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Editor

Gary D. Rawnsley

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Editorial

Introduction to "International Broadcasting and Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century"

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Abstract
International broadcasting remains a key activity in public diplomacy. In this Introduction I discuss how international broadcasting has long been associated with the projection of foreign policy interests, from an instrument of empire building in the 1920s and 1930s, through the Cold War and beyond. In particular, the Introduction evaluates how modern Information Communications Technologies, especially the internet and social media, have transformed the way international broadcasting contributes to public diplomacy.

Keywords
broadcasting; Internet; propaganda; public diplomacy; soft power

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1. Introduction

Across the world governments have embraced with enthusiasm the idea that they must exercise 'soft power' ever since Professor Joseph Nye first introduced the term at the beginning of the 1990s. Few—within both political circles and the academic community—appear to understand what soft power really means, with many preferring to emphasise the attraction of cultural products rather than a particular society's positive values and behaviour. One only needs to refer to the annual *Monocle* soft power survey to see how the concept is misconstrued and therefore misused. Soft power, if it exists at all (and I have reason to doubt that it does), 'depends on others' knowledge of one's alluring qualities' and 'on knowing exactly how to make their ideas and themselves attractive to a target population' (Mattern, 2005, pp. 584-588). Communicating 'one's alluring qualities', values and positive behaviour to the international community is the responsibility of public diplomacy, a term first attributed in most literature on the subject to Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.[1] Public diplomacy refers to 'the process by which direct relations with people in another country are pursued' by state and non-state actors 'to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented' (Sharp, 2007, p. 6). Jowett and O'Donnell's definition is broader. Public diplomacy, they write:

> "deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation of governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communications between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p. 287).

[1] Nicholas Cull's research (2009, p. 19) has revealed that the earliest use of the term 'public diplomacy' was in the *London Times*, in 1856.

Nicholas Cull (2008) developed a taxonomy that proposed defining public diplomacy by five fields of activity: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting. The papers gathered together in this special issue demonstrate that international broadcasting, described by Monroe Price (2003, p. 53) as an 'elegant term for…the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another', is a mechanism of public diplomacy that remains as relevant today as ever. However, they also encourage a wider understanding of international broadcasting and its relationship with public diplomacy. While research in the field has been dominated by analyses of 'traditional' or 'mainstream' media, such as radio and television, now we must also consider more carefully the impact of the Internet, social media and other platforms of communication on how a political or diplomatic actor uses international broadcasting to further their own interests and ambitions.

International broadcasting enjoys a long history. The earliest recorded instance of the organised use of radio for political purposes was in 1926 when Russia used radio broadcasting to demand the return of Bessarabia from Romania. Moscow was also the first to employ international radio as a tool of its foreign policy: the inauguration of Radio Moscow in 1929, first in four languages and growing to 11 by 1933, resulted from an aspiration to explain the Communist revolution to the wider world and communicate its accomplishments. Its broadcasts found an audience. In 1930, Hugh Dalton at the British Foreign Office received a letter expressing concern that Moscow radio had been heard broadcasting in English and 'urging revolution repeatedly' (West, 1987, p. 22).[2] Holland followed with its Empire Service in 1927, China in 1928 (first as the Central Broadcasting System and then as Radio China International in 1941), Germany in 1929, France in 1931, the BBC's own Empire Service in 1932, and Japan in 1934. The Voice of America started to broadcast in 1942, making the US a relatively junior member of the club (Browne, 1982; Mansell, 1982; Partner, 1988; Pirsein, 1979; Walker, 1992).

Radio continued to dominate international propaganda and public diplomacy during the Second World War and through the Cold War; and alongside the continued development of the BBC Overseas Services, Voice of America, Radio Moscow, Deutsche Welle, etc., so–called 'surrogate' radio stations (such as Radios Free Europe, Liberty and Asia and Radio and TV Marti) were launched to take the propaganda war direct to Communist audiences in their own languages (Cull, 2008; Nelson, 1997; Price, 2003; Rawnsley, 1996, 1999, 2013).

On 17 January 1991, a coalition of 34 nations led by the US launched combat operations to expel Iraq from Kuwait. As Operation Desert Storm began, television audiences around the world found on their national TV news networks 'live' coverage from a new kid on the block, CNN…only they did not see much at all. In fact, the opening hours of the war were in sound only as the three CNN reporters described from the safety of their hotel room the bombs falling on Baghdad, while audiences saw only their photos superimposed on maps of Baghdad and Iraq. The first conflict not only of the New World Order, but also of the 'new' media age, characterised by 24/7 electronic news-gathering and live satellite broadcasting, was reported as if on radio (Taylor, 1992). Yet the Gulf War marked the arrival of CNN as a serious major player on the emerging international television news landscape, and others would be quick to follow their approach to broadcasting.

The rapid development of live round-the-clock international news programming has since morphed again to provide for live and *instant* news broadcasting via the Internet. New communications technologies have shattered forever the spatial and temporal boundaries that constrained their predecessors and now allow the 'deterritorialization' of news broadcasting. Moreover, the likes of CNN and the BBC no longer tower above the global news media environment that is now characterised by more regional actors facilitating a multi–directional flow of news and information: Al-Jazeera, NHK, RT, CCTV, India's NDTV, the pan–African Channel S24, and Singapore's Channel News Asia all provide alternative voices and perspectives on global issues, while inviting us to gaze upon local and regional news that would otherwise be ignored by the dominant networks.

The speed at which news, information and other forms of communications now travel across the globe has transformed diplomatic practice (Gilboa, 2008; Seib, 2012). While television and even radio remain the primary method of communication in many parts of the world (see the paper by Jacob in this collection) the social media and the Internet have expanded the room (though some may prefer to call it an echo chamber) in which conversations take place. This has two important consequences. First, all members of a diplomatic mission are encouraged to be more sensitive than at any time in the past to the possible impact on public opinion of what they do and say. Mark Twain is credited with saying, 'A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its boots'. One can only speculate what Twain would have thought about the power of Twitter and other social media to make events real just because they are discussed in cyberspace.

[2] This brought for the first time the act of listening and international broadcasting together as per Cull's (2008) typology: the letter sent to Dalton provoked the British government into organising the first systematic monitoring of international radio broadcasts by the Post Office, a task later taken over by the BBC.

The second consequence of what has been called the 'new media' age is that the number and type of actors involved in public diplomacy has grown. We can no longer maintain our focus on states, governments, foreign ministers and press officers. Rather, a more accurate picture of public diplomacy today requires a broader perspective that includes the activities of groups and individuals operating outside the confines of states and governments and who can deploy (and sometimes innovate) methods of international broadcasting for their own strategic ambitions.

As I write in the Spring of 2016, one such group is dominating news headlines across the world: Islamic State (also called ISIS, ISIL and Daesh) is not only carving out territory for itself in the Middle East, but is also responsible for terrorist activities in Europe. Their development and use of new communication platforms, documented in a series of volumes (for example, see Stern & Berger, 2015; and Atwan, 2015), presents new challenges for international relations which require a more nuanced and creative response from governments and diplomats operating in a modern media ecology which is undergoing almost constant reinvention.

This collection of papers offers a broad understanding of this new media ecology and its interaction with public diplomacy. The authors demonstrate the innovative practices that international actors, whether they are governments or terrorists, use to project and communicate their power, interests and ambitions. Yet for all the changes that have occurred in the global media landscape, international broadcasters and public diplomats working in the new media age still face challenges that their predecessors would recognise. After all, the history of international broadcasting since the 1920s is one of actors playing 'catch-up' as technological development gallops ahead and new geopolitical problems demand new communication responses (Rawnsley, 2012).

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Information Asymmetries and Their Challenge to International Broadcasting

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Abstract
Dramatic symmetries in strategies and techniques of persuasion create challenges to the functioning of established actors in the global media ecology, including international broadcasters. This essay articulates an adaptation of the concept of asymmetric warfare to the field of propaganda, persuasion and recruitment. It examines the particular challenge of certain asymmetric entrants, including ISIS and categorizes how the more traditional entities and government institutions react to these new entrants in markets for loyalties.

Keywords
asymmetry; broadcasting; global; journalism; market for loyalties; Russia today

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1. Introduction

At the moment, there is widespread and despairing astonishment at the effectiveness of ISIS in exploiting the information space, particularly in its capacity to use social media for purposes of recruitment.[1] These achievements, as sordid as they may be, give rise to self-examination among those long established as engaged in shifting or sustaining public opinion. The rise of ISIS and its impact on media ecology can be analyzed, in part, as a case of asymmetric information warfare. In this essay, I wish to do three things with ISIS as an object of interest: articulate the relation between asymmetric warfare and asymmetric *information* warfare; examine the particular challenge of the ISIS techniques to traditional players, especially international broadcasters; and, finally, discuss responses to the phenomenon. This is a study, too, of how innovation can catch, unawares, the established, the conventional, namely entities that assume that the privileges of previous power will continue. Examples abound of the changing dynamics of information flow in a world of new media technologies and practices. In the very early days of the Syrian conflict, the *New York Times* reported how a dozen or two diasporic geeks were successful in capturing and shaping the way the narrative of the Syrian protests was being received in Western capitals. Syria could not control the narrative. Western broadcasters could not. And certainly the international broadcasters were unable to as well. For Joshua Landis, a professor of Middle East studies at the University of Oklahoma, this led to an interesting, not necessarily exaggerated, conclusion: "These activists have completely flipped the balance of power on the regime, and that's all due to social media" (Price, 2014).

