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# MEDIACT PROJECT E - B O O K

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## **CHAPTER 1:**

# **CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION & PEACE BUILDING**

# THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN CONFLICT ZONES

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COUNTRY: CYPRUS

AUTHOR: CYPRUS YOUTH COUNCIL

Contemporary conflicts around the globe are complex, multiple and have a shifting tendency. Cyprus is often described as one of the longer frozen conflicts in Europe and given the role of Greek and Turkish nationalism in leading up to intercommunal strife (see Papadakis, 2003). The status quo on the island today is that of division of the country in two by a UN-patrolled buffer zone. The North (37 % of the island) is occupied by 30,000– 40,000 Turkish troops who intervened/invaded Cyprus in 1974 after a short-lived coup engineered by the junta in Greece that aimed at union ( enosis ) of Cyprus with Greece. In 1983 the Turkish Cypriot leadership and Turkey declared an independent state that is recognised until today only by Turkey and condemned by the international community and UN resolutions. The rest of Cyprus is controlled by the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and governed by Greek Cypriots. In 2003, travel restrictions between the two sides were lifted and contact between members of the two communities became possible. The whole of Cyprus joined the EU in 2004 but the *acquis communautaire* is suspended in the north pending a solution of the Cyprus problem.

## **Objectives:**

The main objective of this research is to determine the role of the media not only in the political situation but also towards peace building and towards promoting the resolution of the conflict, along with the processing of information in Cyprus. The “obstacle” with the case of Cyprus is that we are faced with the incoming of different information according to the media we have access to: greek-cypriot media, turkish-cypriot media, and european and international media. Divided Cyprus provides a unique case which furthers our understanding of the media’s role in these processes.

## **Specifically, we must:**

- Check whether the population has access to independent unbiased information, and to what extent, and in which context (Turkish-Cypriot media/Greek-Cypriot media/International media)
- Does media contribute to the political instability in the country?
- What is the narrative promoted by the different media?

# INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY

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In 1878, as a result of the Cyprus Convention, the United Kingdom took over the government of Cyprus as a protectorate from the Ottoman Empire. In 1914, at the beginning of World War I, Cyprus was annexed by the United Kingdom. In 1925, following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Cyprus was made a Crown Colony. Between 1955 and 1959 EOKA was created by Greek Cypriots and led by George Grivas to perform enosis (union of the island with Greece). However the EOKA campaign did not result in union with Greece but rather an independent republic, The Republic of Cyprus, in 1960.

The 1960 constitution put in place a form of power-sharing, or consociational government, in which concessions were made to the Turkish Cypriots minority, including as a requirement that the vice-president of Cyprus and at least 30% of members of parliament be Turkish Cypriots. Archbishop Makarios III would be the President and Dr. Fazıl Küçük would become Vice President. One of the articles in the constitution was the creation of separate local municipalities so that Greek and Turkish Cypriots could manage their own municipalities in large towns.

Internal conflicts turned into full-fledged armed fighting between the two communities on the island which prompted the United Nations to send peacekeeping forces in 1964; these forces are still in place today.

On 15 July 1974, the National Guard, under the direction of Greek officers, staged a coup d'état against the Cyprus government headed by President Makarios. On 20 July, the Turkish government, invoking the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960, launched an extensive military operation on the north coast of Cyprus under the preface of protecting its Turkish Cypriot citizens around 36% of its territory, which resulted eventually in the occupation of the main Turkish Cypriot enclave north of Nicosia and areas to the north, east and west of the enclave, including Kyrenia. Fighting resumed on 23 July, especially in the vicinity of Nicosia International Airport, which, with the agreement of the local military commanders of both sides, was declared a United Nations protected area and was occupied by UNFICYP troops. The Secretary-General reported to the council on the breakdown of the ceasefire, and sent messages to the prime ministers of Greece and Turkey and to the acting president of Cyprus, expressing his great anxiety and requesting

measures to ensure observance of the ceasefire. (source: UNFICYP).

Approximately during the years of conflict, more than 200,000 people were displaced from their homes. Greek-Cypriots from the north of the island fled to the south, which is controlled by the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus, while Turkish Cypriots were displaced and live in the north, in areas controlled by the so-called TRNC.

Although there was no further mass violence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots after 1974, talks for reunifying the island have failed repeatedly. The Economist has described the political situation in Cyprus as "Europe's longest frozen conflict."

## SOCIETY

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The two communities in Cyprus have distinct ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Most Greek Cypriots are Greek-speaking, and Christian orthodox while most Turkish Cypriots speak Turkish and are Muslims albeit rather secular in orientation compared to mainland Turks. According to Psaltis & Chakal (2016) the fact that the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities have been divided geographically across ethnic lines for almost half a century resulted in two distinct collective memories of the past, especially regarding the Cyprus problem and its history. These divided collective memories of victimisation are closely aligned to the official historical narratives disseminated for years through the separate educational systems of the two communities (Psaltis, 2016).

In the case of Greek-Cypriots, and given the official policy on the reunification of the Republic of Cyprus, and the withdrawal of Turkish occupying forces, the political narrative goes along the following lines " We have always lived peacefully with Turkish Cypriots and we can do it again once the Turkish troops leave the country " and " the key to the solution is located in Ankara and not in the TC community ". On the other hands, for the Turkish-Cypriots, the main political narrative that promoted the ideal of two separate states in Cyprus is, more or less, like this: " The experience of living with Greek Cypriots was one of domination and suppression and we will be better off having our own state " and " Turkey intervened in 1974 with a peace operation to save us from Greek-Cypriots " (Lytras & Psaltis, 2011 ; Psaltis et al., 2014 ).

## EXPLAIN THE CASE

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The case of Cyprus is described in detail in the previous sections. The case of this specific approach adopted for seeking peace building and conflict resolution through media will be described in detail in the following sections. This case study will describe the approach adopted by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in which case there was the creation of "A Glossary for Journalism in Cyprus", a shared glossary with more "neutral" terms that would not promote the specific narratives that were previously described in the above sections, and would thus promote peace building through media. According to the authors of the glossary itself, the glossary addresses the challenges that all journalists face that is to report professionally on the complex situation of Cyprus on behalf of all communities. The authors themselves report that "while journalists are not in charge of negotiations on the future of the island, their approach, the way they report on the situation, and even the choice of words they use can have a direct effect on perception and on public opinion." The project of the glossary was produced mainly by the cooperation of journalists' unions on the island, with the close cooperation of "Cyprus Dialogue" and under the supervision of Mr. Aidan White, the President of the Ethical Journalism Network. The glossary was primarily created in order to support a better understanding among readers and with the aim to encourage journalists to consider the sensitivities around certain words and narratives, and to offer them a useful tool of possible alternatives. It is worth mentioning here that the creation of the glossary is not binding, meaning that the journalists are not obliged to use the glossary, it is just a tool they can refer back when they need it.

## RELATION OF THE CASE STUDY TO THE PROJECT

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"Mediact" project aims at peace building and conflict transformation through the use of media in youth work. Divided Cyprus provides a unique case which furthers our understanding of the media's role in these processes, but also gives a fruitful ground for youth work to foster the way towards peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Media and narrative in Cyprus, and as explained above, play a major role in the understanding of the "Cyprus problem". Additionally, international media play an important role as well because of the narrative they

promote on media. Thus, the case of Cyprus is a very interesting one, especially on how the media report and promote the narratives of the two communities; Greek-Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. The glossary created provides journalists with more "neutral" terms for future use in case they refer to the Cyprus problem.

## METHODOLOGY / APPROACH

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As mentioned above, the approach adopted by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in which case there was the creation of "A Glossary for Journalism in Cyprus", a shared glossary with more "neutral" terms that would not promote the specific narratives that were previously described in the above sections, and would thus promote peace building through media. According to the authors of the glossary itself, the glossary addresses the challenges that all journalists face that is to report professionally on the complex situation of Cyprus on behalf of all communities. The authors themselves report that "while journalists are not in charge of negotiations on the future of the island, their approach, the way they report on the situation, and even the choice of words they use can have a direct effect on perception and on public opinion." The glossary was primarily created in order to support a better understanding among readers and with the aim to encourage journalists to consider the sensitivities around certain words and narratives, and to offer them a useful tool of possible alternatives. It is worth mentioning here that the creation of the glossary is not binding, meaning that the journalists are not obliged to use the glossary, it is just a tool they can refer back when they need it.

## CHALLENGES

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Despite the fact that there was a neutral acceptance of the glossary by some of the journalists, a great number of journalists from both sides have expressed their concerns and opposition for the use of the glossary. From the Greek-Cypriot community, a number of journalists expressed the idea that the glossary restricts the freedom of speech and minimizes the war crimes committed by Turkey during the Turkish invasion in 1974. Concerns were also expressed by Turkish-cypriot journalists who expressed their opposition to the glossary since it

minimizes and eliminates the war crimes committed by Turkey all these years.

## HOW CAN IT BE IMPLEMENTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS

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The idea of creating glossaries that include more “neutralized” terms in the context of conflict could prove to be a good start for the promotion of peace building through media. Despite the fact that in Cyprus the glossary created was not adopted or was not accepted by the majority of the journalists, does not mean that such initiatives are not to be implemented in other countries with problems of conflicts. It is very important for future initiatives for the creation of such glossaries to try to be as objective as possible and try to eliminate the promotion of certain narratives. Also, the creation of such glossaries is not the solution of the problems created in case of conflicts. Therefore, a close consideration of the opposition to such initiatives is also very important.

## FOCUS GROUP: THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN CONFLICT ZONES

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*Nicosia, Cyprus – August 22, 2019*

On August 22, 2019 the Cyprus Youth Council organised a focus group under the title “The Role of Youth Workers in Conflict Zones.” Cyprus Youth Council’s trainer Maria Drakou led the focus group, with the participation of nine youth workers.

### **They were asked to discuss three questions:**

1. What skills do youth workers in conflict zones need?
2. What kinds of assistance do youth workers in conflict zones need?
3. What is the role of youth workers in conflict zones?

Divided into two groups, the participants wrote down their opinions

on A1 papers. For the first question, one of the prevalent answers was that youth workers in conflict zones must be open-minded and creative. They also cited professional distance, respect to the feelings of locals, inclusivity, empathy and knowledge of the political situation as necessary skills.

Regarding the kind of education that youth workers in conflict zones need they answered that training in psychology, peace-building, conflict resolution, non-formal education and tolerance are essential. When asked to write down the kind of help that they need, the youth workers said that they would like more education on the political situation, as well as language skills, history and law lessons. Finally, the participants said that the role of youth workers in conflict zones is to help make a change, assist to the development of an area/country, motivate youth and engage in non-formal education.

### **Extra sources/Videos:**

#### **1. An example of the different narratives by the two communities**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsdBoOTMKh0>

#### **2. The glossary**

[http://media.philenews.com/PDF/glos.pdf?fbclid=IwAR112f1QeBreLnL8Mcayf1fmhK H3JIGuRpqfZIK6DcCDDWwL\\_GTjEQQ9\\_Sc](http://media.philenews.com/PDF/glos.pdf?fbclid=IwAR112f1QeBreLnL8Mcayf1fmhK H3JIGuRpqfZIK6DcCDDWwL_GTjEQQ9_Sc)

#### **3. UNFICYP – Events summer 1974**

<https://unficy.unmissions.org/events-summer-1974>





# THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS OF SENEGAL: A CASE STUDY OF Y'EN A MARRE

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COUNTRY: GERMANY  
AUTHOR: IGNATIUS OLI

The context of this case study will expose the constitutional crisis in Senegal that led to the Y'En A Marre revolution in the period of 2011 to 2012 and explains how such movement instituted by the Rap/Hip-hop artists and fanned by using the instruments of the new media (Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, person to person contact) to start an organized system of social change using a bottom-up approach contributed to changing the political narratives leading to a disbandment on the amendment of the constitution by the National Assembly of the Republic of Senegal and subsequently mobilizing the community through two social structure organization approach (the wind and the hardcore) to reflect the yearning and aspiration of the people and consequently resulting to a peaceful second round of election that transitioned to a democratically elected government in the Republic of Senegal in March 2012 and has opened the way for further discussion on grassroots transformation of democratic processes in Africa. The critical lesson from this movement is the fact that it remains with its ideological foundation and refuses to join the government.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY

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The Republic of Senegal is a former colony of France and independent nation in the coast of West Africa surrounding the North Atlantic Ocean to the West and one of the influential members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). Senegal is flanked by Mauritania in the north, Mali toward the east, Guinea toward the southeast, and Guinea-Bissau toward the southwest. The Republic of Senegal likewise encompasses The Gambia, another small West African nation possessing a limited bit of land along the banks of the Gambia River, which isolates Senegal's southern locale of Casamance from the remainder of the nation. Senegal likewise shares a sea fringe (maritime borders) with Cape Verde another beautiful West African Country on the verge of Europe's coast. Senegal's financial and political capital is Dakar.

Although Senegal proclaimed her independence in August 1960 after the then National Assembly announced her withdrawal from the Mali Federation, it was not until September 5, 1960, that she became fully independent with a Head of State, Prime Minister and a 15-member appointed council of Ministers. The country's area and landmass are estimated at 196,839km<sup>2</sup> with a population of about 15.85 million people, 2.8% population growth rate and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 16.37 billion (World Bank 2017). The major ethnic groups include the Wolofs (37.1%), the Pular (26.2%), and the Serar (17%) (CIA World Fact Book).

However, Wolof, Pular, Mandinka, Soninke, Jola, and others are some different dialects spoken in Senegal. About 95.9% of the nation's populace is Muslim with most holding fast to one of the four Sufi fraternities practised in the country. At the same time, Christians, generally Roman Catholics, represent 4.1% of the populace (Oishimaya Sen Nag 2019). The country is among the nations with the highest birth rate in the world and enjoys a youthful population with a projected fertility rate of 4.84 children per woman (Statista 2019). Furthermore, Senegal has around 6.52% unemployment rate, and it has been estimated to decrease between 2020 and 2024, according to the International Labour Organisation (Plecher 2020). Nevertheless, the corona virus pandemic ravaging public health institutions and the global economy may impede the stabilization of macro-economic indices.

Although Senegal is generally a sunny and dry country, the northernmost part of the country has a near hot desert climate. In contrast, the central region has a tropical semi-arid climate, and the southernmost part is very tropically wet with a dry environment. The people of Senegal are predominantly farmers, and significant GDP earnings are from Agriculture. Some scholars have posited that the cuisine of Senegal is influenced by her roots of North Africa, French and Portugal. A portion of the more typical dishes in Senegal includes ceebu jen, a tomato fish stew over rice; Yassa, flame-broiled chicken marinated with onions and lemon juice; and mafé, a meat and nut stew. Rice, couscous and French bread are regular starches that are eaten by average families in this beautiful coastal country. Fish is predominant at long the coastal regions and wildly eaten with plantain by the inhabitants of these regions.

Football, wrestling, and basketball are the most famous games played in the nation. Wrestling is viewed as a national fixation as it permits numerous youngsters to gain some living and therefore get away from destitution and poverty. Football is played professionally and casually all through the country. The national football team of Senegal got to the finals of the African Cup of Nations for the first time in 2002 and lost to Cameroun on penalties. The team was also among the first three football teams from the continent to reach the quarter-final round of the World Cup in 2002. Senegal's national basketball team is ranked among the best in the African continent, and they have competed favourably with other sports teams and organisations across the world. In 2022, Senegal is ready to break the records by turning into the leading African nation to have the Summer Youth Olympics sport competition.

The Senegalese society is more of patriarchy, although they are gender-based jobs and some legislations to give women and the minority more rights. Women are relied upon to deal with the family and youngsters. They additionally take an interest in the rural workforce yet are paid lower than men. In the family unit and network, men have the last say in many issues. Women are relied upon to obey men. Albeit urban Senegalese women are entering the workforce today, the numbers are still deficient.

Since polygynous relationships are very typical in Senegal, the family unit is usually composed of extended members containing a man and his various spouses and brothers, sisters, cousins amongst others. Islamic law is predominant due to the various Islamic ethnic and religious minorities; therefore, the family union under Islamic laws are practised

practised widely. The customary social structure is not flexible and it is dependent on connection, that is who an individual knows in government or the private sector. Kids are exceptionally preferred in Senegalese society. Kids are shown social qualities from an early age.

The whole family takes an interest in raising youngsters in the community due to extended family practice. Young men and young women begin learning about themselves and gender-based issues while they are youthful, and this has played a critical role in shaping the Senegalese society. General education and adult training are accessible to both genders although fewer girls than young men are enrolled to study. Nevertheless, it is gradually changing. The insight of older folks is exceptionally respected by the Senegalese. Regard for the seniors is of extreme significance in the general public. Foul language is not endured in broad daylight. An individual who keeps the cultural guidelines has a higher social rating than the individuals who do not.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND THE UPRISING IN SENEGAL JUNE 2011

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The Republic of Senegal, one of Africa's shining example of a democratic state had failed to address the incessant and continuous economic negative curve arising in several years of budget deficit. It had persistent infrastructural deficit such that electricity is rationed and many households, small and big business hardly enjoy steady energy supply before the period of 2010-2012. The economic reality was biting, and indices for growth were least encouraging due to external monetary shocks and events beyond the control of the central government since the currency of the nation is determined at a fixed rate to the Euro.

Also, because of the global financial crisis of 2008 and high corruption on the path of the officials were still ripe and the country was slowly spiralling into the events that occurred from February 2011 to April 2012. The price of foodstuffs like rice, corn, wheat, millet, beans which are essential foods eaten by low-income household was high during this period as a result of the colonial era policies that reversed Senegalese agricultural sector producing a myriad of staple crops to farming cash crops for household consumption. This made the country highly

dependent on importation of food to meet the local demand of a geometrically growing population. Therefore, a global shift in prices at the world markets in rice, millet, wheat and corn affects the price of local goods negatively in Senegal and thereby causing more hardship to the population.

Within the period under review (2011-2012), Senegal was also on the brink of a political crisis. The President Abdoulaye Wade who had been in office for eleven years (2000-2011) under the Senegalese's Peoples Party (PDS) and around eighty-five years of age at the time had instituted a bill to the legislature to alter the tenure of office of the President as well as create a position of Vice President. The first amendment would create the post of vice president, who may succeed the president in the event of incapacitation or death. In contrast, the second amendment will reduce the requirement for being declared the winner in the first round of a presidential election from 50% plus one to 25% of the popular total vote cast.

The political reasoning from the opposition and motivation for the ruling party was that if successfully implemented, it would ensure the current President avoid a run-off during the 2012 Presidential Election and return him to the office for the third time. As if the third term was not enough, it would cancel the first two terms and also allow the President to seek re-election after his third term. The ruling political party (PDS) had also cemented plans to nominate the son of the seating President, Karim Wade as running mate in the 2012 elections. Father and son will be on the same party ticket. The new law would replicate the United States system and depart from the Senegalese long-held political culture which stems from the French design of a Presidential Republic wherein the President of the Senate assumes power in the absence of the elected President but must ensure new elections are held within 30 days.

The constellation of the above circumstances alongside the non-performance and responsiveness to the plight of the people by the central government caused much frustration amongst citizens. Particularly of note is Oumar Bocoum, a government soldier, who set himself ablaze outside the presidential palace in Dakar on February 18, 2011. Before this time, some local rap artists had already started using music to speak against the constitutional amendment and the dire economic situation in the country calling out those responsible for the economic conundrum and seeking urgent reforms. This group later became Y'En A Marre which organised massive revolution across the country using music and arts to portray their message against the

government and succeeded in mobilising mass voters to change the government and particularly the President in the presidential elections of March 2012.

*The movement Y'En A Marre was co-founded in January 2011 by Cheikh Omar Cyrille Toure aka Thiat [the last born] and Mbessane Seck aka Kilifeu [the authority/elder] from the rap group Keur Gui [The House] of Kaolack, and activist journalists Fadel Barro and Alioune Sané. They were later joined by Malal Tall aka Fou Malade [Crazy Sick] from the group Bat'hallons Blin-D [Armored Beaten Rags or Armored Battalion], and many other rap artists. According to Fadel Barro, the creation of the movement was a cathartic idea, which emerged as they sat in his living room waiting for electricity to return after a twenty-hour blackout. (M. Gueye 2013).*

In the period leading up to the constitutional amendment by the National Assembly precisely on the 21st of June 2011, there was a clash between the opposition protesters and the Police Force which resulted to some deaths on the path of the protesters. This incident fuelled the already fragile state of the country. It activated civil unrest beginning from the 23rd of June 2011 with a blend of a gathering that called themselves the 'June 23 Movement'. The civil society, and many organised opposition groups linked with the central group of Hip-hop artists led by Fou Malade and Thiat, all popular rap musicians well known across the country known as the Y'En A Marre movement which began gaining traction after its formation in January of 2011 (We are Fed up, or Enough is a Enough).

They had congregated at the entrance of the National Assembly to protest the passage of the bill to law by an act of parliament. Although the government had before this time placed a ban on mass gatherings, the protesters defied the order and matched on. News had circulated within the protesters as well as among the National Assembly members that they were similar unrest in the countryside from Rufisque, Kaolack, Casamance, Thiès, and Pikene.

The protesters wore black shirts with an inscription Y'En A Marre. They kept chanting "Enough is a Enough", and the situation escalated quickly throughout the city capital Dakar and continued throughout the local communities. With the participation of the local rap artists Malade and Thiat as well as the journalist Fadel Barro in the organisation of the protest, a lot of young people joined the movement bearing in mind the news of the wave of the Arab Spring from Tunisia, Iraq, Morocco, Syria, and Egypt. So the actual uprising and revolution against the government began with months of gathering in the public square called "place the republic".

Senegal continued to be unstable as large numbers of protesters gathered each day and the escalating political violence particularly in Dakar in the months of November and December 2011. While President Wade initially rescinded on the quest to drop the second amendment of establishing the office of the Vice President due to the pressure of the protesters and the insistence of his resignation to calm the situation. He later proceeded to the Supreme Court having been checkmated on the earlier move to have the National Assembly pass the amendment within one week by the division from his party men. The Supreme Court of Senegal granted President Wade's eligibility for the elections of 2012 on the premise that his first term in office started before the controversial term-limit was introduced and added to the constitution. The Supreme court judgement also invalidated the presidential candidacies of three other candidates, including Youssou N'Dour – a leading popular opposition voice and contender for the office of the President in the March 2012 scheduled Presidential elections.

Due to the ruling of the Apex court, the Y'En A Marre group started the mass mobilization and registration of voters for the elections. Amidst the challenging circumstances, the arrest of their leader and spokesperson; the group continued to sensitise the public on why they needed to turn out in their numbers to cast their vote in the next elections. The mass mobilization of people became unprecedented that the UN Secretary-General urged all political parties in Senegal to resolve their disputes peacefully and through the ballot. This additional voice from the global level gave the opposition political party "Alliance of Progress Forces" led by Macky Sall and the organisers of the movement extra energy as it could be seen that the world had noticed what was happening in Senegal. All eyes were now on the President and the National Election Commission to resolve the impasse through the ballot on a level playing field.

“

**The movement recorded success of changing a seating President with the instrument of mass mobilisation of citizens from the grassroots using Hip-hop music and arts to preach the message of social change and transformation.**

The mobilisation eventually paid off as the elections were held with a tie in the first round and the opposition winning in the second round with 66% of the total vote cast on March 25, 2012. Before the second round of elections, Former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria was deployed by the Economic Community of West African Countries on a peaceful mediation with political stakeholders after the first round of elections nearly resulted to another escalation of violence. The second round of elections was held under the watchful eyes of international observers including the ECOWAS, African Union and the European Union and this saw Macky Sall of the Alliance of Progress Forces being elected and inaugurated as President on the 2nd of April, 2012.



A public display of demand by the protesters

## RELATE THE CASE STUDY TO THE PROJECT

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This case study fits into the context of the project Media Act because the protesters enabled the use of media to start a revolution against the government and succeeded in gaining global recognition through simple acts of sharing arts, street raps songs through youtube videos and WhatsApp messaging across Senegal. The overarching aim of the project Media Act is to enhance Media literacy skills through non-formal methods and to enable opportunities for young people to participate more in the society particularly those with fewer livelihood opportunities. The constitutional crisis in Senegal orchestrated as part of the grand plan by the elite to remain perpetually in power without providing common amenities for the citizens was subjugated with the power of Hip-hop music and arts.

The context of the case study of "We are Fed Up". The nexus of the deliverable from project Media Act will enable the younger generation in Senegal and among the participating organisations to reflect on the current trend of political events and fashion out additional methods to embark on using the instrument of the media to demand more accountability and transparency from the government. Innovation in governance can only be persuaded and driven by a deliberate change designed for the system, and this entails critical thinking when creating and suggesting new policy framework. Most times those watching from afar will grasp the situation of what needs to be changed more than those operating the system itself. This is what the concept of media literacy among youth workers and an extension of the citizens can help address by making them more enlightened with the power of non-traditional and traditional methods of the media.

In two of the scholarly books written by the revered Harvard Professor of Political Classics, Francis Fukuyama, the Origin of Political Order and the Political Order and Political Decay. He observed that the political and economic down curve progression for countries like Nigeria and Senegal are among the worst in the world's political map being among the African biggest nations and a democratic nation so to say. Fukuyama holds that the political economy for these countries is virtually in a static caravan and near impossible to redeem, not necessarily because of corruption or weak institutions and or bad politics but because nations like Senegal are what Richard Joseph described as a prebendal political institution.

The learned authors thought implies that these economies are a mere mixture of rent-seeking citizens regularly on the payroll of the political class with a high level of clientelism and ethnic identity between them. Fukuyama postulates that the political economy system operated by the oligarchs in these countries have no underlying merit architecture. So, rent-seeking citizens elect one of their own whose essential qualification is the capacity of being a prebendal political philanthropist who has to reward those citizens through political rents or empowerment. Fukuyama says such a system is a cliché which is a circumlocutory principality wrecking some of the biggest economies in Africa and reducing their relevance to mere footnotes in the world's history. The way forward according to him is to raise the consciousness of citizens to elect and build institutions with peculiar political and economic sector-specific intelligence managed by technocrats in the case of the economy and entrench politics of ideology for the political institutions. And this is where this project Media Act plays an integral

part towards attaining that height suggested by the learned author.

### Methodology/approach

The approach used in accomplishing the objective of the protesters was a non-formal method involving the use of music recordings and arts and spreading the same through several media channels. For example, the "Mind" was the soul of the movement and did contact mobilization at the grassroots level while the "Hardcore" persistently did the organization and coordination of activities employing the underground and street tactics in Dakar talking about the dangers of imposition and political lukewarmness; Hip-hop street music freestyle also held across the country using street rap to highlight the suffering of the masses.

The adoption of the strategy to use new media to circulate mass information through WhatsApp, Facebook, street freestyle raps, basketball pitches, age-grade meetings, churches, mosques, twitter and person to person contact about the shortfalls of the government. As well as explaining the reasons behind the action to the protesters enabled a large turnout for the protest and mass mobilisation for the voter registration exercise when the Supreme Court had granted the candidate of the ruling party access to contest the 2012 elections.

The approach of the founders not being interested in running for office themselves but merely concentrating on changing government and asking members to sign up to be part of the one million votes they require to make that change are also ideological. Finally, the structural formation of the group in itself was democratic with a clear line of information sharing and strategy session. For example, the group actively based their model on grassroots democracy, adopting a bottom-up approach and engaging the real people that suffer from the injustice perpetrated at the centre. They had a regional and semi-autonomous local organisation working with them from which they referred to as the "Minds" and a relaxed doctrine (free will), structure and restrictions on the central committee known as the "Hardcore". This approach enabled the "Minds" to be "flexible, innovative and communally responsive" according to Damon Sajjani of the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

### Impact

The impact of the Y'En A Marre movement was unprecedented in the

history of African political space, and it will continue to be for years. The movement recorded success of changing a seating President with the instrument of mass mobilisation of citizens from the grassroots using Hip-hop music and arts to preach the message of social change and transformation. That needed transformation can only come through the ballot when state actors use state institutions to subvert the will of the people.

Shortly after the formation of the movement in January 2011 and the subsequent ideological declaration that followed as well as the organisation of the structure of the movement started having an impact on the local community because the level of political participation and consciousness was awakened and the grassroots were ready to change the socio-political structure of the government. Furthermore, the joining of forces with the opposition political party, leaders of thoughts in the country and the demand for change divided the ruling party members in the National Assembly and made most of them speak on the side of the people. This, to a large extent, shaped the President's withdrawal of the bill for the constitutional amendment from the National Assembly.

The transversal impact of the movement was such that it was almost replicated in Nigeria in the period leading up to the 2019 elections. Mr Innocent Idibia, a Nigerian Hip-hop musician popularly known as Tuface called for his fellow artists to lead a mass protest against the government because of the lack of vision, corruption and the protracting economic crunch on the people. The Federal Police quickly arrested Mr Innocent Idibia.

### Challenges

•Among the topmost challenges inherent with this methodology is the threat to life that could come with venturing into the political terrain of



Picture taken by the Guardian UK



a country. Since each country has powerful state and non-state forces backing each candidate occupying the seat of the President of a nation. An example of such is the threat to arrest and imprison all the family members of Mr Innocent Idibia, a famous musician in Nigeria who called for the replication of this methodology in Nigeria in the lead up to the 2019 Presidential elections. He was personally arrested and detained for several days.

•Another challenge is the level to which the intended civil action can be kept “civil” without causing fatalities either on the side of those protesting and on the side of those defending the protest. However, in the African context, the tendency to keep any mass mobilisation of people against the interest of the government will result to excessive disruption of activities and even record casualties because on the one side the level of education is low. On the other side, the frustration of the environment in which the protesters live in may make some people react more than necessary.

•The different challenge is that of sustaining the momentum. As you may have recalled above, majority of the rural people in Africa live daily based on what is available. As such, they can be apathy on the side of people is not adequately motivated to stay the cause. For example, providing daily incentives like water and food.

#### **Benefits/disbenefits of this practice**

The legendary author, Francis Fukuyama in his book *The End of History and Last Man*, says that democracy is the last form of the human governance model of its kind, any other form of government will be a branch of democracy either as Liberal, Illiberal or Social Democracy. Democracy is the End of governance architecture and the last of a kind.

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Francis Fukuyama says that democracy is the last form of the human governance model of its kind, any other form of government will be a branch of democracy either as Liberal, Illiberal or Social Democracy. Democracy is the End of governance architecture and the last of a kind.

