world in the western media or a shallow analysis of so-called "western values" reflected in the media of some Asian countries are both sides of the same coin. Media coverage is made simple and accessible at the expense of understanding the complex differences which exist in a multicultural world.

These failures to reflect the realities of life is seen in local as well as national and international media .

[4] Umberto Eco, *Index on Censorship*, 1996
[5] IFJ Conference Report, Ethnic Conflict and Political, 1994

Stereotyping may have little impact on the consciousness of multicultural communities, where people's own experiences are a counterweight to ill-informed media coverage, but it can be important in shaping the prejudices of people who do not have daily contact with minority communities.

A failure to balance discourse which treats immigrant, racial or minority groups as a problem means that media can be implicated in a process of discrimination, particularly at a time when racist ideology is becoming part of mainstream political debate.

Stereotyping often arises due to neglect of the conditions in which journalists work and the way media are managed. Most media organizations, for instance, do not have recruitment policies that encourage journalists from ethnic or minority communities to enter journalism. As a result most newsrooms rarely reflect the ethnic and cultural balance of society at large.

Additionally, journalism training often fails to tackle issues of discrimination and intolerance. There is too often a profound lack of awareness and ignorance among news gatherers and production staff about the societies they serve.

This lack of awareness is reinforced by a failure to use representative and authoritative sources of information from minority communities when dealing with news items about community relations. It is a common criticism that media too often rely alone on "official" and establishment sources of information without seeking out the opinions of other expert sources.

The Challenge of Diversity in Media   Many of the problems outlined here can be resolved if media recognize that diversity is an issue within journalism as well as a potential news item. Media management and journalists have a responsibility to examine their own recruitment, training, and reporting techniques; to set targets for improvement and to monitor the results. [6]

The first step is recognition of the problem. A staff profile that is ethnically balanced, a training regime that talks about the ethical dilemmas involved in dealing with intolerance, and a willingness to examine and to monitor the editorial performance of media will inevitably raise awareness, broaden the horizons of news gatherers, and reduce the incidence of error and prejudice arising from ignorance and incompetence.

Diversity not only exists around media, but within media. Many countries have newspapers and broadcast stations which cater for religious, cultural, and language minorities. Journalists and media from different groups should be encouraged to work together, to exchange information, and to learn from each other. Dialogue within and between different media is as important as dialogue between media and society at large.

Racism and International Regulation

In almost all countries open forms of racial prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities are punishable by law. National laws regulating the content of media in this area are drawn from international standards and conventions.

While the well established right to freedom of opinion and expression is set out in Article 19 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, Article 29(2) of the same declaration adds:

---

[6] See *Handbook to Counter Racism in Media,* IFJ 1996

"In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements or morality, public order, and the general welfare in a democratic society."

Additionally, Article 19 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights holds that everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference but adds, in Article 19(3), that the right to free expression may be subject to restrictions by law in order to respect of the rights or reputations of others, or for the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals.

Article 20 states:

1 ⟩ "Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law".

2 ⟩ "Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

The **International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination** of 1965 Article 4 says:

"State parties condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons on one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any from, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicated all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end. . . ."

a ⟩ "Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;"

b ⟩ "Shall declare illegal and prohibit organisations, and all organised and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognise partici-pation in such organisations or activities as punishable by law;"

c ⟩ "Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination."

In addition to these there is the 1978 UNESCO **Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice,** which urges mass media to promote understanding and tolerance and to contribute to the eradication of racial prejudice in society.

There are a number of regional charters and conventions which are also useful to consider. The **African Charter on Human and People's Rights** states in Article 9 that "every individual has the right to receive information and the right to express and disseminate his opinions."

Article 25 says that states party to the Charter: "shall have the duty to promote and ensure through teaching, education and publication, the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the Charter.…"

Article 27 states: "The rights and freedoms of each individual shall be exercised with due regard to the rights of others, collective security morality and common interest."

Additionally, the **European Convention For the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** guarantees freedom of expression and opinion in Article 10:

1〕 "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.…"

2〕 "The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary."

These texts are valuable, not just when talking about the performance of media, but as useful points of reference in the daily work of journalists. However, they need to be accessible to journalists, and should be made available, that examples and case studies, to show how they are relevant to contemporary journalism in Europe.

Self-Regulation and Ethical Codes

It should be said from the outset that ethical codes will not solve all the problems of intolerance in media, but they may help journalists focus on their own responsibility and help them resolve dilemmas. By setting out the ideals and beliefs which underpin independent journalism they encourage journalists to do what is essential in all areas of their work—to act according to their conscience.

Codes of ethics begin with sweeping generalities but tend finally to require particular attention to local context and to particular facts. That is how, in the end, ethical dilemmas are resolved. In matters of tolerance, journalists must place the broad sweep of aspirations and values set out in ethical codes firmly in the context of their day-to-day work.

It is worth recalling that the landmark Sean McBride Report for UNESCO in 1980 laid emphasis on "professional integrity and standards" in its recommendations for better international communications. The McBride Commission concluded that:

"For the journalist, freedom and responsibility are indivisible. Freedom without responsibility invites distortion and other abuses. But in the absence of freedom there can be no exercise of responsibility...The adoption of codes of ethics at national and, in some cases, at the regional level is desirable, provided that such codes are prepared and adopted by the profession itself—without governmental interference." [7]

Journalists must constantly remind themselves that regulating ethics is the collective business of journalists, not principally of the corporations which commission and carry their journalism, and especially not of governments.

Governments have a legitimate role in regulating media structures to try to ensure the diversity necessary for freedom of expression to flourish and for local culture to flower. But journalists' ethics are a content issue, and governments have no proper role in media content.

Ethics, then, require active support. Journalists have to act ethically, not merely memorize and parrot ethical codes. The standards or rules of such codes are useful and they work most of the time. But sometimes genuine conflicts arise between values and ethical decision-making is required.

---

[7] McBride Commission, Recommendations, Part III, introduction and para 43

This difficult skill is like all the other skills of journalism: it takes training, time and effort to become good at it. Individual journalists, employers, local journalists' associations, and international organizations of media professionals have a specific responsibility to encourage good practice. The ethical dilemmas facing journalists referred to earlier in this paper – the conflict between the need to seek the truth and to minimize harm – cannot be satisfactorily addressed unless journalists unions, publishers, broadcasters, and industry regulators do much more to raise awareness among journalists of the potential impact of their work.

There are many different models, but all ethical codes and codes of practice focus on the fundamental aims of the journalistic mission. They can be used like a checklist, even when journalists are working close to a deadline. They direct thinking and permit conscious decision-making that can be explained later if and when controversy arises about decisions.

One model, by Joann Byrd, **Washington Post** Ombudsman, suggests media must ask some simple, yet essential, questions before going public:

- Have we done good reporting?

- What do we know, and how do we know it?

- Who are the sources, and what is their stake in it?

- Have we verified the information?

- Is it reasonable to conclude the truth based on what we know, or do we still know nothing more than some facts?

- Will the story have impact? What kind?

The final question in this list is particularly helpful in dealing with issues of intolerance by helping to clarify the harm that might be caused, and that must be weighed against the benefits of publication.

The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race or nationality is one of the most general features of professional codes of ethics agreed upon at the national and international level. [8]

The Code of Principles of the International Federation of Journalists was revised in 1986 to include the following article:

7. "The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins."

In addition, a number of journalists' organizations and a number of public broadcasting organizations, for example – have established specialist working groups and published statements and guidelines for journalists revealing a commitment going beyond the good intentions of ethical declarations.

At the same time, a number of national Press Councils have adopted codes that identify the issue of intolerance and have taken up complaints from members of the public about poor media reporting of race relations issues.

The value of a self-regulating process can be seen in a recent case from the Netherlands in which broadcasters were taken to court following complaints

---

[8] *Report on Media Ethics in Europe,* University of Tampere 1995

of discrimination over a television program broadcast by RTL4, a commercial channel, concerning the district of Lombok in Utrecht where many immigrants live. The courts did not find that the program was unlawful and cleared the broadcasters, but the case was then taken up by the Dutch Press Council, which found that there had been a breach of standards of journalism. The professional verdict that the program was unacceptable was highly publicized in the Dutch media.

For self-regulation to work, whether through professional organisations or more formal press council and broadcasting complaints bodies, there must be greater internal co-operation between media professionals. There is common ground, at least in theory, between managements, editors, and journalists on ethical values and standards of journalism, but different everyday working objectives often establish obstacles to dialogue. These problems need to be overcome.

Media Action to Combat Intolerance

Following the wars in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, journalists organizations have made re-newed efforts to put tolerance on the ethical agenda.

At the International Federation of Journalists Congress in Santander in 1995, unions from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia agreed to prepare a report on the role of journalists in the war. The interim report of that inquiry will be reported at this conference.

Within the IFJ argument at the 1995 Congress centered on whether or not journalists should be identified by the Federation for the purpose of prosecution under international law for acts of propaganda. The consensus reached was that organizations of journalists have a responsibility to monitor media performance, to report on incidents of unprofessionalism, and to promote high standards, but it is not their role to act as the agents of other authorities with responsibility for law enforcement.

Taking advantage of the European Union designation of 1997 as the European Year Against Racism – another important feature of the Bilbao discussions— publishers, broadcaster, and journalists in Europe are starting to work together on questions of tolerance.

A conference will be held in Brussels in July when the IFJ, the European Newspaper Publishers Association, and the European Broadcasting Union will discuss a joint approach to questions of portrayal, recruitment, and training and their role in raising awareness on issues of tolerance.

Earlier, in 1995, media professionals also set up the International Media Working Group Against Racism and Xenophobia and launched a campaign of activity—including the organization of four regional conferences, the publication of handbooks for journalists, and the establishment of a European Journalism Prize. [9]

In 1996 the IFJ established a Media Solidarity Centre in Algeria to help media workers and journalists who are victims of the current internal conflict.

The question of tolerance and media solidarity has been one of the key issues in IFJ professional assistance projects in Africa, where extensive Media For Democracy Programme was launched in 1994. Handbooks dealing with ethnic conflict and human rights have been produced.

---

[9] IMRAX, c/o 266 Rue Royale, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

Five round-table meetings of journalists from the Balkan region organized by the IFJ and the World Association of Newspapers (FIEJ) have over the past four years put tolerance and co-operation among independent media firmly on the professional agenda in the region.

Media For Democracy work has been established in Latin America and three regional round-tables of unions of journalists from South Asian countries have also taken up the question.

Other areas of co-operation that are important include the area within the trade union movement where the IFJ has begun discussions with other media workers in membership of the International Committee of Entertainment and Media Unions and the area with regional trade union organisations in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Summary of Recommendations

Diversity Within Media: Journalists have a responsibility to address internal weaknesses that compromise journalistic standards and to apply principles of diversity and pluralism at all levels within the industry. In particular,

■ journalists and their unions should demand media recruitment policies that encourage journalists from ethnic or minority communities to enter journalism.

■ journalism training must address issues of discrimination and intolerance in society. There is often a profound lack of awareness and ignorance among news gathers and production staff about the societies which they serve.

■ journalists and media organizations must broaden their coverage of the community and use representative and authoritative sources of information from minority communities on relevant news items.

Industry Co-operation and Solidarity: Increased dialogue and co-operation between journalists, broadcasters, and publishers is needed to better understand the role of media in confronting intolerance. In particular, dialogue should be encouraged between media outlets serving minority communities and mainstream media.

International Standards: International and European conventions, texts, and declarations that are relevant to journalists facing ethical dilemmas in the area of tolerance should be promoted through the provision of handbooks and materials that provide useful examples and case studies at a regional level. The IFJ should promote the development of such materials at a regional level.

Role of Governments: While governments have a legitimate role in regulating media structures to try to ensure the diversity necessary for freedom of expression, they have no proper role in the regulation of media content and journalistic ethics.

Support of Self-Regulation and Ethical Conduct: All journalists' unions should promote editorial independence and the right of journalists to report free from external and internal pressure.

The IFJ and journalists' unions should campaign vigorously against all forms of censorship–including self censorship–and should develop codes of conduct and guidelines for journalists to assist them in resolving ethical dilemmas.

In the promotion of self-regulation journalists should promote professional solidarity among journalists and media professionals to promote high ethical standards and the right of all journalists to act according to their conscience without undue interference or pressure. In particular,

- the IFJ and journalists' unions should promote conferences, seminars, and workshops to exchange information and promote awareness within the industry.

- the IFJ and journalists unions should convene on projects and activities that will ensure that journalists are made aware of national and international ethical codes and their usefulness in resolving day-to-day journalistic dilemmas.

- the IFJ and its member organizations should monitor and report on media performance in the area of intolerance and should engage in dialogue with governments and other professional organizations in defence of journalistic independence.

Our century has been characterized by organized group violence on an extraor-dinary scale. The figures are slippery, but it is safe to say that the human race has seen fit to engage in something like 250 significant armed conflicts in the course of this century, during which over 110 million people have been killed, and many times that number wounded, crippled, and mutilated. According to a report issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, over thirty wars have occurred in Africa since 1970. In 1996 alone, 26% of the continent's nations were engaged in armed conflict, and these African wars accounted for more than half of all casualties worldwide.

We have become accustomed enough to these numbers and the human suffering they represent that it is easy to forget how much more violence we live with than did our ancestors and how much more deadly it has become. Indeed, as we know, mass violence on a previously unimaginable scale has become universalized, industrialized, and routinized. At this very moment, the escalation of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has caused the Horn of Africa to become the deadliest conflict cluster in the world. Yet, we have become all too complacent about such facts and all too often ignore such situations.

With this in mind, and for *realpolitik*, humanitarian, and moral reasons, the international community has at last seriously begun to ask what more can be done to reduce and prevent such conflict and the suffering that accompanies it. The question is all the more urgent in Africa, where the widespread warfare has often prevented countries from converting their diversity into an asset for development.

For these reasons, it is of critical importance that the international community begin to explore the potential of the media to prevent conflict precisely because, taken together, the diverse mass media technologies, institutions, professionals, norms, and practices constitute one of the most powerful forces now shaping the lives of individuals and the fate of peoples and nations. To be sure, media influence in Africa is not evenly distributed in space or time and varies with circumstance. But, overall, media influence on this continent is sig-nificant, and increasingly so, and as a result the media constitute a major human resource whose potential to help prevent and moderate social violence begs to be discussed, evaluated, and, where appropriate, mobilized.

It is important to recognize that in asking what the medias preventive potential might be, much more than journalism must be on the table. In fact, in speaking about "the media" we have in mind any and all mass media forms distributed to mass audiences by any technology whatsoever. With this in mind, we believe that the international community needs to understand and fully develop the potential of popular music, journalism, soap operas, advertising, and public relations, TV and radio dramas and comedies, interactive video dialogues, talk shows and call-in shows, social marketing, wall posters, matchbooks, and the World Wide Web, among other mass media forms and formats. What is more, inasmuch as attention to the potential of such genres is tantamount to focusing on *media content*, it must be supplemented by the development of initiatives designed to explore the *institutional dimension* of the media by addressing professional codes and guidelines, government and multilateral policies, the

---

[1] *Rhodes Journalism Review,* August 1999

interests of media personnel or the economic stakes of their employers, and the potential of training programs, and journalist and management exchanges, as well.

With this in mind, the Media & Conflict Program of the N.Y.U. Center for War, Peace, and the News Media has been working to develop a comprehensive media strategy for helping to prevent, manage, and resolve ethnonational, religious, racial, and other forms of substate and international conflict. This program engages professionals from advertising, social marketing, public relations, television and radio entertainment programming, among many other fields. Indeed, professionals in many such fields have long been associated with efforts to alter social or political behavior by promoting better nutrition, AIDS awareness, or more effective family planning practices.

Having said this, it nevertheless must be admitted that in a number of countries, no single issue has so bedeviled the discussion of Media & Conflict as the deeply held belief on the part of many journalists that the very idea of media-based preventive action violates the norm of objectivity – whose corollary, disinterestedness with respect to the events being reported, is an essential element of the professional creed.

There are more or less sophisticated variants of this creed, and "nonpartisanship" or "fairness" is sometimes substituted for "objectivity" as the desirable norm. But whenever in recent years events such as the genocidal violence in Rwanda have provoked discussions concerning the role of the media, the conversation stopper has been the passionate assertion by many journalists that such concerns lie beyond the pale of legitimate journalism.

Because this question so frequently becomes the fulcrum of debate for Media & Conflict issues in journalism settings, I would like to try to offer a small number of propositions that, I hope, may contribute to the clarification of such issues.

- It is important to stipulate that objectivity and related norms are fundamental core values in many journalism systems and that these norms are believed to be inviolable because they are essential to the profession's commitment to discovering and reporting the truth.

- Objectivity is, at the same time, an unobtainable ideal, as both philosophies of science and the postmodern emphasis on the genesis of narratives have made clear. A growing body of evidence points to the fact that there is an irreducible contingency in all accounts of the world (journalism's included) that belies the claim that they can, in fact, report "the truth."

- Objectivity is therefore in some sense both necessary and impossible. It is a "vital illusion" – and perhaps even a tragic one. Objectivity is unobtainable, but the effort to achieve it is much of what gives the practice of journalism its social utility and undoubted nobility.

- Despite this nobility, objective journalism may be faulted on the grounds that its epistemological strength as a truth-seeking technique is also the source of a fundamental moral weakness. For it is an article of faith for those who practice objectivity that they can neither intervene in events they are covering nor take responsibility for the consequences of their decision to abstain from doing so. Critics of this point of view make the case that the professional norms of journalism do not trump fundamental human moral obligations. To my knowledge, this argument has not been successfully refuted.

- Debates about Media & Conflict most often proceed without recognizing that much of the world does not practice objectivity-based journalism, nor does it

necessarily aspire to do so. While the rejection of objectivity in the name of "The New World Information Order" or "development journalism" has often in the past been a smokescreen for rationalizing state control, it is nevertheless true that other forms of journalism possess excellent pedigrees and histories of accomplishment. Traditions of literary journalism, which emphasize a strong personal voice, or traditions of engagement, which express belief in the importance of defending the values and ambitions of communities (or even particular political parties or points of view), render the ideal of objectivity often irrelevant or undesirable to journalists operating within other cultures and media systems.

■ Such journalists may have a point – or, again, they may not. We don't really know, inasmuch as the journalism profession as a whole has yet to carefully examine the nature of the epistemological foundations of its craft. To do so would be to ask whether objectivity-based journalism is an invention with universal validity, or whether it is a particularistic accomplishment which merely answers to the needs of particular societies or historical moments.

■ Having raised this question, however, it must also be stipulated that no matter how particularistic such journalism might, in the end, be determined to be, under no circumstances is propaganda a valid alternative to objective journalism, no matter how such propaganda may be rationalized.

Further, in order to examine this question intelligently, we need to keep in mind at least the following two points when it comes to truth and journalism:

Human beings have a great need to understand the truth of things. (It could even be argued that we actually do not appreciate the full extent of what might be called our "species-need" for the truth.) To put it another way: Truth has survival value for both individuals, economies, and polities. (Liberal economic theory recognizes this fact when it privileges "information" as the *sine qua non* of free markets, for example.) Whatever its failures and illusions, objectivity-based journalism has proven to be an effective techniques for seeking our species-truth.

Objectivity, however, may be only that: a particular technique. In fact, objective journalism, which we often represent to ourselves as an enduring value at least as ancient as the "ancient hatreds" that journalists often write about, is only a half-century old. Whatever value objectivity may have as a means of acting on our universal need for truth, in other words, it may be only a particular, time and culture-bound solution to this species-wide compulsion.

■ This should serve to remind us of the obvious point that journalism is a specific social practice that has a history and that this history is one of unending social invention. Consider that only a hundred years ago the interview – which today we would consider *the* primordial journalistic act – was regarded as an unacceptable invasion of privacy, a mindless waste of good reportorial energy (and, by Europeans, a particularly American outrage). What is more, such taken-for-granted journalistic staples as the sports page, science journalism, investigative reporting, and business journalism are all recent journalistic inventions that answered to the needs of a particular moment. In other words, in discussing Media & Conflict issues, it is important not to fall prey to an ahistorical essentialism that presumes that today's form of journalism is, or ought to be, tomorrow's.

■ Last, in the final analysis, objectivity – and, indeed, journalism itself – is only *one* of the media tools available to local actors and the international community

for conflict resolution purposes. There is ample evidence that objective, fair, accurate, timely journalism is an effective way to help prevent or manage conflicts, and we will hear some of it at this conference. But at the same time there is compelling evidence that there are a wide variety of media-based strategies that have *nothing whatsoever to do with journalism* that may be strikingly effective in their turn. We need to recognize that in intervening in a country in conflict, we need what advertising people call a "good media mix" in which journalism is but one of the constituent ingredients.

In light of the foregoing stipulations, when it comes to examining the potential function of journalism, it seems to me that we need to operate analytically on both the *operational* and the *paradigmatic* levels. At the operational level, we need to consider what can be done right now to prevent and resolve conflict through activities consistent with existing journalistic practices in each region of the world.

But even as we consider what more might be done at the operational level, I believe that it is also incumbent upon us to work on the *paradigmatic* level, in order to develop entirely new ways for journalism to participate in the prevention and resolution of conflict. By doing so, we free ourselves of the fetters imposed by journalists' conceptions of what it may be now possible to do, since, as I have noted above, journalism is a particular social practice whose principal tenets are both relatively recent and currently in flux, and it does not seem unreasonable to imagine that the history of this profession will not be frozen in its present form. Indeed, I suppose it is my argument that the urgency of the task of preventing genocidal violence *should* shape the evolution of journalistic paradigms in ways that will make it possible for the profession to contribute to the prevention and resolution of conflict more effectively in the future.

I say this not as the representative of a humanitarian NGO, a multilateral assistance organization, or as the victim of violence. I speak, that is to say, objectively, as a journalist, as someone who honors the professions values and norms and who understands the way it serves its readers and viewers every day in every corner of the globe. This is, in other words, a call from *within* the profession, and I am offering it in the knowledge that it will be considered unacceptable in many quarters, where the defense of journalism-as-it-is-practiced is motivated by an essentialist vision of the profession as somehow always remaining in the future what it has already become today. That view, I believe, is profoundly in error on both historical and moral grounds.

Accordingly, we at the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media have been asking ourselves if we could turn the usual question about Media & Conflict around, and in lieu of asking, "What is it possible for the media to do to prevent conflict?" pose the question, "What does conflict resolution theory and practice tell us needs to be done to prevent conflict?" In other words, instead of starting with the media's understanding of their own possibilities, as determined by current paradigms, we have decided to begin by establishing the *desiderata* for media action on the basis of the work of the negotiators, diplomats, Track Two practitioners, and protagonists who have participated in the resolution of conflict, have studied the process, or have developed a body of theory about it.

This shift of perspective makes it possible first and foremost to address the question of *what conflict prevention and management require of the media.* This is rather different from other discussions of media and conflict, which tend to accept at the outset what media professionals judge would be practical or possible according to the standards currently dominant in their fields.

Accordingly, when we began to examine conflict resolution theory and practice several years ago, we quickly identified a number of potential "media roles" in conflict prevention that emerged from this literature and experience. Each one of these "roles" has an extensive theoretical and practical foundation in the conflict resolution tradition, and each, we felt, opened up possibilities for media activity that could readily be imagined. The point was to identify the conflict-preventing functions that the media can perform and then to develop media-based activities (as appropriate to diverse conflict circumstances, media technologies, and media systems) by means of which such functions can be fulfilled. With this schema in mind, we began to develop an inventory of such roles.

In the course of doing so, I should add, we discovered that the media were in some cases already performing some of these roles as a byproduct of what they do for purely journalistic reasons. In such cases, the question then becomes whether the media can more self-consciously and more completely take on the burden of preventing deadly conflict, whether within current paradigms or through the elaboration of new ones over the years to come. In other cases, we found that, in the case of Africa, conflict resolution NGOs and, in some cases, international multilateral organizations had undertaken media initiatives that performed some of the roles. Among such projects have been the Simonye Dialogues, organized by the Media Peace Centre in the Thokoza township; Radio Umwizero in Burundi; Studio Ijambo, also in Burundi; Star Radio in Liberia; and perhaps a half-dozen other related initiatives. Meanwhile, as a small sample of the repertory of potential journalistic roles that I believe the media can and must play in the future, let me offer the following:

Potential Media Roles in Conflict Prevention and Management

Channel of communication between parties: The media not infrequently play this role ad hoc in domestic and international politics as it is; the point would be to heighten the appreciation and systematic performance of this dialogical role in the ethnopolitical context.

Education: Simply changing the information environment in which the parties operate can have a marked impact on the dynamics of conflict; it is particularly useful to promote appreciation of the complex factors impinging on the conflict situation and to create appreciation of and tolerance for the negotiation process itself.

Confidence-building: Lack of trust between parties is a major factor contributing to conflict. The media can help to reduce suspicion through their reporting of contested issues and increase trust through reporting of stories that suggest or illustrate that accommodation is possible.

Counteracting misperceptions: Related to the confidence-building role above, journalists can come to see the misconceptions of the parties as a story in and of itself, and by reporting this story they can encourage the parties to revise such views, moving closer to the prevention or resolution of a conflict in the process.

Analyzing conflict: This differs from conventional conflict reporting in that the media would self-consciously apply analytical frameworks derived from conflict resolution and related fields to systematically enhance the public's understanding of key aspects of the situation, as well as the dynamics of the efforts to manage it.

Deobjectifying the protagonists for each other: Sophisticated journalism, by revealing peoples' complexity, can already do this, but the question is whether some of what journalists already do ad hoc can be developed into a systematic repertory which they will be able to employ by virtue of an enhanced conception of journalism influenced by conflict-prevention considerations.

Identifying the interests underlying the issues: This is standard conflict resolution practice, but it is surprising how infrequently journalists address this question in stories. As one media scholar has remarked, in the case of U.S. journalism, instead of answering "Why?" with a sophisticated analysis of underlying group interests, "Explanation in American journalism is a kind of long-distance mind reading in which the journalist elucidates the motives, intentions, purposes, and hidden agendas which guide individuals in their actions." [1]

Emotional outlet: Conflicts may escalate or explode in part because the parties have no adequate outlets for expression of their grievances. Conflict can be fought out in the media rather than in the streets, and journalists, already prone to report conflict, could better serve their readers and viewers, as well as the cause of preventive diplomacy, by more fully understanding this role and perhaps pursuing it self-consciously.

Encouraging a balance of power: This helps get parties to the negotiating table. A media report can weaken a stronger party or strengthen a weaker party in the eyes of publics, thereby encouraging parties to negotiate when they otherwise might not have out of concern for the perception of their relative positions.

Framing and defining the conflict: This is nothing but good journalism practiced on the right occasions. The media can help frame the issues and interests in such a way that they become more susceptible to management. The media can be particularly attentive to the concessions made by the parties, the common ground that exists between them, the solutions they have considered, and so on.

Face saving and consensus-building: Similarly, when, in the course of negotiations, parties take steps toward resolving a conflict, they risk being attacked by more intransigent members of their own constituencies. The media can greatly facilitate the process of compromise by making it possible for negotiators to address their own publics through the media in order to explain their negotiating positions and build support for them.

Solution builder: Conflicts get prevented or managed when the parties table and consider possible solutions to grievances. Journalists can play a role in this process by pressing the parties for their proffered solutions. Although this seems self-evident, many third-party negotiators have noted that parties are often so invested in their grievances that they do not develop or consider options for potential agreement with adversaries. The simple act of eliciting ideas and reporting them could assist the dynamic of the more formal mediation process itself. It should also be noted that the process of formal mediation can fail if there is not a parallel process of what might be called "social mediation," by which the constituents and publics of the formal negotiating parties are brought into the process and prepared to accept its outcome.

This is but a partial account of potential media roles. A fuller account would describe a complex set of activities undertaken by a great variety of actors operating from institutional bases in independent, multilateral, and govern-

---

[1] James W. Carey, "*The Dark Continent of American Journalism,*" in Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson, eds*., Reading the News*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987. Page 180.

mental institutions in conflict situations of great diversity. Elaborating such a full account will require, over time, the combined efforts of media professionals, diplomats, conflict resolvers, and diverse protagonists, among others.

The process by which this could done would be one of "social invention" in which the spontaneous, largely uncoordinated, but not random activities of diverse actors could create new institutions and behaviors. Journalism itself, in fact, is a product of precisely this process over time, as is the sitcom, soap opera, rap song, the portable radio, and the sports page. It would be folly to believe that the history of the media has ended here and that we do not possess the social imagination to meet the challenge now being posed by the threat of mass social violence to human societies everywhere.

Do television news organizations have a responsibility to stop wars? In considering this question, I will begin by stating that it is our individual responsibility to prevent war. (This bypasses important questions such as whether all wars are necessarily evil or whether there is such a thing as a "just" war. It ignores questions of sovereignty and self-determination.) I am also considering the question only from the perspective of international television news organizations. The role that national and local news media can play in fomenting or preventing conflict, being more complicated because it directly involves participants, deserves a more detailed treatment than is possible here.

If we accept that it is our responsibility as individuals to do our best to avoid war, should this responsibility also apply to television news organizations, which are, after all a collection of individuals?

Before looking at what role television news media should play in conflict prevention, is it correct to assume that television can prevent wars? It is clear that international television news coverage alone cannot stop wars in their tracks. Once wars start, they can be stopped only by force or mediation. The question, then, is whether television should influence what kind of force is applied to end wars.

The idea that television can in some way prevent conflicts has emerged as a result of the effect that television images have on the conduct of foreign policy. Images from the war in Bosnia – most notably those of the Muslim detainees in the Bosnian Serb detention center at Trnopolje in August 1992 and the pictures from the Sarajevo market bombing in February 1994 – have led to changes in the application of foreign policies that have had a direct bearing on the war. These examples suggest that television images, by prompting intervention from superior powers, certainly influence the course of wars and may even lead to their conclusion.

This view is countered by the argument that television news footage does not have a dramatic effect on the conduct of foreign policy. The foreign policies of countries, alliances, and organizations that constitute the international community are determined by national or self-interest. While the stimulus of media pressure may prompt short-term action, this does not affect the long-term policy. The media may wish to believe that their reporting is making a difference, but in reality the underlying foreign policy is not altered.

The answer to whether the media can influence foreign policy probably lies somewhere in the middle, with varying short-term policies. Let us imagine that the policy of Western European governments in Bosnia was to contain the war within the region. Direct military intervention, complete inaction, or the slow invasion that has taken place would probably have made little difference to the success or failure of containment. (Short-term policies do affect those in Bosnia, though. They can mean the difference between winning and losing, between destruction and salvation.)

The effectiveness of the media in driving government policy may be overestimated, but it should not be ignored. The media may not influence long-term policy, but it can affect the application of that policy. Governments are adept at responding with short-term measures to assuage an outraged electorate

---

[1] This article was originally published in the March/April edition of *Crosslines Magazine.*

whipped up by a dramatically presented news story. What may not actually concern a policymaker, for example, is how a war is to be stopped or in whose favor. Here, the argument that television cannot influence policy does not necessarily mean that the media is incapable of stopping – or on the other hand prolonging – wars.

In Bosnia, media attention played a major role in preventing the complete defeat of the Sarajevo government forces. Yet the same attention did nothing to prevent the destruction of Grozny. It still remains for governments to produce the political will to change the course of conflicts, and the influence of the media may not be enough to do that even if it is able to prompt some act of political expediency. Media effort is not guaranteed to influence conflicts. Even if there are no guarantees, should the media still make every effort to stop wars?

Everyone takes sides in conflicts. But whatever their views on the power of television to influence events, the old-fashioned "who, what, where, why, and how" news reporters would set aside their personal feelings in an attempt to report accurately what is happening. This is professionalism at work. It is a recognition of the role of a reporter – to report.

Today, this professionalism is being undermined. The struggle for power and influence among network reporters is as fierce as it is in any government. There is also a battle for ratings and advertising revenue. Cutting costs to feed price wars tends to hit the foreign news budgets first. This leads to a reduced number of correspondents abroad, so that the media often does not report in-depth from many regions until a crisis has spiraled out of control.

These factors may lead to healthy free-market competition, but they also lead to declining standards in news reporting because effort is applied to maintaining an image rather than actual reporting. The sensation is preferred to the fact; the instant reaction is preferred to the considered reflection.

Reporters flock to conflict zones once the crisis breaks. Many arrive lacking an understanding of history and current events and are required to gain the necessary knowledge rapidly in order to file their reports. Some do this more diligently than others but it is surely impossible for one reporter to keep abreast of events in conflicts.

The individual reporter cannot hope to gather enough material to maintain an impartial viewpoint. The reporter is bombarded by propaganda and is often unable to cross frontlines to check facts. There comes a time when the reporter begins to identify with one party to the conflict simply because the weight of information received is very one-sided.

The difficulties are made worse by the thirst of news desks for stories that must be delivered before those of competing organizations. Dry facts and policy explanations do not make interesting television. Stories about individual suffering do and those who suffer more receive more media attention. This has a distorting effect. Instant responses to images of suffering may cloud an appreciation of the underlying causes of a conflict, which in turn can delay the search for lasting solutions. Instant news, and the demands for action that so often accompany it, may be denying us time for reflection.

Reporters are dispatched with briefs to uncover atrocities committed by one side. Somehow in this process the misdeeds of the other side are diluted. Right and wrong, and the attribution of blame, is decided on utilitarian grounds. Whoever tugs at the media's heartstrings first wins the propaganda war. But

this lack of balance may lead to one side in a conflict losing faith in international efforts to mediate fairly.

The change in reporting styles – the demands imposed by the requirement to produce instant news and analysis (how often does a live TV interview with a reporter in the field add significantly to an understanding of the situation?) and the emergence of the reporter as a personality – promotes the reporter to a position as an advocate. It appears that news reports must have a point of view. The reporter must take sides overtly or implicitly. Is this a change for the better?

An additional problem for television is that it needs pictures to tell the news story. In the absence of those pictures, it has to substitute material from archives or other sources. This may be justified on the grounds that the images selected fairly illustrate the real situation.

The dangers of this approach are clear. The first is the notion that, in the pursuit of a greater truth, a substitute image can pass for a fair representation of facts. If this is accepted, then it means that facts may be set aside if they do not confirm the greater truth. But truth is a matter of perception until the facts are marshaled to support it. Ignoring or bypassing facts distorts the truth.

A second danger is that the unscrupulous can use this weakness to promote falsehoods and misinformation. In Bosnia, figures produced by the government in Sarajevo were accepted and broadcast with not nearly as much skepticism as greeted similar information coming from the Bosnian Serb leadership in Pale.

Television news professionals should not allow themselves to become instruments of policy. Independence and balance must be preserved, more so when an ever increasing number of people, movements, governments, and international organizations are aware of the power of the media in forming public opinion and are working towards making sure that their view is the one presented.

Once a journalist has set for himself the goal of stopping or influencing wars, it is a short step to accepting that any means to achieve that end are justified. At that stage, it becomes possible to use the good lie, if it leads to a greater truth. Lies then become more important that the truth. There can be no greater betrayal of journalistic standards. Journalists and news organizations should stand up for the truth, not compromise it.

The role of television news is to report the facts. Within the media, there are opportunities for opinions to be expressed, and the distinctions between news reporting, news analysis, and comment have to be maintained. These distinctions must also be made clear to the audience. Television news must regulate itself; those who work in it must decide between political commitment or commitments to the standards of fair reporting.

There is a way in which the media in general, and television in particular, can play a part in preventing or influencing conflicts. This lies in producing fair and accurate reports that inform the audience. Otherwise, the media can have no role in trying to positively or negatively influence conflicts, but only in fighting them on behalf of one side against the another. And that is the job of the soldier, not the reporter.

III
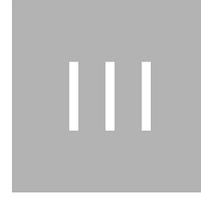
CASE STUDIES:
THE PRESS AND DIVERSITY

The role of the press in covering Nigeria's hydra-headed ethnic conflicts continues to generate controversy. For the press, the coverage of the recrudescent Ijaw-Ilaje conflict, which dominated headlines most of 1998, was an all-comers affair. Newspapers, magazine, radio , and television stations sought to sell the exclusive angles and stories manifested by the event as the orgy of violence and arson continued.

Soon after, the reports began to take on a life of their own. Statistics citing the number of victims rose exponentially. Reports of conflicts began to tilt, depending on which sources were friendly to the reporter. The prospect of balanced coverage was undermined by the risks that such suspicious initiatives exposed the reporter to the hands of overzealous parties in the conflict.

In the heat of this war, the *Guardian* wrote an editorial on October 5, 1998 reviewing the genesis of the hostilities and offering solutions to a way out. But the *Guardian's* editorial team, apparently uncomfortable with the way the press was reporting the incident, also took a look in the mirror on behalf of all press. Its verdict: "the mass media have not helped matters at all. Their sensational reports speak of massacres, of communities razed by 'marauding armed youths.' Frightening fatality figures are mentioned, some as high as 500. Other reports speak of over 100,000 rendered homeless. Yet these statistics are attributed to sources which have political reasons to be alarmist."

These alleged unprofessional practices of journalists in covering the Ijaw-Ilaje conflict seem to have reared their ugly heads during the spate of other inter-ethnic violence or communal clashes that broke out all over the country in recent times, drawing much concern from professionals and readers alike. Still, the *Guardian*, in its pacifism, unwittingly underplayed the positive role that the press has played in managing ethnic clashes and seemed oblivious of the various influences that shape the stories.

Considering Nigeria's recent experience, ethnic clashes would most likely continue to recur because the state has been unable to generate and sustain allegiance. Thus, indigenous ties have become viable stepping-stones in the struggle of various ethnic constituents for political and economic power. But it is to the credit of the press that it performs the crucial role of alerting the government to the looming dangers of communal imbroglio before tension explodes into war.

No fewer than 35 major ethnic clashes have occurred since 1981; in most cases, the press reports the buildup of these clashes by drawing the readers' attention to the issues at stake and the personalities involved. For instance, on May 27 of this year, the *Punch* alerted the nation to a looming conflict in Niger State. The reporter, Inuwa Bala, reporting from Minna, captured the situation thus: "Tension is building in Niger State following renewed conflict over the control of Makara, a town carved out as a neutral land by the government." The correspondent's reports indicated that the peoples of Kontagora and Bida have been seeking to control the area and alleged that a recent reaction by armed police might have been initiated by one of the factions.

Also, on April 15 of this year, the *National Concord* reported growing hostilities in Ilorin, Kwara State, over the retention of the Ilorin emirate. According to its account, the Yoruba, under the aegis of Oke Moro/Oke-Asa Development Union, asked the government to discontinue the system or risk communal

[1] Mr. Kehinde Bamigbetan is political editor of The *Punch* in Lagos. He also edits the professional magazine *Fourth Estate* from which this article was culled.

crisis. Their word: "As a matter of fact, the heavens can only fall if the government continues to disregard us and remain insensitive to our cause."

And, a few days after the Ijaw-Yoruba clash broke out in the ghetto called Ajegunle in Lagos, the *Guardian* indicated on November 11 that the situation could get worse. Its report, "Ijaw youths threaten reprisal against OPC," apparently provided the government and security agencies enough information to assist them in nipping a fresh crisis in the bud. According to the *Guardian's* Chido Okafor, based in Warri, the aggrieved Ijaw youths gave the OPC a seven-day ultimatum to produce two of their men allegedly kidnapped during the weekend.

How the government and security agencies react to these warning signals tends to shape the buildup of the crisis. In most cases, these reports are often filed away in cabinets, where they gather dust, as the crisis balloons. However, when authorities have followed up on the reports, it has been possible to avert the looming clash. One such rare example is the Ilorin report. Security operatives picked up the report and followed it. In September, they were able to avert a communal clash. Reporting how their intervention saved the day, *National Concord's* Kwara State correspondent, Wole Adedeji, wrote that "they swiftly averted what could have been a bloody clash between the Ilorin Descendants Union and Indigenes of Moro Local Government."

However, these incidents are often left to degenerate and clashes that could have been averted break out. For instance, after the Ijaw youths' threat, they finally carried out their reprisal by killing 12 policemen, mostly Yoruba, at Odi. Considering the prevalence of these communal clashes, it would be expected that media organizations would have clear editorial policies on their coverage. But, as the *Fourth Estate* found out, most editors use the age-old rule of thumb espoused in the code of ethics.

Gbenga Adefaye, editor of the *Vanguard* newspaper, told the *Fourth Estate* that the newspaper expects its reports to reflect the opinion of both sides to the conflict, to ascertain the facts of the situation and to report neutrally. He admits, however, that this is easier said than done. Parties to communal clashes tend to recognize the role of the media in propagating their cause and often seek to compromise reporters to present reports favorable to their cause.

There is also the problem of the reporter's affinity. Since newspapers often deploy reporters with a fair knowledge of the situation on the ground to the states, their familiarity with influential people makes it easy for parties in conflict to seek their support. Adefaye says the *Vanguard* manages this problem by ensuring that reporters who cover conflict zones are not from the areas. When they do, people from other ethnic groups join them to balance their reports and to ensure the newspaper's neutrality.

Still, once the conflagration deepens, it ignites a media war of sorts. In the competition to be first with the news, a gory contest of depicting horrid scenes and displaying alarming figures begins at fever pitch. This seems to be the period when even editors let down their guards as each medium applies the shock treatment to persuade readers to part with money. A sample of these headlines: "5 injured in Abuja ethnic clash," the *Guardian* 10/9/99; "7 Ijaw youths shot dead," *Vanguard* 22/4/99; "Another 15 killed in Ijaw/Ilaje crisis," *Nigerian Tribune* 30/1/98; "20 killed in clash," *Daily Times* 7/5/99; "Ilaje/ Ijaw clash, 13 killed," *Daily Sketch* 30/11/98; "50 killed as Ilaje and Ijaw renew hostilities," the *Guardian* 3/8/99; "16 killed in Lagos Mayhem," *Post Express* 10/9/99. Significantly, only a quarter of the reports attributed the figures to

police or government authorities. Most were attributed to competent sources or parties to the crisis.

For the enterprising reporter, covering both sides of a conflict can be stress-fully illuminating, as Gbenga Fayemiwo, national *Concord's* correspondent in Osun State who covered the Ife-Modakeke conflit found out. At a stage in the raging feud, he discovered that many corpses brought from the battlefield by a party to the crisis betrayed no traces of cuts or gun shots in their bodies. But he did notice tiny black spots, particularly on the back. This confounded him and he sought to unravel the mystery. A conversation between two people on the opposing side, who were inclined to give him information, gave him the clue: The other side had resorted to using rice as bullets. This gave birth to Fayemiwo's exclusive story in the *Sunday Concord.*

Another aspect of the coverage of ethnic conflicts that has generated a lot of controversy is the use of pictures. Emphasizing the crucial importance of pictures, the International Organization of Journalists published the "Textbook of Press Photography" in 1981. It states that "the pictorial communication supplements the verbal news by making it more graphic and thus enabling readers to form a more precise picture of an event. Photography has one very important feature in fulfilling this task, it records reality with unsurpassed precision, or as is often said, with documentary faithfulness."

To observers, a key element in the reaction of Kano residents to the Hausa/Yoruba clash in Sagamu, Ogun State was the pictorial elaboration of this event by the media. There were gory, blood-chilling pictures of dead victims packed in trucks and station wagons apparently being conveyed to the mortuary. Although there were no visible marks to indicate the ethnic identity of the victims, the pictures served the disruptive purpose of rousing hatred between the divided. The result was the reprisal in Kano, which again left several dead. Media analysts, considering the impact of the pictures, believe the press editors should have exercised restraint in printing the horrid scenes. However, this lesson seemed to have been learned in the outbreak of inter-ethnic clash in Ketu, another suburb of Lagos.

Adefaye gave *Fourth Estate* the opinion shared by other editors: The emphasis of the pictures used by most newspapers during the Ketu clash was comparable to the salacious potrayal of the gory Sagamu incident. A large chunk of press space is filled with reporting on the efforts of the government and non-governmental bodies toward ameliorating conflicts and seeking lasting solutions. In the Sagamu crisis, the visit of the governor, ministers, and later, the president, and the decision to assist victims with relief materials, were published and the material's distribution monitored by the press.

The press played other positive roles. News features were initiated to explain the issues at stake from the accounts of the witnesses and victims. The paper also began to use editorial columns to review news reports and present pacifist options to end the gradual depopulation of the nation. For instance, *This Day* said on October 21, 1998, in an editorial titled "Again, Communal Clashes," "It is obvious that fundamental solutions are needed. The machinery for undoing all the damage done by the ill-advised creation of local councils should be put in place immediately. Since the issues are essentially local, it is necessary to find solutions at that level. The federal government should explore the possibility of sending social scientists from higher institutions located in these areas to study the problems extensively and come up with effective solution."

Also, the *Nigerian Tribune*, in an editorial titled "State of Emergency; Matters Arising," on November 17 this year, had this to say: "Neither self-righteous paternalism nor righteous indignation will restore inter-ethnic trust. Only continuous dialogue will. When gentlemen and women in the National Assembly are done with their petty bickering, they should spare a thought for the fire that may well consume us all." And the *Guardian*, commenting on the Umuleri Aguleri feud on May 5, last year offered this solution: "The state government should provide the facilities for the peace talks. There should be no difficulty identifying illustrious people and religious leaders to serve as mediators."

As soon as the situation calms down and the fighting stops, the government must take a close look at the recommendations of the 1995 investigation with a view to implementing aspects that can promote lasting peace. As it hurries into the second millennium, Nigeria, overwhelmed by the problems of the past, apparently needs the press not as an undertaker, but as a sympathizer. The problem: Will her leaders listen to the distress signals of the media?

The recent coverage of the Sharia religious crisis in Kaduna State provides a vivid illustration of how the country's diversity ought not to be covered by the media. The debate about media abuse in coverage was first raised by Northern elders and Emirs when, after a meeting in Kaduna, they raised an alarm that media coverage of the events have been unduly "one-sided, unprofessional and unhelpful" in the search for solutions and in the long-term peaceful co-existence in the country.

Arguing that the southern orientation of the media caused bias against the north, they contended that a resolution of the country's problems could be solved only if the press learned not to complicate matters and if the southern media in particular learned an important lesson in preaching tolerance.

The major debate between the north and the south in Nigeria has always been whether the media, mostly based and owned in the south, could be fair and objective in dealing with matters outside its region. Since this is a deeply-held perception, it has always been difficult to suggest that the mix of experiences that makes up the peoples of the south is itself so diverse that they cannot be narrowly streamlined as "southern." To be sure, the south is diverse; for instance, one southwestern part is a mix of Christians, Moslems and other religions while another southeastern region is largely Christian. A huge gulf of ethnic differences separates them all.

There are, certainly, problems in coverage. Generally, newspapers tend to be purely reportorial in their attitude to coverage, sacrificing analysis, and in that process failing in a fundamental obligation to offer their readership the critical choices upon which they might make intelligent decisions. Newspapers often do not engage in a lot of analysis or interpretation. This gap, plus a penchant for the deification of personalities, opens the window for bias and misrepresentation.

A particular issue that comes to mind is how the media handles the issue of photo captioning. The captions, for instance, that accompanied two pictures published in a news magazine featured this outrage: The first picture, of a Christian archbishop from the south had the caption "*The presidency must take a stand on this issue*," while the second, a photograph of the governor of Zamfara state, who was the first to introduce the Sharia code of law, carried the caption "*The 'high priest' of Sharia*." The first caption was a statement made by the archbishop while the second was the journalist's opinion of the governor. In reporting the issue, it was usual for some journalists to use the expressions "*Sharia governors, high priest of Sharia, Sharia jihadists*," et cetera. Indeed, in one story, a reporter described the governor of Zamfara State as "*a nondescript governor of a barren Zamfara who has become the leading light of the new Islamic states of the north*." These expressions so colored the reports that it is fair to describe the media as behaving as if they were undertaking an evangelical crusade.