True, these young Syrian activists were early disrupters (and supporters of freedom of expression), but they fade into the shadows compared to the later capacity of ISIS to turn prior assumptions on their heads. And the Syrian dissenters ultimately relied on the megaphones of great conventional broadcasters and newspapers to get their word out. They are, however, ex-

[1] There are hundreds of articles on the subject. Compare Mark Mazzetti and Michael Gordon (2015) with Kathy Gilsinan (2015).

amples of sudden transformations and new concepts of capturing media for modes of change that require analysis: a perceived reversal of an existing distribution of power in the information sphere. States seek to determine aspects of a new epidemiology. They and ISIS are examples of a context in which the state had overarching control over how words and images, even thoughts and ideas, were diffused, it now frequently finds itself backfooted, even stutteringly impotent.

2. Asymmetric Information Conflicts

Asymmetry in the sense I use it here has its source and origin in the concept of "asymmetrical warfare," a concept that has its own vagaries. One definition from the force-related context calls asymmetrical these conflicts where one opponent can take actions that are not available to its foe (Barnett, 2003). This is an asymmetry in the quiver of techniques, where the unavailability may stem from legal, ethical and pragmatic reasons: historic differences in access to information, differences in access to and control of the means of distribution and differences in the capacity to create and produce messages. In contemporary usage, warfare asymmetry often describes the circumstances where a conventionally powerful state is faced with a ragtag set of protestors or adversaries who are, at the outset, hardly worth dignifying as enemies. A final definition of warfare asymmetry is functional: it describes techniques that an adversary exercises to "undermine an opponent's strengths while exploiting his weaknesses using methods that differ significantly from the opponent's usual mode of operations" (Miles, 1999).

In recent decades, we have associated asymmetrical warfare with acts of terrorism, tactics like hostage taking, the use of biological warfare and the use of torture. Asymmetric warfare is contrasted with a conventional "ideal," one where sides are evenly matched, use similar kinds of techniques, and where over centuries, rules (whether fully respected or not) have developed regarding the limits on what one side can do to the other. To put it simply, asymmetry in warfare occurs when parties to conflict seem mismatched in particular ways—with one combatant far stronger in terms of firepower and wealth than the other, or where the strategies of one combatant are radically different from the strategies of the other and from the norm.

The notion here is to ask what the concept of asymmetric warfare has to offer us, if anything, in terms of strategic insight into current modes of information conflict.[2] Like asymmetry in war, asymmetry in the battle for loyalties involves undermining an enemy's strengths and exploiting its weaknesses. Gains are achieved through the pioneering use of techniques not immediately available to the other side—either because it has not discovered them, has not mastered them or is otherwise disdainful of their adoption. Asymmetry in communications techniques often involves significant disruption of the status quo, initiated by entities that are often scorned as disempowered or substantially weaker (Srebreny & Mohammadi, 1994). Underestimation is a characteristic byproduct of asymmetry. The lack of conventional equality masks the resourcefulness of desperation.

3. Asymmetric Entrants in a Market for Loyalties

I start with an approach I developed over the years, first in an article in the Yale Law Journal, then in an earlier book, *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (Monroe, 1995), in Media and Sovereignty, and finally in *Free Expression, Globalism and the New Strategic Communication*. In these works I sought to define a "market for loyalties," in which large-scale competitors for power, in a shuffle for allegiances, use the regulation of communications to organize a cartel of imagery and identity among themselves.

> "The 'sellers' in this market are all those for whom myths and dreams and history can somehow be converted into power and wealth—classically states, governments, interest groups, businesses, and others. The 'buyers' are the citizens, subjects, nationals, consumers—recipients of the packages of information, propaganda, advertisements, drama, and news propounded by the media. The consumer 'pays' for one set of identities or another in several ways that, together, we call 'loyalty' or 'citizenship.' Payment, however, is not expressed in the ordinary coin of the realm: It includes not only compliance with tax obligations, but also obedience to laws, readiness to fight in the armed services, or even continued residence within the country. The buyer also pays with his or her own sense of identity." (Monroe, 1994)

Government I argued, is usually the mechanism that allows the cartel to operate and is often part of the cartel itself. But among the many points that are intriguing is this: what we mean by "government," or what levers of power should be included, changes and means different things in different contexts. Indeed, it is hardly ever a single government that makes these decisions. What I emphasize is the way in which the market for loyalties within any state or in a different definition of target audience is often the product of multiple interests—other states, transnational religious entities, NGOs, and others. Some of these are members of the cartel, formally or not. And it is difficult to determine which players are most effective in the cartel: the state

[2] For insight into the general concept, see U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual. A thorough explanation is contained in McCauley and Moskalenko (2010).

agencies, the multinational corporations, religious groups, international organizations, governmental and non-governmental. Some cartels are stable—having the same members with the same relevant strengths, for years; some are unstable, ever changing, with varying capacities to police participant behavior and the entry of competitors.

Those who seek to enter the market, particularly those who are for many reasons forcefully excluded are the asymmetric pioneers. This is hardly always the case, but in the instance of ISIS, asymmetries of anticipated exclusion were met with affirmative invention. Asymmetry prodded creativity; but asymmetry may also have provided time and cover for efforts to take hold and experimentation to go below the radar. ISIS did not spring forth full blown, but much had been put in place in terms of communications strategy when it came to major public attention.

Markets for loyalties are, by definition, ubiquitous and have existed at all times in their wide variety of forms. We like to think that the current environment is different, in terms of how these markets function: the opening impact of technology, the range of participants, the sophistication of players, the porousness of boundaries, and the changing power of regulatory bodies in terms of establishing and enforcing rules for participation and exclusion. All these factors have always been present; it is in terms of their relative importance that markets change over time.

In terms of this "market for loyalties" analysis, the successful surmounting of asymmetrical weaknesses can be said to occur when a group, excluded from the cartel of entrants eligible to shape national identity (or other similar constructs), breaks through and uses the breakthrough to substantially change the distribution of allegiances in a target audience. Asymmetry can be a function of technology, or profound differences, as mentioned, in what tools and approaches are considered available. Beheadings and the showing of beheadings—as a mode of expression—is an example of ethical availability: it can be a mode so repugnant that it is prized by some and abhorred by others. Asymmetry becomes a guide to how rude entrants use technology or force or subsidy or other mechanisms to break into cartels.

4. International Broadcasting and the Market for Loyalties

The history of international broadcasting—here principally meaning state-sponsored broadcasters reaching across borders—could be written from the perspective of asymmetry. These broadcasters, including the BBC World Service and aspects of the Broadcasting Board of Governors in the US, could see themselves as once historic innovators—entering tightly closed ideological markets to bring in new voices, new approaches. International broadcasters were short-wave innovators, technical pioneers, adventurers with new satellite technologies. They emerged often from colonial communicators to their own diaspora, or local bureaucracies to redefine themselves as instruments of potential political change. They thought about how to give voice to those without any and to project credible news account. How "white," "grey" or clandestine they or their colleagues were might be a gauge to the asymmetry of their condition.

There are still innovators among the international broadcasters, but they are extensively challenged by the asymmetric entrants, principally, at the moment, ISIS.

In Iran, the mullahs may think of international broadcasters from the West as powerful interlopers, while the international broadcasters themselves may self-perceive as struggling to break through in a difficult environment. To put it another way, the international broadcasters, for the most part, are elements of what is delicately called the "legacy media," a category of entities that have felt power and privilege, that crested in their corporate life–cycle, and where the question of future and future role looms large. This position means that asymmetry takes a different profile. International broadcasters are in a culture of extending existing arrangements, when they prod they can be painted not as the creative, brave outsider, but rather as an instrument of a hegemonic West.

International broadcasters conform to this model because of their measured performances and expectations. While the practitioners sometimes make large claims as to the potential for regime change and historic effectiveness in "bringing down the Wall," tolerance of these entities as contributors to discourse can be often attributed to some idea of limit either on their goals or their impact. Censorship, filtering, other modes of aggressive behavior are indications that the international broadcaster is crossing some vague line of accepted behavior. In the US, under this analysis, the international broadcasters may have to assert some goals to satisfy their donors—primarily the US Congress—realizing that in practice they must behave, in large part, under cartel rules.

A decade ago, before ISIS, before the Arab Spring, The challenge of understanding and appreciating asymmetries in the battles for hearts and minds was highlighted for me by a now somewhat–forgotten 2006 speech given by Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary of Defense, to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. The talk, labeled "New Realities in a Media Age," was a candid discussion by a person of immense power who was perplexed by what seemed to be the sudden and unexpected diminution of that power (Rumsfeld, 2006). The premise of the talk was that "Our enemies have skillfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age, but for the most part we, our country, our government, have not adapted." For Rumsfeld, this asym-

metry of adaptation meant that "violent extremists" had gained an edge in "manipulating the opinion elites of the world." In addition, "They plan and design their headline–grabbing attacks using every means of communication to intimidate and break the collective will of free people." These individuals were not bound, Rumsfeld argued, by the standards of legality and ethics that bound the United States. But Rumsfeld also recognized that this was not just a question of tactics or purpose, but one, in part, of superior practical application. "They're able to act quickly. They have relatively few people. They have modest resources compared to the vast and expensive bureaucracies of Western governments." In spite of these qualities, or perhaps because of them, these groups had, in Rumsfeld's view, prevailed in the media sphere. Rumsfeld summarized this asymmetry with a metaphor that demonstrates the irony and tragedy of power—the turn from strength to weakness, from dominance to something closer to cluelessness: "Our federal government is really only beginning to adapt our operations to the 21st century. For the most part, the U.S. government still functions as a five and dime store in an eBay world." But Rumsfeld saw only part of the problem: the asymmetry was not only because the U.S. government had not modernized. It also hadn't seen the potential for asymmetrical, terrifying and sometimes pre-modern modes of shifting allegiances and turning weaknesses into strengths.