Martin Moore in his work *Democracy Hacked* clearly showed that democracy had been altered, reshaped and modified by today's technology from its original version and contemplation. He holds that the future of democracy will thrive on how it can cope with technology, therefore contemplating that surveillance and platform democracy is the Future.

Going by the understanding of the above authors, among the first lessons learnt is that democracy will be shaped by technology and that includes the media because the traditional media space has been reshaped by technological advancement and removed to a large extent the gatekeeping of traditional media houses. Therefore, a single tweet from somewhere in Germany and can be seen across the world in less than a second after the tweet. The organisers of the Y'En A Marre movement understood the power of media literacy and used this to enhance their social change for the benefit of the entire citizens.

In my opinion, I would agree that this approach can be replicated in many African countries because the ordinary citizen in these countries gets to interact with artists (musicians, actors) more than even government representatives. However, those replicating this methodology must not seek to be the ones to replace themselves in government; they must separate their political lineage from the struggle in itself. This way, the movement will have an ideological inclination and a clear path that will remind any oppressing government of the failure to work for the benefit of the people.



*Team's meeting.*

## HOW CAN IT BE IMPLEMENTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS?

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The context of this case study and the methodology used by the Y'En A Marre can be replicated in any country because every country has notable musicians and star-artists that are connected to the people based on their art and skill in portraying real-life situations in the states, they ply their craft. For example, several groups from the external and internal with ties to Egypt used the media to gain ample traction to the 2017 NGO Law which had penalties of imprisonment for Non-governmental organisation workers. The law was draconian that civil rights activists protested until the law was repealed and certain elements removed in July 2019. Although human rights group still call for more relaxation of the law, it is a win situation that politicians have no choice than to listen to the people if concerted efforts are channelled properly by society's influencers. Recently in Nigeria, we also witnessed the mass mobilisation of social media influencers to rebuke the intended "social media bill" before it was even read in the National Assembly. A domino like effect was replicated by some musicians (rapper Smockey and Sam' K Le Jah) in Burkina Faso with the Le Balai Citoyen/Citizens broom and Ca suffi/Enough movements in 2013 when President Blaise

Campaore sought to change article 37 of the constitution to grant himself continuous term in office having ruled the country for 27years. The implications of the examples highlighted above is that the context of this case study can be implemented in other context when the citizens are dissatisfied with the status quo and want more social, economic and political change.

Further background information and visuals can be seen from the two documentaries below to further understand the context of which this case study is written. While beneath is are some pictures from the protest demanding for more transparency and accountability in governance.

• **'Incorruptible' Documentary Looks Inside Artist-Led Youth Movement During Senegal's Tumultuous 2012 Election** (can be found on Netflix)

'Incorruptible' is a new political documentary from director Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi focusing on Senegal's tumultuous 2012 elections.

• **Boy Saloum: La Révolte des Y'en a Marre' by French director and producer Audrey Gallet documents the Y'en a Marre movement in Senegal which took place from early 2011 through early 2012.** The film opens with a Franz Fanon quote: "Every generation must, in relative opacity, discover its mission, accomplish it or betray it."

<https://africasacountry.com/2013/11/the-new-type-of-senegalese-social-movement>



*This picture shows one of the leaders being arrested by the police.*



Some of the text and demand for reforms shared during the protest  
by the members

Movement Name	Stated Objectives	Leadership
Y'en a Marre	Reforms the political system with citizens' concerns at the center; promote civic education, non-violent protest, and improved living conditions; nurture a "new type of Senegalese" who would be more involved in public affairs; oppose Wade	Journalists Fadel Barro, Aliou Sane, and Denise Sow; rappers Fou Malade, Thiar, and Kilifeu
Le Mouvement Juin 23 (M23)	Defend the constitution and democratic values; oppose Wade	Opposition party leaders, especially Macky Sall, Moustapha Niassé, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, and Idrissa Seck; Alioune Tine, head of the African Assembly for the Defense of Human Rights
Bes du Nakk	Provide moral support to citizens and local government officials protesting high electricity prices and low quality of public services; within the Assises Nationales framework, help opposition parties and civil society unite around a single candidate to run against Wade	Mansour Sy Djamil, a progressive Tijani Sufi marabout who returned to Senegal in 2007 after working for the Islamic Development Bank
Fekke Ma Ci Boule	Oppose Wade, but not in cooperation with the Assises Nationales; raise citizen awareness	Yousseou Ndour, a globally renowned singer with humble origins
Yamalé	Fight corruption in government contracts	Bara Tall, president of the large construction



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# OSH

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COUNTRY: KYRGYZSTAN

AUTHORS: LIDIYA CHIKALOVA, NURSULUU  
SULEIKEVA, ZHANYLAI ADYLBEK

Western-supported peacebuilding, mediation and reconciliation projects initiated in response to intercommunal violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 have proven to be attractive to donors as they provided good insight and management of conflict situations. Yet, today in 2020, we still see that youth workers, activists from various NGOs as well as journalists continue to work in the sector of peacebuilding, mediation and reconciliation using approaches which were developed in grassroots scenarios. Whether due to sustainability aspect of the donors' initiatives or due to other reasons, it was not clear whether the methods used during the conflict were actually productive. By means of the research and a focus group among journalists and activists living in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, a team from Kyrgyzstan collected data and added substantial pieces to the research on 'Conflict Transformation and Media Tools among Youth in Kyrgyzstan'. In June 2010 violence among Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in the South of Kyrgyzstan left 400-500 people dead, many more were displaced internally as well as externally. Social and political tensions in the country and a lack of economic opportunities, provided a backdrop to the political instability following the overthrow of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April 2010. The research encompasses methods used and their effectiveness in the peace-building activities and the views of youth activists on the role of media.



# BACKGROUND OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country in Central Asia. With the central government located in Bishkek, its second most populous city, Osh, is the southern capital. The majority of population in the Southern region of Kyrgyzstan are Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups. After the collapse of 2nd president's rule and the inauguration of an interim government in 2010, Kyrgyz society lived in tension, intimidated by followers of Bakiev, who said they would seek to cause unrest. At that time the authorities sought the support of the Uzbek population in the south, to help minimise the influence of Bakiev (ex-president). In May 2010, influential southern Uzbek politician Kadyrjan Batyrov spoke to his voters and persuaded Uzbeks to take part in the political process. His speech was taken by some leaders in Kyrgyz society as a call for autonomy. The situation escalated into a conflict between two ethnic groups with more than 400 people killed and many more displaced. Kyrgyzstan is considered to be the only democratic country in the post-Soviet Central Asia and has constant change of ruling parties.

## CASE STUDY

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According to Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI) report 2014 the violence followed the worst crisis in independent Kyrgyzstan's history, specifically political crisis.<sup>1</sup> The official position of the Kyrgyz Government was that the alliance of Uzbek separatist politicians and supporters of the former Bakiyev regime, and Kyrgyz politicians and supporters of the regime and security chiefs in the Southern region failed to spot the warning signs and the escalation of the situation peaked.

Many Osh residents and local NGOs argued that mediation projects were not adequate for re-building interethnic relations and preventing future conflict. Local actors stressed that interethnic tensions could not be overcome by talking about peace, but rather by addressing deep structural problems such as the lack of economic opportunity, and the failures of the legal system to secure justice for ethnic minorities. In summer of 2011 many international organizations were executing

mediation projects in Osh. Participants and local NGOs expressed cynicism about workshops and seminars, referring to them as a waste of time and funds as they did not offer economic help. Many in Osh were struggling to rebuild their businesses and were looking for financial support, such as interest free loans. Thus, the economic demand was not met, yet international NGOs were mostly offering only psychological and mediation assistance.

Importantly, many local residents resented the tolerance seminars because how they understood and framed 'perpetrators' and 'victims' differed from the international donors' notions. Despite different narratives about the nature of the conflict, many residents agreed that the dominant discourse of a historical interethnic hatred did not make sense. It was striking how seminar participants challenged reconciliation processes in seminars, where one ethnic group was framed as a perpetrator and another as a victim. The resentment of the reconciliation process was particularly strong among the Kyrgyz, who rejected it and their portrayal as a group that suffered less and that were required to acknowledge their wrongdoing.<sup>2</sup>

The case study is related to the overall goal of the Mediate as the main focus is on the peace-building as well as the reconciliation of the peace process via young activities and journalists as well as youth. The methodology of the research is based on the desktop review of the analysis conducted by international institutions such as SIPRI, OSCE and others. The second element of the research is a focus group organised in Osh, Kyrgyzstan with the involvement of youth activists, students, journalists and media representatives. The interviews were transcribed to determine which aspects of the conflict reconciliation have worked and were relevant in the conflict transformation. The impact of the research can help to assess whether the factors observed during the conflict were in place and whether the methods used in combating the conflicts were appropriate. The challenges that were faced were getting everyone on board to discuss the issues, as experts were working remotely or located in other countries. The benefit of the project approach is that it could be reapplied into any country case-study

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<sup>1</sup>MEGORAN, NICK, *et al.* *EVALUATING PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014, [www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19150](http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19150). Accessed 10 Mar. 2020.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

provided that qualitative approach (focus group) is widespread and commonly used in assessing and evaluating the quality of methods applied in conflict transformation.

## THE CONFLICT MEDIATION

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Following the violence of June 2010, reconciliation and mediation projects were rapidly spearheaded by international donors as a valuable means of conflict prevention in Osh. With time the strategies started to overlap, became intertwined with local state and civil society interventions, and had deceptive parallels to nationalist state consolidation programmes.

Peacebuilding programmes that were encountered by researchers were delivered inappropriately. Some Osh residents regarded reconciliation workshops as a strange set of activities: the face-to-face interactions, sessions of speaking out inner feelings, role plays and group discussions did not correspond to the way the local population expressed feelings of grief. Such activities not always appropriate to the local cultural aspects where it is uncommon to speak out about personal issues. Some local NGOs judged the mediation projects to be problematic on this ground. Moreover, people who had limited social capital in their own communities were involved to resolve the mini-conflicts, and these interventions were hard to control and consider successful. This was the first aspect raised during the focus group to gain the understanding from the perspective of youth activists after nine years have passed.

International actors presented their efforts to promote peacebuilding, mediation and reconciliation as success stories. Project success was inevitably reported to showcase an achievement with concrete results. Research is led to believe that thousands of mediators are now capable of mediating conflicts, the youth is more tolerant as a result of joint football games and dancing to each other's music, and as funding comes to an end it is the responsibility of the communities to carry on with various activities to sustain peace. The donors are normally unaware of the beneficiaries' situation and what is beneficial for them. In this case, the applied norms could sometime be even harmful. This was the second issue raised during the focus group discussion.

Following the evaluation of the EU and the US presence in the reconciliation processes to prevent further violence it was concluded that the authors propose that peacebuilding and reconciliation projects

are only likely to be effective if they are designed and implemented to address these conflict factors in a comprehensive way, moving far beyond reconciliation and mediation to address key political issues, notably economic opportunity and justice as these were the most notable points among residents of Osh.

Thus, in 2010 a combination of below factors were observed<sup>3</sup>:

1. Resentments on both sides created structurally by the operation of the ethno-territorial settlement, which through 'titular ethnicization' raises expectations of privilege amongst Kyrgyz and experiences of discrimination amongst Uzbeks;
2. Poverty, unemployment and lack of economic opportunity, which disproportionately affected rural Kyrgyz;
3. Kyrgyz fears about Uzbeks challenging the integrity of the state, which circulate as conspiracy theories and rumours;
4. Political instability and crisis, meaning that the altercation in Osh quickly grew into violence;
5. As demonstrated in each of the major reports on the conflict, institutional weakness, or the inability of administrators and security forces to anticipate and respond to and de-escalate violence when a sudden and unpredictable spark ignites it.

Peacebuilding projects were sought to prioritize working with demographic groups directly i.e. youth, activists, less educated, unemployed males from monoethnic areas, with less emphasis placed on people from mixed urban areas, women, and the elderly. Moreover, international organisations noted that conflict mediation and reconciliation programmes aimed at young men should have gone hand in hand with a substantive element of creating economic opportunities for young people, considering that economic reforms were not made in a long term neither before nor shortly after the conflict.



**Following the violence of June 2010, reconciliation and mediation projects were rapidly spearheaded by international donors as a valuable means of conflict prevention in Osh**

In the eyes of many Kyrgyzstanis the methods of western actors carried rather a tarnished and ineffective brand and in general there was a mistrust on the part of locals towards peace-making entities during the conflict resolution process and the next years. To help address these concerns, donors should therefore aim to support and strengthen appropriate and effective Kyrgyzstani conflict management programmes where they exist and where their support would not harm or undermine such initiatives, rather than initiate their own.

International peace-building institutions shall have developed assessment tools against the behavior change. Prior to initiating peace-building interventions, a strategy including clear baselines for action should be established based upon an integrated conflict analysis. Evaluations should be performed by independent individuals and organisations, without an obvious interest in the continuation of similar projects.<sup>4</sup> This demands donors to make long-term commitments to working with key individuals and communities. However, conflicts vary case by case and cannot be resolved by the specific blueprint applicable to any interethnic conflict. Having that in mind, our research team build the theme of questions for the focus group around tools and key actors that helped to resolve the conflict in the most effective way.

## CONCLUSION

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Provided that the research was conducted among journalists, activists and youth workers it was essential for us to find out how media, international organizations and government worked and still works up today on conflict prevention, furthermore we wanted to know about the effect of the approaches used during the conflict nine years ago and their effectiveness. Following the interviews, it was established that international organizations played a great role in building peace during

the conflict time despite the fact that the initiatives were criticized at the initial stage. Mass projects which were focused on preventing ethnical conflicts and transforming conflict to peace with time demonstrated to be effect, but did not have instant effect. International donors held many trainings, workshops and peace tables among residents of Osh, both Kyrgyz and Uzbek, journalists and NGO workers. Such trainings are still being launched among youth from Kyrgyz and Uzbek background.

In addition, many learnt that international organisations were working with humanitarian aid organisations supported by the UN to diminish the result of the conflict on the basic human needs level.

Furthermore, contrary to the popular belief in the international reports, state mass media played an effective role. Local journalists had a great influence on peacebuilding and violence preventing activities. Mainly, state media tried to calm down the conflict situation by providing constant informational input via media sources. International media demonstrated one-sided information informing that the genocide was taking place in the Kyrgyz Republic. The media reported on Uzbeks only and the difficult situation they found themselves in. State media did not have access to marginalized Uzbek community and national media could not provide information about it. Thus, despite the fact that information was presented it was not always accurately portraying the situation. Moreover, according to focus group results, participants shared the insight information about ethnical conflict in 2010 and the way both national and international media acted on peacebuilding activities, the way NGOs and government of Kyrgyzstan acted in crisis situation and methods being used in peacebuilding. Among the tools/methods were: factchecking, spreading creditable but dosed information, informational campaign among the representatives of two ethnicity, trainings and workshops aimed at mental health of the victims. Despite the fact that many local residents ignored and criticized the western approach it actually proved to be effective among youth nowadays.

Lastly, the Kyrgyz government was experiencing difficult political situation because of governmental transition of power. Roza Otunbaeva the interim president visited a conflict zone of Southern Kyrgyzstan to give courage to victims on both sides. Moreover, Roza Otunbaeva as a president of Kyrgyzstan turned to international community and organisation to calm down the situation in the South. Although the political support was not as constant, the media was the only tool for authorities to communicate to both actors involved in the conflict.

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<sup>3</sup>MEGORAN, NICK, *et al.* *EVALUATING PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTIONS IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014, [www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19150](http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19150). Accessed 10 Mar. 2020

<sup>4</sup>OECD. (2008). *GUIDANCE ON EVALUATING CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES*. Paris.

As demonstrated above mass media played a key role that reached both ethnic groups and proved to be an essential element when communicating a message to people on behalf of the authorities. Therefore the emphasis was placed on peace reconciliation on psychological level when working with groups of residents as well as on the professional level with NGO activists and journalists, who despite the fact that they were considered as actors of the conflict, had to stick to the professional duties and conduct thorough fact checking when report on the event and cover both ethnic groups.



## **CHAPTER 2:**

# **STANDARDS OF JOURNALISM**



# CYPRUS COMMUNITY MEDIA CENTRE

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COUNTRY: CYPRUS  
AUTHOR: CYPRUS YOUTH COUNCIL

The case study that will be discussed in this essay is the Cyprus Community Media Center (CCMC). Founded in 2009 and disbanded in 2015, the Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC) functioned as an independent community media and supported local organisations and community groups to communicate their message to a wider audience through audiovisual productions and training. It was comprised of over 40 civil society organisations that represent a broad range of civil society issues throughout Cyprus. CCMC empowered its members through media trainings, dedicated support, equipment loan, video, and audio production, and providing a community space for their various functions. CCMC also provided training workshops for civil society, media professionals and the public in a wide range of media-related subjects.

## BACKGROUND OF THE COUNTRY

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Cyprus has been geographically and ethnically divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north and occupied 38% of the island, after decades of intercommunal tensions and violence. Since then, the two major communities, the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot have been living in two different parts of the country: the officially recognized by the international community Republic of Cyprus in the south and the Turkish-held auto-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the north, recognized only by Turkey. Most of the population on the island is Greek Orthodox (78%), with 18% of Muslims, and an overall 4% of Maronites, Armenian Apostolics, Catholics, and so forth. The official languages are Greek and Turkish.

Not surprisingly, the Cyprus Problem is the main topic of discourse in the media on both parts of the island. Nationalistic and conflict-oriented discourse through the media develops in similar patterns, accentuated by the unresolved division of the island.

## OBJECTIVES OF CCMC

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At present there is no explicit recognition of community media in either part of Cyprus. CCMC was the first community media organisation to be established in Cyprus.

Financed by the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Action for Cooperation & Trust in Cyprus (ACT), which is in turn financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), one of the core objectives of CCMC was the provision of training sessions to improve the media skills of civil society and empower individuals with the equipment and ability to create their own media.

CCMC strived to be diverse and inclusive by promoting the benefits of community-based media to as wide an audience as possible. It also aimed to enhance relationships between the mass media and civil society through the creation and broadcasting of productions that contributed to multiculturalism and diversity.

Since its inception CCMC trained hundreds of civil society representatives from a wide range of backgrounds. The key to CCMC's accessibility as a training centre lied in its location in the heart of Nicosia's buffer zone, within the grounds of Ledra Palace, able to host participants from both sides of the divide. It housed a meeting space used for training as well as video and audio edit suites, video and still cameras, workstations and recording facilities.

In its "Foundation Charter" the mission of the CCMC is summarised as "[e]mpowering a media literate and active society," but it is especially in the description of its 10 core values where the link to conflict resolution is made explicit.

The first item on the list of core values is to "[u]nite people and communities through community media based on coexistence, dialogue, inclusion, reconciliation, and respect for diversity." In addition, the fifth core value emphasises the inclusiveness of the CCMC ("We value and respect the contributions of all people in society and aim to provide a forum for diversity, multiculturalism, and social inclusion through community media production based on creativity, dialogue, and innovation") and the ninth core value refers to the CCMC's opposition toward "all forms of discrimination based on concepts of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, creed, and/or religious belief and views."

**To achieve this objective, three main strategies were used by the CCMC:**

**A.** The first strategy was based on the capacity building and skill enhancement of the CCMC members. During its years of operation (2009–2015), the CCMC formed a network of more than 40 civil society actors, who are all Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot NGOs, working on a variety of topics, such as "health, the environment, human rights, women, youth, reconciliation, education, culture, and more" ("CCMC Members"). This strategy aimed at providing "support [to] local organizations and community groups in communicating their message to a wider audience. [The CCMC] does this in many different ways, whether it's training, dedicated support, equipment loan, creating videos, taking photographs, holding public events, setting up online forums or even just being on the end of the phone, offering advice to its members."

**B.** The second general CCMC strategy was to bridge the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities on the island, bringing their member organizations (and others) together into one rhizomatic network. The physicality of the CCMC, with its offices within the buffer zone, plays a significant role here. The notions of copresence, collaboration, and coproduction, are important conflict resolution mechanisms that create a sense of togetherness, transgressing the frontiers between both communities.

**C.** A third strategy was to affect mainstream media content and produce alternative media content that provides more diverse and less divisive representation of the island. One of the CCMC's aims was to promote a diversity of opinions or voices, and to "diversify the media landscape" ("FAQ"). This strategy intersects with the bridging-both communities strategy, both materially, by bringing (media and CSO) people together.

## PROBLEMS

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According to Orestis Tringides, one of CCMC's founders, the organisation faced several structural problems during its six years of operation.

The first set of problems is related to the societal-political context in which the CCMC functioned. In Cyprus, it is almost impossible to think about community media without involving the conflict at some point. The increased sense of freedom to publicly defend a reconciliatory agenda, without the risk of being branded a traitor, has not completely replaced the instability created by the logics of division. This caused the CCMC to develop a series of scenarios, to deal with either the consolidation of the island's re-unification as a federation, or its partition.

Moreover, in the current configuration, the division has led to the existence of two politico-legal systems, with two media environments and two (imaginary) communities who use different languages. These legal realities of the division also impact directly on the CCMC's organisational structure, as it required the establishment of two separate NGOs. Also, the lack of specific legislation on community media, in both parts of the island, impedes upon the realisation of the

CCMC's objectives.

Finally, sustainability issues also complicated CCMC's reconciliatory role. As is often happens with community media, their existence is filled with uncertainties and permanently threatened. In the case of the CCMC, this caused the demise of the organisation. After its donor (the UNDP) ceased its funding in 2013, CCMC effectively shut down its operations. What remains now is a loose network of civil society organisations and individuals, affiliated with CCMC, who organise their own actions. CCMC also retains a social media presence.

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE CASE OF CCMC

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The CCMC example illustrates that community media can play a role in conflict resolution, but this case study also shows the complexities and restrictions of their capacity.

Because of their openness toward different voices in society, community media can become meeting places for the different actors involved in the conflict. By allowing these actors to work together on specific media content and projects, which form alternatives to the content and narratives produced by Cypriot mainstream media, but also by having them decide collectively on the community media organisation itself, they become sites of collaboration and collective decision making, transgressing the realities of conflict.

Their role in conflict resolution and reconciliation is further strengthened by their very nature as medium, which allows them to promote counterhegemonic discourses on peace.

However, we should take in mind the vulnerable position community media have in society, and the problems inherent to the community media model. CCMC faced problems that all community media face, nevertheless, it had to deal with issues, specific to the Cyprus conflict.

As is often the case, the relationship of the CCMC with the communities it seeks to serve is complex and the participatory ethos is not always easy to translate into practice. This is further complicated by issues of sustainability and by the many objectives the organisation set for itself.



In a country where there are no community media and no legislation for them, the CCMC had the role of community media facilitator, as CSO facilitator, and as a mediator amongst CSOs, community media, mass media organisations, and society.

Another set of problems is created by the context of conflict and division, in which the CCMC had to function. This context, whether it is legal/regulatory, political or societal always impacts on community media. Being able to contribute to conflict resolution also obviously means having to function within the conflict itself, which is far from easy.

Despite these problems, related to the community media model and to its specific position within a conflict zone, the CCMC case shows that community media can play a significant role in conflict resolution by creating more opportunities for mutual understanding and humanising the other.

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# RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

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COUNTRY: LITHUANIA  
AUTHOR: HANNA CHABARAI

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia tries to maintain its status quo of the "greatest country on the continent", and engages in propaganda. Post-Soviet countries are the ones who suffer the most, especially, Ukraine, that experienced Russia's armed aggression in 2014. This aggression was called "hybrid" because it was actively accompanied by information attacks. For the European region, this means a potential threat from the side of Russia that opposes itself to the EU and NATO. That's why the defense of information space from the Russian propaganda should be a concern for these countries. They can use Ukrainian experience, as Ukraine has implemented many initiatives of fake and manipulation resistance in the last five years. For example, the StopFake initiative that debunks fakes in Russian media outlets, analytical platform Vox Ukraine that investigates the activity of the Russian bot farms on social media, online courses for media literacy, etc. Due to the influx of the extremist and offensive comments, Lithuanian media outlets Delfi and 15 min started filtering the comments sections on their websites, or prohibited them altogether.

# INTRODUCTION

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Russia as the successor of the USSR sets a goal of not losing its influence on the post-Soviet countries and perceives them as its satellites. Nowadays the special interest of Kremlin is post-Soviet countries of the European region that have already joined or could potentially join NATO, the main strategic rival of Russia. The biggest success in detachment from the Soviet heritage was achieved by the Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which had integrated themselves into the EU. A situation a little worse is currently in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. What is common for the aforementioned countries are the feelings of the older generation that remembers the USSR, and consider its fall to be the biggest tragedy of the century. People of the older generation still follow the events in Russia, consider Russia to be a metropolis, and Moscow to be the true capital. Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin for many remain heroes despite the decommunization policy.

Since there were no independent media outlets in the USSR and no alternative sources of information, the Soviet generation is used to trust the central television channel. They don't have a habit of critical thinking and believe that the state and media outlets are totally lying and that the truth does not exist. Russian propaganda is now using that belief. Russian news agencies Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik broadcast in many languages in different countries, imposing the Kremlin's viewpoint and sharing fake or manipulative news. The older generation of post-

Soviet countries out of habit votes for communist parties (where they still exist), or does not take part in the life of the community and building democracy, because it believes that it can not influence the political situation.

## THE EUROPEAN REGION TARGETED BY THE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

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In November 2015, the US State Department estimated that Russia was spending US \$1.4bn per year on its propaganda in 30 languages. For example, Sputnik news agency is widely represented in the world. It includes websites, mobile apps, streams, a radio service and press centers. It was founded by Russia Today in 2014 and its CEO Dmitri Kiselev is now under EU sanctions. Sputnik has offices across the world and delivers news in over 30 languages.

In 2019, Indrek Halilov, officer of the Estonian Defense Forces General Headquarters, wrote in the Sõdur magazine (1) about trends in Russian propaganda on defense. According to Halilov, the frequency of mentions of Estonian Defense Forces had grown in the Russian media ever since allied units of NATO arrived in the country in 2017. The most attention had been paid by the regional TV channels, including Sputnik, Baltnews and Rubaltic. They repeat messages claiming that NATO is an aggressor and is not really defending Estonia while the local population opposes NATO.



Pic 1. Russian propaganda poster in Crimea.



Also, Halilov described how the Russian propaganda was trying to stoke tensions between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking people in the country with lies and half-truths.

During the abovementioned NATO drills in 2017, Twitter saw a surge of messages from Russian-speaking bots in Eastern Europe, STRATCOM reports (2). The report mentions that two out of three Twitter users tweeting in Russian about NATO presence in the region were bots. According to STRATCOM's estimates, these bot accounts generate 84% of messages in the Russian language. Among the four countries analyzed (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland), Estonia was the most frequent target of the bot tweeting. They were the least active on Poland and Latvia. The surge of tweeting in Russian peaked in May and early June during the biggest NATO drills.

NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence in Riga explored the activity of Internet trolls focused on fueling debates in the interests of a certain state. Baltic Elves, the volunteers that search for trolls on social media and complain about them, oppose them. NATO sees it as a serious threat that many Latvians perceive these trolls as the real Russians.

Lithuanian fighters with misinformation see similar trends. "What we see more and more now is that Lithuanian-speakers abroad are recruited to spam networks with comments which are hard to differentiate from messages by bots. They are paid small sums of money for that as far as we have found out when the Kremlin's recruiters mistakenly contacted some of our Elves," the group founder Ričardas Savukynas said in an interview. (3)

Apart from that, the Russian propaganda has targeted Delfi, one of the top news websites in Lithuania. According to its chief editor, the comments section of this website was filled with pro-Russian posts before the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Now, the team includes people who remove extremist messages.

Sigita Struberger from the University of Latvia has written about the nuances of the Russian influence on Latvia (4). According to Struberger, nearly 37% of Latvia's population speaks Russian and the society is comprised of two communities – ethnic Latvians and Russian-speakers. Therefore, the Russian propaganda apparatus works to fuel a divide between these citizens, preserve soviet values, spread mistrust in Latvian political elite and increase positive perception of the Russian president.

Television and Internet are the main sources of the Kremlin's narratives. The topics they featured in 2018 included NATO presence in Latvia, Brexit, Latvia's place in the EU, education reform in the country, the rights of the Russian-speakers, nationalism that is put in the same category as fascism – as is the case with Russia's propaganda on Ukraine – and May 9. At the same time, Russian TV channels are popular among the Latvian population. While part of it that speaks Latvian perceives them critically, the Russian-speaking Latvians are almost fully incorporated into the Russian information space. The level of media literacy among the Latvian population is fairly low, the author claims. As a result, over 70% of the Russian-speakers do not see any danger for Latvia in the Kremlin's words or actions. Also, according to a research by DSPC, only a quarter of the Russian-speakers polled in Latvia see the developments in Eastern Ukraine as a conflict between Ukraine and Russia. 66% view it as a civil war.

Despite a number of problems, Latvia has accomplished success in strengthening the security of its information space, Struberger says. For example, it had the first instance of criminal liability for an individual who created fake news on the Internet. Another person was put on trial for fueling hatred and actions against national security. In 2018, media literacy, critical thinking skills and patriotism were introduced as part of the school curriculum in Latvia.

Apart from that, Latvia decided to fully switch school education into Latvian. The Russians and the Russian-speaking population there



protested against this; the protests were organized by the Russian Union of Latvia, a political party with links to the Kremlin. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs refers to the education law in Latvia as "discrimination of Russian-speakers". Ukraine is in a similar situation: its parliament passed a law in 2017 whereby Ukrainian is the only language of education. Separate classes can be created for national minorities where they could learn their native languages. Russia opposes this law while Latvia's Minister of Education and Science Kārlis Šadurskis has supported it.

In November 2019, the National Electronic Media Council of Latvia (NEPLP) decided to stop the broadcasting of nine channels that are part of a holding owned by the Russian billionaire Yuriy Kovalchuk. He is on the list of individuals sanctioned by the European Council for violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity. After this, officials in Estonia claimed that they were looking at possible banning of TV channels linked to Kovalchuk in the country.

The Russian propaganda uses similar instruments and messages in the countries of the European region, manipulating facts and emotions, playing on fears and sensitive topics and fueling problems. Easy access to the Internet, high level of anonymity online and poor media literacy contribute to the spread of disinformation.