We Need To Discuss The Sharia Issue

The launch of Sharia in Zamfara State had generated a lot of controversy. Dr. Ayesha Imam, Executive Director of Baobab, a women's human rights non-government organization, expresses the position of women in this interview with Kayode Ogunbunmi.

Excerpts:⎤ One of the major issues plaguing the nation is the introduction of Sharia. As a women's human rights advocate, what is your assessment of this development?

As someone from a Muslim community as well as a women's human rights advocate, I am very worried that women are being restricted. I feel there is a lot of confusion around the issue and a lot of emotions also. And one of the reasons is because if you are somebody who is a Muslim, you are not expected to say anything against the introduction. The moment you mention Sharia, all sorts of discussion is closed. The moment you raise objection on any issue, people label you anti-Islam. All that is sheer intimidation, because the whole idea of law is that it is something that has to be reasoned, debated, and discussed. There is a famous incident involving Sheik Malik, who wrote the treatise on which Muslim laws in Nigeria are supposed to be based. The caliph of his time was so impressed that he said he would make Malik's suggestions law for the whole country. But Malik said no, they could not be imposed. He wanted it discussed, and if a Muslim does not agree with his reasoning, they were not obliged to accept it as law. If Malik could say that, how can anybody in Nigeria say that to merely question what they are doing by introducing Sharia makes us anti-Islam.

There appears to be general support for Sharia in the north. Would you ascribe this to fear?

There is a lot of hysteria, intimidation, and politicking around the issue. Take the issue of Danbazzau. He was well respected, and people know he stands for justice and equity since the time of independence. Yet, because he dared say publicly that we need to be cautious, he was so haunted that he had to buy space in a newspaper to say he is not anti-Sharia. And he is not the only one. Justice Bello said so in his paper at the conference on Sharia held in Zaria. Even the Emir of Kano said we should be careful because not everything that people call Sharia should be accepted.

You are one of the few people who have expressed the need for caution. What are your fears?

First, the manner of passing the bills. Laws are serious things. There must be a lot of discussion before these things are done. But the lawmakers don't appear to have taken it seriously. They didn't publish the text of the bills, so people don't know what the bills say.

We appear to have been so used to military life that we don't realize there should be open discussion of issues. The bill in Zamfara State did not say anything about women not riding in public bus with men. So, where did the state governor get that from? Is he a military ruler with the power to decree such things? Where did he get the idea that it is included in Sharia that men and women are not to ride together in public transport? This is the kind of intimidation that took place when we issued the press release in which we expressed our worry that the introduction of Sharia will violate women's human rights. The newspaper headlines said we were denouncing and condemning Sharia while in fact we were only cautioning against its use in discriminating against women.

So you are aggrieved with the press reports, too?

Yes, and for two reasons. It will mean that we have been condemned, even by the press, for being against Sharia, and the people in Muslim communities will not want to listen to whatever we have to say because they see us as against them.

The major thing that we worry about is the content of the law. Sharia is just the Arabic word for law. It refers to that which human beings put together to govern their existence and how they live. It is done by human beings, and anything human beings do is subject to discussion by other human beings. None of the schools of laws were elaborated upon until after the prophet died. They were made by human beings, though they did this in view of their religion. Those who wrote the laws were not divine and neither are today's Ulamas. I hope they will not claim to be divine. So the laws should be debated by all of us. In 1957, Yisa Wali affirmed that democracy should be part of how a Muslim community should be ruled. It is not that someone, or even a group of few people, will say, "This is the law, we are the ones who know best." It must be thoroughly debated without using intimidation to keep people quiet.

But Sharia is said to be a divine injunction on how people should live their life. Sharia is people's interpretation of how to put divine laws into practice in their own cultural, political, and economic context. Because it is human-based, humans should discuss it. It is very worrisome that, apart from any argument about democracy, this is a society that just emerged into a democracy with regulations about how laws are made and what should be in the laws. It is surprising that the president and the attorney general, who should ensure that citizens are protected, are throwing up their hands and saying there is nothing they can do. Take, for example, the local government chairman, who said unmarried women will be sacked. That is unconstitutional, and yet the president would say nothing against it. Does it mean they don't care about women's rights? It is not only unconstitutional, it is not justifiable as Sharia. Khadija, the prophet's first convert and wife, was already a successful trader before she married the prophet. I wonder if the people who today condemn those who take issue with some aspects of Sharia would have allowed her to work. If people can take their anti-women prejudices and call it Sharia, it is frightful. If you see the practice of Sharia in other countries, you will see the possibilities for protecting women's rights. Under Sharia, women rights could be either violated or protected. So, we have to know what is involved.

Zamfara State and other states in the north lack roads, healthcare, and education, and they are worrying themselves about taxis. What kind of priority is that? And from what we heard, the support for it was not spontaneous. The government actually solicited it.

You have been to the north a couple of times since the controversy started. What is the mood of the people, especially the women?

There is a range of reactions. One is the uncritical, "Yes, it is good." Because as Muslim women in a country where religion is politicized, they cannot say anything against it. Then there are a number of women who are saying that what is happening is not right and that it is not fair. But these groups are afraid to speak up. Some other women are also exploring ways of ensuring that the laws not violate women's rights.

Some people argue that the Sharia issue is a fad that will soon go away.
What is your opinion?

There are two or three ways it could go. One, the sort of intimidation that stopped people from discussing it will continue. So, the place will continue to be autocratic. The second possible result is something I hope won't happen: that it will provoke some states to claim to be more Islamic than others and lead other states to react in ways that could divide the country. What will Muslim people in Oyo, Edo, or even Cross Rivers do if this happens? The third scenario is the one I hope will happen: that people will overcome the intimidation and insist on laws that are just and that respect the rights of women and other people. But it will mean we will all have to speak up and not be afraid.

You are one of those who have been speaking up. What has been your experience?

At times, there have been indirect threats. At other times, there have been people who say, "Don't talk because you or your family or organization could be physically harmed." When we disagree with them, we want to talk to them, but when they disagree with us, they want to use physical power.

There are some other people who have thanked us for speaking up for them and for ourselves. So I keep going. People should be wary of rushing in to proclaim their holiness as if one's holiness depended upon one's announcing it.

Today, the Sierra Leonean media is at a crossroads, as nine years of civil war has forced upon it a new image: that of a media so ill-equipped that we must now admit that its only legitimate image will be defined by its sharply conflicting perspectives. Truth, through the media, has been the first causality of our recent travails. Eager to ensure the defeat of the Revolutionary United Front rebel army led by Foday Sankoh, and to work toward a quick end to the war, the media sold itself to the governments propaganda without noticing it in the least.

Thus on August 19, 2000, the *African Champion* newspaper claimed: "Loyal Forces Enter Kono" while the *New Storm* headlined its lead story: "Gov't Forces Enter Kono." Since this has not been the first time for newspapers to claim successes of the ill-disciplined government soldiers over the RUF bandits of Foday Sankoh, the *Awoko* newspaper of the same day took the liberty of publishing that "RUF Denies Kono Push." Kono, an eastern district rich in diamonds, is 210 miles away from the nations capital, Freetown, and since 1992 has been hotly contested by rebels and loyal forces. The truth, however, has been that the rebels have always beaten back the advances of government forces. The rebels use diamond proceeds from Kono to buy arms and other logistics. Therefore, aware of its futility in wrestling Kono from the hands of rebels, the government sorted out the most ingenious exit strategy – media propaganda. Sadly, this too has been handled poorly.

Since the start of the war in 1991, newspapers have aided government propaganda machinery by over-exaggerating war claims, such as the number of surrendered rebels long before the Lome peace accord of July 1999. In April of 1999, the *Democrat* newspaper published that some eleven thousand rebels had surrendered. Prior to this report, the paper had built a reputation for being "exclusively" in possession of records of surrendered combatants, records that, at the end of the day, cannot be otherwise verifiable. Indeed, as is so well known in Sierra Leone, the *Democrat's* figures hardly add up.

The paper had competitors in this race for the headlines. Between 1991 and the Lome peace accord in 1999, newspapers virtually killed some 80,000 RUF combatants, giving the impression that the war was coming to an end with the possible "extinction" of RUF supporters. This was proved wrong when the RUF entered the city in May of 1997 in the hundreds of thousands with their allies, disgruntled soldiers of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. Though it took almost nine years to disprove the newspaper stories, it took Sierra Leoneans few seconds to understand what it means to be faced with heartless bandits, machetes in hand, flying the flag of an unwelcome revolution even as an unreliable media builds a basis for disinformation, distortions, and mind conditioning.

The major crisis in the Sierra Leonean media today is to understand what role it would play in the context of a deadly conflict. This weakness in the media has also compromised its capacity to respond to the corruption so rampant today that the media has been co-opted into the putrescence. Financial inducement to affect favorable coverage is now the norm, but political patronage too has been a strong current in steering the direction of coverage.

---

[1] David Tom-Baryoh edited the *Punch in Freetown* and in 1999
was a co-recipient of the International Editor of the Year award.

True, professionalism among media practitioners easily gives way to material and other considerations in a society in which half the media outlets are owned by politicians always fighting to outwit their opponents. This was illustrated on August 21, when the *Standard Times* newspaper wrote that Sierra Leone's former High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Prof. Cyril P. Foray had been implicated in the sale of the country's building in London. While Parliament was investigating the matter, the *Democrat* newspaper, partly owned by the accused diplomats younger brother, wrote how the government was embarking on a political witch-hunt. This media practice of patron defence may satisfy the paper's managers, but it does great disservice to the society by weakening their faith in the system and urging the people to seek extra-legal solutions to problems, the kind of solution that leads to further conflicts, wars and chaos.

Another illustration was the *Standard Times* edition of July 27, which carried the report that the director of the Social Action and Poverty Alleviation (SAPA), a World Bank sponsored project, has built a sub-standard school for displaced kids, suggesting the cheating and endangering of the lives of the pupils. The paper published documents to support the story. The next day, three other newspapers ran the high academic and job profile of the accused director, presenting her as a victim of circumstances and target of job seekers bent upon destroying her high-earned image. Invariably, such a method of "attack, defend, and collect" journalism has often led to friction and discredit among journalists on one hand, and disregard for the profession by the general populace on the other. And as the *Concord Times* of August 21 cautioned, "unless and until media practitioners separate their interest from their new stories, it would be very difficult to give the usually required credibility that certain news items deserve, be they political, war or economic stories."

On the whole, it is a tough challenge for the Sierra Leonean society and its press. There is no united position within the profession to push for spirited challenge against this oddity and to help save the core values of the press. A good many media houses refuse to challenge the negative excesses of their colleagues (a case of dogs don't eat dogs) and in the strangeness of this attitude, such media houses have resigned to tolerating the worst attitudes of the political class, especially those who are opposed to the critical sections of the media. On August 19, the *Citizen* newspaper, taking a middle balance in the highly contested argument over the failure of the Tejan Kabbah government, called for an interim government after March 2001. It wrote, "Those who hold the view that we must not rush to elections come March 2001 are not wrong, and neither are those against the motion. Let the debate continue so that we may be seen to be a democratic state, even if the argument of the proponents may seem nonsense."

The medias malignancy and neglect in Rwanda

How the international media missed the real story – and local media directed the carnage.

The skulls are still there. They are bleached now and covered in long grass, brilliant red flowers, and scraps of the brightly colored clothes once worn by the women of Ntarama Mission in Rwanda, where about 1,500 people were butchered in 1994 while the world and the media averted their eyes. About one million people were massacred in a low-tech civil war and genocide that lasted a mere 10 weeks.

Almost three years later, visitors to this memorial to the worlds swiftest holocaust wonder aloud how it happened and why we hear only snippets of information – if we hear any at all – about the ethnic cleansing that is spreading through Central and East Africa. The ethnic card is politics and economics and is destabilizing several countries in Africa and elsewhere, creating millions of refugees, spreading disease, and increasing arms peddlers profits.

I first came to Ntarama in 1994, just days after the raging Hutu militias had killed women, children, and old men in the church, smashing them with nail-studded clubs and then finishing them off with machetes supplied by British and Chinese farm implement manufacturers. Nobody asked why nearly 100,000 new machetes were imported secretly into Rwanda before the civil war began in April 1994. No gas ovens, furnaces, or hi-tech extermination instruments as in Nazi Germany or the former Yugoslavia; just machetes, clubs, and fragmentation grenades.

It is hard work to kill a person with a club or machete. The killers would have had to "rest" from their "work" as victims lay bleeding at their feet. Most of Rwandas one million victims were killed in this way.

Shattered bones, skulls split like watermelons, mouths drawn back in toothy grimaces, a childs skeleton held in an embrace of death by a mother. They are still there today in Ntarama, mute witnesses to the worlds ignorance, neglect, and complicity.

President Juvenal Habyarimana, Rwandas long-time strongman, died on April 6, 1994, in a fiery plane crash, probably engineered by his own presidential guard and/or agents of foreign powers. There can be little doubt now that his death unleashed a well planned and executed genocide of moderate Hutus and most Tutsis.

It took a while for the international media to catch on. "Just another boring African tragedy" was the attitude, "blacks still killing blacks." Eventually stories of carnage did filter into CNN headquarters in Atlanta, as refugees poured out of Rwanda in unprecedented waves. There were more Rwandans dead or escaped to Zaire or Tanzania than there were alive in the tiny, hilly country. Packs of dogs grew fat on human flesh and the sickeningly sweet stench of death hung over the lush, unharvested fields.

The real story   The media, United Nations agencies, and high-earning aid professionals missed the real story. That is why Central Africa is in massive

---

[1] Hugh McCullum, a Canadian journalist based in Harare and Nairobi, has covered the Great Lakes crisis for several years for various international media

chaos today. Yet we wring our hands or dump tons of tents and potatoes on refugee camps seething with frightened hopeless people, pawns of politicians at home and abroad.

The media missed the genocide, which is why there are 80,000 Rwandese awaiting almost certainly unfair trials, while the UN cannot bring one person to justice at its War Crimes Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania.

The thin, sloppy analysis in the international news media ignored German and Belgian colonial history which played Hutus and Tutsis against each other until they became blood enemies. The genocide of 1994 was the worst, but not the first, of the massacres that have wracked Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Zaire since independence in the early 1960s.

The media missed the deliberate conditions put in place by the extremist Hutus, aided and abetted by arms sellers from Britain, France, China, and South Africa delivering their goods through surrogates in Uganda, Zaire and Kenya.

Most of the media missed, and continue to miss, Frances murky role in supporting extremists so that Rwanda would stay French, and Britains pretense that its allies in Uganda and Kenya were supporting conflict on opposing sides. Not to mention that South Africa sold weapons to both sides as well as attempting to broker peace.

In its frenzy to show us horror without analyzing the causes, the media left Africa more tattered in the worlds eyes than ever before, a basket-case continent where people are always killing each other and begging for food.

Perhaps most significant for those of us who are ourselves media practitionersis that we missed the story of how certain media in Rwanda waged a campaign of incitement to ethnic hatred and violence, which created the social and cultural conditions for genocide, a campaign that is now being repeated in Burundi and eastern Zaire.

Killer airwaves   As early as 1992, foreign human rights organizations were criticizing state-owned Radio Rwanda for its scurrilous ethnic attacks on opposition politicians. But it was private-sector commercial radio and television stations that incited mobs to mass ethnic cleansing.

Radio Television Libre Mille Collines (RTLMC) was formed in 1993 by extremists close to Habyarimanas family and became a propaganda success story (although a commercial failure), creating a climate of mass hatred on one side and mass fear on the other. It broadcast a daily stream of anti-Tutsi hate propaganda reminiscent of Goebbels techniques in Nazi Germany and of the anti-Communist vitriol of the McCarthy era in the U.S. Hourly and repetitively, RTLMC referred to the opposition as "traitors who deserved to die" and to Tutsis as "cockroaches and snakes that should be stamped out."

The broadcasts were aimed at convincing an unsophisticated and frustrated audience, poverty-stricken, landless, and unemployed, that their problems were all caused by Tutsis. Individuals identified by name were accused of murdering Hutu babies, and their personal lives and alleged sexual practices were narrated daily.

After the genocide began on April 6, the station regularly broadcast lists of people to be killed.

The power of the radio in village life cannot be overestimated. Highly propagandist broadcasts in French were toned down so as not to offend the diplomatic community. But the broadcasts in peoples common language,

Kinyarwanda, were incendiary and direct, calling continuously for the total extermination of Tutsis. The generally illiterate population, a senior UN peace-keeper noted, "listens very attentively to broadcasts in Kinyarwanda; they hold their cheap little radio sets in one hand and their machetes in the other, ready to go into action once the signal is given."

RTLMC was known as "the killer station" for months before the genocide began. According to Journalists without Frontiers, two weeks into the civil war RTLMC proclaimed on air that "by May 5 (1994) the cleansing of the Tutsi from Rwanda must be completed" and that "their grave is only half-full; who will help us fill the rest?" It stayed on air for months after the war, operating from a mobile transmitter, from Zaire and from Burundi, and has a number of extremist successors today.

Perhaps one of RTLMCs least understood roles was that of preparing the mass exodus of refugees into Tanzania and Zaire in June and July of 1994. Its message was that all Hutus would now be massacred in revenge, that retreat was only tactical, and that refugees would be treated well by international aid agencies. The dubious theory of aid as neutral complemented extremist propaganda.

"Press freedom?"   Where does press freedom end and incitement to genocide begin? A thorough investigation of the influence of the mass media is required. How did the international community, in the name of press freedom, allow a station like RTLMC to exist? Surely "information dissemination" has its limits – and we in the media have a responsibility to guard them.

At the beginning of December, I went to Gihanga, a small area twenty kilometers northwest of Bujumbura. Because the majority of the people who live there were Tutsis like me, I felt safe and thought I would be able to cover the massacres between Hutus and Tutsis that had just broken out there. On the road where the confrontations had taken place, I watched helplessly as a group of four or five Tutsi boys with machetes cut the throats of two small Hutu girls who were six or seven years old. It was as if the boys were cutting down a tree trunk. The blood of the two girls gushed like a waterfall, their cries begging for mercy from killers who had none. It cannot be described. Their lives were extinguished before me.

I have never forgotten the image and I consider myself a criminal because I did nothing to save them. What shocked me even more was that these young Tutsi killers approached me, laughing, just to tell me, "We had to kill them because their parents killed our parents, our brothers, our sisters. But you must not broadcast it on the radio, and you shouldn't write about it either."

I didn't say anything. I was on the verge of tears. I was sorry that I was there, present at the deaths of children whose only sin was to be Hutus on the road with these Tutsi killers. I was sorry that I had had no way to save them. I saw even worse all along the journey that day – dozens of children's bodies – and I realized that it was because the children were unable to flee and no one would protect them. Even the police were with the soldiers, drinking and yelling, laughing. They were almost all drunk, and I was struck by how happy they seemed.

I knew some of these police from college. One of them said to me, "These Hutus are criminals; they have killed thousand of Tutsis since the death of President Ndadaye, and we must do the same." I though they were incredibly stupid: professionals of justice who promoted vengeance. I felt lost and tense. On one hand, the Hutus had massacred a great many members of my extended family. In the two days after the death of the president, they had killed 102 of my relatives in the central part of the country – including my aunts, uncles, nephew, and cousins.

One evening toward the end of October – I'm not really sure of the date anymore – I had begun to realize that the tradition of keeping secrets form each other about our people's misdeeds, and the wholesale protection of collective interests, were the diseases of my society. I also began to realize that they were incompatible with my work as a journalist. I told myself that my father was a victim of this manipulation. He belonged to the colonial generation, he was uneducated, he had lived through the conflicts between Hutus and Tutsis from the very beginning. They began with the Hutus genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1959, which had left its mark on Tutsi imaginations in Burundi. It must be added that the Tutsi genocide of Hutu intellectuals in 1972 left a similar mark on the imaginations of Hutus.

Not being educated, my father didn't know that the Rwandan Hutu intellectuals, encouraged by the Belgians, had put out a false rumor that the Tutsis had killed the king. This rumor led Hutus to believe it was necessary to rise against the

---

[1] This article was originally published in the March/April edition of *Crosslines Magazine.*

Tutsis in revenge. As for myself, I belonged to another generation, and I refused either to be manipulated or to be the manipulator. The Hutu journalists at the station told me that they supported my efforts, but they admitted that they couldn't broadcast any reports on atrocities committed by the Hutus out of fear of Hutu extremists on one side and the military on the other. Professionally, I realized, we were all being made powerless by the structure of the conflict.

Their willingness to remain silent as journalists haunted me. I was very curious about this and asked them why they did so. Their answer was that they understood why the Hutus were killing: It was the only way for them to get back at the Tutsis and to fight against their arrogance. I will never forget what one of them said to me,

> You Tutsis are all arrogant, you crush us, you are in the minority, and things are not going to go on this way. If the Hutus kill 100 Tutsis each day, how many Tutsis will be left?

I began to discover that each of my colleagues at that station had been harboring secret hatred toward another. I felt like vomiting when I saw them exchange their hypocritical smiles. How could a poor Tutsi peasant crush, step on, and dominate an evolved, educated Hutu journalist? How could he so threaten the interests of a government official that he would deserve death? How could one justify the deaths of those Hutu children I had seen slaughtered like sheep? Were they planning to exterminate the Tutsis? Why were those little girls dead? All these questions ran through my head, with no answers. I could not understand this hatred or its origin. I especially could not understand why the hatred was so great at the highest levels of society. I did not understand.

I was able to publish my report on Gihanga, which had been censored by the radio, in my newspaper, *La Semaine*. I described everything I had seen at Gihanga: the massacres of the children, the behavior of the police. I illustrated the attitude of the politicians who propagated rumors to stir up more violence. In the same issue an editorial by Patrice Ntibandetse, my old journalism professor and one of our university's more revered teachers, was even more critical of Burundi's intellectuals for their part in fomenting such hatred.

> The cream of Burundian society has just shown, in the most bitter way, its total incapacity to run the country. Our thousands of intellectuals, for whom Burundi has given blood in order to train in humanism, have not gone beyond the stage of the vendetta, the way of our ancestors. Primitives we have been and we still are at the dawn of the twenty-first century. I kill you, you kill me, we kill each other, and then?

Reactions to my own article were as surprising as they were bizarre. My wife told me that everywhere she went, Tutsis told her that I was a traitor. She told me that she had much the same impression because she felt I hadn't been able to control my anger in the article. She asked me to stop doing this kind of reporting because it was going to create useless enemies for me. My brothers and some of my friends said the same thing.

Others told me that they liked the article. Many of them admitted to me in private that they were opposed to the killing, but they were afraid to denounce it publicly. And as violence followed upon violence with greater intensity in parts of the city, *La Semaine* published witnesses' accounts from every side denouncing the killing, though always under the cover of anonymity, fearful of naming names. I realized then that the people of Burundi had been taken

hostage by invisible forces, but also that many were cowards, poor, passive, and terrified.

Just as the army massacred Hutus in the city of Bujumbura, Hutu militia had been massacring their Tutsi neighbors in the areas where Tutsis were in the minority, and the Tutsi soldiers, with the support of the army, were doing the same thing in the areas where the Tutsis were in the majority. The press vied with one another in calls for murder or to justify the resulting massacres, depending on which ethnic group they were defending. Suddenly the conflict had redesigned the society along lines of violence and political survival. *Dawn of Democracy*, a Hutu newspaper, did not hesitate to justify the massacre of over 50,000 Tutsis in October 1993, just after the death of the president, an act perpetrated by Hutu peasants under the manipulation of Hutu party leaders. In an article that appeared earlier that year in April 1993, *Dawn* had even foreshadowed the slaughter:

> Oppressed for a long time, the Hutu people, like a spring too tightly wound, have expressed their withheld anger against the oppressor, and if it has to be done again, it will be done again.

Articles and analysis published in *Dawn* presented the Tutsis and the army as criminals to be killed. Meanwhile, the Tutsi papers weren't gentle either. Their own pieces aimed at galvanizing the Tutsis against the Hutu terror. According to newspapers such as the *Crossroads of Ideas*, the Hutus dreamt only of exterminating the Tutsis. In January 1994, *Crossroads* wrote

> All Tutsis must be very clear-headed about confronting the Hutus, using their methods, because they are not the only ones who know how to use a machete… if not, they will roast us all on the spit.

In some of its publications, *Crossroads* also expounded its racist ideology towards the Hutus, saying that Hutus had ugly faces and using physiognomy as a means to identify and dehumanize them in the eyes of the Tutsi.

Meanwhile, the most powerful medium -- Burundi's state radio station --became the arena in which political parties and extremist factions would compete with each other ideologically through "news" that was no more than communiqués read by journalists. Hutu journalists at the station were reduced to silence, and two of them were assassinated: Makobanya in February 1994, and Alexis Banruatuyaga in September 1994. The ones who were left were those who accepted having to remain silent. Others went into exile in neighboring countries and became a powerful force at a clandestine "hate radio" station based in Congo (the former Zaire), only twenty-five kilometers from Bujumbura. The radio station, called Radio Voice of the People, broadcast only in order to rouse the Hutus against the Tutsis.

I began then to reflect on why most of my fellow journalist did not want to mobilize in order to help change things or to reduce the tensions. My answer was that they had never been close to the majority themselves and that the structure of media in Burundi was a bureaucratic superstructure meant to subdue and reduce innovation. As employees of the state, the journalists had never learned to serve the public. Their only route to success and security in Burundi had been a position in public administration, and the radio was a training ground for working in the government. The journalists maneuvered in this circle, serving their ethnic, regional, or clan authority, hoping to elbow themselves into a nice little spot as director, or as ambassador. But by getting so mixed up in politics, they ended up feeling more like politicians than journalists.

At the time of the Hutu democratic victory, Hutu journalists figured that their time of privilege had come and that Tutsi colleagues were looking at their own sunset. They were engaged in fanatical causes led by political leaders of their ethnicity. I did not want to get involved in this game because I detested the condition of our society, which was brought about by political military authorities and their habitual manipulation and corruption.

Some of my Tutsi colleagues hated me, but they also respected me. They considered me an idealist, and sometimes they circulated that I was Hutu, which was a grave insult to my mother, who was afraid of the Hutus and actually hated them. My Hutu colleagues wanted to use me, explaining that the Hutu cause was a just one. But for me, I understood the game all too well by now: They were all the same, and I was different.

This state of the press, and especially of the radio, made me sick, and ashamed of myself. I was ashamed to go pick up my government paycheck at a time when taxpayers were continuing to die without anyone making the least effort to bring about peace. After much reflection, I decided in June 1994 to leave my job at the national radio and to concentrate exclusively on writing for *La Semaine*. I felt useless in radio. I had no influence to change the *status quo*, even though I was convinced that radio, if it would just play its role, was the only medium really capable of diminishing tensions.

The paper paid me almost nothing, less that 100 dollars a month. I had heavy bills because I was renting two houses, one for my mother and my two little sisters and another for me and my small family. Life was hard, but still it was good because I loved what I was doing. Even if the newspaper's readership was small, 3,000 total, my conscience felt at peace. I was serving a little at something and able to work according to my own conscience and professional standards.

"Love Under the Machete and Bullets" was my last article for *La Semaine* before it closed after receiving repeated death threats. Published in mid-August 1994, the article told the story of a mixed couple from Muyinga, in the northeastern region of Burundi, that was separated by the war. I had traveled to Muyinga in a convoy with the American ambassador at the time, Bob Krugger, and there I had met a woman refugee named Leonie Iconayigize in one of the Tutsi refugee camps visited by the ambassador. I decided to center my reporting for the paper on her story:

> I don't know why those Hutus were hunting me down. I married a Hutu, I have brought Hutus into the world, on my back I am carrying a Hutu," she told me. Then she cried, "I have to say this; Saidi, my husband, has to know this. He cannot come see me without risking his life. I cannot run the risk and go out into the Hutu area, but I love him, and he loves me, too, I know he does.

She was crying. Across the story of this woman, the suffering of thousands of Burundians is spread. A people with the same language, same culture, who'd intermarried and mingled as neighbors and co-workers, were now divided because of differences among its elite. Even now, those families are separated and live in solitary anguish.

Macedonia is one of the few republics of the former Yugoslavia that is still at peace. But the outward stability in this tiny, mountainous nation is deceptive. Tensions between the majority Orthodox Macedonian Slavs and the large Albanian Muslim minority run high and there is little interaction across ethnic lines. As a nation in transition from socialism to capitalism, Macedonia also lacks many of the institutions that support democracy, such as a fully independent court system and an independent press. It was the latter that brought me to this obscure Balkan republic last summer.

In June 1995, I traveled to the Macedonian capital of Skopje, where I spent the month helping a team of local Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish journalists conceptualize, report, write, and edit a series of articles that would be published in the Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish language press. The aims were three-fold: To expose journalists in Macedonia to Western-style reporting during an intensive, hands-on workshop; to create an environment, however brief, in which reporters of different ethnicities from different media could work cooperatively and forge bonds of respect, trust and professionalism; and lastly, to spark interest in future multi-ethnic collaborations that might continue after the project ended and I went home.

Experts agree that efforts to resolve ethnic conflict are especially crucial today in Macedonia, which has been known throughout history as "the tinderbox of the Balkans". If the Bosnian war spreads to Macedonia, there is widespread fear that Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, and Serbia – all of whom have historic claims on the region – might be drawn into a larger regional conflict.

It was with these concerns in mind that two U.S. foundations joined forces in 1994 to develop a journalism project that could address ethnic tensions. They were Search for Common Ground, (SCG), a Washington, D.C. based non-governmental organization, and the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media, which is based at New York University. After putting on several workshops and conducting study visits, it became clear that a more hands-on approach was needed to address two vital problems. They were ethnic segregation of the media and – at least from a Western perspective – basic journalistic short-comings. Under contract with SCG, The Center for War, Peace, sketched out a tentative four-week journalism project. They then contacted me.

With a decades experience as a *Los Angeles Times* reporter and a recent Fulbright Fellowship teaching journalism at Skopje University in Macedonia in 1993-94, I was a likely candidate to lead such a project. Prior to leaving the United States, I met with Rob Leavitt, the Centers associate director, to plan strategy and design a project that would tackle Macedonias journalistic short-comings by mixing practical lessons with team reporting across ethnic lines. But for all our preparation, I found that much of the actual project coalesced only after I had arrived in Macedonia and met the participants.

In Skopje, I was introduced to my team: Two Macedonians, one Albanian and one Turkish reporter, which corresponded very roughly to the population breakdown in this small nation of 2.3 million. The reporters had been selected by their editors and freed from staff duties to work exclusively with me throughout June. They would pick the topic of our project and work coopera-

---

[1] The Multi-Ethnic Team Reporting Project, *Nieman Reports,* Summer 1996

tively on each story, with the finished series to be published concurrently in the respective papers under a joint byline. Possibly the stories also would be reprinted in the West.

Under my guidance, the team produced a series they christened "How We Survive", that examined how ordinary citizens of all classes, ethnicities, and religions were faring under tough economic conditions today in Macedonia. We made a conscious decision to stay away from politics, fearing that tackling this topic directly might inflame nationalistic feelings among the reporters and lead to a journalistic stalemate. By contrast, we believed that concern over economic survival resonated universally in Macedonia. The team took to the project with gusto, interviewing ministry officials and street children, slum dwellers and millionaires. The documented the growing heroin trade and the explosion in black market cigarettes. Along the way, they fought intensely among themselves, accused each other of partisan politics, and worried privately that their own ethnic group would come out looking badly in the series. One reporter even threatened to quit. As editor and advisor, I had to act quickly to defuse problems as they arose, mediate conflict, and negotiate solutions that were acceptable to the group. But I quickly learned one thing: Regardless of how much they distrusted each other initially, working cooperatively drew them together. They had to set aside their differences to get the job done, and since they were very excited about the project, they swallowed their pride and kept going.

The breadth and depth of our reporting – unusual for Macedonia – also forced them to confront and shatter stereotypes they might have held about the poor gypsy, the rich Albanian, or the lazy Macedonian bureaucrat. All of a sudden they felt empathy for a member of a group they had heretofore seen only as a stereotype.

At one point Macedonian reporter Julijana Kocovska confided to me, "You know, I am a human being as well as a reporter. I care about the people here. And I realize that only if Albanians get along with Macedonians can we all stay at peace here."

In addition to Kocovska, who worked as an editor at the Macedonian language daily newspaper *Nova Makadonija*, the team consisted of Nazif Zejnullahu of *Flaka e Vellazerimit*, the Albanian newspaper, Seyhan Kain of *Birlik*, the Turkish newspaper and Biljana Bekova of Radio NoMa, a Macedonian language state radio station. (We had attempted to enlist reporters from independent newspapers but were told that editors at the shoestring operations could not spare reporters for an entire month.) On top of their regular salaries, the reporters received an honorarium for participating in the project, which undoubtedly whetted their enthusiasm for the project. Irregardless, within about three weeks, the team produced four main stories and five sidebars. They also took photos, designed a logo, and wrote up an explanatory box to describe the project and its participants. The series began running in mid-July. One reporter even postponed her vacation in order to ensure that the stories sailed smoothly into print. Kocovska and Zejnullahu were so inspired that they asked their editors to undertake a joint investigative project into the countrys growing heroin trade, a type of collaborative reporting across ethnic lines that was unheard of in Macedonia until our project.

We opted to work out of the Search for Common Ground in Macedonia office in downtown Skopje because it was centrally located, had two phone lines, and provided a staffer who could take messages and translate – which was

extremely crucial since our Albanian reporter didnt speak English. Eran Fraenkel, SCG director in Macedonia, sat in on our meetings whenever possible, a boon since he spoke Macedonian, Turkish, and Albanian and understood all three cultures. Likewise, he helped me debrief every few days and provided helpful suggestions throughout the project.

The reporters and I met each morning to discuss how stories were progressing. My initial plan was that the journalists would spend two weeks reporting the stories, one week writing, and one week rewriting. However, things unfolded more slowly. We spent a full three days going over the goals of the project, picking a logo, and hammering out story ideas. Often we had two reporters engaged in a furious debate and two more hanging on the phone, trying to line up interviews. They weren't used to spending weeks developing stories and sources. And when it came time to write, they were proud to dash off their stories in several hours. I urged them to take more time on the second drafts. But clearly this was not something that their papers encouraged or rewarded.

Initially the reporters also were suspicious of each other and of me. They were afraid to suggest their own stories, to critique the suggestions of others, or to contradict anything I said. This was a cultural hurdle: Macedonians find it rude to disagree or speak directly. (You have to ask everything three times before you get a real answer. I would ask them, "Would you like to take a coffee break now?" They would say no, and I would go on with our discussion. Meanwhile, they would be seething inside, dying for a smoke and a coffee and waiting for me to ask them again.) For an American used to a robust exchange of ideas, frank talk, and fast planning, this could be frustrating. I know they would have been much more comfortable had I laid out the game plan for them and assigned them topics. But I felt it crucial to the projects success that they generate the stories and feel responsible for executing them. Initially, many of our ideas were quickly dismissed by the reporters who said, "This is not new for Macedonia. Everybody already knows that." To which I responded:

1. "Everybody talks about it but nobody writes about it so why don't we try to" and

2. "You're right, this is not new but let's present it in a new way, from a new angle".

The reporters were fervent believers in the "one-source, one-story" approach and were shocked that I expected them to interview about 50 people of various classes, ethnicities, and professions during the course of their research. I also urged them to look creatively at stories, to consider spending a night at the border, to chronicle the black market trade or to track a crop from soil to market to show the difficulties faced by farmers. To my delight, the reporters were game. Our Albanian journalist volunteered to hang out at the border and returned with all sorts of great quotes and anecdotes. And our Turkish journalist helped put us in touch with farmers and producers of tobacco. Yet although they developed many sources and leads for future stories, we found it difficult to do groundbreaking journalism in the time we had, especially with the level of skills and resources we had. For instance, our refined and ladylike Turkish reporter, Seyhan Kain, was unequipped by training, temperament, or culture for aggressive, Western-style reporting. "Haven't we done enough interviews yet?" she asked me, after completing three. (At her paper Seyhan wrote political commentary after watching Turkish TV and reading Istanbul newspapers). But we finally settled on the following stories:

1] An economic overview and introduction;

2] how women are faring in the tough economy;

3] the exploitative cycle of tobacco; and lastly,

4] the plight of young people today.

Macedonian customs and culture slowed our work pace. Phone interviews are rare here. Instead, interviews are usually done in person, last three hours, and unfold over numerous cigarettes and Turkish coffees. The reporters were also worried, as they put it delicately, that "journalism in Macedonia and America were not at the same level." They suggested that we send them all to America instead to work at U.S. newspapers. This was a great idea. However, I explained cheerfully that in this case, America had come to them.

But their concerns bring up a point that needs to be addressed for the success of future projects. Most East Bloc journalists I've met have a terrible inferiority complex coupled with a mighty sense of superiority. After attending endless workshops and conferences in recent years sponsored by well-meaning Western organizations, they are understandably prickly about being lectured to by another American journalist. As the editor of *Nova Makadonija* told me: "You know, our reporters are experienced professionals, they have been abroad, they have reported from Paris and London, and while people in the West may think they are "regime reporters" and not real journalists, they are just as competent as you and it annoys us when Westerners come over here and tell us how to work." So it was clear that I had to proceed diplomatically if I meant to introduce them to multi-sourced reporting and man-on-the-street interviews.

Luckily, the project itself paved the way. The reporters loved that it wasn't a static seminar but a hands-on exercise in which they worked side by side with an American journalist. Whenever possible, I accompanied them on interviews, so that when it came time to edit, I knew which great quote or telling statistic they had written down in their notes but left out of the story. That was a wise move, because despite good sources and extensive reporting, the stories required heavy editing. By American journalism standards, many stories lacked structure, displayed poor development of ideas, used page-long quotes, and failed to give examples to back up general statements. Additionally, some reporters inserted editorial and political commentary into their articles. However, since I attended many of the interviews and debriefed reporters daily, it was relatively simple to excise the politics, add context and structure, and find better quotes to illustrate their points. It only took time and patience. And because we had been in the trenches together, the reporters found my editing more palatable.

But we had plenty of heated discussions along the way. As we got into the project, I discovered that they were enamored of statistics and official government sources. They bridled at being asked to do street reporting and found it hard to believe that veteran reporters in the U.S. often drop in without appointments or just show up at cafes or villages to do interviews.

"This is work for young, inexperienced reporters; We are veteran reporters and we should be doing analysis and commentary," Kocovska told me. All of them pointed out to me that it would be a waste of time to interview average workers or peasants since they knew nothing about the economy. True, I responded. But

ask them how many times a month they eat meat, if they can afford their own apartment, or if their factory pays them in cash or script redeemable only at the overpriced company store.

Eventually, the journalists grew to like street reporting. They would descend like locusts on some unsuspecting suburban apartment dweller or cafe denizen and start firing questions and writing down every word, shocked and intrigued by what they found. They developed a little preamble of introduction and found people pleased and eager to talk to them. They also realized that as a team, they gained access to people and places that would have been off-limits to them as individuals because of language or cultural barriers. For instance, the Macedonian reporters were able to interview 10-year-old Albanian boys and girls selling cigarettes at the bazaar because they had an Albanian reporter in tow. It would have been difficult to win the trust of these children otherwise, especially since most Macedonians don't speak Albanian.

To obtain the broadest cross-pollination, I split the reporters into multi-ethnic teams of two to conduct interviews whenever possible. Each was responsible for writing one story with feeds from the others. We spent a lot of time discussing how to balance out stories to include voices from each ethnic group and class and to avoid stereotyping. It paid off. By the project's end, they were coming to me to point out passages in their stories they feared would be insensitive or offensive to another ethnic group.

Our road trips also forged bonds. I asked each reporter to organize a day trip so we could travel and talk to people outside Skopje. One day, we were gone from 8 am until midnight, hitting a Turkish tobacco farming village, a tobacco processing factory and a city near the Bulgarian border known for its wealthy businessmen. At the village, our Turkish reporter arranged interviews with tobacco farmers who treated us to a fabulous home-cooked lunch and then led us out into the fields where they labor under horribly primitive conditions for 11 months out of the year. After meeting a smart young village girl who couldn't go to university for lack of money, one of our Macedonian reporters took it upon herself to try to help the young Turkish woman get a scholarship. Likewise, our Albanian and Macedonian reporters were so horrified after inter-viewing 12-year-old heroin addicts spawned by the burgeoning heroin trade in Macedonia that they proposed a series of joint articles on drug smuggling. Drug addiction is a new plague for the nation that is striking young Macedonians and Albanians with equal force.

In many respects the project inspired the reporters to look with fresh eyes at things they had seen all their lives but never considered before. One of our Macedonian reporters, for instance, had never realized the horrible working conditions of Turkish tobacco farmers. "Now I understand why they are so angry and why they go on strike," Kocovska told me.

But while the reporters agreed with the wisdom of setting politics aside during the project, minor ethnic tensions surfaced from time to time. If not addressed, these could quickly turn experienced professional reporters into pouty, suspi-cious nationalists. Words assumed ominous political proportions – for instance using the word "illegal" to describe a squatter settlement outside Skopje populated mainly by poor Muslims. Since the city had installed water and elec-tricity to this settlement, giving it tacit permission to exist, our Turkish and Albanian journalists bridled at calling the settlement "illegal," which connoted that its Muslim residents were lawbreakers. The team also wrestled with how to describe a private university that Albanian nationalists had tried to open in

Tetovo, a heavily Albanian town outside Skopje. The police had promptly torn it down, claiming that the university lacked the necessary permits, which sparked a mini-riot in which at least one Albanian was killed. So was the university illegal? Unsanctioned? Merely private?

So words were a mined thicket through which we all stumbled. As soon as I got hints of grumbling I pulled aside the reporter, found out what was wrong, then raised those concerns with the group so we could get at least a grudging consensus on how to proceed. Oftentimes, the problems could be corrected quickly. For instance, Zejnullahu, our Albanian reporter, complained that we had profiled a Turkish and a Macedonian millionaire but not an Albanian one, so I asked him to find us an Albanian millionaire to write about, which he did.

In general, whenever the reporters got into political debates that threatened to derail the project, I gently reminded them of our agreement to stay neutral but urged them to continue investigating and writing about these issues after the project ended. The Macedonian reporters – both of whom were women – seemed especially moved by the backward status of some of rural Albanian women we interviewed.

Indeed, for most of the reporters, the project was the first time they had worked and socialized with people outside their ethnic groups, and they found it an eye-opening experience. Kocovska told me numerous times how much she enjoyed working with Zejnullahu and what a good journalist he was. She seemed downright surprised to find such common ground with a Muslim Albanian. But she could see the benefits before her eyes when she went out on assignments. Eventually she became the project's most staunch ally and even made a presentation to her editorial board urging more collaborations between *Nova Makadonija* and *Flaka*.

Perhaps my biggest problem was logistical – finding time and translators to convert stories from three languages – Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish – into English – since each reporter wrote in his/her mother tongue. That took more time than I had originally anticipated. After editing, the stories were then translated back into Macedonian, their l*ingua franca*, for group discussions, and then also into Albanian and Turkish for publication in those newspapers. The fact that our Albanian reporter didn't speak English was a psychological barrier as well as an aural one, but I tried to compensate by taking him aside with a translator frequently to discuss any concerns he had. That said, having energetic reporters who were enthusiastic about the project and open-minded enough to try a new style of journalism also went a long way.

In retrospect, I would have liked more time to debrief the reporters, to get feedback from their editors on the series, and to set up a reader hotline that would have allowed us to get response from the general public. We did hold a press conference to let people know about this unusual collaboration, which was reported in the papers and on radio, but alas, I left Macedonia before the stories started running. So I only know from anecdotal experience that the series was well-read and that many people were intrigued by the chatty Western format, the sizable number of sources and facts presented, and the personal anecdotes in each story. Some said they were especially shocked by the blunt article about drug use among the youth of Macedonia.

More importantly, the success of the Macedonia Journalism Project shows the potential of such programs to improve understanding across ethnic lines while teaching solid journalism skills. While our initial effort involved only a handful of reporters, it created a ripple effect, since those four returned to their news-

rooms with knowledge and ideas to pass on to others. Additionally, the Center has successfully applied for a Knight Fellow to continue this work during Fall, 1995. That fellow, Richard Mertens, is currently in Skopje, where he has embarked on a second multi-ethnic journalism collaboration with four new reporters. This time, the topic is healthcare. Again, the resulting series will be published in the local press.

In closing, let me say that the Macedonia Journalism Project also has great potential as a teaching and conflict resolution tool in countries with multi-ethnic populations outside the South Balkans. The project could be easily adapted to suit specific needs from Burundi to Israel. It is clear that one month of intensive work with four local journalists cannot turn around distrust honed over centuries of conflict. Nonetheless, the project is helpful in developing a fact-based, independent press and in training reporters who can move fluidly across ethnic lines. And in many parts of the world today, including our own United States, that in itself is an accomplishment.

Media Coverage of Ethno-Nationalities – The Case of Ogoni Ethnic Minority in Nigeria.
A comparative study of the *Punch*, *New Nigerian,* the *Champion* and the *Guardian*.

Background   Four newspapers were content-analyzed vis-à-vis their cover-age of the activities of the Ogoni people, an ethnic minority in Nigeria, and their umbrella organization, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP).

The daily newspapers are the *Punch, New Nigerian,* the *Champion* and the *Guardian*. For the purpose of this study, all of the April 2000 editions of these newspapers were studied.

Choice of Newspapers   The objective of the study determined the choice of newspapers. This study was conducted to examine the impact of ownership and control of media houses on their coverage of issues that border on diver-sity; in this case, on the Ogoni, a minority ethnic group in Southeastern Nigeria now called south-south in Nigeria's geopolitics. A Yoruba, belonging to the majority ethnic group in Southwestern Nigeria, owns the *Punch*. The Federal Government of Nigeria owns *New Nigerian* but it is managed and controlled by the Hausa in Northern Nigeria. An Igbo, who belongs to a majority ethnic group in Southeastern Nigeria, owns the *Champion*. An Urhobo, belonging to a minority ethnic group in the now South-south region of Nigeria, owns the *Guardian.*

Categories and Methodology   Categories used in this study are:

1] The number of favorable, unfavorable, and neutral stories/items on the Ogoni reported by these four print mediums [Table 1].

2] Prominence given to favorable, unfavorable, and neutral stories/items on the subject measured by points allocated to their page position using the table below [Table 2].

3] Prominence given to favorable, unfavorable, and neutral stories/items meas-ured by points that are awarded to the space allocated to the stories/items using the table below [Table 3].

PAGE POSITION	POINTS
FRONT PAGE	4
BACK PAGE	3
PAGES 2, 3	2
FEATURE	3
EDITORIAL	4
ANY OTHER PAGE	1

NO. OF PARAGRAPHS	POINTS
21 – OVE R	5
16 – 20	4
11 – 15	3
6 – 10	2
1 – 5	1
EDITORIAL	5
FEATURE	4

---

[1] Kelvin Adinnu is a correspondent of the Kaduna-based *Weekly Trust.*

Definition of Terms

1 **Favorable stories:** Items include any news story, editorial, feature story or letter to the editor that attracts sympathy or justifies the activities of MOSOP or the Ogoni people or blames and denigrates the repressive actions of government officials in the area.

2 **Unfavorable stories:** Items include any news story, editorial, opinion, feature story, or letter to the editor that blames or denigrates the activities of MOSOP or Ogoni people and justifies the repressive activities of government agents.

3 **Neutral stories:** Items refer to news reported on both sides without slanting the story to favor or attract sympathy to either side.