In some ways much has changed since Rumsfeld's speech, and many governments have sought, not always successfully, to avoid the shock of surprise that leads to crises in communications. The Obama State Department, especially under Hillary Clinton, persistently devoted itself to changing the culture of the institution to remedy the deficit that Rumsfeld pinpointed. Whiz kids surrounding Secretary Clinton became transfixed with the task of transformation—with, for example, the creation of what they called a doctrine of "21st Century Statecraft" meant partly to obviate elements of adverse information asymmetry.[3] Technical updating—becoming more fluent in social media, for example—offers a relatively easy area for catching up. Far more difficult are those circumstances where the asymmetric advantage of a foe comes from their more sophisticated understanding of customs engrained in the cultures of the societies where allegiances are being shifted—for example, better knowledge of family and educational structure or familiarity with language—or where ethical or other similar differences lead to the inability of one party to use effective approaches open to another.

In analyzing asymmetric contexts, rather than ask who has the most weaponry, one could ask which agents have the most sophisticated sense of using the information tools they have, including marketing or use of social media. This could be sophistication in presentation or insight into potential effect. Rumsfeld (2006), in his talk discussed above, suggested asymmetries in moral expectations, with the "weaker," non–state actor willing to use communicative techniques with lower ethical standards. There also may be an "asymmetry of patience:" citizens of a Western democracy may tire of persisting in a conflict while the asymmetrical opponent can maintain its slow and dogged approach. Writing about asymmetrical warfare, Uroš Svete (2009) has argued that the "essential point of asymmetry thus lies in pursuing…[approaches] that are contrary to realistic ideas of the balance of power in the quantitative/conventional sense." Strategists of communication recognize a historical jujitsu, reversing the power context so that the weak appear to become strong, and the strong become weak.[4] The counter–strategist recognizes the vulnerabilities that may lead to this kind of reversal of fortune. The protestor and his or her supporters internalize the existence of new means to break a wall of access; the state and existing authority will seek new ways to compensate for the weakness of old defenses.

Participants in a competition for allegiances who have been in a position of dominance are often blighted by the illusion of their presumptive power. Conventional international broadcasters may suffer from this phenomenon. These dominant players are almost always faced with the danger of unanticipated openings by new entrants: mere shadows on the horizon that suddenly loom as potential or real threats. ISIS' media team, otherwise barred from the communications landscape, turn to new and viral forms of communication as they seek to break formal and informal modes of control. International broadcasters and those behind them may not be well prepared for the consequences of asymmetry. They have broader targets, less well defined. They are constrained in their behavior. The impulse, often justified, is to strike out at the asymmetric innovators. Much of what occurs in terms of censorship, control and, increasingly, the use of violence, constitutes a blunderbuss of responses of the powerful in this paradigm-shifting asymmetric world.

There have been many examples of technological innovations that help to break broadcasting- related cartels. Radio stations that broadcast, unlicensed, from the sea (so–called pirate ships) caused turmoil in the radio sphere of the 1960s. In the 1990s, the brashly competitive introduction of satellite technology over existing transponders broke the illusion of total control over the information space, but even then, for the most part, weak players were not able to take ad-

[3] See Department of State (2013), and Drezner (2011). The ambiguous results of this ongoing effort have been captured by critics. For instance, see Morozov (2010).

[4] See McCauley and Moskalenko (2011).

vantage of the apertures because of inexperience or prohibitive costs or gateway barriers. What is significant about ISIS is the replacement of a cartel by a monopolist, and a ruthless and effective one at that.

5. Patterns of Reaction

This then goes to questions of how international broadcasters or their governments react. Many modern debates deal with ways of reacting to the disruptions and asymmetries these technological changes have created. Asymmetry is significant, for example, if the characteristics of "weakness" result in one player being more innovative and responsive than another in a way that is destructive of existing institutions. The important variable is how these opportunities are seized and by whom. In *The Cultural Industries*, David Hesmondhalgh (2007) distinguished (in a very different context) between large commercial, corporate bureaucracies and small network organizations. Bigger bureaucracies with all their resources and hierarchical structures find it hard to move quickly enough to address changes in the market, while smaller, more nimble, decentralized network organizations are often more successful, especially in early adoption of trends. A similar phenomenon is at work in the political context. Of course, large entities may use their scale and control to stifle innovation; and some large entities (companies and countries) have sought nevertheless to maintain an innovative edge.

International broadcasters, and certainly the governments behind them, seek, in a certain sense, to "learn" from innovative competitors and adopt their techniques. But often this cannot work. What makes an asymmetrical competitor effective, as has been stated, is the resort to arguments that are not available to a conventional broadcaster. The fictive promise of an afterlife, cushioned with an abundance of conforming sexual partners of an idealized quality, is available to the ISIS propagandist, but not to the BBC or the Voice of America. There are areas of content differentiation which cannot be a zone for comparable access.

Institutional differences present themselves. If for example, the issue is battling the recruitment of young Britons for ISIS, the role of the World Service might be to help public understanding—around the world. It is not the vehicle for retail contestation for hearts and minds one at a time. Its focus is not on a domestic audience, even a segment of one. In some states, new entities are shaped to counter the work of the asymmetric entrant. In the US, an entity called the Center for Strategic Counter-Terrorism Communication was established in the Department of State, but it lacked the scale and fervor of its ISIS competitor. The tasks and skills required to perform new tasks in a new information environment may not be easily nourished in an existing environment.

States' and other players' responses to the new information asymmetries vary across categories. Adaptation to information asymmetry can mean adoption of the new or adaptation of the old. In response to the often stunning and surprising communications innovations by asymmetric opponents, governments—as we witness—fluctuate between repression and creative response. They extend the ordinary processes of control to modes and technologies by which the marginal or innovatively subversive express themselves. But that is often not enough. Harshness may be the initial impulse, but it is often ineffective in staunching the effects of the repression. Counter-strategies evolve.

Players in an asymmetric context have had both similar and differentiated categories of target audiences. ISIS has demonstrated the significance of potential recruits as a heavily analysed and exploited market. But usually the targets are populations in the zone of conflict (Afghanistan or Egypt of the Arab Spring) and a global audience as well. Furthermore, the entity, usually here the legacy media, may have a home market (the domestic audiences of the coalitions of the willing, the donor audiences of the NGOs, and so on).[5] In all of these there are allegiances to shift. Each audience requires a different strategy, and asymmetries have different implications for each audience and each strategy. There is a difference between the use of media, even asymmetrically, to persuade generally—to reach a large audience to change opinion—as opposed to its use to "recruit" a dedicated core of workers or supporters, or those who engage in acts of terror such as suicide bombers. And counter-strategies differ depending on cross–national support for asymmetric efforts.

6. Who is Weak and Who Is Strong?

Asymmetry in a strategic communication context generally features a narrative dimension; stories shift and are transformed by the specific asymmetric relation of a particular context. Incumbent governments, and their broadcasters, may for a time deem themselves (or be deemed by others) as categorically powerful even if in a particular setting or at particular time they are on the verge of becoming weaker and outmaneuvered. The putatively weak, often agents of subversion from the perspective of the established states, consciously look to the margins as modes for entering the market. If they gain a foothold, the response of the powerful can be one of sharp self-realization and complex reaction.

The model for asymmetry, then, should capture situations where a weak player has the potential for upending the status quo. Experts at the asymmetrical

[5] Consider Putnam's well–known two–level game theory, where strategic communicators look to both "home" and "target" markets even as they engage with the asymmetry *within* the target market citation.

seek to protect their capacity to disturb, shielding action from the interventions of the established. They take risks and endure the possibility of arrest and death; they engage in hard to detect personal contact. They mask or cover their use of social media. They concentrate on the person-to person.

Strategies of innovation and response depend on understanding patterns of information flow. A first look at the Arab Spring cases suggests that the reverberation from street protest to international or regional press to Al Jazeera beaming back into Egypt was a formula that wreaked havoc with existing patterns of state control over information. And—certainly this was the case in Egypt—the major global attention created a second relevant audience, one that was meaningful not only within the state but also internationally. In the international market for loyalties, elements of asymmetry were almost reversed as weaker entities could find points of access more readily than official spokespersons. Whatever "cartel" affects large elements of the international market, ease of entry for proponents of reform, civil society or "change" may be greater in over-ripe regimes with aging leaders and increasingly unpopular agendas. Looking across the sweep of instances—from Tunisia to Libya—one could seek to determine how the once-weak and asymmetrically positioned overcame or exploited that status, in what markets (domestic elite, domestic popular, international officialdom, international public opinion), and what combination of external coverage and internal growth could be held accountable for change.

7. How the David and Goliath Metaphor Dissolves

Weak players have certain tropes that they may push to gain sensational and immediate entry to an audience's attention. Terrorist acts have this quality. One response is to determine ways to neutralize such tropes. During the worst days in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush administration sought to deny its enemy, comparatively "weak" proponents of powerful images—such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda—such external amplification. This was done, for example, seeking, sometimes in vain, the assent of broadcasters not to diffuse photographs of dismembered heads or flag-draped coffins of returning American military.