A report by CAPS/IRSEM (Policy Planning Staff and the Institute for Strategic Research) in France looks at the influences of soviet propaganda (5). According to the report, 80% influence efforts in Europe are attributed to Russia. The authors claim that the Kremlin has "weaponized" conventional and social media, ideology and culture, criminality and corruption, and energy. Russia has not invented anything new, it has simply applied KGB methods: sabotage, disinformation, terror, manipulations, aggressive propaganda and the use of protest potential in the population of other countries. The name of Russia Today was replaced with RT to make the connection with Russia less obvious. Researchers claim that its goal has changed too: instead of advertising Russia, the channel starts discrediting its opponents.

In the past several years, Europe has experienced a wave of measles caused by a serious decline in vaccination. Russian propaganda was among the contributors to this: American researchers found (6) that the Russian Internet Research Agency, a troll farm accused of interference with the US presidential election in 2016, sparked debates about vaccination on social media since 2014. 93% of the news on vaccination on Twitter was spread by Russian trolls or bots. After that,

the World Health Organization recorded a spike in measles across the world, including the countries believed to be close to fully eliminating the disease. Ukraine, Greece, France, Italy, Romania and Serbia were among the European countries most affected by that attack. They have high rates of measles and low coverage with vaccination.

## RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

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In 2014 the Russian propaganda was concentrated on Ukraine. As a result of the revolution, pro-Russian politicians left their positions and pro-European politicians came to power. In February and March 2014, Russia invaded Crimea, a Ukrainian peninsula, as Ukraine was undergoing a transition of power. Simultaneously Russian diversionists took under their control a part of Ukraine's territory in the Donbas region. There are many proofs of the involvement of the Russian army in the fighting in Ukraine's territory. InformNapalm is the volunteer community that collects these proofs (7). However, the Russian propaganda denies this, just like it did with Crimea, insisting instead that the military conflict in the Donbas is a purely Ukrainian issue.

The story about a crucified boy was one symbol of Russia's propaganda. In July 2014, Russia's Pervyi Kanal showed a woman pretending to be a refugee from Ukraine. According to her, Ukrainian military had crucified a three-year old boy on a notice board in Sloviansk. Factchecking did not find any proof of that claim. The "refugee woman" was later spotted in other videos under other names. In November that year, Rossiya-1 reported about a woman allegedly raped by Ukrainian "vigilantes" (or karатели in Russian, one of the labels created for the Ukrainian military by the Russian propaganda) when she was in a fit of epilepsy. Again, no proof was found while the "raped epileptic grannies" grew into yet another iconic case of Russian fake news.

The whole world knows about the Boeing MH-17 tragedy: it was shot down on July 17, 2014, near Donetsk killing 298 people. The Dutch authorities have officially confirmed that crashed Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down by a Russian-made BUK missile fired from eastern Ukraine (8). What Russia did from day one was to blame Ukraine for the catastrophe. RIA Novosti referred to their sources in a report claiming that Ukraine

moved Buk missile systems into the conflict area on that day. Russia's Defense Ministry claimed that a satellite spotted a Ukrainian Su-25 fighter jet flying 3-5km away from the MH-17 that day. A number of the Russian media reported that it was the jet that fired the missile at the Boeing airplane. Russian TV channel LifeNews claimed that Boeing was blown up from inside as a result of a special operation.

Apart from conventional media, Russia proactively uses social media to spread its propaganda. For example, a fragment from the 2010 Russian-Belarusian movie Brest Fortress was distributed as a "proof" of the crimes committed by the Ukrainian army in the Donbas (9).

On its Facebook page, Mir 24 TV channel presented Kosovo refugees from 1999 as Ukraine's refugees to Russia in 2014 (10).

By using such fakes, Russia tries to portray Ukraine as a country of chaos, where anarchy and criminal groups prevail, police and justice do not exist, and the peaceful population flees. Russia juxtaposes itself to this chaos as a place of stability and prosperity. Pro-Kremlin media outlets broadcast such manipulative information to the whole world, distorting the reality. As a result, people living in these countries begin to perceive Ukraine (or another country that becomes the object of Russian propaganda) as a horrible place that one should avoid.

One of the excuses for Russia's annexation of Crimea was the protection of the Russian-speaking population: the Russian propaganda claimed that the new Ukrainian authorities were oppressing Russian speakers. Messages were repeated over and over again that Russia should "protect" the Russian-speaking population of the Donbas. In this context,

Russia is using its own theory of "brotherly nations" that includes Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. "One (single) people" and "russkiy mir" or the Russian World are the memes and markers of this propaganda (11).

But it goes beyond the above-mentioned countries. For example, Lithuania's Defense Minister Juozas Olekas said at the meeting of the Defense and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on June 1, 2014, that the Baltic States were in danger too. "Putin's new doctrine is the Kremlin's obligation to protect the rights (of Russian-speakers) abroad wherever they are. This could be an excuse for Putin to intervene and defend the rights of Russian-speakers in the Baltic States", he said (12).

## HOW A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY CAN COUNTER RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

States should view propaganda as a national threat, according to the Czech NGO The European Values. It has developed recommendations to counter Russian propaganda (13). Firstly, countering disinformation should be a priority of foreign policy. Secondly, propagandist statements by Russian politicians and other individuals should be publicly challenged. Thirdly, disinformation campaigns and the channels they used should be revealed. Fourthly, resilience against propaganda should be strengthened consistently.

Society can play an important role here. It should watch politicians and

украина[2348], беженцы[51], регионы[636]

В южные регионы России прибывает все большее число граждан Украины

Бескомпромиссность: Коллаж из фотографий

Это те, кто...

**It should watch politicians and public institutions, involve pro-Russian politicians and their organizations in public discussions in order to discover their sources of funding, and investigate their operations.**

1/1 В южные регионы России прибывает все большее число граждан Украины

public institutions, involve pro-Russian politicians and their organizations in public discussions in order to discover their sources of funding, and investigate their operations. Journalist associations should develop codes of conduct and use ethics commissions for those who spread propaganda under the guise of journalism. Lessons of media literacy should be introduced for children and young people.

Ukraine has a number of successful practices in countering Russian propaganda. In March 2014, StopFake was launched<sup>(14)</sup> upon the initiative of professors, graduates and students of Digital Future of Journalism, a school at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Journalists, editors, IT developers and translators joined the project. Initially, the community debunked fake information on developments in Ukraine. Then, it eventually grew into a center researching Russian propaganda. StopFake was launched as a volunteer project; it later started engaging funds through crowdfunding, international organizations and governments of democratic countries. StopFake is publishing in 11 languages, producing content for TV and radio channels, podcasts and a print paper.

The authors of StopFake specialize in debunking fake news in Russian media, they look for the sources of information, photographs, video and publish refutations on their website. Moreover, StopFake created an instruction called "How to identify a fake". For example, there are several ways to identify a photo fake. If you are using the Google Chrome browser, you can right-click on a suspicious image and click "Search Google for Image". If your browser does not have the function of

image search, you can install a special plugin, for example, "Who stole my pictures". You can also search the images saved on your computer by dragging the file into the Google search bar. These methods help to verify, if this image is original, or if it was edited in the photo editing software. Moreover, you can check the date of the first publication of this image, and what is really depicted on it.

It is harder to verify the video, but if the name of the video has a fresh date, but the actual file gets re-uploaded to YouTube many times, there is a high probability that it is a fake. It is worth reading the comments. Quite often, people who saw the original video would publish a link to it. You can also think of keywords that would describe this video, print them on the YouTube or Google search bar, and find the original. You can also make a screenshot of this video and google it

To reinforce the credibility of its messages, Russian propaganda often references western media outlets, but among such messages, there are many artifices of marginal websites that should be verified. Another trick of Russian propaganda is twisting the real messages of established media outlets. In this case, it is always worth reading the original text<sup>(15)</sup>. In 2014, LikBez. History Front<sup>(16)</sup> was launched to debunk myths on history. The project started with donations collected via social media. It publishes in Ukrainian and Russian as the audience of the Russian myths is Russian-speakers; some texts are translated into English.

Professional historians involved in the project help prepare objective historical publications for the website. For example, the Russian propaganda often manipulates the topics of the Second World War, claiming that in West Ukraine, there were "Ukrainian collaborationists" (politicians and the military of the Organization of Ukrainian nationalists, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army) that cooperated with the Nazis. LikBez explains that these organizations fought two occupation regimes, the Nazi and the communist, at the same time.

That same year, Ukrainian activists created Inform Napalm<sup>(17)</sup>, a project to inform the audience about the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Its key activities include OSINT, intelligence based on open sources, including social media. Its analysts systematize proof of Russia's military crimes against Ukraine, compile a database of the Russian Armed Forces military and units, and of Russian weapons in the Donbas, as well as data on Russia's presence in Syria. It now unites the efforts of more than 30 volunteers from over 10 countries. Their investigations are available for the audience in more than 20 languages. The project has no sources of funding. Its only source of income is contextual advertising on its website.

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**It is harder to verify the video, but if the name of the video has a fresh date, but the actual file gets re-uploaded to YouTube many times, there is a high probability that it is a fake.**



VoxUkraine (18) is an analytical platform founded by professional economists and lawyers in 2014. Specialized on economics, it also tackles other domains, including Russian propaganda. It is published in Ukrainian, English and Russian. The website exists via donations and grants from TTF, NED, PACT, Renaissance Foundation and the US Embassy. VoxUkraine studies the activity of Russian bots and trolls on social media, how they influenced the Brexit referendum and the political situation in Ukraine. For example, these fake accounts actively pursued the version that Ukraine was guilty in the MH-17 plane crash that only confirms Russian involvement in this incident.

In 2018, the Regional Press Development Institute (RDPI) supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched an information campaign titled Behind the News (**По той бік новин**) to debunk fakes and manipulations in the media and social media. The campaign has a website and an account on Facebook, publishing in Ukrainian. Among other things, it informs about the Russian propaganda — for example, about how Russia imposes its perspective on European MPs (19); how Russian trolls spread information about disposal of nuclear waste in Ukraine's territory (20), and how Ukrainian patriots are used to promote the Russian Church (21). They post in a light conversational style typical of social media and add funny illustrations to the posts.

Ukrainian Institute of Mass Media and Texty outlet created an online game Manipulator. The game explains how to create manipulative news: use posts on social networks, represent ordinary people as experts, invent fakes, make emotional headlines. The game screen shows the number of readers created by the user, depending on how successful the move was. The creators gave it the slogan: "Create the worst media and become popular". (22)

Fair and democratic media are one of the ways to resist disinformation. For example, the state of Taiwan, the country that China tries to influence informationally, decided not to resort to either censorship or restriction. When there is disinformation in the information space, the state is obliged to reach within an hour, before the deceitful message reaches the mass audience. The message of the state should be equally or even more convincing. If a counter-message has not been published in 6 hours, the reaction is meaningless. Independent media outlets and NGOs that resist propaganda in Europe and across the world could consider this experience.

One of the ways of refuting lies is the so-called "sandwich of truth". First,

one should write, what really happened, then shortly mention the facts of disinformation, and then write the truth again. This way fake gets isolated by the truth (23).

Lithuanian news website 15 min in 2016 launched a campaign of "Internet hygiene" with a motto "Here we are cleaning the Internet". The website prohibited published anonymous comments, as there were racist, homophobic and offensive ones among them. The campaign calls Internet users for responsible online behavior. Items such as a hair comb, toothpaste, soap, and deodorant symbolically help users not to publish excessive content on the Internet (24).

Ukrainian platform for free online education Prometheus created an online course of media literacy for teachers. The authors of this course explain how media influence society, who is a media literate person, how to protect yourself and the kids on the Internet. The aim of this course is for the teachers to pass the gained knowledge to the kids, and educate the new generation on media literacy (25).

Another course on Prometheus concerns the practical aspect of media literacy. It explains how fakes are created and disseminated, and how to identify and resist them (26).

Another project that has existed in Ukraine since 2010 is Media Sapiens, created by the "Detector Media" NGO. It publishes materials that help distinguish quality information, teach to critically treat media outlets, and detect manipulations. The audience of the project is journalists, civic activists, media managers, etc (27).

Detector Media created an online course "News literacy", aimed at improving the media literacy among the population living in conflict zones. Experts share how the news is made, what are professional standards in journalism, how media can manipulate public opinion, and who owns media outlets in Ukraine (28).

"MediaDriver" is a Ukrainian-language multimedia online handbook for teenagers that contains textual information, infographics, video, cartoons, and tests. This handbook teaches to detect fakes and manipulations and resist them (29).

Another Ukrainian project is "Feykohryz" (fake nibbler), a browser extension for Firefox and Google Chrome, and a Telegram bot. Feykohryz sends notifications if the user visits a manipulative website or reads a

material that was marked as a manipulation. These marks are created by a neural network that was trained on thousands of manipulative news pieces. Users can also send their own marks of manipulation (30).

As we see, one can fight Russian propaganda on a state level, or with the power of civil society. There are different instruments that help to resist fakes and manipulations, independent and professional media outlets, civic initiatives, educating the population on media literacy and critical thinking. These instruments can be used by any country that has experienced external propaganda. In these countries, journalists have to unite around standards and stand up for true news, debunking fakes at the same time. Online or offline lectures for pupils and students on media literacy should also be organized to educate them to detect fake messages. Others effective initiatives include information campaigns that teach to behave safely on the Internet, detect fake accounts, complain about them and their publications to the administrators of a social media platform, resist commenting posts that have troll and bot activity in the comments section ("don't feed the troll").



## **CHAPTER 3:**

# **IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICTS AND PEACE BUILDING**

A person wearing a light-colored hoodie and dark pants is standing on a rooftop, looking down. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds and the structure of the building they are on.

# EL ESPINO COMMUNITY EVICTION IN EL SALVADOR

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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

AUTHOR: JUAN CARLOS

The social processes of development and exclusion are always accompanied by different actors that reconfigure the territories according to the city logics that are created. Because of this, understanding the mechanisms of participation, amplification and denouncement is a first step to reflect and interpret the collective strategies of resistance that occur in certain contexts.

As a result of the above, the present case study addresses the process of exclusion of a community in precarious conditions in El Salvador and, how its eviction, involved young activists and alternative media in the complaint process. In addition, it seeks to interpret the process of the community organizing through digital media and its use as a complaint tool.



# INTRODUCTION

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Antiguo Cuscatlán is one of the 262 municipalities that make up the 14 departments of El Salvador; It has an area of 19.24 km<sup>2</sup> and is at a distance of 6 km from the capital of San Salvador<sup>1</sup>. Currently, Antiguo Cuscatlán is the municipality that presents the numbers in economic and social indicators throughout the salvadoran territory. However, despite having the best development indicators, there are still families in extreme poverty and, in the worst case scenarios, their needs are not being met instead they are being pressured to leave the territory.

Antiguo Cuscatlán has initiated a development process that, by the same logic of capital production, has left out ten precarious settlements in the area; one of them and, the most representative for its lack of basic services and precariousness, is the El Espino Community. For this reason, this essay aims to analyze the process of social exclusion of El Espino unit and the different actors that have been part of the social dynamics of community organization and resistance.

In addition, it seeks to reflect on the urbanization processes thought from a production logic of city distance between those who can access consumptionism and those who cannot. That is, and, in the words of Z. Bauman, social segregation and marginalization are the result of wars over space that occur in the processes of globalization.<sup>2</sup> . That is why, the inhabitants of the El Espino Community are a product of a global logic that structures territories in spaces that are increasingly separated and distanced in their ways of living. Consequently, the different social classes that dispute a certain territory are physically distant and, increasingly, ideologically further away. Thuswise the construction and reproduction of space by local orders (municipalities) is essential to interpret the structure of different actors, policies and ways of using the territory of the El Espino Community.

Likewise, it reflects on the role of young people and the media in the eviction process of the El Espino community. In particular, the different strategies of organization and resistance, they have united

the community as a territorial actor and brought young activists who do not belong to that territory closer together. As an effect, it ends by analyzing the process of organization and visibility that the eviction of the community had and its impact on the media.

# DELIMITATION

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## Scope

Theorizing and reflecting the exclusion process that the El Espino Community is facing, raises the need to define the scope that research can have throughout it's development. With that being said, to establish our field of action research that allows us to generate theoretical approaches about the reality of the municipality of Antiguo Cuscatlán and its dialogues with the territory. In this manner, we can ask ourselves the following questions: Since when does the territorial dispute arose? Why does such dispute exists? Who does the territory really belong to? And why does the State benefit real estate agencies in the name of development and not the community?

In turn, the research will make a bibliographical journey throughout the different legal norms that have crossed the logic of inhabiting El Espino and its main promoters. As well, it will seek to focus on the cusp moment of this process, which is the eviction of the 76 families that are part of the El Espino community. Thus, to be able to theorize about the process of expropriation and the growth logic of the city.

## Limits

To deepen the analysis of the present investigation, limits will be established between what will be studied and what for technical, budgetary and temporal reasons, will not be addressed. As a consequence, the present investigation does not detail the different legal norms of the country state of the El Espino territory; rather, there will be a brief historical tour of them. Likewise, it is not sought to rebuild the purchase and sale of lost land by the El Espino cooperative, but a brief mention will be addressed of the last buyers and current owners of the land.

## JUSTIFICATION

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Antiguo Cuscatlán is a municipality that in the last 20 years has witnessed the reconfiguration of its territory and the transformation of its social-urban dynamics. That is why the city's new forms of growth have impacted the ways of inhabiting this space; In particular, it has intensified the social processes of exclusion and development.

A clear example of the above is the El Espino Community and its dialectical relationship with the landscape of real estate and urban development in the city of Antiguo Cuscatlán. In other words, there is a microcity full of memories, precariousness and exclusion at the mercy of the big city hierarchical infrastructure projects.

In addition, since the urban intensification of the area, the El Espino Community has been part of forgetting and harassment strategies by the public and private sectors respectively. As a consequence, the strategy used to strip the community of its territory has been spatial suffocation and forgetting policies. By this means, the political intervention of space by the municipality of Antiguo Cuscatlan has been to let precarious settlements degrade over time. And, the role of real estate agencies and other private actors has been to use the legal tools available to expropriate the community from its territory.

As a result in 2018, the eviction of the 76 families that make up the community begins officially and institutionally. The objective of the eviction was to make use of the land in which the families lived for the construction of new projects of the area. In synthesis, the apparent owners of the land where the families that reside in the areas. They had gone to the legal instances for the claim and appropriation of the territory; thus, to be able to speculate with the land and its urban potential.

However, the resistance presented by the community in evicting their homes and the use of force by public authorities, activated a number of social actors in favor of the community. Among the most representative are organized youth and the non-profit organization "Techo" El Salvador. Which, carried out a series of performative activities to claim the right to the city of the inhabitants of the El Espino community.

Despite the different activities carried out, the eviction was fulfilled by the authorities; however, the action took visibility in Salvadoran public opinion. This allowed different pronouncements to exist for and against the eviction of the community but, more importantly, such visibility deepened the strategies of organization and resistance on the part of the community. That is why, this essay seeks to reflect on the social dynamics of exclusion and appropriation of the territory of Antiguo Cuscatlán; taking as a case study, the El Espino Community.

## METHODOLOGY

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This research will make use of the literature review methodology to collect and document information about the social exclusion process of the El Espino Community and the role of young activists as media channels. In addition, it will seek to generate reflections from the data collected in alternative media, official websites of public institutions as well as private and database.

## BACKGROUND

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Antiguo Cuscatlán is one of the 262 municipalities that make up the 14 departments of El Salvador; It has an area of 19.24 km<sup>2</sup> and is at a distance of 6 km from the capital of San Salvador. According to data from the last population census conducted in El Salvador in 2007 and, elaborated by the General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC), the population structure of the municipality consists of a total of 33,698 inhabitants with a majority of urban population and female sex.

In other words, the territorial space of Antiguo Cuscatlán is classified, for the most part, as a continuous urban fabric, since they have the infrastructure, viability services and basic interconnectivity of a city. It also has three industrial areas, four shopping centers, nine highstandard housing towers and two embassies.

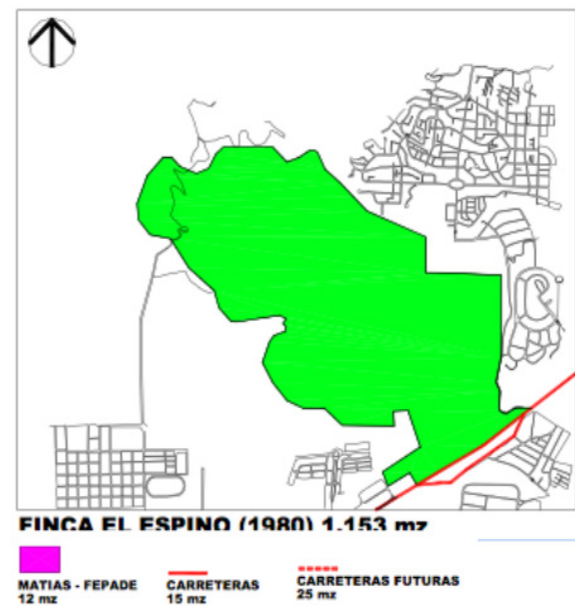
of the four shopping centers located in the municipality, are popularly known as the consumption centers of the Salvadoran elite.

It is important to note that, despite the interconnectivity and infrastructure characteristics of Antigua Cuscatlán, there are ten precarious settlements that dispute the territory in a war for space and its production. Among them, the El Espino community, but, in order to understand the community and its territorial dispute with real estate companies and the Salvadoran State, a timeline must be drawn up, which will allow the different events to be covered in a brief and timely manner, the different events as policies or regulations that have marked the logic of the “Finca El Espino” and its territory.

For this, it is important to mention that the El Espino territory is the largest forest reserve in the city of San Salvador and that it also shares jurisdiction with Antigua Cuscatlán. Originally, Finca El Espino had 2,839.24 acres of which and, as a result of the land reform known as agrarian reform of 1980, 1692.67 acres were delivered, by order of the Supreme Court of Justice of El Salvador in 1986, to El Espino cooperative. Entity that would responsible for its administration and legal representation before the State and private entities.

Afterwards in the year of 1993 and, through legislative act 432, Finca El Espino is declared a natural forest reserve area and therefore, a protected area by the State. However, this decree did not prevent that the lands in power of the El Espino cooperative could be donated, sold or given in the form of a mortgage to possible loans acquired by the cooperative.

#### Territorial-urban transformation El Espino 1980–2018





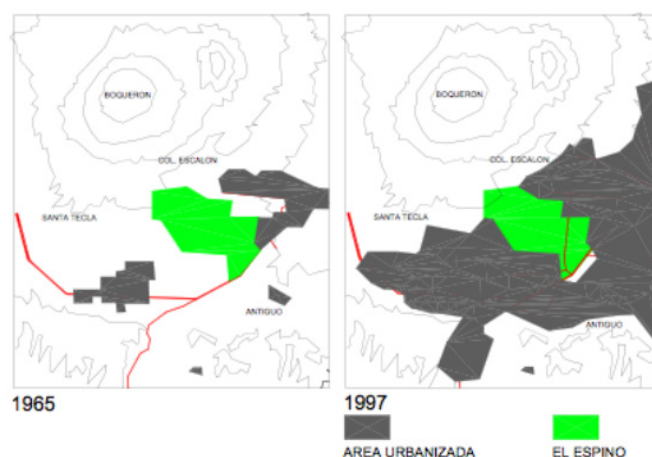


Source: Salvanatura Foundation 2019

As a result of the above, in 2002, a series of movements of ownership and landowners of the lands of Finca El Espino began; basically, the urban constructions of the city of San Salvador and Antigua Guatemala had reached the forest reserve and it is declared suitable soil for urban development this led the lands to acquire surplus value. As a result, real estate and construction companies with private entities such as churches, a golf course and, one of the wealthiest families in El Salvador, had shown their interest in buying land from the "Finca El Espino". Thus, through irregular ghost companies, lenders and sale, El Espino cooperative sells part of the land to private entities to urbanize and lotify the area.

By that time there were about 426 families that inhabited the "Finca El Espino" and, in addition, in 1995, they had signed an agreement with the government for the construction of a housing project in a space of 10 blocks. However, the project was never carried out and the purchase and sale of land by the cooperative, made the community in 2006, divided into two: those families that were in favor of the cooperative and 215 families that were against it. Consequently, a second territorial entity is created, that disputes the political legitimacy of the use of space to the "El Espino" cooperative. In 2006, the "El Espino" Community Development Association (ADESCO) was created as a counterweight to the actions of the cooperative and private entities.

## Growth of urbanizable areas and "Finca El Espino"



Source: Salvanatura Foundation 2019

In spite of the above, the clientele networks, corruption and land speculation of the El Espino Estate only intensified from 2002 to 2009. Currently, the cooperative only has 526.33 acres of 1,692.67 that were delivered to it in 1986. That is, 1,166.34 acres that have passed into the hands of private entities and lotifiers.

## PROBLEM SITUATION

As a result of the above, it is important to ask the following question: what is the relationship between the El Espino Community with the process of urbanization and land sales by the cooperative?

On first instance, it is important to mention that since 1995 and as a result of the intensification of urbanized areas on the land, the families that inhabit this community have been reduced over the years; from a total of 426 families (1995) to 100 families by 2009. The current dispute is that among those 100 families, there are 58 families that inhabit a 2.8 block, which is a forest area declared as developable land.

It is necessary to mention that, those lands were expropriated in the 80s from the Dueñas family, one of the richest families in El Salvador, and with the revaluation of the lands they returned to have interest in recovering the properties. That is why, in 2012, the Dueñas family requested the Attorney General's Office (FGR) to open a trial against the



58 families for the crime of usurpation. Which later on in 2014 resulted in an eviction order for families.

On the other hand, the El Espino cooperative tried to negotiate with the "ADESCO" El Espino, for the eviction of the 2.8 blocks. However, the community remained firm within their posture in the right to housing and inhabit its space. Later on, in the month of May 2018 with the support of state institutions, the families of the 2.8 blocks are evicted leaving them on the side of the road. Consequently, symbolic wars over the use of space have intensified, involving more actors and institutions in what appears to be, a battle between capital and the right to the city.

### **Photographs of the current conditions of the community on the banks of the road**



*Source: Carlos Barrera, El Faro newspaper*

## **ACTORS INVOLVED**

As a result of the above, it is important to identify the actors that negotiate and dispute the logic of belonging to the territory of Antigua Cuscatlán. That is why 12 actors have been identified who constantly reconfigure the social and territorial space of Finca El Espino; among which we can divide them between public, private and territorial actors. Public actors are all those who belong to the forms of institutional organization raised from the State and administered under the central government and the different local governments. Among these we can find 4 main actors that are: the local government, the municipality of Antigua Cuscatlán, the National Fund of Popular Housing and the Salvadoran Institute of Agrarian Transformation (ISTA).

On the other hand, the predominant actors in the study being held about the El Espino Community, are the private ones; identifying 6 key actors in the urbanization, exclusion and development process of the area being studied. They are: the real estate agencies, "Inversiones Ancona SA de CV", the Familia Dueñas, Club Campestre which is a golf court, the Institute of Human Rights (IDHUCA) and "TECHO", El Salvador.

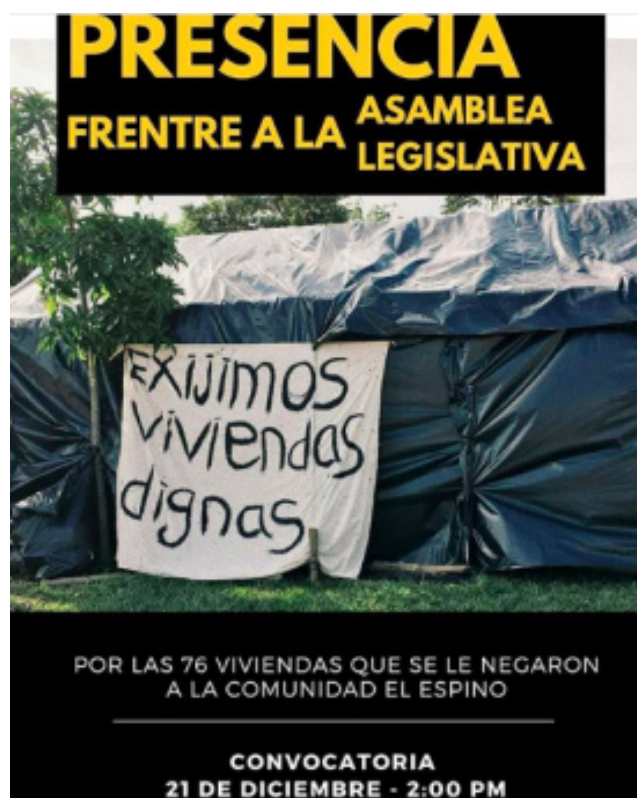
On the other hand, 3 territorial actors can be identified as well that play a decisive role in the appropriation and negotiation of the territory. These are: the El Espino Community Development Association (ADESCO), the El Espino Cooperative and the young activists who have organized themselves together with the community to avoid the eviction process. In this way, and, as the previous figure puts it, you can identify the relationships and interactions that the different actors have, if you also reflect on the distances of interaction between them.

## **YOUTH AND SOCIAL AND MAINSTREAM MEDIA**

However, the eviction produced by the authorities to the 58 families that inhabited the 2.8 blocks declared developable by the authorities, activated a series of resistance strategies by different groups and young activists.

In the same week of the eviction, both artists, university students and social workers summoned a series of performative acts around the community. The objective was to create coexistence spaces with the community habitants, as a protest act affirming the right to housing and being in public.

#### Images that circulated in social networks posted by young activists



**Source: Download images of anonymous social networks**

In other words, the political strategy used was the celebration event as an act of protest; thus, different entertainment activities were displayed among people of different ages who belonged to the community. Children were part of recreational activities as an exchange between ways of inhabiting a space (boys and girls in the community) and ways of conceiving a social struggle (young activists). As a result, the organizational capacity of the community was enhanced through apparent horizontal exchanges between actors outside the community and inhabitants themselves.

In turn, it is important to highlight the role that the digital media had in the dissemination of the convocations and at the time current situation of the community, especially because the majority of young activists as organizations that assisted the community in the post-eviction process, they had digital media that function as loudspeakers of what was happening in real time. That is, the social dynamics of denunciation and protest were amplified by sectors of society classified as middle class and, at best, allowed more people to join in favor of the El Espino community from cyber-activism.