Results of Study

Number of favorable, unfavorable, and neutral items on the Ogoni reported by the four print mediums under examination:

TABLE 1

MEDIUM	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	TOTAL
THE PUNCH	10	7	3	20
NEW NIGERIAN	5	5	–	10
THE CHAMPION	6	4	1	11
THE GUARDIAN	12	5	2	19

Prominence given to favorable, unfavorable, and neutral items measured by points allocated to their page positions:

TABLE 2

MEDIUM	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	TOTAL
THE PUNCH	32	20	6	58
NEW NIGERIAN	–	11	–	11
THE CHAMPION	20	10	4	34
THE GUARDIAN	12	5	4	21

Prominence given to favorable, unfavorable, and neutral stories measured by points awarded to space allocated to the stories/items:

TABLE 3

MEDIUM	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	NEUTRAL	TOTAL
THE PUNCH	29	22	7	58
NEW NIGERIAN	–	11	–	11
THE CHAMPION	21	11	5	37
THE GUARDIAN	42	14	9	65

Analysis of Results

The tables above can be interpreted in various ways, but it should be noted that:

1] Media organizations owned and controlled by members of the ethnic groups in the southern part of Nigeria (in this study the *Punch,* the *Champion* and the *Guardian*) gave more coverage to the Ogoni than the one managed and controlled by ethnic groups in the northern part of the country (in this study New Nigerian.)

2] Media organizations owned and controlled by a South-southerner, or member of a minority ethnic group, gave more favorable coverage to the Ogoni, a minority ethnic group, than media organizations owned by members of the majority ethnic groups.

3] Only the *Guardian*, owned by a Southern minority, ran a sympathetic editorial to the plight of the Ogoni people.

4] Whereas the *Champion* and *New Nigerian* were indifferent to describing Ken Saro-Wiwa, a murdered Ogoni activist, the *Punch* was consistent in describing him as an "environmental activist." On the other hand, the *Guardian*, whose publisher is a member of a minority ethnic group like Saro-Wiwa, described him as a "slain minority rights activist," "civil rights leader," "environmentalist," and "minority rights crusader."

The above analysis has not been subjected to scientific statistical rigor to test its significance. This can be done using the chi-square test of independence. It should also be noted that the April 17 edition of *New Nigerian* and the April 28 edition of the *Guardian* were not available.

The Nigerian press has been an institutional instrument for the protection of marginal and marginalized groups in the battles against dominant groups and interests. From its advent in 1859, the Nigerian press has provided a means of articulation, projection of interests, and civil intervention in a colonial society and state and, subsequently, a voice for the unempowered and the disadvantaged.

Consistently, the dominant section of the Nigerian press has defended marginal interests, in the total organization of the Nigerian state. Conversely, the marginal section of the press (owned or sustained by the state and/or dominant ethnic groups) has supported and defended dominant interest.

It is against this general backdrop that one can understand the pattern of coverage of ethnic conflict/diversity.

In the specific case of the Ogoni Crisis, it is important to note three points. First, the two sides, Ogoni versus dominant groups/Nigerian state, were in open conflict over the meaning and interpretation of the issues at stake. Consequently, two opposing interpretive frameworks were employed in the press.

Second, the sources on both sides of the conflict identified the press as an important agent in winning public support of their standpoints. Third, the key issues in media coverage are domination, exploitation, federalism, justice, fairness, and political, social, and economic neglect.

Unarguably, the coverage of this crisis by both the dominant section of the press (also called the 'Lagos-Ibadan' axis, the advocacy press of the '*Ngbati* Press) and the marginal section of the press (also called the government-owned press or *Arewa*/Northern press) show the clear linkage between this crisis and the National Question.

At the initial state of the Ogoni agitation, media coverage by the Lagos-Ibadan media axis focused on neglect. As *Newswatch* captured it, the voice of the Ogoni "represent, the collective voices of the oil-producing areas of the country crying against the neglect and poverty they have experienced in the midst of plenty."

The government-owned establishment press, including the *New Nigerian* and *Hotline*, ignored the Ogoni agitation at this initial stage. The key theme of neglect in the Lagos-Ibadan press captured the sub-theme of exploitation/appropriation/devastation/despoilation in ways that set binary relations between the Ogoni and the Nigerian state/dominant ethnic groups, particularly the Hausa-Fulani (for example see *Sunday Tribune*, Nov 19,1995.) This exploitation/appropriation sub-theme linked the Nigerian State (dominated by the Hausa-Fulani) with international finance capital (represented by Shell), capturing their alliance as one that has "wrecked for eternity" the livelihood and well being of the Ogoni. Strong images of devastation and evocative metaphors are used to construct the binary image of the deprived and the criminally indifferent.

Ken Saro-Wiwa, the arrowhead of the Ogoni struggle, attracted a large measure of support to the cause, given his own relationship with the Lagos-Ibadan press as a newspaper columnist, author, TV series producer, and later president of

---

[1] Wale Adebamiwi teaches political science at the University of Ibadan. He is also on the editorial board of *The Tribune.*

Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). Saro-Wiwa confesses as much in his book A *Month and A Day* (pp.139-140).

Saro-Wiwa, minority activists and other human rights activists constituted the major sources for the news stories and analysis. On a few occasions, voices representing the Hausa-Fulani and the Nigerian State were brought in with a view to discursively raise the stake, betraying the insensitivity and disdain of the dominant groups. Tanko Yakassai often reminded the Ogoni "(who) are not many" of what the Hausa-Fulani did to the 'Biafrans.'

The coverage by the Lagos-Ibadan press concentrated on Ogoni terms, conditions, demands and grievances while the constraints and positions of dominant groups (government, Hausa-Fulani ethnic category, and the oil companies) were hardly covered. In a recent study of three magazines and one newspaper that were analyzed over a one-year period, there were less than five instances where the views of the dominant groups were given as much space as that given to the Ogoni.

The trial and the subsequent execution of Ogoni activists brought out strong reactions from the press. The trial was deconstructed in the Lagos-Ibadan press as a "show trial" with "tunes of morbidly familiar performance" linkable to the trial of General Zamani Lekwot and other Zango-Kataf leaders.

While Justice Auta (Lagos-Ibadan press) was an "Abacha hireling" who displayed startling peculiarities, the Tribunal was for the "reputable" Northern press. While the *News* described Saro-Wiwa as a "progressively minded (man)…whose heroic struggles for the restoration of Ogoni rights raised the struggle… to the epicenter of national discourse," the *New Nigerian* saw him as the "instigator and promoter of militant strategy and violent options."

For *TELL*, the " judicial murder" of Saro-Wiwa and his constituents made the world see the General Sani Abacha junta "much in the light of a yahoo… a regime with sensibilities as pristinely unrefined as those of ruling brutes of the Stone Age." For the *New Nigerian*, "one lesson (of the Ogoni crisis) is the morbid and stinking hypocrisy of the Western nations." "The world," *TELL* insisted, "is not over-reacting (because the hanging)… rides brutally against settled convictions." However, the *New Nigerian* disagreed, stating categorically that the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth "was a convenient excuse for the unfolding of a premeditated agenda against Nigeria… (a decision which) was premeditated, retrogressive, and high-handed."

As a whole, it is evident that the newspapers and magazines took positions that were consistent with their standpoints on the larger issues of the national question. For the *Ngbati* press, the Ogoni crisis was yet another manifestation of the 'lopsidedness' of the Nigerian Federation, inequitable resource allocation, hegemony and domination by the Hausa-Fulani, in particular, and the need for self-determination from the constituent parts of the Nigerian Union. For the *Arewa* press, it was purely a matter of law and order, of subversive agencies and groups that had ulterior motives, of the sovereignty of Nigeria and her rights to non-interference by other countries.

As noted elsewhere, the press coverage was framed in a largely exclusionary manner, which fell into the usual cleavages produced by the history and politics of dominant-marginal relations in Nigeria. Therefore, the coverage was highly consequential because they were linked with and over-determined by history and politics.

With rare exception, the media use the same shop-worn stereotypes to portray people with disabilities: the pitiable cripple, the courageous and inspiring hero, the broken spirit who would be better off dead -- unless, of course, there's a cure just around the corner.

What is it about disability that makes the media so uneasy? Why do the media continually use the same ill-fitting and inaccurate phrases? Mainstream media coverage of Christopher Reeve's disability emphasized his chances of walking again, rather than living with and accepting his condition, as dealt with in the disability magazine *New Mobility*. So terms such as "wheelchair-bound," "afflicted," and "special needs" – are these not terms the disability community rejected long ago?

"Disability is still such a negative stereotype," asserts Bill Stothers, editor and publisher of the disability magazine and a thirty-year veteran of newsrooms in Canada and the United States. Stothers, who uses a wheelchair, says deeply entrenched fear of disability has both created inhospitable newsrooms and perpetuated negative coverage of disability issues by the media. "I've seen little positive change over the years," he says.

Given the mainstream media's poor to nonexistent coverage of people with disabilities, one would hardly guess they make up the largest single minority group in the United States -- about 54 million people, according to U.S. Census figures.

So when the American Society of Newspaper Editors voted in October to expand its mission statement on newsroom diversity to include people with disabilities along with women, lesbians and gay men, older people, and people of color, it seemed to be a positive step. But the move has raised concerns and criticism -- both among some people of color who see the expansion of diversity as further erosion of affirmative action efforts designed to increase opportunities for ethnic minorities, and among disability groups who are skeptical about their inclusion.

"I don't see a genuine commitment to truly covering disability," says Leye Chrzanowski, president and executive editor of Disability News Service in Virginia. For one thing, Chrzanowski says, the ASNE diversity statement seems to only cover people with physical disabilities. It reads, in part: "The newsroom must be a place in which all employees contribute their full potential, regardless of … physical ability or other defining characteristic."

Chrzanowski says the ASNE statement ignores people with mental or sensory disabilities. He points out that the media often think of people with disabilities as "people in wheelchairs and people who are mentally retarded – that's it." Yet some of the media's brightest stars, including CBS' Mike Wallace, have experienced clinical depression, one of the most misunderstood and stigmatized disabilities in our society today.

---

[1] Betsy Bayha is director of technology policy at the World Institute on Disability in Oakland, CA. She was a radio news journalist at National Public Radio affiliate KQED-FM in San Francisco covering health policy and the environment. She contributed this article for the *ASNE Reader* from which it was culled.

Veronica Jennings, diversity director at ASNE, says that the organization's mission statement does include people with all types of disabilities in the phrase "other defining characteristic."

But even though the ASNE board expanded its mission statement and approved adding women to its annual census on newsroom employment, the board stated that the focus of its diversity initiatives would remain on the hiring and promotion of people of color in the newsroom.

ASNE adopted a well-known goal in 1978, which challenged the industry to achieve racial parity by 2000 or sooner. According to ASNE's annual newsroom census, conducted at the beginning of 1998, minority journalists comprise 11.46 percent of the professional newsroom work force. People of color currently account for 26 percent of the total U.S. population.

In April, the ASNE board issued a new draft diversity statement for comment from its members, journalism organizations, media foundations, and other interested parties. The society received considerable written comment on the draft statement, and the ASNE Diversity Committee held a meeting in August to discuss the comments and make recommendations to the board.

Each year, ASNE sponsors job recruitment programs, publications, and an annual census of ethnic and racial minorities employed in newsrooms across the country. ASNE also focuses on job recruitment, retention, and promotion efforts. Gilbert Bailón, vice president and executive editor at the *Dallas Morning News* and chair of ASNE's diversity committee, says it is possible that ASNE's diversity programs may expand in the future.

"Newspaper editors could make a big difference," says Stothers, adding that if any meaningful change is to come from an expanded diversity effort, "the same programs set up for other groups should also be available for people with disabilities."

Cristopher Reeve: A Case Study

Coverage of Christopher Reeve's transformation from "Cryptonite to Crip," as Los Angeles based public relations consultant Tarl Susan Hartman irreverently describes it, provides abundant examples of how the media still get disability coverage all wrong.

Hartman, who works with a variety of disability groups, says media coverage of Reeve has tended to emphasize negative stereotypes about disability. A look at coverage of Reeve's story over the past few years provides plenty of examples. In 1996, shortly after the horse-riding accident in which Reeve became a quadriplegic, *Time* magazine headlined its cover story on him, "Super Man," and then proceeded to hit the most pervasive stereotype about people with disabilities in a five-sentence blurb in the table of contents: "Will he ever walk again?" The magazine editors noted that shortly after the accident, Reeve considered suicide but bounced back and was now engaged in a "heroic battle to rebuild his life and help find a cure for spinal cord injuries." From a civil rights perspective, disability must be transformed from being a personal tragedy to being an expected part of the life cycle.

The coverage of Reeve's condition made many members of the disability community wince. Why? Because stories about heroic disabled people striving to overcome their tragic fate have been rehashed *ad nauseum.* The problem with this story angle is that it obscures the civil rights message the disability community has articulated for the past thirty years: Disability should be viewed in

viewed in a wider context than merely the personal struggle of individuals. From a civil rights perspective, disability must be transformed from being a personal tragedy to being an expected part of the life cycle. The responsibility of accommodating this diversity falls to the greater society and is no longer just a burden each person with a disability has to bear on his or her own.

The media have also done an incomplete job of medical and science reporting on the question of whether Reeve will be able to walk again. Television anchor Dan Rather, on CBS News' "48 Hours," broadcast Sept. 3, 1998, provided an example of this. After a profile of Reeve in which the actor asserted "we're going to get out of these [wheel] chairs," Rather introduced a follow-up story by saying Reeve "could walk again" according to a new spinal cord regeneration research being conducted on laboratory rats. Both Reeve and the media who report his assertions unchallenged are guilty of raising false expectations about finding a "cure" for spinal cord injury.

"The media still believe in Superman," says Hartman. "They're perpetuating the myth." Significantly, when conducting interviews with the disability press, Reeve modulates his assertions that he will walk again. Instead, Reeve talks of "incremental recovery" and recapturing some movement, but he doesn't talk about throwing away his wheelchair.

What the media – and Reeve – have failed to understand is that it is not uncommon for people with disabilities to hope for a cure at the onset of their disability. It is a phase some people must pass through on the road to self-acceptance. But living with a disability and challenging societal attitudes and barriers does not grab headlines the same way a cure for spinal cord injuries does.

"If and when Reeve starts to change his message and stops talking about walking again," Harman muses, "will the media even be interested?"

Disability and Assisted Suicide

The most dangerous stereotype in the Reeve coverage has been the attention focused on his fleeting thoughts of suicide shortly after his accident. Barbara Walters asked about it, *Time* wrote about it, and the mainstream media frequently repeat this aspect of Reeve's story. Mentioning suicide hits a raw nerve for many in the disability community who have faced the ignominy of hearing others describe disability as "a fate worse than death."

Talk of suicide also touches on one of the hottest stories within the disability community, one that the mainstream media have all but ignored: the debate over assisted suicide.

"Assisted suicide has not been reported from the disability perspective," says Hartman, who points out that most of the well-reported cases of suicide assisted by Dr. Jack Kevorkian's were of patients who had some kind of disability, which was not mentioned in many of the stories.

Other disability stories that the mainstream media repeatedly miss include issues of housing discrimination, employment discrimination, the backlash against efforts to "mainstream" children with disabilities in schools, and the impact of HMO-based health care on people with disabilities.

"The onus is on the disability community to communicate with the media," adds Hartman.

Speculating on why that has not happened, Hartman points to the protracted political battles to defend the Americans with Disabilities Act and reauthorize the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, which have focused the attention of disability community on Congress rather than improving coverage in the media.

For his part, Bailón acknowledges that lobbying is likely to have a positive impact and that ASNE has not, as yet, received much pressure from disability groups. "We could focus on issues of [disability] coverage more aggressively," he concedes, as long as ASNE gets a strong message from the community that it has to be done.

Betsy Bayha is director of technology policy at the World Institute on Disability in Oakland, CA. She was a radio news journalist at National Public Radio affiliate KQED-FM in San Francisco covering health policy and the environment.

When covering people with disabilities, bear in mind the following:

■ Avoid the common stereotypes of disabled people as either helpless or pitiable or as unusually courageous. Both approaches are patronizing. In this era of technological aids, greater access to housing, education, and public services, a disabled person's accomplishments should not be considered unusually amazing or requiring inordinate courage. By the same token, it is inappropriate to assume that people with disabilities are incapable of helping themselves. Don't underplay their abilities or overplay their accomplishments.

■ Use "people first" language, instead of disability terms, to describe people. People with disabilities are often described by the type of disability they have. This diminishes them as people and presents them as a diagnosis. Avoid descriptions such as "the deaf," "the blind," or "the disabled." Instead describe the person, and if relevant, their disability.

■ Be careful in your choice of descriptive words. Avoid the phrases, "wheelchair bound," "special needs," and "afflicted." The disability community generally rejects these phrases in favor of more appropriate choices such as "wheelchair user," "reasonable accommodation," and "person with disability."

DONALD R. BROWNE
HARLES M. FIRESTONE
ELLEN MICKIEWICZ

Even in the best of all worlds, where money to support expanded ethnic minority broadcasting and coverage of conflict is plentiful, there remains the question of how to go about the reshaping of the electronic media so that they will play more meaningful roles in the creation of more tolerant, peaceful, healthy societies. We have suggested several structural ways of going about the task: councils, training schemes, approaches to information gathering, role-playing, etc. But there remains the most vital step of all: how to depict, through words and visual images, what a healthy society should be.

As we have indicated, it is very difficult to sustain the argument that NOT displaying conflict and intolerance is the best way to meet the goal. Experiences in China, India, the former Soviet Union, and many other places show that such a strategy may keep inter-ethnic tensions under wraps, but it doesn't appear to diminish them. And where there was a seemingly airtight monopoly over the air waves people's fertile minds often created elaborate scenarios out of scraps of rumor, and these may have been far worse than the reality of a given situation. Also, individuals whose everyday experiences contain the usual human mixture of good and bad are unlikely to believe everything they hear and see over a media system which portrays only the positive aspects of national life. That simply is too far removed from the reality of those everyday experiences.

Assume, then, that the electronic media will deal with the realities of a society – "warts and all," as Oliver Cromwell allegedly told his portrait painter. How should they do so in order to be most effective? It sounds simplistic to observe that while much depends upon just what the media choose to tell and show, and how thoroughly and even handedly they choose to cover events, at least as much depends upon how: the specific words and phrases chosen, the specific visual images accompanying or dominating those words and phrases.

The "how" of electronic communication is a vast subject, and a vast amount has been written about it. Furthermore, various studies conducted over time and in many different cultures make it clear that people communicate in a wide variety of ways, which means that they also have many different ways of interpreting what they see and hear. If one picture is worth a thousand words (highly doubtful), they certainly would not be the same words to all people. That is true not only across national borders, but also within nations. What is more, situations involving conflict and tension appear to exaggerate differences in interpretation, as individuals are even more likely to perceive what they want to perceive.

If there is a valid universal observation on the complex subject of words and images, it is this: Electronic media personnel involved with program production and decision-making have the obligation to be especially sensitive to the fact that interpretations of words and images will vary within and between cultures. Increasingly, people around the world receive their first news of events through the electronic media. That alone imposes a special responsibility on media staff. But research on the linkage between televised violence and violence in real life indicates quite clearly that television does play role, and perhaps an

---

[1] From *Television/Radio News* and Minorities

important role, in shaping people's attitudes toward violence; and that is still further reason for staff responsibility in any treatment of conflict.

It is quite true that differences in interpretations of words and images often will be slight enough that media staff need not worry about them. It is also true that variation in interpretations can be exceptionally difficult to detect, although it may emerge more clearly if stations turn to their ethnic minority staff and to the resource person they have identified in ethnic minority communities, universities, etc, for advice. If use of those resources still leaves media staff in doubt over whether to use certain words or phrases or to show certain visual images, and if there is considerable tension within society at the moment, it would seem wiser to simply avoid using a term or image that could be taken as slighting, demeaning, racist, or even overay stereotypical. Many broadcast newsrooms have developed detailed guidelines for the use or nonuse of such terms as terrorist, black, yellow, etc. All newsrooms should have them and update them regularly, as the BBC and numerous others have done.

Such guidelines should be developed in light of everyday language use, rather than dictionary definitions of terms. That is particularly important when dealing with emotional situations, where ethnic minorities may appropriate majority culture terms and use them in very different ways. The term "bad" began to be used by African-Americans some years ago to indicate something that commanded respect, rather than something negative. But if a majority culture journalist were to use that term to describe an African-American, there almost certainly would be confusion over the intended meaning.

Nonverbal messages often resist stable definition, as well. A close-up shot of an individual often serves to underline a visual statement. Show a close-up of an identifiable ethnic minority youth at a disturbance of some sort, with eyes blazing, and the likely majority culture reaction will be, "There's another one of those out-of-control *******s who thinks she/he can get away with anything." That might be true, but the eyes also might be blazing because the individual's house has just been burned to the ground by other individuals of the same or another ethnic minority, or the majority. Accompanying audio material might explain that, but often such images are allowed "speak" for themselves, even if what they "say" isn't what the individual means. If the images are graphic enough, the reporter's words, if any, can easily be ignored, especially when the images reinforce existing visual stereotypes.

That raises yet another important point about the languages of the electronic media. Not only do certain recurring visual and aural images tend to reinforce stereotypes — whoever holds them, whether accurate or not (and "accurate" to whom?) — But they also may lose their impact (shock value) with frequent repetition, especially if used often within a brief period of time. U.S. TV coverage of starvation in Somalia may have helped to awaken the U.S. public to the of the disaster, as well as to the conflict that had caused it, but there were periods when virtually every report about the country showed at least some images of starving individuals, usually children and often in fly-covered close-up shots. Similarly, television coverage of the aftermath of the Los Angeles "riots" in April 1992 concentrated heavily on block after block of burned-out buildings. It was not unusual to hear viewers state, after no more than a week or two of such coverage, "I wish they'd show something else. Those pictures are so boring/sickening/upsetting/repetitious (the list could go on) that I'm tired of seeing them." Such perceptions often appear to be linked to viewer's feelings that TV tends to exaggerate, especially in visual terms.

The same perception also may apply to verbal terms. An April 1993, bombing carried out by the IRA in London was the subject of many call-in programs. A number of individuals specifically stated that they thought the media exaggerated the effectiveness of the bombings, and, in so doing, led the IRA to think that they continued to be useful. Furthermore, said some of the callers, the very language used in media reports on the bombings is at times exaggerated; several referred to a report in one of the more sensationalist British newspapers that said that the bombing had "brought London to a screeching halt." The phrase may have been colourful, but the reality was that most Londoners and visitors were unaffected by the blast and unaware of it until it had been reported.

There is a final note of caution about uses of languages in situations of tension and conflict where ethnic minorities are involved. If one of the sides has a markedly different cultural background, and especially if its members speak a markedly different language, then reporters, editors, and managers should be especially careful to attempt to understand exactly what those individuals are saying. Some will misuse what may be their second language (the language of the majority culture) and, as a result, may employ terms that are far more, or less, hostile or conciliatory than what they really want to express. Some may be showing their very deepest feelings when they speak softly, while others may do some by shouting. Some may avert their eyes as a sign of respect, confusion, or shyness (especially if they're not accustomed to being recorded), while others may look aside out of hatred or for concealment.

If electronic media personnel had to consider every nuance of every verbal and nonverbal expression made in the course of a conflict or at times of interracial tension, then producing the news or entertainment would be a very slow process – and the electronic media, whatever else they may be, are not slow to report, or even to dramatize.

Technology helps to make instant, or nearly instant, production easier than ever. However, it is up to human beings to be sensitive enough to variant uses and interpretations of words and images, especially when connected with conflict and tension in a multi-ethnic society; to know when to slow down the production process so that they might question old habits and stereotypes, and then to get the stories they are relating, whether fact or fiction, as "right" as possible for the promotion of a healthier society.

IV

PRINCIPLES AND ISSUES

The Nigerian press has evolved as a mouthpiece
  of constituencies firmly rooted in civil society.

— Adigun Agbaje

Whenever government officials in Nigeria want to exonerate the government of the day of the charge of press gag, they say the Nigerian press is the freest in Africa. They speak as if it is the government that willingly allows newspapers and magazine reporters to write and publish what they wish. There is something fraudulent in what their assertions suggest. The Nigerian press, it is true, is free, even at such ignoble times as during a dictatorship, such as we recently witnessed under General Sani Abacha. The press can even be licentious, irritatingly licentious. But, like any true freedom, the freedom to practice journalism decently or in Nigeria always has to be fought for and seized. It is not handed over with mutual smiles, like a gift; as a matter of fact, the virility of media practice in that country is at once in spite of and because of any form of dictatorship. If you shut down a newspaper house because it published an embarrassingly true report, the operators of that publishing house might choose to defy your unconstitutional order. After all, their responsibility is not to force and falsehood.

Since the mid-1980s, the number of newspapers and magazines has grown rapidly in Nigeria. Between the end of the Second Republic in 1983 and the final days of the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida ten years later, seven newspapers and nine magazines began publishing. Actual figures are unknown or unreliable because the rates of growth and collapse are dependent on the political and economic conditions, which are far from stable. But there are some thirty daily newspapers and about twenty weeklies, including magazines. About two-thirds of these are published in Lagos. With the exception of *Daily Times, New Nigerian*, and the state papers, most are independently owned. The owner(s) may or may not have political ambition; some may even be fronting for the government or government officials. But once the paper gets in the public domain, it is bound by market logic to define other important territories.

Due principally to the pluralistic nature of Nigeria and the adoption of the federal principle in 1954, interests have developed in the country that the political society cannot contain and the state cannot fully control. Those interests, securely locked in the civil society, have found expression in the press, and it is not an accident that there were newspapers in Nigeria before there was Nigeria. At the best of times (which is to say, in theory), these social forces further democratic principles: the rule of law, freedom of the press, civil rights, and so forth. Tested in Nigeria, they have been seen to promote the claims of ethnicity, religion, and other geo-political calculations. Strictly speaking these are not negative values. In the case of Nigeria, they reflect a sense of reality. But one central issue at every time is that of federalism: Beyond the experience of 1954-1966, the country has been ruled as a unitary state. Worse, in all of its thirty-nine years of political independence, Nigeria has been ruled by the elected representatives of the people for less than ten years. The rest of the years, soldiers have been in power. Nothing promotes discord in a plural setting more than the application of a singular force, hence the bitter struggle between the media and power which is the focus of this paper. (Let me quickly add that there are also tensions during a civilian era, but the avenues and opportunities for dissension are as multiple as there are interests. The basic fact that the rule of law prevails in principle puts contenders at par.)

This is not the case under the most secured military regime. During the Abacha dictatorship, the media went through every imaginable form of terror. But the story has a history.

The partisanship of the press during the Second Republic (1979-1983) was used as an excuse by the military regime of Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon to promulgate Decree Four of 1984. That anti-press decree was evoked to jail two journalists that same year, the first time such a thing would happen in the country's history. The harshness of that decree (Protection Against False Accusations Decree) was one of the reasons General Ibrahim Babangida cited for overthrowing Buhari and Idiagbon in a palace coup in 1985. By the time he left power in August 1993, Babangida had gone full circle: jailing journalists, shutting down their offices, seizing copies of their magazines without even the pretence of an enabling decree. So when Abacha came in November 1993 and reopened all the newspaper houses that Babangida had shut over the simmering annulment of the June 12 presidential elections nobody was fooled. He did not abrogate the Newspapers Registration Decree 43 of 1993 (created late in Babangida's days) which stipulated that newspapers had to be registered by the government before they could operate. By the following January, his agents were already seizing copies of *Tell* magazine, whose reporters, like those of *TheNews* and *TEMPO*, had had a rough time during the last months of Babangida. By August, three of the national newspapers – *The Guardian, Concord,* and – were under locks. In November 1997, during the fourth anniversary of his coup, Abacha was holding close to a thousand political prisoners in jailhouses scattered all over Nigeria, and about a third of these were journalists. Apart from the five who were released in January and April 1998, all the journalists remained in jail until Abacha expired in June 1998, thus giving room for all the changes that the country has been witnessing.

The travail of the media under the Abacha regime, like the regime itself, was largely a result of the political crisis that followed the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential elections by Ibrahim Babangida. For the first time in ten years, Nigerians had the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights at the polls. And what an exercise it was! For the first time in the country' history, a free and fair election was held, and a winner was going to emerge whose victory would not be as a result of rigging. Past elections had been categorized by violence and rigging, and the military had twice seized upon this as an excuse for coming to power. In fact, the process that culminated in the elections was disrupted several times by Babangida. He cancelled all the parties independently formed by the politicians and formed two for them: the National Republican Convention (a little to the right) and the Social Democratic Party (a little to the left), pretending to model the country after the two major political parties in the United States. The parties' manifestoes and funding, as well as the original administrative staff, were freely supplied by the military government. A transition plan announced in 1987 was expected to terminate in 1990, but it was extended until January 1992, then January 1993, and finally August 1993. The elections of June 1993 were the last lap. Nicknamed Maradona for his wiliness and unpredictable moves, Babangida had a number of sayings that did a lot to confirm the belief that he was closely stage-managing the procedure. One of these was, "We don't know who will succeed us, but we know who will not." He was also fond of saying that his regime would be the last military regime in the country. In early June a group called Association for Better Nigeria, ABN, headed by Arthur Nzeribe, one of the banned presidential aspirants, secured an interim injunction restraining the NEC from conducting the elections. It rather favored the continuation of Babangida's government in

power until 1997. The government allegedly supported this group. Following the injunction and signs that the government might cancel the planned voting, the director of the United States Information Service, Mike O'Brien, declared that the United States would not accept a cancellation. O'Brien was promptly deported from Nigeria, and the elections took place on June 12. Three days after the voting, results were already showing Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party in the lead. Then ABN returned to court to challenge the validity of the elections and successfully got a high court in Abuja, the capital, to suspend the counting of results. The chairman of NEC disappeared. Tension began to build up. On June 23, eleven days after the voting, an unsigned piece of paper emerged from the office of the press secretary to the vice president, announcing the annulment of the June 12 1993 elections. By this time, the Campaign for Democracy, CD, had compiled results from the thirty states, and Abiola had won majority of votes in nineteen. Three days later Babangida himself appeared on national television to justify the annulment.

But the media, taking up the case of the shocked public, were waiting for him. Although he took the initial credit for abrogating Decree Four, Babangida had begun to fritter all the credit barely a year after he got into power. He was on record for consciously seeking to co-opt the media by appointing a former journalist as information minister. He announced amnesty for all political detainees, including journalists, and began reviewing the cases of those already jailed. But the extent of his sincerity became clearer with time. In a little over a year, two things had shown the shallowness of Babangida's much-vaunted respect for the freedom of the press: the still-unresolved murder in 1986 of Dele Giwa, founding editor of *Newswatch* magazine, and the shut down of the same publication for publishing the ungazetted report of the Political Bureau. Equally, his alienating economic policy, contrary to the spirit of the style of its adoption, was just more of the same old story. Furthermore, his attitude toward the political process, borne out in cancellations, bans, and extensions, had alienated the public, and so too the media. A weekly newsmagazine, *Tell,* had appeared on the newsstands in April 1991; among other liberal objectives, it aimed at helping to foster the emergence of a southern president in a country where the north had virtually monopolized the political leadership. A year later, when another magazine, *African Concord*, published a story that suggested Babangida had lost control of the economy, its editors were told to either apologize to Babangida or resign. They chose the latter, and by February 1993, the editors had formed the founding team of another weekly newsmagazine, *The News*. Between them, Tell and *The News* constituted the core of what was later termed the opposition press. Before the annulment, Babangida's security agents had shut down the offices of *The News* over a story analyzing the Machiavellian ways of the military leader. This was in the midst of regular seizure of copies of either magazine any time they ran a critical story on the regime. On June 23, the day the elections were cancelled, a formal press release from the office of the attorney general announced the proscription of the magazine: Its heroic attempt to frustrate the closure of the office by publishing from an undisclosed location was now outlawed. The following week, however, the same company came out with a new publication: *TEMPO.* For the remaining part of the Babangida regime, *TEMPO* and Tell did virtual battle, publishing underground and so promptly that government's agents were constrained to allege that they were being issued from the American embassy. They ceased to be normal magazines; they were published in a tabloid form due to the logistics of underground publishing. And they sold! Their tactics were so successful that by September, all the media houses shut down in the wake

of the annulment were each issuing a new clandestine title. But when Abacha came to sack the interim government that had replaced Babangida, the media had a respite. The bans were lifted and they were allowed to resume work at their offices. But here Abacha merely created a deceptive liberalism, not unlike that which Babangida had used to consolidate his own regime eight years earlier.

It is necessary here to give an idea of how Abacha came to power. Although Babangida annulled the elections, his wish to conduct fresh polls through the interim national government failed. The public and the media were resolute in their disapproval, and a Lagos high court in fact pronounced the ING illegal. Most people expected the president-elect, Abiola, to take his mandate at once. But when Babangida was quitting office, he left the erstwhile Secretary of Defence, Sani Abacha, behind. There is an argument that Babangida himself was forced by Abacha and some other military officers to relinquish power in late August, but the public and the media claimed credit for his ouster. The confusion that attended the conduct of the ING before and after the court ruling provided the armed forces, well manipulated by Abacha, a chance to seize power again. Calling itself a child of necessity, a new military regime with Abacha at the head edged itself into power on November 17, 1993. If Abacha's coming to take power from ING, then led by Ernest Shonekan, provided any respite, military government-style, this was brief, and it quickly emerged that he was up to no good. But disappointed at Babangida's handling of the June elections, people wanted an end to the interim arrangement; so deep-seated was their hatred of the contraption that some well-meaning human rights activists, believing that Abacha could come to restore Abiola's mandate, actually called for a military coup. In fact, Abiola met with Abacha before the coup. Earlier in the year, during the July protests for the validation of the election results, Abacha, as defense secretary, had sent out soldiers to shoot protesters. More than 200 people were killed in Lagos alone.

But once it became clear that Abacha was no democrat, but a mean and ambitious fellow who just wanted "to reign," politicians and journalists who were initially skeptical again reached for the weapons turned against his predecessor. In early May 1994, the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO – a collection of civilians, retired military officers, and human rights activists) was formed, marking the beginning of the opposition that lasted until his death. The coalition demanded that Abacha and his team resign by month-end and urged the boycott of the impending Constitutional Conference. In his take-over address, Abacha had promised that the conference would be vested with "full constituent powers." But it turned out to be a selection of his cronies and would-be cronies. Most people in the southwest refused to turn out for the elections, and when the assembly gathered in the federal capital to deliberate, one of the members, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, successfully got the assembly to settle for a vote asking the regime to quit by January 1996. Abiola went about campaigning against the regime and demanding his mandate. He declared himself president on June 11, 1994, at a symbolic ceremony in Lagos. But after about two weeks in hiding, he was arrested and later charged with treason. In July the Nigerian Labour Congress called a strike at the instigation of one of the most powerful unions, the National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers. After a day the labor leadership called off the action, but NUPENG did not back down. The strike went on for nine weeks, virtually paralyzing economic activities in the country. With the arrest and detention of Abiola and the hounding of the strike leaders, a different kind of tension was building now. Newspapers and magazines were becoming more and more resolute in their criticism. When *The Guardian* ran a story that suggested divisions among the regime's leading officers concerning

Abiola's treason trial, it was promptly shut down. Soon, *The Punch* and *National Concord* (the latter owned by Abiola) were similarly closed. In the next couple of months Abacha went out to war with practically every segment of the society, including the military – his constituency. Late in February 1995, mass arrests of military officers, serving and retired, were announced. They were alleged to be plotting to overthrow the regime. Included in the list were Olusegun Obasanjo, former head of state (1976-1979), and Yar' Adua, his former deputy and mastermind of the January 1996 ultimatum. When the newspapers published reports that none of the arrested men was found guilty by the investigating panel, four journalists were randomly picked and jailed for life. Their offence? Being accessory after the fact of treason. Notably, two of the four were from *Tell* and T*he News*, known for their anti-government stance. Following international campaigns, Abacha and his junta commuted the sentences in October 1995, but a week later he approved the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People. (Over twenty members of this movement had been arrested in May 1994 in connection with the murder of four Ogoni chiefs.) From this time until his death in June 1998, Abacha was putting every critic in jail, ordering their executions by his secret police, or running them into exile. If you were a critic of Abacha in those days, you were either on the run, or about to be; in jail, or about to be; or dead, or about to be.

The journalists did not give up. The three newspapers that had been shut down were reopened after one year. They remained as before, including *The Guardian*, which had never really been known for combative reporting. (In February 1996, Alex Ibru, publisher of *The Guardian*, was cruelly shot in the street in Lagos but was lucky enough to survive. A few weeks before, in December, there was an attempted arson attack on the offices of *The Guardian* and *The News*.) Rather than be scared into a retreat, the newspapers actually became more confident and were joined by a rash of new ones, with tendencies that ranged from libellousness to servility. One businessman who became notorious for supporting Abacha and had private bodyguards who shot protesters in Ibadan in May 1998, began publishing his own newspaper about this time.

But an interesting development was introduced at this point. Journalists took on responsibilities other than reporting. Two journalists, Edetaen Ojo of *The Guardian* and Austin Agbonsuremi (also of *The Guardian*, but later to join a radio station), formed the Media Rights Agenda, a pressure group dedicated to promoting the freedom of information. The journalists had been working closely with human rights groups in Lagos and therefore were able to appreciate the value of advocacy that was not strictly combative. In the dark days of the dictatorship, they published a monthly newsletter called *Media Rights Monitor*, which covered all cases of violations of the civil rights of Nigerian journalists. They continue to publish it. The Independent Journalism Centre, a subsidiary of Independent Communications Network Limited, which publishes of *The News* and *TEMPO*, has also been created. It worked closely, and continues to do so, with organizations like PEN, Amnesty International, Index on Censorship, the Washington-based Committee to Protect Journalists, the Canadian Journalists Association, the World Press Institute, and Reporters Sans Frontiers to bring the appalling situation in Nigeria to the notice of the world. Much of the international campaign that ensured the eventual release of all journalists held by Abacha's agents was the result of an alert network between the IJC and these organizations. Others, like the Centre for Free

Speech and Journalists for Democratic Rights, also did useful work, but because they are new and less institutionalized, their impact is only very recent.

Abacha did not back down. Instead, he dug, charging opposition figures like the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka and several others with treason. He isolated Nigeria completely until the moment the suspension of the country from the commonwealth. This took place after the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and still remains in force. While he spread terror and paranoia through the entire country, Abacha and his closest allies and family members continued to steal public funds as public utilities decayed. That those he put in jail had no hope of release until his death serves as proof of his inflexibility. When he died on June 8, 1998, he was the sole "consensus candidate" for the presidential elections slated for last August.

My attention has been focused exclusively on the print media, as you must have noticed. This is not an oversight. Until September 1993, the electronic media were exclusively in the hands of the government. Both the National Television Authority and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria are state organs, controlled from the Federal Ministry of Information, though they had to find some of their funding from commercials. The National Broadcasting Commission, however, granted some licences to a number of private radio and television houses in 1993. The earliest of these began transmissions in September 1994. Seven private television channels and two radio channels are operational in Nigeria at the moment. For logistic and corporate reasons, none of these could do any guerrilla work during the time of Abacha. I'm not suggesting that such methods were very necessary in all cases, but to a great extent, the regime's disregard for the rule of law rendered the time-honored journalistic ethic of neutrality (truculently canvassed by many journalists) pretty pointless in Nigeria. Even reporters in some state-owned radio stations got suspended or sacked for airing reports considered unfavorable to the regime. The clandestine Radio Kudirat, named after Abiola's wife, who was murdered in Lagos by assassins believed to be carrying out the dictator's orders, did stay on the air. From late 1995 through last Christmas, when it went on recess, Radio Kudirat broadcast almost daily to listeners in Nigeria. In fact, Soyinka's involvement in the so-called treason charge (which the Nigeria Police Force dropped after Abacha's death) was linked to his broadcasts on the radio.

The experiment of Radio Kudirat points to several possibilities – and not just in a time of disaster. Considering the linguistic diversity of the country and the high level of illiteracy, it is beyond argument that the immediate impact of English-language newspapers is limited. One of the highest circulation figures ever recorded by a newspaper in Nigeria was less than two 200,000, and it was a weekly publication . In contrast, figures attributed to UNESCO put radio listeners in Nigeria at 19.4 million and television watchers at 3.7 million. The most popular source of news in northern Nigeria is not newspapers. It is not even the FRCN, Kaduna. It is the BBC Hausa Service. And this is just as broadcasting is being deregulated. Imagine what will have happen ten years from now, when the roads are not likely to be all-tarred, when electricity may not have served even the cities well enough, but when more Amplitude Modulation stations will be crisscrossing the airwaves. Just imagine.

It is not news that women in Nigeria constitute over 50 percent of the population or that women do 70 percent of household chores. However, what is newsworthy is that despite their large population and contribution to the social, economic and political survival of Nigeria, women still take a backseat in several areas of society. In politics, they play second fiddle. In public life, they are relayed to the background. In the mass media, they are portrayed in a negative light.

Instructively, the history of politics in Nigeria has always been written from the male point of view. In the political arena, it is completely a man's world and as such men design, define and determine the agenda for society. Despite their numerical strength and their massive participation in politics, women are still far behind men in that area. This is a fact, as very few of them were elected as councilors, chairpersons of local government councils or state House of Assembly members in the current dispensation.

The 1999 constitution stipulates that 30 percent of key positions should be given to women in matters of political office and management activities as a starting point for gender equality. However, out of the entire 109 members of parliament in the senate only three members are women. They are Hajia Khariat Abdul Rasak of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Chief Florence Ita Giwa of Cross River, and Chief S.U. Omu of Delta South. In the House of Representatives, there are only 10 women out of the total 359 members. The number of women in both houses combined does not make up even one percent of the 30 percent of political seats allocated to them. What are the constraints of women in politics?

"We don't have the funds. In that aspect, the men are better off and that is why women are not coming out," said Mrs. Omotanwa Oluwole Olusi, former chairperson of the Amuwo Odofin local government area of Lagos State during Gen. Sani Abacha's transition program. Politics in Nigeria is an expensive game where men use their wealth to out price women who are undoubtedly poorer and less exposed to the murky waters of politics.

Participation in public life is another area where women do not fare better. Public life is any formal recognized activity through which the individual caters to and interacts with the public. In early 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing China, the issue of removing all obstacles for women to actively participate in every aspect of life through equal contribution to social, cultural and political decision-making was addressed. The Beijing Declaration, to which Nigeria is a signatory, states that equality between men and women is a matter of human rights and a condition of social justice as well as a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace. Participation by women in the public life, according to the document of the conference, should not be seen as concession to women but a matter of inalienable rights.

Ayo Obe, president of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), noted that although the constitutions of many countries contain provisions prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, the civil service still retains surprising anomalies. The public service in Nigeria, like so many other

---

[1] Judith Okpeki is Features Editor at *Vanguard*.

industries, said Obe, has been characterized by the manner in which the number of women dwindle as the hierarchy goes farther up. To buttress her points, Obe said the study conducted in 1997 by the organization reveals that in many states in Nigeria women seeking employment are obliged to produce written permission to work from their husbands. Women civil servants lose their housing allowance which they had when single because of the society's assumption that a women should move into her husband's house after marriage and not vice-versa. The study also stated that in some places, a female civil servant who becomes pregnant without being married is denied pay during her maternity leave. In others, single women who become pregnant are "disciplined" with action, which may vary from termination of her appointment to dismissal. In fact, discrimination against women in the study is legion. But what are the factors that make life different for the woman civil servant when compared to her male counterparts?

Obe added that the expectations of society undoubtedly play the biggest role in preventing women from realizing their full potential. She said, "Society has its structures about what is masculine and what is feminine, and in particular the expectation that a woman's first responsibility is to maintain home, children and husband and paid work comes second." The logistics of combining work and home also provide a stumbling block.

The media is central in perpetuating this condition of women. A weeklong cursory search of five national dailies in Nigeria revealed that issues bordering on gender as it affects women rights received only 12–15 % of news coverage, compared to more than 55 % given to male stories. The subordinate social position of women that constitutes their gender identity is even reflected in the communication structure of the mass media.

The mass media have been severely criticized for the stereotypical and negative images of women, which shape public opinion and attitudes towards women, and undermines societal confidence in them. Take for example the representation of women in folklore or oral tradition portrayed in our various mediums. Women are seen as brainless, submissive, trivial, dependent, devoid of self-esteem, and even parasitic. Also, they advance in age as witches, who eat up children in the neighborhood. In home videos, a genre of the media, women are depicted as untrustworthy, inept, lazy, inconsequential, devious and those who bring disharmony to their matrimonial homes.

Should women fold their arms while aberrations against them go on? Gender equality proponents have offered solutions to these gender biases against women. Mallam Waida Maida, managing director of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), suggested some solutions in a keynote address at the May Ellen Ezekiel Memorial Lecture/Award in 1997. First, Maida said, women should be encouraged to own media outlets and have access to the media. This enables women in the media to address women concerns and needs through programming. Second, women can promote the portrayal of more realistic images of women in the mass media through their various associations while directing tangible affords at educating the public on their promotion of affirmative action in the political sphere. In addition, Maida said women can pool their resources together to establish community papers and radio stations that will encourage women in the community to participate as communicators in these areas.

In the political arena, women should come together and sponsor themselves with necessary funds. Women in Nigeria are economically advanced, but unfortunately they do not invest in power as men do. Chief Kemi Nelson, a com-

missioner who creates jobs for youths in Lagos State, said, "(Women) should support those who are willing because there is no woman who can be in politics that will not be interested in gender issues and that is one of the ways every woman can benefit from politics."

I constantly examine the dilemma I face in this messy set up of contemporary Nigerian reporting. As a person of Southeastern ethnicity who works in a medium owned by a Northerner, my friends truly believe that it is my "responsibility" to downplay any story perceived as detrimental to the broad interest of my ethnic group in the newspaper. As they often joylessly put it: "Facilitate. You have to facilitate favorable coverage for us." The truth, however, is that I am not sure I have much in common with these people— except my ethnicity, but is that enough?

There is so much to worry about these days with the psychology of our media. It starts with the basic issue of classification. In categorizing media organizations in Nigeria, regular readers take at least two factors into consideration: the region of the country in which the headquarters of the medium is situated and/or the ethnic origin of the publisher or proprietor of the medium. Labels such as the *Lagos-Ibadan Press* (a blanket term for all media houses based in the Southern part of the country, particularly the Southwest), and the *Northern media* (for media houses in the Northern part of Nigeria) play to this typography. Similarly when Nigerian readers talk glibly of *Yoruba press, Igbo press* and *Hausa press*, they refer to the ethnic origins of the proprietors suggesting that the press is a parrot of its master's voice. The grand irony is that today proprietors from minority ethnic groups own the most influential newspapers in the country.

As far as Nigerian readers and newspaper analysts are concerned, media organizations in the country slant their coverage along these divisions. For instance, newspaper readers who want to get balanced information often buy several papers. For those who can afford it, doing this enables readers to view all these perspectives. Readers and analysts are not the only ones caught in this trap. The cultivation of parochialism as an editorial culture is so entrenched that its implications for the news process are profound. From the beginning, the paper I work for in Northern Nigeria was unambiguous with its intensions. It did not camouflage the objectives and the editorial policy of the paper--to give more coverage to events that concern Nigerians of Northern origin.

This mission is predicated on several assumptions. One assumption is that media houses in Nigeria, most of which are based in the so-called Lagos-Ibadan Axis, do not cover the North adequately. Another assumption, much more covert than the first, is that the political interest of the North, however defined, can best be protected, projected and promoted by a medium based in the North and owned by northerners. A practical manifestation of this vis-a-vis the news process can be gleaned from the following example: Politicians from Northern Nigeria played a significant role in convincing Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, a Southwesterner, to contest the presidential elections believing that when elected, he would be more amenable to their control. To this aim, Northern newspapers gave wider coverage to his presidential campaign through news reports, features and even editorials.