In the annals of strategic communication, then, the most notable cases will be the ones where seemingly disadvantaged asymmetric entrants become strong and influential (if not dominant), moving from exclusion or subordinate status to being effective participants in key markets for loyalties. It is this success that becomes the study text for innovative asymmetries and for consequent countermeasures. This is not only the (possibly temporary) drama of ISIS, but also of the isolated, distant Ayatollah, distributing audiocassettes in the Shah's Iran and overwhelming the advantages of state control and the sophistications of modern public relations (Srebreny & Mohammadi, 1994). Shudderingly threatening to some, but romantic to others, is the idea of the excluded becoming the prevailing figure, almost as if being an outsider becomes a talisman for entry. Some combination of exclusion, striking of a sympathetic cord, and a capacity to play the instruments of communication leads to an unexpected triumph. In the aftermath, the world searches for hidden signs that elements of asymmetry were a façade—that those who appeared weak were heavily financed, that there were powerful players in league with the seemingly powerless. Conspiracy theories, not always unfounded, crop up to shift the characterization of the enterprise from one of weak to strong, to one of strong to strong, or strong to weak.

The sympathy is often, though less in the case of ISIS, with the seemingly weaker player—the hunger striker, the initial protestors, the proto-Gandhis of the world. But there is a curious question about the very semantics of the asymmetric. Take the ubiquitous David and Goliath metaphor, so firmly in our mind—the mythically unstoppable, powerful figure attacked by a nonentity armed with a seemingly inconsequential weapon. In retrospect, that is an illusion. The match is asymmetric if the two are fighting in different worlds with different rules, different technologies, even different strategic capacities. But as time passes and circumstances shift, balances may change, and the clash is no longer so asymmetric. Innovators use asymmetries in the commercial field to bring down media giants; the frequency and bases for that become the stuff of military and political analysis. The lesson has been established and the lesson should be learned, whether David triumphs because of skill or fortune (or divine blessing). Information asymmetries are thus time-bound, though the learning curve and repair phase could be long. Finally, asymmetry fatigue may set in, as the insistent message of a proponent, too steadfastly portraying its David-like status, loses credibility. For these reasons, asymmetries are inherently unstable.

In the case of ISIS, the metric for success is complex: it is a matter of measuring fear and following within the physical area it controls; or the extent to which it terrorizes civilian populations around the world; or the extent to which it proceeds to gain recruits from a diverse geographical source of target groups. In the case of ISIS, as with most asymmetric entrants, the question then becomes disturbing the effectiveness of those techniques? One question is whether any asymmetric innovator long relies exclusively on its own capacity or, rather, must rely on voluntarily or involuntary allies who amplify their messages. For example, the anti-Mubarak Tahrir Square protestors, at the beginning, fit within the category of the weak against the strong. But it was not the technique of protest and grassroots mobilization alone that led to the success of

the protestors and their emergence as effective asymmetric actors. It is hard to determine what gave rise to the international support for Tahrir Square or to assess the exact balance of forces that led to change, but it is clear that that additional support was crucial. In terms of control of information flows, protestors faced a substantial fortress—the government of Egypt—yet proved extraordinarily successful in an international market for the validation of ideas and the obtaining of support. Face time on channels in the United States and Europe could and did influence coverage in Cairo. However they are portrayed, ISIS messages are often amplified.

8. Communication Strategy and Asymmetry: Consequences

Strategies of contemporary wars have been revolutionized by thinking about asymmetric conflict.[6] Indeed, asymmetric warfare studies created a new and dynamic taxonomy for military approaches. The asymmetries in battles for hearts and minds can and have led to similar transformations. First, there is a transformation in attention to technologies of information access. The United States was obliged to overhaul its understanding of the relationship between new technologies (including social media) and opinion formation. Surveying asymmetric movements in the Arab Spring, studying the opposition in Iran, and reviewing the building of civil society in China, another lesson learned by the United States may have been that those who seek to support seemingly weak players can best do so by increasing access to information and seeing the uses of social media for mobilization increase.

Battling to maintain primacy in contexts of information asymmetry is an ongoing effort for all competing actors. Certainly, the dissidents of the world use current events as a text from which to learn for the future. ISIS has been significantly creative, even if dangerously and immorally so, in its information policies. It has learned and it has through its learning innovated. Those in authority struggle to do so as well, analyzing modes of affecting a market for loyalties, seeing how apertures are exploited, determining how defenses can be buttressed. The main condition for understanding asymmetry in information exchanges is that circumstances change as participants learn and adjust to previously exposed weaknesses.

Perhaps this is the primary lesson in understanding information asymmetries: authorities adjust or they are doomed (or certainly disadvantaged). Similarly, if the "protestors" or destabilizers cannot adjust to change, cannot learn sufficiently from prior processes of dynamic adjustment, or cannot forge alliances with strong players who enable them, they too are rendered less successful. What works in terms of use of media to mobilize an internal target audience one day may not work the next.

From the perspective of the state, gaps in technological development are particularly difficult to surmount. Bureaucracies, particularly sclerotic bureaucracies in authoritarian regimes or bureaucracies that have been nepotistic, as opposed to meritocratic, attempt to buy external expertise at high cost and have a delayed capacity to respond to the use of new technologies and social media. What this has meant is that there is a new race to learn what was not learned before, to overcome the deficiencies Rumsfeld noted, to eliminate the weakness of social-media tone–deafness. It is important to remember the key mantra of asymmetry: exploit your opponent's weaknesses, and avoid their strengths. The implication is to anticipate weaknesses and convert them in advance to strengths. This was a central tenet of the Petraeus counter-insurgency strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I have suggested that asymmetry also occurs if one side considers itself empowered to use techniques that are denied to the other, whether this denial is for ethical or legal reasons. As a way of evening out the playing field, "adjustments" in these legal and ethical barriers may occur. Consider the United States and its rolling, shifting effort to compete in the market of effective techniques that asymmetry has produced. Principles—even constitutional principles—that limit surveillance, hamper eavesdropping or restrain coercion are modified so that the capacity to interrupt or monitor flows of information is increased. Governments overcome reluctances to subsidize messages, or to coopt journalists, if they consider that techniques useful to them, or undertaken by their foes, should be enlisted. Perhaps the most notorious example of this process is the drone–based killing of Anwar Al-Awlaki and Samir Khan, both American citizens who were deeply engaged in effective messaging on behalf of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as well as in certain acts of terrorism. Khan occupied a unique position as editor of the online terrorist magazine, *Inspire*, said to be a vital recruiting tool for AQAP as well an effective way of advancing its beliefs in English; it was *Inspire* that was said, later, to be the source of information for the Boston Marathon brothers. Conceptual barriers to targeting killings of American citizens were effaced; though the information–related justifications may not have been at the forefront, they were a possible element of the decision. The implication is this: where barriers exist because of domestic limitations, seemingly hamstringing transnational efforts, those barriers will be under pressure, and will sometimes be torn down.

Similarly, all societies, and particularly democratic ones, are at an asymmetrical disadvantage if their capacity to fashion an effective transnational information campaign is hampered by domestic politics and that of

[6] See Van Baarda and Verweij (2009).

their opponents is less restrained. As an example, American international broadcasting investments such as the Voice of America and Radio Marti could reflect foreign relations needs and necessities, but also pressures created by internal domestic politics. Resources for international broadcasting may be aimed at Cuba for reasons of local political pressure rather than otherwise assessed national preferences, and effective diaspora groups can hijack the process for their parochial needs.

Table 1 may assist in understanding. This chart seeks to demonstrate certain of the distinctions discussed in this essay as between asymmetric entrants more traditional communications entities, including international broadcasters. This is hardly a complete discussion of differences; it is stylized to emphasize distinctions.

Table 1. Distinction between asymmetric innovators and legacy broadcasters.

	Purpose	**Medium**	**Narrative Message**	**Constraint**
Asymmetric Innovator	Short term mobilization	Internet, Personal influence	Urgency	Few
Legacy Broadcaster	Longer term shift or reinforcement	Broadcasting, Satellite	Present or future Stability	Many

A curious and important asymmetry—relevant to strategic communication—involves the different capacity of the government and dissenters to control whether individuals in society can sense the changing political mood of the community. It is one thing for individual citizens to wish a change in government. It is another if these same individuals are aware that their views are widely or pervasively held—an awareness that could eventually lead to efforts for change. By controlling information, the state has been traditionally in a position to reinforce a view of what the public generally believes, even if that is inconsistent with rampant private beliefs. In this sense, Elihu Katz (1981) has linked asymmetric strategies to concepts of "pluralistic ignorance" and the "spiral of silence." Pluralistic ignorance, a term introduced by Floyd H. Allport in 1931, describes "a situation where a majority of group members privately reject a norm, but assume (incorrectly) that most others accept it" (Katz, Allport, & Jenness, 1931). The spiral of silence, a concept developed by Elisabeth Noelle-Neuman, asserts that a person is less likely to voice an opinion on a topic if he or she feels in the minority and therefore is in fear of reprisal or isolation from the society. Situations of asymmetric communication usually involve efforts by the state to maintain pluralistic ignorance and spirals of silence, and by agents of change to reduce or end them. ISIS creates its own silos to encourage shifting loyalties among recruitable youth.

Finally, an emerging area of information asymmetry—increasingly related to governance and the power of the state—is cyberwarfare and cyberterrorism. This is not information asymmetry of the kind most discussed in this chapter (asymmetry in access to markets of allegiances). It is rather the use of innovative (if immoral and illegal) approaches to hampering or disabling the capacity of states to function by attacking their infrastructure. Destructive hacking may be the action of individuals demonstrating their prowess, or it may be in the service of other states, their militaries or organized groups. Cyberwarfare raises the ethical and moral questions often raised in asymmetric conflict, including the very permissibility of the tool in conflict. It emphasizes the innovative, and as such, has the quality of rapidly changing circumstances of strength and weakness.[7]

What is emerging is a context of new technological and institutional arrangements where responses to asymmetries yield ever greater unpredictability. Asymmetries have always existed. But new media technologies, coupled with aggressive use of them by increasingly sophisticated players (those invoking the power of the protesting streets to the hackers of Anonymous and WikiLeaks), upend traditional arrangements and traditional doctrines. An increase in information asymmetry leads to weakened confidence in the existing institutions and accommodations. In this environment, understanding the dynamics of interplay between entrants and existing cartels of communication becomes more and more urgent.