The aforementioned, opened a process of reconfiguration of the resistance and denunciation strategies by El Espino Community Development Association, to such an extent that during the post-eviction process the association created its own official ADESCO website in Facebook; in order to be able to denounce and demand from the authorities their rights. The interesting thing about these strategies is the role that the community began to have as official spokesperson for its problems in front of the different traditional and alternative media. A complete different scenario as in most cases of this indole, that there are activists or organizations outside the community who will take care and champion their struggles. In other words and, in terms of Pierre de Bourdieu, the community began to have the means of production for the elaboration of its own discourse.

On the other hand, what had begun in 2012 as a bilateral process between the community and pressure from private actors had become a struggle of forces between the right to the city and land speculation. Where, the community had surpassed the Dueñas family before public opinion.



## Screenshots of the official page of the ADESCO El Espino



Source: ADESCO El Espino official Facebook page

In addition, they managed to add the support of different groups and young activists to their cause; to such an extent that, at present, the

community has managed to create an agreement with the central government for a housing project for the 58 evicted families. This way, the organizational strategies of pressure and resistance have had an impact on the lifestyle of the inhabitants.

## POSITIVE PRACTICES AND TOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Taking into account that, each case of activist practices and youth collective resistances are diverse and, that each one of them respond to their territorial contexts and realities, some organizational tools and activities that were successful for the El Espino Community can be pointed out and, which can also be taken into consideration by young people and groups from other regions. Such practices can be listed in two complementary formats: territorial practices and virtual practices considered as cyber-activism.

First, the territorial practices considered as stories of success are all those that were initiated by the community and amplified by different social groups and young activists. By means, most resistance processes always start within the communities outward. Then, there must be a common cause that unites the participants. For example, in this study, in addition to the obvious eviction of the 58 families, there was a common reasoning about the abuse of real estate and private interests in the territory of the El Espino forest reserve.

As a consequence, it allowed the union of different actors with different struggles and ways of perceiving the world in a single cause: the community's right to housing.

Second, the different territorial activities between the community, the young activists and the exchanges between both forms of social dynamics, led to the opening of the official Facebook page of the El Espino Development Association. In which, the community obtained a public-virtual space for denunciation and communication abroad.

This is a practice that must be taken into account in the processes of

participation in excluded communities; above all, because it is a format where excluded people can be reators of their own messages and forms of denunciation.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The community of El Espino has been part of a progressive process of social exclusion throughout the years, that has as their cusp, the eviction of families in 2018. Although the eviction was and still is a traumatic experience for its inhabitants, this process triggered a series of organizational strategies by the community and young activists that allowed the empowerment of the community.

However, the case study has shown how a process of social exclusion can unite a minority and excluded group. Likewise, it shows how new digital media can create complaint spaces for communities silenced for years by traditional media.

It also shows the importance of young people and the media when contextualizing territorial issues in El Salvador. However, it is important to highlight the fundamental role that the community has as a spokesperson for its problems. That is, the community as a producer of its complaint speech without a third party intervention. That's why, the present case study has tried to bring to light the forms of appropriation in the network that can be generated by organized youth and excluded communities in eviction proceedings in El Salvador.

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# MEDIA STEREOTYPING AND FRAMING ON THE EXAMPLE OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN GERMANY

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COUNTRY: GERMANY  
AUTHOR: RÜDIGER HAHN

National mass media play a very significant role in political and social controversy. This applies particularly to topics that can have a polarizing effect. In general, media reports should appropriately inform people. They are also expected to critically question different views and to promote a democratic culture of debate. This essay will explain examples of how such basic principles were violated by large parts of the German mass media in the context of the 2015 EU refugee crisis. In particular, a form of religiously determined general backwardness of Muslims was assumed, which was then used to explain alleged criminal behavior patterns, terrorism or misogyny. By stereotyping Muslims, even in politically moderate media, democratic journalists have unintentionally contributed to the success of a rapidly growing far-right movement in Germany.

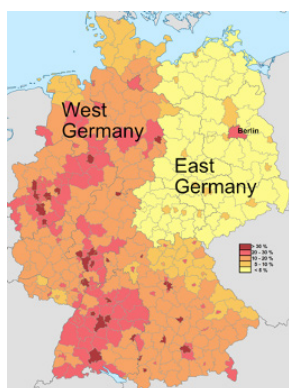
# INTRODUCTION

In 2018, 20.8 of 81.6 million residents in the Federal Republic of Germany had a 'migration background'. The term refers to those who either immigrated themselves or have at least one parent who was not born with German citizenship (wikiwand.com 09.06.2020).

The proportion of residents with a migration background is 28.6% in West Germany and 8% in the east. The difference is related to historical reasons. From 1949 to 1990, Germany was divided into two nations as a consequence of World War II. While the western capitalist Federal Republic had gradually become a magnet for immigration since the mid 1950s, there was hardly any foreign immigration into the eastern socialist Democratic Republic.

The past border between the former two German nations can still be seen today, based on regional differences in the percentage of people with a migration background. In most eastern German counties, their share is actually below 5% of the total population (fig. 1). Only the city of Berlin marks an exception. The reason is that Berlin was also divided until 1990. The 'Berlin (West)' enclave belonging to the Federal Republic has also seen significant immigration numbers (bpb 15.03.2005).

The first socially significant immigration of Muslims took place on the basis of a 'guest worker' agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey. A contract signed between the two nations on the 30.10.1961 allowed low-skilled workers from Turkey to receive a temporary residence permit in order to support the 'Wirtschaftswunder' (economic miracle) of the rapidly growing West German economy. Initially, both locals and guest workers considered this to be a temporary agreement.



Turks in West Germany lived under very simple conditions and they were sending most of their wages back home to support their families (Trost & Linde 09.02.2016).

Fig. 1: Distribution of residents with an Immigrant Background in Germany (wikiwand.com 09.06.2020)

For this reason, there was little social and cultural integration effort. Guest workers preferred low-cost environments and an environment in which compatriots had already settled. This resulted in ghettoization processes, with a relatively high concentration of guest workers in distinct areas. Berlin's city district of Kreuzberg is a good example. Already before the arrival of guest workers, mainly financially weak industrial workers were living in this district. In 1973, Turks already had a share of 12.3% of the total population of Kreuzberg, which corresponds to 30.8% of all Turks who immigrated to Berlin (West). Other magnets were the geographically close and socially comparable districts of Neukölln and Wedding.

Native German apartment owners were very interested in Turkish tenants, who, ignorant of the local rental market, paid far too high rents for the worst living space. The guest workers also had little choice because they were not accepted as tenants in wealthier districts. The result was the development of relatively poor Turkish guest worker 'enclaves', with Turkish shops, restaurants, bars, cultural associations, neighborhood communities and Mosques. Of course, there was a multitude of professional and other social interactions between Germans and Turkish immigrants, but the two groups tended to remain separate in their private life (Kleff 18.06.2020).

The guest worker program was terminated in 1973 due to growing unemployment rates caused by the 'oil crisis' and the resulting economic recession. However, at the same time the Federal Republic started a controversial family reunification program. Regardless of their country of origin, the majority of guest workers received a permanent residency permit and their family (spouse and children) were allowed to join them. As a consequence of this development, the Islamic community became the largest non-Christian religious group in Germany (see fig. 2). In the following decades, there was also an increasing immigration of Muslims from other Islamic countries. Most of the new residents were people who had fled their home countries because of armed conflict, persecution, and oppression. Then, in the early 2000s there was a phase in which more Muslims emigrated than immigrated. This development was interrupted by a drastic increase of conflicts, particularly in the middle East (iwd 28.01.2016).

In terms of how many native Germans have converted to Islam, social science studies range from 20,000 to 100,000. Consequently, this religion continues to be practiced almost exclusively by immigrants (Spiegel Panorama 14.09.2016).



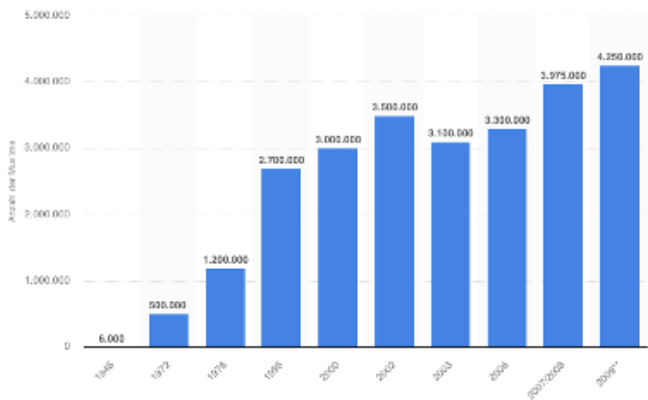


Fig 2: Estimated number of Muslim residents in Germany, 1945-2009 (statista Research Department 30.11.2009)

To understand the full picture of migration movements into Germany, it is important to be aware that until 2015, non-Muslim immigration was always significantly higher than the immigration numbers of Muslims at a ratio of approximately 5:1. The first guest worker agreement was actually concluded with Italy in 1955. Other relevant countries of origin were Greece, Spain, Portugal and Yugoslavia. Outside of the guest worker program and especially since joining the European Union, large numbers of immigrants also came from countries such as Poland and Romania (bpb 31.12.2005).

## THE 2015 EUROPEAN UNION REFUGEE CRISIS

Between 2014 and 2016, about 4.5% of the approximately 68 million displaced people worldwide sought refuge in the European Union with its total population of 512 million citizens (statista.de 20.06.2016). The member states were plunged into a deep political crisis, which cannot be discussed in detail here. Regarding the specific situation in Germany it needs to be noted that, within the EU, the country has accepted the by far highest number of incoming refugees (1.4 million) (bpb 18.10.2018).

About 87% of them are Muslims. The majority came from war-torn Syria. Other significant countries of origin were Afghanistan and Iraq. Within just two years, the total Islamic population in Germany increased by roughly 25 %. Based on the example of Syrians, figure 3 shows how significant the impact of the refugee crisis really was.

Since the start of the civil war in 2011, the number of Syrian residents in Germany increased by more than 2,400%. Immigration numbers in Germany have been slowly returning to 'normal' since 2017. In 2018 non-Muslim immigrants again made up the much larger group. The top 5 nations of origin were Romania (238,824), Poland (146,209), Bulgaria (81,793), Italy (64,852) and Croatia (51,450). (statista Research Department 28.08.2019). In total, 1,585 million immigrated to and 1,185 million emigrated from Germany, resulting into a migration balance of plus 400,000 (Statistisches Bundesamt 21.06.2020)

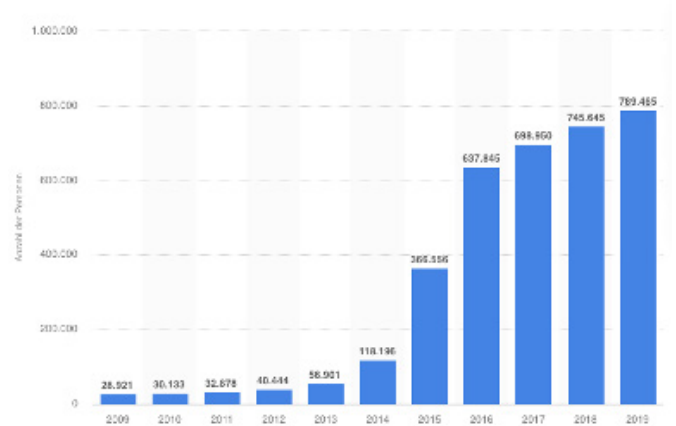


Fig. 3: Number of Syrian residents in Germany, 2009-2019 (statista Research Department 16.06.2020)

Currently, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) estimates that 5.4 to 5.7% of Germany's total population are Muslim (Mediendienst Integration 21.06.2020).

# IMMIGRATION, GENERAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS RELATED TO THIS ESSAY

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The US writer Paul Blanshard warns of *"immigrants from authoritarian societies that cling to fundamentalist religious beliefs. They are against women's rights and birth control. Their faith is a remnant of medieval authoritarianism, and they have no place in a democratic environment. These immigrants do not want to integrate, they want to found parallel societies and enforce their faith in the country they immigrate to. They show much higher birth rates than the native population."*

Blanshard further describes this foreign religion as an *"undemocratic system of alien control"* aimed at *"religious world domination"*. The title of his book is 'American Freedom and Catholic Power'. It was published in 1949 and was on the New York Times bestseller list for 11 months. The author criticized large migration movements of Catholics, especially from Italy and Ireland, to the United States. Blanshard clearly saw himself as native American, although he was actually a descendant of military invaders and predatory immigrants.

Migration is an extremely complex topic. Throughout history there were still some fundamental similarities between immigration movements that included significant tensions or even violent conflict with the host society.

Language barriers, cultural differences, ignorance of local laws and social rules, ghettoization processes, parallel societies, religious differences, crime, racism, prejudice and discrimination are just some of the key words related to conflict-laden immigration. This does not mean that all possible problems apply in every single case. For example, Donald Trump, the current President of the United States, has recently called for a national state of emergency to 'defend' the country against central and south American migrants/refugees by building a wall at the US/Mexican border. *"They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists"* (Washington Post 08.07.2015). However, in this case, the religious affiliation of the so accused is not mentioned as a significant reason for their supposed general dangerousness because any negative associations with the Bible and Christianity would also affect the predominantly Christian US population, which today, includes a fully integrated Catholic community.

It is also important to understand that conflicts related to immigration do not only occur between migrants and locals. In fact, the case of national emergency in the US was ordered by President Trump because this was his only option to ensure the funding for building the border wall against opposition from domestic political opponents (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 14.02.2020). Modern secular democracies in particular have a strong humanistic claim that calls for the admission of people in need. This aspect is most important if the migrants are refugees from war, political persecution and torture. Significant controversy between anti-immigration and immigration-friendly natives is a very common source of social and political conflict within the host society.

Locals who want to prevent immigration generally attempt to characterize the arrivals as dangerous or abusive. For example, migrants/refugees are very often portrayed as lazy welfare-system abusers, archaic criminals, anti-democratic invaders, religious or political extremists, etc. To counter the incoming threat 'we', the people who rightfully own this land, must protect 'our' way of living, economic wealth, jobs, individual safety and liberal values against the 'alien others' who should better be working on establishing comparable achievements in their home countries. Anti-immigrant groups usually do not say that refugees should not be sheltered. Instead, they claim that this status is being heavily exploited by fraudsters to simply gain access to the host society, which then has to pay an enormous economic and social price.

In contrast, refugee-friendly groups emphasize the already mentioned humanist obligation to shelter people in need. They also point to positive effects of immigration. For example, the German Economic Institute (iwd) concluded in a scientific study that the 2015 EU refugee crisis contributed 7 billion Euros to Germany's economic growth in 2016. Since a continuously increasing number of refugees in the country are having a permanent job, this amount is estimated to be already € 29.5 billion by the end of 2020. The iwd calls German government spending on refugees an economic stimulus package and sees the 2015 crisis as a great economic opportunity for the country (Informationsdienst des iwd 16.01.2017). This simple example illustrates that it is not only politically left-wing individuals or institutions that see positive effects resulting from the refugee crisis. The iwd is actually a very conservative institute with strong links to democratic right-wing politicians.



National mass media play a very significant role in such complex political and social controversy. This applies particularly to topics that can have a very polarizing effect. Any media reports should appropriately inform people. They are also expected to critically question different views and to promote a democratic culture of debate. According to the German Federal Constitutional Court, the media are also mediators of public communication and they must represent varying opinions (bpb 31.05.2012). In particular, it is the responsibility of the media not to discriminate anyone on the basis of their gender, a disability or their affiliation with an ethnic, religious, social or national group (Wikipedia 09.07.2020). After a brief theoretical introduction, this essay will explain examples of how the above principles were massively violated in the context of the 2015 EU refugee crisis.

## MEDIA STEREOTYPING AND FRAMING, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

*(Section text written and kindly provided by Barthel, M. and H.-J. Bürkner. A few alterations were made to adapt the content to this essay)*

Mass media generally play a decisive role at how political and social questions, problems and conflicts are perceived by the audience. Media studies have revealed in which ways information is systematically filtered out by the media so as to gain a discursive gatekeeper function.

Filtering employs two types of bias which specifically contribute to agenda setting: selection bias and description bias (Smith et al. 2001). Selection bias results from gatekeepers' choices of a small number of events or problems "from a much larger pool of events which could be reported" (Smith et al. 2001). Description bias is produced by the politically and socially imbued way in which a particular event is portrayed. In practice, both types of bias combine into a process which Herman and Chomsky named the 'manufacturing of consent' (Herman and Chomsky 1994), meaning that dissent between discussants or conflict parties is marginalized in the interest of socio-political elites.

Proposing a "propaganda model" of the media, Herman and Chomsky identified the wider effects of filtering in the limitation of the number and scope of voices that are admitted to media representations, this being a process which fixes the 'premises of discourse and interpretation' (Herman and Chomsky 1994). Characteristically, bias in media reporting easily diffuses into other public, political and expert discourses.

A second key approach employs the notion of framing. Robert Entman defines framing as a process of selecting and highlighting information about reality that creates and enhances the salience of a particular interpretation (Entman 1993; 2004). Salience builds on the marginalization of competing interpretations, and is thus based on the application of bias which highlights preferred and blinds out unwanted insights and opinions. Framing, in turn, consolidates salience by continuously providing biased representations of reality, ready for evaluation by an audience. However, in practice biasing goes often unnoticed by the recipients so that it can be assumed that both filtering and framing have strong subliminal effects on the formation of political opinions.

More than that, the obscure quality of biasing itself enables the media to produce bias at will: "As such, the media are capable of constructing misrepresentations, distorting the 'news' to suit a particular ideological or political agenda. Thus, as well as facilitating democratic processes the media can subvert them, distorting how people see and engage with the world through 'biased' reporting" (Hobbs 2009). Bias is generated by emphasizing particular events, ideas, actions, persons, structures, etc., at the expense of others, thereby leading the attention and perception of an audience to a desired subject or effect.



1 - "Allah's daughters without rights. Muslim Women in Germany"  
2 - "Why do they want to kill us. The history of Islam"  
3 - "How dangerous is Islam? Why so many terrorists are Muslim"

*(Menschen machen Medien 17. 08. 2017)*

It makes some things visible while others remain (relatively invisible). Generally, the political orientation responsible for biasing is contingent, context-dependent and historically unique, as is the resulting production of knowledge and truth by media (Hobbs 2008). As such, the media are subject to the rules and conventions created by the power/knowledge nexus valid in a particular situation (Hall 1997). Bias, therefore, may hamper the implementation of well-balanced or critical “fourth estate responsibility” that has been ascribed to the media as one of its primary normative tasks within a democratic system (Herman and Chomsky 1994). Instead, it generates power for those who apply it: “(...) ‘true’ media power is the ability to represent one’s preferred political party, politician, or cause in a ‘biased’ manner (...)” (Hobbs 2009).

So called Imaginaries are important ingredients of framing. They should not be confused with imaginations or images. They are based on abstract ideas which are reduced to a simplified formula. However, in practice, they are more complex than the notion suggests. Bob Jessop has addressed them as ‘semiotic ensembles’ which frame “individual subjects’ lived experiences of an inordinately complex world and/or guides collective calculation about that world” (Jessop 2012, 8). They represent coherent sets of ideas, images, beliefs, emotions, values, and symbols, which easily combine with political projects (Wetzstein and Le Heron 2010). Many of them are borrowed from overarching ideologies or world views and are tailored down to the necessities of political action. They are used by participants of project-related discourses to promote their own interests, create legitimation and assemble social resources for their strategies.

By contributing convincing ideas to a particular frame, imaginaries shape discourses. They assume orienting and guiding functions as they draw together logical arguments and non-verbal representations of ideas, perceptions and attitudes. Within a discursive arena created by the media, imaginaries convey mixed ideas/images/emotions that give legitimation to political aspirations and expressions of power. They render a subject or proposition apparent or natural without necessarily explaining it or suggesting an interpretation. By this capacity, they easily lend themselves to biasing, the production of salience, and framing, which, in turn, give discourse a particular direction.

So far, the relevance of imaginaries for discourse has hardly been theorized. In Foucault’s thinking power is continually generated by the creative production of knowledge and discourse.

Hence, “power creates both the social world and the discursive categories to access it” (Carta and Morin 2014, with reference to Foucault 1982). This draws attention to the relevance of images and imaginaries as generated and conveyed in discourse. Although Foucault’s concept of power does not explicitly refer to imaginaries, this category can be introduced as a transmitter of power and legitimation, as done by scholars of post-structural political economy (Wetzstein 2013; Wetzstein and Le Heron 2010) and the study of discourses on bordering (Bürkner 2015). This transmitter function can be assumed to be valid for social practices as well as for media representations, since the media are not separated from the various discourses which surround them. In Foucault’s understanding, the mass media are “infused with discourse (or ‘discourses’), which define the meaning of media representations” (Hobbs 2008).

Hence, media representations do not simply mirror reality. Instead, “media texts are replete with the discourses that surround and define the events being represented, and they are the material/symbolic results of a discursive practice” (Hobbs 2009). This makes imaginaries easily communicable and understood.

## **MEDIA FRAMING AND STEREOTYPING ON THE EXAMPLE OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

Between February 2015 and the end of March 2016, the renowned newspaper ‘Die Welt’ (The World) published 5,456 articles on the refugee crisis; the ‘Tagesspiegel’ (Daily Mirror) published 6,051 and ‘Spiegel online’ (Mirror online) published 5,097 (Haller, Michael 2017). These numbers give an impression of how much the topic has dominated the German media landscape. Practically all publishers on tv, the internet and in newspapers focused on how federal politicians position themselves and how they assess the situation. Refugees and ordinary locals were only mentioned, usually without giving them any chance to express their perspective (Frankfurter Allgemeine 21.07.2017).

Journalists (and politicians) particularly often used the metaphor of a 'wave', 'flood' or even a 'tsunami' of refugees who were moving into Germany to seek shelter (Verdi 17.08.2017). Dramatic images and, in addition, the question of resulting national economic and social burdens became the central topic of a so far unprecedentedly large mass media debate. At the same time, the democratic media narratively advocated that seemingly endless columns of refugees must receive democratic protection in Germany. Anything less would be a violation of this nation's basic humanist norms. People who were instead worried or afraid of the large number of refugees were usually portrayed as xenophobic, racist and undemocratic (Zeit Online 20.07.2017).



Fig. 4

Figure 4 shows a desperate young woman with a baby in her arms. Without doubt, she needs help. The associated media article, however, raised the question of how many hundreds of thousand left-behind family members could potentially try to follow after over a million refugees have already arrived in Germany (Zeit online 06.10.2015). As a result, this mother no longer just represented only herself and her little baby, but instead a potential second wave, flood or tsunami.

At this point, let's imagine you are enjoying a drink in a beach bar. The television is on, showing a real tsunami (or flood) hurtling towards this beach. However, the reporter says that you absolutely must remain where you are and wait for the impact with open arms. Any other behavior is evidence that you have water phobia. This analogy shows the core antagonism in the way the EU refugee crisis was portrayed in the German media with the result that a significant proportion of natives felt significantly unsettled.

In particular, four irresponsible mistakes were made:

- The fact that the European Union completely failed at politically and economically supporting Greece as the main country of arrival for the 2014 to 2016 refugees is embarrassing for all member countries. Lack of distribution systems, lack of solidarity and national selfishness represent a severe EU crisis. The predominant terminology in German media reports, however, declared the refugees to be a crisis.
- This crisis was portrayed in dramatic images and texts, which correctly depicted aspects of the real situation. However, there was no democratic medial space offered that dealt with resulting worries and fears in the German host society in a constructive and solution-oriented approach. This created an opening for anti-democratic far-right groups who used this opportunity to spread large-scale conspiracy theories. As a result, Germany is currently facing the largest far-right protest movement since the founding of the Federal Republic.
- Refugees are not familiar with media practices in Germany. They do not speak the language and are particularly focused on legal residence matters. To create a bridge, it would have been the duty of democratic journalists to much more proactively approach refugees and to include their actual perspective in media reports.
- Because 87% of the arrivals in Germany are counted as Muslims, Islam played and still plays a decisive role in all media reports about the refugee crisis. Up to 80% of these reports are focused on terrorism, crime, fanaticism, fundamentalism, the oppression of women and archaic religious behavior in general (Zeit online: 21.02.2017).

For example, German media publishers were controversially debating crime levels and supposed criminal behavior patterns of Muslim immigrants/refugees in Germany. In particular, right-wing journalists tended to portray Muslims as extremists, murderers, rapists and drug dealers (see fig. 5). Left-wing liberal journalists reacted to this by pointing out that only a small proportion of Islamic refugees and immigrants commit such crimes. Unfortunately, this debate still contains an essential consensus between the conflicting opinions, namely that an Islamic criminal behavior potentially exists.

Even if the allegation that Muslims are committing more crimes than other immigrants/refugees is rejected, the characteristic 'Muslim' is still used as a supposedly valid statistical unit.



1 - "Asylum authority allows 46 Islamists into the country"  
2 - "Critics of Islam fear for their lives. Islam does not belong to Germany"  
3 - "Murderers, rapists, drug dealers; Nobody wants to tell if they're still here"

Fig. 5: Headlines related to Islam in the 'Bild' (Picture) newspaper (marx21 28.06.2020)

It should be noted that there have been comparable debates in the German media in the past, for example regarding the crime rates of 'Eastern European' immigrants. However, such a generalized construction of a direct link between crime and religion is only applied to Muslims. In this context, please ask yourself, would you accept statistics on 'Christian crime' based on a research that puts various numbers of Congolese Protestants, English Protestants, Romanian Catholics, Japanese Witnesses of Jehovah, Ecuadorian Catholics, Canadian Mormons, Orthodox Russians, Iraqi Copts and Cameroonian Presbyterians into one study group?

It is essential to understand that Muslims in Germany are a highly diverse group from many different countries, cultural backgrounds and Islamic faiths. However, treating all Muslims as a single statistical unit assumes that Iraqis, Indonesians, Malaysians, Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Pashtuns, Persians, Sunnis, Shiites, Wahhabis, Salafists, Sufis, Alevites, and many other ethnicities, nationalities, and Islamic faiths are following one religious concept, one practice and, for example, a common religiously determined criminal behavior pattern. To further elaborate on this point, let's compare the actual number of suspects per 1,000 residents of immigrants/refugees in Germany from different Islam-dominated countries. The calculation is based on the 2016 and 2018 PKS (Police Criminal Statistics). Actual numbers of suspects cannot be deduced from the table as some people were suspects in several cases. The results also contain several inaccuracies. For example, a suspect did not necessarily commit the crime and not in every case a suspect can be identified. In addition, naturalized citizens are counted as Germans in criminal statistics.

Consequently, the goal of this research is to simply identify *basic trends*! The related question is: *Are there signs of transnational Muslim criminal behavior patterns?*

The following table considers two categories, the total suspect quotient (all types of crime) and violent crime (sexual/physical assault, rape, robbery, kidnapping). Listed results include non-Muslim reference groups to offer comparability.

Table 1: Suspect quotient of selected immigrant/refugee groups in Germany (statista Research Team 02.04.2019, Bundeskriminalamt 2016 and 2018).

Nationality*	Total suspect quotient per 1,000 residents**		Violent crime suspect quotient per 1,000 residents		Residents in 2018
	2016	2018	2016	2018	
<i>Algerians</i>	522.0	356.8	81.3	58.4	18,575
<i>Georgians</i>	271.9	283.0	20.0	18.4	25,775
<i>Montenegrins</i>	114.0	107.6	11.6	11.0	21,065
<i>Serbs</i>	108.8	80.7	10.1	8.2	231,230
<i>Lithuanians (EU)</i>	108.0	81.8	9.4	7.7	56,155
<i>Romanians (EU)</i>	100.4	76.4	6.1	5.4	696,275
<i>Iraqis</i>	80.7	70.4	13.7	12.2	247,800
<i>Afghans</i>	80.2	94.9	15.7	19.8	257,110
<i>Bulgarians (EU)</i>	74.8	61.6	6.5	5.7	337,015
<i>Syrians</i>	61.2	57.6	10.6	11.0	745,645
<i>Turks</i>	46.8	43.6	6.4	5.6	1,476,410
<i>Germans (EU)</i>	19.4	18.6	1.6	1.5	72,325,000
<i>Fins (EU)</i>	14.8	14.4	0.3	0.5	15,665
<i>Indonesians</i>	8.0	8.1	0.2	0.2	19,785

\* Islamic countries of origin: *italic*.

\* Nationalities who mostly entered Germany as asylum seekers/refugees: *blue*.

\*\* Countries sorted by total suspect quotient in 2016

The table shows six trends. First, Algeria is defined as a 'safe nation of origin' under the German Immigration Act. The country's citizens can enter Germany either as skilled workers, as tourists or they are illegal migrants. Algerians cannot successfully apply for political asylum. In particular, drug trafficking by illegal Algerian migrants has been a problem since the 1980s. A recent repatriation agreement, however, allows easier deportation and the effect clearly shows in the table. Second, the suspect quotients of Indonesians are the lowest of all study groups. Most Indonesians came to Germany as highly qualified professionals. Third, the main groups of Muslim refugees (Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans) are in the midfield as far as the quotient of total suspects is concerned. However, in the area of violent crime, they are relatively over-represented. In comparison, predominantly Christian Georgians are the 7th largest group of asylum seekers in Germany and the only current none-Muslim refugee reference group on a national level. Their 2018 violent suspect quotient is comparable to that of Afghans and their total quotient is by far the highest of all refugees. At this point, please keep in mind that the conflict situation in Georgia is nowhere near as dramatic as in the Muslim countries of origin. Fourth, the total suspect quotient of Syrians is 40 % lower than that of Afghans and even 45 % lower in the area of violent crime.



Fifth, immigrants from politically stable, Islam-dominated countries show lower suspect quotients than immigrants from stable, Christian-dominated Eastern European countries. Lithuania and Romania are EU Member States. Sixth, minor annual changes in suspect quotients are normal, while the overall trend shown in the table corresponds with the general development of declining crime (lowest since 1992). This essay will not further look, for example, into the 2018 increase of Afghan suspects as it is not the aim to conduct individual group analyses. Please keep in mind the actual key question. The response is, there is no indication of transnational criminal behavior patterns of Muslims. For example, the decisive difference between Indonesians and Algerians in Germany lies in their socio-economic background and predominant residence status. Thorough research is the only way to further explain the suspect quotients of individual study groups.