However, when Obasanjo came to power, the papers carried out actions that Northern politicians as well as most Northerners considered inimical to their interest and those of their region. Since then, most Northern media have been

---

[1] Selma Uduak is a Nigerian freelance journalist.

at the forefront of exposing the perceived ills and weaknesses of the Obasanjo government. Part of this strategy is to give more space to the upsurge of inter-ethnic conflicts and to demands by different ethnic groups to opt out of the Nigerian federation. Although most of these mediums were not known to give any substantive coverage to events in the Southeastern part of the country, the recent activity of a political group calling for Southeastern secession from Nigeria captured the interest of most Northern publishers. In pursuit of what is clearly an agenda structured to suggest that the Obasanjo regime is characterized by misrule, extensive coverage has been given to this story on the activity of the group called the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

This example shows the problem of how media ownership not only interferes with the news process but how it can complicate the management of diversity. Yet this is not to suggest that there are no other problematic issues. One that readily comes to mind is the organization of correspondents around different ethnic backgrounds such as Igbo journalists, Northern journalists, Yoruba journalists, Southern minority journalists, etc. In Abuja--the seat of the Nigerian presidency, parliament and the Supreme Court, and the crucible of policy formation in the country--reporters filter their dispatches through ethno-nation prisms, even though they don't know it. Readers lose in this arrangement. Apart from protecting the micro-interest of members of these associations, reporters also further the interest of their respective larger ethnic groups in the news process. Media organizations have a long way to go in managing diversity in the news.

A D E S U W A   O N Y E N O K W E
I B I M   S E M E N I T A R I
T U N D E   O L O K O D E
T I N U B U

THE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY [1]

PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Diversity is what we have to live with. It is both a challenge and an asset to our experience of society. There are differences in tastes, values, interests, beliefs and attitudes among people in different areas of the world. These differences also vary between populations and geographical groups causing diversity at both the individual and group levels. Differences come in the form of ethnicity, religion, class, ideology, gender or age. These facets represent the beauty that diversity puts into our lives. Unfortunately, difference also carries the potentials of conflict, misunderstanding, intolerance and jingoism.

Diversity becomes a public policy matter to the extent that the government or public authority – which has the responsibility of providing law, order and welfare, the necessary environment for the individual or group pursuit of happiness – confronts these challenges.   Some governments attempt to promote diversity for national growth and development, and limit all forms of discrimination, jingoism, intolerance and other attitudes that lead to severe conflicts and violence.

Journalists are not peacekeepers, but they will almost certainly be promoters of peace. Their role in the process requires that they be apprised of public policy initiatives to manage diversity. These provide both the context for the events they report and the context in which they play their professional roles. Public policies directed to manage diversity covers both the efforts of government to promote social integration within the nation and those designed to help journalists be mindful of balance and fairness in reporting. The former attempts to create equal representation of issues and events, while the latter guides the process of diverse reporting.

The management of diversity is not limited by national boundaries. Globalization has intensified interaction between citizens of different countries across the globe. Therefore, events in one nation have serious and immediate impact on other nations. Thus, the problem of one state often becomes the problem of the world. It has become increasingly difficult for governments to defend the idea of internal affairs. In addition, the increase in identity conflicts that have produced refugees across the globe makes it imperative to have international regulation of conflicts that in the past would be viewed as strictly internal. Currently, there are both regional and global initiatives to manage diversity. These take the form of peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace building and technical assistance, international treaties, conventions and declarations.

Moreover, the globalization of democratic values and the increasing universal consensus on fundamental human rights have led to the emergence of several charters and initiatives to define, promote and protect these rights and values. (For a review of these initiatives see "What Commitments Have Governments Made to Ensure the Realization of the Human Rights of Ethnic Minorities?" in chapter VIII) Together, these provide the public policy framework for reporting diversity.

[1, 2] This article is one of three in a series ("The Management of Diversity: Public Policy Perspective," "Strategies for Managing Diversity: Traditional Perspective," Issues of Diversity: The Media Perspective) which were jointly authored by some of the Reporting Diversity Network members. Contributors are Adesuwa Onyenokwe of One-on-One NTA, Ibim Semenitari of Tell, Tinubu of Galaxy TV, and Tunde Olokode of OGBC. Dr. Albert Isaac of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, organized the various concepts into the three articles.

A D E S U W A   O N Y E N O K W E
I B I M   S E M E N I T A R I
T U N D E   O L O K O D E
T I N U B U

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING DIVERSITY 2
TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Diversity can take the form of gender, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, ideology or sexual orientation among other variations. All of these diversity issues are managed through different forms of public policies. What is less known in literature of conflict studies is the number of local approaches for dealing with issues of diversity. Several Nigerian communities have retained traditional practices.

Traditionally, migration patterns across the various communities in several Nigerian cities and towns, although welcomed and probably encouraged, are structured in ethno-national terms such that people of similar ethnicity tend to stay closer to a community leader who is recognized as the ethnic head by the host community. The leader of the specific migrant population is usually the mouthpiece of the migrants in local courts. Whenever the migrants have any problems they pass them to the traditional ruler of the community through their elected leader who, in a place like Ibadan, could be the *Sarkin Hausawa, Eze Ndigbo*, or *Oba Tapa* among others. A migrant leader in Kano could be *Sarkin Yarbawa*, or *Sarkin Igbo*. He could be *Oba Yoruba* or *Sarkin Hausawa* in Enugu. Through this kind of "diaspora political leadership" style, migrants are also able to contribute their quota to the health of the host community. This may not be a conscious program of inclusion and provision of space for identity development of the migrant in the context of a new immigrant sensibility. However, until recently, the arrangement served that purpose.

Respect for these local institutions and the bond they foster can be a major tool in promoting a long-term spirit of tolerance. This is an example of inclusion without suggesting assimilation. In this process, everyone is satisfied. Problems that could result in ethnic or religious conflict between the migrants and their hosts are quickly contained.

A keen awareness of these developments by the media, a concern to report them truthfully and without bias, and sensitive coverage of the holistic structures of the society can help play a tremendous role in the promotion of true national identity. The Yoruba and Igbo are formally settled at *Sabon garin* in Kano and a few other northern Nigerian cities. In Ibadan, Hausa migrants are settled at *Oja Oba*, *Isale Osi, Sabo, Ojo, Bodija*, and S*asa*. The Nupe are settled at *Mokola* and *Ago Tapa* quarters. In many parts of eastern Nigeria, Hausa migrants are settled at "*Abakpa* quarters." This arrangement of settling migrants in special quarters began in the pre-colonial period of Nigeria history. The colonial institution attempted to exploit this development but, with the passage of time, the settlement pattern has, in the final analysis, served as a good forum for meeting the special needs of the migrants in such a way that the cultural disparity between them and their hosts does not result in any major conflict.

In gender and inter-generational terms, however, diversity tends to be more problematic in Nigeria. A famed Yoruba adage summarizes the problem: "Leadership claim [older age] is hardly worthy than as a means of privilege." This adage speaks to how issues of gender and inter-generational conflicts are managed. Men, like elders, try to rule over women and youth in society. Within this patriarchal universe, the media has a challenging role. The media is aware that democracy cannot survive in an authoritarian context and Nigerian women and youth want to be free of the "oppressive rule" of the elders as well as patriarchs leading their society. Thus, it becomes the role of the media to spell out clearly how diversity can help build democracy.

ADESUWA ONYENOKWE
IBIM SEMENITARI
TUNDE OLOKODE
TINUBU

Why is the media in a conflict environment always in a hurry to break news? Is it out of insensitivity or simply out of a carefree desire to bring down the house? If the media is so critical in shaping the context within which news and events happen, and if indeed they play a significant role in mediating the nature of the debate that drives political and social action in a society as we know they do, wouldn't it be fair to say they should consider the process as much as the goals of their practice?

The overbearing crave to meet the market bottomline often propels the media to indulge in excessive attention game, and the painful reality of sensational headlines remind us of the catastrophic damage that can result from this practice. It is not even about misquotes and misrepresentations alone, the problem is that the media, by their enormous power to affect political behavior, do affect the legitimacy of the different parties in a conflict. They do this through their reporting and analysis. When the media will do this to diminish the legitimacy of the diverse groups, or parties in conflict, the credibility of peace partisans is gravely compromised and the possibility for resolution becomes problematic. To be sure, the reverse is also true but here is where the problem arises for we cannot legitimately saddle the media with an agenda that bothers on proselytizing which readers or viewer or listeners will construe as bias and tendentious. Attitudes that in turn condition apathy.

The way out of this is not even easy. One clear prospect is to insist that reporters continue to be professionally accountable in strict ethical terms. This drives the resolution of the tension between the news process and the conflict resolution regime into the terrain of media ethics. In my organization, it is a basic standard that journalists should never get carried away by their sources or indeed by their stories. Abuses do come and sometimes they do not hold a flag. The journalist must go the extra mile to get balance, to be objective, and independent as far as dealing with any story. Scoops should not displace a journalist sense of balance.

---

[1] This article is one of three in a series ("The Management of Diversity: Public Policy Perspective," "Strategies for Managing Diversity: Traditional Perspective," Issues of Diversity: The Media Perspective) which were jointly authored by some of the Reporting Diversity Network members. Contributors are Adesuwa Onyenokwe of One-on-One NTA, Ibim Semenitari of Tell, Tinubu of Galaxy TV, and Tunde Olokode of OGBC. Dr. Albert Isaac of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, organized the various concepts into the three articles.

We should make diversity a company-wide policy at every newspaper; infuse it into our values just as we infuse our journalistic standards into these values.

We should conduct regular content reviews, constantly asking ourselves if we are being inclusive, if all voices are given an opportunity to be heard, if others unlike us are reading about themselves or seeing themselves in our news and advertising columns, if we are eliminating the stereotyping that sadly still appears in too many newspapers.

We should identify and nurture minority candidates, reaching as far down as our elementary grades to encourage young people to join our craft and help them with scholarships and internships. We should make sure that journalism schools are part of the solution, because journalism graduates fill 87 percent of all entry-level jobs.

We must create a welcoming environment at our newspapers, create mentoring programs internally and externally, partner with other organizations in our communities to make the transition easier for those who join us, provide training for everyone in our buildings so that they can relate in some way to the multi-cultural, multiethnic, multiracial society of today. We must work harder on retention and promotion of minorities, shattering those glass ceilings that most of us in this room have never had to deal with and, therefore, don't know how it feels to not be given a chance because of race or gender.

We must direct our energies toward achieving these goals rather than expending our energies trying to affix blame. There is enough blame for all of us to share.

And, finally, we must make sure that people do not have to forget who they are in order to become what they want to be.

---

[1] Gregory Favre, a past president of The American Society of Newspaper Editors and executive editor of *The Sacramento Bee* (Calif.), gave this excerpted speech last April during the Newspaper Association of America convention held in Dallas, Texas.

This is an excerpted article from a chapter in the Master's thesis of Muyiwa Adekeye to the graduate school of journalism, university of Cardiff in Wales, UK.

Identity is mainly about culture. As the mediators of culture, the mass media play a role in creating and sustaining a common public culture (Smith, op cit:111.) Books, newspapers, film and radio have all helped to forge nations, but the media itself is part of a contested cultural terrain, given its power to help preserve or undermine a cultural space or collective identity (Schlesinger, op cit.) That is why even stateless nations are keen to enlist the media in a nationalist project. Nation-states too consider the media as vital to constructing and maintaining a collective identity. Fears that Western domination of their news and entertainment media would promote the erosion of their national cultures inclined Third World states to campaign for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the 1970s. An echo of this view of the media as a tool for cultural defense is sounded by the European Union's attempt to create a European audio-visual space. The connection between the media and identity is not an idle matter:

"...Our sense of ourselves – as individuals and as members of communities at various levels – whether families, regions, nations or supra-national communities ...[are not] a set of political abstractions, for they are finally, matters of our (mediated) everyday lives." (Morley and Robins, op cit:69)

Transnational forces have invaded this sphere of mediation. The boundaries that shielded national broadcasters have been breached; the laws that protected them have been changed. With physical obstacles breached by technology and legal barriers by deregulation, global media corporations have emerged. Their operations have shattered the traditional conception of the role broadcasting plays in national life. National broadcasters like the BBC were credited with helping to forge a sense of community, national identity and political citizenship. The transnational broadcasters are dedicated to different ideals. Companies like News Corp. and Time-Warner are creating consumers, not citizens. They entertain audiences to capture them for advertisers (Bagdikian, 1997:179; Herman and Chomsky, 1986:16.)

Electronic communities are replacing national communities. Television programs can be produced and transmitted to audiences far away. Although the producer is able to address several national audiences, he constitutes them as one. Television is thus able to construct a single audience, but is unable to provide a common identity. The separation of production from the audience is described as the de-territorialization of the media; new forms of fragmentation accompany this development. Audiences are increasingly segmented not along national lines, but along class and interest lines. Channels dedicated exclusively to movies, sports, news, music and other interests have proliferated. Catch-all programming is out of vogue. Globalization threatens to sever the media from geographical space and has created global segments across cultures. Schlesinger argues that given these, television is now less important in forging

---

[1] This is an excerpted article from a chapter of Muyiwa Adekeye's master's thesis, written while a student at the Graduate School of Journalism, University of Cardiff, Wales, U.K. Adekeye was also a former editor of *The News* magazine in Lagos.

national identity than newspapers and radio. As the next chapter will show, some nationalists consider television as the most important tool for national mobilization, especially when, as in Wales, there is no national press.

Regional resistance to globalization has a media dimension. With emphasis on diversity and the variety of identities in Europe, regional interests seek to restore the connection between media and place by re-territorializing the media (Morley and Robins, op cit:17.) Even this is limited for the very reason that regional identity is itself prone to further fragmentation.

Yet place is bound to remain an obstacle transnational media cannot abolish. Place will remain important because even the recipient of transnational programming still has to live and work and perceive himself as belonging somewhere. It is obvious that the media could condition the perception of place, but that would not eliminate fragmentation. So long as people are rooted in place, that place's concerns and attachments continue to inspire an identity of sorts. Territory remains the most convenient basis for political and cultural mobilization. The resilience of territory and the importance of proximity to the sustenance of a cultural and political community ensure that local identity will thrive alongside transnational culture.

De Moragas, Spa, and Garitaonandia (1995:15) declare that it is impossible to sustain small cultural identities without their own media. In Britain, Sianel Pedwar Cymru (S4C), a Welsh language television station, exists as part of official efforts to defend and promote Welsh language and culture. S4C, despite having to serve a multinational state, remains unique in a highly centralized British broadcasting system.

Introduction   The title of this presentation may at first blush seem a reasonable topic for a presentation of this length. However, once one realises the vast array of what are rather euphemistically referred to as "challenges" facing the Nigerian media, the task appears more daunting. This is reflected in the topics to be addressed by the working groups, which cover almost every imaginable regulatory issue.

As a result, I shall restrict my comments to outlining the general nature of Nigeria's obligations regarding freedom of expression under international law and to noting a few of the consequences for the media which flow from these obligations. I will not address the many forms of crude harassment and interference that the Nigerian media have been subjected to in recent years - such as arbitrary detention of journalists, torture, banning and seizing newspapers by decree, and unfair trials. I believe the illegality of these actions is reasonably clear.

Nigeria is a party to both the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) and the *African Charter on human and Peoples' Rights*. Both of these instruments guarantee the right to freedom of expression, the former at Article 19 and the latter at Article 9. The full text of these provisions can be found in the Workshop materials. As the guarantee in the ICCPR is more detailed and has also been the subject of more detailed interpretation, my remarks will focus primarily on it.

Restrictions on Freedom of Expression   It may seem a bit odd for a human rights activist to start by talking about restrictions on rights. I take it as a given that this audience needs no reminding of the importance of freedom of expression, both in its own right and as an essential underpinning of democracy. The constant reiteration of this by courts, international bodies and distinguished individuals has become almost a mantra.

The purpose of this conference, however, is to assess the present restrictions on freedom of expression in Nigeria and to determine a strategy for addressing those which are oppressive or illegitimate. I this it is appropriate, therefore, to take as my starting point the extent to which international law allows restrictions on freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression is one of those rights which, unlike for example freedom from torture, is subject to a number of exceptions. This is in some ways problematical as it means that a form of balancing must be undertaken when assessing whether a given restriction falls within the scope of permissible exceptions. International bodies, however, have outlined a clear 3-part test which any restrictions on or interference with freedom of expression must meet. It may be noted that as a matter of law, it is for the State to justify these restrictions, not for citizens to prove that they are excessive.

The test, which flows clearly from the wording of Article 19 of the ICCPR and from views published by the UN Human Rights Committee, requires that any restriction must: a) be provided for by law; b) be required for the purpose of safeguarding one of the legitimate interests noted in Article 19(3); and c) be necessary to achieve this goal. It is clear that the proper approach to evaluating

[1] Toby Mendel is a Head of Law Programme at Article 19.
[2] Paper for the Media Laws Reform Workshop, 16-18 March 1999, Lagos.

a particular restriction is not to balance the various interests involved but to ascertain whether the restriction meets this strict test.

The first part of the test means State interference with freedom of expression cannot be legitimate unless it is specifically provided for by law. Restrictions must be accessible and foreseeable and "formulated with sufficient precision to enable the citizen to regulate his conduct". Acts by the authorities which interfere with media freedom but are not specifically sanctioned by law, such oacceptable. Second, freedom of expression may be restricted only to safeguard one of the limited list of legitimate interests in Article 19(3), namely respect of the rights or reputations of others, and for the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals. Measures restricting freedom of expression which have been motivated by other interests, even if these measures are specifically provided for by law, do not meet the test.

Perhaps, the most important part of the test, and the one upon which most restrictions founder, is the requirement of necessity. Although absolute necessity is not required, this requirement sets a high standard which restrictions must meet. Courts around the world have elaborated on this test when assessing restrictions on freedom of expression. In balancing freedom of expression and other legitimate interests, the Supreme Courts of Both Zimbabwe and Canada, for example, look at three factors. First, the objective must be of sufficient importance to warrant limiting a fundamental right. Second, the measures must be rationally connected to the objective, in the sense that they are carefully designed to achieve that objective. Third, the measures must impair the right as little as possible, in the sense that there is not less intrusive means of protecting the legitimate interest. In other words, restrictions which are not clear and narrow, or which do not serve a legitimate aim, cannot be justified.

Regulation and Control over the Media

Independence   One of the most important principles to flow from the guarantee of freedom of expression – which I shall refer to as the principle of independence – is that the media should be strictly independent of government control. The rationale behind this principle is clear. If governments exercise control over the media or regulatory bodies, the media will be unable to fulfill their dual mandate of informing the public and acting as "watchdog" of government. In addition, it is clearly unacceptable for government to use public funds for their own propaganda purposes and it is only through strict guarantees of independence that this can be prevented.

The most important consequence of the principle of independence is that regulatory bodies and media outlets, even if State-funded, must be strictly independent of government control. This applies broadly and includes regulatory and licensing bodies –whether in relation to private broadcasters, public broadcasters or newspapers - media outlets - whether broadcast or print - any statutory professional bodies, news agencies, printing houses and newspaper distributors. The principle also means that government action which directly affects the media should be as free as possible from political influence. For example, the placing of advertisements by authorities should be made on the basis of independent professional criteria rather than political favouritism. The principle also includes editorial independence, which means the right of journalists and editors to make decisions on the basis of professional criteria, free of government interference.

The principle of independence finds wide support from both international bodies and national courts. The Human Rights Committee, for example, in its commentary on Article 19 of the ICCPR, states: "effective measures are necessary to prevent such control of the media as would interfere with freedom of expression." In a Communication from Nigeria, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights held that a registration process for newspapers which was effectively controlled by the government and which left wide discretion to refuse registration was a breach of the right to receive information. Discussing a regulatory body which was effectively appointed by the responsible minister, the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka noted: "[T]he authority lacks the independence required of a body entrusted with the regulation of the electronic media which, it is widely acknowledged on all hands, is the most potent means of influencing thought."

In relation to State-funded broadcasters, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe notes "that the independence of the media, including broadcasting, is essential for the functioning of a democratic society," and sets outs guidelines including: "The legal framework governing public service broadcasting organisations should clearly stipulate their editorial independence and institutional autonomy ..." The same idea is reflected in comments by the Ghanaian Supreme Court: "[T]he state-owned media are national assets: they belong to the entire community, not to the abstraction known as the state; nor to the government in office, or to its party. If such national assets were to become the mouth-piece of any one or combination of the parties vying for power, democracy would be no more than a sham." The need for independence is also noted in ARTICLE 19's principles on broadcasting.

The independence of regulatory bodies can be ensured in a number of ways, in particular focusing on the appointments process to these bodies and rules relating to individual members. Approaches which have been used in many countries include, in relation to the former: open processes that ensure transparency and participation, broad consultation with affected individuals and groups, nominations and appointments processes governed by separate bodies, a requirement that the membership as a whole be representative of the society and super-majorities for ratification of nominees to ensure all-party input. Civil society organisations and the parliament should be responsible for nominations and appointments rather that government officials or ministers. Individual members should be governed by strong conflict of interest rules, need professional qualifications, have guaranteed tenure except in narrowly specified circumstances and be sufficiently remunerated.

Pluralism   The guarantee of freedom of expression also places an obligation on States to promote pluralism within the media. The European Court of Human Rights stated: "[Imparting] information and ideas of general interest ... cannot be successfully accomplished unless it is grounded in the principle of pluralism." The Inter-American Court has held that freedom of expression requires that "the communication media are potentially open to all without discrimination or, more precisely, that there be no individuals or groups that are excluded from access to such media."

The obligation to promote pluralism has a number of implications, a few of which I would like to highlight as particularly relevant to Nigeria. First, licensing decisions for private broadcasters should be made on the basis of pre-established, published criteria which include the promotion of pluralism and access to the airwaves. The airwaves are a public resource and frequency allocation should take this into account. Second, if governments insist on imposing

registration requirements for newspapers - which in my opinion they should not - this should be a purely formal system which does not grant the authorities any discretion to refuse registration. Third, it is by now well-established that mandatory licensing for journalists cannot be justified under international law. Indeed, this was the specific matter at issue in an advisory opinion in which the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held that mandatory licensing was incompatible with freedom of expression.

Freedom of Information   The importance of freedom of information to a democratic form of government cannot be overestimated. In its very first session in 1946, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 59(I), stating: "Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and ... the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated." As the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression observed in 1995, the right to receive information is not simply the converse of the right to impart information but is an independent right:

Freedom will be bereft of all effectiveness if the people have no access to information. Access to information is basic to the democratic way of life. The tendency to withhold information from the people at large is therefore to be strongly checked.

In his 1998 Report, the Special Rapporteur noted that there should be a presumption in favour of access to government-held information. He also noted that access is best implemented in practice where it is guaranteed by freedom of information legislation. Most established democracies already have in place such legislation and plans to introduce freedom of information laws are relatively well-advanced in countries all over the world, including the United Kingdom, Trinidad, South Africa, Bulgaria, India and Fiji.

The Special Rapporteur went on to note that in practice access to information requires an independent administrative body which can review refusals of access and which can order the authorities to release information where non-disclosure cannot be justified. There are clearly exceptions to the general right of access but these should be clearly and narrowly set out in the law and a public authority seeking to deny access should be able to demonstrate a clear risk of harm to a legitimate interest to justify non-disclosure. In many countries, there is a barrage of legislation which undermines access to information, such as the Nigerian *Official Secrets Act* (1962). Any freedom of information law should include a provision that it should prevail in case of conflict with such legislation.

Content Restrictions Purportedly in the General Public Good

Every society imposes some restrictions on the content of expressions to protect the public from general harms such as public disorder or threats to national security and these are legitimate grounds for such restrictions under international law. If they are not cast in sufficiently narrow terms, however, such restrictions can easily be abused by authorities to limit legitimate political speech. The concepts of public order and national security are susceptible of a very broad interpretation. For example, authoritarian governments have sought to limit such political debate – at the heart of a democratic form of government – arguing that it poses a threat to public order.

In some countries, the public interest grounds for restrictions go beyond public order and national security, for example to protect the public against "false news", "fear and alarm" or certain political programmes, such as the transition to civilian rule in Nigeria. These restrictions are not generally permitted under

international law as they neither protect one of the limited list of legitimate interests nor are they necessary. In particular, the idea of free political debate is at the heart of freedom of expression – restrictions which seek to impose a certain ideology or programme, no matter how broad the support for it, can never be justified.

Certain specific restrictions on freedom of expression, though perhaps formally justifiable, have so often been abused that they have been abolished or are effectively a dead-letter in many jurisdictions. Sedition is a good example of this. In 1840, the United States Congress took the extraordinary step of repaying all the fines ever levied against individuals convicted under the *Sedition Act 1798*, on the basis that it was unconstitutional and invalid. Sedition remains a common law offence in the United Kingdom but has not been applied for over 50 years. Similarly, in Canada, the *Criminal Code* still prohibits sedition, but it has not been used since 1951, when the landmark case of *Boucher v. The King* so narrowed the scope of the offence as to render it obsolete.

To guard against the abuse of public order and national security as grounds for limiting freedom of expression, human rights jurisprudence requires that a sufficient nexus between a given expression and the purported harm be established. This implies that restrictions which do not satisfy the following conditions are not legitimate. First, the risk of harm must be highly likely; a merely possible or speculative risk is not enough. Second, the risk must be of imminent harm, in the sense that they harm would ensue immediately or very shortly after the impugned expression. The third, related, condition is that the harm must flow directly from the expression. In tense social circumstances, the risk of public disorder or violence may be quite great. Debate about the underlying problems is necessary to defuse the situation but may be seen as contributing to the risk in the short term. The third condition means that it is only legitimate to prohibit expression which directly incites to disorder or violence. Fourth, the risk must be of serious harm; minor or insignificant harm cannot justify restrictions on a fundamental right. Finally, some sort of intention must be present where sanctions are to be applied. Thus it may be legitimate to interrupt a public speech which is the equivalent of a "spark in a powder keg" but the speaker may only be subject to sanction where he or she intended to ignite the powder.

These conditions find substantial support in both national and international standards. For example, in October 1995 ARTICLE 19 convened a group of experts in international law, national security and human rights which drafted what have become known as the J*ohannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information*. These principles have been endorsed by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression and noted by the UN Commission on Human Rights. Principle 6 is of particular interest here:

Subject to Principles 15 and 16, expression may be punished as a threat to national security only if a government can demonstrate that:

a] the expression is intended to incite imminent violence;

b] it is likely to incite such violence; and

c] there is a direct and immediate connection between the expression and the likelihood or occurrence of such violence.

While the *Johannesburg Principles* deal with restrictions on grounds of national security, the same considerations apply to many other general public interest restrictions on freedom of expression. A brief submitted by ARTICLE 19 to the European Court of Human Rights in December 1997 surveyed restrictions on freedom of expression to protect public order in Australia, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The brief concluded that:

in any of the nine democracies surveyed … expression alleged to incite a threat to public order can only be prosecuted in the narrow circumstances that the speech at issue is intended and/or likely to directly incite an immediate and serious breach of the peace.

A recent case before the European Court of Human Rights challenged binding over orders which were imposed on a number of demonstrators. It is significant that the Court only allowed the sanction only in those cases where the demonstrators had physically obstructed legal activities; where demonstrators had engaged in peaceful protest, binding over orders were not appropriate.

Defamation Law   The law relating to defamation, by which I mean all law which has as a goal the protection of personal reputations, is highly developed and hugely complex. Defamation suits tend to be very common and there is a large body of both national and international jurisprudence on this issue. I would like here to address just three key issues which either are or may become important in Nigeria as democratic consciousness takes root.

The first is the principle that public officials must withstand a greater degree of criticism than ordinary citizens. There are two key reasons for this. First, such officials have knowingly and willingly put themselves in the public eye and must tolerate enhanced public scrutiny. Second, criticism of official action is central to democracy. This principle has been reiterated on a number of occasions by the European Court of Human Rights. Indeed, the European Court has held that the scope of this principle extends to all matters of public interest. This principle has also been adopted by many national courts.

The second relates to the question of proof of truth. In common law jurisdictions, it has traditionally been open to the defendant in defamation actions to prove the truth of the statements as a defence. If the defendant could not prove this, however, factually damaging statements would generally sustain liability. This approach has been rejected in many jurisdictions as imposing too high a standard on the media which have an obligation to report in the public interest. Instead, in these jurisdictions, the media are required only to show that they have not acted maliciously, or that they have acted reasonably, even if ultimately they published factually erroneous material. Decisions to this effect have been rendered by superior courts in Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States and Zambia. The European Commission of Human Rights has also held that proof of truth is not necessary and this issue is currently before the Court.

Third, it is now clear that the quantum of damages is also subject to the international test for restrictions on freedom of expression. An important case before the European Court of Human Rights challenged the level of damages imposed for a defamatory statement. The Court held that any sanctions also needed to satisfy the proportionality part of the test and that in this case they were too high to be justified.

Conclusion   The importance of freedom of expression as a fundamental human right is now beyond question and the key role it plays in a democracy has been recognised by courts, international bodies and human rights activists

around the world. Judicial and quasi-judicial bodies, both national and international, have dealt with most of the challenges facing the Nigerian media today and have provided us with solutions to many of them which respect international human rights norms.

I have tried to outline some of these solutions to you today. I hope that this presentation has provided some useful material for the working groups. It is only by recognising these international standards, and by implementing them in practice, that Nigeria can regain her proper place as a respected member of the community of nations.

T O B Y   M E N D E L [1]   **F R E E D O M   O F   E X P R E S S I O N** [2]

A N D   I N V E S T I G A T I V E   J O U R N A L I S M

This paper was given in a session entitled "Restrictions on Freedom of Expression in a Democratic Society" and addresses, primarily, the type of legal framework best suited to promoting investigative journalism, in the context of the role of the media in promoting probity and accountability in public affairs.

Article 19 - background

ARTICLE 19 is an international human rights organisation, registered as a charity in the UK, which takes its name from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in 1948 as its flagship statement of human rights. Article 19 of the UDHR, together with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (an international treaty which is legally binding on governments) guarantee the right to freedom of expression. This includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, through any media and regardless of frontiers. The primary goal of ARTICLE 19, therefore, is to promote freedom of expression.

Article 19 does this in a wide variety of ways, including:

- Working for law reform and for greater respect for human rights.
- Producing reports both on problems within specific countries and on general issues relating to freedom of expression.
- Educating and training, both formally and through our publications and outreach programme.
- Within the Law Programme, promoting freedom of expression through the UN and other inter-governmental bodies such as the Council of Europe.
- Promulgating standards on specific freedom of expression issues, such as media coverage of elections and restrictions on grounds of national security.
- Involvement in cases raising freedom of expression issues before both national and international courts and tribunals.

Introduction [precis]   ARTICLE 19 argues that media reform should be integral to anti-corruption programmes, given the media's important role in exposing corruption as part of their 'watchdog' function, which includes reporting on matters of public interest and keeping a check on the activities of governments. This article looks at the institutional obstacles to the types of investigative journalism which can expose and challenge corruption.

Why investigative journalism is important   Democracy is founded on a number of principles, one of which is the accountability of elected representatives and civil servants to the people. Ideally, a host of mechanisms should help ensure accountability but even the very best systems may be abused.

Experience shows us that when wrongdoing does take place, investigative journalists are among those best placed to expose it and ensure that justice is

---

[1] Toby Mendel is a Head of Law Programme at Article 19.

[2] Paper for the Conference 'The Role of Social Communication Media in Probity and Transparency of Public Affairs', 20-24 July 1998, Santiago, Chile.

done. In fact, because of the great public interest in the conduct of government including the exposure of corruption and other misuse of public office, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has frequently noted the important 'watchdog' role of the media.

Facilitating investigative journalism   The concept of an 'appropriate' legal framework for promoting investigative journalism is primarily one that conforms to international standards regarding freedom of expression in the relevant areas. These standards have been most comprehensively elaborated within the European system of human rights, through treaties and other standard-setting documents and by the European Commission and Court of Human Rights. But obviously other international bodies, including the UN and the Inter-American system, have undertaken some important standard-setting. The basic principle underlying these standards is that while freedom of expression is not absolute, any restrictions must be necessary in a democratic society and must satisfy a strict proportionality test.

Three main conditions can be identified as creating an ideal environment for investigative journalism to flourish. First, there should be an independent, pluralistic media which is both interested in and capable of undertaking investigative journalism. Second, journalists must be able to identify problems and investigate them: this implies, most importantly, that they can have access to relevant information from a variety of sources. Third, the media must be free to publish or broadcast the stories their journalists have uncovered in the public interest, without fear of censorship, recrimination or penal sanction.

The promotion of appropriate conditions for investigative journalism requires action at a wide range of levels. A suitable legal framework is one essential part.

There are three main components in a legal framework geared to facilitating successful investigative journalism. These correspond to the three conditions noted above: a good regulatory structure for the media, an open freedom of information regime and only limited and narrowly defined restrictions on publication. The first is necessary to promote the development of an independent, pluralistic media which values investigative journalism and to ensure unhindered access to journalism as a profession. Without this, even the motivation to investigate corruption and other accountability problems may be lacking. A proper freedom of information regime enables journalists to have access to the information they need to root out and expose corruption and to help defend themselves when charged with publishing false information. Finally, excessive restrictions on publication, such as prior censorship or oppressive defamation laws, can mean that even when corruption is discovered, stories are not published.

The Regulatory Framework for the Media   Unless the media – both print and electronic – are independent, and unless there is a reasonable degree of media diversity, investigative journalism is very difficult. Public actors must respect the editorial independence of public broadcasters and the government must create an enabling environment in which the independent media can flourish. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has set out a number of guidelines on guaranteeing the independence of public broadcasters. These include:

- strong guarantees of editorial independence and institutional autonomy, for example with respect to programme schedules the presentation of news, financial management and staffing;

- a prohibition on censorship; and

■ a requirement that members of governing bodies be appointed in an open and pluralistic manner and be representative of society as a whole.

These guidelines clearly establish the importance of independent, representative public broadcasters.

A 1993 case before the European Court of Human Rights addressed the issue of whether a public monopoly on broadcasting was an acceptable limitation on freedom of expression under the European Convention on Human Rights. Significantly, the Court held that the public's right to know could only be satisfied where the media was "grounded in the principle of pluralism, of which the State is the ultimate guarantor." A public monopoly imposed "the greatest restrictions on the freedom of expression, namely through the total impossibility of [private] broadcasting" and was therefore unacceptable. This case thus established the important principle that the State is under an obligation to take positive steps to promote media diversity. This implies that the government should promote rather than restrict access to the broadcast media sector. The same principle implies that licensing of the print media is not acceptable and that the government should promote economic conditions which favour press development.

Equally important in this regard is the right of anyone to practise journalism without restrictions. The key international standard in this area was elaborated in an advisory opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, upon a request of the government of Costa Rica. In that opinion, the issue was whether a law licensing only journalists who were members of a professional association was an acceptable limitation on freedom of expression. The Court held that licensing of journalists was not compatible with the Inter-American Convention. Unlike law and medicine, the practice of journalism was "an activity specifically guaranteed by the Convention" which could not be limited under the guise of promoting professionalism.

Freedom of Information   Freedom of information is clearly a right of the very greatest importance. In its very first session in 1946 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 59(I) which stated:

Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and ... the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated.

The importance of freedom of information to those engaged in investigative journalism is almost too obvious to warrant repetition. Information is the basic stock-in-trade of a journalist; a freedom of information regime makes the exposure of corruption and other types of public wrong-doing considerably easier.

There are a number of aspects of freedom of information, of which the most relevant here are access to government-held information, secrecy laws, protection for whistleblowers and confidentiality of journalists' sources.

If journalists are to be able to expose corruption, they must have access to information held by government. The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression has noted that "the right to seek, receive and impart information imposes a positive obligation on States to ensure access to information, particularly with regard to information held by Government …." In many countries around the world, one finds free-standing rights of access to government information – for example, in press laws – that are ineffective because they are simply not applied in practice. Proper access requires not only a legal guarantee but also an accessible and effective administrative mechanism to ensure that requests for information are dealt with quickly and fairly.

Obviously, some limitations on access to information are legitimate, for example for reasons of national security and privacy. But these must be narrowly defined and also necessary to protect the interest. In addition, any refusals to disclose information must be subject to review by independent bodies and ultimately by the courts.

Secrecy laws represent the other side of the coin. Whereas access to information legislation grants a right to use government-held information, secrecy laws make it a crime to disclose certain information, for example for reasons of national security. Again, secrecy laws may be legitimate, but only if they are very narrowly drawn and seek to protect a legitimate interest. In 1995 the Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information were adopted by an international group of experts meeting in South Africa. Principle 15 is particularly relevant here, prohibiting punishment "on national security grounds for disclosure of information if

1] the disclosure does not actually harm and is not likely to harm a legitimate national security interest, or

2] the public interest in knowing the information outweighs the harm from disclosure."

Whistleblowers   Protection for whistleblowers is an important aspect of secrecy laws. Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure by civil servants and others of information in the public interest, even though this information is otherwise legitimately classified. Ideally, whistleblowers should have special exemption from prosecution. Whistleblowing is in practice very common; there is often a constant flow of classified information from civil servants to journalists. In many ways this serves as a safety valve, ensuring that information on matters of public concern does get to the public. Corruption is clearly an issue where whistleblowing will often be in the public interest. For example, the fact that an army general is making money by selling arms to friendly regimes should be made public even if information about those particular weapons is otherwise classified. Principle 16 of the Johannesburg Principles deals with this issue, providing that no one should be punished "for disclosing information … if the public interest in knowing the information outweighs the harm from disclosure."

Protection of sources   Investigative journalists often rely heavily on confidential sources – individuals who are prepared to leak material to them – for much of their information. Often, these sources wish to remain confidential, because they risk censure if found out or because they have breached laws or employment contracts by leaking the information. Journalists often refuse to divulge the identity of these sources, partly because of professional ethics but mainly because if they do so, other sources will be reluctant to come forward and the flow of information will dry up. In a celebrated case, in which ARTICLE 19 intervened, the ECHR held that "protection of journalistic sources is one of the basic conditions for press freedom" and that mandatory disclosure was unacceptable unless "justified by an overriding requirement in the public interest." The Court went on to hold that the desire of a private company to unmask a disloyal employee who had leaked confidential information to a journalist was insufficient to warrant mandatory source disclosure. Source confidentiality is protected in many countries, in recognition of its importance to press freedom.

Restrictions on Publication   Censorship is an extreme way of restricting freedom of expression. In recognition of this, Article 13(2) of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights expressly prohibits prior restraint and

so in the Americas, censorship is formally illegal. The problems of censorship for investigative journalists are obvious.

Protection of reputation   In ARTICLE 19's experience, defamation laws in many parts of the world severely curtail the publication of information in the public interest. Harsh defamation laws lead journalists to err on the side of caution, not publishing rather than risking the cost and inconvenience of a court case. This is particularly common where allegations of corruption or wrongdoing, including by public officials, are involved. Repressive defamation laws can be costly even when journalists win cases. The Guardian newspaper in Britain, for example, had three high-profile defamation cases in 1997, all of which it won. Despite this, it lost money and staff time in all three.

Although the term 'defamation' is used, it is actually a convenient shorthand for a whole category of laws which restrict freedom of expression, purportedly to protect reputations. These restrictions go by many names, including slander, libel, insult and desacato laws. The precise label is unimportant – the issue here is how to strike the right balance between protecting reputations and dignity, on the one hand, and freedom of expression on the other.

It is clear that freedom of expression may be restricted to protect reputations. This is explicitly provided for in all the main international human rights instruments, including the Inter-American Convention. It is, however, equally clear that some defamation laws unacceptably limit freedom of expression.

A number of important principles have emerged from these cases and other international standard-setting. One of the most important, certainly, is that politicians and public officials must tolerate a greater degree of criticism than ordinary citizens. In a report on desacato laws, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights noted that "in democratic societies political and public figures must be more, not less, open to public scrutiny and criticism." As a result, the Commission was of the opinion that desacato laws breach the guarantee of freedom of expression. The Verbitsky case involved a conviction under desacato laws for defaming the Argentine Supreme Court Minister. Mr. Verbitsky applied to the Inter-American Commission at which point the Argentine authorities settled the case, reversing the conviction and repealing the desacato law. The ECHR has frequently held that politicians must tolerate a greater degree of criticism than ordinary citizens and that the limits are even wider as regards governments.

Distinctions between facts and opinions   The ECHR has made a clear distinction between statements of fact and opinions or value judgements. An important principle is that defendants cannot be required to prove the truth of opinions. In a case from Austria, a journalist had accused the Chancellorof, among other things, the "basest opportunism" and "immoral" and "undignified" behaviour. Under Austrian defamation law, the journalist had to prove the truth of his or her allegations and the journalist in this case was convicted, in part for failing to do this.

The ECHR held that this was unacceptable, noting that it was impossible to prove the truth of opinions. A case in which a journalist had called a leading politician an 'idiot' provides some indication of what the appropriate standard might be as regards opinions. The ECHR held that this was acceptable, taking into account the fact that the politician had also been provocative and that the article was part of a larger political debate and not simply a gratuitous attack on the individual concerned.

Burden of proof and proof of truth   It might seem obvious that in relation to statements of fact, proof of the truth should be a complete defence. However, in many countries, such as Mexico and Spain, defendants are denied this opportunity. The ECHR has clearly established that defendants must be allowed to prove truth and that convictions for true statements are not acceptable.

The rule that true statements cannot be defamatory does not necessarily imply that false statements are. In fact, there are serious problems with requiring defendants to prove the truth of their statements. The Privy Council, in a case from Antigua and Barbuda involving a law prohibiting the publication of "false news", observed:

[I]t would on any view be a grave impediment to the freedom of the press if those who print, or a fortiori those who distribute, matter reflecting critically on the conduct of public authorities could only do so with impunity if they could first verify the accuracy of all statements of fact on which the criticism was based.

A requirement of proof of truth exerts a significant chilling effect on the media for two reasons. First, it is not possible for journalists to satisfy the public's right to know and yet never err. The imperative of getting the news out to the public means that even the most professional journalists will make mistakes. Second, journalists often cannot provide proof of truth, even where their statements are correct. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights recognised this in its desacato report, stating, "Even those laws which allow truth as a defense inevitably inhibit the free flow of ideas and opinions by shifting the burden of proof onto the speaker." A recent case in England, involving allegations of corruption against a former Minister of Defence, clearly demonstrated this problem. For a long time the newspaper was unable to prove the truth of their allegations, in part because the Minister's wife and child had lied to protect him. Eventually, the newspaper unearthed new evidence and the case against the newspaper was dropped.

In many jurisdictions, journalists are not required to show that their statements are completely accurate, particularly where the allegations involve public officials. Instead, they are only required to conform to certain standards of professionalism. In the celebrated case of New York Times v. Sullivan, the US Supreme Court held that public officials may only recover damages for a defamatory falsehood if they prove that the statement was made with actual knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard for the truth. Two points are notable here: first, the onus of proof has been shifted from the defendant journalist to the plaintiff. Second, the defendant is only required to have acted without malice or recklessness. Variations of this standard havebeen adopted in a number of countries around the world, including Australia, Germany, India and Zambia.

No international human rights court has so far adopted what has come to be known as the Sullivan standard. However, in a recent case before the European Commission on Human Rights, a Romanian journalist had been convicted for allegations of corruption on the part of elected officials. Even though the articles contained a number of errors, they were not completely false and so the conviction violated freedom of expression. The Commission specifically noted that it was in the public interest that investigations into corruption be pursued. Another case involved a conviction for an article alleging police brutality, based on popular rumours and containing a number of mistakes. The Court noted that the articles addressed a matter of some public interest, that the goal was to promote reform and that it would have been impossible to

verify the rumours. As a result, the conviction was held to breach the guarantee of freedom of expression.

These cases suggest that an absolute requirement of proof of truth would fall foul of the European Convention. Malicious falsehoods are clearly not acceptable. On the other hand, where the goal of publication is to promote reform or expose wrongdoing, it would appear that mistakes should be tolerated. No doubt the Inter-American Commission and Court will develop detailed standards on this in due course. Presumably they will also allow for errors as long as they have not been made in bad faith.

Conclusion   Investigative journalism is enhanced when a number of conditions are met. In most countries, legal impediments to investigative journalism are only part of the problem – others not covered here include lack of training for investigative journalists and a lack of political will to investigate attacks on journalists. However, legal impediments are an important part of the problem and are often symptomatic of a wider malaise. This paper has focused on what ARTICLE 19 regards as the most important components of an effective legal framework for promoting investigative journalism. On its own, this legal framework will not ensure that corruption and public wrongdoing are exposed. Without it, however, the challenges and dangers faced by investigative journalists will be considerably greater.

TOOL KIT:
KEY JOURNALISM TECHNIQUES

This Checklist was developed by journalists, journalism professors and diversity advisers at a workshop at Carleton University in June, 1995. They exchanged information about diversity initiatives and how to sustain them; they shared experiences both positive and negative; they debated with vigor the difficulties and the merits, the problems and the advantages of greater diversity in both hiring and coverage; they worked at case studies based on real events; and they drafted this set of principles to help newsrooms respond better to the changes in Canadian society. They would like to share these principles, condensed and formatted as a checklist, with other newsrooms.

Reporting on DIVERSITY means reflecting all members of the community in a fair and accurate manner, and applying equal standards of scrutiny for all groups.

For beat and General Reporters

- Am I covering all aspects, including positive and negative, of diverse communities?

- Am I aware of the power of images, and do I avoid furthering stereotypes by seeking a diverse representation when interviewing people, no matter what the story?

- Are the « labels » I use to describe people appropriate and necessary, and do they meet the guidelines of my news organization?

- Do I regularly consult a variety of widely representative community newspapers, radio and television programs and their editors and producers?

- Do I involve all resources in our news organization as a way to enrich our coverage?

- Do I help keep the diversity dialogue alive in the newsroom through questions, source suggestions and requests for explanation about news decisions?

- Do I research diverse groups thoroughly, to avoid perpetuating stereotypes?

- Do I include questions/allegations of systemic racism as context to specific stories, whenever I can do so fairly and responsibly?

- Am I aware of factions and agendas within groups so that I do not fall prey to manipulation by prominent sources?

- Do I get my assignment/city editors onside-show them how allowing me time to do background research will pay off with better coverage?

- Do I take the time to consult peers and editors to gain a balanced overview when in doubt about the tone of a story?

For Desk and Assignment Editors

- Am I giving reporters the time to develop diverse contacts and pursue a wide range of stories?

- Am I creating a newsroom atmosphere that encourages reporters to move beyond traditional news gathering?

- Am I personally exploring all sources of news, and open to non-traditional views and voices?

- Do our story and photo ideas and our content perpetuate cultural or other stereotypes? Am I assessing whether our photographs and visuals accurately reflect the entire community?

- Am I watching our use of language for bias?

- Am I aware of minority sensitivities before setting and reviewing a style to describe groups or communities?

- Are we under-playing or over-playing a story because of its diversity content?

  sour coverage of the actions of a few stereotyping an entire group?

- Am I regularly reviewing the accumulative impact of our coverage?

For Senior Management

- Are we hiring the most qualified people? And are we making clear what those qualifications are?

- Are we seeking to hire people who can bring diverse perspectives into our newsroom?

- Are we looking for candidates in non-traditional places (e.g., ads in community papers; staff of community papers or cable television and community radio stations; and community groups or organizations)?

- After hiring, are we supporting and training new employees?

- Are we telling schools of journalism what we need?

- Are we thinking long-term about recruitment (e.g., organizing job fairs, participating in high school media literacy programs)?

…Sustaining it

- Is there commitment from the top that diversity is important?

- Are we clear what we're prepared to invest to make it happen (e.g., outreach, assigning, mentoring)?

- Are we telling diverse communities that we want their business?

- Are we creating opportunities for reporting diversity?

- Are we measuring progress regularly?

Most journalists willingly concede that objectivity is an honorable myth, achievable only in an ideal world. If that is so, then our success at moving along the continuum from subjective reporting toward that objective ideal hinges on our ability to recognize and correct for the human biases that pull us in the wrong direction. Here are places to look for those biases.

Selection

The stories we choose can tell our public something about what we value. Where we go, whom we interview, what perspectives we represent, all convey a message to the public.

When it works: When the scope of coverage shows communities in their fullest complexity–all classes, religions, races/ethnicities, men and women, gay and straight, all political persuasions–then there is greater chance that all groups will feel valued and will respect your organization.