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Conflict of Interests

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[7] For indications of U.S. concerns about cyberwarfare vis-à-vis asymmetric war and communication, see Clarke and Knake (2010), and Libicki (2009). The first is written by a former Special Advisor to the President on cybersecurity, the second commissioned by the US Air Force.

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Article

Public Diplomacy and the Clash of Satellites

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Abstract
The communication revolution has shifted the paradigm of diplomacy by emphasizing the role of public diplomacy, at the same time complicating the environment within which state-managed public diplomacy is conducted. The rise of regional media has provided weaker states with opportunities to challenge the monopoly of information on the part of the more powerful states. *Al-Hurra*, the American sponsored channel to the Arab World, stands as evidence of the challenges facing US policies in this part of the world because of the influential role of regional media. It was particularly *Al-Jazeera* that transformed the media sphere in the Arab World as well as globally in what became known as "*Al-Jazeera* effect". The paper argues that identity presentation plays a major role in determining performance of the public diplomacy of the media.

Keywords
Al-Hurra; Al-Jazeera; communication revolution; counter-hegemonic discourse; Gaza War; hegemony; identity representation; public diplomacy; regional media

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1. Introduction

The American funded TV channel to the Middle East—*Al-Hurra*—went on air with a specific mission in mind: challenging *Al-Jazeera*'s (the Qatari channel) predominance and winning Arabs' hearts and minds. According to many American officials, there was a need to counter- balance "biased" Arab media. For example, in his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush announced the launch of *Al-Hurra* in order to "cut through the barriers of hateful propaganda" (cited in Cochrane, 2004). However, the US public diplomacy mission was not very successful. Unlike *Al-Jazeera*, *Al-Hurra* was never the "channel to go to" for the majority of Arabs. Not only did it fail to challenge *Al-Jazeera*'s supremacy, but it also lagged behind other Arab channels. Subsequent results of Zogby's and the University of Maryland's poll (2008, 2009, 2011) showed that *Al-Jazeera* remained the most watched news channel for Arab viewers. In 2008, the polls found that after five years of being on air, *Al-Hurra* was the preferred news channel for only 2% of Arab viewers.

The question then becomes how do regional satellite media challenge the way the US conducts its public diplomacy in the Arab world? What is the difference between *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Hurra* with regard to their media messages? This study argues that *Al-Jazeera's* discourse is counter-hegemonic as it represents and introduces a different set of ideas, values, and most importantly, a different Arab identity. Similarly, the US public diplomacy initiative represented in *Al-Hurra* is an example of a hegemonic discourse that represents the most powerful state in global politics, and consequently introduces another presentation of Arab identity that serves its political interests.

2. Theoretical Framework: Media, Globalization and Hegemony

Gramsci developed the term "hegemony" to describe how one class dominates the others by a combination of political and ideological means. In his view, media disseminates the ideas that maintain the status quo and keeps the elite's grip over power policy (Abercombie, 1996, p. 161). Robert Cox introduced this

idea to the field of international relations by arguing that hegemony is important in preserving the stability of world order. In his view, great world powers have succeeded in establishing a global order favorable to their interests by promoting a set of hegemonic ideas in parallel with their coercive power (Callinicos, 2002, p. 275; Hobden & Jones, 1997, pp. 209-211).

Not only is hegemony about ideas, but it is also about the representation of identities. As Butler (1999) and Mann (1999) argued, hegemonic discourse is essential to national identities as it contains references to, and social implications for, race, class and gender. This way, hegemonic discourse creates a national identity that is different or opposed to an international "other" (McPhail, 1991, p.34). Media obviously plays an essential role in developing and maintaining hegemony.

However, with advancements in communication technologies, this hegemonic role of the media was questioned: how far do media represent the dominant group? Price Monroe's (2002) idea of "market of loyalties" shows how media is used to maintain the distribution of power by promoting a set of political views, cultural ideas and slogans that maintain the existing power structure. New developments in media sphere, according to Monroe, challenges this arrangement. Governments can consequently respond either by redefining the power structure and accommodating new entrants or by taking effective steps to raise the barriers of entry (Monroe, 2002, p. 33).

Global media sphere has lifted the barriers of entry as it encouraged the creation of new national and regional media (Figenschou, 2014, p. 5). This was particularly the case with the Arab sphere since the 1990s. The CNN coverage of the Gulf War introduced Arab governments to the power of satellites (Robinson, 2002) and confronted them with the ill performance of their national media; such a realization inspired the rise of *Al-Jazeera* which, subsequently, challenged Western hegemony over news production (Seib, 2008).

In this way, satellite media have provided some opportunities for the disadvantaged to express themselves, define their interests, represent their identity and challenge the hegemonic discourse of the more powerful states (Volkmer, 1999, p. 48). When counter-hegemonic discourse becomes much stronger, hegemony fails (Lull, 2000, p. 71).

3. Arab Identity

Contextualizing *Al-Jazeera*'s identity discourse is important to understand its description as a pan-Arab media. It also serves as a preliminary step in comparing it to *Al-Hurra*. Defining identity was always a contesting issue among scholars. The traditional view perceives identity as a given based on the primordial factors. According to this perception, identity refers to a group of people sharing a common fixed culture, history, language and most importantly, a common ancestry. On its part, social constructivism perceives identities as modern developments and inventions. Instead of focusing on the "objective" characters of the identities, constructivists deal with the phenomenon as mainly psychological and cultural artifact—i.e., an imagined community (Anderson, 1991).

In his seminal work on the *Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas (1989) defined public sphere as the domain of social life where public opinion is formed by discussing matters of general interest without the interference of the authorities. In this virtual space, people interact, exchange ideas and information, and discuss issues of general interests (McKee, 2004, pp. 4-5). Media have been widely recognized as the modern manifestation of the bourgeoisie public sphere described by Habermas. This conception of the public and, consequently, media spheres is not far from the debate on identities. Traditionalists argue that people engage in the public sphere with a pre-given identity. In this case, media only reflect on the existing identity; if there is no existing collective identity, there would be no public sphere. In contrast, constructivists perceive the development of public sphere and collective identity as being constructed through the social, political and discursive practices. Building on this conception, media thus play an important role in the representation and formation of identities. In other words, the story of media spheres is conducive to the story of national identities.

Although primordial claims are difficult to prove, it is possible to show how Arabs developed some sense of belonging before calling it "Arab nationalism," i.e. before the political engineering of Arab identity. While many scholars disagree on dating the first appearance of Arab nationalism, most of them agree that Gamal Abdel Nasser's era represented the peak of "Arab nationalism". The issues debated and circulated in the Arab media sphere have influenced the definition of Arab identity. The following discussion explores how the issues debated and circulated in the Arab media sphere have influenced the definition of Arab identity.

3.1. The Arab Media Sphere and Arab Identity

Building on the previous discussion on the traditional versus constructivist views on identities, this study differentiates between Arabness/Arabism and Arab nationalism/Pan-Arabism. Arabism is a cultural expression of identity that refers to, and includes, many elements like language, history, religion and culture. As for Arab nationalism, it adds to these cultural traits a political aim: uniting Arabs in a one single state. "Solidarity vs. unity" distinguishes the two terms. While solidarity is the ultimate goal of Arabism, Arab nationalism survives on the dream of unity (Dawisha, 2005, p. 8).

According to Ernest Dawn (1973), Arab nationalism

started as an opposition movement in the Ottoman Empire without necessarily separatist tendencies. At that time, Arab admired Western scientific progress, but loathed Western accusations of Islam as the reason for Muslims' underdevelopment. This was an Arab cultural revival that stressed the role of the Arabic language and the status of Arabs in the heritage of Islam. This trend was accompanied by the development of private print press by the new large-landowners class and a newly educated class composed largely of local Christians. Private press was generally tolerated as long as there was no direct criticism of the Ottoman government (Ayalon, 1995, pp. 28-29).

Nascent Arab national consciousness was, thus, mainly based on language and culture to distinguish itself vis-à-vis the Ottomans. This could be called "Arabness/Arabism." At that time, the majority was still hoping for special status for Arabs within the Ottoman Empire under the umbrella of Islam (Khalidi, 1981). It was only after the secular chauvinist trend of Young Turkish became clear that religion was employed. Independence was presented as a preliminary step to restore the golden days of Arabs and consequently, Islam. Turkish, in this way, became the Arabs "Other."

During World War I, Arabs fought with the allies against the Ottoman Empire. They asked for, and were promised, their independence. Post-war arrangements, however, wrote the first chapter in the tensioned history between Arabs and the West. Arabs were traumatized by what they considered as Western betrayal. This left deep imprints on the construction of Arab identity as independence became the primary concern of Arab nationalists who framed colonialism as the Arab's "other".

Under colonialism, media, represented in the press, played a vital role in developing the nationalist sentiments among Arabs. The interwar period was particularly a period of relatively greater autonomy for the press (Ayalon, 1995, pp. 75-124) that led to the expansion of the Arab public sphere. Writing about the distinctive characters of Arabs and the need for them to be united in one nation had flourished. Sati'al-Husari's writings reflected these ideas stressing the role of common history and language in Arab identity.