However, generally well-known causes of crimes by refugees include a relatively high proportion of young men, traumatic experiences, lack of social contacts, unemployment (no work permit) and an archaic notion of masculinity, which is a cross-religious cultural problem. For example, Mexico declared a national case of emergency in November 2019 due to escalating male violence against women. The three countries with the highest murder rates of women are El Salvador, Jamaica and Guatemala (Wikiwand 30.06.2020). It is important to note that this article is in no way designed to trivialize archaic violence in Muslim countries. The central topic continues to be, how is Islam portrayed in the German media? In this context, the generalized picture that the characteristic 'Muslim' may determine crime is one example for inappropriate framing and stereotyping. At the same time, this essay certainly does not claim that there are no problematic archaic and patriarchic cultural elements in Islamic countries or immigrant communities.

Another prominent example for framing is the alleged religious obligation of Muslimas to veil themselves in public, for example by wearing a hijab, chador, niqab or burqa. In contrast, a scientific study by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in 2009 showed that 72% of Muslim women in Germany do not use any type of veil. Several other studies independently came to the conclusion that the majority of women actually wearing a veil are confident individuals who prefer to show an outward sign of their religious affiliation (Mediendienst Integration 21.06.2020).

It is also interesting that in the first generation of Muslim immigrants from Turkey, 41% of women wear veils. In the second generation it is only 21% (Pollack et al 2016). This not only shows that young Muslimas in Germany are increasingly removing the veil. It also becomes clear that there was never a majority wearing one. Nonetheless, Muslim women are almost exclusively shown with a veil in national mass media reports. The discrepancy between media pictures and the everyday reality of Muslim women is particularly evident when it comes to full-face veiling. It is estimated that 0.015% of Muslima residents in Germany completely cover themselves except for the eyes. The most common garment used by them is the niqab. Please be aware, there has not been a single confirmed sighting of a female resident in Germany wearing a burqa (bento 11.08.2016). Nevertheless, the burqa is very often used in the mass media as a synonym for a lack of social integration, the oppression of women and anti-democratic attitudes in Islam. Whether this assessment is correct will be discussed in section 7. At this point it is important to note that, in 2016, a mass media debate about the potential need for a national 'Burqa Ban' created the false impression that this clothing style is in any way relevant in Germany. The very tiny text in the bottom right corner of fig. 6 on page 54 says, "In a Berlin subway, a woman is wearing a niqab that is similar to the burqa." Clearly, the authors of the article knew that the picture and headline don't match and the note has been added as protection against potential criticism.



Fig. 6: "The burqa has no place in a free country" (BILDblog, 17.08.2016)

In April 2017, based on public pressure, the German parliament (Bundestag) issued a law prohibiting judges, soldiers and federal officials from wearing either a burqa or niqab on duty. The newspaper 'Die Welt' (The World) reported this under the headline: "Burka dispute;

parliament decides to ban full veiling". (Welt 28.04.2017). However, the nation-wide about 300 Muslimas who wear a niqab are not in the social and educational situation that they could or would ever work in any of these positions. That is why some reasonable political and media voices have tried unsuccessfully to point out that there is actually a huge sham debate going on. Unfortunately, these voices were drowned in a highly emotional situation in which archaic women's clothing from Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is irrelevant in Germany, became the symbol of defending democratic values (BILDblog.17.08.2016).

## INCREASING CONFLICTS AND DIVISIONS IN THE GERMANY SOCIETY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MEDIA STEREOTYPING AND FRAMING

Figure 8 shows the estimated 2019 population proportion of Muslims in each federal state of Germany. In comparison, in figure 9, you can see the share of voters who support Germany's far-right ultra-nationalist party 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD). Basically, lower proportions of Muslims correlate with stronger support for the AfD.

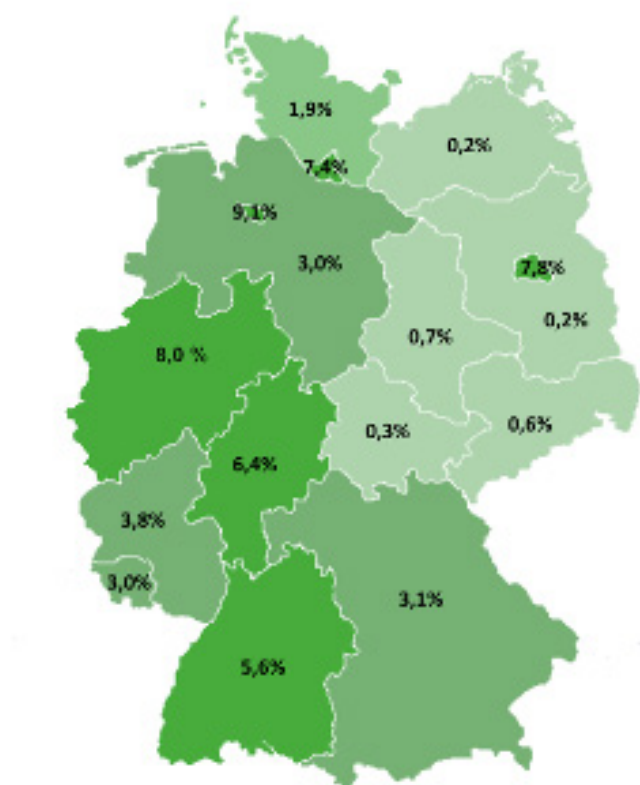


Fig. 7: Estimated Population proportion of Muslims in Germany's federal states (reddit.com 09.06.2020)

In this context, a scientific study by the Bertelsmann Foundation has shown that non-Muslims who are regularly in personal contact with Muslims generally have a much more positive attitude towards Islam (Zeit online 08.01.2015). The Islam-image of people with little or no contact with Muslims, however, is influenced to a large degree by the media presentation of this religion (Deutschlandfunk 15.07.2019).

Due to the special historical situation, in particular as a consequence of the Nazi rule from 1933 to 1945, there used to be a social consensus in democratic post-war Germany that rejects generalized statements about minorities. Democratic mass media played and still play a crucial role in this because, regardless of their political affiliation, they used to mostly respect this consensus. During the refugee crisis, however, Muslims were more and more divided into two simplified groups, those who follow the Qur'an literally and thus cannot be integrated into a democratic environment, and those who are Muslim but do not strictly follow the Qur'an. The latter group was portrayed as potentially integrable. This means that the 'literal' Qur'an and Islamic scripture in general was presented as an archaic contradiction to a modern, progressive and open society. The main media debate then focused on conflicting opinions about which of the two groups made up the majority of Muslims in Germany and to what extent. However, as with the idea that 'Muslim' is a supposedly legitimate characteristic in regard to criminal behavior patterns, the faithfulness of Muslims now became a measure of democratic compatibility.

### AfD votes in each state



Fig. 8: Votes for Germany's far-right political party "Alternative Germany" (NBCNews 02.02.2018)

## UNDERSTANDING RELIGION, WHAT DOES ISLAM ACTUALLY SAY ABOUT A WOMEN'S VEIL?

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The fundamental ignorance in the German population about Islam has especially been used by far-right extremists in order to rapidly gain political influence. Their already mentioned political arm, the AfD, portrays multiculturalism as a 'serious threat to social peace and the survival of the nation as a cultural unit'. Islam in particular is seen 'as a great danger for the democratic state, society, and value order'. Yurdakul et al. describe the AfD as a "focal point of far-right activism (...) pointing to an alleged 'invasion' by Muslims and 'a creeping land grab' while the 'pure people' are tricked by a 'sinister elite' that betrays the supposedly true will of the German people. Anti-elite sentiments in the AfD's campaigns often position 'the people' in opposition to the supposedly corrupt - or at least deluded - elite. If the people do not rally around a solution, in this case the AfD, a catastrophe such as the disintegration of the German society is to be expected. Consequently, the major slogan of the AfD in the 2017 (national) elections was 'Have Courage, Germany!' This presupposes that taking the party's position requires courage to break free of the 'yoke' imposed by the elites in power" (Yurdakul et al. 16.12.2019). The predominant language used by AfD politicians deliberately violated the standards of the political etiquette of public debates in Germany. For example, Alice Weidel, chairperson of the AfD in the German Bundestag said in a speech with regards to Muslim refugees, "I can tell you that burqas, hijab-girls, knife-men and others who are 'good for nothing' will not secure our wealth, prosperity and social welfare system". In a later newspaper interview, the chairman of the German Siemens group (385,000 employees) reacted to Weidel's choice of words with the statement, "It is better to be a hijab-girl than a Federation of Germany girl" (FAZ 16.05.2018). Please note, 'The Federation of German Girls' (BdM) was a fascist youth organization during the Nazi reign. This example shows how polemical the public debate about refugees and Islam really was. A political and social divide went through Germany, with hardened fronts between liberal refugee-friendly positions and nationalist protectionist positions calling for closed borders and, in some cases, even a large-scale 'remigration project'. In between, there was a huge group of unsettled citizens who were understandably overwhelmed by the flood of contradictory positions on 'The Islam', 'The Muslims' and 'The Refugees'.

Before going into detail, it is important to understand that this brief essay can only offer simple examples. However, the following text applies equally to all major world religions. For example, there are hundreds of Bibles that often contradict each other in their content. The 'Christian Standard Bible' teaches in Proverbs 13: 24, *"The one who will not use the rod hates his son, but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently."*

The exact same verse in the Contemporary English Bible reads, *"If you love your children, you will correct them; if you don't love them, you won't correct them."* The standard Bible clearly calls for violence as an educational tool. If you don't beat your son, you don't love him. The contemporary Bible, on the other hand, demands 'correction' without taking any position with regards to the methods.

The oldest Qur'ans that still exist today were written in Hijazi and Kufic, old Arabic scripts that did not yet include diacritical marks to clearly identify certain words. They were also written in medieval poetry. To be able to interpret the Qur'an, Muslim scholars therefore use other Islamic scripture, such as the Hadith or Sunnah. How these sources are being used and which of them are being considered to be 'authentic' varies between different Islamic faiths. Accordingly, just as there are numerous Bibles, there are many Qur'ans.

The question of how women should dress in public is described in verse 33:59. The following examples show how controversial the subject of a woman's veil is being treated in Islam.

*"Prophet, tell your wives, daughters, and the wives of the believers (...),*

- to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (i.e. screen themselves completely except the eyes or one eye to see the way) (Hilali & Khan Qur'an);
- to draw their wraps a little over them (Ahmed Ali Qur'an);
- to lengthen their garments (Talal Itani Qur'an);
- to cover their bosoms and breasts (Mohammed Sawar Qur'an);

*"(...) this will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) and not be molested. Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful (quranx.com 07.07.2020)."*

Based on the Sawar Qur'an, Muslim women may wear whatever clothes they want for as long as their "bosoms and breasts" are covered, which is in no way unusual. In contrast, the Hilali & Khan Qur'an strictly demands full veiling. To better understand these differences, it is important to look into the history of each Qur'an. For example, 'The Noble Qur'an' was written in 1969 by two orthodox Saudi Arabian Wahabis (Wikipedia 07.07.2020). However, according to their translation, the Qur'an only says this: (...) to draw their cloaks all over their bodies (...). If a Qur'an verse now includes additional text in brackets, then this marks comments by the interpreters, explaining what they individually conclude how this revelation must be followed.

In comparison, the 'Al-Quran, A Contemporary Translation' was first published in 1988. It was written by Ahmed Ali, co-founder of the 'Pakistani Progressive Writers Association' (Wikipedia 12.07.2020). His interpretation of verse 33:59 is very vague. Such an approach is often used by liberal Muslims who see the Qur'an as a guideline that allows space for social development. This does not mean that such scholars intend Islam to be westernized in the sense that Muslimas should throw away their veils, listen to western pop music and wear blue jeans. Instead, they are guided by an understanding of Islam according to which God has deliberately given people the freedom to find their own way.

Social, political and religious perspectives as well as cultural realities are subject to constant change. Just like all other divine concepts, the development of Islam is influenced by countless internal and external factors. The photographs presented in figure 9 are misleading in several ways. First, women who wear skirts and show their skin are not a plausible way to measure the level of oppression they may suffer from. Second, the women on the left picture represent a very small proportion of Afghan women in the 1970s. Most of them were illiterate and lived in poor rural areas. Fashion was their least concern. Third, "By focusing the debate on women's clothing (...), broader questions around the problems facing Afghanistan become elided – and the discussion returns to a simplistic dichotomy between Islam and secular modernity" (Shams, Alex: 30.06.2019). The photographs are still useful as a reminder of how the country may have potentially developed if it would not have been caught in the power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War period (Shams, Alex: 30.06.2019). In the largest regime change operation in the history of the US (1979-1989) at least 35,000 Islamist extremists from 40 countries were armed and trained to unleash them on Afghanistan.

This strategy was successfully aimed at forcing the Red Army into military intervention in support of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and to create a 'Vietnam situation' for the Soviet Union that would contribute to its financial and social collapse. Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor of the US President Jimmy Carter was asked in an interview in 1998:

Question:

"Do you regret having supported the Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists?"

Brzezinski:

"What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?"

Question:

Some stirred-up Moslems? But it has been said and repeated: Islamic fundamentalism represents a world menace today.

Brzezinski:

Nonsense! It is said that the West had a global policy in regard to Islam. That is stupid. There isn't a global Islam. Look at Islam in a rational manner and without demagoguery or emotion. It is a leading religion of the world with 1.5 billion followers. But what is there in common among Saudi Arabian fundamentalism, moderate Morocco, Pakistan militarism, Egyptian pro-Western or Central Asian secularism? Nothing more than what unites the Christian countries

(Aldeilis.net 02.03.2005).

Be aware, Islamism used to be irrelevant in Islam until the late 1960s, early 70s. The USA did not create this extremist movement but they used it, supported and strengthened it for their own political purposes, even handing them an entire nation that they could form in the way they wanted. It is inappropriate to unilaterally blame "the West" for the situation in countries such as Afghanistan. It is nevertheless important to understand that today's strength of Islamists is not simply the result of a religiously determined backwardness of 'The Islam'.

Now, what can we learn from this insight with regards to the medial debate about Islam in Germany?



Fig. 9: Afghan Muslim women in the 1970s and today. All of the women are Muslimas (Global Research Center, 30.04.2019)



# HOW CAN ARCHAIC, VIOLENT AND PATRIARCHIC ELEMENTS OF CULTURE BE OVERCOME?

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Ahmed believes in a divine permission to beat his wife Fatima. Which of the following example responses makes more sense?

- "Ahmed is right! Islam allows violence against wives and that is one of many reasons why this religion is incompatible with democratic modernity!"

• "Men have oppressed women in almost all societies throughout the history of humanity, regardless of their faith, ethnicity or other social characteristics. No woman was ever oppressed by God/s. They have been/are being oppressed by men who use a male-dominated interpretation of religion as a powerful legitimization concept. Ahmed's socialization and mindset are the actual problem. His violent and oppressive understanding of Islam reflects these issues!"

Please be aware that Version A builds a consensus, not with the beatings, but with their justification. Anyone who agrees that the Qur'an allows violence against wives is an additional person who sees this as the appropriate translation of the respective verse, in this case 4:34. Version B, on the other hand, rejects both, the beatings and the justification because archaic notions of masculinity are the problem, not religion! Only when this is understood a constructive solution can be found. The central message of this essay is that Islam is the sum of how most Muslims and non-Muslims choose to interpret it. This statement applies to every world religion. For example, Bible verses that were used to legitimize slavery and the colonial period have nowadays 'disappeared' from official Christian prayers. It is inconceivable that in modern democracies a priest or pastor quotes the following text: "Slaves, be subject to your masters with all reverence, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are perverse" (1 Peter 2: 18; New English Translation Bible).

Martin Luther, the founder of supposedly liberal Christian Protestantism, said of women: "*Weeds are growing fast, so girls grow faster than boys.*" He also offered this sexual advice to husbands: "*If the wife does not want, then take the maid*". In medieval times, many women died during childbirth. Luther commented on this with the words: "*Just let them die. That's what they were made for*" (hassprediger-luther.de 12.07.2020).

Even in 1966, the German Federal High Court ruled on the role of women

in Christian marriage, "if she finds herself unable to find satisfaction in marital intercourse, then marriage still demands of her that she grants marital affection and in an act of self-sacrifice, she is not allowed to show indifference or aversion" (IV ZR 239/65). The court decision was based on the general belief that the sexual satisfaction of her husband is a wife's legal duty, derived from civil law, BGB § 1353 "Marital Partnership". In 1986, a woman was picking up her husband who worked as bus driver from work. He wanted to have sex right there on a bus. She disagreed, so he raped her. Several people heard her screaming for help and they called the police. The officers correctly decided that no crime had been committed after the victim explained that she is married to the attacker (Spiegel Online 29.06.1987). Until May 1997, rape was explicitly defined as 'extramarital' forced intercourse under German criminal law. The traditional Christian perspective on rape in marriage said, "Those who have a legitimate right to sexual intercourse, like the husband, do not commit a crime by using force." (SZ.de 04.07.2017). These examples are just the tip of the iceberg that represents wide-spread oppression of women related to religion in Germany. Today, in the 21st century, social and economic gender equality has still not been fully achieved.

Nevertheless, dominant interpretations of Christian scripture have undeniably developed progressively. The question is, was this the result of consent or disagreement with archaic, violent and patriarchic traditions? The response is obvious, which leads to another question. What will you, the reader of this essay, respond next time someone asks you, for example, if Islam forces women to veil themselves in public? Anyone who responds by saying 'yes' is in agreement with the Mullah's in Iran, the Saudi royal family, the Taliban in Afghanistan and far-right extremists in Germany. Those who say 'no' are in agreement with progressive Alevites who fully reject any veil as well as with Kurdish Muslims who leave the decision to each individual Muslima.

## IMPACT OF THIS PRACTICE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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In 2014, the University of Leipzig conducted a study on the correlation between the representation of Islam in the media and Islamophobia. Unsurprisingly, it has been shown that none-Muslims who mostly follow one-sided negative reports tend to adapt Islamophobic positions (Geschke et al. 2014).

Honor killings, misogyny, religious terrorism and other archaic problems are of course not to be trivialized in media reporting. In contrast, however, Muslimas in Germany use the democratic freedom of this country for an Islamic feminist movement (Frankfurter Rundschau 22.04.2016). Like Christian feminism, this process takes time and is done in small steps. Under no circumstances should Muslim women be discouraged by the German media parroting the attitudes of archaic Muslims.

Balanced reporting is not only necessary, it is actually required by the German press code (Wikipedia 13.07.2020). After all, no German journalist would ever come up with the idea of naming violent and extremist anti-abortionists the representatives of 'true Christianity'. At this point, this essay will not participate in the pointless debate about the worldwide distribution of archaic people. What proportion of Muslims follow which Qur'an or, for example, how many Christians still have an archaic world-view and to what degree? Polemic distinctions between 'better' or 'worse' religions do not solve problems.

Instead, it is a good and encouraging development that the leading mass media in Germany actually have started to critically reflect the mistakes they are responsible for during the refugee crisis. More and more reports about Muslims reject de-individualizing generalizations and rely on detailed information. To what extent this is actually going to affect the reputation of Islam in Germany will have to be examined in the future. It is too early for a final assessment. However, the German media clearly have an influence, not only on the opinions and perspectives of none-Muslims, but they can also strengthen and support moderate Islam.

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO THIS CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICE

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Germany's successful economy, health insurance and welfare system would collapse without immigration. The main reason for this situation, the low fertility of Germans, has well-researched socio-economic reasons. It is in no way related to foreign influences. Islam is and will remain to be a part of the future of this nation. No one can reasonably predict the proportion of Muslims in 30 or 50 years, but from a democratic point of view, this is not important anyway. The democratic citizen must

respect the law and freedoms of others. There are no constitutional requirements regarding ethnic origin or religion. The openness of democracy can only be reasonably questioned if a particular group poses a threat to the system itself. If their crime, their terrorism and their cultural and religious background endangers the very existence of 'our' democracy, then they must clearly be excluded.

In summary, media images of a 'flood' of mostly Muslim refugees in connection with up to 80% critical reporting on Islam have fueled irrational fear of alienation and Islamization among a relevant proportion of the native German population. At the same time, a 'welcoming culture' towards refugees was portrayed as the democratic duty of the native population. This antagonism in the media coverage of the 2015 EU refugee crisis has led to a serious loss of trust in the German mass media. The term 'lying press' became socially accepted. It is particularly being used by Germany's growing far-right movements, which made the AfD the strongest opposition party in the last federal elections in 2017 (12.6%). Any information that does not portray Muslims as generally dangerous is seen by them as part of a large-scale conspiracy that ultimately aims to 'abolish' the German nation. Based on such enemy images, an intolerant xenophobic racist becomes a valiant savior and protector who defends his homeland. Nationalist extremists founded their own so-called alternate media, which continuously serve the narrative of generally dangerous Muslims (and immigrants in general). Rebuilding lost trust will be a difficult road for the democratic media.

Other significant challenges include a lack of knowledge about Islam among democratic journalists, as well as prejudice and ignorance of one's own ignorance.



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**The democratic citizen must respect the law  
and freedoms of others.**

# HOW CAN THIS PRACTICE BE IMPLEMENTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS?

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The democratic state can demand that a democratic Islam must be preached in German mosques, just as it needs to find a solution to counter far-right extremism in the native population. Unfortunately, this part of the political and media debate often ends up in a simplistic dissent that concentrates on the legitimacy of mass surveillance, restrictions to freedom rights, stricter laws, more power for the state, etc. However, these policies represent the exact opposite of democratic progress. They promote social division and distrust by assuming that the state as well as the safety of its residents are so endangered that the legal order may only be maintained by limiting democratic freedom.

Please be aware, in 2017, 39.1% of children under the age of 5 had an immigration background. Less than 3% of women in Germany are Muslim, so the proportion of children with Islamic parents is comparatively low. However, this section goes beyond just looking at Muslim residents. The point here is that this country is irreversibly multicultural. Consequently, there is no other option than to work towards a functioning multiculturalism in Germany based on integration, collaboration and respect for all minorities. This is a challenge that many nations in the European Union inevitably face in the modern globalized world. However, the 2015 EU refugee crisis has shown the EU's weakness in finding common solutions.

At the end of 2019, the number of displaced people worldwide has increased to 79.5 million (UNHCR 26.07.2020). In 2015, roughly 3 million refugees plunged the EU into the most significant crisis it ever faced except for the 2020 Corona pandemic. If humanistic European values are to be worth more than the paper they were written on, then the EU must now much more actively face the global reality of increasing conflicts. This includes a stronger role in avoiding and resolving global conflicts as well as an end to arms deliveries that support unjust regimes (example: Saudi Arabia).

At the same time, the Union must be prepared for the fact that it is impossible to permanently escape the ever-increasing number of refugees around it. Climate change and the Corona pandemic will additionally exacerbate the situation. A common refugee distribution

and integration policy is essential to prepare for future, maybe even larger refugee movements. Anything less is irresponsible and may even endanger the very existence of the European Union.

The role of national and international media is particularly important in this context. Instead of tens of thousands of articles on refugee floods and 'The Islam', media pressure could be exerted to strengthen the role of the EU and to emphasize the need for common policies. Unfortunately, there is no indication that the media will take this role at a sufficient level, neither in Germany nor in other EU countries.



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# THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN GREECE

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COUNTRY: GREECE

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In 2015, in an environment of economic crisis, Greece was also presented with the challenge of facing a great influx of refugees trying to escape the war in Syria, seeking refuge in Greek islands and a gateway to Europe and its security. A change of this size and impact, was not received positively by the Greek society, and the local media played a big role in this reaction. The negative perspective in which this situation was presented, the stereotyping of the refugees, and the lack of representation and opportunities for the refugees to express themselves, were the main problems with the role of the media. An effort to battle this situation was the "Young Journalists" initiative, which includes "Migratory Birds", a newspaper entirely managed and written by underage refugees, and "Dandelion", a radio station operated by young refugees, discussing themes important for young people, refugees and locals alike. This initiative is a gateway for a better representation of the refugee community, a way for young people to develop journalism skills that can help them in their future life and with their inclusion in the European communities, and provide them with a voice.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY

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Greece is a country located in the Southeast of Europe, bordering Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania, and North Macedonia. Its population is approximately 10.7 million as of 2018. It boasts one of the richest coastlines in the western world, with thousands of islands in the Aegean and Ionian seas. Many of the Aegean islands are in close proximity to the Turkish coastline, which makes them a bridge to continental Greece and, as an extension, Europe. In the years of the global economic crisis, Greece was particularly affected, and went through many years of EU-enforced austerity, in order to recover financially. As of 2015, Greece was still feeling the effects of the economic crisis, when the refugee crisis started. The arrival of thousands of disadvantaged people requiring immediate attention and care, combined with the lack of resources, central political planning, and European help, created an explosive environment in Greece, which seemed unable to undertake the role of a buffer state for the refugee flow. The result was thousands of people arriving in the small communities of the Greek islands, living in camps that did not provide them with the necessary resources to survive with dignity and opportunities. The contribution of local media in bringing the locals and refugees together was poor, as it enhanced refugee stereotyping and failed to give refugees an opportunity to express themselves.

## EXPLAIN THE CASE

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The recent increase in the flow of refugees trying to escape war and persecution, heading for Europe, has led to a major humanitarian tragedy worldwide. In 2015, Greece welcomed more than 850,000 asylum seekers who sought refuge in Greek islands. The outbreak of the flow crisis is due to the new qualitative characteristics of the flows and, in particular, to the massive participation of Syrians in the steadily increasing flow from other countries with similar problems, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea etc. This unprecedented influx of disadvantaged people in dire need of accommodation, food, health care etc, in small communities (ie the small islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, etc.) created a very difficult situation for both refugees and locals alike. Refugees are hosted in camps that are not fit to accommodate the numbers, and, as a result, the living conditions are far from ideal.

Even though a portion of Greeks have been moved and motivated by this large humanitarian crisis, and have contributed towards the betterment of this situation, a significant part of the population still holds a negative image regarding refugees. The fact that this part of society views refugees as a huge problem, and perhaps even a threat, can be attributed to the media portrayal of the refugee crisis. The local and international media have presented the refugee crisis from a bleak perspective, and focus on the negative aspects, enhancing stereotyping of the refugees, and creating a sense of dread to the public regarding the impact of the refugee crisis on the Greek society. Refugees are mis- and underrepresented, and are in dire need of a voice. The result of this lacklustre representation is a refugee image which is disassociated from the "person" refugee, and promotes the "group" refugee, and which strips the locals from the opportunity to empathise and connect with the community of refugees.

## RELATE THE CASE STUDY TO THE PROJECT

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### **How does this case fit into the framework of the MEDIACT project?**

According to a report by the European Commission named "The role of Media Literacy in the promotion of common values and social inclusion", the transformation of modern society accelerated in the last decade, bringing massive economic, technological and social change and a new set of ensuing challenges to be addressed. One of these challenges is the overwhelming and, at times controversial, amount of information available to everyone at the click of a mouse. In this context, today's citizens need to acquire new skills to manage the new reality: Digital skills, critical thinking and media literacy are key skills and competences needed by today's modern citizens. The situation is even more critical for disadvantaged young people. According to the same report, those that are not media literate face multiple difficulties to function fully in a digital society and this affects their full and responsible online participation. A study conducted by LSE (Ellen Hasper) confirms that "whilst access to the Internet in some form is near-universal, the quality of such access, digital skills levels, the availability and expertise of support networks, and, most importantly, outcomes of digital engagement differ radically for disadvantaged young people".



Disadvantaged young people such as refugees face also another important problem in relation with media. According to a report from the European Federation of Journalists <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2018/08/20/migrants-and-ethnic-minorities-are-underrepresented-in-media/>, their voice is often underrepresented in the media. Although, media framing differs for specific migrant groups and used discourses, immigration coverage is often negative and conflict-centered, the publication shows. Repetitive exposure to negative messages on migrants leads to negative attitudes towards migration, enforcing stereotypical approach towards the groups, and even influence voting decisions. According to the same report, female migrants are even less visible. The core aim of the MEDIACT project is to intensify the youth work efforts for peace building and conflict transformation, utilizing mass, alternative and social media. It aims to achieve this objective through the fostering of cooperation and exchanges between youth workers and young people.

The main response to these challenges is to empower young people from migrant and ethnic minority groups (in cooperation with local youth from low socio-economic background) to take the media in their own hands. We aim to present a local project called "Young Journalists" which was developed in a local level in Athens, Greece. In the framework of this project, young migrants were empowered to run and manage their own newspaper called "Migratory Birds" which was distributed as an insert with one of the newspapers with the greatest circulation in Greece (Efimerida ton Sintakton- <https://www.efsyn.gr/>). All the articles, as well as the management of the newspaper is undertaken by the young migrants themselves with the support of a team of media professionals. The Migratory Birds initiative started as an independent attempt by a group of teenage female refugees to have a way to express their own views on life, to let people of the local community know the hardships of being a refugee in a such a vulnerable age, and to hone their writing skills.

## METHODOLOGY / APPROACH

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How the problem was approached, what actions were made to solve it

The Network for Children's Rights [The Network] is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation from Greece whose aim is to safeguard the rights of children as set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [1989]. The Network's members include teachers, parents, children's authors, illustrators, academics, journalists and artists, as well as anyone who respects all human rights, in particular those of children, and is willing to take action to uphold and promote them. The network realized that a different approach was needed to enable young people to gain their own voice through the use of media. For this reason, they decided to launch a new initiative called the "Young Journalists" developed at a local level in Greece.

The Young Journalists is a relatively recent initiative of the Network for Children's Rights with a dual purpose; to integrate refugees and migrants and to combat xenophobia. This inclusive non-formal learning practice is addressed to teenagers and youths from 13 to 20 years of age. It includes the "Migratory Birds", a newspaper produced by and for refugee, migrant and Greek youth, and a Web Radio Dandelion. The articles in the newspaper and the web radio broadcasts are produced solely by teenage immigrants, refugees and Greeks, with the support of the Network.

The Network aims to put across the principles and values of journalism, promote cross-cultural dialogue and help children exercise their basic rights such as the freedom of speech, opinion and expression.

It is encouraging, motivating and inspiring for young refugees to read about the experiences of their peers, about their past, life in the camps and future goals, who decided and managed to become reporters

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**The core aim of the MEDIACT project is to intensify the youth work efforts for peace building and conflict transformation, utilizing mass, alternative and social media.**

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themselves and be the voice of this group. Today, 13,000 copies per issue are distributed in camps and social organizations all over Greece.