When it doesn't work: It produces reporting that largely ignores groups or disproportionately shows them in a negative or stereotypical way. Religious fundamentalists as extremists; gay men as AIDS victims; Hispanics and black people as criminals.

Language

How we refer to people or incidents, from the opening of a story to its kicker, can speak volumes to the public. Each adjective, phrase, or inflection, either verbal or written, has the power to signal to a viewer, reader, or listener that the reporter has a particular point of view.

When it works: Language is precise, direct, strong. It is not overly dependent upon sources and subjects. It is wary of single-word descriptors–radical, hysterical, separatist–that are used as labels by one person or group against another. It avoids hyperbole and euphemisms.

When it doesn't work: Inference substitutes for fact. Language is loaded. Euphemisms reign. A man "admits" that he is gay. A pregnant woman "peddles" her story to the press. Richard Jewell "bounces" from job to job. "Inner city" replaces black or Hispanic. "Conservative," "suburban," or "blue collar" replace white.

Images

Studies show that images can easily overpower words in broadcast and in print, and they can deliver a message that may or may not be what the journalist intends. Images shape impressions, and their effects, positive and negative, are long-lasting.

When they work: They portray a diversity of people and offer a range of per-spectives. They take the public where they might not ordinarily go. They're the work of informed photojournalists whose continuing education provides both sensitivity and confidence. They produce a body of work that is balanced and fair.

When they don't work: They help form or reinforce stereotypes by portraying people disproportionately in a negative or stereotypical light. They hurt people unnecessarily. They provide the public with a false sense of the world in which they live.

---

[1] Keith Woods, The Poynter Institute.

Play The most abiding and most immediate values transmitted from journalists to their public arrive via the "play" a story gets. Top of the A-block. Banner headline. Large letters. Urgent pitch. Journalists tell people who and what is most important. Which stories must be told now. Which can be relegated to the news briefs and the back pages.

When it works: All people are valued equally. Breast cancer stories get the same play as prostate cancer stories. Success and tragedy stories about people of color receive the same prominent play as those about white people.

When it doesn't work: Journalists perpetuate a false hierarchy where men's issues are more important than those of women. Where white lives are worth more than others. Where the sexual orientation of gays and lesbians is considered more newsworthy than that of heterosexuals.

BRUCE J. ALLEN
STEVEN WILKINSON

GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALISTS COVERING ETHNIC CONFLICT [1]

1 Cover Each Side of the Conflict

At a conference in March 1992, Mikhail Komissar, president of Interfax news agency, spoke about the challenges facing his staff in seeking to provide accurate and balanced coverage of all sides in a conflict.

I can offer many examples when one of the warring sides tried to serve their own interests by feeding disinformation into mass media, knowing that our information reaches a world-wide audience. There have been many very complicated cases when it was difficult to clarify what was going on because the disinformation was prepared very professionally and fed into our agency very professionally. Often it comes from government officials. Sometimes the president's press secretary offers you a complete lie. You feel that something is wrong, you check it out, find out that it was a lie — but it came from the president's press secretary. Journalists face the problem of what to do with this kind of information. We know that if we publish the information in the form we received it, it will provoke new bloodshed, new conflict. Moreover, the other side often puts pressure on us. They say to us, "Do you want to cause more bloodshed?" Imagine the situation: Journalists understand that publishing such information may lead to bloodshed, but if we do not, we might as well cover the weather reports. What should we do?

As we have noted, it is often difficult to get a clear picture of what we term the truth, the facts, the "objective situation." Because these are often an ambiguous notion, the journalist should present, or at least refer to, the different perceptions and explain why he or she is more persuaded by one interpretation than another.

Mikhail Komissar's rule of thumb for Interfax's reporting on military movements was widely supported by other journalists.

If Azeri officials tell us that Armenian troops are moving into their territory with tanks, that a battle is being waged with hundreds of casualties, we have a rule: Never publish this information without double-checking it. We call the CIS armed force and Armenian sources, and we try to balance out our information, presenting two or three sides. Even if we do not have specific information, we still say, for instance, "The Armenian side denounced this claim," so that our readers understand that the information of the Azeri side is not necessarily the ultimate truth.

And for those media organizations without the resources of CNN or Interfax, without the money to hire more cameramen, there is always the opportunity to use the telephone to contact ordinary people from all the affected areas, as well as non-partisan specialists on the conflict who can put the events in context.

2 Present People as Individuals, Not as Representatives of Groups

The comparative study of ethnic conflict shows us that the perception of other groups as solid, threatening entitles, and of one's own group as weak, perse-

---

[1] From *Conflict Management Group*, Vol. IV, Issue 22-23, May-June 1994

cuted, and diffuse, plays an important role in preparing ethnic populations for conflict. If members of an ethnic group believe they are threatened, they will be much more prepared to believe rumors and to take pre-emptive violent action to "kill them before they kill us." Most ethnic violence is justified in defensive, not offensive terms, and journalists have an important opportunity to play a role in breaking down this sense to threat.

There is a danger that the need to cover both "sides" in a conflict might unwittingly help to strengthen damaging perceptions of solid ethnic groups.

The wish to cover both points of view may encourage journalists to seek out "group representatives," such as individual politicians or self-appointed "ethnic leaders," whose comments can be used to represent the feelings and point of views of "the group." Reporters often subconsciously make the actions of specific individuals represent those of the ethnic group, by using phrases such as "The lngush want this," "the Ossetians want that," "the Azeris were attacked by the Armenians." The stereotypes such reports encourage are extremely damaging.

At the local level, before conflict becomes widespread, the perception of other groups as solid and threatening is often conveyed through reports on crimes. To do so encourages the perception that certain communities have criminal propensities, or are bent on taking political or economic control of the country.

Breaking down perceptions of groups as solid entities requires that journalists be very careful in their presentation of the facts. The key is for journalists not to assume that an individual politician or subset of an ethnic group represents the wishes and interests of the ethnic group as a whole. As Stovan Cerovic has argued:

You should always make the distinction between people and regimes... It's a matter of life and death. You're trying to win people over, stop them from following the nationalist hate mongers who offer them "protection," not frighten them by making them feel they're held personally responsible for bad acts by members of the other group. So make sure you limit responsibility when assigning the blame for an atrocity. Remember that individuals committed these acts, not the whole group. If you don't ten many people will say, "I am a Serb. I don't like Milosevic, but he is president of Serbia and all the other groups are against us because they think we support his actions. Therefore we have to support Milosevic because only he can protect us from the other groups."

3 Provide Context, Not Just Coverage of Events

Ethnic conflicts often emerge against the background of complex historical grievances with widely differing interpretations of group identity and the legitimacy of claims to territory. In Nagor-no-Karabakh, Armenians and Azeris hold very different views of the past histories of both groups with each other and with the Russians and the Turks, as well as over the rights and wrongs of Stalin's 1923 decision to place Karabakh within the boundaries of the Azerbaijani Soviet Republic. In reporting on this conflict, as on any other, it is essential for the journalist to report on the wider historical context behind what may seem to outsiders to be inexplicable events of violent savagery.

It is important to clarify what we mean by context. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's book, The *Invention of Tradition*, reminds us that most ethnic histories are comparatively recent in origin and that different views of the past are put forward by different individuals within a group to justify their present political, social, or economic agenda. Therefore there will be many different "historical contexts" available from which a journalist might choose.

Wherever possible a journalist should recognize in his articles that these different historical understanding exist (and are driving the conflict) and that very often key tenets of group ideology may be only recent in origin.

For example, in ex-Yugoslavia the attempts of Franjo Tudjman and other Croats in the late 1980s to rewrite the history of the region during the Second World War and portray the Croats as having suffered as much as the Serbs was a major factor behind the declarations of autonomy by the Serb minorities within Croatia.

But many journalists in the West ignored the impact of this recent historical revisionism by Croats and maintained that the conflicts between Croats and Serbs were the product solely of "age-old antagonism."

It often seems inexplicable to members of one group, or to foreign observers, that members of another group seem to hold such "mistaken" views about the rights and wrongs of a conflict. This belief that a certain community cannot think rationally is especially dangerous because it encourages the false belief that ethnic conflicts themselves are irrational, primeval, and hence unavoidable. Stovan Cerovic has recommended that only by exposing all sides to the media interpretations that support the positions of the other side can any real understanding be achieved. "You'll understand everything if you see what people in Yugoslavia are told by the government reports in TV Belgrade and TV Zegreb."

Journalist should focus on the manipulation of the media by nationalist politicians, rather than on the misguided beliefs held by those who are fed this diet of misinformation.

4 Will Censoring Myself or Others Reduce Ethnic Violence?

Where reporting on instances of ethnic conflict seems likely to inflame passions and provoke even more violence, what should the responsible journalist do? Can self-censorship or government censorship of potentially explosive news ever be justified? Is the only way to avoid conflict to censor out the most inflammatory facts? Supporters of censorship point to the vast literature about the media and violence in the United States and Western Europe. This literature shows that at certain times, reports in the media and especially live reports on television do seem to have sparked acts of violence or intensified acts of violence which were already occurring.

Examples would include reports during the conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Brixton riots in London in 1981, or the riots in the United States in the 1960s.

Indeed, the very presence of the media at protests or political events (for possible future media coverage) often encourages dramatic displays of violence by crowds, unions, political parties, and ethnic group representatives. Most recently in India, the Bharatiya Janata party's demolition of the Ayodhya mosque was directly related to the party's need to have a media success after several disappointing political setbacks. Reports in the media have the power to magnify conflicts by making faraway threats seem near and by connecting one's ethnically different neighbors with an immediate threat to one's community, home, and family. The destruction of a mosque in a remote town in northern India became a wedge dividing Hindus and Muslims in towns and villages throughout the subcontinent. Because they realize that media coverage often has an effect on the level of conflict, supporters of censorship imagine that removing the media reports will reduce the level of conflict.

They are very much mistaken for two reasons. First, the issue is not whether the reporting of the facts about ethnic conflict will sometimes lead to violence. It will. The issue is whether introducing censorship will have even worse effects.

Journalists can only be forces of moderation if they have the trust of their audience, and therefore attempts by governments to censor accurate reports, or attempts by journalists themselves to suppress facts in order to reduce conflict, are misplaced and counterproductive. We know that suppressing news about conflicts only creates a greater public appetite for information. Ithiel de Sola Pool and Wimal Dissanayeke have shown – in the cases of Eastern Europe under communism and Sri Lanka during the 1971 rebellion – the citizens of countries which restrict news about sensitive subjects are more likely to believe alternative news sources such as propagandists and traditional rumor networks. If the responsible news media either chooses not to satisfy the appetite for information about ethnic conflicts, or is prevented from doing so by government, others who are less well intentioned will fill the void.

Second, those who would censor underestimate the extent to which the balance of technology has shifted away from them and in favor of individuals and organizations who wish to put out ethnic propaganda. At least since the Iranian Revolution, when the Ayatollah Khomeini's use of taped sermons and daily faxes helped him overcome censorship and direct the overthrow of the Shah, it has become obvious that censorship of the facts not only has bad results, it does not work.

Richard Francis, the controller of BBC Northern Ireland in the 1970s, is an excellent example of a journalist who understands why censoring facts not only conflicts with free speech but also represents bad public policy. Francis was criticized for a BBC a news report which broadcast the information that four Protestants had been shot in East Belfast while at the same time a riot was taking place in West Belfast. Responding to critics who argued he should have delayed the broadcast, Francis correctly argued that "In a town like Belfast, which is like a village, rumor can travel faster even than radio. If we had not announced unequivocally that four Protestants had been shot, the rioting crowds likely would have made it not four but fourteen, not shot but dead, and the not could have been very much worse than it was."

But it is important to recognize that some journalists, acting with best intentions, have chosen to censor both their own reports and those of others.

Andrei Cherkizov, for instance, was appointed to head the Russian government press center in the North Caucasus during the outbreak of mass violence between the Muslim Ingush and the Christian North Ossetians in late 1992.

Hundreds were killed in several days of fighting. Cherkizov, a firm supporter of the role of the investigative reporter in the stages before and after the eruption of major conflict, felt that unrestricted reporting of the violence in Ingushetia and North Ossetia would have caused more deaths than it averted:

There is a price for freedom of speech. That price is bloodshed. Censorship is a violation of all laws. But it saves the lives of people. It helps begin a process. The level of hatred must be lowered a bit before you can get people to sit down at a negotiation table. Then they can talk to each other. Hatred increases not without our participation, not without the influence of journalists. We put one person in Nazran (the capital of Ingushetia) and one in Vladikavkaz (the capital of North Ossetia) and simply said, "Take everything off the media if it has the element of moral extremism." And immediately an Ingush told me how the tone had changed markedly in Ossetian television. It was noticeable the next day.

Because of my experience, inside this conflict, all democratic conversations about freedom of speech were finished for me. Freedom of speech – yes, in a normal situation. No question. Freedom of speech in an abnormal situation of extreme violence is excluded. Maybe I am not right. But people are alive because of this position.

5 Focus on Processes, Not Just on Events

It is an unfortunate fact, as William Ury has pointed out, that "It is much more 'telegenic' to cover violence, and it is quite boring to cover negotiation, which is just talking." The media have a tendency to focus on events rather than the processes of negotiation and mediation. Much of the pressure comes from editors who want coverage of the "big event" rather than a less visible process which may be just as important.

Dan Sheider of *The Christian Science Monitor*, speaking about his experiences covering the political turmoil in South Korea in 1987 and 1988, said that many of reign correspondents received calls from their editors saying, "Well, the AP reported today that there was a demonstration and the people were fighting with the police. Why aren't you covering this? What's going on? We saw it on T.V., pictures of these demonstrations." We say, "This is only happening on this one little spot. The rest of Seoul is completely quiet, other things are going on." And this was OK for me, but for all my colleagues this was almost a daily event of trying to convince your editors that what they were seeing or hearing was not in fact the total reality and was not in fact even a very important part of the reality. Reporters agreed that more time should be given to exploring mediation and negotiation rather than assuming that violent events represent an accurate measure of the state of group relations. There are some examples where media have sought to provide special coverage of the process of ethnic conflict management.

India today has reported on the successful process of trust-building between the police and local authorities and the local religious groups and leading individuals in the city of Bhiwandi. This local negotiation process allowed the community to avoid the violent ethnic riots in which hundreds were killed in Bombay and other Indian cities during the unrest following the destruction of the Ayodhya Mosque in December 1992.

6 Seek to Educate About Ethnic Diversity

Many people advocate more education about ethnic diversity as a way to improve understanding and ultimately improve group relations. The news media are clearly a prime way in which such education programs or articles can be disseminated. But a key question often not addressed is what kind of education is appropriate? It is important to stress that in our desire to promote ethnic diversity and understanding, we should not create images of solid ethnic groups and give power to cultural elites who develop an interest in promoting a political agenda based on ethnic particularism.

If the example of ex-Yugoslavia is anything to go by, the creation of national historical institutes (such as Serb or Croat institutes) does not encourage a sense of inter-ethnic understanding as much as fund a vested cultural elite which tries to distinguish the history of its own people from that of other groups. It is these new national intelligentsia which have most to gain from ethnic nationalism.

7 Remind the Audience That Ethnic Problems Are Global and That Conflict Management Is Possible

The process of dissolution in the former Soviet Union (FSU) has seen the emergence of many violent ethnic and nationalist conflicts. Many people in the FSU are confused as to why, when it seemed these conflicts had not existed there for decades, they now seem to be a permanent and dangerous feature of the new states. Emil Payin has suggested that one way to tackle what he sees as a growing "sense of fatalism and apathy" which can allow conflicts to emerge is to insert the problem into the system of historical analogies – to show the people that it is not a unique problem and that we are not first ones to face it. It is important to remind the FSU audience that these new ethnic conflicts exist throughout the world – in Canada, Ireland, Sudan, Malaysia, and the United States. To overcome a sense of fatalism and apathy among the inhabitants of the FSU, the media should focus on the fact that ethnic conflicts have often been effectively managed. The experiences of Switzerland, Senegal, Belgium, and Malaysia show us that ethnic heterogeneity does not have to lead to ethnic conflict. Journalists should not just focus on the ethnic "problem cases," such as ex-Yugoslavia, but should also give the inhabitants of the FSU some grounds for optimism about the future by pointing out that effective political management has allowed countries such as Malaysia (after 1969) to step back from the brink of ethnic conflict. One way to accomplish this is through tapping into the work of the many specialists who address ethnic issues and by making their work accessible to a wider public.

When you ask good question, you make good ethical decisions

1] What do I know? What do I need to know?

2] What is my journalistic purpose?

3] What are my ethical concerns?

4] What organizational policies and professional guidelines should I consider?

5] How can I include the voices of other people, with different perspectives and diverse ideas, in the decision-making process?

6] Who are the stakeholders – those affected by my decision?

7] What if the roles were reversed? How would I feel if I were in the shoes of one of the stakeholders?

8] What are the possible consequences of my actions? Short term? Long term? Are we sacrificing truthtelling for technical quality?

9] What are my alternatives to maximize my truthtelling responsibility and minimize harm?

10] Can I clearly and fully justify my thinking and my decision? To my colleagues? To the stakeholders? To the public? To myself?

11] Is the photograph being presented as editorial reporting or illustration.

Key considerations:

- Is the photograph what the photographer saw in the viewfinder?

- Is the photograph being changed in ways beyond basic image quality corrections?

- Is the illustration clearly obvious to the reader/ viewer?

- Is it necessary to place the image in context with additional text for disclosure?

---

[1] From *Doing Ethics in Journalism,* Diversity Section, Society of Professional Journalists, 1995

1 Sources

What is a source? How can you find and develop good sources?

A source can be any individual, organization, or medium that can help a reporter on a story. Sources can range from traditional voices, such as government officials, to the unconventionalones , such as pop singers. You may think you have no idea how to find people to interview. You may be used to writing stories based on official handouts. Yet even if you don't realize it, you have many contacts that can be tapped.

It is important to find spokespeople on all sides who can comment and give context to stories. Obtaining comment from spokespeople on all sides helps balance the story by including a variety of (often conflicting) voices that allow the reader to make up his or her own mind.

Establish contact with experts who have studied both sides of an issue and might be able to provide a more objective analysis of events. Experts who are one step removed from the situation can often assess events and issues more dispassionately than those directly involved, and they offer the added benefit of being authorities in their field due to years of research or involvement on the topic. This adds credibility to their comments. Also use experts to shade in the background and history of an issue, giving the reader context in which to understand the present-day events.

Contact government spokespeople, but also conduct "man-on-the-street" interviews that can illustrate in narrow focus how a new law or phenomenon is affecting average citizens. Man-on-the-street reporting uses the lives and struggles of individual people to illustrate national economic or social policies.

Other sources include religious authorities, business leaders and union representatives, doctors and health care professionals, nonprofit agencies, artists, and members of subcultures. (For a thorough discussion of this topic, see *Television/Radio News & Minorities* by Donald R. Browne, Charles M. Firestone, and Ellen Mickiewicz, published in 1994 by the Aspen Institute and the Carter Center of Emory University.)

Draw up a list of your sources, share the list with colleagues, and keep adding to it as your work as a reporter moves forward. These sources may include individuals and organizations, both public and private.

This list you compile relates to the concept of a Multicultural Rolodex, a term coined by *News Watch*, a publication of the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism at San Francisco State University. It is a concept that is being adopted in many American newsrooms. Instead of relying solely on dominant-culture, male "sources," the Multicultural Rolodex calls for reporters to find men and women of other religions and ethnic groups in business, politics, academia, and civic life who can provide authoritative opinions on a variety of subjects.

2 Interviewing

Knowing how to conduct interviews is vital to good journalism. Finding the person on the street who illustrates a trend, the bureaucrat who has the crucial statistic to illuminate a story, or the source with a poignant anecdote requires planning and research before the interview. And it requires a willingness to ask probing questions once interviewing is under way.

Here are some ideas for planning and conducting interviews.

■ **Draw Up a List of Interviews:** Draw up a list of sources, then review it to ensure that it is balanced for ethnicity, class, race, gender, and religion. Equally important is that the interview choices avoid harmful stereotypes. (A multi-ethnic reporting team can help avoid such pitfalls: Each reporter can identify concerns that others might miss. This sensitizes the entire team to stereotyping and will,we hope, encourage efforts to avoid such depictions in the future.)

■ **Prepare the questions:** Compile a list of questions to ask. Plot the story structure ahead of time and visualize the information you need to obtain from the interview. Make sure questions aren't open-ended or general. And prepare for follow-up ques-tions by rehearsing the interview ahead of time.

■ **Hit the Five W's:** Review those old journalism chestnuts: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. How will you answer those questions in a story? If this is too simplistic, try the alternate Five W's espoused by Art Charity, author of *Doing Public Journalism*. He suggests that reporters frame the interview in terms of community concerns and ask: *What* is the problem? *Who* does it affect? *How* and *where* does it affect them? *When* and why did it arise? *Why* won't it go away? This line of attack helps reporters frame questions that address the larger issues underlying a story and probe for answers as they write the stories.

3 Some Key Issues for Reporting and Writing

Focusing on the following issues can help journalists produce balanced, diverse, and objective articles that address the concerns of real people.

Diversity: Portray members of ethnic and racial groups fairly and accurately. Think about how the local media portrays members of individual ethnic groups verbally and visually. Does this tell the whole picture? What is a stereotype? What stereotypes exist about your own ethnic group. How do you feel when you see those stereotypes in print or on the air? Likewise, what are the hot-button issues in your community? What kind of a job does the local media do in portraying these important issues?

Also think about the results of the *failure* to cover an ethnic group in the media. Because this renders that group invisible, it can be as dangerous as stereotyping. It perpetuates the belief that a group is outside the mainstream of life and that its perspectives do not matter.

If and when do you plan to mention the race, religion, or ethnicity of people in stories? When are such distinctions needed, if ever? When is it important to the context of the story? How do your newspapers usually handle such identification with stories about crime? Politics? Human drama?

Some guides have been drawn up by journalism groups on diversity-related issues. In its "Tips for Journalists," *News Watch* suggests that one way to determine whether race or ethnicity is a proper identification factor in a story

is to ask whether the individual's race would be relevant if he or she were white. (For more information on this, see the *Seattle Times* Diversity Checklist.

Mainstreaming: This refers to the concept of including women and people of color in general news stories and photographs and ensuring that the media represent fullness and complexities of their communities. Is coverage of some ethnic or racial communities limited to certain categories, such as sports, entertainment, or crime? How can your reporting expand that coverage?

Mainstreaming can be applied to photos as well as print coverage. Examine a local newspaper: Are some groups stereotyped or excluded from certain types of coverage?

Give Context: Showing the whole picture means not leaving out material that puts the story in context. For instance, a story that focuses on militant Albanians who advocate armed revolution in Macedonia to incorporate the western part of the country into a "greater Albania" is misleading and irresponsible if it fails to note that the vast majority of Albanians in Macedonia are peaceable and have no territorial ambitions. Such a story could easily stir up resentment and hatred in a country that is already smoldering with ethnic tensions toward Albanians, who comprise the largest minority in Macedonia.

Seeking Balance/Showing the Whole Picture: Stories usually aren't black and white, and there are often more than two sides to an issue. You may need to interview an official government spokesman, then members of the opposition party, then several "average citizens" who can illustrate the story, then an academic expert, then a union boss, and lastly a professional, such as a   psychologist or doctor or health care expert, who can comment on the issue involved. Interviewing everyone involved in the debate, not only the ones who generate the most publicity, and helps shade in nuances.

Likewise, you may need to decide about including inflammatory statements. Ways to address this problem are to ask whether the statement is based on fact or rumor, whether it adds anything new or timely to the debate, and whether it can be verified by outside sources.

Avoid Loaded Language and Images: Steer clear of politically loaded language and imagery that will inflame public passions. This is not always clear-cut, however. While some words are almost universally offensive, others are more ambiguous or may have evolved over time to be more or less offensive. For instance, the word Oriental, frequently used in the past in the United States, is now considered inappropriate in describing a person of Asian descent. To clarify such usage, many newspapers have style books of words and phrases to avoid as offensive. (For more information, see "Project Zinger, A Critical Look at News Media Coverage of Asian Pacific Americans, excerpts from the *Los Angeles Times Stylebook*, and the *Multicultural Management Program Dictionary of Cautionary Words and Phrases.*)

Symbols such as music, flags, and uniforms can also be provocative images in reporting. In Northern Ireland, an area torn by ethnic and sectarian violence, reporter Paul Connelly points out that even place names can take on dangerous significance. Catholics call Northern Ireland's second largest city Derry. Protestants call it Londonderry. People have been killed for using the wrong version. While this case is ex-treme, there may be less drastic examples locally.

Journalists and Social Responsibility: Journalists are citizens. What is a journalist's responsibility in a society driven by ethnic tension and how does that square

with your professional responsibilities? The media has power to influence events. How can reporters incorporate social concerns into journalism?

Civic journalism, a concept popularized by journalism professor Jay Rosen at New York University, suggests that newspapers act as catalysts for change. Supporters of civic journalism believe that newspapers, communities, and democracy will die unless journalists and the public team up in a search for solutions to community woes. One example of civic journalism was a year-long series in the Dayton, Ohio, *Daily News*: Its prize-winning stories on teen violence ranged from encouraging people to talk informally about teen violence to printing personal stories and expert information to helping organize public forums to reporting on the conclusions reached at the forums.

Journalists and the Public: In his essay "Why Americans Hate the Media" (*Atlantic Monthly,* Feb. 1996) James Fallows says that journalists must try harder to ask questions about how political choices affect people's lives, instead of focusing on short-term political strategies. Fallows says that "ordinary people" in town-hall forums and radio call-in shows don't care about the short-term impact of the political horse race; they want to know how politicians will provide answers to national problems. Do these sentiments apply where you are working. Is the media trusted or reviled and why? How can you improve this image and begin addressing real public concerns?

4 Writing Tips

Translate Jargon: Think about the average readers. Will they understand these terms? Will they find the stories relevant and interesting? Don't let officials get away with "bureaucratese." If a bureaucrat gives a long-winded, complex answer, the reporter can respond, "I'm not sure I understand." Then rephrase the comments in simpler words.

Go Beyond the Press Release: Pick apart a press release, many of which are as significant for what they leave out as for the information they contain. Analyze what questions have been left unanswered and then pose those questions. Likewise, many press releases include flat, canned quotes that don't really say anything. Call up or visit the source to get livelier comments.

Use Statistics Sparingly: Statistics should illustrate points, not clobber readers over the head. In many former Socialist, centrally – planned economies, both bureaucrats and journalists are still enamored of long strings of numbers and try to shoehorn them in at every opportunity, thinking that they add a ring of authenticity. Assess how meaningful a statistic is before including it in a story. For instance, saying that three million surfboards were produced in 1996 gives no hint as to whether surfboard production is rising rapidly, slowing down, or tapering off. Likewise, giving surfboard production for five years running can make a reader's eyes glaze over.

Statistics can be paraphrased to good effect. Saying the country produced enough surfboards to reach to the moon if laid end to end from Earth gives readers a more lively way to imagine the colossal production than a mere figure. (For more ideas on the use of statistics, see *Tips for Business Reporting* by Paul Hemp.)

Humanize: Present people as individuals, not as representatives of groups. Find av-erage citizens to illustrate a statistic, trend, or problem instead of relying on "talking head" experts and bureaucrats. Don't just interview people who are rich, important, or official; do man-on-the-street interviews.

Provide context: Show the significance of the news. Make it alive and relevant. Provide context, not just coverage of events. Give background for readers who may not be familiar with the issues. Good stories tell the reader why a problem exists and how it got to be a problem. This doesn't have to be long – a few sentences should suffice. For instance, a *Houston Chronicle* story about gangs included congressional testimony from a University of Chicago professor explaining that gangs have their origins in early immigration. The story also talked about the role of poverty and community in forming gangs. (For more on this, see "M. L. Stein's Racial Stereotyping and the Media," *Editor & Publisher*, Aug. 6, 1994.)

5 Maximizing the Impact of a Team Reporting Project

Press Conferences: After completing a team reporting project, you might want to hold a well-publicized press conference at which the individual reporters on the team and their local community sponsors explain the project and answer questions. Highlighting the project in this way will encourage other media to publish stories about the project, which will increase interest in the series. It is also a constructive way to provide reporters with a public forum to describe in their own words what the project meant to them and their communities.

Radio Talk Show with Reader Call-In: In many countries, talk radio is more popular than ever and attracts many listeners. Arrange booking for your journalism team and on-site partner on a local radio talk show with a popular host. Encourage listeners to call in with comments and ideas.

TV Talk Show With Audience Participation: Arrange bookings on a talk show on a local cable TV station or a network or public television affiliate. Many cities now feature local shows on which pundits discuss pressing issues in the community. Pitch the series as a timely, groundbreaking project that seeks to reduce simmering tensions by forging bonds across racial, cultural, and ethnic lines.

Public Forum: Use contacts and resources provided by your local partner to arrange for a townhall meeting at a school, church, or community center at which the col-laborative reporting team, the local partner, and members of the public can discuss the series, its impact, and ideas for future collaborations.

1 AVOID portraying a conflict as consisting of only two parties contesting one goal. The logical outcome is for one to win and the other to lose.
INSTEAD, a Peace Journalist would DISAGGREGATE the two parties into many smaller groups, pursuing many goals, opening up more creative potential for a range of outcomes.

2 AVOID accepting stark distinctions between "self" and "other." These can be used to build the sense that another party is a "threat" or "beyond the pale" of civilized behavior — both key justifications for violence.
INSTEAD, seek the "other" in the "self" and vice versa. If a party is presenting itself as "the goodies," ask questions about how different its behavior really is to that it ascribes to "the baddies" – isn't it ashamed of itself?

3 AVOID treating a conflict as if it is only going on in the place and at the time that violence is occurring.
INSTEAD, try to trace the links and consequences for people in other places now and in the future. Ask:

- Who are all the people with a stake in the outcome?

- Ask yourself what will happen if ...?

- What lessons will people draw from watching these events unfold as part of a global audience? How will they enter the calculations of parties to future conflicts near and far?

4 AVOID assessing the merits of a violent action or policy of violence in terms of its visible effects only. INSTEAD, try to find ways of reporting on the invisible effects, e.g., the long-term consequences of psychological damage and trauma, perhaps increasing the likelihood that those affected will be violent in future, either against other people or, as a group, against other groups or other countries.

5 AVOID letting parties define themselves by simply quoting their leaders' restatement of familiar demands or positions. INSTEAD, inquire more deeply into goals:

- How are people on the ground affected by the conflict in everyday life?

- What do they want changed?

- Is the position stated by their leaders the only way or the best way to achieve the changes they want?

6 AVOID concentrating always on what divides the parties, the differences between what they say they want.
INSTEAD, try asking questions that may reveal areas of common ground and leading your report with answers which suggest some goals maybe shared or at least compatible, after all.

[1] From Peace Journalism – How To Do It, by Jake Lynch [2] and Annabel McGoldrick (annabelmcg@aol.com), written Sydney, 2000.
[2] Jake Lynch is a correspondent for Sky News and The Independent, based in London and Sydney. He is a consultant to the POIESIS Conflict and Peace Forums and co-author of "The Peace Journalism Option" and "What Are Journalists For?"

7 AVOID only reporting the violent acts and describing "the horror." If you exclude everything else, you suggest that the only explanation for violence is previous violence (revenge); the only remedy, more violence (coercion/punishment). INSTEAD, show how people have been blocked and frustrated or deprived in everyday life as a way of explaining the violence.

8 AVOID blaming someone for starting it.
INSTEAD, try looking at how shared problems and issues are leading to consequences that all the parties say they never intended.

9 AVOID focusing exclusively on the suffering, fears and grievances of only one party. This divides the parties into "villains" and "victims" and suggests that coercing or punishing the villains represents a solution.
INSTEAD, treat as equally newsworthy the suffering, fears and grievance of all sides.

10 AVOID "victimizing" language such as "destitute," "devastated," "defenseless," "pathetic" and "tragedy," which only tells us what has been done to and could be done for a group of people. This disempowers them and limits the options for change.
INSTEAD, report on what has been done and could be done by the people. Don't just ask them how they feel, also ask them how they are coping and what do they think? Can they suggest any solutions? Remember refugees have surnames as well. You wouldn't call President Clinton "Bill" in a news report.

11 AVOID imprecise use of emotive words to describe what has happened to people.

- "Genocide" means the wiping out of an entire people.

- "Decimated" (said of a population) means reducing it to a tenth of its former size.

- "Tragedy" is a form of drama, originally Greek, in which someone's fault or weakness proves his or her undoing.

- "Assassination" is the murder of a head of state.

- "Massacre" is the deliberate killing of people known to be unarmed and defenseless. Are we sure? Or might these people have died in battle?

- "Systematic" e.g., raping or forcing people from their homes. Has it really been organized in a deliberate pattern or have there been a number of unrelated, albeit extremely nasty incidents?

  INSTEAD, always be precise about what we know. Do not minimize suffering but reserve the strongest language for the gravest situations or you will beggar the language and help to justify disproportionate responses that escalate the violence.

12 AVOID demonizing adjectives like "vicious," "cruel," "brutal" and "barbaric." These always describe one party's view of what another party has done. To use them puts the journalist on that side and helps to justify an escalation of violence.
INSTEAD, report what you know about the wrongdoing and give as much information as you can about the reliability of other people's reports or descriptions of it.

13 AVOID demonizing labels like "terrorist," "extremist," "fanatic" and "fundamentalist." These are always given by "us" to "them." No one ever uses them to describe himself or herself, and so, for a journalist to use them is always to take sides. They mean the person is unreasonable, so it seems to make less sense to reason (negotiate) with them.
INSTEAD, try calling people by the names they give themselves. Or be more precise in your descriptions.

14 AVOID focusing exclusively on the human rights abuses, misdemeanors and wrong doings of only one side.
INSTEAD, try to name ALL wrongdoers and treat equally seriously allegations made by all sides in a conflict. Treating seriously does not mean taking at face value, but instead making equal efforts to establish whether any evidence exists to back them up, treating the victims with equal respect and the chances of finding and punishing the wrongdoers as being of equal importance.

15 AVOID making an opinion or claim seem like an established fact.
("Eurico Guterres, said to be responsible for a massacre in East Timor _")
INSTEAD, tell your readers or your audience who said what. ("Eurico Guterres, accused by a top U.N. official of ordering a massacre in East Timor _") That way you avoid signing yourself and your news service up to the allegations made by one party in the conflict against another.

16 AVOID greeting the signing of documents by leaders, which bring about military victory or cease fire, as necessarily creating peace.
INSTEAD, try to report on the issues which remain and which may still lead people to commit further acts of violence in the future. Ask what is being done to strengthen means on the ground to handle and resolve conflict nonviolently, to address development or structural needs in the society and to create a culture of peace?

17 AVOID waiting for leaders on "our" side to suggest or offer solutions.
INSTEAD, pick up and explore peace initiatives wherever they come from. Ask questions to ministers, for example, about ideas put forward by grassroots organizations. Assess peace perspectives against what you know about the issues the parties are really trying to address. Do not simply ignore them because they do not coincide with established positions.

VI

TRAINING

Reporting Ethnicity and Other Diversity Issues

**A Manual for Discussion Leaders
and Journalism Trainers**

Comments, suggestions and additional materials should be forwarded to:

European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media

Milica Pesic, Director   Tel: + 44171 435 9282
4B Kemplay Road   Fax: + 44171 435 9805
London NW3 1SY–UK   Email: silica@gn.apc.org

Preface   The recent conflict in Kosovo has served to emphasize that ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, post-communist societies in Europe continue to struggle, often violently, with fundamental social and political questions relating to national identity, minorities, ethnic conflict, and diversity.

Beyond the former Yugoslavia, similar problems fester across the region. Ethnic, religious, and other minorities battle for legitimacy against extreme prejudice and even legal prohibition. Indeed, across the region, many forms of "otherness" are widely presented as suspect, or even deviant. Left unchecked, the continuing extremism, divisiveness, and discrimination threaten to place insurmountable obstacles in the path of creating democratic, pluralistic, and tolerant societies in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Throughout the region, the news media play a critical role in sustaining and exacerbating the problem. More generally, the media provide precious little information to help the majority populations understand the different minority groups living within their midst. Rather, the media all too often provide only superficial and negative images of minority groups, contributing greatly to the suspicions and fears on all sides.

In this context, training and education for media professionalism is a necessary, but not sufficient, strategy for tackling the diversity problem. Greater media independence from political control is certainly required, as are higher standards for journalists and news organizations. But these priorities, critical as they are, are not enough. Indeed, long-established democratic countries in the West with the most vibrant and respected independent media continue to struggle mightily to address problems of prejudice, intolerance, and discrimination.

The Reporting Diversity Network (RDN) created and managed by the London-based European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media, is an innovative collaboration of media organizations from Central and Eastern Europe, dedicated to the proposition that journalism can, and should, play a central role in aiding increasingly diverse societies understand their differences within, build bridges between and among communities, explore alternatives to confrontation and violent conflict, and successfully undertake the processes of reconstruction and reconcilition.

The RDN is focused directly and exclusively on improving media coverage of minorities, inter-ethnic relations, and other diversity concerns. Its mission is to promote, create, and sustain substantially to improved journalism on diversity issues in ways that contribute to tolerance, pluralism, and stability in diverse and often war-torn soceties.

The network emphasizes work in five areas of journalism and media development: diversity reporting initiatives; mid-career diversity training for journalists; media assistance for minority groups; journalism education and curriculum reform; and media monitoring and research. The manual you are reading is a part of the complex and long-term RDN program which has already been joined by numerous regional media organizations in the region and which is expanding internationally, as well.

This RDN Leader's Manual was conceived by Robert Manoff, director of the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media at New York University, as a regional resource for news organizations, media NGO's, and journalism organizations interested in addressing the problem of diversity in news coverage. It was written by Karen Howze, an experienced journalist and diversity trainer, under his direction.

We hope that you will find this manual useful and encourage you to elaborate on and develop the basic themes that are sketched out on the pages that follow.

Milica Pesic, Director
European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media

Diversity is a value within journalism that requires a careful rethinking of some of the values which had traditionally been used within the profession. In times past, the word of the government may have been sacrosanct. In times past, the word of the wealthiest members of the society was not to be questioned. In times past, certain religious leaders could say and do what they pleased without comment from the news media.

Meanwhile, whether in Central or Eastern Europe, Latin America or Africa, the Middle East or Asia, journalists have been grappling with ways to eliminate stereotypes and representations of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities that foster conflict and social division.

This manual is designed to assist in developing a sense of the value of diversty for journalists who are interested in providing an outlet for community understanding through their news media. The manual provides an opportunity for journalists to work through ways in which coverage is not diverse or is actually offensive to members of the community. And the manual provides a framework for discussion of issues of racial, ethnic or religious difference in the context of journalism. We hope the discussions that are envisioned through the training course will lead to more open discussion about those matters — historical and current — which have divided groups and maintained conflict and tension within our communities. We hope the discussions will help each participant in the training see that there are other ways to report the news without relying on old and sometimes false perceptions of diverse communities within our societies.

For journalists, the end prize for providing a more inclusive and less offensive news report will be that more people from more communities will begin to read, listen, or watch the news we produce. The more people who consume our work, the stronger the base of our news organization in the community and the closer we can come to developing the news media as a forum for community debate and community understanding.

Diversity is a value which in its simplest form suggests that journalists will strive to include all segments of society in coverage in ways that are balanced. Journalists will provide coverage that is free of language that reinforces histories of exclusion, strengthens negative stereotypes, or promotes hate speech.

The principles of diversity are relatively simple:

- The news media have the opportunity to shape the discussion, define the areas of common ground through accurate, unbiased reporting.

  The result: All segments of our society will participate in easing real and perceived isolation that has been the historical reality for many groups defined by "race", ethnicity, religion, gender, physical abilities, sexual identity, or economic circumstance.

- Diversity and the voices of minority members of the community enrich and enliven the coverage of people in our communities.

- Despite our differences we are all members of the communities where we live and work.

- Our words have the power to encourage our communities to read our newspapers and magazines and listen and view our broadcasts — and believe us.

- Readers and viewers connect with the media when they can see people who look like them reflected in the print and broadcast media.

- Diversity in news coverage allows all members of our community — regardless of their racial, ethnic, religious affiliations, gender, age, and disabilities — the opportunity for all to share in the responsibilities, rewards, and duties of citizenship.

- Where there is more than one group involved in the history of a nation or state, there is not one national or state history but rather many histories representing the perception and experience of each group.

- Journalists must be able to determine the facts of those histories and provide the most comprehensive historical perspective possible when covering issues of national, regional, or local importance.

Historical changes in the political and social fiber of nations create constant challenges for achieving the goal of diversity in media coverage. People are often willing to believe that which will promote their beliefs about other groups. Where government edict has determined what is historical fact for generations, a change in the government structure requires a new look at those complex historical perspectives that create the backdrop for today's news coverage.

The quest for news media that values diversity does not mean that the news media will end all stereotypes, hatred, or conflict within our communities. News media that value diversity will balance the past with the present; develop a place for debate with accurate, factual information that can begin to help members of the community realize that a community of inclusion is healthier and more productive than one where conflict and strife are encouraged, condoned and rewarded.

The causes of division and conflict have been with us for centuries; history will not be eradicated and cannot be rewritten. It is history. However, our institutions — particularly the news media — have an opportunity to begin defining a new history based upon a new spirit of community respect, inclusiveness, and openness about our differences. This new value — based upon diversity — will, over time, help our communities become more peaceful places despite the long history of conflict and division.

The journalists who seek out stories, write them, and report them must understand our history. The history that journalists must know and use when reporting about our communities is one that can be best described as a balanced history — not beholden to one group or another. Fully professional journalists truly will keep in mind that we can not take sides in past conflicts. We present all sides and provide accurate information about the results of that history as it shapes where we are headed tomorrow. We are to be the informed eyes and ears of the total community able and willing to provide the information that will give meaning and context to the news of the day without ignoring the history that was yesterday.

What is our job in creating a forum that can begin to develop tolerance and community understanding? We must always present the news with accurate use of language; with images that tell the true story and not the story that someone else would like to see; and we must be able to write an accurate context into each story. That context is at the heart of changing the way the news media focuses on one side of a conflict versus another. We provide context, accurate facts without bias for the simple goal of allowing the people who read, watch, or listen to our news reports to make up their minds about the facts and events we are reporting.

We are truly the voice of the people. To be a voice in our complex societies, we must develop our means to reach the people, learn who they are, what they are interested in, and how the actions of other institutions affect their lives. This is our role as the eyes and ears of our communities in a world where there is no longer one side to every story.

This manual is meant to be used to develop, plan, and conduct seminars, workshops, trainings, and consciousness-raising activities for reporters, editors, producers, and other journalists and media professionals. It is designed to provide the leaders of such programs with flexibility in deciding what is the best technique for discussing and developing a diversity approach to journalism based upon the needs of the local community, and the needs of journalists who are chosen or seek to participate in training.

To facilitate this approach to training, the manual is divided into modules which should provide leaders with the opportunity to design a training program that will meet the needs of each participant group. The leaders should feel free to use all or portions of each module. Leaders are encouraged to add examples from their local or regional or national newspapers and radio and television broadcasts to focus the training to make it maximally useful for local participants.

Our mission To strengthen the credibility and the value of the newspaper as an instrument of community participation and understanding

Goals: ■ Increase diversity of voices and images in the media.

■ Strengthen connections with readers, listeners, and viewers.

■ Reach communities that have generally not considered the newspaper or broadcast media as reflective of their lives and views.

Each leader should consider this manual a work in progress. Your experiences as seminar leaders will assist in continuing the development of the concept of diversity as a value in our coverage and our communities. Your feedback regarding the effectiveness of this approach and your contributions of examples to add to this manual as you review your local newspapers and radio and television broadcasts will be an important part of developing a body of knowledge that we hope will lead to a change in media values and the development of societies where "difference" is valued and every individual can take advantage of the benefits of citizenship.

Pre-Workshop Assignments for Participants The seminar leader should request that each seminar participant provide the following information at least four weeks before the start of the seminar. The materials should be sent to the seminar leader for review and packaging.

Each participant should send the following:

- One week of the participant's newspaper.

- An example of a story found in each participant's newspaper or from a radio or television broadcast that the participant considers to be a well reported, well written, and balanced story.

- An example of a story in the participant's newspaper or from a radio or television broadcast that the participant considers to be an example of a lack of diversity in reporting, writing, and editing.

Each participant should provide the following data:

- The various ethnic groups in the coverage area and estimated population figures.

- Estimated percent of the population that is under 25, between 25 and 40, between 41 and 60, and over 60.

- Estimated percentage of women in the coverage area.

A Pre-Workshop Evaluation by Leader Prior to the opening of the seminar the leader should carefully review the newspapers and broadcasts provided by the seminar participants and the demographic information. The leader should evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the newspaper. The seminar leader should look for specific examples of inappropriate use of language that would be considered offensive to a segment of the population; look for examples of stereotypes within stories. The leader is reviewing the materials provided by each participant as a reader from the coverage area of the newspaper of each participant.

1 Specific ethnic or racial groups are covered as problems within the community based upon the language within the stories or the tone of the story.

The newspaper provides coverage of disputes involving various racial or ethnic groups but there is no coverage of those same ethnic groups in positive, productive, and contributory processes within their communities or the overall community.

Examples of the types of strengths and weaknesses the seminar leader should be looking for follow:

2 Over the course of the week's coverage, crime stories that are reported are primarily involving perpetrators from one ethnic or racial group.

Descriptions of crime suspects are all from one racial or ethnic group and are very generic rather than being specific. Example: "Dark male, 5'8" tall and 200 pounds" rather than a description that included clothing, shoes, etc.

3 Inconsistent editing

Do the stories that are reported in the newspaper or in radio and television broadcasts use language that is offensive or stereotypical to a certain ethnic group, older people, people with disabilities, or women?

4 Poor local coverage

Do the newspaper, and the radio or television broadcasts consistently include new stories about local events that are inclusive of various racial or ethnic groups, older people, people with disabilities, or women?

5 Inadequate coverage of ethnic communities

Do the newspaper and the radio or television broadcasts provide coverage of specific ethnic groups or religious minorities? If there is coverage does it include use of clichés, stereotypes, or offensive characterizations of those groups?

6 No inclusion of ethnic community members in regular coverage

Do the newspaper and the radio or television broadcasts provide coverage of business men and women, doctors, attorneys, and professors as sources in stories who are members of various ethnic, religious, or racial groups? Are they consulted regarding topics that are not related to their race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation? Are women used as story sources on stories about all elements of life in the community?

An example: A story focuses on doctors at a local hospital who are discussing the health needs of pregnant women and the importance of prenatal care. Are there doctors quoted who are either women or members of religious or ethnic minority groups?

7 Not enough women, minorities, and others in images that run in the newspaper

Do the newspaper and the radio and television broadcasts provide photos of people who are members of minority groups in routine coverage? Women, older people, or people with disabilities?

An example: In the story about the doctors who are advocating better prenatal care, are pictures used? Who was chosen to be photographed? Male or female; a doctor from an ethnic group? What about a doctor who is disabled?

   The seminar leader should organize the materials pulled from participant news examples and use them as examples for the modules that follow. If it is not possible to complete the pre-seminar evaluation of samples forwarded by participants, each module provides additional materials that can be used as examples.
   The seminar leader should develop a mechanism for collecting materials for use in the seminar process and use those examples for future seminars as needed.

8 No sense of historical context in stories where race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation are elements of the story

Does the newspaper, radio, or television news organization provide an accurate historical context in stories where ethnicity, race, or religious affiliation are relevant to the story? If so, whose history? How do we determine whether the historical context is accurate and appropriate?

   Materials provided by the participants, together with the reader's analysis, will provide essential material for the leader's interventions and group discussions during the workshop or training.

Goal: Provide an opportunity to discuss the history of exclusion within our communities and the impact that exclusion has had on the development of our communities. By briefly looking back, each participant should be able to engage in building a new model of inclusion within their work in the media.