However, the one issue that sparked the Arab public sphere was that of Palestine and the danger of Jewish immigration. Arabs from their different loyalties and perspectives all agreed on the need to resist the demographic changes that were under way in Palestine at that time (Dawisha, 2005, p. 107). When Arabs were defeated in 1948, the Palestinian issue became a defining mark in Arab identity. As Tareq Ismael (1976, pp. 12-13) described, the defeat was "traumatic to the Arab masses…that it fostered a transformation of Arab nationalism from the glories of the past to the failures—particularly the failure in Palestine—of the present".

The post-independence phase stressed the role of the Arab state. Media became the state's main institution in mobilizing popular support. The adopted top-down model of communication stressed state's unity as a predominant social value. Soon, the Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, recognized the influential power of media on regional politics. This was the role played by the influential Egyptian radio station of *Sawt Al- Arab* (Voice of the Arab), that had sown the seeds of pan-Arab media. At that moment, the Arab's "Other" was clear: imperialism and its local collaborators (Dawisha, 2005, p. 285). The Palestinian issue has since become a key issue, if not the key issue, in shaping Arab identity and modelling Arabs' relationships with the West. Arabs themselves were classified into unionists and sovereigntists. The former promoted the idea of one Arab sovereign state where Arabs share oil wealth and receive equal treatment. The latter preferred solidarity and support for other fellow Arabs without necessarily compromising their sovereignty or sharing their wealth. In other words, while the former defined Arab identity in terms of Arab nationalism/Pan-Arabism, the latter perceived it as "Arabness/Arabism".

The perception of unity was built upon a glorious history and subsequent suffering (Chalala, 1987); it was also a unity of language and hope. These were the main elements that were stressed in the first phase of Arabism and circulated in the Arab public sphere. Then, a political dimension was added to these cultural factors: Arabs were to be united into one nation. This was the phase of Arab nationalism and the objectification of Arab identity.

The shocking defeat in the 1967 war damaged Arabs' trust in their media for its fabricated news (James, 2006), and obliged Arab nationalists to lower their demands from Arab unity to Arab solidarity (Dawisha, 2005, pp. 243-246). Moreover, conservative Arab states regained control over their media sphere after Nasser's defeat. Saudi Arabia was one of the Arab countries that suffered the most from Nasser's propaganda. Therefore, following the 1967 war, the Saudis' ownership of regional newspapers increased to promote a regional outlook consistent with their policies. With the Lebanese civil war, an increasing number of Lebanese journalists and newspapers relocated outside the region. Lebanese professionalism allied with Saudi money to dominate Arab media sphere (Miles, 2005, p. 24). The defeat also exposed the failure of the secular-oriented Arab nationalism (Kramer, 1993, pp. 171-206), and opened new venues for discussing allegiance to the *ummah* (Islamic community).

This short overview shows how certain issues have always played an important role in the formation of Arab identity: history (particularly colonialism and relations with the West), Arab unity (defining who is included or excluded and reflecting upon inter-Arab interactions), the Palestinian issue (although related to the history of colonialism, it became a defining character of its own), and religion (Islam). Arab identity rep-

resentation in both *Al-Hurra* and *Al-Jazeera* will be analyzed against this background to see which factors are highlighted and those that are downplayed.

4. Methodology

This study mainly relies on critical discourse analysis (CDA), with occasional support from framing theory and content analysis, in analyzing the media messages of the two channels. According to CDA, discourse is an instrument of power, control and the social construction of reality. CDA is interested in how texts and speeches enact, reproduce and/or resist social power, dominance and inequality in the social and political contexts (Van Dijik, 2003). It is also interested in the study of identity construction and changes of identities at both the national and transnational levels (Wodak, 2002, p. 18). The relevance of CDA to this study emanates from the assumption that discourse shapes as well as expresses identities (Larson & Pepper, 2003), and its interest in the social processes and structures surrounding the production of a text which, consequently, influences how individuals or groups create meaning in their interaction with the text (Wodak, 2002, p. 12). This means that it pays attention to certain questions such as, who is communicating, with whom and why. Moreover, it is concerned with the kind of society and situation that the communication targets and through what medium (Bell & Garret, 1998, p. 3).

The study is particularly interested in the text itself (the discourse of the two channels) as well as its the socio-cultural (structural) contexts. The analysis, then, takes part on two levels: the macro level: analyzing the context of the discourse and the structural context of the media messages, and the micro-level: the language of the discourse, who is participating, and identifying who is "Us" vs. "Them". In applying this tool, this study analyzes the context in which both channels started broadcasting and how this affected their future reputation and the reception of their messages. Secondly, the study examines the use of language in the discourse of both channels to see how tactical this usage is and how it relates to the assumption of identity they represent. Thirdly, the structure of the discourse itself is analyzed to check its consistency and uncover the ideological assumptions, especially those related to the underlying perception of identity.

Framing also helps in discerning the underlying reasons for reporting the news in a certain way and in suggesting why certain pieces of news (or certain issues) are given more emphasis than others (Allen, O'Laughlin, Japerson, & Sullivan, 1994, pp. 255-285). Framing analysis is closely connected and complementary to discourse analysis. Discussing the context in which the two channels appear and who were behind them, helps in understanding their respective frames.

This study analyses two talk shows from each channel, in addition to the news bulletin during the Gaza 2008–2009 War. In analyzing talk shows, the study pays special attention to the introduction given by the presenter as it defines the limits of what will/will not be discussed and the way the event is framed. By controlling the premises of a discussion, the speaker can guide what their audience thinks about and influence the conclusions drawn (Bulter, 1999).

In choosing the shows, the study selected shows that are as similar as possible in format. From *Al-Hurra*, the study chose *Sa'a Hura* (Free Hour) which is a daily one-hour program that examines and discusses the news and stories of the day. The equivalent to this format in *Al-Jazeera* is *Ma Wara' Al Khabar* (What is behind the news). The second program is *Al-Itijahat al-Arba'*(The Four Directions) in *Al-Hurra* which is a roundtable discussion that provides analysis and comments on the main events of the previous week. The equivalent to this show in *Al-Jazeera* is *Akthar Min Ra'y* (More than One opinion).

As the overview on Arab identity revealed, the Palestinian issue occupies a special place in the formation of Arab identity. The Gaza War (2008–2009) was the first major event directly related to the Palestinian issue that took place after *Al-Hurra* went on air. It is, therefore, interesting to see how the two channels dealt with the event. The study relies on two sets of data: the episodes of the selected talk shows (25 episodes from *Al-Jazeera* and 26 episodes from *Al-Hurra*), and the nightly news bulletin in both *Al-Jazeera* (*Hasad al-Yum*: the day's harvest) and *Al-Hurra* (*'al'almiyya*: The Global). The data is analyzed over the period from December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009. The first date refers to the start of the war and the second corresponds to Israel's unilateral ceasefire.

The study adopts a *priori* coding where the categories are already established before the analysis based on previous literatures and existing frameworks (Stemler, 2001). The study selects the categories that serve its overall purpose and match its methodology. The selected codes particularly correspond with discourse analysis and framing theory. The analysis derives codes from El Masry, El Shamy, Manning, Mills and Auter (2013), Figenschou (2014), and Dobering, Lobinger and Wetzstein (2010). The following variables and analytical categories were included in the overall analysis.

- Representation of guests in each channel (Palestinians, Israelis, Other).
- Representation of the Palestinian side (Fattah, Hamas, Other).
- Representation of the Palestinian viewpoint (Hamas, Fattah, Other).
- Information sources (Palestinian–Israeli)
- Type of views represented (Official, Specialists, popular).

- Location of the first report (Palestine, Israel, Other).
- Dominant Frames represented (humanitarian, political...).
- Words used to describe Israeli and Palestinian actions.
- Description of Israeli and Palestinian casualties.

5. The Story of Two Channels: Contextual and Conceptual Aspects

Understanding the historical moment and the different institutional arrangements within which each channel started working is a preliminary step in making sense of their discourse. *Al-Jazeera* was part of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani (Emir of Qatar 1998–2013) progressive plan to introduce a distinctive ruling style. From the beginning, the channel was playing an indispensable role in Qatar's attempt to redefine itself (Booth, 2010). This is why its "perceived" credibility, independence (Figenschou, 2014, p. 27), and nonpartisan (el-Nawawy & Iskander, 2002, p. 33; Miles, 2005, pp. 28-29)[1] were prerequisites to fulfil this role. It explains why the Qatari government officially distanced itself from *Al-Jazeera* and resisted the different pressures to control its content. *Al-Jazeera* has also put an end to the Saudi-Lebanese hegemony over Arab media sphere (El Oifi, 2005, pp. 70-71), thus, changing the structure of media power relations in the region.

Al-Jazeera quickly won a reputation as revolutionary and provocative by promoting debates about political, religious and social topics that used to be taboo in Arab societies. The channel has successfully managed to project its identity beyond its funding country and its regional boundaries (Lahneman, 2005). Capitalizing on the Palestinian issue gave the channel its pan-Arab credentials and won it unprecedented regional fame (Miles, 2005, p. 73). Its coverage stirred up Arab public opinion against the US bias towards Israel (Bessaiso, 2005, p. 160).

The US war on Afghanistan ushered the end of Western media monopoly (Bessaiso, 2005, p. 165) as *Al-Jazzera* was the only channel allowed to work there. It was an example of information flow reversal: from the South/Orient to the North/Occident. *Al-Jazeera* presented an alternative news coverage highlighting civilian casualties caused by American air strikes. Deprived of its "on air supremacy", the US attempted to influence the editorial independence of *Al-Jazeera* (El-Nawaey & Iskander, 2003, p. 176). The attempt itself ruined the US image as a supporter of media freedom and raised doubts regarding its discourse on democracy.