The teenagers explore the ability to cooperate with peers, to learn from each other, to open their minds, to share democratic values and organize themselves in cooperative or collaborative groups. This initiative strengthens their self-confidence due to the tangible effect and recognition of the effort by their peer community. When holding an editorial meeting (which frequently takes place at the premises of the National Library of Greece) these young people have the opportunity to get familiar with the writing style of an article, editorial management, content production, structured interviewing process when meeting e.g. an artist, athlete. Junior experts explain them the real meaning of journalism and the importance of freedom of speech, opinion and expression. Hence, they can express their anxieties about the way people behave them, finding a constructive route out of daily problems and a goal to achieve. Moreover, they get the chance to present their stories, not only to the local population, but also to reach greater reading audience beyond camps.



Pic 3. A cover of the newspaper "Migratory Birds"



Pic 2. "They are not refugees, they are devils who come to cut our heads off". Greek newspaper coverportraying refugees in a negative way.

## IMPACT

### Outcome of the approach

The impact of the activity of these young journalists is not limited to articles' writing and webcasting; they visit schools and participate in festivals as a guest in order to meet with Greek peers and exchange views. Perhaps the most important impact of this project is the social inclusion and integration of the refugee and immigrant children into the Greek society. Greeks themselves participate in this initiative as well, making it a platform for exchange between refugees and locals.

To be noted that immigrants, refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families have the opportunity to learn Greek, English, etc. As a matter of fact, a young man from Iran recently wrote in Migratory Birds Newspaper a whole article exclusively in Greek. Language competences open new perspectives and enables people to discover other cultures.

To be noted here that Migratory Birds has been recently included as a promising good practice and an example of child participation and

peer-to-peer information in a practical handbook for professionals working with children prepared by the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division. The Network has accomplished to further expand this innovative action as good practice across the EU by receiving further funding from the program KA3 Erasmus + .

#### Other Achievements

- Newspaper was used as a classroom material from a German school
- Participation in conferences
- Identification by the Council of Europe as a best practice
- Interview of the Ombudsman for Children's Rights

#### Why is it a best practice?

- Awareness and sensitization tool;
- Advocacy tool;
- Integration tool: chance to meet and interact closely with teenagers from many different countries and cultural backgrounds, including local teens;
- Capacity-building tool: learning of practical skills that can help them later on in their working or personal lives;
- Access to labor market: expansion of network, journalism workshops and seminars, proof of experience through their articles.

## CHALLENGES

#### Faced while approaching the application of the methodology :

- Stable funding is needed for the continuation of the same format of the project;
- High maintenance, logistics and newspaper production related costs;
- Isolation of camps where adolescents reside;
- Access into higher education or private journalism schools: high fees, good level of Greek language, few scholarships.

## HOW CAN IT BE IMPLEMENTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS?

Can the methodology/approach be used in other conflict environments (even if it didn't work in this case). The methodology of the practise has a very specific structure that can be easily be transferred in other contexts and frameworks where the young people's voices from disadvantaged background is not represented adequately in the media and society.

**Adolescent boys and girls aged 14–18+ years old, develop new skills in journalism, express their views and work to promote broader intercultural dialogue since April 2016**

AGE GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
14–15	34	30	64
16–18	114	49	163
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>227</b>

Table 1.



### **The proposed structure for transferring the practise is the following:**

-The first phase should be related with the development of the method for the organisation of training in digital media skills through the organisation of e-newspapers, online radio stations etc run by young people from disadvantaged background based on the "Young Journalists" best practice. A focus groups should be organised with disadvantaged young people and professionals in order to validate the practise on the basis of the real training needs of the young people in the local context. On the basis of the results of the focus groups, the practise should be refined and finalised.



*Pic 3. A young refugee writing an article in the "Migratory birds" newspapers*

-The second phase should be related with the training of professionals working with disadvantaged young people (youth workers and media professionals).

-The third phase should be related with the training of young people. Guidelines should be provided to these professionals who are going to train young people through specialised workshops in local and national level. Inertia Young people from migrant/ refugee backgrounds as well as local people with low socio-economic status should work in cooperation. Specific emphasis will have to be provided to the increased participation of young girls in the sessions. At local level, training should also include workshops, study visits in media organisations, simulations etc.

-The fourth phase should be the phase of the practical implementation of the skills acquired by the young people involved. They should develop and run their own e-newspaper

and online radios. Cooperation with mainstream media will be sought in order to disseminate widely their articles and their voices. Mentoring should be provided by the trained professionals,

-At the end of the project, in light with the results of the implementation, the method should be revisited and refined.

## **UPSCALING OF THE PRACTISE**

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The dissemination and upscaling will unfold on a number of levels (horizontal, vertical and sporadic) through both operational and strategic partnerships (together with the associate partners), and joint targeted actions in all project partner countries, EU countries not within the partnership, and countries beyond the EU. The good-practice model picks up and develops further, successfully implemented intervention methods. The main adaptation strategy of the project will be the geographical upscaling of the method in 5 new European countries as well as the change of the focus of the method from traditional (in the local project) to digital media. Therefore, the practice is being upscaled both in a horizontal and in a vertical way. The target group remains the same as in the local project, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



*Pic 4. One of the "Young journalists" journalism workshop*



Editions of newspaper produced	11
Radio shows broadcasted	41
Number of children participating	227
Number of people reached through newspaper and radio shows' dissemination	261.476
Number of people reached through visits and peer-to-peer workshops	1.273
Number of Greek high schools cooperated with the YJ team	126

Table 2.

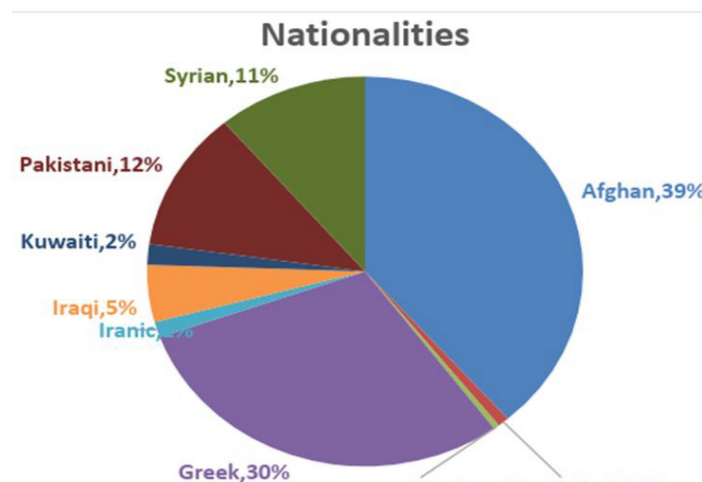


Chart 1.

## Further resources/background information:

### Where to find further information on this topic and methodology/approach?

<https://www.accmr.gr/en/services/service/669.html>

[https://ddp.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/migratory-birds\\_english\\_5\\_english\\_00.pdf](https://ddp.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/migratory-birds_english_5_english_00.pdf)

<https://gr.boell.org/el/2015/12/04/prosfygiko-2015-hroniko-mias-proanageltheisas-krisis>

<https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/statistics>

[https://mirekoc.ku.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Mirekoc\\_Report\\_The-Greek-response-to-the-refugee-crisis-in-Eastern-Mediterranean-web.pdf](https://mirekoc.ku.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Mirekoc_Report_The-Greek-response-to-the-refugee-crisis-in-Eastern-Mediterranean-web.pdf)

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/aug/01/media-framed-migrant-crisis-disaster-reporting>

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-07-25/young-migrants-and-refugees-greece-wanted-voice-so-they-started-their-own>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFNeld5C3qI&frags=pl%2Cwn>

The background of the entire page features a dark blue-grey gradient. Overlaid on this are several white silhouettes of soldiers in various combat poses, some holding rifles. A thin yellow horizontal line is positioned below the title.

# THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

COUNTRY: KYRGYZSTAN  
AUTHOR: LIDIYA CHIKALOVA

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the acutest in the Southern Caucasus region. The area may seem of limited importance, but the Southern Caucasus has a strategic value to surrounding powers. Influence over the territory is on the agenda of many great powers. When interests collide, we witness global interactions and a change in the pattern of power relationships among states. Not all external actors have a decisive influence on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The reasons are external actors enjoy the current geopolitical outlay and the geopolitical imaginations of each external player shape a certain approach to containment of the conflict either with classical or critical geopolitical approach in foreign policy. The more than quarter of a century old Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exists on local and regional arenas. External players pursue their own interests in the Southern Caucasus, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict becomes a maneuvering card for all players. Russia is still one of the influential players in the region, however not the only one and shares its place with Turkey. Considering the framework, the USA, and the European Union do not pose a threat to geopolitical dominance to Russia in the region. Moreover, the conflict provides with a platform for Russia and the USA to cooperate. Iran is a cautious player that uses soft power as its only tool in the geopolitical rivalry over Nagorno-Karabakh and hence, the region. The issue is important due to the unstable security situation in the region. Yet, it is important to asses not only the geopolitical situation, but also the means of proper peace building actions that are being undertaken by both powerful parties as well as grassroot parties.

## BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

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The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict began in 1988 with a clash of political ambition in this historically disputed territory. The tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated and led to full-scale fighting in 1991. The war lasted till 1994. The armed conflict of 1988 took the lives of approximately 40,000 people on both sides. A fragile truce signed in 1994 in Bishkek was violated most recently on April 1, 2016, with a four-day war, which took lives of approximately 200 people on both sides. The land-locked region in conflict, which established its independence on September 2, 1991, produced many refugees and IDPs, including “300,000–500,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan and 724,000 Azeris from Armenia and Karabakh.”<sup>1</sup> The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (aka the Artsakh Republic) has been de facto independent since December 1991, when Artsakh Armenians in the capital of Stepanakert proclaimed their independence from Azerbaijan, which has not exercised power over most of the region since the 1991 collapse of Soviet Azerbaijan. “Today, the NKR controls six districts plus special modalities for the seventh, the so-called Lachin Corridor that serves as the sole overland link between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia.”<sup>2</sup> The legal status of the NKR has not been identified yet due to various factors. However, it is recognized by three states, which gain autonomy: Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia and has several houses of representation in Yerevan, Moscow, Brussels, and Washington D.C. The international community has reacted to the war and in 1993; four UN Security Council resolutions (822, 853, 874, and 884) were passed condemning the violations of the ceasefire and ongoing hostilities during wartime. Resolutions have not invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter, giving the UN power to maintain and restore international peace and security. The three Minsk Group Co-Chair countries in 1993, the Russian Federation, the US and France, working on the peace process, voted against the unilateral draft resolution, which threatened the peace process. “They reaffirmed their support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.”<sup>3</sup> However, the picture of the frozen conflict and the present status quo can be changed due to external powers entering the scene of the conflict.

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<sup>1</sup>Ohanian, Karine. *Investigation: Karabakh: Missing in Action – Alive or Dead?* 21 February 2005. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/investigation-karabakh-missing-action-alive-or-dead> (accessed July 14, 2016).

## THE CONFLICT MEDIATION WAYS

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In the course of the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, five peace process documents were drafted: the Zheleznovodsk communiqué of 1991, the Tehran communiqué of 1992, the Bishkek protocol of 1994, The Prague Process of 2002, and Madrid Principles of 2009. The first communiqué led to a deadlock, as neither side wanted to compromise, further escalating the conflict in three-day of clashes on the Line of Contact. The Bishkek protocol of 1994, a ceasefire agreement, is still barely holding since the April war on the Line of Contact. There is an element of controversy surrounding the Bishkek Protocol. The de facto authorities were part of the process until 1998, when Robert Kocharian, former leader of the Karabakh Armenians, became president of Armenia. “At that point, his personal role in the peace process was accepted as a representative for both Armenia proper and the Karabakh Armenians.”<sup>4</sup> The Prague Process of 2002 and the updated Madrid Principles of 2009. Not all were successful, but these steps led to establishing a document that keeps the status quo in the region. Since 1998, Azerbaijan maintains a dialogue with Armenia, disregarding Nagorno-Karabakh, despite the latter to be an actor recognized in various international documents. The finalized document of the Basic Principles aka Madrid Principles dated July 2009 was drafted by the OSCE Minsk Group to bring the two states to the negotiating table to stop violence and deadlock over Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the proposed principles only keep the present status quo and lack updated conflict resolution instruments.



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**The three Minsk Group Co-Chair countries in 1993, the Russian Federation, the US and France, working on the peace process, voted against the unilateral draft resolution, which threatened the peace process.**

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The status of Nagorno-Karabakh remains a key issue of dispute between the parties. The Basic Principles include the following:

- return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control;
- an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance;
- establishing a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh;
- future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will (referendum);
- the right of all IDPs and refugees to return to their former places of residence;
- international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation.<sup>5</sup>

This step by step plan sought to find a solution where Nagorno-Karabakh continues to exist in the present status until an agreement is reached, and would gain an internationally recognized "interim status".<sup>6</sup> Neither side wants the other to win. Thus, Baku defends the interim status as an act in progress, while Armenia defends the "first status, then agreement" position.<sup>7</sup> Both Armenia and Azerbaijan fear each other of not following the set rules. The shortcoming of such a step-by-step plan is the absence of political boundaries of Nagorno-Karabakh, i.e. how to incorporate the status of Nagorno-Karabakh into a constitutional legal system of Azerbaijan and manage a timeline for the referendum. Although the updated document was drafted and proposed to the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2009, consensus between the two presidents has not been reached up until today and international actors are not rushing to recognize the status of the NKR.

## CONCLUSION

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All external players have interests in the region; however, some interests overlap causing tension and rivalry. We witness various geopolitical imaginations that are built on spatial constructions. By deconstructing interests of each player to economic, military, political and strategic/security aspects, we can assess each country's approach in the

resolution of the conflict. Whether their approach to geopolitics is classical or has gained a new perspective – critical. Russia's perceptions and geopolitical imaginations have not changed and continue to be achieved in confrontational style. Russia regards the Caucasus and the former Soviet area as its own backyard. Russia is still bound to classical geopolitical approach. Whereas the USA and the EU are rational and lean towards critical geopolitical approach of using soft power by stressing on mainly economic and security reasons. Due to tensions present in the aftermath of April events, Turkey has gained a lot of attention from Armenian public. Despite being another external player, Turkey is not demonstrating a threat to Russian dominance in the region unlike the expert opinion, which can be justified by mass hysteria and conspiracy theories. In reality, Turkey's approach to the region has been unstable; from classical to critical geopolitics, Turkey maintains its constant support to Azerbaijan. Iran is an alternative emerging power that bases its foreign policy solely on critical geopolitics, by building a geopolitical imagination of an impartial mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Given the presence of a number of external actors in the region, it is easy to conclude that several actors are influential at this point and have decisive role in the resolution of the conflict. The answer to the question posed at the beginning of the case study has remained inconclusive. In the international system where all countries cooperate, either bilaterally or multilaterally, pressure is usually exerted in terms of sanctions. However, it is almost impossible to isolate a country out of the international system if it is rich in resources. Therefore, we see that all external actors have decisive influence on conflict resolution. However, the degree of influence depends on the power that a country has.

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<sup>2</sup>Fuller, Liz. "Fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh: War Or War Dance?" Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty. 08 August 2014. <http://www.rferl.org/a/caucasus-report-karabakh-war-dance/26521123.html> (accessed December 19, 2015).

<sup>3</sup>OSCE. Statement of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. 17 May 2008. <http://www.osce.org/mg/49564> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>4</sup>Shiriyev, Zaur. "A Bleak Future For Nagorno-Karabakh: Models, Formats, and Prospects. An Azerbaijani Perspective." In *The South Caucasus 2018. Facts, Trends, Future Scenarios*. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2013.

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<sup>5</sup>OSCE. "Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries." OSCE. 10 July 2009. <http://www.osce.org/mg/51152> (accessed December 19, 2015).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



# THE MEDIA IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

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COUNTRY: GUINEA-BISSAU  
AUTHOR: SYLVIE REINE MANGA

Guinea-Bissau has been witnessing political instability since their independence, including four military coups, one of the reasons why the country is labelled (extremely) fragile State. The country can't ensure either its economic development or security, nor can it guarantee its citizens' basic rights. As a consequence, the prospects for lasting peace are virtually nil for the time being.

In every country, the media is an essential tool for communication and sharing information. The internet and social networks has definitely changed the world by asserting themselves as key devices in the information dissemination. From now on, every action in every field of activity aiming to reach a large audience is compelled to go through these channels. Since the world is increasingly experiencing a diversity of political, religious, and ethnic conflicts, now more than ever, it is necessary to promote peace by using every communication means available, such as the media and above all social networks.

Since Guinea-Bissau has turned out to be unstable for decades, this study was undertaken in order to shed light on the media's attitude to the political situation as well as the information generated and dissemination nationwide.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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Countries all over the world or any form of society are often faced with conflicts. In Africa in particular, conflicts can occur at ethnic, religious or political levels. Indeed, peace in any country is certainly the result of the combined efforts of the rulers and the population. Several prerequisites such as effective and operational education and sanitation systems, job creation, the building of quality infrastructures, etc., are vital if it is to keep that much sought-after momentum towards stability. All these elements contribute to peacebuilding and security in all nations.

With respect to education, various channels can be followed in order to contribute to the citizens' training and awareness-raising. In this case, in addition to formal teaching, the media very early on proved to be essential instruments for the population's access to information and awareness-raising.

Actually, information has become essential in every field, and plays an important role, not only in individual and collective decision-making processes but also at the political level. Thus, at this stage, and at the economic level, gaining control over the information is powerful. As a result, being aware of such power, the individuals, structures, and/or States can use it for strategic purposes. But gaining power at the media level can contribute to generating negative consequences at all levels, above all on a country's stability.

Furthermore, Guinea-Bissau turned out to be a country which proved to have been politically unstable since its independence in 1974. Since its accession to sovereignty, the country has witnessed various tensions. However, despite all those crises it underwent, the local media has not always, and still not currently, been present at the international level. That media vacuum in reference with the country's political situation, which is for the incomprehensible, to say the least, has raised much interest for our research. We found it, therefore, necessary and interesting to wonder which role the media plays for the political stability and information processing in Guinea-Bissau.

## Objectives:

The main objective of this research is to determine the role of the media in the political situation, and the processing of information in Guinea-Bissau.

## Specifically, we must:

- Check if the population has access to information, and to what extent.
- Show that the media contributes to the political instability
- Research hypotheses

## Two main hypotheses are raised in this study:

- The population has access to information
- The media contributes to political stability in Guinea-Bissau

Several individuals have been interviewed during this case study. A party leader in Guinea-Bissau, a Senegalese army captain, the first female journalist and chairwoman of Guinea-Bissau's female social communication professionals, former Bissau-Guinean vice-consul in Ziguinchor, a Senegalese journalist, the Chairman of Guinea-Bissau Students at Assane Seck University of Ziguinchor, 11 youth, among whom 5 young women and 6 young men belonging to the National Forum for the Insertion through Extracurricular and Professional Training (FONAIPEP)

# P R E S E N T A T I O N O F G U I N E A - B I S S A U

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A country with a wide religious, ethnic and cultural diversity, Guinea-Bissau is located in West Africa. The country is among the poorest in the world. It was the 178th poorest among 188 nations in 2016, and more than 70% of its population are poverty-stricken (ADB, 2018). The illiteracy rate of adults above 15 was 40% in 2014.

In addition, concerning the economy, the dominant sector is agriculture, which creates more than 85% of jobs and makes more than 90% of the exports. But the country has become a hub and transit area for drug trafficking; this is due to the population's precarious living conditions; Still, at the political level, the country has been characterized by instability since its independence. Guinea-Bissau became independent in 1974, in the aftermath of a long armed conflict led by founding father, Amílcar Cabral, which lasted 11 years. Since then, the country has been undergoing endless crises. The PAIGC (the African Party for Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde), which fought for independence and became the ruling party, has been facing crises

conflicts, in addition to their 'legitimate right to rule' given that they had fought for the liberation of the country. Additionally, there were 4 military coups which made Guinea-Bissau the status of an (extremely) fragile State, generally labelled as a failed State or narcostate. The country can't ensure either its development or security, nor its citizens' basic rights. As a result of this, any lasting peace prospect is almost zero for the time being.

Tensions began to be felt in 2012, after president Malam Bacai Sanhá's death and replacement by the parliament's chairman. The opposition parties didn't approve of the takeover operated by Raimundo Pereira, despite his constitutional legitimacy. Yet, the interim president organized elections. If the first turn happened peacefully, it wasn't the case with the second one. In April 2012, the vice-president triggered a military coup attempt which hindered the second turn of the elections; Guinea-Bissau witnessed a political transition period which lasted 2 years and causing it to be suspended by several international institutions.

## THE LINK BETWEEN MEDIACT AND THE CASE STUDY

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The project identifies the power of stakeholders, media, the internet and social networks to tackle local and international issues, intensify direct interaction with the sources in the field, and foster a structured dialogue in view of the construction of more peaceful societies and conflict transformation. As such, Guinea-Bissau stands as an interesting case as the country has been undergoing crises since independence. What is more, the media proved to be almost missing at the international level. The case is therefore in direct connection with the project as long as it enables the understanding of how the media faced those internal crises, and which actions had been taken to pull out of them and undertake a sustainable peace building process in the country.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to study the youth's activities in relation to the conflict, above all their Internet-based actions, to transform the conflicts and contribute to political stability;

## INFORMATION ACCESS AND ROLE OF MEDIA IN GUINEA-BISSAU

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### ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

With the advent of the Internet and social networks, access to information has become widespread and easier. As a result of this, it becomes clear that traditional media is no longer the only information holders and disseminators. But in some countries such access is not affordable for all the groups of the population, Guinea-Bissau is an example.

In Guinea-Bissau, access to information is not available in some areas, even if with the different media types. However, traditional channels are prominent, and the most widely used are the radio stations. There is only one national television; Guinea-Bissau National Television (TGB), only available in the capital city, Bissau. A State-owned newspaper, "Nô Pintcha", and several other private radio stations such as "Pindjiti" (the first private media), Bombolong, Solmansí, Capital, Africa FM, Jovem, Clele, etc. Overall, there are 15 radio stations in Guinea-Bissau, along with written media like the private newspapers, Domos, Da Bola and Democrática.

Two main factors explain the radio's influence on information: on the one hand, the weak literacy level in the country reduces the capacity of the population to acquire and understand the news broadcast on TV. On the other hand, as stated above, there is no private TV in Guinea-Bissau, and radio stations are more available. However, due to limited equipment, radio stations don't have the possibility to reach some areas; community radio stations play an outstanding role in the countryside as they stand as the main disseminators of information. Furthermore, as far as the Internet and social media is concerned, only 4% of the population have access to them (WB, 2017). Again, the weak literacy level in the country combined with visibly weak political motivation, are among the main causes of this situation. Now, social networks and the Internet have proven to be very powerful means when it comes to sharing information quickly. Better, they have turned out to be the fourth power during the Arab Spring.

Additionally, in time of crisis, the issue is raised by Bissau-Guinean media. Unfortunately, as shown above, not everybody has access to

information in the country. As a result, inequality in real time access to what is going on in the country can be observed. Furthermore, for those who are informed, the low literacy level reduces their ability to interpret and screen the news as transmitted. Now the media have real power since the political leaders use and thrive to control them. Thus, one can observe a bias in the information processing and dissemination, which entails a media war between the protagonists. This media bias is not, for some of them, a motivation to contribute to making the situation worse but the blatant consequence of threats and the closing of some media. With jobs being rare in the country the effect of this phenomenon is an amplification of the tensions in the country because not everybody has the same aptitudes, the populations, themselves, are caught in those positioning conflicts; this has therefore worsened and lengthened the crisis in Guinea-Bissau;

Furthermore, it is important to note some shortages in the training of media agents in Guinea Bissau. Indeed, there is no school of journalism in the country, thus not enough competent and experienced professionals in the information processing and dissemination process. Moreover, expressions, terms used is not relevant in terms of conflict sensitivity or communication, which alters the information in time of crisis. Communication professionals are, therefore, not empowered enough to do their jobs properly, and above all, be able to respect the code of ethics. It must be noted the existence of the Guinea-Bissau Technicians and Journalists' National Network, which fights for freedom of speech and more independence for journalists in Guinea-Bissau;

The internet and social media, not including traditional media, is used by the youth and Bissau-Guineans living abroad increasingly for denouncing the political situation at home. For those living in the country, internet access is difficult, mainly due to the high costs, which is a serious obstacle and it not only discourages any attempt to fight against internal crises through the social networks but also information sharing on real situations in the country; all these factors limit the country's ability to open up to the outside world;

Electricity access level in Guinea-Bissau (around 26% according to the World Bank) in 2017) contributes to aggravating the low level of access to information, for traditional media as well as new ones.

***H1 : verified: the populations do have access to information, even though it is not available in some areas.***

## **MEDIA AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN GUINEA-BISSAU**

There has been several military coups in Guinea-Bissau. The first one, fomented by Prime Minister and former commander of the armed forces, Joao Bernardo Vieira, which took place in 1980. In 1994, 20 years after independence, the first presidential and legislative elections were organized in the country, and won by outgoing president, Joao Bernardo Vieira.

Then, in 1998, armed forces chief of staff, Ansoumana Mané, fueled a coup against the regime in reaction to his suspension and replacement, which pushed the country towards a civil war that caused hundreds of casualties and thousands to be displaced before a peace agreement could be signed on November 1st 1998. In the aftermath of the civil war, in 1999, presidential elections were organized, and President Joao Bernardo Vieira, this time, was toppled. Kumba Yalla took over but was also brought down by a military coup in September 2003.

Almost a decade later, in 2012 another military coup was plotted, this time the country got split into two irreconcilable camps; those backing up the ruling party and those who supported the mutiny. The country then went through a transition period which lasted 2 years during which the opposition took over, and again, pushed the country towards chaos. Meanwhile, the media came into play, each one supporting a camp. Journalists were, therefore, summoned to high offices such as, Communication director, minister and director of the state-owned radio station. During that difficult period, only foreign media was used to denounce the crisis. The ECOMIB, involving troops from Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, intervened to ensure security in the country. Later, in 2014, tensions were noted again between then reelect President Joao Bernardo Vieira and his Prime Minister. The formation of the government was the source of those tensions.

Guinea-Bissau is a country with a semi-presidential system, which grants power to the Prime Minister and his government. As a result of this, one can distinguish 2 strong men, each trying to exert power. Since 2015, 4 governments had been summoned but not a single one got to the end of its mandate.

Regarding the media, in particular private ones, they took a stance again, some would support the President while others would merely back up the Prime Minister. Censorship had also been noticed against the outgoing Prime Minister at the public media level.



As for the population, since they had no means to fight against this situation, they merely accepted it. Well-aware of the difficult times the country was going through, the different political stakeholders signed a peace agreement in Conakry. The peace agreement set to bring post-election assistance to the country, stabilize and empower an army which is far from regular. The media had real power with politicians battling to get control of them. Thus, one can note a bias in the processing and transmission of information entailing, therefore, a media war that burst out between the different parties. This kind of media is not a motivation to contribute to the worsening of the situation as mentioned before, but the mere consequence of threats, acts of intimidation, imprisonment, closing of some media, etc. Therefore, the independence of the media has been a serious issue in the country. The effect of that is the amplification of the conflict in the country; since not everybody has the same aptitudes, the populations eventually fell into that positioning war, with the effect of perpetuating the crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

***H2: invalidated: the media played a key role in the Bissau-Guinean conflicts, and did not contribute to political stability since they stand as the fighting means used by warring parties.***



# DISINFORMATION ABOUT CORONAVIRUS IN LITHUANIA

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COUNTRY: LITHUANIA

AUTHOR: ADRIANA LAVRUKAITYTĖ

Lithuania has a history of being a victim of propaganda and has always remained a target of external disinformation campaigns, as well as misinformation coming from the internal sources. Many Lithuanians tend to believe the fake news which they receive on mass media channels or hear from the people in close surroundings without a slightest hesitation or critic. It is especially relevant in the current times when the whole world is concerned with the Coronavirus crisis. Wishing to stay informed about the situation, people seek it at all possible sources, which are not always truthful and trustworthy. Receiving misleading information which leads to increased panic and paranoia is harmful for health of residents, as well as the wellbeing of the country and Lithuanian society. Therefore, it is crucial that people knew how to stay informed with real, relevant information and could tell fake news apart, as well as how to cope with the crisis that occurred. The article overviews various cases of misinformation and disinformation about the COVID-19, that has reached Lithuanians, as well as analyses how the society approached it.



# INTRODUCTION

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Lithuania is a post-soviet country which used to be under occupation of other countries (namely Soviet Union, fascist Germany) for years. Taking it into account it is clear that generation which lived under the occupation has very weak immunity to misinformation and disinformation.

Even after declaring independence in 1990, Lithuania has always remained an active target of misinformation campaigns. Since the elder generation was taught that everything what is said on TV or in a newspaper is true, it is hard to reshape their mindset and make them think differently. In fact, the majority of them do not understand it is wrong and never hesitate about the legitimacy of the information they receive. Hence, they become easy to manipulate.

According to the research data, found by American scientists in 2019, older people are almost 7 times more likely to trust and share false information. (Guess, Nagler, & Tucker, 2019) Taking in account that in the past 5 years the number of Lithuanian internet users aged from 65 to 74 increased almost twice, the threat of being affected by the untruthful information in the media is only increasing. While elders are the most vulnerable group to fake news, youth still faces high level of media illiteracy and are not aware of the dangers within information they being targeted with. Thus, a big part of Lithuanian citizens tends to believe every piece of information they find: on social media networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) and Lithuanian news media portals (15min.lt, delfi.lt, lrytas.lt, vz.lt etc.); and offline: in newspapers, magazines, the word of mouth.

## DISINFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON LITHUANIA – COVID-19

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In a world where anyone can publicly express their opinion, information flows are enormous and a person would not ever be physically able to read every piece of information that is published online and offline every day. It is important to tell which information you can trust and which should be labeled as 'fake news'.

Fake news – false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media. They are being created for multiple reasons: as a joke, propaganda, desire to harm someone, to splash a conflict, to scare someone, to get a 'clickbait', to encourage to buy certain products or services or just by spreading one's personal approach as a fact. Hence it is usually to meet someone's interests despite having to spread misleading information, which sometimes mean even harming someone.

Fake news might vary: it may be a whole article with untruthful information or just a drastic title to attract the readers or viewers. Yet it provides the audience with information that is not true and might convince a big part of it to believe it, as well as spread it further (even having good intentions).