Principle

The news media has the opportunity to shape the discussion and define the areas of common ground through accurate, unbiased reporting.

The result: All segments of our society will participate in easing real and perceived isolation that has been a historical reality for many groups.

The media's role in the continued conflicts within a community, a state, or a nation have been the focus of studies and suggestions for change for decades. Whether the discussion is related to new immigrants or to ethnic groups that have long been a part of the national landscape, journalists have a role to play in providing residents with a sense of what the shifts in populations or the influence of long standing minority cultures means to the development of the nation as it stands today or as it will be in the future.

Every nation has one or more groups that are not considered part of the mainstream. In England, immigrants from the former British colonies of Africa, the Caribbean, or South Asia have for decades complained of exclusion, stereotyping, and hatred from whites. For most of the former colonies of European nations, there has been a negative reaction when citizens from the colonies have moved to the land with which, because of historical circumstance, they share a language. Immigrants from former colonies have discovered, much to their dismay, that having a language in common does not necessarily mean a welcoming attitude.

In many other countries in Europe, the presence of immigrant populations has brought forth misconceptions and mistrust that are often not understood or addressed until major conflict occurs. Meanwhile, in other nations the divides of culture have existed for hundreds of years without redress.

Reporters, just like the rest of the populace, are often caught off guard, unable to gather the historical perspective to promote community understanding and tolerance. Rather, journalists have been accused of fueling conflicts and hatred, and of exacerbating divisions in communities because we have not been able to provide true historical perspective as we cover the news.

The societal history of exclusion has taken its toll across the world. There is no state that has been left untouched by the conflicts that arise from differences that exist, or that we perceive as existing and making us different from our neighbors.

Today, many members of our community may not know why historical exclusion began; however, all know that exclusion is an integral part of the fabric of community life. Those who are in the minority are or consider themselves to be invisible. Sooner or later, those who are excluded will become frustrated, will demand inclusion, and their demands may engender a reaction that leads to more intolerance, bias, further exclusion, or violent conflict.

The news media have a pivotal role in easing the tension created by historical exclusion. The news media provide an opportunity for all people to participate through the free flow of information, a safe place for debate and, while the debates rage, the opportunity to be included in coverage of the community on matters that are central to day-to-day life. In fact, the first step is the inclusion of all groups in day-to-day coverage of social issues such as health and welfare,

community economics, education, and family life. If these issues are seldom covered by the news media, it is important to consider the value of building tolerance for diversity by providing information that points to how various groups are in their expectations regarding the quality of their everyday lives.

It is the coverage of everyday life with an eye to including everyone that provides journalists with the rare opportunity to build a diverse community process without relying on partisanship. Journalists are to be or to become the recorders of life in our communities. They have the opportunity to move throughout the community gathering information, gathering facts that they can knit together into stories of the lives of the people who make up the nation.

Journalists, without being partisan, can create a public space for discussion that leads to common ground within diverse communities.

Example: A newspaper journalist develops a series of stories about economic strife in a major city. The reporter works hard to find sources from various ethnic, racial, or religious groups, older residents, and women who are struggling economically. By carefully choosing the sources to be used, the journalist has taken a step toward creating a common group as readers who have the opportunity to see that they share experiences with people they believed irreconcilably different.

Note to Leader:

- Provide other examples of stories that may have provided an opportunity to view this type of inclusive coverage from the newspapers or broadcast examples provided by the participants prior to the seminar.

- Ask the participants to brainstorm on how stories could have been more inclusive. What would the reporter do to expand the coverage with an eye to diversity?

- The first discussion should be with the entire group. As the participants provide their feedback, the seminar leader should begin to ask questions of the participants regarding their experiences with specific groups in the context of the example being used to spark discussion.

Few examples of the questions to be asked of the participants:

- Have you had the experience of working on a story with persons or persons from a different ethnic, religious or racial background? What was the hardest part of the experience? What was the reaction from the person or persons who were your sources?

- Were you able to use the information in a story? Was the story specifically about the ethnic or racial group only? Would the story have been more effective if the scope were expanded to discuss the realities of economics across racial or ethnic lines?

Next, the leader should provide a second example that the participants will discuss in small groups of three or four. Each small group should develop a coverage plan to improve the story's inclusiveness.

The seminar leader should then ask each small group to develop at least three conclusions related to diversity gleaned from the discussion in this module. The "Lessons Learned" are recorded and posted on the seminar room walls.

The seminar leader must make it clear to the journalists that this exercise shows that the inclusion process will help journalists in their role as writers of history while providing an opportunity for a balanced, comprehensive, and inclusive view of the community to the news media's consumers.

Based upon the notes, each participant should be able to state one action step that they will use to add a new historical context in their coverage. Each

participant should be very specific about the next step. The seminar leader should seek specifics that can be taken home and used by each participant. A form for action steps is available at the end of the manual.

MODULE 2 WHAT IS NEWS?

Goal: Defining what is news with diversity in mind.

Principle { Diversity and the voices of minority members of the community enrich and enliven the coverage of the community as a whole.

Everybody has a story, but not every story is news!
To determine what is news, we must start with the above question.
The seminar leader asks: What is your definition of news?

Note to the seminar leader:

Each participant should be asked to define what is news in writing on paper provided for the exercise. Once everyone has written their definitions, the participants should each state their answer while the seminar leader records.

The recording of the definitions can be done on large pieces of paper which are posted throughout the room so that the definitions can be clearly seen as the participants complete this exercise. The names of the participants do not have to go next to the definitions.

As this exercise shows, many of us have to struggle with defining what is news. Why? Because there are many layers to the definition. Each of us brings our own historical perspective to defining whether certain events constitute news that should be reported to readers and viewers.

The staples of journalism: [those definitions that tend to be most common]

■ Inform the public about current events that reporters, and editors determine relevant to our readers.

■ Provide official information from numerous sources to the community.

■ Cover what reporters and editors deem to be important information which must be provided to our readers.

Note to the seminar leader:

Ask the participants: "What are some of the new elements that should be included in the definition of news now that we are defining the importance of diversity and inclusion in our coverage?"

Each of us defines news based upon our personal life experiences. A journalist who is raising a child with disabilities will view related stories as more newsworthy than someone who has not experienced life with a person with disabilities. A person who is caring for an elderly relative will define certain topics related to the elderly as more newsworthy than someone who is not caring for an older person.

The seminar leader asks: How do our personal experiences impact our definition of

news? What new elements would be added to the definition of news based upon personal experiences, ethnicity, age, race, religious affiliation, and gender? The discussion can be a large group discussion or you can break the group into smaller groups. Each group should designate someone to take notes and report the responses back to the entire group at the end of the discussion.

The following statements can be used to help draw participants into a discussion regarding the definition of news in a diverse society where that diversity becomes an element of how we provide information to our communities:

- Not just covering people who are traditional news makers or are the most prominent businessmen.
  An example of opportunities for news stories here would be small businessmen and women who are helping to employ residents, adding to the economy, providing innovation in the workplace.

- Personal, so that people can relate to the news.

- A means to understand our communities, and the rights, obligations, and capacities of our members.

- News is relevant.

The seminar leader should ask: What does the group think about what they talked with their families about the night before; what did they talk about over coffee or breakfast or lunch the day before? What were the things that left an important impression upon them as they went about their normal activities as a member of the community – not as they went about their duties as a journalist?

Note to leader:

Encourage argument, questioning, and challenging statements. The leader should begin to verbally edit and sharpen the statements based upon the discussion. The points that follow can be used to spur discussion.

Ask the participants what they think the last statement means and how it fits into their understanding of the role of a journalist in the diverse and ever changing world, region, nation, and community where they work. What values are inherent in this last definition of news?

- Civil liberties are enjoyed by all people and not one portion of the community.

- Justice is for all.

The seminar leader should ask: How does this value present itself in your community? Is it a value that is shared by all for all? Are some groups excluded and can that exclusion be inferred from reading, listening, or viewing the area news media?

The seminar leader should engage the participants in a discussion about relevance. Relevance to whom? Will the relevance issue be different if the reader is a woman, a woman over 65, or a woman from a specific ethnic background? Encourage a lively discussion about the challenge and opportunity of defining relevance as more layers of diversity are added to the definition of the reader to whom relevance is directed.

The seminar leader should be able to make the following points in recapping the discussion regarding what is news:

■ The definitions of news should encompass relevance of the news to people's lives.

■ Relevance is difficult to define because there are so many types of people with so many definitions of their own sense of relevance as they consume the information provided to them by the media.

Questions to ask the participants: Is the search for relevance to the widest range of readers more appropriate than defining news based upon the leaders and those who represent the status quo? What are the risks to the newspaper, the journalist — if any — of focusing on relevance rather than maintaining the status quo or the old order in our delivery of information?

Questions to ask the participants: If relevance is the focus, how do we handle the fact that what is relevant to you may not be relevant to me? How do we get both perspectives on relevance into our stories?

More definitions of news to consider:

■ Those events — large and small — that tell us how we live, where we live, explain our times, and help us continue our human history with knowledge, tolerance and open inquiry.

■ That information that is deemed important by the individual, the group, or the community.

■ Anything that effects a person. Isn't it true if something effects you, it's news? It's something you want to know about whether it's emotional, financial, or physical. Whether this news becomes a story in the newspaper is based upon the priorities set each day and at each newspaper.

■ When determining what is news, you're building into the newspaper process everybody's individual prejudices. When you start down that road then you're going to end up with a much more fractionalized approach to news. Everybody's going to have their own agenda and definition of news.

■ A much broader and inclusive view of what is news is needed.

Question for participants: What would you define as a broader and more inclusive view of what is news within your work and your newspaper, radio, or television organization?

The seminar leader should elicit answers to the question from the participants. To get the discussion rolling or to move it forward ask:

■ What about the impact of diversified staffs: age, gender, ethnic groups, religious backgrounds, sexual orientation?

Since it appears news is defined by the people who work in the newspapers, the news will by that definition be more diverse if the staff is diverse.

■ What people are talking about?

Since news appears to be what people are talking about we must be able to translate what people are talking about to the staff inside the newspaper. We must bring news from our neighbors, the coffee shop, the lunch counter and help determine whether there is more to the issues the public talks about that we are missing in our news pages.

Leader's wrapup: As we can see from the discussion on the issue of what is news, each journalist comes at the issue from a different angle. Each participant gave a different definition of what is news and each of us responded differently to the issues and questions raised throughout this exercise.

Each of us must consider whether our definition of news matches the definition of news set by our newspapers, radio, or television organizations. If it is not the same, what do we do daily to bridge the gap? Compromise? How can we take the issue of diversity and make it work for each of the stories we work on? How do we move the issue of inclusion and diversity past ourselves as individuals and begin changing the news culture within our organizations? Our communities?

MODULE 3   WHAT IS DIVERSITY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Goal: To define journalistic opportunities that will lead to more diverse coverage.

Principle Despite our differences — ethnic, political, age, gender, religious, or economic — we are all members of the communities in which we live and work; we all wish to be considered members of the greater community.

It is the common threads of our lives that diversity coverage is designed to address. Doing so engenders understanding, tolerance, and a cohesive community structure with room for debate, disagreement, and even discord with an underlying value of respect for the differences among individuals, groups, and communities.

If people don't see themselves in the media, they will not come to see themselves as a part of the community in which they live. If journalists are to cover the entire community, they must develop ways to ensure that all members of the community are reflected in the coverage.

For example, recent history shows that the reporting of government policy without providing room for diverse voices to be heard regarding those policies has fed racism, sectarianism, and ethnic hatred in many nations.

Leader asks: What are the critical issues of diversity that you believe are not covered by the news media?

The seminar leader should write all responses on large sheets of paper in a place that all participants can see.

Note to leader: It can be expected that the responses will include such topics as the history of ethnic strife within a region; the politics of ethnic strife or racial difference; the politics of ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance.

The seminar leader can ask the group to provide recent examples of how the media have helped to strengthen or weaken communities through their coverage. Examples may be local or from Rwanda, the Near East, Canada, Western Europe, etc. In addition, the seminar leader should probe for specifics regarding the reporting that contributed, ultimately, to strife and warfare. The seminar leader should also make the point that the historical connection to the conflicts

provides a backdrop that is formidable to overcome if the media's only recourse are stories about the strife, its history, and the politics of both the conflict and any efforts toward reconciliation.

First, we must step back from the clashes and conflicts and take a look at everyday life. The seminar leader must reach back to the previous module and remind the participants that strong diversity coverage begins with the coverage of everyday life. We are looking for ways to include all people in regular, everyday coverage in the most basic way. For example, if people begin to read names that are identifiably from non-majority ethnic groups — names of women, names of persons who are from different racial or religious groups — they will begin to feel that they are a part of the national dialogue and debate.

Once the media has expanded its use of sources from various groups, when the news media tackle topics which squarely address social conflict, the credibility of the news media will grow as the readers and viewers recognize that there is an interest in including the views and experiences of all segments of the community.

Many newspapers and broadcast organizations, whether in Europe, Africa, Asia, or the Americas, have for decades served primarily as the arm of reporting what the government has decided and how those decisions will be carried out. In the model of inclusive, diversity journalism, the government statement takes a back seat to telling the story of how government policy and practice has an impact on various members of the community. The journalist works to allow voices from the community to tell the story of government action or inaction.

Once those voices from within the community are heard, we enhance our ability to include larger numbers of people in the debate; the media becomes a forum for the debate that may, over time, allow society to solve its problems in the interest of all its members.

Note to leader:	It must be clear that engendering change does not mean orchestrating change. The media is not the crusader but the place where diverse voices can be heard and seen.

To start, the seminar leader should ask the participants to provide a list of subjects that reflect everyday life. Examples to help elicit discussion:

Health   Education   Personal finance   Children and their development Religion or faith

The seminar leader should have examples of news stories from some of these categories to provide to the participants. Using those articles as the basis of analysis, discuss how the stories could have been expanded to include more elements of society — by age, ethnic group, disability, gender.

Example: A story on prenatal health care. Are there any doctors who are from minority or ethnic groups? Are there women who are doctors as well as patients? Are there any religious issues that need to be considered when discussing prenatal care? Who could have been used to create a sense of inclusion in a story on this topic? How would you locate those diverse sources?

Note to leader:	Begin a discussion with participants about the demographic information each participant provided prior to the start of the seminar or demographic information you have developed and will use to set the basis for your discussions of diversity within a specific community.

A hypothetical questions to be considered to spark discussion:

- If 30 per cent of the population in your community is made up of women between 25 years of age and 40 years of age, What possible impact might that fact have on coverage?

A few answers to help spark the discussion:

These are women who are of childbearing age. They will be interested in matters of health and education as well as information regarding parenting strategies. They will be interested in developing government policies related to health, education and welfare and will want to know how those policies will affect their every day lives.

Leader asks: Are there any other subjects that they might be interested in? Note that this segment of the population's interests will shift once they are no longer of childbearing age. Once they pass childbearing age, what might they be interested in? The seminar leader should suggest that the participants use their own lives as benchmarks for discussion along the following lines.

Are these subjects covered in your newspaper, radio or television broadcasts? How frequently and how would you evaluate the quality of the coverage? What would you do to add content to your news reports that would meet the information needs of this particular group? By considering the information needs of this group are you also providing information of interest to men?

Bear in mind that deciding areas of interest for particular groups does not necessarily mean that others will be excluded.

Note to leader:	Ask the seminar participants their views of the last statement. How can coverage of particular group also benefit others not in that group? Do any of the participants have story ideas or concepts that would validate the statement? Ask the participants to provide concrete examples to illustrate the concept.

- If 20 percent of your community population is over 65 years of age:
  What possible impact might this data have on coverage?

A few answers to help spark the discussion:

Travel and leisure activity; personal finances (making ends meet after one is no longer working); planning for retirement; health concerns. What other information about this group would be helpful in your efforts to provide coverage of interest to this group of people? Do they travel? Does the travel focus on particular areas of the country or neighboring countries? Does the travel depend upon the ethnic background of the people in this category? Does it depend upon the economic status of the people in this category?

Note to leader:	As above, ask the seminar participants their views of the last statement. How can coverage of a particular group also benefit members of other groups? Can participants provide story ideas or concepts that would validate the statement? Work with participants to develop concrete examples to illustrate the concept.

- If the demographics indicate that 30 percent of the people in the area are under 25 years of age: What possible impact might this data have on coverage?

A few answers to help spark discussion:

The Arts (particularly music); personal finances; health and well being.
What other information about the interests of this group might be necessary to determine whether there are areas of coverage that the newspaper should be

aware of or should consider increasing? Sports and leisure activities? Relationships? Does your newspaper cover these topics?

Note to leader:	Explore the same issues as above regarding the benefits to all groups of increasing coverage of those now visible.

The leader should use examples from the review of participants' newspapers and broadcast samples to expand on the focus of this module. The questions can be very specific as related to the ethnicity, age and gender issues within any country or region where the seminar is held.

Workshop Exercise:

The participants are divided into groups of four. Each participant takes the news-paper, radio or television broadcast of another participant and reviews the news product to ask questions about representation of key constituents based upon anecdotal demographic information shared amongst participants. As the partici-pants ask each other questions about the diversity of their audience and the news product, an informal demographic profile is provided based upon what is said. Each participant should take notes during the discussion for reporting back to the entire group.

The participants are looking for:

- ■ Anecdotal demographic profile.

- ■ What information is *not* known that would help determine whether the newspaper is covering all segments of the community.

The results of the review and the small group discussion are presented to the entire workshop. Notes should be taken regarding areas needing improvement to increase diversity coverage for discussion during a later module.

MODULE 4   SPECIAL DISCUSSION POINTS ON LANGUAGE

Goal:	To develop a sense of the use of language to avoid racial and ethnic stereotyping.
Principle	Our words have the power to encourage our communities to read our news-papers, listen and view our broadcasts, and believe us. Those same words can perpetuate negative community perceptions about different groups and leave the news media with the appearance of bias and unfairness in our reporting and writing. It is important to consider why certain words just don't work.
Note to Seminar leader:	The seminar leader should initiate a discussion using examples from the news-paper articles or radio and television broadcasts provided by the participants. In the case of print examples, photocopy the stories that you will use so that each participant can read and follow the discussion. Broadcast stories should be played for the group.

Most news media do not set out to create stereotypes or division. However, journalists often fail to use language effectively in an effort to eliminate group

stereotypes or intolerance. Assuming that today's news media is interested in avoiding the damage caused by the inappropriate use of language, the primary rule for journalists is:

Follow the rules of precision for writing that will allow language to be used in its purest form.

The words we choose are critical in our quest for diversity in media content. The first challenge is to present members of different ethnic and racial groups fairly and accurately by carefully choosing our words, and avoiding stereotypes and clichés that can be seen as slurs.

Some news organizations have launched committees to fix the "problems" of misuse and misidentification. Others have made issues of language an integral part of their development of rules and regulations related to style.

However, most journalists seldom have the opportunity to sit back and think about why they choose the words they use. The pressure of the clock, space constraints and the ultimate flow of the story often rule our choices. Seldom is there time to debate the best word for the job.

Now that the news media acknowledge the depth of society's diversity, and as we explore the impact that diversity has or should have on our work as journalists, we are forced to take a second look at the words we use.

In fact, the only rationale for examining what we call people and how we describe places is the attempt to accurately report on all segments of our communities and, while doing so, to use the right words for the job.

When we carefully look at our use and misuse of language, we are not catering to the politically correct. Rather we are crafting our work using all of the rules and resources available to us.

Using the Dictionary

The first step in the examination of our use and misuse of words is simple: Use the dictionary. The book is a resource we can reintroduce to our daily work as we grapple with ways to accurately and fairly represent the nuances of our communities.

The dictionary is also a tool that journalists can use to improve word control while eliminating the perceptions we create of our nation, our   communities and their people — and ourselves.

Times change. Meanings change. The dictionary can remind us of that fact, remind us of the origins of the words we use, and help us to choose the right ones for the stories we write.

A few examples:

Ghetto: In the 1960s, dictionary's definitions described the ghetto as a place where the law forced a group of people to live within a restricted area of a city, and specifically referred to the pogroms in Europe. By today, a second definition has been added. It allows this word to be used to describe a quarter or section of a city in which members of a minority group live because of social, economic or legal pressure. Key facts included in this secondary definition change the earlier definition that required government action to create a ghetto.

What do reporters and editors have to know before they can use this word?

1] only a minority group lives in the area in question, and
2] they live there because of social, economic or legal pressure.

There are indeed places in cities across the world that could be called a ghetto, but journalists must be very careful that all of the facts required to meet the definition's test are present. Once again, the word cannot be used as a catch phrase for any areas of town that don't seem to fit a middle-class housing standard. Moreover, in most cases, journalists should use the opportunity to be specific and name the specific area or neighborhood where the story's action occurs.

Barrio: This word has the same fact-based specific meaning.

According to the dictionary, barrio is a Spanish-speaking quarter or neighborhood in a city or town. With the dictionary as the guide, we learn that we cannot use barrio as a synonym for ghetto. Moreover, there is no indication that economic, social or legal pressure created the ward or neighborhood. The word only applies to specific neighborhoods that are Spanish-speaking.A barrio is not a ghetto. It is not a slum. It is a place where Spanish speakers live.

Specifics vs. labels

Barrio and **ghetto** are just a couple of examples of words we often misuse or misapply. Better writing and reporting would describe accurately the places, conditions and economics that are at play in stories rather than resorting to the labels that often confuse and stereotype because of our misuse of the language.

Journalists must be aware that many of the people we interview for stories are not tuned in to the dictionary and precise definitions. They may not be attuned to the fact that ethnicity is not a distinguishing factor on matters of achievement or income. Or that specific ethnic groups are not synonyms for the poor, criminals, under-educated or over-educated, the unassimilated or the disenfranchised.

Educate readers and sources

How many journalists have written stories about senior citizens and called them "elderly," but did not ask the ages of the people interviewed? Again, look up the meaning of the words: "Elderly" and "aged" apply to people who are older than 65.

What about a news service story that called a man a "cripple" without describing what his specific condition was? Again look up the meaning. The

definition is very specific and applies only to a small percentage of people who are considered disabled.

Distinctions without differences? No, they are distinctions that divide journalists from the people we serve. They are the distinctions that continue to polarize our society.

As we head into the 21st Century, we are left with a great responsibility to make sure the polarization does not continue and widen simply because we were too busy, too lazy or too indifferent to look up a few words in the dictionary.

A few additional tips:

- Be careful when using adjectives and adverbs. These words are descriptors which can and do perpetuate stereotypes. Journalists are reporters and not describers. We provide the readers, listeners and viewers with the facts so that the they can come to their own conclusions about the appropriate descriptors to use in the situation. Our function is not to tell the community what they should believe. Our function is to provide the community with the unbiased facts that will allow each member of our community to make decisions about how they will live their lives and participate in the benefits and burdens of membership in our communities.

- Be vigilant to avoid loaded terms or phrases that will create a sense of disenfranchisement from those who are members of the groups most affected. Do we describe a source as a swarthy, dark figure in attempt to create a tone and not realize that the tone we create is stereotypical? Do we use phrases like "he was jewed down" to describe a process of negotiation without considering the impact that the phrase will have on the perceptions of others? We must think about the average reader, listener and viewer with every word and phrase we choose. Are we communicating what we intended? Are we reinforcing stereotypes of specific groups without intending or even realizing it?

Our words have the power to encourage members of our communities – one person at a time – to read our newspapers, listen and watch our broadcasts and believe the information we provide each day. When we use loaded phrases, clichés and jargon we risk losing any trust that has been developed between the community and the media.

The words we choose can perpetuate community perceptions that the media are still as biased toward certain segments of society as the newspapers, radio and television organization of previous generations, or previous political regimes. Our words when read or heard recreate the experiences of earlier times – times when social, political, economic and legal dynamics created pockets of hatred, fear, division and conflict. With each recreation we move further back into the historical context rather than allowing our communities to move forward toward becoming societies that value the freedom of expression and diverse opinion upon which democratic media depend.

Note to leader:

- Define what is a stereotype. Ask participants to discuss the stereotypes that exist for their ethnic, racial or religious group which they identify with. Ask the participants to communicate how they feel when they see a stereotype that is related to their racial or ethnic group in a newspaper article or radio or television news report.

- Use samples from the newspapers provided by seminar participants to discuss the use of language in the quest for diversity. How could the language in these stories have been changed to avoid or eliminate the stereotypes?

The following points should be made:

■ Avoid words or phrases that do not present a clear picture.
Example: In a nation where religious freedom is being reestablished, a description of minority religious organizations such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists and Protestants as sects is both inaccurate and creates a fuzzy picture for the community of what is the dynamic between the "mainline organizations", i.e. Catholics, Moslems and Orthodox organizations.

Note to leader:	The seminar leader should at this point request that someone in the group read the definition of the word "sect" and a discussion should follow regarding why this word would have a negative impact for those members of the religious groups which were lumped into that category.

■ Avoid descriptions of people that tend to prove or disprove a stereotype.

■ Use words that accurately describe older people, without being patronizing or demeaning.

■ Avoid using words that stereotype older people.
Examples: feeble; decrepit; crippled.

■ Avoid descriptions of women based upon whom they are married to. Women in our stories must be allowed to stand alone. Do not identify them as the wives of men but rather provide them with their own identity.

■ Avoid geographic or historical inaccuracy in language.

■ Use specifics and avoid labels.
Example: In a crime story the suspect is described as a dark skinned male between 20 and 30 years of age. Press for more detail from the police. What was he wearing; where was he seen escaping; what did his hair look like.

The authorities will not provide specifics unless the journalist asks the questions. And our specific questions assist in providing the community with an adequate description of a suspect rather than a generic description that could be used to describe 50 percent of the population of a certain ethnic or racial group. And what if there are no specifics? Consider whether the description serves any purpose if it will not assist the authorities in apprehending a criminal.

M O D U L E 5   QUESTIONS REGARDING ETHNICITY

The following questions and answers are presented for your use in the discussion with the group. Focus the discussion around specific examples from the experiences of the participants. The answers provided below are to be considered a beginning and not the end. Allow the participants enough time to debate whether ethnic or racial identification was appropriate in the stories you are using as examples. The participants will raise issues that the leader must be prepared to actively engage, question or develop as they are made in order to assist the entire group to have a meaningful discussion. At the end of the discussion, the seminar leader should recap the conclusions of the group.

The notes from these sessions should be preserved to continue to expand on the questions and answers on the issue of ethnicity and reporting in the region.

| **Note to leader:** | Crime stories are often the best to use as the basis for discussion of ethnicity and reporting. These may be the easiest examples to find in participant newspapers. |

Question: When is race or ethnicity relevant?

Answer: Generally, race or ethnicity are not relevant in a story unless ethnicity is the factor that is at the core of the story. In stories involving politics, social action or social conditions, ethnicity is not automatically relevant. Writers should be careful not to let their word choices let the reader infer that ethnicity is an issue.

Example: In large cities, one ethnic group may own particular kinds of small stores or business establishments. Those stores often become targets of vandalism and hatred on the part of other groups. Even so, in reporting a specific vandalism, a reporter should not assumes that it is ethnically motivated. At first blush, ethnicity may be key. However, a closer look and good sourcing in the neighborhood may indicate other causes of the violence, including interpersonal relationships among people who reside in a particular neighborhood. Under these circumstances, ethnicity is a minor factor and reporting should not lead the reader to believe that members of a different group are out to destroy or harm members of another group.

| **Note to leader:** | ▪ Ask the group to discuss how they can determine whether race or is central here or is it a case of the haves vs. the have nots? Or is it simply a criminal element run amok? How can the story accurately reflect the situation? Ask, would this person be identified by ethnicity if he or she were of the majority group? If the answer is no there should be a serious consideration of whether ethnicity is relevant to the story.

▪ The seminar leader should find examples of the identification of persons by their ethnic group which leads to a conclusion that the story is about an ethnic or racial situation. |

Question: Who Decides whether there is a racial or ethnic angle?

Answer: Journalists should not assume the burden of deciding whether an incident has ethnic or racial overtones. The facts of the story should present enough fodder for race or ethnic issues to lead the story framework. Often a government source will tell the journalist that race or ethnicity are elements of the story. Official statements can be tested by talking with representatives from the communities involved. Develop sources across racial and ethnic lines and at least there will always be multiple points of view on this question in your story if officials maintain that an incident or an issue has a racial or ethnic angle. Challenge the same officials with questions that probe "why?" they have determined there is an ethnic issue at play.

Example: Police label gang warfare as ethnic warfare. Once the reporter asks why, she finds the police have concluded the warfare is ethnic because one gang is from one ethnic group and another gang is from another ethnic group. But in fact, the warfare was triggered by a turf war over lucrative illegal drug trade on the streets of your city. The war had to do with territory based on economics vs. ethnic strife. Might there be an ethnic element in this story? Possibly. However, it is not necessarily the most important reason for the conflict and therefore caution should be used in determining what importance the reporter will ascribe to ethnic issues in his story.

Question: What should people be called?
Answer: One way to deal with this issue is to ask the source — the person you are quoting or referring to — how he or she prefers to be described and that can be accomplished by simply asking. However, it is the general rule that only where ethnicity of a source is relevant to the subject of the story should it be used in the story.

Remember, a picture tells more than a thousand words. Often the ethnic identity of sources can be communicated effectively through the use of pictures in newspapers and television. Where possible, why not show your source as the real person he or she is instead of indirectly characterizing her?

Note to leader: Descriptions of the source should be as specific as possible. Simply stating that someone is from Asia does not provide any relevant information about the person once the racial identity is determined relevant. Be specific. Generalizations promote stereotyping. Good journalism is specific about everything — ethnicity included. What country in Asia is the person from?

Question: What about immigrants?
Answer: The same rule applies. Avoid lumping all immigrants into classes. For example: Africans, Asians. The reader or viewer receives more information if you provide specific details about where the person is from. A person from America could be from Canada, the United States or Latin America. The reader learns nothing when we say that the person in the story is from Asia; more important to the story is the country that the person is from. Tell the reader the nation, state or the city where relevant. Africa is a large continent. Tell the reader what nation the person is from. The critical rule: Provide the reader or viewer with specific information.

M O D U L E 6   DEVELOPING SOURCES

Goal: To assist program participants in developing new and diverse sources

Principle { Diversity in sources in news stories will
by its nature create a more diverse news report.

Changing the way we find and use sources in our news reporting is a task that requires a great deal of conscious action on the part of a reporter. Each reporter who is interested in creating more voices in his or her stories must begin developing the bank of sources with each contact made within the community. Casual meetings of people can provide opportunities to meet that doctor or lawyer who may be able to provide a different perspective to a routine story. Casual meetings may provide an opportunity to add the names and numbers of academics who are respected but may be from different ethnic groups. Every contact with an interesting person becomes an opportunity to expand your source list beyond the government sources that have been the mainstay of news reporters for decades. The best reporters have the most extensive network of diverse sources.

Note to leader: Choose four stories from the participants' examples or from your reading or viewing that can be used to discuss expanding the base of sources for news stories. Ask the participants to read each story and break into small groups. Ask the participants to rate the stories for their diversity of sources or voices. Are the only people quoted men? Are the only people quoted members of the government? Are the only people quoted from the majority group even though there may be other perspectives on the issue from other racial or ethnic groups?

To Ponder:
- Beware of unbalanced stories that appear.

  Minority issues don't require comment from the majority; Jewish issues don't require comment from antisemites. Nor do gay and lesbian issues require comment from homophobic elements. The mechanical "balancing" of sources actually can open the door to biased reporting by increasing the opportunity to use stereotypes, clichés and prejudiced voices.

- Be careful when describing living arrangements between adults.

  In many countries it is not relevant that a man and woman do not have a marriage certificate or that two men or two women are a couple and live together. If it must be mentioned, do not moralize or use coy, cute labels. Many journalists use "companion" or "close friend" to describe these long-term relationships or living arrangements. The key: don't assume; ask the subject of the story how he or she would characterize the relationship.

Note to leader: Review the stories again. Ask each participant to make a list of other categories of people who could be contacted to add perspective to the story. Complete the same exercise with the remaining three stories. Ask the participants to discuss how they would identify sources to expand the perspectives in the stories.

MODULE 7   **IMAGES**

One of the first places that journalists can provide an opportunity for members of all racial, ethnic and religious groups to identify with the content of the newspaper, magazine, or television broadcasts is through the use of pictures. Note to leader: Ask the seminar participants what kinds of pictures of minorities — if any — are included in the newspaper or television news broadcasts. Do minorities serve as news anchors as well as field reporters? Are women pictured in stories where women can be used as the image for the story, or is the news photography or video predominantly male? The seminar leader should pull examples from the newspaper and video samples provided by the participants or examples that the leader has found and feels would be excellent to illustrate the lack of diversity in the news images we project.

- As you show the examples to the group, ask them to brainstorm other ways the stories could have been illustrated with an eye to diversity rather than sim-

ply using the same male government sources and showing their photos or video clips.

■ Ask the participants to specifically review stories and art work that accompany crime stories. Crime stories are frequently more graphic. Also find video or still photographs of news broadcasts from war zones or zones of civil unrest. Do these pictures and videos provide a slanted view of the unrest or fighting? Are the video images, particularly, used to provide a point of view? Is this or should this be the journalist's goal? How can presenting a point of view be avoided in stories that have a strong political or historical context that has traditionally excluded all views but the government's view?

Pictures — both still and video — must reflect the news. But there are no rules as to who must be included in the pictures to reflect the news. Except for the breaking news events, the spot news stories, there are often choices.

Note to leader:	Review the newspapers and video provided by the participants and go over the pictures that are available. Discuss whether there were other opportunities to provide a more diverse picture of the event than was used by the newspaper or television station? Discuss the stories that are chosen from the video clips provided. Might there have been other opportunities to illustrate the story that would have provided a more diverse view of the news story?

When there is a major event, photographers can look for opportunities to capture the diversity of the crows rather than focusing the lens eye on those who represent the sameness of the majority.

Example: In a recent election story, the photographer photographed a voting place with a woman monitoring the polls and a woman voting. The photographer knew that this scene in a male-dominated society would not have been recorded in the past. The photographer's picture signals a new day. The photographer probably could have gone to another polling place or could have shot a similar picture with men and walked away. The photographer in this case captured change and readers or viewers will be affected in some way by the change represented in the image. Consciously or unconsciously, the reader or viewer will begin to sense a shift in the community and the role of women in that community.

Note to leader:	Again, look for examples of pictures that provide a sense of subtle change within the community. Are there any in the newspapers or broadcast materials provided before the seminar? Are there any pictures that the seminar participants would question could have been taken with others creating diversity without changing the news event?

One of the goals in examining images for diversity is to make it possible for some of our readers and viewers to say: "Thanks for letting me see myself in your newspaper or television broadcast. Thanks for letting me be a part of this community as you, the news media, define our community through the news you report each day."

Note to leader:	At this point, the seminar leader should stress that the images used are a matter of choice by the persons within the news media who are making the decisions about what images should be printed or prepared for broadcast. How must the decision-making change if there is to be an increase in diverse images in the newspaper or in the television news broadcasts? Go back and look at some of the footage and newspaper photographs reviewed earlier in this module. Where are the other choices that could have been made? When

should that choice have been made, and who makes the choices? The leader should engage the group in discussion about viewing the scene of a story and making the choices at the point that the artwork is being planned and shot by the photographer/reporter or camera person.

Diversity in the art work used by the news media also includes the decision making when one picture is chosen over another for a story. Each person responsible for taking and choosing art should begin to ask what is the best way to illustrate this story while drawing in as many readers as possible.

Note to leader: Choose two or three stories without pictures from local or national newspapers that would lend themselves to a brainstorming session about the kind of art-work that best illustrates the story while keeping the diversity principles in mind. Write down the suggestions for each story on large sheets of paper that should be visible to the participants. Once the process has been completed, suggest to the participants that they use the process for stories in which they are responsible for the artwork. How would each participant include such a process as part of their news organization?

Editorial Commentary: Cartoons

Editorial cartoons pose a special challenge. Editorial cartoons are meant to be irreverent and, at times, to present the extremes of political views or social discordance. These cartoons often trade heavily on stereotypes of minority groups.

But editorial cartoons, though in a different league, are not immune from evaluation, particularly when the cartoons tend to perpetuate stereotypes that divide the community or reinforce hatred and distrust. The remedy here is the constant debate and vigilance of journalists and news organizations.

Note to leader:
- Find samples of editorial cartoons and make copies available to the participants. Ask whether there is anything in any of the cartoons that would be offensive to the participants; to someone from another racial, ethnic or religious group? The final question: Do the participants believe the offensiveness — even the threat of offense — was a "price worth paying" for the message that was conveyed by the cartoon? Use the participants' response as a benchmark for determining whether editorial commentary in the form of cartoons is so offensive as to be threatening to any segment of the population.

- Begin a discussion regarding the difference between the editorial cartoon and the news photography that accompanies news stories in print or on television. What are the different standards applied to both? Does the public understand that difference? What would be the participants' view of what should be done if an offensive cartoon were printed? What if there was a complaint from the community? What if everyone knew it was offensive and there were no complaints? Would the fact that there were no complaints be a sign of a problem between the community and the media, one which the media would have to work to overcome?

THE INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN

The Individual Action Plan is the key to helping journalists take home with them what they have been discussing, analyzing, and learning about during this program. It is a device to encourage the participants to actively commit to changing what they do every day as professionals. Moreover, because journalists can commit not only to individual acts, but to working with their colleagues, news organizations, and professional associations and unions, the Individual Action Plan (IAP) can also be a mechanism to influence other individuals and institutions, as well.

The Leader should adapt the IAP form printed below, adding or replacing the questions here, and distribute the IAP at the beginning of the workshop or seminar so that each participant has this outcome in mind throughout the program. The IAP should be discussed by the group before it is filled out by individuals, and the Leader should encourage each participant to be as specific as possible about the goals he or she is setting, the means to be employed, and the timetable to be followed. It is suggested that a six-month time frame be used for the IAP, but this is at the discretion of the leader and the group, which should revise the IAP form until group members become comfortable with the commitments it asks them to make. After the IAPs are filled out at the last session, the Leader should suggest that each participant share his or her Action Plan with the group.

The Leader should make notes on each one to assist in the follow-up discussed below. Ideally, there will be follow-up by the Leader at the agreed-upon IAP deadline. Because the commitment to journalism that is sensitive to diversity issues is often personally and institutionally difficult, this follow-up timetable provides an opportunity to review the material covered in the original discussions, encourage further discussion, and reinforce the original diversity goals. In the best circumstances, such follow-up will be institutionalized in the form of follow-on workshops, publications, and other forms of on-the-job training and support.

Remember the Mission:

To strengthen the credibility and value of newspaper, radio and television news coverage as vehicles for community understanding and tolerance.

Remember Our Key Objectives:

- Increase diversity of voices and images in all news coverage

- Strengthen connections with readers, listeners, viewers and potential readers, listeners and viewers

- Expand readership, or the listening and viewing audience to a greater segment of the community

- Foster team work and communication within your news organization

The individual action plan is one of the most important steps in beginning to meet the challenge of applying what you have explored during this program. Each participant should take home a concrete plan of action that you will use as you return to your daily duties as a journalist.

Please take a minute and consider the ways that you can concretely begin to work toward increasing the diversity of voices and images in your work, eliminating stereotypes, employing language carefully and, in general, being sensitive to the diversity issues you have discussed during this program.

Next, write a short description of the actions you will take to meet some of the objectives established at the outset of this program. Consider your plan a six-month plan; at each six-month interval you will review your progress, add another goal as you continue to move toward creating news media that values and encourages community understanding and tolerance. Action Plans are affirmative statements that focus on a specific task that you believe you will be interested in committing to once the program ends. The Action Plan should be considered your personal plan to work toward achieving some of what is described in the mission statement above. It is important to set goals that you know you will be able to attain and sustain for six months or more.

A few examples follow. Use additional space to expand or change the models or to develop an action statement that will work for you.

1] I will discuss the principles of diversity with another journalist where I work and share the materials developed during the training. I will do this by

2] I will use language more precise and monitor my work to eliminate slurs, clichés and other loaded terms that may be or are offensive to one group or another. I will do this by

3] I will share my successful strategies for a more precise use of language with other journalists. I will do this by

4] I will organize a training session for other staff members to discuss the principles of diversity as they apply to

5] I will monitor the images presented in our newspaper or television broadcasts and make suggestions or plan my news gathering to provide opportunities for diverse images — women, the elderly, people of different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds — in my news reports. I will begin by

Note :	The suggestions are just samples of possible action plans. Draft your own statements using the suggestions above as models. Be concrete. Be specific. Be realistic. No matter how simple, remember that if each of us takes a step to increasing the diversity of voices within our news media we come closer to creating a vehicle for community understanding and tolerance over time.

APPENDIX

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR WAR, PEACE, AND THE NEWS MEDIA

Activities to Support Diversity Reporting

About the European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media

The European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media (ECWPNM) is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation dedicated to supporting journalists and news organisations in their efforts to sustain an informed, democratic citizenry. The ECWPNM is based in London, and is affiliated with the Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media of New York University, one of the leading media assistance organisations in the United States.

The principal work of the Centre is the coordination and expansion of the Reporting Diversity Network, an international program which brings together journalists, news organisations, media assistance centres, journalism schools and others in a collaborative effort to mobilise the power of the news media in support of a deeper public understanding of diversity, minority communities, inter-group conflict and conflict resolution, and human rights. The Network promotes the highest standards of professional journalism as they relate to coverage of minorities, diversity, and inter-ethnic relations, and develops the tools, training vehicles and practical reporting initiatives required to implement those standards.

The Network's activities are concentrated in five areas:

- Mid-Career Diversity Training for Journalists Practical training programs for journalists and news organizations to increase their skills and capabilities for improved reporting on diversity-related concerns.

- Diversity Reporting Initiatives: Journalism projects that address specific local, national and regional diversity issues and/or bring together journalists from communities in conflict.

- Diversity Journalism Education and Curriculum Reform: Working with journalism educators and journalism schools and departments to integrate diversity concerns, ideas, materials, and new approaches into regular courses and curricula.

- Media Assistance for Minority Groups: Strengthening minority-owned media organizations, and developing the minority group NGO skills and resources to work more effectively with majority media to address problematic coverage and support more informed and sensitive reporting on their communities.

- Media Monitoring: Developing monitoring and research projects to better document shortcomings in coverage of ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups; expose chronic problems demanding remedial action; and hold news organizations accountable to the highest professional standards.

Each of these activities are explained in more details further in this text.

In leading the Reporting Diversity Network, the Centre builds on projects undertaken beginning in 1996 in such countries as Albania, Hungary, Latvia, Macedonia, Bosnia, Romania, and Russia. These activities have included the

production of specialised Reporting Diversity resource manuals for different countries; special workshops and seminars with journalists on Reporting Diversity issues; and the development of an extensive network of national partners and project supporters among journalists, journalism schools, media assistance organisations, and human and minority rights groups across the region.

The Centre is directed by Milica Pesic, a veteran Serbian journalist now based in London. Ms. Pesic was one of the creators of both the AIM and the Reporting Diversity Network. She has directed and participated in numerous seminars, conferences and workshops on diversity-related issues with organisations such as the UN, UNESCO, Council of Europe, SOROS-OSI, King's Collage, the Freedom Forum, and Internews. Ms. Pesic originates from Belgrade where she worked as TV news presenter/news editor at TV for ten years before being fired in 1991 for refusing to take part in war propaganda. Since then she has worked as a journalist with Radio Free Europe, BBC, Le Mond, Times HES, and Danas Daily in Belgrade, and Vijesti Daily in Montenegro. She has been interviewed on media & conflicts issues numerous times by BBC TV and Radio, as well as ITN of the UK, and NPR of the USA. She graduated Belgrade University with a degree in Comparative Literature with History of Art, and received an MA in International Journalism from City University London.

The Reporting Diversity Network Partners

The Reporting Diversity Network (RDN), a unique collaboration of media organizations from Central and Eastern Europe, is dedicated to the proposition that journalism can, and should, play a central role in aiding increasingly diverse societies understand their differences within, build bridges between and among communities, and explore alternatives to confrontation and violent conflict.

Unique among media assistance efforts in the region, the RDN is focused directly and exclusively on improving media coverage of minorities, inter-ethnic relations, and other diversity issues.

To accomplish its mission, the RDN has developed a comprehensive, long-term strategy, based on the extensive experience of its partner organizations across the region:

Albanian Media Institute (Tirana)

Association of Independent Electronic Media (Belgrade)

Centre for Independent Journalism (Bucharest)

Centre for Independent Journalism (Budapest)

Centre for Multicultural Understanding and Cooperation (Skopje)

Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media, New York University (New York)

Independent Journalists Association of Serbia (Belgrade)

International Federation of Journalists (Brussels)

Latvia University, Department of Journalism (Riga)

Media Development Centre (Sofia)

Media Plan Institute (Sarajevo)

Soros Media Centre (Sarajevo)

National Press Institute (Moscow)

Panonia Press Network (Vojvodina)

Roma Press Centre (Budapest)

STINA News Agency (Split)

Vijesti Daily (Podgorica)

International Centre for Education of Journalists (Zagreb)

Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (Podgorica)

Detailed Activities of the European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media

The ECWPNM has produced a five-years program of Reporting Diversity Network activities. The activities are classified in the 'baskets' as following:

1 Mid-Career Diversity Training and Professional Development — Practical training programs for journalists and news organizations to increase their skills and capabilities for improved reporting on diversity-related concerns. The ECWPNM plans the following specific activities:

■ Summer Institute for Media Decision-Makers: Past training activities by the ECWPNM, RDN, and others have focused on reporters, but reporters can do very little to change the news product without the support and understanding of the organization's editors and owners – the decision-makers who ultimately control news content, style, and attitude. Therefore, the ECWPNM, through the RDN, will train the media "decision-makers" as well, through a special Summer Institute. The Summer Institute, held in Croatia, will have the following characteristics: 20-25 media decision-makers from across the region in attendance;

■ 5 full days of intensive training;

■ A total of 7 trainers, including those who will teach at the concurrent Summer Institute for Journalism Educators;

■ Training materials, including the RDN Training Manual;

■ Intense and systematic follow-up activities through subsequent consultancies with participants conducted by the two RDN resident experts.

■ Post-Conflict Professional Development: In the aftermath of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, the media infrastructure has been destroyed, journalists have fled or turned to non-journalistic activities, or often lack to reporting with balance, objectivity, and fairness. In these conditions, the ECWPNM has planned a particularly important series of activities designed to ensure that the methods and sensibilities of balanced and accurate reporting on minorities, ethnic and identity-group issues, and all post-conflict issues become an integral part of journalism in the region. Specific projects are the following:
— A five-week Kosovo Media Training Course, to be held in Pristina, which will provide intensive training for 20 young journalists on professional coverage of ethnic, minority, and tolerance issues in the context of basic journalism training;
— A Post-Conflict Reporting Conference to be held in the region, which will be led by experts on conflict and post-conflict coverage and which will assist journalists from all groups in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia to

come to terms with the legacies of the conflict, re-establish ties with each other, and play a constructive role in the process of reconciliation and conflict prevention. Journalists with experience in other post-conflict zones worldwide will help provide an international perspective;

— Active participation in the establishment of a Kosovo Media Institute, which is under discussion with the OCSE, as well as the some international donors organizations.

2 Diversity Reporting Initiatives — Journalism projects that address specific local, national and regional diversity issues and/or bring together journalists from communities in conflict. The ECWPNM plans to focus on two particular models of reporting initiatives:

■ Regional Team Reporting Projects: The ECWPNM attempts to bring together multi-ethnic teams of reporters to report and write joint feature stories under the supervision of outside team leaders. The resulting stories will be printed or broadcast by all media organizations involved in identical versions, thereby building cross-ethnic professional bonds, providing models of high-quality reporting on ethnic issues, building confidence, and (not least) providing direct professional training. Such projects are designed to provide permanent institutional change among the participating news organizations. Project design and implementation is based on the ECWPNM's team reporting manual. Specific projects will include:

— In Albania, the ECWPNM will organize a project for journalists from areas with minority communities (Saranda, Korca, Shkodra) based on the concept of "total community coverage." Project leaders will include one of the ECWP-NM consultants, Fatos Baxhaku of Gazeta Shqiptare , and Iris Luarasi of Tirana University.