Against this background, the Iraqi war (2003) took place. For the second time, the US found itself losing the propaganda war. While pan-Arab media concentrated on the humanitarian sufferings and civilian loss due to "occupation", their American counterparts portrayed the war as an act of popular liberation. With the increasing violence in Iraq, the US became furious with Arab media, particularly *Al-Jazeera*, for portraying these acts as "resistance" (Lynch, 2006, pp. 5-6). Convinced by the importance of the "war of ideas," the US decided to counter its perception as "arrogant, impatient and unwilling to listen" by the Arab public opinion (McDonald, 2000, p. 69). Defining the problem as one of image and information deficit, the US approached the region assuming that American policies needed better marketing to win Arabs' hearts and minds.

Al-Hurra has, thus, arrived at an inappropriate moment where hostility to American policies in the region was at its highest because of its war on terrorism, a war that was widely perceived as a war against Islam. Language use has fed these pre-held conceptions. For example, the common greeting in Arab media is the Islamic one of "*al-sallamu* '*alaykum*'" (peace be upon you). *Al-Hurra's* presenters avoid this greeting and use 'welcome back' instead. The greeting itself, as Baylouny correctly noted, confirms perceptions that the US is against the region's religion (Baylouny, 2005, p. 21). Moreover, *Al-Hurra* was a late comer to the Arab media sphere and encountered a very competitive environment. Nevertheless, *Al-Hurra'*s founding perceptions assumed that Arab media sphere resembled the former Soviet Union space during the Cold War.[2] Such a mistaken conception made *Al-Hurra* seem "redundant in content, and preachy in tone" (Kraidy, 2006, p. 3).

Not only was *Al-Hurra* working in a highly competitive media environment, but it was also influenced by institutional constraints that were not that obvious in *Al-Jazeera* (Collins, 2008). The channel was required to meet the expectation of Congress, American conservative press and people in Washington D.C as well as Arab audiences. Such an expectation is unattainable giving the different perspectives of these parties. In addition, *Al-Hurra's* message lacked credibility. While its message was about freedom and democracy, the US

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[1] The so-called Arab Spring has exposed the built in contradictions of *Al-Jazeera* and challenged its "perceived" independence due to the discernible stance taken by Qatar towards certain regional allies, and its impact on *Al-Jazeera's* coverage.

[2] In his testimony in the House of Representative, Mouafac Harb claimed that:
"Alhurra introduces to the region ideas of truth and freedom and democracy never before discussed. Alhurra brings to the vast region of the Middle East unprecedented town hall meetings, talk shows, and debates….We have to continue to foster these conversations, these debates, until they become a part of the lives of the people of this region, until they become part of life in the Islamic world." Statement of Mr. Mouafac Harb. Broadcasting Board of Governors and AlHurra Television. Hearing before the subcommittee on oversight and investigations of the committee on international relations, House of Representatives. First session, 10th November 2005.

was occupying Iraq and allying with authoritarian regimes. The public diplomacy campaign was thus tainted as an act of hypocrisy (Napoli & Fejeran, 2004).

6. Discussion: Mapping the 2009 Gaza War Coverage on Both Channels: Content-Related Aspects

Before delving into the details of the coverage of the two channels and its relationship to Arab identity representation, it is important to highlight general observations on the way each of them covered the war.

In general, *Al-Hurra* was more representative of the Israeli viewpoint. For example, in news bulletins, Israeli guests represented 32% of the total guests, while Palestinian guests represented 28% (Table 1). Although the number of Palestinian guests (24%) in *Al-Hurra's* daily discussion show "Free Hour" exceeded that of the Israeli guests (10%), the American guests (30%) were staunch defenders of the Israeli view (Figure 2). This raises the percentage of the Israeli point of view to 40%. Moreover, the news excerpts from Israeli sources were 62%, while those from their Palestinian counterparts were 37%. News reporting started from the Israeli side 57% of the time, while reporting from Gaza started only 42% of the time, despite the expected interest of Arab viewers to hear and see first from the Palestinian side.

Table 1. The number of guests on each channel's news bulletin.

Criteria	Al-Jazeera	Al-Hurra
No. of Palestinian Guests	29	16
No. of Israeli Guests	6	18
Other	98	22
Total	133	56

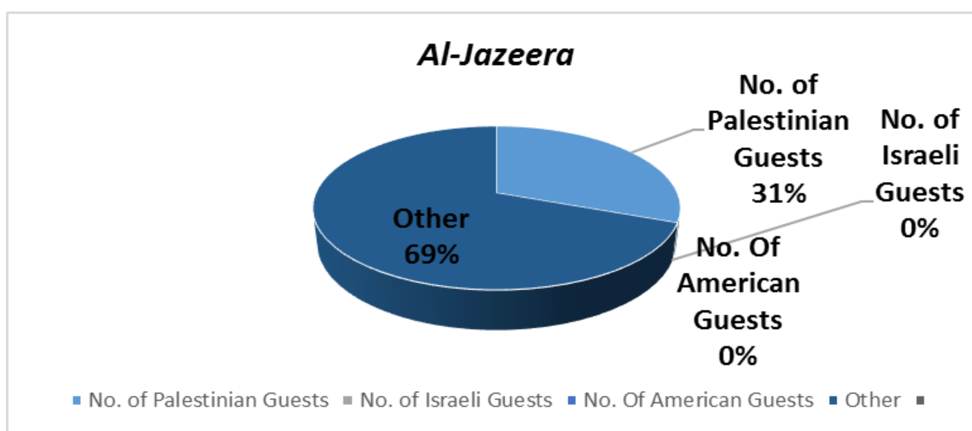

Figure 1. Representation of guests in *Al-Jazeera*'s talk show.

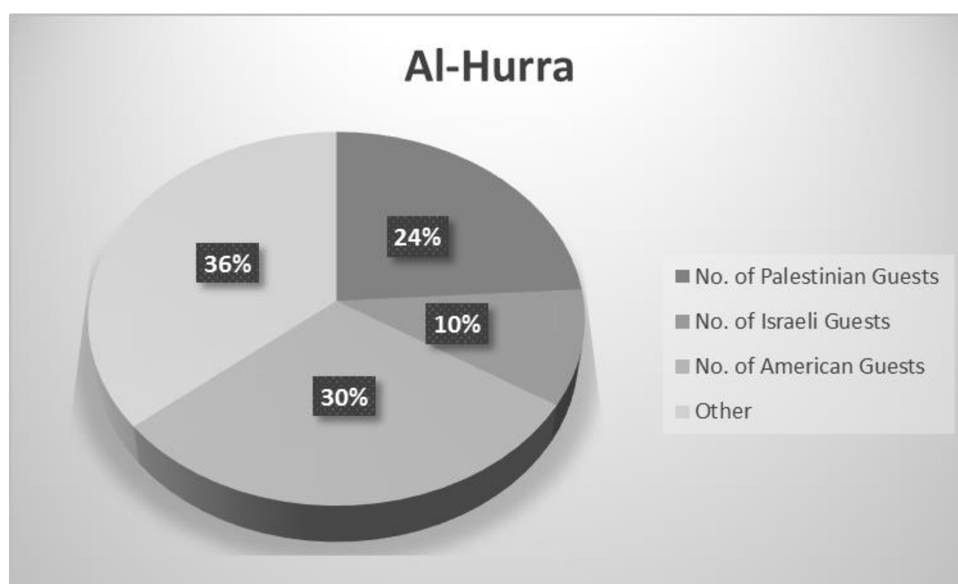

Figure 2. Representation of guests on *Al-Hurra*'s talk shows.

Al-Hurra's representation of the Palestinian voice favoured one party; Fattah (Figure 3 and Table 2). Palestinians belonging to Fattah represented 28% of the Palestinian voice in "Free Hour", while Hamas was not represented. Non-Palestinian guests represented 68% of the total guests where 40% of them were against Hamas and blamed the movement for the war. The same pattern appears in the news bulletins where Fattah's guests constituted 75% of the Palestinian voices, while Hamas was absent and other Palestinian voices only represented 35%. *Al-Hurra* focused more on the official viewpoint of different parties. Official voices represented 46% of the guests on the talk shows, while popular voices were only represented by 4%. The same applies to news bulletins where official voices represented 54% of the guests while popular voices represented 16%. (Figures 6 and 7).