Since nowadays perhaps the biggest concern and the point of interest worldwide is the rapidly spreading SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Coronavirus disease, the publishers do not miss the chance to attract plenty of people's attention all around the world. A research, conducted by a non-profit organization called Taiwan FactCheck Center, shows that more than 90 percent of 50 virus-related news online are false. Spreading fake news in Europe started even before COVID-19 reached the continent and multiplied quickly once it did on 28th of January 2020.

There was plenty of untruthful information about COVID-19 published so far. The subtopics that people talked about are various: the very first source of the virus, what caused it and what did not, what are and what are not the symptoms, how it can be passed to others and how it cannot be, what can protect people from it and what cannot do it, if there is or there is no cure and vaccine, if there is one, when will it be available



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**Taiwan FactCheck Center shows that more than 90 percent of 50 virus-related news online are false.**

for everyone and why the governments do not let people use it yet, what are they trying to hide and why they do not want people to be saved and just let them die, what is the purpose of it and in whose interests it is that old and sick part of the population dies, as well that economies crash... The list can go on and on.

Regarding Lithuania, there was a tendency: first, majority of people did not take the problem seriously. It was mainly followed by the information seen on the media: Coronavirus has the same symptoms, yet is not as deadly as the seasonal flu, which people around the world are kind of used to and which renews every year. It has been around for years, so why worry about some kind of virus so much now? Many sources were providing examples claiming that COVID-19 is not something people should be scared of, comparing it not only to the flu, but also to numbers of deaths in the car accidents. So, convinced that Coronavirus cannot cause much harm, people continued living with the same habits: traveling to the infected places abroad, not using any additional protection from potential infection, gathering in open and public places.

Later a part of the citizens started being suspicious. The media had its impact here: for instance, articles with titles like "You are likely to get the Coronavirus", "If Coronavirus reaches Lithuania: would there be enough beds in the hospitals?" "Coronavirus is already scaring Lithuania", "The end of globalization: the borders are closing due to Coronavirus pandemic", "Supermarkets are out virus-protective respirators, another shipment is only in one month or June" "They infected us" started to be published. Because of receiving such information, the panic amongst people has started rising. The masks and hand sanitizers that were still left before, were instantly vanished from the shelves of pharmacies and supermarkets, as well as products with a longer expiration day did. While some people were laughing at it, the others were living in fear. A few videos and photographs showing empty shelves and masses of people, trying to get the last piece of grains or toilet paper were posted on Facebook, claiming it takes place in Lithuania. It splashed when the first case of infected person was confirmed in Šiauliai, Lithuania. Later most of this visual material was taken down from the social network because they were found untruthful (whether taken months ago or at other locations). The Government was trying to keep the situation down, reassuring citizens that there is no such need to buy plenty of products in advance because supermarkets have enough in stock..

Similar situation remained in Lithuania throughout the period before and after the declaration of official quarantine in the country. By this

declaration, the Government restricted all traveling abroad and any unnecessary going out of people's houses and the authorities were also regularly updating citizens with all relevant information, recommendations and means that are being implemented regarding Coronavirus. However, in spite of information provided by official sources, people were receiving false information which they continued to believe, hence on one hand, the fear and panic started to get into more and more people's heads and on the other hand, people continued not to take the virus seriously enough.

#### **Fake news about Coronavirus make on people mostly twofold harmful influence:**

1. The fear is rising, people panic and get paranoid. These emotions lead to a worsening of people's mental state and health, that is why more and more people face difficulties and start needing psychological support. This also leads to weaker immune system which is especially dangerous in this time since COVID-19.
2. The society is being split and divided, conflicts among citizens, as well as between citizens and the governance arise. It makes coping with the crisis more difficult and less efficient.

## **FAKE NEWS ABOUT HARM AND SPREADING OF THE VIRUS**

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As it was mentioned before, there are various subtopics of the COVID-19 discussed in the media. Some of concrete examples of fake news which are relevant for Lithuanian audience are presented below.

To begin with, first wave of panic regarding Coronavirus in Lithuania started due to fake news about the first cases of infected people. Once it reached Europe, meaning weeks before there was an actual case confirmed by the authorities of Lithuania, rumors were spreading around. Unknown people were initiating them by telling that their trustworthy sources state that there are already several people infected, yet the Government does not announce it with an intention not to increase the level of already existing panic. Such information was flowing and rapidly spreading on the social networks and by the word of mouth every day,



scaring more and more people. However, it was later confirmed that none of these rumors were real: the first case in Lithuania was officially confirmed on the 28th of February 2020.

Once the number of cases started to grow more quickly and with regard to the dramatic situation in other European countries like Italy and Spain, Lithuanian Government declared a nationwide quarantine, suspending activities at all educational, cultural, sports and leisure establishments, advising residents not to leave their houses unless necessary and restricting gathering of even very small groups of people. These restrictions and recommendations were meant to stop the spread of the virus across the country.

However, since some of the sources in social media claim that Coronavirus is mostly deadly to the elderly and people with chronic illness, many of young Lithuanian people did not see it as a threat to themselves or their friends and families. Even after declaring a quarantine, many citizens kept on going to work, casually seeing their friends at the parks, supermarkets or their houses. Since they were convinced that they are healthy and will not be affected in any way, they do not see themselves as a threat to other groups of the society as well.

We cannot blame social media for actions taken by people, but misinterpretation is also partially social media content creators' fault. The information that they deliver is often misleading and usually only onefold and negative, while it could always be concrete and twofold – announcing news and facts, mixed with statistics of both cured and infected people. For instance, if it tells that statistics show that the vast majority of deaths due to Coronavirus is of elder people, aged from 60 years old, it is important that they also include information about the danger it possesses to younger people. It is possible to find information about young people severely suffering from the Coronavirus, but this information is not being delivered so actively, while it could serve as an

encouragement for youth to be more careful, too. People should receive a real and truthful, easily understandable information in order to properly absorb it. A good example can be a short, visual message by the World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, which was published by many sources. In a video he approached to young people, stating “you are not invincible. This virus could put you in hospital for weeks or even kill you. Even if you don't get sick the choices you make about where you go could be the difference between life and death for someone else”.

In addition, Lithuanians are now split into those, who still do not think that they have to do anything in order to prevent Coronavirus from spreading and those, who do everything to prevent it; those, who want Lithuanians living abroad to come back to their homeland and those who are full of hatred towards such people because they fear that arriving people will bring the virus to Lithuania. Such split is harmful for both the nation and individuals, therefore it is crucial to interfere and make them stick together in the face of crisis.

## FAKE NEWS ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF COVID - 19

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Fake news about Coronavirus are frequently related to the conspiracy theories about its origin. Many sources claim it came from bats soup, other sources of Western media which also made an impact on a part of Lithuanian audience, were claiming that there is a chance that the popular Corona beer is where Coronavirus come from. While the origin of the virus is not officially confirmed yet, people still tend to believe various theories. A popular opinion on the media is that COVID-19 was intentionally created and spread by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, so it can later profit financially from selling drugs and

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**A popular opinion on the media is that COVID-19 was intentionally created and spread by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, so it can later profit financially from selling drugs and vaccines protecting from the infection.**

vaccines protecting from the infection. The others are sure that it is created by the CIA of the United States of America to crash the economy of its competitors – China and Europe. Some people say that publishing such news might help change the perception of USA in the eyes of Europeans – make them distrust the country, which could be beneficial for Russia. To support this theory, rumors about potential spreading of virus through the shipment of goods from China were started. Such believes made Europeans, including Lithuanians, reduce ordering products from Chinese online shops, which resulted in drastic fall of sales (thus, the economy) in China.

On the other hand, there were also the opposite theories, stating that it was initially the plan of Russia to spread this virus in order to eliminate European military officers so Russia can easily occupy Lithuania and other Northern and Eastern European countries or just to gain more power over other countries when they are weakened by the crisis. It is known that a special European Union monitoring team which tackles online disinformation has already collected more than 80 examples of disinformation from Russian sources in two months up to 16 March. Pro-Kremlin media has circulated coronavirus disinformation to undermine public trust in Western countries and aggravate the public health crisis in these countries, states an internal EU document, written by the strategic communication division of the European diplomatic corps, the European External Action Service. Moreover, an increase of Kremlin-support posts has been noticed on Facebook groups: since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, some of the groups have been dealing with a barrage of fake profiles, posting disinformation which can be linked to Russian disinformation campaign.

What is more, there is also a point of view, shared by Lithuanian anti-vaccers: they claim that the virus was created by with the intention not only to benefit from selling drugs and vaccines, but also to kill certain people that might possess threat to the wellbeing of the citizens or with the purpose of reducing the existing population. They encourage people not to be afraid of the virus and once the government suggests people to get vaccinated, not to do that under any circumstances if they want to stay healthy and “in a saint mind”.

Another conspiracy theory, that has reached Lithuanians, is presenting an approach that COVID-19 pandemic did not occur from animals or other natural sources, but it was initially made to divert attention of the citizens and hide other crimes that are being committed at the same time, for instance, brutal detainment and brainwashing of 1 million

Uyghurs in China or another, much more dangerous and deadly virus.

Moreover, other theories were trying to convince people that Coronavirus is not even real: people on social networks were sharing their hesitations about the reasons why no identities of the victims of COVID-19 were announced. People were claiming that this is probably another way to scare people and cover something else going on in the world. However, when shortly after people expressed such opinion, infected people started sharing their stories of getting infected and being sick with the Coronavirus disease online, not only some rumours were shut down, but also awareness about the seriousness and harm of the problem was raised.

Yet such conspiracy theories remain dangerous to individuals and the society: as UK researchers from East Anglia University found, those who believed in conspiracy theories surrounding the pandemic were less likely to take protective measures, thus letting the virus spread

## OFFICIAL TOOLS AGAINST CORONAVIRUS DISINFORMATION

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The Lithuanian Military has previously stated that since February 2020, it had registered around 150 instances of informational incidents in Lithuanian, English, Russian and other languages that involved COVID-19.

Facebook, 15min.lt and delfi.lt claim to be implementing fact-checking programs in order to eliminate fake information from online media in Lithuania. Additionally, similar job is also being done by the European Commission, which warned the citizens of Europe to stay careful and safe, because frauds are using people's fear to benefit themselves. Together with the Member States of the European Union the Commission is working towards protecting citizens from cybercrimes and disinformation which are very present at this moment: the frauds are not only providing people with untruthful information, but also selling fake cures, sanitizers, masks promising to completely protect user's health, malware apps designed for people to track person's symptoms or the spread of the virus. To avoid becoming victims of such scams, people are being encouraged to double-check the sources of information and products/services that they purchase. Along with that,

the aforementioned EU agency is working towards eliminating disinformation cases from media.

## **Organizations and public figures approaching the issue:**

### **1) tackling COVID-19 fake news:**

Lithuanian experts claim that there is no recipe for recognizing fake news, because they are presented in a different way each time. Yet the main way to make people stay rational when facing disinformation, is to raise awareness and encourage them to think critically. It was noticed that some of the public figures did contribute to that purpose during the current crisis. The role of organizations, influencers and other public figures is crucial in this time: in the era of communication, it is significant that people, who are listened to by thousands or millions of people, would spread the word and act as role models, as well as would help people to cope with the psychological and social issues that current situation may provoke.

One of the examples – a comedian and an active citizen Oleg Šurajev, who publicly showed that he was very unsupportive towards Lithuanian media news portals. He claimed that it does a really bad job in informing people, because everything they publish has the only purpose – to attract readers' attention with scary titles and negatively provided content, there is no interest for such portals to give relevant and truthful information. He encouraged these information sources to be more responsible in the time of crisis: "With the right information policy, it would be possible to avoid panic."

In addition to that, some active people, with an intention to stop unnecessary panic which occurs because of unproven facts, have created a Facebook group "Coronavirus – real info" dedicated to informing people with filtered, fake news free, scientific information about the Coronavirus – people who are interested in the situation can reach all relevant information in one place, thus avoiding disinformation. What is more, another Facebook group "Vakcina nuo vatnikų" regularly encourages people to double-check the information they find on the internet, as well as provides with examples of fake news. They have also published a list of facts to dispel some popular myths about COVID-19:

- The virus is spreading in hot and humid countries as well.
- The cold does not kill the virus.
- A hot bath will not help kill the virus.
- Frequent drinking of water will not protect against the virus.
- Temperature measurement does not detect virus. It just shows that a person has a fever. The virus can also be spread by non-feverish persons.
- Spraying alcohol and bleach on the body will not kill the virus if a person is already infected.
- Alcohol consumption does not kill the virus.
- Pneumococcal vaccines do not protect against SARS-Cov-2 virus.
- Frequent disinfection of the nose does not protect against the virus.
- Garlic does not protect against the virus.
- The virus can be transmitted to people of any age.
- Antibiotics do not help to fight the virus. Antibiotics only affect bacteria.
- Mosquitoes do not spread the virus.
- Children can be infected and be undetected carriers, who are especially dangerous for the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. Therefore, they must avoid social contact not only with risk groups but also with their peers.

### **2) building unity:**

Other public figures like Andrius Tapinas, Lithuanian journalist and writer, started an initiative foundation "Laikykitės, medikai" to gather money, which is being used to purchase medical supplies that were needed by medics. So despite social media telling us that there is not enough of those supplies in Lithuania and the situation is awful (which was planting additional fear and panic), this foundation started immediately working



**With the right information policy, it would be possible to avoid panic.**

on solving the shortage. Many people were not only donating money to the foundation, but also showing appreciation of such actions. As a result, people were feeling more calm receiving information about concrete actions and knowing that the required supplies are being brought to the hospitals. Some other non-governmental organizations started similar initiatives with a purpose to collect the needed goods.

It is important to mention that governmental institutions are also initiating donations, giving an opportunity for citizens to contribute to solving the aforementioned issue: in the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, "Life box for medics" ("Gyvybės langelis medikams") – boxes for donating unused and stored in intact packaging masks, gloves, respirators, face shields or goggles, disposable hats, aprons, gowns, etc. to the medics – were placed, so collecting and passing the supplies that are urgently needed for medics at the moment.

In addition, other organizations in Lithuania have also contributed to solving the crisis. For instance, a nongovernmental organization Active Youth started the initiative [www.coronahelpers.lt](http://www.coronahelpers.lt), where it invited to register organizations which needed help and volunteers who could provide them with that help. Thus, the society was informed about the situation in the country: how others, especially vulnerable social groups (seniors, people with disabilities, etc.) were holding up and what help they needed. This also helped some people to avoid unnecessary contact, hence protecting them (one of the ways to help – to bring people 'at risk' products from supermarkets, which are considered to be a dangerous place for them at the moment). What is more, volunteers who could give emotional support for elderly just by talking to them on the phone were recruited. As a result, this platform was one of the ways for people of Lithuania to unite, help and support each other in the hard period of time. Such unity began to be something that seems to help Lithuanians survive the hard times. It can be noticed how people started offering help to strangers, non-governmental organizations and municipalities mobilized and started collaborating to focus their forces on helping the ones, who needed it the most (elderly, medical staff, people with disabilities, families with kids, lonely people, etc.), many of the biggest companies across Lithuania are donating money, respirators, masks and other much needed medical supplies to municipalities and hospitals. What is more, there were many more initiatives (regarding helping, voluntary medical and legal consulting, translating, emotional support, informing the society; giving free lessons, seminars, trainings; donating money, supplies, books and many more) started by individuals and organizations. What is more, residents of Lithuania are being

encouraged to keep on supporting their local businesses in the hard time by ordering the good from them. Such actions not only help medics do their job and people 'at risk' stay healthy and protected, but also contributes to making the nation more united and creates a feeling of having impact and control over the existing crisis.

## UNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CRISIS

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It is not the first time when unity is helping Lithuanians in a difficult situation. Back in the times when Lithuania was occupied, people tried to stick together and show themselves, the world and the occupiers that they are one and that they are strong together. First it was when partisans were running to live in the forests to join their force and fight the Soviets to protect their homeland. Later it was Soviets again, who needed to be fought. Using unity of Lithuanian people can be perfectly visualized with an event that took place in 1991. Lithuanians call it "Baltijos kelias" which means Baltic way (also being known as Baltic chain), uniting approximately two million people from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, who joined their hands, thus forming a human chain spanning 675.5 kilometers. There are also other examples proving the belief that unity and solidarity is what let Lithuania become independent again. All in all, it is believed that being united is helping Lithuanians to cope with the current crisis. In the face of fear and paranoia, sticking together and feeling the collective spirit lets them think that they are in control and that they will tackle this problem sooner or later. That is why the job that organizations and public figures do is so significant: it helps connect people and create a stronger feel of unity and collective spirit.

Hence, the topic of Coronavirus has really been used to spread disinformation and harm countries, societies and individuals, including Lithuania and its residents. As it was noticed, there are two main ways to approach such problem: raising awareness about the real situation and building unity among citizens. As the history of Lithuania shows, taking such actions can truly help to effectively tackle the problem or at least to reduce its scale. It is important to take into account that it should be done not only when confronted with crisis: if the society is always united and well informed, it will be ready to cope with upcoming situations more easily, efficiently and effectively. And such solution can be applied in all the societies and sticking together is extremely important. illustrated



important. This can be also illustrated by the quote of the World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus: "COVID-19 is taking so much from us, but it's also giving us something special – the opportunity to come together as one humanity – to work together, to learn together, to grow together".

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## CHAPTER 4:

# YOUTH WORK AND ACTIVISM THROUGH THE USE OF MEDIA





# DIGITAL ACTIVISM IN EL SALVADOR N THE FACE OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC CASE OF STUDY: “SALVADORANS STRANDED ABROAD”

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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR  
AUTHOR: JUAN CARLOS

Reflecting on and understanding the organization and management processes through digital media allows us to open the Salvadoran forms of collective articulation; especially, in the management of a global pandemic that has promoted the territory to digital context in which we are all locked up in our homes but social dynamics do not stop. For this reason, this case study seeks to enact as an example in the face of forms of virtual articulation in the management of the coronavirus pandemic.

# INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this case study is to reflect on the different dynamics of organization and digital incidence that the "Varados Sv" group has had in the Salvadoran digital atmosphere during this quarantine period. Following the closure of the borders of El Salvador due to the spread of the Coronavirus, around 4 thousand Salvadorans remained in different countries without being able to return home. Therefore, they decided to organize and manage their demands through digital platforms and thus seek for alternatives to return home with all the international situations.

This document seeks to describe and reflect on the different modes of digital organization that the "Varados Sv" have had in order to not only give an explanation of their operation and organizational structure, but also to serve as an example of good practices, which can be replicated in other circumstances and contexts.

Lastly, the document presents relevant information to understand the distribution of the stranded abroad and, in addition, offers figures from different campaigns that have been carried out during the country's total closure time. Thus, finalize with the general conclusions of the current situation and positive aspects of the organization and coordination of the "Varados Sv".

## DELIMITATION

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**Space:** Salvadoran citizens stranded abroad due to the Coronavirus crisis and country under complete quarantine mode.

**Time:** March - May 2020.

**Scope:**

This case study seeks to reflect on the processes of organization and citizen articulation that Salvadorans had while being stranded abroad through digital platforms demanding repatriation to the Salvadoran government.

Consequently, the actions taken by Salvadorans outside the country during El Salvador's most intensive 3-month border closure are analyzed. In addition, the role of government authorities in managing the repatriation of citizens abroad and their systematic errors are described.

**Limits:**

Given the characteristics of the "coronavirus", border closure measures are still in force in El Salvador. Therefore, more than 4,000 Salvadorans who failed to return to the country before the closure of their borders, are still in different countries waiting for a response from the government. As a result, this document does not study the different mechanisms by which some Salvadorans managed to negotiate and return to the country.

During this case study, the legislative framework by which Salvadorans outside the country attempted to appeal to the Salvadoran authorities for their return is not addressed. Rather, we will discuss the different forms of social and digital organization, and not the legal forms of appealing to the State.

## JUSTIFICATION

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The chaos and fear unleashed by the Coronavirus pandemic caused governments and civil society to look for quick and, in many cases, irrational responses to prevent the spread of the virus. In the case of El Salvador, this fear was fueled by institutional government channels to pressure the different national sectors to agree on an agenda for the total closure of the economy and a strict quarantine of Salvadoran citizens.

This implied not only the closure of large businesses and shopping centers, but also the total closure of small and medium-sized businesses; which have been the most affected by the COVID pandemic in El Salvador. At the same time, the closure involved completely shutting down any traffic of people entering or exiting the country, in other words, a closure of El Salvador's borders.



Consequently, no one could enter or leave the country. At first, the executive's action was applauded by the majority of Salvadorans; however, like all governmental public action, it had its consequences. In this case, around 4 thousand<sup>1</sup> Salvadoreans were unable to enter the country before the measure was announced by the president, leaving them outside surprisingly and without any consideration.

To this, we must add that those 4,000 Salvadorans are only those who have been registered through diplomatic representations in different countries. This means that it is very likely that there are more people who have not been identified as stranded abroad. Further aggravating the situation of those who have been unable to return.

Although there has been national and international support for the stranded to return, the President, through his government representatives, has prevented and delayed the repatriation process. Therefore, Salvadorans who did not manage to enter the country on a regular basis, decided to organize and form a citizen bloc that could better articulate their citizen demands towards the Salvadoran government.

As a result, they created a digital collective entity called "Los Varados Sv", they named their own representatives, and through them, began direct negotiations with the government for their repatriation. At the same time, they created digital campaigns that allowed them to expand their situation and message.

Due to this matter, understanding the logic of organization and reflecting on the good practices exercised as well as the bad practices of the "Los

Varados Sv", allows generating approaches to the logic of organization and digital activism in El Salvador.

Escalante, E. (April 02, 2020). MAP: There are 3,450 Salvadorans abroad unable to return due to a coronavirus pandemic. Revised from <https://www.elsalvador.com/noticias/nacional/coronavirus-asamblea-emergencia-arena-carlos-reyes-mario-ponce/701902/2020/>

## METHODOLOGY

For the collection of data and representative samples on the situation of Salvadorans stranded abroad, who were unable to return to their country before the start of the quarantine, two formats for collecting information have been established: on one hand, a bibliographic review of the different news, tweets and posts from the stranded community and, on the other, direct interviews with Salvadorans who were left out of the country before the beginning of the quarantine period.

Thus, to be able to formulate more real interpretations of the situation. Similarly, official statements from governmental institutions were taken to carry out comparative analysis between the stranded discourse and those of the government.

**Table 1: Techniques and instruments to use in the case study**

PRIMARY SOURCES		SECONDARY SOURCES
Quantitative	Qualitative	
Census of the population stranded performed by the embassies	Official reports on the community condition's	News in major newspaper in El Salvador
Official data on the stranding given by the government	Posts and tweets from Salvadorans stranded abroad	Articles on opinions of stranded Sv
	Interviews	

Table 1: Techniques and instruments to use in the case study.

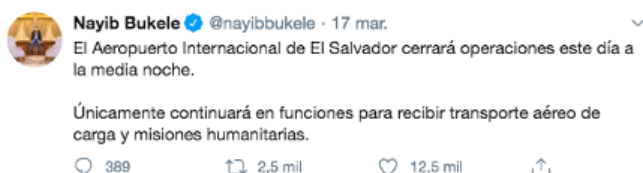
# PROBLEMATIC SITUATION

Now, to understand the situation of the “Varados sv” and the president’s decision to leave them out of the country, a short timeline must be created to connect government decisions and the conditions of Salvadorans abroad. First, from the president’s announcement (figure 1) to shut down airports operation’s up to the current date and in what conditions are the stranded up to now.

It all started on March 17, 2020 when president of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, announced, through a tweet, that the country’s international airport was closed for 15 days. An announcement that surprised not only Salvadoran citizens in the country, but also the different airlines as family members of people who were abroad.

Worse still, those people were on their flight returning home at the time of the announcement. These who did not know anything about it until they landed in El Salvador. This not only brought chaos and uncertainty to those who had just landed on March 17, but also anguish to those who had purchased flights for the days following the announcement.

**Figure 1: President’s tweet announcing closure of the international airport**



Source: Screenshot of President’s tweet. Stating the following: “The international airport of El Salvador will shut down operations tonight at midnight. It will only continue to receive “air cargo” or “humanitarian flights””.

The moments after the announcement were uncertain. In addition, the president published, again through twitter, that had information about 12 people that tested positive of COVID-19 coming on a flight procedent from Mexico city. This not only fueled fear in the Salvadoran population, but also created momentary political tension with Mexican diplomatic representatives who argued that such information was totally false.

The important thing about the situation mentioned above is that this action channeled the attention of the media to the political dispute

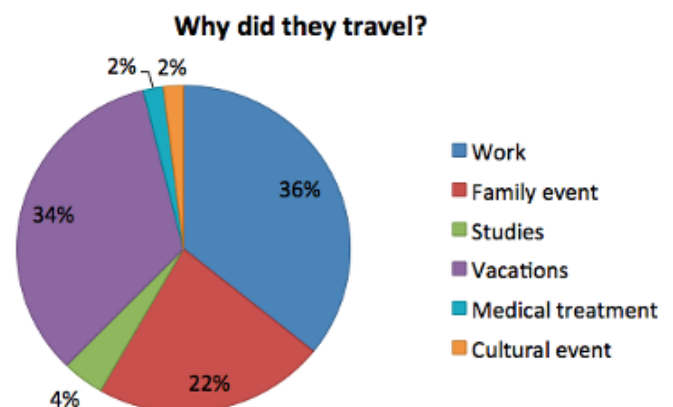
between the two countries, leaving aside the more than 4,000 Salvadorans who did not know when or how they would return to El Salvador.

The days following the announcement, at an official level, it was maintained that the airport would be closed for only 15 days and that they would then reopen so that Salvadorans could return. However, after 15 days, the president again announced that the El Salvador airport would remain closed until further notice. This brought up a series of questions such as anguish within the community of people stranded abroad. Since on the one hand, there was no clear date for his return and, on the other, there were already people complaining that they could not sustain themselves economically abroad.

The main representatives of the government of El Salvador defended that the people who were abroad were people who had the possibilities of sustaining themselves abroad, since they had decided to travel, it was very likely that they had the financial resources to be outside the country while the quarantine lasted. However, when comparing official data and statistics, as shown in figure 1, they showed the opposite.

Three out of ten salvadorans traveled for business and two for family events<sup>3</sup>. In other words, 50% of the people who traveled outside the country before the airport closed were for non-tourist reasons, but with previously acquired commitments. This can be corroborated with Salvadorans who traveled alone and unaccompanied, since 7 out of 10<sup>4</sup>, stranded had left the country traveling alone. In this way, you can counteract official government information about the stranded motives of travels.

**Graph 1: Reasons for traveling abroad of stranded Salvadorans**



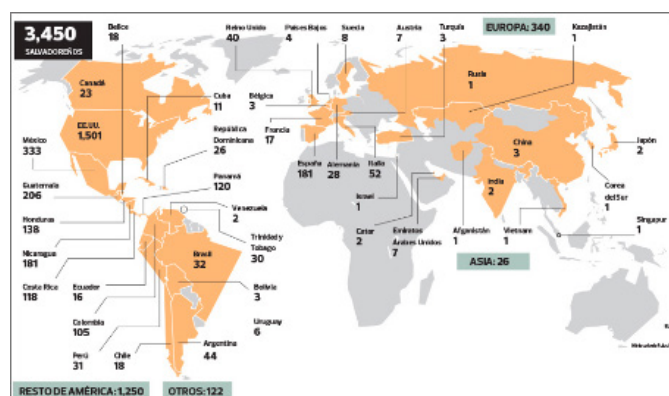
Source: Self- advocacy based on survey data on stranded from El Diario de Hoy

Now, it is important to highlight that, despite the fact that 34% of Salvadorans stranded abroad left the country for tourist reasons, it does not mean that they have the economic conditions to sustain their trip during the long time period the strict quarantine of El Salvador lasted. At the finalization date of this case study, the airport will continue to be closed until the end of June 2020.

In other words, people who went on vacation for 5 or 10 days have had to extend their stay abroad for more than 80 days. As a result, they have had to use their personal savings (20%) and family aid (35%) to cover the expenses of living outside of El Salvador.

It should be noted that not all the stranded are in vulnerable conditions, although there is a minority group that has the economic guarantees to support their life outside the country for the extended period of time, not all of them can afford to incur unforeseen expenses or adequate income wages. Furthermore, the influence of the cost of life in the countries they are stranded in, is not the same a country of high income or one of medium or low income to be residing in for living purposes instead of touring purposes. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of stranded worldwide as a quantity.

**Figure 2: distribution of stranded worldwide**



Source: Design prepared by the newspaper El Diario de Hoy.

As it can be seen in figure 2, the majority of Salvadorans stranded abroad are concentrated in the American continent; especially in the United States.

If we compare this with the GDP per Capita by country, we can have an overview of the cost of living and purchasing power of each. On one hand, and according to World Bank estimates, El Salvador has a GDP per Capita of \$ 4,058.25 annually; while the United States one of 62,794.59 USD.

In other words, despite the fact that many of the Salvadorans stranded in the United States continue to work remotely, their wages are not compatible with the type and costs of life that develops in the described life context. For this reason, they have had to fall back on to their savings, request credits and family aid.

This situation led the stranded abroad to organize through virtual platforms to impose pressure on the government and demand their right to return to the country. What is interesting is the way in which they were articulated and the different digital media campaigns that they have carried out to date to attract attention to their cause and generate sympathy with non-stranded people.

## “LOS VARADOS SV” AND DIGITAL ACTIVISM

The important thing about this case study is to understand and reflect on how a group of Salvadorans stranded abroad can organize themselves as a result of a cause and generate digital activism. The first thing to note is the rapid mobilization of the group of “Los Varados Sv.” who seek to bring together all Salvadorans who failed to enter the country. To continue, the different forms of coordination and representation of the same group to address government representatives on this matter. And finally, the digital campaigns launched to generate sympathy for their struggle.

That is why the organization, coordination and incidence processes of “Los varados Sv.” have been divided into 3 complementary moments. Likewise, the way it was carried out is considered good practices and can serve as an example for other types of campaigns and advocacy processes.

<sup>3</sup>MMartínez, L. (2020, May 12). Disappointment among the Salvadorans stranded at the Foreign Ministry plan. Retrieved June 10, 2020, from <https://www.elsalvador.com/eldiariodehoy/mapa-datos-salvadorenos-varado-repatriacion-cancilleria-plan-retorno/713642/2020/>

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

## A) Digital organization:

This is one of the fundamental features that has defined the digital identity of the "Los Varados Sv". Since they are all being distributed in different countries of the world, virtual platforms provided a fast and efficient way to bring them together and share their similar situations. Consequently, they used the whatsapp platform to generate a large chat group with all the Salvadorans who could not return. This way, they were recruited through credible third parties, stranded in other countries.