— In Montenegro, the ECWPNM will employ a similar approach in multi-ethnic areas (Podgorica, Ulcinj, and Rozaj) with project leader(s) selected by the RDN Montenegrin members, the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, and Vijesti Daily in Podgorica.

— In Macedonia, the ECWPNM will work with the Macedonian daily Dnevnik and the Albanian daily Fakti. Gordana Icevska of Dnevnik and Kim Mehmeti, journalist and director of the Centre for Multi-Cultural Cooperation, an RDN member and partner, will serve as project leaders.

■ Pilot Regional News Exchange: Despite the launch of a number of news exchange and agency projects in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s, distribution of top-quality material on minorities; racial and ethnic conflict; and tolerance remains minimal – with the modest exception. In order to stimulate the distribution of such material, to provide journalists throughout the region with "best practices" models, and to directly contribute to conflict prevention, the ECWPNM will work with existing news agencies as follows:

— In Croatia, the ECWPNM will help the STINA News Agency in Croatia – which currently serves over 100 media outlets in the region – to introduce a special service devoted to ethnic, racial, and minority issues. The ECWPNM will commission and edit articles and actively promote the initiative. A ECWPNM consultant will spend a month with STINA to provide direct, on-site consulting.

3 Diversity Journalism Education and Curriculum Development — Working with journalism educators and journalism schools and departments to integrate diversity concerns, ideas, materials, and new approaches into regular

courses and curricula. Specifically, the ECWPNM will undertake the following activities:

■ Regional curriculum development project: Even those journalism professors who understand and appreciate the importance of quality reporting on racial, minority, and ethnic-relations issues typically do not have the tools to transfer that understanding to their students. Effective curricula are lacking. The ECWPNM plans the following RDN project in order to help such professors develop effective mechanisms for teaching the subject and to stimulate interest in doing so among journalism educators throughout the region:
— Commissioning a comprehensive survey and analysis of existing journalism courses in the region and elsewhere in Europe which cover reporting of minority and ethnic issues;
— Regional curriculum development workshop dedicated to promoting improved teaching of the coverage of minority, ethnic, and human rights issues.

4 Media Assistance for Minority Groups —Strengthening minority-owned media organizations, and developing the minority group NGO skills and resources to work more effectively with majority media to address problematic coverage and support more informed and sensitive reporting on their communities.The ECWPNM work in this area will consist of two parts:

■ Media Relations Guide: In order to provide basic guidance for establishing effective relationships with mainstream media, the RDN will produce a Media Relations Guide, to help minority organizations effectively interact with the mainstream media.

■ Annual Minorities Media Relations Workshop: In order to launch the Media Relations Guide and begin the process of training minority representatives and heads of NGOs, the ECWPNM will hold the first annual RDN Minorities Media Relations Workshop. The four-day event will include 20-25 participants representing minority communities of the region as well as two regional trainers and one international trainer, in addition to one of the ECWPNM regionally-based consultants. One of the trainers will be from the Roma Press Centre in Budapest, one of the RDN members.

5 Media Monitoring for Program Development and Implementation — Developing monitoring and research projects to better document shortcomings in coverage of ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups; expose chronic problems demanding remedial action; and hold news organizations accountable to the highest professional standards. Specific activities will include the following:

■ Media Monitoring Experts Group (MMEG): In order to help develop the protocol and to provide specific feedback and advice to the RDN members and other organizations which undertake media monitoring projects, a 5-person International Advisory Committee will be created to provide general guidance, project-specific advice, and other consulting in media monitoring.

■ RDN Member Monitoring: Using the research protocol developed by the RDN, and drawing on and consulting with the international advisory committee described above, each RDN member will fund, organize, and implement media monitoring and research projects appropriate to its programmatic needs and local circumstances.

Women Meeting the Challenge: A Handbook for Media Leadership is filled with practical solutions to the barriers that hold women back from reaching their leadership potential. It draws upon the discussions at The Carole Simpson Leadership Institute (CSLI) and other African Women's Media Center (AWMC) programs to create a guide for women aspiring to leadership in the news media. It uses recent studies to demonstrate where African women stand as leaders in the media. And it relies on the leadership development work of Jerusha Arothe-Vaughan, director of Independent Communication Associates Ltd., who facilitated the CSLI training. In addition, the UNDP Africa's regional gender programme endorses and confirms these methods for empowering women to assume leadership positions.

While this book is for women, about women and by women, it also is a tool that should be shared with everyone in the newsroom. It is a means by which to change the leadership roles of women in their media houses. As such, it can be a powerful tool for awareness of leadership training and capacity building for women, as was recognized by the 1997 South Africa Gender Roundtable as the key factors in women's empowerment. Some of the solutions must come from the women themselves and some must come from the media companies. To accomplish that, women must take men with them every step of the way, sharing with them responsibility for how the media conducts itself toward women and women's issues.

The AWMC thanks Jerusha Arothe-Vaughan for her many contributions to the content of this publication. Ms. Arothe-Vaughan is Director of Independent Communication Associates Limited (InCA, Ltd.), a communications and management consulting firm based in Kenya.

Introduction and Acknowledgements

In Africa, as elsewhere, the news is seldom managed or presented by, for or about women. In all forms of news media, decisions are most often made by men. When women are excluded from decision-making within the news, the media fails to reflect the issues and perspectives that are important to a majority of society.

With the social, cultural and economic changes sweeping Africa today, more opportunities have opened for women to move into positions from which they can have an impact on the content of news coverage. Leadership is indeed becoming more accessible to women. Yet many women are not prepared to take on the challenges of leadership or have a good grasp of how to maintain a position of authority. Generally, women's socialisation and education do not incorporate a basic knowledge of the skills necessary to move into leadership, or an understanding of the individual's relationship with power and power structures. Women with considerable talent and ambition continue to be frustrated in their efforts to move into decision-making roles in the news media.

In response to these concerns, the AWMC established a programme designed to help women gain equality in the newsroom through educational workshops

[1] From the African Women's Media Center, http://www.awmc.com

and networking. The Carole Simpson Leadership Institute (CSLI), named for the American journalist whose generous donation provided seed funding for the institute, was launched with a four-day seminar in November, 1998. Out of this gathering of 42 women from 13 African countries came ideas, discussions and strategies on how African women can break through the cultural, social and gender barriers that prevent them from reaching their leadership potential.

Just three months after attending the leadership training programme, a woman from Zimbabwe wrote, "For the first time I realized my self worth and I am much more assertive. I had lacked confidence in myself because I had been side-lined for a very long time." After returning from the programme she acted on her career plan and her new feelings of empowerment, and was soon after given a promotion, becoming the first woman to hold the position of deputy chief editor at her newspaper.

Where Do Women Stand?

The idea that women can be strong and effective leaders is not reflected in the reality of women's status in the news media. Studies of some African media organisations have confirmed the perception that women are absent at the top. In 1995, UNESCO conducted a groundbreaking study of the African region showing that, on average, women account for only 8.4 percent of the highest levels in media management in broadcast and 14.1 percent in print media.

In 1997, the UNDP Africa Roundtable, organized in South Africa, highlighted the obstacles to women's empowerment through the media. It was noted that a lack of gender advocacy activities and a lack of institutions through which to conduct advocacy programmes leads to inadequate resources, training, and opportunities for women's advancement. Many of these obstacles can be overcome if women are in leadership positions within the media itself.

During 1997-1998, Jennifer Makunike-Sibanda, Regional Director of the Federation of African Media Women-Southern African Development Community, conducted a study of employment patterns of 37 media organisa-tions in Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Her preliminary findings show that the majority of media organisations hire men for decision-making positions such as editor/general manager and deputy editor/deputy general manager. When women reach higher level positions, often they are given the secondary position of deputy. On average, there were 24 male senior reporters per organisation compared to only six women in the same position.

While 54 percent of responding organisations said they had at least one female board of management member, most had an average ratio of five men to two women members sitting on their boards. Forty-three percent had no female members. About 40 percent of the organisations had both male and female representatives sitting on their board of governors, but again the average ratio was six men for every two women.

Furthermore, most of the survey respondents did not have an affirmative action program for the hiring and promotion of women. A majority of the responding organisations (75.7 percent) said they had not had any policy discussions to address issues of equal opportunities for women. Additionally, only about 29 percent used affirmative action during recruitment and promotion.

CHART ON GENDER DISTRIBUTION FOR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

The result of so few women in leadership positions in the media is that there is no strong voice for how their gender should be portrayed in the media and what issues should be reported. Men are left to develop stories based on their own cultural and social views. According to a study conducted by Margaret Gallagher in 1996, women appeared in just 19 percent of all news stories in ten African countries. When women do appear in the news, they are most often portrayed as victims of violence or as physical objects and rarely as experts, resources or leaders.

What Are the Obstacles?

There are a variety of obstacles that are preventing women from moving ahead in the news media -- some individual, some organisational and others firmly rooted in societal and cultural beliefs. The result is an ongoing struggle for women to gain acceptance as professionals, create opportunities to develop a sense of personal confidence and vision, and obtain access to the knowledge and training necessary for leadership development. Understanding the dynamics of these obstacles is the first step in overcoming them.

Cultural and Social Barriers

Perhaps the most predominant set of obstacles faced by women aspiring to move into the upper ranks of the news media are the cultural and social norms they face every day. These stereotypical notions about women's abilities and responsibilities effectively keep them from entering the professional world, and once there, set up enormous barriers to their success. Yet women continue to struggle to transcend biases against them. "If I had tried to live by the cultural standards, I don't think I'd be where I am now," says Susan Njanji Matetakufa of Zimbabwe.

Women are expected, first and foremost, to care for the home, children, other family members and their spouses. Unlike their male colleagues, women with demanding professional careers are expected to maintain their duties at home often with little or no help from other family members.

While pressures to conform to traditional roles may come from boyfriends or husbands, many African women say that, more often, difficulties emerge from their own families and their in-laws. In some cases, families look down at the careers chosen by their daughters or sisters. Women journalists struggle against negative stereotypes about women in the journalism profession. The image is that women in this field take on some of the more harsh male social behaviours.

"There are some women who come to work in the media and don't have the support from their family structures and that's because of their cultural background," said a woman journalist from Uganda. "You have to move away from those restrictions, not just saying, 'I don't like it,' but doing something about it, and being able to withstand the pressure."

Such assumptions about women's roles in society and in the home have clearly kept women from the arenas of power and leadership. It is assumed that women cannot or should not work long hours, take on difficult assignments or travel for business. As women attempt to move into management, they must fight to gain acceptance in a new role as a professional and to create an acceptable balance for themselves between their lives at home and at work.

According to Libby, Councillor of the Independent Broadcasting Authority of South Africa, "Women are often made to feel that you have to choose between child care and career. [We] often only rise to the top…by either giving up on our families or by exploiting other women – whether it's our mothers, our neighbours, our sisters, or women who work for us in order to get there."

Women throughout Africa deal with the impact that societal and cultural norms have on their ability to do their job, as well as on the attitudes of their supervisors and colleagues. Among many employers there is a perception that women tend to take more time off than men to care for family members. But, in the study conducted by Jennifer Makunike-Sibanda a majority of respondents (77.6 percent) said that female members of the staff were prepared to work the necessary hours to get the job done.

Some women managers have commented that, in fact, women sometimes feel a great deal of pressure not to take time off. They fear that they will prove the negative assumptions about women, making matters worse for themselves and their females colleagues. Many women have told of job interviews where a potential employer asks a woman if she has children and how she will take care of them and do her job at the same time.

But dealing with assumptions regarding family responsibilities is just one set of obstacles women face in the newsroom. In media houses throughout Africa, women are discriminated against in terms of salary, access to jobs, access to information and harassment. Each of these affects women's opportunities for advancement in the media. When women are left out of formal or informal information networks they miss out on training opportunities, fellowships, promotions and important assignments.

Many women journalists feel that the type of assignments they receive inhibits their advancement potential. A woman from Ghana states, "Bosses tend to create the impression that women are incapable of certain assignments." They are too often assigned to cover soft news and are denied assignments related politics, technology or business. In this way, they don't get the exposure they need to move ahead. Mutwe Sperance from Senegal said, "the majority of the top posts in the media are held by men, and they rarely give women the opportunity to prove their capacity on politics or other major reporting matters."

In the words of Mildred Mulenga of Zambia, "The important stories are assigned to the men. Female journalists are largely restricted to unimportant, unchallenging assignments. It will be a long time before women in Zambia are assigned to cover things like riots, bomb explosions, and international summits.… Female journalists rarely get to be editors; the highest position they can aspire to is senior reporter."

Women who are promoted into management have related an additional set of challenges in the workplace, including hostility. Zubeida Jaffer was recently appointed group parliamentary editor for Independent Newspapers of South Africa. She described the day top management informed the all-male staff of her promotion. "I was sitting in this room, with only men, and they were told that I would be taking this position. No one came up to me and congratulated me. For me that was such a shock. It was the first time in my life I experienced anything as rude as that in terms of my colleagues. In a funny, subconscious way I'd expected it, but it was still a shock."

Jemimah Mwakisha, a reporter with The Nation in Kenya and chair of that country's Association of Media Women, suggested that perhaps there is an

expectation that women managers should be better than men. Women managers sometimes feel it is necessary to constantly prove themselves and their abilities, even though they had legitimately earned their promotions. They have to overcome preconceptions about women bosses, while men with less experience have been more readily promoted and accepted.

At times women said they are placed in awkward situations by issues that deal with gender and that are not easy to openly address. For example, asking for women's toilets in media houses that have accommodations only for men. In such a situation, not only are women made uncomfortable, but they are made to feel unwelcome in the work environment.

Personal Obstacles

Women, themselves, can bring their own leadership obstacles with them into the workplace. Often women are taught to be soft-spoken, not question authority, stay at home and in some cases, not to look someone in the eye. Women are faced with not only overcoming the traditional beliefs held by men in the workplace, but also with modifying some of their own views and assumptions.

Just as women generally possess some traits that are important to leadership, there are other characteristics that women must struggle to overcome if they are to be effective leaders. Generally speaking, women tend to avoid taking risks, which can limit their innovative contributions to the company and, therefore, their visibility as well. Women can have a tendency to focus on details rather than taking a big-picture approach, which is key to leadership. And, while women have a strong orientation to human relationships and the success of the team, this can create a situation where a female manager is not seen as a strong authority. In that light, some women who have reached management positions said they have struggled to understand their leadership role.

Finally, there can be a great deal of rivalry among women in the newsroom. When few management level jobs are available to women, an atmosphere of competition arises rather than one of cooperation and support. Some women talk of feeling alienated by other women once they have been promoted. Others mention female supervisors who do little to help female colleagues gain the skills they need to move ahead. A woman from Tanzania said, "When I was moving up, men and women tried to keep me down. They felt threatened, so I had to work harder to prove myself - my strength was, in fact, my dedication to my work."

Tips for Working with Men

- Physical appearance makes a difference. Wear business-like clothing. A crisp, no-nonsense image helps establish positive contact with men.

- Be prepared and organised. Use strong, direct language and be firm if you are interrupted. Statistics show that women allow themselves to be interrupted 50 percent more often than men. Don't contribute to those statistics!

- Use appropriate body language. Men usually use less body language than women.

- Do not respond to flirting. Keep your conversation and attention directed to the business at hand.

- Keep your sense of humour. A sense of humour helps keep you "human," but don't "laugh off" disrespectful or harassing behaviour.

- Speak up and voice your objections. If any language or conversation offends, say so.

- Avoid discussing feelings. Personal revelations from business associates are inappropriate.

- Don't feel you have to like someone to get the job done. Concentrate on the job at hand and productivity, not personalities.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions or for advice. No one has all the answers, and honesty is the best approach.

- Be prepared to disagree and to stand up for what you believe.

Common Prejudices Women...

- fall apart when the going gets tough

- are catty or love to gossip

- are afraid to make decisions or always change their minds

- use sex to get what they want

- are difficult to work for

- aren't able to see the big picture

- aren't good team players

- are too soft to make decisions

- allow their families to get in the way of the job

- no sooner get trained that they leave to have a baby

- are too emotional and cry too easily

- can't travel on business because of family commitments

- make things more complicated than they really are

- are moody

- are inconsistent and fickle, and don't know what they want

Tools To Meet The Challenges

There are many mechanisms to help you address such challenges as you work to move into leadership positions. This next section offers a number of ways to begin exploring leadership and strategies to strengthen your leadership abilities. Working through these exercises should help you gain the confidence to prove cultural stereotypes wrong and to challenge workplace attitudes.

Knowing Your Leadership potential

Leadership begins with self-awareness. It is important for you to understand your own personal style and your strengths and weaknesses related to effective leadership. By determining where your strengths lie, building onto those strengths and learning to rely on them, you can showcase your talents in the best light. By focusing on your strengths and using them to help you through challenging situations, you will release a greater productive energy and reduce the stress in your life. Once you understand your strengths, strive

to find the outlets that allow you to express your managerial talents and build your confidence.

It can be difficult to determine your leadership strengths independently. Taking the following test can be starting point. Then talk to your colleagues, your supervisors and the staff that report to you. Ask them their perceptions on your strong points. Think about the talents you are using when you are most satisfied with your work. Most likely, this is when you are relying on your strengths.

However, it is also important to not become too comfortable with only the set of skills at which you naturally excel. When your boss is pushing you to stretch your talents, to go beyond your previous limits, view that as a way to tap into undeveloped skills. The further you are stretched, the more you feel your abilities as a leader are being developed.

Sometimes, it is necessary to encourage your bosses to push you and to remind them to nurture your talents. Zintle Filtane of South Africa offers the following advice, "Believe in yourself. Don't be afraid to go into those areas that are seen to be no-go areas for women."

Not everybody is going to endorse your career development goals. Some people are going to try to sabotage you for a variety of reasons. A woman from Tanzania says that the greatest challenge she faces is "the negative attitudes of my male-counterparts. I am the only woman manager and I'm proving too good for their liking."

Janet Zeenat Karim, owner of Now Publications in Malawi, tells of her own experience with this and how she turned it around. "I was given chances and was really stretched from an early stage in my career. But my immediate bosses didn't like this. I got the last laugh though because I resigned, launched my own publication company and started producing a magazine." She explained that "the managing director took my magazine and literally threw it at our chief executive and said, 'We had this talent here, and it's gone and there is nothing we can do about it.'"

Enlisting the very people who seem opposed to your plans can reap positive results. A woman who participated in the CSLI program said, "I saw the potential of the job and I wanted to stretch myself, so I decided to take my boss on board. If I had an idea I took him with me, I made him think that it was part of his initiative. He would get credit, but the next time he would give me a little bit more leeway. Little by little, I got to get as much as I could from the job by taking him along."

Asserting Yourself

It is important for a leader to be assertive in order to stand up for the principles she believes in, to be seen as an figure of authority and respect, and to improve her negotiation skills. Often women shy away from assertive behaviour because they fear being seen as aggressive.

Assertiveness is not the same as aggressiveness. Aggressive behaviour is combative and disregards the rights of others. Assertive behaviour recognizes both your rights and the rights of others. Effective leaders use assertive behaviour because it is persistent and firm, positive, direct and open. This style of leadership lends itself to motivating teams and building alliances.

By minimizing their own contributions and accomplishments, hiding their true opinions and being apologetic, women can fall into a trap of non-assertive behaviour. By asserting yourself, you strengthen lines of communication with your supervisors and colleagues, take control of your decisions, and utilize formal and informal sources of power.

Rights in the Context of Assertive Behaviour

Assertive behaviour involves being clear about the rights you take for yourself and respecting the rights of others.

As an assertive person you have the right to…

- Your own feelings, needs and opinions
- Consider your own needs
- Ask (not demand)
- Refuse
- Be successful
- Be your own self
- Make a mistake
- Change your mind
- Choose not to assert yourself

Balancing Work and Family

According to an IWMF study conducted in 1996, African woman journalists place balancing work and family life as the greatest challenge they face. Women managers often work hard both in the office and at home. This balancing act can create a great deal of stress, draining their energy and their creative powers. Any leadership tool must address the techniques for balancing those often divergent priorities and help women reduce the stress levels in their lives.

Jerusha Arothe-Vaughan, of InCA, offers the following reminders of the stress factors in women's professional and home lives and offers some strategies for dealing with them.

Wise Advice on the Great Balancing Act

Clara Kenole Olsen, managing editor of The Botswana Gazette: "If a woman arranges time off to take care of her family, she could negotiate with her employers to do some work while she is at home that might ensure that she is not totally cut off. "

Gwen Lister, editor of The Namibian: "Balancing work and family means living absolutely chaotic lives. To move ahead you need to make sacrifices on all fronts, relationships too, but maybe that just makes us stronger."

A woman from Nigeria: "With a lot of planning and wise investment in home labor-saving appliances, one can maintain a balance. And it is important that any spare time be quality time with family. The extended family system should also be exploited to the fullest."

Again from Nigeria: "The profession of journalism for a married woman with

children is not an easy task. The secret behind her success is mastering the sharing of time between career, family and herself, and not giving up no matter the challenges both at work and a home."

Professional Life Stress Factors

- Work load
- Lack of time management
- Relationships with boss, subordinates colleagues
- Visitors and persistent calls at work
- Sexual harassment
- Guilt over neglecting family
- Discrepancies between values
- Working terms and conditions
- Conflicting roles: manager/housewife
- Inadequate technology
- Commuting and traffic jams
- Gender differences our own feelings, needs and opinions

Strategies/Solutions

- Set priorities with achievable goals
- Make use of your assertive skills
- Time management
- Negotiate for salary increment and equitable remuneration
- Delegate work where possible
- Use stress management techniques, such as taking breaks
- Prepare adequately for meetings
- Don't make yourself ill trying to achieve the impossible

Personal Life Stress Factors

- Heavy domestic chores
- Lack of financial management at home; insufficient income
- Relationship with spouse
- Domestic violence
- Guilt over neglecting family
- Pregnancy and family planning
- Marital status
- Discrepancies between values

- Conflicting roles: manager/house wife
- Lack of social amenities
- Lack of child care
- Lack of modern conveniences
- Different professions

Strategies/Solutions

- Work out a plan on family finances
- Manage your time better
- Find time for each other; discuss sex and other family matters
- Share domestic chores
- Network with other women's clubs, NGOs, etc.
- Organise house help and use labour-saving devices
- Increase quality time for yourself, family, take holidays
- Create personal space; use tact and be consistent
- Do not bring office problems home
- Seek counselling
- Be assertive with your extended family

Stepping Outside of the Box

So often, women and men focus their thought processes and their actions within a very narrow set of parameters - a box or a comfort zone. Overcoming gender obstacles in climbing the media ladder requires stepping outside of that box. "People who are into this comfort zone will not think creatively because they will always say it is too risky," Arothe-Vaughan said. "Excuses like, I might get the sack, my husband might start divorce proceedings, it will cost too much, or being afraid of losing control, power or authority or looking foolish is not practical."

In much of Africa, the news media is undergoing great changes in its structure and approach. Creative thinking and the ability to break out of the personal comfort zone and take a few risks are basic requirements for leadership in this field. Women, who have been the historic outsiders in the media, have an advantage by bringing a new perspective to the industry. You should not be afraid to unleash your ingenuity and resourcefulness and to establish a creative vision.

Using your creativity and taking risks will demonstrate your leadership skills to others and will help you to find ways to deal with the challenges women leaders face. Women who are willing to take risks in breaking through the barriers in their career path should continually question systems that are often seen as the norm. They should break away from restrictions such as cultural and social practices that are oppressive to women and make their concerns heard.

Keep an open mind and don't judge until you have thoroughly explored alternatives. Ask questions in new ways; never assume the usual path is the best one; create opportunities for risk taking. For Amina Frense, a producer and editor with the South African Broadcasting Company Television, overcoming the fact that she did not have management training and education meant taking a big risk. "It is a team effort, it is confidence, it's a healthy dose of arrogance," she said. "I do not have the MBAs or any of those qualifications that one might require for running such a big organisation, but I'm determined to carry on."

Creating Visibility

An important key to moving ahead is creating a positive image about yourself and sense of excellence at what you do. Said Arothe-Vaughan: "There is no point having an idea for a story and allowing somebody else to hijack that idea. You have to have ownership of your own ideas." Spend time knocking on office doors in your organisation and getting people to know you and recognise you. Make yourself available to talk about your areas of expertise. Offer to mentor younger colleagues.

But, adds Arothe-Vaughan, "If you claim your right to be visible…you need to be aware of what the repercussions might be and then put your own strategies in place. There are people who are not going to like to see you being visible because they would like to be more visible than you."

Let your colleagues and supervisors know about your successes and your accomplishments. Share copies of reports you have contributed to and successful articles you have written. Let people know about the ideas you think are important to the future of the organisation and the community. Building visibility is a common career strategy for men, yet women shy away from self-promotion. If you don't toot your own horn, no one else will do it for you.

Elizabeth Akua Ohene, a Ghanian national and deputy editor for BBC gave this advice: "Sometimes being a token achieves far more than you can achieve being a member of a big representative body…But make sure if you are a token, you are an impressive token."

Visibility: How to Become More Positively Visible

- Contribute to meeting agendas
- Reports: share your own, have your name on the report
- Is your name on the organisation's directory?
- Accommodation or office space
- Visibility in social aspects of the organisation
- Introduce new practices with your name attached
- Select strategic issues important to organisation and work on them
- Think of the future; become future oriented; outward looking
- Get information outside of the organisation and be visible outside of organisation

Making a Career Plan

Jerusha Arothe-Vaughan said it best: "Careers, like everything else, have got to be managed and they've got to be planned. Rarely does a successful career happen spontaneously. It happens through goal setting, planning, evaluation, and focused skill development. That doesn't mean that careers don't often change direction, that plans are not revised and that you shouldn't take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

It does means that you should take control of where your career is headed. It requires that you be deliberate in your professional and personal choices and be willing to take on additional challenges and risks. After answering the following questions, think about what kind of training will help you get where you want to be. Talk to others who already hold the position you aspire to and learn how they reached that position. Talk to others seeking similar positions and learn what their career plans entail. Seek out a mentor to help you navigate the organisation and discover

If you do not have the full requirements for the job, seek specialized training. The importance of training women for leadership was a key issue at the UNDP Media panel held as part of the Economic Commission for Africa's conference in May 1997 in Ethiopia. Panelists included representatives from the AWMC, and the League for Women and Children Education. The UNDP works with many organizations throughout Africa which can provide training for leadership positions or direct you to institutions that can offer such training.

Seraphine Lainjo Tata of Ghana says, "To have and keep the position you want, you need to define our goal and objectives in the profession and your strategies to achieve them. You need to analyse the situation in the background. There are no failures in life. There are only experiences and outcomes that need to be redefined and your direction refocused. You must seek out your priorities and learn to manage resources and time effectively. And when should you begin? Right now! Time lost is lost forever

Planning for the Future

Questions to ask yourself…

- What job or type of job do I want next?

- What other possible options might I consider?

- By what process will I be offered this job?

- What actions will I need to take in this process?

- What additional skills might I need to develop?

- What additional experience will I need to show?

- What barriers might exist to my getting this job?

- How can I attempt to overcome them?

- From whom can I seek support?

The Importance of Networking

In many newsrooms throughout Africa, women often feel isolated and alone. They are not included in the informal networks that men take part in. Nor is it always appropriate for women to go to lunch or socialize after hours with their

male colleagues. Yet, the information exchanged at such out-of-the-office gatherings is valuable. It is within these informal networks that men enhance their own visibility, promote their triumphs and share their challenges. When women aren't included, they miss out on potentially vital information that could help with career development.

While it is important for women to network with men, and with other women on a one-to-one basis, it is critical for women to develop formal networks. "The interaction between African women journalists is very important because we must increase our knowledge of each other," says Ana Lucie Kere of Burkino Faso.

"It's very important for all of us to realise and remind ourselves that we're not the only ones experiencing the difficulties that we're feeling," Libby Lloyd of South Africa said. "It's not us that's the problem, it's the system." And women need to work together to change the system; individual action alone is never enough.

Mike Siluma, editor of the Sowetan in South Africa and one of the several male journalists who particpated in the CLSI seminar, agrees. "Because most of the media is dominated by men, I think that we can talk until we are blue in the face. Nothing is going to happen until women organise themselves and lobby both within the particular media organisations that they work in, and in the industry as a whole."

The Benefits of Networking:

■ Study company policies to determine if they hinder women from advancing

■ Help companies develop and adopt new policies on affirmative action, family friendly workplaces and support for training programs

■ Share strategies for dealing with the obstacles faced in the work place and the challenges of balancing work and family

■ Help each other focus their career goals and develop new skills

There are a number of strong and active women's media networks in Africa and more are being formed everyday. If you are not already a member of one of these organisations, find out if there is one in your area. If not consider forming one of your own. You can start small by meeting during your lunch break or after work in someone's home.

The goal is to find ways for women to share information and support with each other. Women's networks often discuss common work concerns and strategise on how to overcome these issues. They invite successful women leaders to share their stories and insights, and form bonds of support for risk-taking and career development.

Conclusion

As an information-driven industry, the news business holds a great deal of potential for women to rise into leadership positions. It is a business that is conducive to a team-approach, constantly in need of new ideas, and an arena in which one with good communication skills can excel. For many women, such skills come naturally.

By taking charge of the direction of their careers, practising assertiveness and challenging stereotypes, women can achieve positions of leadership. Each time a woman succeeds in breaking through to the upper levels of manage-

ment, she has the opportunity to act as a role model for other women, to undermine the negative attitudes that keep women marginalised, and to change the policies and work environments that disregard women.

Akwe Amosu, a journalist from Nigeria who now works for the BBC says, "Its really important that we aim high and keep hammering away at the glass ceiling to try and get into positions where we can influence staff management policies – that's where the prejudice really works against women."

It won't be easy. The obstacles women face in being accepted as capable professionals and in moving into leadership positions are considerable. This was emphasized in the African and Beijing Platforms for Action. When women attain leadership positions in the media, they in turn have the opportunity to promote women's issues and advocate on behalf of women's leadership roles.

Change will not occur without hard work. It is only through a concerted effort, both individually and as part of a group, that women will begin to take their place as partners within the news media. By using resources, like this handbook, women will begin to understand their own leadership potential, learn how to showcase their talents and begin rising to newer and greater heights.

In speaking about the goals behind CSLI, Carole Simpson brought the role of women in the media into a broader context. She said, "We launched this institute with the knowledge that we are not the weaker sex, the second sex. We are society's most important asset, and we will not be relegated to any second class status. Our work with leadership development is about equality of opportunity, and boosting women to the high levels they deserve, aspire to, and can achieve. Not just the media, but the world will be better for that."

VII

CODES OF CONDUCT, LAWS, AND STANDARDS

The Universal Declaration Of Human Rights

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

Article 19 — Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Right Freedom Of Thought, Conscience And Religion

Section 38

1] Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and prop-agate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

2] No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or a religion not approved by his parent or guardian.

3] No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination

4] Nothing in this section shall entitle any person to form, take part in the activity or be a member of a secret society.

Right To Freedom Of Expression And The Press

Section 38

1] Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.

2] Without prejudice to the generally of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions:
Provided that no person, other than the Government of the Federation or of a State or any other person or body authorised by the President on the fulfilment of conditions laid down by an Act of the National Assembly, shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for any purpose whatsoever.

3] Nothing in this section shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society —

a] For the purpose of preventing the disclosure of information received in con fidence, maintaining the authority and independence of courts or regulating telephony, wireless broadcasting, television or the exhibition of cinemato graph films; or

b] Imposing restrictions upon persons holding office under the Government of the Federation or of a State, members of the armed forces of the Federation or members of the Nigeria Police Force or other Government security services or agencies established by law.

The Abuja Proclamation

An important conference on Journalists' Ethics and Self Regulation, the first of its type in Nigeria since the return of civil rule, was held in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, from April 3 to 4, 2000. The conference, held under the auspices of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the West African Journalists Association (WAJA), brought together journalists and representatives of regulatory bodies in the sub-region who agreed on the following declaration.

Regulatory Bodies

That there are three types of self-regulation journalists will be prepared to work with:

1 Statutory press councils, which though they shall have a government representative, will however be independent of government in terms of selection of members and funding.

2 Voluntary Press Councils set up by journalists and their organizations themselves.

3 Ethics committees of Journalists' organisations.

Generally however, the following principles on press regulatory bodies should apply:

- Powers to be derived from the constitution.

- Subsidiary regulations to back up constitutionally guaranteed rights.

- Constitution to explicitly guarantee press freedom in addition to general provision for of expression.

- Composition of regulatory bodies to reflect nominated and competent representatives of diverse sections of society including the Judiciary and other media stake holders.

- Officials of the regulatory bodies are to be appointed by the members themselves and not by government or external bodies.

- Financing should either be independent of government or guaranteed by constitutional provisions so as to make the bodies self-accounting.

- Sanctions that regulatory bodies will apply should not be draconian such as not to undermine press freedom. Press councils must never be mandated to impose substantial fines or prison sentences. This can only be done by the courts.

---

[1] Journalists' Ethics and Self-Regulation, IFJ - WAJA Conference, Abuja, April 3 & 4, 2000. Originally published on the World Wide Web at http://www.ifj.org/regions/africa/abuja.html

Journalists' ethics

- Conference was of the view that:

- Journalism as a profession emphasises the principles of ethics.

- Journalists' ethics relates particularly to individual conscience; journalists should therefore show self-respect, respect for the profession and above all respect for the society in which they operate.

- Communication professionals should create in their respective countries the enabling conditions for the practice of the profession namely:

  (i) Drawing clear code of ethics

  (ii) Create a framework which is appropriate to everybody.

- Public authorities are responsible for creating a legal framework in conformity with the constitution and guarantee of fundamental human rights especially freedom of expression and media freedom.

- The communication & press professionals in collaboration with civil society must be in congruence with public authorities to embrace laws that will allow for the free exercise of journalism.

- Information & communication professionals must do their work with the will to be free from political, economic, financial authorities as well as other pressure groups.

- There must be a curriculum of courses for schools of journalism and journalism associations in which the issue of ethics must be raised in all the domains of journalistic education.

Defamation and Privacy Laws and the Press

- After exhaustive deliberations which took cognisance of trends in international human rights law, jurisprudence and institutional legal regimes, the conference resolved that:

- All Laws which inhibit the growth of a vibrant press, particularly those which provide very harsh penal sanctions for journalistic activity, including criminal defamation should be abolished forthwith.

- Public officials, servants and politicians should be susceptible to a higher degree of scrutiny by the media.

- Statements of opinion or value judgements should not be subjected to the test of strict proof.

- The prevalent culture of awarding damages in defamation suits should be discouraged.

- Damages awarded in such suits should be proportionate to the injury suffered.

- Bearing in mind the importance of having the society well informed, media reports on matters of public interest should be protected from defamation suits.

- The practice of responsible journalism should be upheld.

Recommendation and Commendation

Conference recommended to journalists in Nigeria, being the largest body of the press confraternity in the sub-region, to create an enabling environment that is conducive to the development of the media. The organisers – IFJ/WAJA – were commended for organising the forum which proved useful in exploring new frontiers for the promotion of ethics and professionalism, with the suggestion that a follow up event should be organised.

The National Broadcasting Commission has consistently sustained a nationwide campaign and canvassed the opinions of policy makers, scholars, professionals, station owners, and ordinary citizens, young and old alike, on the profile and future of broadcasting in Nigeria. We have held workshops and seminars in different parts of the country.

As a result, there have been changes and additions to the National Broadcasting Code, as well as sundry regulations. The new code, launched during our 1996 International Conference on Deregulation of Broadcasting in Africa, now provides, among other items that:

1.4.6 Only professionals can head professional departments and divisions of broadcasting stations.

2.3.2.4 It is mandatory to forthrightly admit a mistake once clearly established and fully effect remedy as agreed upon with the aggrieved body:

2.3.6.6 The portrayal of nudity and sexual scenes and expressions is justifiable only in contest; however, it shall be presented with tact and discretion.

2.3.7 Womanhood shall be presented with respect and dignity.

2.3.10 Program exclusivity shall be discouraged, but where exclusive rights have been acquired, such programs shall be readily made available to other operators on mutually negotiated terms. The National Broadcasting Commission shall arbitrate when there is a fundamental disagreement in negotiation.

4.3.11 The National Broadcasting Commission shall regulate charges for foreign programs where it is established that owners are charging either differentially or unreasonably compared with what they obtain in other comparable parts of the world, or where one or a number of interested stations are being deliberately denied a right to participate. A similar regulatory process shall be applied in the case of local programmes.

2.3.11 News is universally accepted as sacred. Sponsorship of news detracts from its integrity and predisposes a bias in favor of the sponsor. Therefore, newscasts shall not be sponsored either by the use of commercial backdrops in television newscasts or by other device on either radio or television.

4.4.5 Equal opportunity and air time shall be provided to all political parties or views, with particular regard to amount of time and belt.

5.4.1 Coverage of public events of major national importance shall not be exclusive to any single broadcast organization.

7.2.26 The adversing of fortune-telling or astrology is not permitted.

7.5.5 An advertisement shall not contain copy which is exaggerated by reason of the improper use of words, phrases, or expressions, such as "magic," "magical," "miracle," miraculous," and the like.

7.6.4 An advertisement for an alcoholic beverage or tobacco product shall be aired only during adult listening/viewing periods. For television, advertisements for alcoholic beverages and tobacco products shall not be broadcast before 9:45 p.m.

---

[1] Abridged for this manual

7.7.1 Advertisements by religious persuasions, including trado-religious practices, shall not contain statements or visual presentations which, directly or indirectly, are likely to mislead the listener/viewer with regard to claims of miracles, hypnotism, palm reading, and the like.

7.7.2 Religious announcements that deceive people into believing that miracles are commonplace events shall not be accepted for broadcasting by any station.

7.8.2 In the interest of fairness and balance and to prevent the monetization of political broadcast, any form of commercialization of political news or coverage is forbidden.

This is an excerpted version of the Freedom Of Information Bill [FOIB] that is currently before the Nigerian Parliament. It has undergone a second reading at the committee stage and if it eventually passes and becomes an Act, it will make Nigeria second after South Africa, in the Commonwealth of Nations that has a FOI Act. The Bill is being promoted by a coalition of Nigerian civil society groups led by the Media Rights Agenda.

■ Subject to the provisions of this Act but not with standing anything contained in any other Act, Edict, Law, or Regulation, every person whether or not that person is a citizen of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has a legally enforceable right to, and shall, on request, be given access to any record under the control of a government or public institution.

■ An applicant herein need not demonstrate any specific interest in the information being requested for.

■ For the purpose of this Act, any record requested under this Act that does not exist but can, subject to such limitations as may be prescribed by regulation, be produced from a machine, readable record under the control of a government and or public institution using computer hardware and software normally used by the government and or public institution shall be deemed to be a record under the control of the government and/or public institution.

■ The head of every government and or public institution to which this Act applies shall cause to be published in the Federal Gazette at least once every year:

a] A description of the organisation and responsibilities of the institution including details of programmes and functions of each division, branch and department of the institution.

b] A description of all classes of records under the control of the institution in sufficient detail to facilitate the exercise of the right of access under this Act;

c] A description of all manuals used by employees of the institution in administering or carrying out any of the programmes or activities of the institutions;

d] A description of documents containing final opinions including concurring and dissenting opinions as well as orders made in the adjudication of cases;

e] A description of documents containing substantive rules of the institution;

f] A description of documents containing statements and interpretations of policy which have been adopted by the institution;

g] A description of documents containing final planning policies, recommendations, and decisions;

h] A description of documents containing factual reports inspection reports, and studies whether prepared by or for the institution;

i] A description of document containing information relating to the receipt or expenditure of public or other funds of the institution;

j] A description of documents containing the names, salaries, titles, and dates of employment of all employees and officers of the institution;

k] A description of documents containing opinions concerning the rights of the State, the public, a sub-division of the State or a local government or of any private persons;

l] A description of documents containing the name of every official and the final records of voting in all proceedings of the institution;

m] A description of documents containing applications for any contract, permit, grant, or agreement.

n] A list of reports, documents, studies, or publications prepared by independent consultants or other independent contractors for the institution;

o] A description of materials containing information relating to any grant or contract made by or between the institution and another government and/or public institution or private organisation; and

p] The title and address of the appropriate officers or employees of the institution to whom requests for access to records under this Act should be sent, provided that the failure of any government and/or public institution to publish any information required to be published under this sub-section shall not prejudicially affect the right of access to public records and information in the custody of such government and/or public institution as provided for under this Act.

- Any person entitled to the right of access conferred by this act shall have the right to institute proceedings in a court to compel the head of any government institution and/or public body to comply with the provisions of this section;

- The government and or public institutions to which this Act applies are all authorities whether executive, legislative or judicial agencies, ministries, and extra ministerial departments of the Federal Government and of all State and local governments, together with all corporations established by law and all companies in which a Federal, State, or Local Government authority has a controlling interest and also private companies performing public functions.

- A request for access to a record under this Act shall be made in writing to the government and or public institution that has control of the record and shall provide sufficient detail to enable of the record and shall provide sufficient detail to enable an experienced employee of the institution with a reasonable effort to identify the record.

- Where access to a record is requested under this Act, the head of the government and/or public institution to which the request is made shall subject to Sections 7,8, and 10, within seven days after the request is received.

a] Give a written notice to the person who made the request as to whether or not access to the record or a part thereof will be given; and

b] If access is to be given, give the person who made the request access to the record or part thereof.

- Where a government and or public institution receives a request for access to a record under this Act, and the head of the institution considers that another government and/or public institution has a greater interest in the record, the head of the institution to which the request is made may, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by regulation, within three days after the request is received, transfer the request, and if necessary, the record to the other government and/or public institution, in which case the head of the institution transferring the request shall given written notice of the transfer to the person who made the request, which notice shall contain a statement informing the person who made the request that such decision to transfer the request can be reviewed by a court.

- For the purpose of section 6, where a request is transferred under sub-section (1) of this section, the request shall be deemed to have been made to the government and or public institution to which it was transferred on the day the government and/or public institution received it.

- For the purpose of sub-section (1), a government and/or public institution has a greater interest in a record if

a] The record was originally produced in or for the institution; or

b] In the case of a record not originally produced in or for a government and or public institution, the institution was the first government and/or public institution to receive the record or a copy there of.

Premable

Journalism entails a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every news medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. In the exercise of these duties, a journalist should always have a healthy regard for the public interest.

Trust is the cornerstone of journalist and every journalist should strive diligently to ascertain the truth of every event.

Conscious of the responsibilities and duties of journalists as purveyors of information, we, Nigerian journalists, give to ourselves this Code of Ethics. It is the duty of every journalist to observe its provisions.

Editoial Independence

Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.

Accuracy and Fairness

i] The public has a right to know factual, accurate, balance and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.

ii] Journalist should retrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information. Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice.

iii] In the course of his duties a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment.

Privacy

As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects public interest.

a] Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest.

b] Publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should deemed justifiable only if it is directed at:

  i] Exposing crime or serious misdemeanor;

  ii] Exposing anti-social conduct;

  iii] Protecting public health, morality and safety;

  iv] Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned.

---

[1] March 20, 1998

Privilege/Non Disclosure

i] A journalist should observe the universally
accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the so source of
information obtained in confidence.

ii] A journalist should not breach an agreement with a source of information
obtained as 'off-the-record" or as "background information".

Decency

i] A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms with
public taste.

ii] A journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language.

iii] A journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture,
of violence, sexual acts, and abhorrent or horrid scenes.

iv] In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and
approaches made with sympathy and discretion.

v] Unless it is in the furtherance of the public's rights to know, a journalist should
generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of person convicted or accused
of crime.

Discrimination

A journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person's
ethic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.

Reward and Gratification

i] A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribe, gratification or patronage
to suppress or publish information.

ii] To demand payment for the publication of new is inimical to the notion of news
as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.

Violence

A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, ter-
rorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glories such acts
in the eye of the public.

Children and Minors

A journalist should not identify, either by name or picture, or interview chil-
dren under the age of 16 who are involved in casesconcerning sexual offences,
crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses or defendants.

Access to Information

A journalist should strive to employ open and honest
means in the gathering of information. Exceptional methods may be employed
only when the public interest is at stake.

Public Interest

A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good.

Social Responsibility

A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.

Plagiarism

A journalist should not copy wholesales or in parts, other people'swork, without attribution and/or consent.

Copyright

i] Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, artwork or design, proper acknowledgement should be accorded the author.

ii] A journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national and international laws and conventions.

Press Freedom and Responsibility

A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

What are the human rights of ethnic minorities?

Human rights are universal. They include civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and they belong to all human beings, including members of ethnic minority groups. Members of ethnic minorities are entitled to the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on equal terms with others in society and, without discrimination of any kind. Ethnic minorities – both the individuals belonging to ethnic minorities and ethnic minorities as groups – also enjoy certain human rights specifically linked to their ethnic status, including their right to maintain and enjoy their culture, religion, and language free from discrimination.

The Human Rights at Issue

The human rights of ethnic minorities are explicitly set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities and other widely adhered to international human rights treaties and declarations. They include the following indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated human rights:

- The human right of members of ethnic minorities to freedom from any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, language, religion, birth, or any other status that has the purpose or effect of impairing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- The human right of members of ethnic minorities to freedom from discrimination in all areas and levels of education, employment, access to health care, housing, and social services.

- The human right of each member of an ethnic minority to equal recognition as a person before the law, to equality before the courts, and to equal protection of the law.

- The human right of all members of ethnic minorities to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic, and public life.

- The human right of members of ethnic minorities to freedom of association.

- The human right of ethnic minorities to exist.

- The human right of ethnic minorities to freedom from genocide and ethnic cleansing.

- The human right of ethnic minorities to enjoy and develop their own culture and language.

- The human right of ethnic minorities to establish and maintain their own schools and other training and educational institutions and to teach and receive training in their own languages.

- The human right of members of ethnic minorities to participate in shaping decisions and policies concerning their group and community, at the local, national, and international levels.

▪ The human right of ethnic minorities to autonomy in matters internal to the group, including in the fields of culture and religion.

Governments' Obligations to Ensuring the Human Rights of Ethnic Minorities :

A] **What provisions of human rights law guarantee the human rights of ethnic minorities?**

Includes excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention against Discrimination in Education; and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No. 169).

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.... Everyone is entitled to ... rights ... without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.... All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination ... and against any incitement to ... discrimination.... Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work."

– Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 1, 2, 7, and 23

"States Parties ... undertake to guarantee that ... rights ... will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.... The States Parties ... recognize the right of everyone to ... fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind.... and equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted.... Education ... shall be made equally accessible to all."

– International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Articles 2, 7, and 13

"Each State Party ... undertakes to ... ensure ... rights ... without distinction of any kind.... All persons shall be equal before the courts.... Every child shall have, without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor.... All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.... The law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground.... In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."

– International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 2, 14, 24, 26, and 27

"The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide ... is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.... [Genocide] means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group...: Killing members of the groups; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

– *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Articles 1 and 2*

"States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue ... a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms.... Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act ... of racial discrimination;... Each State Party shall take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination...; Each State Party shall prohibit and bring to an end ... racial discrimination by any persons, group or organization.... States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of ... political rights ... civil rights ... economic, social and cultural rights, in particular: the right to work, ... to just and favourable conditions or work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work;... the right to housing; ... to public health, medical care, social security and social services; the right to education and training.... States Parties shall assure ... effective protection and remedies ... against any acts of racial discrimination."

– *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Articles 2, 5, and 6*

"States Parties shall respect and ensure ... rights ... to each child ... without discrimination of any kind irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.... States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information.... States Parties shall ... encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous.... States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and ... shall ... make primary education compulsory and available free to all;... make [secondary education] available and accessible to every child;... make higher education accessible to all.... States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to ... the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values.... In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to

enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language."

– Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 2, 17, 28, 29 and 30

"States Parties ... undertake: to ... discontinue any ... practices which involve discrimination in education.... It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and ... the use or the teaching of their own language."

– Convention against Discrimination in Education, Articles 3 and 5

"Governments shall have the responsibility for ... ensuring that [indigenous] peoples benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population.... Indigenous and tribal peoples shall enjoy ... human rights ... without ... discrimination.... Governments shall ... establish means by which [indigenous] peoples can freely participate ... at all levels of decision-making in ... institutions and ... bodies responsible for policies and programmes which concern them.... The peoples ... shall have the right to decide their own priorities for ... development as it affects their lives ... and the lands they occupy ... and to exercise control ... over their ... development."

– ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, (No. 169), Articles 2, 3, 6, and 7

B] **What commitments have governments made to ensuring the realization of the human rights of ethnic minorities?**

Includes excerpts from the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities; the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; and commitments made at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna; the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen; the Habitat II conference in Istanbul.

"States shall protect the existence and the ... ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.... Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities ... have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.... Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions ... concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live.... Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group and with ... citizens of other States to whom they are related by ... ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.... Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights ... individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.... States shall ... ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law. States shall take measures to

create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs..... States should take appropriate measures so that ... persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory.... States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country."

– Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities, Articles 1, 2, 3, and 4

"No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or other belief.... All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights ... in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life...."

– Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, Articles 2 and 4

"Respect for human rights ... without distinction of any kind is a fundamental rule of international human rights law. The ... elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination ... and related intolerance is a priority task for the international community.... The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirms the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights ... without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.... The persons belonging to minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion and to use their own language in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.... The World Conference ... expresses its dismay at massive violations of human rights especially in the form of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and systematic rape of women in war situations, creating mass exodus of refugees and displaced persons. While strongly condemning such abhorrent practices it reiterates the call that perpetrators of such crimes be punished and such practices immediately stopped.... The World Conference ... urges States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.... Measures to be taken ... should include facilitation of their full participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development in their country."

– Vienna Declaration, Vienna, Part I, paras. 15, 19, and 28; Part II, paras. 26 and 27

"We commit ourselves to promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on ... non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, ... and participation of all people.... To this end ... we will ... formulate or strengthen policies and strate-

gies geared to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and the achieve-ment of social integration based on equality and respect for human dignity;... promote access for all to education, information, technology ... as essential means for enhancing ... participation in civil, political, economic, social and cultural life;... recognize and respect cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, and take measures to facilitate their full participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of their societies and in the economic progress and social development of their countries."

– Copenhagen Declaration, Copenhagen, Commitment 4

"Eliminating discrimination and promoting tolerance and mutual respect for ... diversity ... requires ... enacting and implementing ... laws ... to combat racism, racial discrimination, religious intolerance in all its various forms, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination in all walks of life in societies ... [and] taking specific measures ... to remove long-standing legal and social barriers to employment, education, productive resources and public services;... Governments should promote equality and social justice by: Ensuring that all people are equal before the law; Carrying out a regular review of public policy, including health and education policies, and public spending from a social ... equality and equity perspective;... Expanding and improving access to basic services with the aim of ensuring universal coverage;... Promoting full access to preventive and curative health care to improve the quality of life, especially by the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups."

– Copenhagen Programme of Action, Copenhagen, paras. 73 and 74

"We are determined to ... ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights ... for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people."

– Beijing Declaration, Beijing, para. 32

"Massive violations of human rights ... in the form of genocide, ethnic cleansing as a strategy of war ... and rape, creating a mass exodus of refugees and displaced persons, are abhorrent practices that are strongly condemned and must be stopped immediately, while perpetrators of such crimes must be punished.... Gross and systematic violations ... that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights ... include ... all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, ... and religious intolerance.... Particular attention should be paid to sexual violence against uprooted women and girls employed as a method of persecution in systematic campaigns of terror and intimidation and forcing members of a particular ethnic, cultural or religious group to flee their homes."

– Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing, paras. 131 and 132.

"As human beings are at the centre of our concern for sustainable development, they are the basis for our actions in implementing the Habitat Agenda.... We shall intensify our efforts to eradicate ... discrimination, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all"

– Istanbul Declaration, Istanbul, para. 7

"Equitable human settlements are those in which all people, without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, have equal access to housing, infrastructure, health services, adequate food and water, education.... We ... commit ourselves to ... Eradicating and ensuring legal protection from discrimination in access to shelter and basic services, without distinction of any kind."

– Habitat Agenda, Istanbul, paras. 27 and 40

The International Press Institute, at its European Media Symposium "From State-Controlled Broadcasting to Public Broadcasting," held in Vienna, Austria, September 22 to 24, 1993, declares its unconditional support for the development of editorially independent public-service broadcasting to replace the state-controlled broadcasting structures which continue to exist in Eastern Europe and therefore:

1] Demands legal and statutory measures that support the right of journalists and program producers in broadcasting organizations to exercise their profession safely and without interference.

2] Calls for the complete and immediate extension of the freedom of the press to include the freedom of broadcasting. This freedom of the media is to guarantee public broadcasters their independence in the exercise of the tasks conferred upon them. To avoid pressure by the government of the day or the public or private bodies, this principle should be enshrined in national constitutions and broadcasting statutes as well in as the statutes of international organizations.

3] Calls for constitutional and statutory measures to remove the governing and managing bodies of public broadcasters from everyday politics. Leading positions in the media should be open to men and women of achievement, regardless of their political affiliations. Only such openness can create an environment of diversity and high quality.

4] Proposes that a primary mission of public broadcasting should be to inform people of the issues – past, present, and future – that are of direct concern to them. Public broadcasting should also serve as a medium for the expression and debate of basic values.

5] Calls on managements and staff representations to commit broadcasting journalists to editorial objectivity. The highest aim must be free and fair information for the public. All aspects of an issue are to be presented with journalistic integrity, in a balanced manner, and within an appropriate period of time.

6] Proposes the introduction of guidelines for journalistic practices in the public broadcasting media. These guidelines are to be developed by the journalists themselves, without interference from governments, political parties, or other interest groups.

7] Demands legal measures to assure diversified funding, including – but not limited to – viewers' and listeners' fees and other forms of public funding, as well as advertising to an extent which reflects an increasingly competitive environment.

8] Demands that state and public bodies allow the independent media, including public-service broadcasters, the same free access to all information, material, and facilities as the official media.

9] Demands that public broadcasters and independent media be assisted in the upgrading of the production, content, and presentation of television news and current affairs programs through the provision of new technology and the exposure of staff to modern production techniques.

10] Proposes the abolition of monopolies and, while not questioning the privileged position of public broadcasters in the exercise of their tasks, of all forms of discrimination in broadcasting and frequency allocation, as well as the abolition of all barriers to the launching of new private media outlets.

In conclusion, the IPI believes that public broadcasting should be a true reflection of the constitution, the principles, and the attitudes of a free and democratic state.

This international declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information in describing events.

1] Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist

2] In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right to fair comment and criticism.

3] The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.

4] The journalist shall only use fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.

5] The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.

6] The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.

7] The journalist shall be alert to the danger of discrimination being furthered by media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discriminations based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national and social origins.

8] The journalist shall regard as grave professional offenses the following: plagiarism; malicious misinterpretation; calumny; libel; slander; unfounded accusations; acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.

9] Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognise in matters of professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of any kind of interference by governments or others.

---

[1] Adopted by 1954 World Congress of the IFJ. Amended by the 1986 World Congress.

VIII

RESOURCES

Below is a list of organisations, publications, and on-line resources (in addition to the partner organisations listed in the introduction to this manual) dealing with ethnic minorities, diversity, and/or the media. Note that some organisations with web sites or regular publications may appear under more than one heading.

Organisations

African Women's Media Center

http://www.awmc.com

The AWMC is a project of the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). The IWMF was founded in 1990 with a mission of strengthening the role of women in the news media worldwide, based on the belief that no press is truly free unless women share an equal voice. The IWMF launched the AWMC in 1997 to provide African women journalists the training, resources, and tools they need to compete equally with their male colleagues.

Article 19, The International Centre Against Censorship

33 Islington High Street
London N1 9LH, U K
Tel: 44-171-278-9292
Fax: 44-171-713-1356

Article 19 works to combat censorship world-wide. It monitors the compliance of countries with international standards for protecting freedom of expression, intervenes on behalf of those who are unjustly treated for expressing free speech, and produces various publications that address the issues surrounding freedom of speech, including Index on Censorship.

Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL, U K
Tel: 44-120-352-2963;
Fax: 44-120-352-4324

The Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations conducts research about racism, migration, and ethnic relations. CRER sponsors research programmes, training, conferences, seminars, and other activities. Its web site contains a searchable database of publications dealing with ethnic relations.

Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations

Stockholm University
Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: 46-08-16-26-87
Fax: 46-08-15-67-20

An interdisciplinary research unit based at Stockholm University, CEIFO sponsors research in international migration, ethnicity, nationalism, xenophobia and racism, ethnic relations, and immigration policies. CEIFO co-ordinates several networks and working groups on these issues, and publishes several report series.

The Commission for Radio and Television Policy

Duke University
Box 90241
Durham, NC 27708-0241, USA
Tel: 919-613-7330
Fax: 919-681-8288

E-mail: cpm@pps.duke.edu
http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/crtp.html

The commission encourages the development of democratic media policies through publications, training opportunities, and regional meetings. Founded by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, it brings together high-level news executives, policymakers, and scholars from many countries to examine specific media issues, including diversity and ethnic conflict, and recommend a range of policy responses.

Ethnicity, Racism, and the Media Programme

Department of Social and Economic Studies
University of Bradford
Bradford BD7 1DP, UK
Tel: 44-1274-38-5046
Fax: 44-1274-38-5295

E-mail: a.kundu@bradford.ac.uk
http://www.brad.ac.uk/bradinfo/research/eram/html

The ERaM Programme provides a global forum for discussion, information dissemination, and research collaboration on issues related to the representation of ethnicity in the media; ethnic minority media production; and the recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities in the media. ERaM provides this forum through several free e-mail mailing lists and its web site.

The Freedom Forum

1101 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209, USA
Tel: 703-528-0800
Fax: 703-522-4831

E-mail: news@freedomforum.org
http://www.freedomforum.org

This international foundation is dedicated to promoting free press and free speech through conferences, publishing, broadcasting, on-line services, educational activities, training, and research. It maintains news and media libraries throughout the world.

Human Rights Watch

15 Rue Van Campenhout
1000 Brussels, Blegium
Tel: 322-732-2009
Fax: 322-732-0471

E-mail: hrwatcheu@gn.apc.org
http://www.hrw.org

Human Rights Watch conducts regular investigations of human rights abuses all over the globe. The main goal is to hold governments, no matter what their political alignment, accountable for transgressing the rights of their people. Human Rights Watch has offices in the Americas, Asia, and Europe and publishes numerous reports on specific human rights issues and an annual report that details the status of human rights in over 70 countries.

International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting

P.O. Box 171, CH-1211
Geneva, 20, Switzerland
Tel: 41-22-920-1676
Fax: 41-22-920-1679

E-mail: crosslines@aol.com

The centre works to facilitate contacts among the key players involved in humanitarian crisis; improve media coverage of emergency relief, conflicts, human rights, disasters, the environment, refugees, and peacekeeping; and provide greater public accountability of humanitarian aid activities. ICHR publishes the journal Crosslines, which covers these issues in depth.

International Center for Journalists

1616 H Street, NW, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20006, USA
Tel: 202-737-3700
Fax: 202-737-0530

E-mail: editor@cfj.org
http://www.icfj.org

Formerly known as the Center for Foreign Journalists, ICFJ works to strengthen the quality of journalism world-wide through professional training and exchanges, including Knight Fellowships. ICFJ publishes many handbooks and guides for journalists all over the world including Environmental Source Book for Journalists: A Resource Guide for Professionals Worldwide. ICFJ was established in 1984 to improve the quality of journalism in nations where there is little or no tradition of independent journalism.

International Center for Migration, Ethnicity and Citizenship

New School for Social Research
Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science
65 Fifth Avenue, Room 237
New York, NY 10003, USA
Tel: 212-229-5742
Fax: 212-989-0504

http://www.newschool.edu/icmec/

The center engages in scholarly research and public policy analysis about international migration, refugees, and the incorporation of newcomers in host countries.

International Federation of Journalists

http://www.ifj.org/

Is the world's largest organization of journalists. First established in 1926, it was relaunched in 1946 and again, in its present form, in 1952. Today the Federation represents around 450,000 members in more than 100 countries.

Maynard Institute for Journalism Education

1211 Preservation Parkway
Oakland, CA 94612, USA
Tel: 510-891-9202 v
Fax: 510-891-9565

http://www.maynardije.org

The Maynard Institute sponsors journalist training programs for American journalists, focusing particularly on minorities. The Total Community Coverage project provides services and training to help news organisations strengthen their credibility by increasing the diversity of voices and images in the newspaper.

Publications

Crosslines Global Report: Published in conjunction with the International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting, this bimonthly magazine is an editorially independent news journal focusing on international humanitarian issues including human rights, conflicts and peacekeeping, environment, business, and media coverage.

Doing Ethics in Journalism: Published by the Society of Professional Journalists, this handbook provides case studies and ethics guidelines about a variety of media issues including conflicts of interest, plagiarism, privacy, source-reporter relationships, and diversity.

Human Rights Watch World Report 2000: Published by Human Rights Watch, this annual report provides summaries of the status of human rights in over 70 countries. The country reports detail the human rights violations of each country's government.

On-Line Resources

ABANTU for Development
http://www.abantu.org/
Committed to enhancing the capacity of African people, in particular women, to participate in development and to increase the participation of women in the political and economic structures.

Africa On-Line
http://www.africaonline.com
Internet news and communications services throughout Africa

African Media Network
http://www.gret.org/mediapartner/en/index.htm
A network of partners of African media for exchanging ideas
and information on activities supporting the press in Africa

American Association of Newspaper Editors
http://www.asne.org/

Ashoka
http://www.ashoka.org/
Its mission is to develop the profession of
social entrepreneurship around the world.

Centre for Environment Information and Knowledge in Africa (CEIKA)
http://www.easd.org.za/ceika.htm
Provides multi-media resources and training to support
strategic environment management in Africa.

Center for Free Speech
cfs@infoweb.abs.net

Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations
http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/CRER_RC/
A searchable database of publications dealing with ethnic relations.

The Commission for Radio and Television Policy
http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/crtp.html
Includes information about the commission's various
programs examining international media issues.

Committee for the Development of Human Rights
cdhr@beta.linkserve.com

Communication for Change
http://www.communication4change.com
Provides an integrated service in the communication for the development field.
Consultants provide communication solutions.

EthicNet
http://www.uta.fi/ethicnet/
A databank of the codes of journalism ethics from
32 European countries, translated into English.

Ethnicity Racism and the Media
http://www.brad.ac.uk/bradinfo/research/eram/html
Information exchanges on issues of racism, ethnic relations, and the media.
You can subscribe to two e-mail lists to receive news, information, policy
documents, and analyses of issues of ethnicity, race, and the media in daily
messages.

Freedom Forum
http://www.freedomforum.org
Includes news and information for and about the press world-wide.

Globalbeat
http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat
A resource centre for journalists covering international news, operated
by the Center for War, Peace and the News Media of New York University.

Global Issues
http://www.globalissues.org/
Over 3,000 links to external articles, Web sites reports, and analysis. Issues
include poverty, Kosovo, East Timor, mainstream media and conflicts in Africa,
human rights, women's rights, racism, the arms trade, children and the military,
military expansion, and more.

The Global Village CAT
http://www.openchannel.se/cat
Worldwide links to 350 public access television sites in 15 countries
and other links related to the movement for the freedom of speech.

Independent Journalism Center
ijc@linkserve.com.ng

Index on Censorship
http://www.oneworld.org/index_oc/index.html
The on-line version of Index on Censorship, a bi-monthly publication
of Article 19 covering free speech issues world-wide.

Information Aid Network (Ifanet)
go2ifa@ibadan.skannet.com

The Information for Development Program (InfoDev)-World Bank
http://www.infodev.org/
Addresses the obstacles facing developing countries in an increasingly
information-driven world economy. Promotes innovative projects on the
use of information and communication technologies for economic and
social development.

International Center for Migration, Ethnicity and Citizenship
http://www.newschool.edu/icmec
Information about the centre's research programs about international migra-
tion and refugees.

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
http://www.icrw.org
Dedicated to promoting social and economic development with women's full
participation. ICR generates information and technical assistance on women's
productive and reproductive roles, their status in the family, their leadership
in society, and their management of environmental resources. Advocates with
governments and multi-lateral agencies, convenes experts in formal and informal
forums, and engages in an active publications and information program.

International Press Center
ipc@micron.com

Internet Journalism Resources
http://moorhead.msus.edu/gunarat/ijr/
Links directory for journalists and students, including writing and editing
guides, Web search tools, international news and information sites.

Internews Homepage
http://www.lh.com/internews/index.html
A newsletter, project descriptions, and links to Internews media projects.
Internews, a non-profit organisation, helps support the development of media
in emerging democracies.

Journalists
joder@infoweb.abs.net

Journalism Net Africa
http://www.journalismnet.com
African newspapers, African search engines, African journalism resources, African human rights, African media

LearnLink in Africa
http://www.aed.org.news/LearnLink.html
Works with NGOs in Ghana, Benin, and the Ministry of Education teacher training institutions in Morocco, Namibia, and Uganda to help develop African models for greater participation in the global knowledge society and economy.

Let's Do It Better:
The Columbia Workshop on Journalism, Race & Ethnicity
http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/workshops/
The aim of The Columbia Workshops on Journalism, Race and Ethnicity is clear: encourage candid, cogent, and complete coverage of race and ethnicity in America. Our approach, funded by The Ford Foundation, is unusual: select excellent examples of race and ethnic coverage by newspaper and television journalists and have them share their work -- as evocative case studies -- with a group of media "gatekeepers," editors, and broadcasters who set newsroom agendas and can implement changes.

Management Sciences for Health, Inc. (MSH)
http://www.msh.org/
Works in public health areas to improve management and access to services in primary health care, child survival, maternal and child health, family planning, and reproductive health.

The Media Channel - Eye on Global Media
http://www.mediachannel.org/

Media Rights Agenda
mra@rcl.nig.com

One World - Connect to a Better World
http://www.oneworld.org/

Poynter Institute
http://poynter.org/index.cfm
The Poynter Institute is a school for journalists, future journalists, and teachers of journalism.

Society of Professional Journalists, Codes of Ethics
http://spj.org/ethics/code.htm

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
http://www.unhcr.ch/un&ref.htm
Reports and other documents about the numbers and treatment of refugees throughout the world.

WomenAction
http://www.womenaction.org/
A global information, communication, and media network that enables NGOs to actively engage in the Beijing +5 review process with the long-term goal of women's empowerment with a special focus on women and the media.

The World Association of Newspapers
and Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF)
http://www.wan-press.org/pf/africa/rap21.html
This organization launched a new pan-African e-mail exchange network to support press freedom and build stronger independent media on the continent.

http://www.subvertise.org
Contains hundreds of images and cartoons covering a spectrum of issues including transportation, war, climate-change, racism, genetics, corporations, sexuality, education, and globalization, all containing the same message: that people and the planet should be put before corporate profits. Many graphics are available for download to be reprinted in newspapers, magazines, and Web sites.

The WWW Virtual Library: Journalism
http://www.cais.net/makulow//vlj.html
Links to media associations, centres, institutes, news bureaux, and organisations.

Nigerian Conflict Resolution Expert	**Adeolu Ademoyo**, Coordinator Nigeria Diversity Study Group, Department of Philosophy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

Kehinde Aina, Executive Director
Negotiation and Conflict Management Group

Dr. Judith Asuni, Director
Academic Associates PeaceWorks, Lagos

Sammy Ikejirika
Strategic Empowerment Mediation Agency, Kaduna

Justice Kayode Esho, Chairman
Negotiation and Conflict Management Group

Joan Mbagwu, Conflict Expert
Afstraf, Lagos

Dr. (Mrs.) Vera Mogboh, Director
Peace Foundation, Enugu

Ozonnia Ojielo, President
Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace Advocacy, Lagos

General Ishola Williams, President
Afstrag, Lagos

Baird, V.

"Spiked!"

New Internationalist, 256, Jun 1994, 4-7.

Introduces the theme of this issue: the Western media and its coverage of the Third World. Asks why so many news stories never make the news, and examines some of the obstacles in their way.

FOX, Fiona

"Rwanda: The Journalist's Role"

Month, 29 (5), May 1996, 186-9.

Two years after the genocide in Rwanda, an event widely publicized in the press and broadcast media, the vast majority of the British public remain completely bemused as to the cause of the killing. Takes a critical look at the media's coverage and calls for a return to the best traditions of investigative journalism.

GOWING, Nik

**"Media Coverage: Help or Hindrance in Conflict Prevention?
A report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict"**

New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1997.

Journalists and policy makers alike tend to assume that media coverage has an undefined yet pivotal role in helping conflict management or prevention. On the contrary, in many cases reports by the media of impending crises have been ignored by the international community. Impartial reporting on conflicts has moreover been negated by media organizations that "peddle one line to the exclusion of other evidence."

JAKOBSEN, Peter Viggo

**"National Interest, Humanitarianism or CNN:
What Triggers UN Peace Enforcement After the Cold War?"**

Journal of Peace Research, 33(2), May 1996, 205-215.

Compares UN peacekeeping operations in Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti to determine whether these were initiated by U.S. national interest or humanitarian sentiment. Questions whether the "CNN factor" of media reporting drives humanitarian interventions.

McCANN, P.

"Lights, camera, war"

Independent on Sunday, Feb 22, 1998, 19.

Suggests that reporters following the chemical and biological weapons story in Iraq are staking our position for Gulf War II, and that the ratings battle has only just begun.

MINEAR, L. [et al.]

"The News Media, Civil War, and Humanitarian Action"

Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 1996.

Examines motives for government and humanitarian intervention in disasters across the globe, and the role that the media can play in catalyzing or influencing relief effort.

MOULD, David H.

"Press Pools and Military-Media Relations in the Gulf War: A Case Study of the Battle of Khafji," January 1991.

Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, 16 (2), Jun 1996, 133-59.

Examines this battle in the light of the nature of warfare, media technology, military and press priorities, the press pool, briefing system, and confusion in the military and press corps. Was this a military defeat or propaganda victory? Discusses the impact of the battle on military-media relations.

NEUMAN, Johanna

"Lights, Camera, War: Is Media Technology Driving International Politics?"

New York: St. Martins Press, 1996.

Presents "a historical perspective for current concerns that new technology is making fundamental changes in international relations and diplomacy." In each generation, effective leaders have learned how to use new technologies to accomplish their purposes.

ROTBERT, R. and Thomas G. Weiss (ed.)

"From Massacres to Genocide: The Media, Public Policy and Humanitarian Crises"

Washington: Brookings Institute, 1996.

Examines the extent to which media coverage and its relief agencies can influence policy making toward humanitarian emergencies, ethnic and religious conflicts, and other crises. Includes recommendations.

SHAW, Martin

"Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distance Violence"

London: Pinter, 1996.

Discusses how Western societies respond to recent global crises and the formation of "global civil society." Examines the role of media coverage of war and the formation of public opinion. The media are of increasing importance because of the decline of other institutions in civil society and the inability of parties, churches, and even social movements, to represent the victims of complex inter-national crises.

UGRESIC, D.

"The Culture of Lies"

Index on Censorship, 23 (1-2), May/Jun 1994, 23-43.

New lies are written over old truths as the people of ex-Yugoslavia are terrorized by the conflict into remembering and forgetting. Clearly shows how media lies helped instigate a war of intolerance in the Balkans.
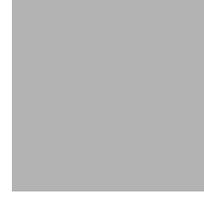
APPENDIX

President Obasanjo was sworn in on 29 May 1999. Since then the ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria has continued to escalate, as the following six months May-Dec 1999 examples illustrate.

30 May 1999: Clashes between Ijaw and Itsekiri youths just south of Warri reportedly caused nearly 200 deaths. Western and Nigerian oil companies evacuated people from the area as fighting nears Chevron's oil export terminal. Some 150 soldiers from the army's 20 Amphibious Battalion, based at Effrun in Delta State, were deployed to the area.

1 June: Village Chief Ogibodide of Ugborodo village in Delta area was kidnapped from his home and subsequently beheaded. Ijaw youths thought to be responsible.

6 June: Dawn-to-dusk curfew imposed in Warri by Delta State Governor, James Ibori.

19 June: Ijaw youths reportedly attacked the Itsekiri town of Kantu, near Warri. Houses were burned and five people were killed. Kantu leaders later reported that armed robbers were responsible (possibly in order to ensure severe punishment of the perpetrators).

19-20 June: Dozens reportedly were killed in Taraba, in northeastern Nigeria.

23 June: Armed youths attacked and boarded two oil rigs, demanding compensation for a June 1998 oil spill. The attack prompted Texaco to declare "force majeure" and temporarily suspend production.

28 June: Two foreign helicopter pilots were kidnapped by a group called 'Enough is Enough' after landing at Shell's oil platform in Rivers State. Their release is reported on 17 July.

29 June: Two Indian nationals working for Nigerian rubber-processing company in Ughelli, Delta State were kidnapped. The Indian Embassy confirms their release on 14 July.

1 July: Three Shell employees were taken hostage. They were released unharmed on 11 July.

8 July: 16 Shell employees were taken hostage by armed militants, but released hours later.

18 July: Fighting erupted between Hausas and local Yorubas in Shagamu, a town of about 300,000 inhabitants some 50-km north of Lagos. An estimated 60 people are reported dead.

22-25 July: Violence resulting in the deaths of sixty persons took place in Kano following the return of dead and displaced persons from Sagamu.

25 July: Seven expatriates and 57 Nigerian Shell employees were seized on their drilling rigs in the Delta by ethnic Isoko youths in Ozoro and Ovrode who demanded money and amenities for the local population. They are released two days later.

July-6 August: Fighting erupted between Ijaws and Ilajes in the southwestern state of Ondo. News organizations estimated 59 killed. The conflict originally broke out in September 1998 over control of land after rumors that oil companies had shown interest in the area.

15 August: Troops were deployed to restore peace in the northern state of Taraba after clashes between the Jukun and Kutep over chieftaincy titles and boundary adjustments.

1-14 September: Fighting between Ijaws and Ilajes in Ondo resulted in 16 killed and 20 reported missing

23 September: The liquefied natural gas plant in the south-eastern town of Bonny, worth US $3.8 billion, was shut down less than two weeks after beginning operations after militant youths blocked roads to press demands for jobs and social amenities. Obasanjo met with the youths and calls for time to develop the area.

29-31 September: Clashes between Ijaw and Yoruba youths in Ajegunle neighborhood in Lagos caused at least 12 deaths. Fifty-six youths were arrested. OPC, Ilaje and Ijaw leaders signed a peace pact.

30-31 October: Six Royal Dutch/Shell employees were seized near Warri by youths from the Opuama community. Four are released on 4 November. The company later reported that the last two were freed on 11 November.

11 November: The governor of the southeastern state of Bayelsa announced that 12 policemen were killed the previous week in Odi, a village in the state.

20–21 November: Some 5,000 troops are deployed in Bayelsa State.

25–26 November: Clash at mile 12 market in Ketu Lagos, Hausa traders clashed with Yoruba resulting in at least 30 casualties and causing hundreds of Hausas to flee the area. The Nigerian Red Cross evacuated 150 wounded to two area hospitals. The police regained control, under orders from Obasanjo to shoot on sight.

19 December: Churches in the central state of Kwara were attacked by some 3,000 youths, reportedly Muslims, and 14 were destroyed, according to State Police Commissioner Antony Sawyer. Police trying to protect the churches were stoned.

The Facts: In 41 Canadian newsrooms surveyed, there are 2,620 professional journalists. Of those, only 67 are minorities. That's 2.6 per cent – five times less than the percentage of minorities in the Canadian population. Can newspapers afford to be that out of touch with their communities?

Non-whites hold only 2.6 per cent of the professional jobs in Canada's daily newsrooms, a census done by the Editorial Diversity Committee of the Canadian Newspaper Association indicates. That's five times less than the 13.2 per cent of the population who were counted as either aboriginal peoples or visible minorities in the 1991 federal census.

Forty-one newspapers answered the survey, which was sent out in fall, 1993, to editors at the 82 papers belonging to the CNA. The response rate of 50 per cent, while disappointing, compares to the 53 per cent rate of return achieved by a less comprehensive survey in 1989. Then, a total of 64 minorities worked at 43 Canadian dailies. Today the number is 67.

Among other highlights from the survey:

- The 41 papers surveyed employ a total of 2,620 newsroom professionals (supervisors, reporters, copy editors and photographers/artists). Of those, 67 are non-white. Chinese-Canadians and Blacks are the largest groups of minorities in the newsroom, with 17 and 16 employees respectively. There are only four Native Canadians.

- 50 of the 67 non-whites (75%) work in newsrooms with circulations over 100,000.

- 16 of the 41 papers surveyed (39%) have all-white staffs.

- Minorities are more likely to be hired as reporters and photographers than supervisors and copy editors. Only 10 of the 41 papers have non-white supervisors. Twenty of the 24 minority reporters and 10 of the 16 minority photographers work for papers in the over-100,000 circulation group.

- Fifty-four per cent of papers say improving the racial balance of their newsrooms will have to wait until the economy turns around and their hiring freeze ends. However, the 41 papers hired a total of 47 new full-time employees during 1993, and only three were non-white (6%). Minorities did better in securing part-time 18 of 89 openings (20%).

- Only 11 of the 41 papers declared they had a "very strong" commitment to hire visible minorities, and a similar number said their interest was "not very strong." When asked why, nine in the latter group said they only hire on merit.

- When asked if the climate in their newsroom could be impeding the hiring and progress of minorities, 38 of the 41 editors polled said no (93%). The three who answered yes were all in the over-100,000 circulation group. However, 19 papers (46%) agreed that their top editors need more training to effectively manage diverse newsrooms.

- Only 9 papers (22%) said they had been approached by minority groups within the past year to discuss problems in coverage. Six were in the over-100,000 circulation group. Chief complaints were coverage that perpetuates stereotypes, and insensitive or unbalanced coverage.

- 32 of the 41 papers in the survey (78%) could list at least one initiative they had taken to cover a more diverse readership. These ranged from regular audits of newspaper content to meetings with community groups.

- More than half the papers (23 out of 41) said they could see no problems in hiring visible minorities other than a hiring freeze. "Availability of qualified candidates" was the problem most often cited by the others. One newspaper with a circulation over-100,000 listed "backlash from white staff' as a problem.

- When asked if newspapers should do more to attract minorities for newsroom jobs, 22 of the 31 papers that answered said yes (71%). Ten did not answer.

---

[1] This article was originally published in the March/April edition of *Crosslines Magazine.*

Minority journalists make small gains in daily newspapers

April 12, 2000

WASHINGTON — The number of minority journalists working at daily newspapers grew in the past year by a third of a percentage point moving from 11.55 percent to 11.85 percent, according to the 2000 newsroom employment survey issued by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This marks the largest percentage increase since the 1995 survey.

Meanwhile, the percentage of women in daily newsrooms stands at 37.12 up from 36.88, according to the ASNE report. Women represented 34 percent of all newsroom supervisors, the same percentage as last year. This is the second year that ASNE has counted the number of women working at the nation's daily newspapers.

Overall newsroom employment grew by 1,100. It totaled 56,200 in the 2000 survey, compared to 55,100 in the 1999 survey. This is the largest increase since the 1996 survey. The number of minorities in the work force increased 300 to 6,700, according to the ASNE survey. This represents the largest increase in minority newsroom staffing since the 1995 survey.

"We are pleased with the progress newspaper newsrooms are making, but far from satisfied. While these are the best gains in some time, they are far from where we must be," said ASNE President N. Christian Anderson III, publisher of The Orange County Register, Santa Ana, Calif.

Diversity Committee chair Wanda Lloyd said: "We've spent the past year developing initiatives to move these numbers up faster in the future. We need the industry to support these initiatives. I'm optimistic about more progress in the near future." Lloyd is managing editor/features, administration and planning for The Greenville (S.C.) News.

While minorities grew across the board, black journalists as a percentage of the work force of newsroom staffs dipped slightly.

ASNE has tracked the growth of minorities in daily newsrooms since 1978 when minority journalists comprised 4 percent of the total newsroom workforce (1,700 out of 43,000). The survey is a tool ASNE uses to measure the success of its goal of having the percentage of minorities working in newsrooms nationwide equal to the percentage of minorities in the nation's population by 2025. Currently, minorities make up 28.4 percent of the U.S. population and will grow to an estimated 38.2 percent by 2025, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Detailed findings of the 2000 newsroom employment survey:

Racial/ethnic groups: This is a breakdown of newsroom staffs by minority group:

	ASIAN AMERICANS	BLACK	HISPANICS	NATIVE AMERICANS
2000	2.35 [1,321]	5.31 [2,984]	3.68 [2,068]	0.52 [292]
1999	2.29 [1,264]	5.36 [2,953]	3.46 [1,905]	0.44 [241]

[1] Originally published on the World Wide Web at:
http://www.asne.org/kiosk/diversity/2000Survey/2000CensusReport.html

Internships and first-time hires: The percentage and number of minority interns rose slightly while the percentage and number of first-time minority hires fell. Of nearly 2,800 interns reported hired in the 2000 survey, 880 (31.42 percent) were minorities. In the 1999 ASNE report, there were 855 or 31.13 percent. First-time minority hires declined nearly a full percentage point, going from 18.72 percent (586 people) in 1999 to 17.74 (561) in this year's report. The percentage of new minority hires has generally declined since 1994.

Supervisors: Nine percent of all supervisors were minorities, while 19 percent of all minorities were supervisors, about the same percentages as last year. That means nearly 91 percent of all supervisors are white, while 25 percent of whites are supervisors.

Newspapers with no minorities: This number continues to slowly improve. Of the newspapers participating in the survey, 368 papers – 39 percent – had no minority staffers compared to 40 percent last year and 42 percent the preceding year.

Where do minorities work: Nearly two-thirds of all minority journalists work at papers with circulations exceeding 100,000. "We intend to keep the issue center-stage and to keep reminding ourselves that diverse newsrooms are essential to serving diverse communities," said Charlotte Hall, incoming chair of the Diversity Committee. "The committee looks forward to helping guide major new initiatives to increase the pipeline of journalists of color. At the same time, we are very concerned about retention and need to attack that problem vigorously." Hall is managing editor of Newsday, Melville, N.Y.

## Highlights from the survey of women

Women on daily newspaper staffs total 20,876 up more than 500 from the previous year. Of those 3,095 or 14.8 percent are minorities. Job categories: 22 percent of women are supervisors, 21 percent are copy editors, 49 percent are reporters and 8 percent are photographers. The breakdown for men: 25 percent are supervisors, 18 percent are copy editors, 43 percent are reporters and 13 percent are photographers.

Of the newspapers participating in the survey, only one percent have no women, down from 2.3 percent last year. The newspapers have less than 10,000 circulation. Where do women work: Women continue to make up nearly 40 percent of the staffers at both large and small newspapers. Women are more often found in papers with less than 10,000 circulation. Here women make up nearly 44 percent of the staffs.

Benchmarks to measure progress

Next year ASNE will start measuring the industry's progress in minority hiring and promotion against benchmarks adopted by the ASNE board in September 1999. The comparisons, to be reported every three years, will alert the industry to whether it is on target to meet the 2025 goals.

The 2001 benchmarks:

Interns	32.6%
Overall minority employment	13.5%
Supervisors	11%

350	Number of papers with no minorities
58	Number of newspapers that have achieved parity with their community

Increasing diversity in U.S. newspaper newsrooms has been a primary ASNE mission for the past 22 years. The Society has been an industry leader in helping newspapers better reflect their communities. It serves as an information clearinghouse and provides career information to journalists just starting out. The Society sponsors a variety of initiatives and projects, including job fairs which are directed at young journalists of color, and an online Talent Bank, where editors can find candidates for internships and entry-level positions.

Census procedures

For the 2000 ASNE newsroom employment census, 953 of 1,451 daily newspapers responded to the survey, representing 65.7 percent of all U.S. dailies. The 2000 census is based on Dec. 31, 1999 employment data reported by daily newspapers.

The survey data are projected to reflect all daily newspapers in the country. Editors participating in the survey agree to publish the percentage of newsroom employees who are minorities. A list of newspapers with their percentages follows the summary and tables.

The data from newspapers that returned the survey are used to project the numbers for non-responding newspapers in the same circulation range. An ASNE follow-up test of non-responding newspapers found their employment of minorities closely resembles newspapers in their circulation categories that respond to the survey. The survey figures reported above are weighted in this way to reflect all daily newspapers. ASNE has implemented internal monitoring procedures to ensure the consistency and credibility of the employment data. Moreover, because the survey procedures remain constant each year, the ASNE census provides highly reliable year-to-year comparisons.

The American Society of Newspaper Editors, with 900 members, is an organization of the main editors of daily newspapers throughout the Americas. Founded in 1922, ASNE is active in a number of areas of interest to top editors with priorities on improving the diversity, readership and credibility of newspapers.

For more information, contact:

tel: (703) 453-1126
fax: (703) 453-1133

Bobbi Bowman, Diversity Director
ASNE, 11690B Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, VA 20191

The Mission

For one week in May, more than 2,000 journalists set out to explore how accurately their news coverage reflects the diversity of their communities. They piled into buses to explore neighborhoods, coaxed people from churches and homes into their newsroom and pored over demographic information about their regions and their readers. They also looked inward assessing how well they choose their words, their sources, their page one stories and photographs.

This nationwide exploration was called The National Time-Out for Diversity and Accuracy, a project developed by the 1999 APME Diversity Committee with support from ASNE, The Freedom Forum and The Maynard Institute.

The committee sought to address dual desires of APME and ASNE and editors across the country: to confront and address our weakened credibility with readers and to better diversify our newsrooms and our news coverage.

The Time-Out's mission was simple: We asked newsrooms to spend a week exploring those two issues, in whatever way they wanted. We asked them to identify what they do well and areas that needed work. And we asked them to report back on what they found.

The Project

Soon after we began recruiting newspapers in March, the positive e-mail responses flooded in. By Time-Out week, more than 150 newsrooms had signed on, as well as 43 bureaus of the Associated Press. The newsrooms were told to design their own diversity explorations. We provided discussion guides and audit forms. We sent out updates to participants, sharing ideas for Time-Out activities, tips for audits.

Newsrooms responded creatively. The Jackson Sun staff went on a guided bus tour to learn more about the African-American history of the community. The Augusta Chronicle held meetings throughout their community. The Spokesman-Review brought in James McBride, author of "The Color of Water," for morning and afternoon workshops. At the St. Paul Pioneer Press, 18 groups of editors were assigned to look at specific coverage issues from different perspectives, including age, economics, religion and ethnicity. The Associated Press staff in Phoenix met with an expert on media, race and gender, who helped them set up a content analysis.

After Time-Out week, editors were asked to complete a survey to share the comments and views of their staffs, to recount the results of their audits and to share ideas for improving coverage and newsroom structure. Most also pledged to continue their efforts in the coming months.

The surveys formed the basis for this report. Here are some highlights:

- Widespread participation: 150 newsrooms (newspapers, wire services) and 43 AP bureaus pledged to participate.

- Support for the premise: 92 of 96 reporting newsrooms agreed with our basic premise.

- Audits conducted: 60 newsrooms conducted audits – from full newspaper audits to self-audits on individual stories, photos and section fronts. While

---

[1] From the ASNE Web Site: http://www.asne.org/kiosk/diversity/1999timeout/exec.htm

many newsrooms found they did a good job reflecting racial diversity of their communities, most reported that they rely too heavily on traditional, official sources and that reporters – and editors – need to spend more time outside of the office.

- Best practices identified: Every newspaper shared details of what's working in their newsroom to improve their organization and to improve coverage. They think about how to cover their beats - and whether to create new ones. They do regular audits of their work. They have diversity committees to explore issues of coverage, hiring and style. They have community forums. They include attention to diversity issues in performance evaluations.

- Commitment to change: Of those responding to the survey, 85 said they want to pursue the idea of reframing diversity as an issue of accuracy in their newsroom. And many of them shared their plans to do so in the coming months, either by continuing the forums and discussions that began during Time-Out week or by re-creating beats, reviving diversity committees and renewing their commitments to report more completely on their communities. Beyond the specific goals of the project – to identify strengths and weaknesses in our newsrooms and to focus on ways we can improve – editors said the Time-Out project had other effects as well. Many reported with pride on the honest, articulate and passionate discussions they witnessed as their staffs wrestled with the issues. Editors spoke of revelatory audits and newsroom surveys. Many said they felt a renewed sense of mission. For some newsrooms, the project discussions stirred up simmering concerns or old resentments, issues that need to be handled before moving ahead. Some identified conflicts within their newsrooms on issues of language, balance and fairness. And some questioned whether their commitment would last for only one week. For most of us, this project simply opened a discussion that we hope will continue.

The Future

Most newsrooms that responded to the survey reported that they want to work to improve their coverage and internal structures to better address the issues raised in their newsrooms during Time-Out week. Of those responding to the survey, 85 newsrooms reported that they felt reframing the issue of diversity as an issue of accuracy was an idea they wanted to continue to pursue.

We think the Time-Out helped many newsrooms get back on track on the issue of diversity and gave them a way to explore methods of improving their internal practices as well as their coverage.

We recommend that we conduct another Time-Out in 2000, building on the gains we made this year and focusing more intensely on producing results in newsrooms and bureaus throughout the country.

The APME Diversity Committee members felt these two values – diversity and-credibility – were linked and should be addressed together. They also wanted to reach beyond editors and into newsrooms to get journalists to change the way they look at diversity in two key ways:

- Consider diversity as an element of accuracy. We wanted to view diversity not as a value that is apart our core journalistic values but as part of the core:that without addressing diversity in our reporting and editing, we were somehow not fulfilling our missions to report accurately on the communities we cover.

- Create a broader definition of diversity. We felt our traditional understanding of diversity should be broadened to include elements beyond race and ethnicity:

class, geography, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political ideology - and any other issues that help define people in our communities.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arbitration: This is a conflict settlement process in which the disputants agree to surrender their right [on how the conflict should be resolved] to a third party. The latter determines how the conflict should be resolved and the outcome of his resolution process has the backing of the law.

Conciliation: The process of a third party [the conciliator] moving forth and backward between disputing parties with a view to making them to keep the peace through a cessation of further hostility.

Conflict: Disagreement between two parties

Conflict escalation: Upward movement of a conflict situation [in terms of rigidity of positions or associated violence].

Conflict de-escalation: Downward movement of a conflict situation [in terms of soften positions and less or non-use of violence]

Conflict management: Process of generating solutions that could lead to the reduction of a conflict situation

Litigation: Process of getting a conflict settled in a court of law.

Mediation: The process of a third party [the mediator] working with disputants to reach a mutually satisfying solution to their problems. The goal here is to solve the problems once and for all. It is not a mere attempt to "keep the peace" as we often have in conciliatory projects.

Negotiation: The process of disputants discussing with each other with a view to settling the differences between them.

Albanian Media Institute (Tirana)

Remzi Lani, Director
Rruga "Him Kolli", No. 45
Tirana, ALBANIA

tel/fax: + 355 42 29800
e-mail: rlani@ami.tirana.al

Association of Independent Electronic Media (Belgrade)

Sasa Mirkovic, Director
Belgrade, SERBIA

www.freeb92.net/media/aneminfo/index.phtml#

Center for Democracy and Human Rights (Podgorica)

Srdjan Darmanovic, Director
Hercegovacka 92
81000 Podgorica, MONTENEGRO

tel/fax: + 381 81 613119
e-mail: cedem@cg.yu

Center for Independent Journalism (Bucharest)

Ioana Avadani, Director
Str Matei Voevod 75-77
Bucharest, ROMANIA

tel: + 40 1 252 2421
fax: + 40 1-252 2483
e-maill: ioana@cji.centind.ro

Center for Independent Journalism (Budapest)

Sándor Orbán, Director
Független Médiaközpont
Eqyetem ter 5.l. em.7.
1053 Budapest, HUNGARY

tel: + 36 1 317 54480
fax: + 36 1 267 3613
e-mail: cij@mail.datanet.hu

Center for Multicultural Understanding and Cooperation (Skopje)

Kim Mehmeti, Director
U1. "29 Noemvri", 4-B
91000 Skopje, MACEDONIA

tel/fax: + 389 91 13 04 07
e-mail: kim@unet.com.mk

Center for War, Peace, and the News Media (New York)

Robert Manoff, Director
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

New York University
418 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10003 USA

tel: +1 212 998 7960
fax: +1 212 995 4143
e-mail: robert.manoff@nyu.edu

European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media (London)

Milica Pesic, Director
54 Belsize Lane, Flat 1
London NW3 5AR UNITED KINGDOM

tel: + 44 207 435 9282
fax: + 44 207 435 9805
e-mail: silica@gn.apc.org

Independent Journalists Association of Serbia (Belgrade)

Dragutin Rokvic, Secretary General
Makedonska 5/II (Market Center)
Belgrade, SERBIA

tel/fax: + 381 11 622 233

International Center for Education of Journalists (Zagreb)

Stjepan Malovic, Director
Perkovceva 2
10000 Zagreb, CROATIA

tel: + 385 1 4826 942
fax: + 385 1 4826 941
e-mail: icej@cursor.hr

International Federation of Journalists (Brussels)

Bettina Peters, Director
IFJ Project Division
rue Royale 266
1210 Brussels, BELGIUM

tel: + 32 2 223 22 65
fax: + 32 2 219 29 76
e-mail: ifj.projects@pophost.eunet.be

Latvia University, Department of Journalism (Riga)

Inta Brikse
4A Visvalza St.
Riga, LATVIA

tel: + 371 722 4705
fax: + 371 721 3405
e-mail: briksa@acad.latnet.iv

Media Development Center (Sofia)

Ognian Zlatev, Director
Ivan Vazov District, 1 Balsha St., Bl. 9
1408 Sofia, BULGARIA

tel: + 359 2 951 5986
fax: + 359 2 951 6348
e-mail: wizoz@osf.bg

Media Plan Institute (Sarajevo)

Zoran Udovicic, President
Patriotske Lige 30/3
71000 Sarajevo,
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

tel: + 387 71 206 542
fax: + 387 71 213 078
e-mail: safax-mp@bih.net.ba
          mediaplan@mediaplan.ba

Panonia Press Network (Novi Sad)

Mirko Sebic, Director
Jevrejska 4/1
21 000 Novi Sad, YUGOSLAVIA

tel/fax: + 381 21 621 308
e-mail: dezertsebic@netscape.net

Roma Press Center (Budapest)

Gabor Bernath, Director
Ferenc krt.22
1092 Budapest, HUNGARY

tel: + 36 1 217 1059
fax: + 36 1 217 1068
e-mail: romapres@elender.hu

Soros Media Center (Sarajevo)

Boro Kontic, Editor-in-Chief
M. Kantardzica 3
33000 Sarajevo,
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

tel/fax: + 387 71 207 026
+ 387 71 444 098
+ 387 71 444 743
e-mail: media@soros.org.ba

STINA News Agency (Split)

Stojan Obradovic, Editor-in-Chief
Setaliste Bacvice 10
21 000 Split, CROATIA

tel/fax: + 385 21 347 121
+ 385 21 591 581
+ 385 21 357 040
e-mail: stina@zamir.net

VIJESTI Daily Press (Podgorica)

Zeljko Ivanovic, Director
Bulevar Revolucije 9
81000 Podgorica, MONTENEGRO

tel: + 381 81 224 992
242 214
fax: + 381 81 242 306
e-mail: vijesti@cg.yu