The group's objective was simple but effective: to organize the stranded community in order to have a greater impact on government decisions. Also, to track those who were unable to return and have reliable stranded data. At the same time, word spread that Salvadorans abroad were organizing to request repatriation to El Salvador on 2 levels:

First, organize by country and thus request the Salvadoran diplomatic headquarters to return them home, and second, once this action has been carried out, request the assistance from the government of El Salvador. In this way, having a double process of political petitions to the current administration.

This not only created a minor incidence towards the government, but it also, attracted the attention of the media and international organizations. This attention was not on a popular media scale but it did outstanded the issue of the stranded on the government's agenda, which is a point in favor if we take into account that they had been made invisible in gubermental matters by the quarantine and the coronavirus in El Salvador.

**Figure 3: Official Varados Twitter account and its digital organization process**



Source: Varados Sv's Twitter

At the same time, Salvadorans stranded abroad sought to amplify their messages through platforms such as Twitter, Figure 3 shows the organization process they started and the digital search for Salvadorans in other countries.

## B) Coordination and representation

It is remarkable that, in addition to the organization and agglutination process that the Salvadorans stranded abroad created, they also decided to look for leaders who could represent the stranded organized by country. In other words, a territorial organization at country level that was managed through virtual platforms.

To do this, they sought voluntary proposals from representatives, these in turn voted for 2 main representatives from the whole structure. Thus, being able to have a structure that is not only organizational but also coordinated in advocacy and representation. In this way, they plead for to establish direct dialogues with the government and be able to reach a repatriation agreement. The repatriation started with those who suffer from chronic diseases or limited financial resources to sustain themselves abroad.

At the same time, they organized live interviews with their representatives. We can highlight two types of interviews carried out: First, at a digital level on platforms such as Facebook and twitter and the second one, direct links to live television programs. This way the "Varados Sv's" could position their situation on the media's agenda.

The aforementioned is important to mention since they are the first media and digital activism executed actions by the "Los Varados Sv's" although they are not defined as an organization, they do function as one. Starting from its internal structure to how to position its cause in public opinion. It is also interesting to mention the ways in which they have communicated and added supporters through the different digital campaigns.

## C) Digital activism campaigns

The stranded understood that the media power of communication against them was monopolized by the President of El Salvador, therefore, they decided that instead of confronting him directly, they looked out for ways to win sympathizers in general. The first step was to create accounts on Facebook and Twitter with the name "Varados Sv's"



and thus begin to communicate their complaints and actions.

This as a result allowed them to locate other stranded salvadorans who did not have any contact with them previously. This allowed the consolidation and expansion of the data base of Salvadorans willing to organize themselves to find ways to negotiate with the government their return to El Salvador.

In addition, and given the characteristics of the middle class of the majority of stranded, they decided to seek support from creative professionals to carry out their own campaigns as advertising designs for social media complaints. In this specific momentum we can highlight that the stranded created their own graphic line developed for their cause; both their colors and digital identity. In this way, they were able to viralize their messages and modify them through whatsapp, digital chat platform.

As a result of the above, a partial part of the stranded salvadorans decided to use their contacts with traditional media and famous newspaper cartoonists to position and share their issue in the salvadoran public opinion. It all resulted in a series of televised interviews via video conference, opinion columns in different mainstream media and even the pronouncement of the Executive Director of human Rights Watch, José Miguel Vivanco.

**Figure 4: Examples of network campaigns and organized debates**



Source: Publications of the VaradosSv

The important aspect about the above mentioned is that in addition to the formal and frontal campaign that they launched to create impact on the government authorities, there were micro actions of solidarity and support among the stranded. A clear example of that is the call to action, when they placed different a profile picture on Twitter with a blank page using the hashtag “#VaradosSv” (figure 5), they did it with the finality of demonstrating support to all the salvadorans stranded

and thus beg with no way of entering back to El Salvador. At the same time, it sought to add more people to the movement and position the issue on the political agenda.

**Figure 5: Actions taken to denounce the Stranded Sv**



Source: Publications of the VaradosSv

As a result of the different campaigns carried out in social networks, the stranded managed to position their situation of “non-return” on the political agenda, to such an extent that, deputies from the different political parties of El Salvador spoke in parliament to seek ways, through the chancery, that the Salvadorans could return.

Consequently, the government of El Salvador announced in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that they would work in the matter of repatriating the stranded salvadorans in different countries. However, the president never gave a plan of returning the stranded home or in how long this would happen or any ways to do it. This only deepened the social unrest in the stranded. Therefore, they decided to take their own actions to return to the country. Some people, and those who could afford it, paid private flights in collaboration with other stranded people to return to El Salvador; Basically, they negotiated with the Foreign Ministry for a landing permit to enter the country.

The problem of buying their own “humanitarian flight ticket” is the high cost of bearing to this method and, even worse, was how the government managed the media with this situation. First, they affirmed that the return of some stranded was thanks to the government and its efforts to return, which was inaccurate and false information since the same Salvadorans abroad paid for their repatriation flights.

Later, the government accepted that they were not managing the return of Salvadorans in the best way, but that they were doing everything possible to get them back to their homes. The stranded, decided to answer the government denying the information provided. At this point, the virtual platforms had brought the group together and given significant representation at the Salvadoran at a digital level.

Despite this, the stranded continue to be invisible by official government institutions and the general fear of Salvadorans of the coronavirus. The actions continue, but they are losing strength little by little. This is due to the loss of energy and hope that the stranded may be having towards an unclear political panorama in El Salvador.

## CONCLUSION

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As discussed through this case study, digital platforms are a way of managing cyber activism in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic. The stranded salvadorans are an example of how a heterogeneous, organized and collective community can share and work together for a common cause. Although there are ideological and religious positions within the group, they have managed to overcome these differences to position the situation of the Salvadorans stranded abroad.

At the same time, the ability to elect representatives democratically through a digital platform is crucial to generate basic levels of collective organization and trust among them. Since the "Varados Sv" collective has achieved a type of organization that is not easy to build and that in many cases takes time to do so.

On the other hand, they have managed to articulate their digital messages in a way that this messages can transcend from the virtual to the traditional media in El Salvador. A positive aspect to highlight is the organizational and coordination level that the "Varados Sv" have had despite being in different countries of the world and with disparees time zones.

To this, it is necessary to add the hitches of connections and lobby that they've achieved with the media and deputies from different political parties. For this reason, they have managed to position their cause on the Salvadoran political agenda. Unfortunately, despite efforts to find a way out for the stranded, they have still not managed to return to El Salvador. A situation that started as 15 days, has turned into a wait of more than 85 days to return to their country, stuck in many different countries around the world. At the finalization of this case study, the stranded are still waiting to return to El Salvador.

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# LGBT COMMUNITY ISSUES

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COUNTRY: GREECE  
AUTHOR: KYRIAKI CHARITOU

Reaching 2020, even though many things have changed in a social level, still, there is an important issue, the one of sexual orientation and LGBT communities that raises huge conflicts, where also the majority of people need to express their opinion. The need of people to be part of this issue, unfortunately leads to opinions that not only divide the community, but also create stereotypes and severe discriminations. In Greece, the last decade, especially the past few years LGBT Communities try to establish their rights in order to be treated as part of the society. As we said above, many people express their opinion regarding the needs and the rights of LGBT Communities, having complete lack of knowledge and awareness. It is true that Media have also played an important role the previous decades. From one perspective, Media did not include for many years issues referring to different sexually oriented populations. As a result, people were unaware of their actual existence. Another perspective is the fact that Media included topics related to LGBT Communities but either incomplete or impartial and in many cases in a way that maximized stereotypes and discrimination. In an effort to change all that and for these people to have their own voice, different attempts took place in Greece with quite optimistic results, so far. First of all, the project E.T.Ho.S.: Eliminating Transphobic, Homophobic and Biphobic Stereotypes through better Media Representation (2014 - 2020), not only challenges long-lasting stereotypes and prejudices against LGBT people but also offers media professionals and media students the tools with which they can better cover and portray the LGBT community. Also, another attempt took place, 'Program against discriminations based on sexual orientation and sex gender: prevention and intervention', which was organized by four organizations during 2015 - 2016, creating the helpline of psychological support '11528 - DIPLA SOU'.

# INTRODUCTION

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Greece is a country located on the southeast border of Europe. Throughout its rich history, it has been in the center of all major global events, due to its geopolitical location. Greece's religion is Orthodox Christianity. Religion is still a matter of great importance for Greeks, especially of older ages. It is notable that, in early 2000s, a controversial situation arose, during which the Greek state and church clashed for the first time in modern history. The reason was that the state decided to remove religion from the ID cards of Greeks. This created a rather large societal conflict, and shows how deeply religion is rooted in the daily life and the personal beliefs of Greeks. Even today, 20 years later, the religious beliefs are deeply integrated in Greece's society, and together, they bring a strict code (mostly in matters of sexuality, gender, and the archetypes of the Greek family).

This same code can be attributed to the Greek traditions (religion is merely related to these traditions), that create an archetype of the Greek family, with the father being the sole provider of the family. Within this framework, the man is supposed to be the strong figure who provides for the family, and the woman is supposed to be the second fiddle to the family, taking care of the children and her husband. Deviation from norms is considered unacceptable in this model. From the above, it is only logical that the LGBT community is ridiculed, unaccepted, and frowned upon in Greek society. Another fact that plays a vital importance in this situation in Greece, is the absolute absence of any kind of sexual education in school. The only thing that Greek children and teenagers are taught is the biology of sex, and nothing about correct sexual behavior, or any other related matter. To sum up, the Greek society is characterized by mainly conservative attitudes, which are brought about by a combination of religion, tradition, lack of appropriate sexual education, and family archetypes that are quite strong.

In recent years, that the LGBT community is becoming more vocal globally, it was only natural that it would also feature on Greek

media. In Greek TV shows, a gay person is always a caricature, of an extravagant, feminine male who is treated as comic relief. The above is the lightest incident that happens in Greek media. One much more serious recent case was the murder of Zak in 2018, an activist of LGBT and HIV rights. His death was reported as a failed attempted robbery of a jewelry store in Athens. Before his identity was known, this news piece was delivered by the news as "attempted robbery from a drug addict, during which the assailant injured himself on broken glass and lost his life trying to escape". Later, it was revealed that he was beaten to death with no provocation by the store owner and the police officers who arrived at the scenes. This incident polarized Greek society once again, a polarization that had a metaphorical quality, of the big division between the traditional and the modern Greek society regarding LGBT rights, the role of males and females, and other similar matters.

## CASE BY CASE

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Although we find ourselves at the dawn of 2020, sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, are considered primary factors of victimization and discrimination. According to the Special Eurobarometer 437 (European Union, 2015), including interviews with 27.712 individuals from 28 EU member states, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are regarded as the second and third most widespread forms of discrimination in the EU as reported by more than half of the respondents. Those results are in line with earliest findings by the EU LGBT Survey conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency (2013), where approximately half of 93.000 LGBT respondents indicated having felt personally discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Greek LGBT activists tried to give voice to the marginalized Greek LGBT community, by creating Media that would focus on LGBT issues. Just a few years after the fall of the Greek junta (1967-1974), the Liberation Movement of Greek Homosexuals<sup>11</sup> (AKOE) published the magazine *Amphi*, which was developed and directed by LGBT activist, historian of the Greek



LGBT movement, writer, poet and translator, Loukas Theodoropoulos (Ioannidis 2013 February 2; Lifo.gr 2014 April 26). Another worth mentioning effort was the magazine Kraximo,<sup>12</sup> which was published by Paola Revenioti, trans woman and activist, during the 1980s and until the early 1990s, and also included texts by famous artists, poets and writers (Karouzakis 2008; Calvi 2013 January 18). Both of these magazines covered issues of the LGBT community and were a very bold movement for the time. Nowadays, there is an important number of Greek LGBT focused Media, which give voice to LGBT people and issues. Some of them focus on specific groups within the LGBT spectrum, while others cover topics from the whole community. For example, T-Zine mostly focuses on Trans people, LesbianGr mostly focuses on lesbian women and GayHellas.gr mostly focuses on gay men, while Antivirus Magazine covers issues that are relevant to the whole LGBT community. But even the more specialized LGBT Media are not limited to their specific target groups and often refer to different sub-groups from the LGBT population, as well as cover important news that affect the whole community. Beside these specialized Media, there is a great number of mainstream, popular media which are friendly towards LGBT people. These media portray LGBT people in a positive and not stereotypical way, they give space and time to LGBT people and issues, and they often adopt a clearly and openly supportive stance towards LGBT events and – most importantly – human rights of LGBT people. According to E.T.Ho.S. field research, some examples of such mainstream media are the newspaper and website Efimerida ton Syntakton, the free press and

websites Athens Voice and Lifo, websites such as Popaganda and the Greek edition of Vice. Unfortunately, there is also a dark side. There are numerous of Media – mainly newspapers and websites – controlled by or friendly towards extreme right or very conservative parties and ideas in general. Beside these “visible” enemies of equality and human rights, in numerous cases Media professionals or hosted guests of mainstream media have openly expressed homophobic, transphobic, biphobic ideas and in some case even anti-LGBT hate speech. In almost all of these cases, no one was punished by the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV) and/or the Greek Justice System.

## METHODOLOGY / APPROACH

In view of the importance of the role of the media in countering negative stereotypes against LGBT people and preventing and combating discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, the project E.T.Ho.S.: Eliminating Transphobic, Homophobic and Biphobic stereotypes through better Media Representation, not only challenges long-lasting stereotypes and prejudices against LGBT people but also offers media professionals and media students the tools with which they can better cover and portray



the LGBT community. Critically, the guide offers media students and media professionals the ability to refer to the LGBT community and the different kinds of challenges that they face in a non-discriminatory and non-abusive way, rendering them valuable allies in promoting equality and human rights.

The project focuses on building the capacities of media professionals and media students in discussing and presenting the needs of the LGBT community using appropriate language and avoiding misrepresentation. The present guide resulted from thorough research as well as the experiences of experts, media professionals, media students and civil society organisations from 3 EU countries; Greece, Croatia and Lithuania. Desk research on the available data, resources and existing legislation was conducted and enriched with the findings from elaborate face-to-face interviews with relevant stakeholders and focus groups with a large number of media professionals and media students across Greece, Croatia and Lithuania.

The guide is divided into two parts. The first part outlines the basic concepts for media professionals and students, including definitions of key words and terminology, description of discriminatory phenomena, hate speech and hate crime, ways of using appropriate language and general guidelines for media professionals and media students. The second presents the case studies of Greece, Croatia and Lithuania based on the findings from the aforementioned research.

Overall, the guide serves as an invaluable asset for media professionals and media students who choose to be capacitated through E.T.Ho.S. in bringing LGBT issues to the surface, increasing visibility should it already exist and promoting proper visibility of the LGBT community and the issues they face by stopping the use of abusive, stereotypical and discriminatory language. Critically, it is not only a tool for active or future media professionals but also for civil society and the general public, contributing to a holistic approach of the matter, promoting in this way respect for human rights and social cohesion.

In the context of methodology, Ethos project implemented several meetings and workshops in order to raise further awareness regarding LGBT issues. First of all, they set up meetings with the current, at the time, government and politicians, such as the meeting with the General Secretary of Communications, at December 2019, discussing the

'Elimination of Transphobic, Homophobic and Biphobic stereotypes.

Another meeting took place with the Foundation of Youth and Lifelong Learning and its president, with the same, as above, topic discussed. At November of 2019, KMOP (Foundation of Social Action and Innovation) in collaboration with Colour Youth Community LGBTQ Youth of Athens, met up with the General Secretary of Social Solidarity against Poverty, regarding LGBTQ discrimination and stereotypes. As part of the project E.T.H. O. S, in the 13th of December 2019, it was the International Conference "Combating homophobic, biphobic and transphobic stereotypes and prejudice by and through mainstream media".

Finally, two different workshops took place in order to raise awareness among the community of Athens. The first one was addressed to Media professionals with main subject the prevention and how to cope with negative stereotypes and prejudice against LGBTQ population and people through Media. The second workshop was addressed to University – public and private – students of Media and Journalism departments. The topic was, once again, the stereotypes and discrimination against LGBTQ population and alternative ways of how to deal with them.



Homophobic slurs from mainstream Greek newspaper "Makeleio"

## IMPACT

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The overall objective was to educate and raise awareness among journalists and media students about the phenomenon of Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (HTB) in the media and in particular about the direct or indirect (re)production of harmful stereotypes against LGBT. This served the overarching goal of E.T.Ho.S. to combat discrimination against LGBT in GR, LT and HR by enlisting media power for their benefit while challenging misrepresentation.

In view of the important role of the media in countering negative stereotypes against LGBT people and preventing and combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation, the project targeted:

- Journalists and media professionals/ staff
- Media students, and
- Policy and decision makers

### In order to:

- Increased awareness and knowledge of journalists, media professionals and students in Greece, Lithuania and Croatia about non-discriminatory representation of LGBT people, and the prevention

and combatting of the reproduction of homophobic/transphobic/biphobic stereotypes in/by the media.

- Provided educational institutions with improved tools/ material to deliver LGBT sensitive media studies
- Improved the representation of LGBT rights by media and political parties
- Increased awareness about the phenomenon of homophobic/transphobic/biphobic media discourse among decision makers, professionals and the public in the 3 countries.

## CHALLENGES

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The first challenge was to find the financial resources needed to create campaigns, events and trainings. However, the major challenge was the constant effort to offer practically and of course socially, the space for these people to raise their voices. Places such as schools for example or Media (especially television) were not each time prepared to endorse such a delicate matter, as sexual orientation and help through campaigns to educate and raise awareness.





## HOW CAN IT BE IMPLEMENTED IN OTHER CONTEXTS?

The methodology and approach is quite simple and it could be implemented in a variety of conflict situations among the community, where awareness is needed. It can be related and implemented in order to support groups, especially of young people, that are treated as a minority. Examples of conflict situations could be related to sex gender, religious and mental health issues.

- First of all, the focus should be in finding a specific vulnerable group of people. This requires detailed research to recognize the norms of each society.
- Then, create a group of experts and professionals
- Training of these group in order to share their experiences not only with the disadvantaged groups, but also with the rest of the community.
- The next step is to set up meetings and events to encourage face to face interaction between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged populations in properly prepared environment.
- The final step requires practical implementation of the knowledge and skills that young population obtained during their participation. The above requires e - books, textbooks, Media campaign, interventions in public and private schools.



Homophobic slurs from mainstream Greek newspaper "Makeleio"

### Further resources:

- <https://www.kmop.gr/el/>
- <https://www.ethos-project.eu/the-project/>
- <https://11528.gr/>
- <http://www.makeleio.gr/>





# THE ROLE OF THE YOUTHS AND MEDIA IN PEACE BUILDING IN CASAMANCE

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COUNTRY: SENEGAL

AUTHOR: FATOU BINETOU MANE

In their endless pursuit of certain economic affluence, countries worldwide are frequently faced with conflicts which can lead to wars and massacres. These are very often political, ethnic-based or even religious conflicts which result from an accumulation of unmet needs, frustrations of part or the majority of a population, such as low education level, unsatisfactory sanitary conditions, lack of quality services and, above all, joblessness.

# INTRODUCTION

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Casamance, the natural region in south Senegal, reflects the other areas nationwide, with 42 percent of the population under 15 years old (Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de Démographie, 2015).

This is characteristic, not only of a very young population but also one well-exposed to the issue of unmet needs and interpretation of messages conveyed by the media, above all where conflict and violence are at stake. As a result, it would be fairly impossible to deal with peace building without associating the youth and the media.

Actually, the media; namely the press, radio, television and the Internet, convey information via text and/or picture format, whether facts or fiction, on a daily basis. They are ubiquitous in our everyday life, and reach almost everybody. Well now, the information conveyed by the media plays a very essential role in the decision-making process, whether individually or collectively, above all where the decision to partake in building stability is concerned. In this way, control over the youth and information must have become the struggle of many individuals, organisations and sometimes even the State, who strive to use them as they see fit, being well-aware of their power.

Since 1982, Casamance is facing an armed conflict. However, some lull is now being felt in the area since several years. Such a state of affairs has motivated our research paper. It appeared to us it was interesting to examine the role, not only of the youth but the media, in the peace building endeavour in the region of Casamance.

## Objectives

The purpose of this research paper is to determine the role played by the youth and the media in peace building in Casamance.

Specifically, we aim to:

- Show the importance of youngsters in building peace in Casamance.
- Highlight the contribution of the media in the peace building process in Casamance.

## Hypotheses

Our research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

- The 2250 Resolution made the dedication of young people to peace building in Casamance easier.
- The "peace journalist" model doesn't exist in Casamance.

During our research many people have been met, among whom:

- All chairpersons of youth's regional councils from the three areas included in the region of Casamance, namely, Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sedhiou.
- Communication professionals (journalists, a film maker and a researcher) having examined the issue of the conflict in Casamance.
- Organisations of Civil society young members.

# A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CASAMANCE

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Casamance is Senegal's southern area, including Ziguinchor in the West, Kolda in the East, and Sedhiou in the centre. Partly isolated from the rest of the country by the Gambia, Casamance is located between two countries; the Gambia in the North, and Guinea-Bissau in the South. Given its geographical peculiarity as well as great ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, it is also very different from the other areas in the country. Like everywhere else in the country, Casamance depends economically on agriculture, with 80 percent of its population relying on agricultural activities. Since 2019, Senegal has been a middle-income country . However, the region of Casamance is among the poorest areas in the country, with a 71 percent very poor household rate.

On the political level, twenty years after Senegal's independence (1982), Casamance has been facing instability due to an armed conflict opposing the State's armed forces and the guerrilla fighters of the Democratic Forces Movement of Casamance (MFDC). Yet, despite the 30-year old conflict, which contributed to worsening the situation at security, economic and infrastructure levels, Casamance is now enjoying a lull which raised hope for a possible return of sustainable and long-lasting peace.



# THE LINK BETWEEN MEDIACT AND THE CASE STUDY

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The MEDIACT project identifies the power of social media and the Internet to tackle local and international issues, intensify direct interaction between sources on the spot while promoting structured dialogue with the view of building more peaceful societies, and foster conflict transformation. As such, Casamance is an interesting case given that it is a Senegalese area which has witnessed an armed conflict between the State of Senegal and the MFDC since 1982. The belligerents' opinion in general and, more specifically, that of former demonstrators – during the 1982 protests – and the population of Casamance about the conflict, have remained unknown, given the fact that the State used to control information closely. For that reason, our case study is in direct connection with the project since it enables to uncover the initiatives of the youths in relation to the conflict, and the role they played alongside the media in the peace building venture in Casamance.

## THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN PEACE BUILDING

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In Africa, young people are very often seen as "agitators". Although such a position may be understandable, yet one must bear in mind that youngsters, owing to their demographic weight, undergo the consequences of conflicts first. Indeed, in conflict zones, youngsters can be seen in two categories: the victims and the stakeholders. They can have positive as well as negative influence on conflicts. Taking into account the fact that conflict zones are breeding grounds for propaganda, disinformation and manipulation in order to gather as many supporters as possible, how can the youths be affected by this?

In developing countries like Senegal, the youth is faced with many unmet needs.

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*The World Bank's 2019 ranking places Senegal among lower-middle-income countries, with a per capita gross income between FCFA 596,5 and 2322.*

That frustrating situation brings them to adopt a "daredevil" stance in order to satisfy the ambitions of those who sell them promises of change. Actually, when young people are jobless, and live in precarious conditions, they become an easy prey to any kind of political or ideological manipulations based on the prospects of change, especially in conflict zones where poverty is the rule.

Regarding the conflict in Casamance, young people are stakeholders, given their involvement in the Senegalese national army, the guerrilla which is the armed wing of the rebellion, and civil society organisations. This proves enough how much young people are concerned by this thirty-year old conflict. The approach adopted to tackle the conflict at youngsters' level depends on which side one stands. Within civil society youth's circles, there are some differences as to the way they deal freely with the conflict and their information level on the conflict. Sedhiou and Kolda's youths feel more at home when communicating on conflict matters, whereas one can notice some reluctance in dealing with the issue with the youngsters in Ziguinchor. Such reluctance is due to the fact that the area has long been the epicentre of the conflict, and dealing with it has long been considered taboo. Those who would speak often had to face atrocities from the belligerents. What is more, the trauma which the populations had been facing during that painful time is still fresh in the hearts and minds, which contributes to making people less likely to deal with those issues.

Now, save for the sensitization young people try to undertake to get their fellows to upgrade their information level, they always feel excluded from negotiation talks. Now, as far as Senegal is concerned, 42 percent of the population being young, including this significant part of the population is necessary or rather promising in conflict resolution.

Furthermore, following the adoption of the UN 2250 resolution<sup>2</sup> in December 2015, an important place is devoted to young people's contribution to conflict management and peace process. In addition to sensitization campaigns and youth initiatives for peace, renewed dedication of young people to partaking in negotiation tables as well as taking peace building initiatives can be noted ever since the application of 2250 Resolution. Indeed, the Peace Dynamics, which is an organisation of young members of civil society based in Ziguinchor, is working hard with the youths on sensitization issues and youngsters' awareness-raising regarding the key role they play in that peace building venture.



# THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PEACE BUILDING IN CASAMANCE

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When dealing with the media, their role as means of information and communication is put forward. Information and interaction between the stakeholders are essential factors in conflict evolution and resolution.

Well, in every conflict, stakeholders need to communicate, either for backing up their ideals and promoting commitment to their cause, deconstructing the motivations of the opposite group or lay evidence of their victory. Getting hold of the media then becomes high stakes in time of conflict, which makes them the first battle of the belligerents in any conflict zone.

Now coming to Senegal, from Independence to nearly the 1990s, only State-run or public media; that is, the national television, radio and written press, were authorized. This caused some imbalance in the dissemination of information, which promoted the State line. Such a disparity derives from the fact that, in that time, one was used to hearing State discourse instead of government opponents’.

Impartiality in the information wasn’t granted. With the advent of the conflict in Casamance, this situation has an impact on information processing. The Senegalese journalists were neither prepared to the advent of a conflict on the national territory nor to dealing with the issue appropriately. To that situation one must add the fact that the State had all public means of communication under control. The journalist didn’t have any freedom in the processing of information, and that would last for years.

Nonetheless, it’s only with the advent of the first private radio in Casamance – Sud FM in 1992, and later Walfadjri – that one started observing some freedom at media level through conflict-based programs. This emerging freedom of speech was very badly appreciated by the prevailing regime, which would strive to silence and arrest any journalist who would dare to interview MFDC members. This echoes the arrest of journalist Ibrahima Gassama for allowing an interview to the MFDC, which enabled the movement to talk directly to the people.

This semblance of freedom leads, all the same, to some balance, not only in the dissemination of information but on the people’s noticeable access to some pieces of information, above all from the rebellion as well as civil society organisations whose initiatives for the conflict’s resolution and respect for human rights became more and more visible.

There was a growing need for information about the conflict at citizen level. The advent of private radios has enabled the population to deal with the conflict, and say what they think about it. Actually, the media’s role should, not only inform but educate, sensitize and keep people from some conflicts. These first two private radios enabled to disclose discourse on the conflict as well as understand and deal with it.

The media also installed, if need be, a distant dialogue between the belligerents who couldn’t sit around a negotiation table. It was common to see the government of Senegal or the Diakaye group, then led by Salif Sadio, communicate through the press to review the state of conflict and deal with ongoing challenges, and this would happen despite absence of formal negotiations.<sup>3</sup>

This overall mechanism is integral part of the peace process, although when tackling peace process, one certainly knows the beginning but not the end of it.

As a result, the research work is based on how to manage that lull prevailing since 2000 for achieving lasting peace. For such a situation to happen, efforts still need to be made on the way to communicate with the government, stakeholders and the populations who underwent the conflict. This must be undertaken through the way the media should examine conflict issues as well as the uncomplete psychological reconstruction.

Today more than ever, these means of information and communication are essential in the reconstruction process, if we are to achieve sustainable and lasting peace.

# CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

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Many challenges have been reported at youth as well as media levels in relation to peace building efforts.

For young people, one should:

- Fight against unemployment by striving to enhance employability for young people.
- Political initiatives fostering socioeconomic development must be significant in the region of Casamance.
- Renewed involvement of young people at the negotiation tables.

As for the media challenges, one can mention:

- Reinforcing research initiatives on the conflict and peace in Casamance.
- Keep on making investigations in order to write research papers or articles aiming to make the genesis and evolution of the conflict in Casamance.
- Further contribution of the population to defining the conflict's prevailing state of affairs.
- Being as neutral as possible.
- An adjustment of the mass media in taking into account that social media have become a communication channel to be used and taken advantage of by communication professionals.
- Being able to manage information networks, above all, social networks.

# CONCLUSION

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Our study has shed light on the role of the youth and the media in peace building in Casamance. Actually, the two research focuses greatly contributed to the ongoing lull in Casamance. However, we have come to realize, through the investigation, that our first research hypothesis is verified only to a quite weak extent. Admittedly, thanks to the 2250 Resolution, young people should be given a far more noticeable role to play in the peace negotiation process, but its implementation is still not effective. Conversely, our second hypothesis has proved correct as there is no such "peace journalist" in Casamance, even though media

people strive to adapt to the situation, and ensure media coverage of conflict-related events.

For young people and the media to partake more positively in the peace building process in Casamance, a greater involvement of these two stakeholders in the peace negotiation tables is necessary.



## Appendix

### ACTIVITY

Interview

Interview

Interview

Interview

Interview

Interview

Interview

Interview

Interview

Focus group

### INTERVIEWEE'S POSITION

Henry Ndécky (Peace Dynamique)

Ibrahima Gassama (Journalist)

Talibé Diallo (Chairman of Ziguinchor's Regional youth council)

Aliou Diallo (Journalist at radio Oussouye)

Fabacary Coly (Film maker)

Hamady Baldé (Chairman of Kolda's Regional youth council)

Bécaye Cissé (Journalist at Kolda)

Bayo Daffé (Chairman of Sedhiou's Regional youth council)

Moussa Dramé (Investigation journalist at Sedhiou)

4 youngsters from Kolda's youth departmental council



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