Table 2. Hamas' point of view vs. Fattah in discussion shows

Guests	Al-Jazeera	%	Al-Hurra	%
Hamas	1	3	0	0
Fattah	0	0	14	28
Non-Affiliated Palestinians	10	26	2	4
1-Supporting Hamas	10	26	1	2
2-Against Hamas	0	0	0	0
3- Neutral	0	0	1	2
Other	28	72	34	68
1-Supporting Hamas	16	41	1	2
2-Against Hamas	4	10	20	40
3- Neutral	8	21	13	26
Total	39	100	50	100

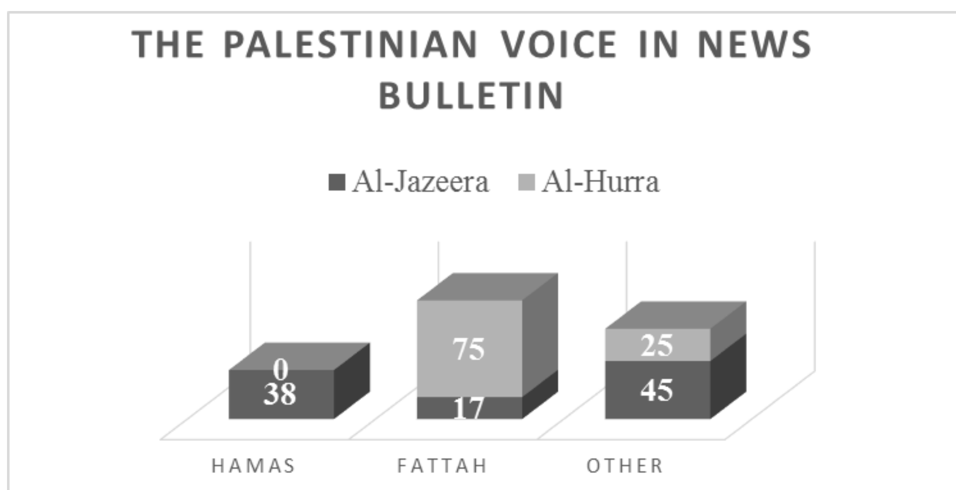

Figure 3. The Palestinian voice in news bulletins

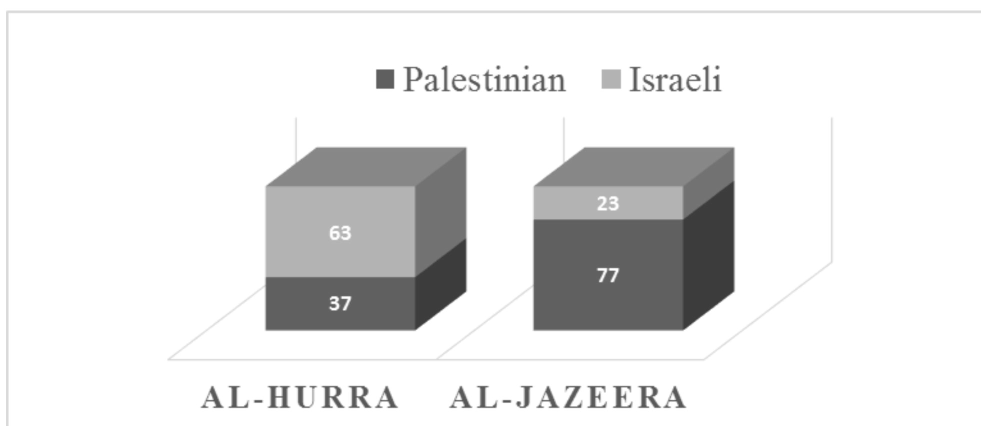

Figure 4. Percentage of excerpts from the Palestinian vis-a-vis the Israeli sources in the news.[3]

[3] Any piece of news proceeded by: said, announced, confessed, recognized, broadcasted…etc.

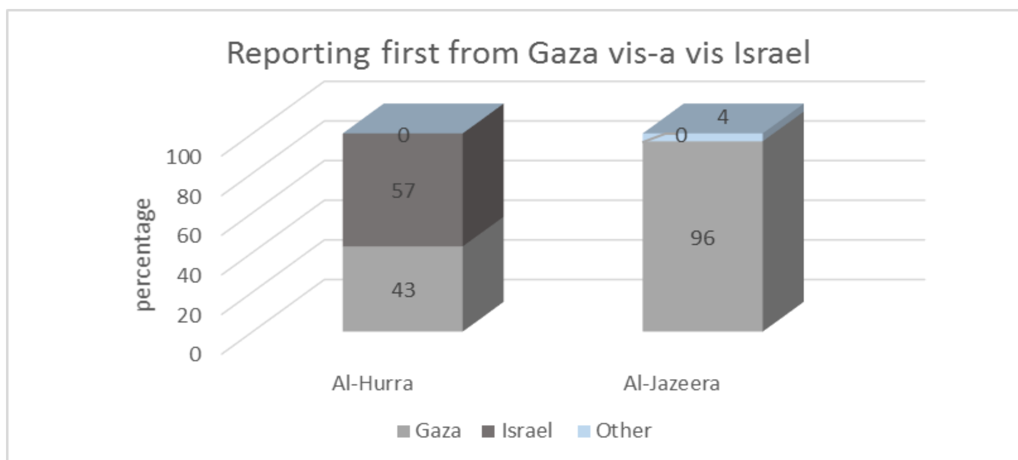

Figure 5. The reporter who spoke first in the news.

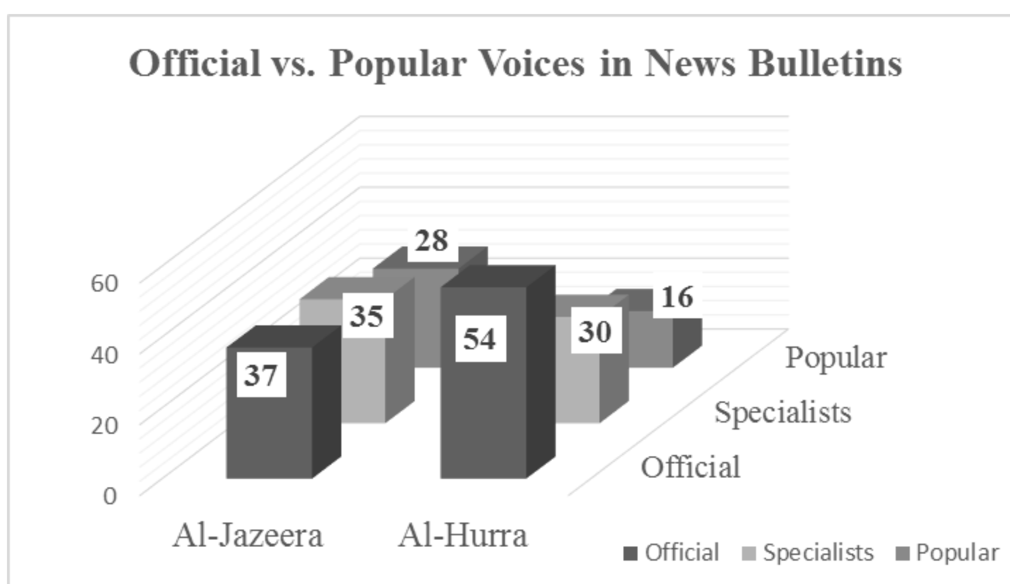

Figure 6. The popular vs. the official voices in news bulletins' guests.[4]

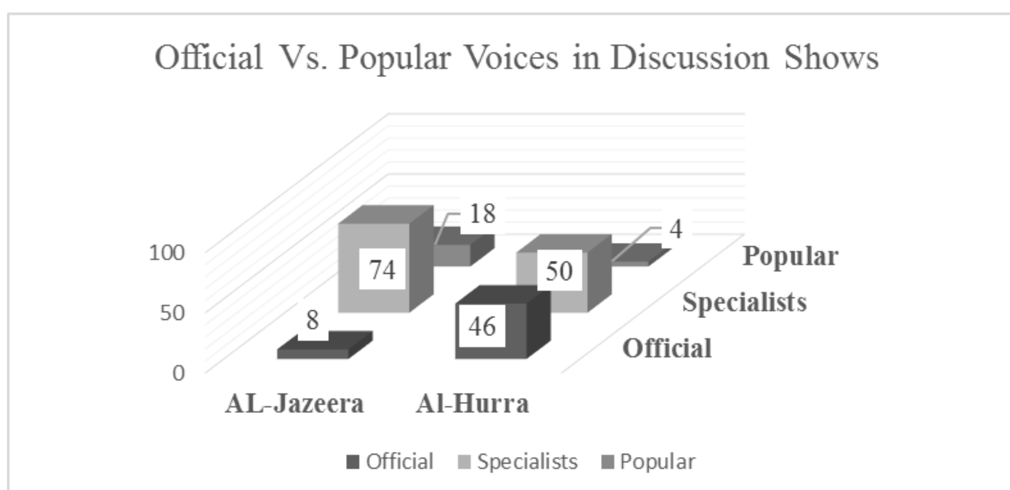

Figure 7. The official vs. popular voices in discussion shows' guests.

[4] The study considers the representative of Hamas and Fattah as part of the official voice, while the rest of the Palestinian groups and parties as popular voices. The same applies to the representatives of the UN. As for doctors and specialists in international law, they are counted as part of the specialists' voice.

Al-Jazeera's coverage reflected different trends. Israeli guests represented almost 5% of the guests in the news bulletins, while the Palestinians were 22%. This pattern was more visible in the channel's daily discussion show of 'what is behind the news' where Palestinian guests constituted 31% of all the guests, while the Israelis were absent (Table 1 and Figure 1). While excerpts from the Israeli sources during the news bulletins were used 23% of the time, those from the Palestinian side represented 76% (Figure 5). Unlike *Al-Hurra*, news reports in *Al-Jazeera* used to begin with the Palestinian side in Gaza (Figure 5). Interest in the Palestinian side was also reflected in the number of reporters working in Gaza and the percentage of times (95%) the news reporting started from it (Figure 4). *Al-Jazeera*'s coverage was biased towards the party involved in the fight: Hamas. Therefore, the percentage of Palestinians in the news bulletins belonging to Fattah was 17%, while that representing Hamas was 38%. For the discussion shows, 3% belonged to Hamas in contrast to 0% for those who belonged to Fattah. However, voices defending Hamas and representing its viewpoint, from either non-affiliated Palestinians or other guests, represented 67% (See Figures 3 and 4)

In contrast to *Al-Hurra*, *Al-Jazeera* gave more airtime to popular voices. The number of official voices in *Al-Jazeera* was 49 while the number of the popular voices was only 37. For *Al-Hurra*, the difference was 30 vs. 9 in favor of the official voices. The fact that the specialists' voices on *Al-Jazeera* were non-official ones, raises the percentage of the non-official voices to 63%. Regarding the discussion shows, the official voice was the minority (8%) *vis-a-vis* that of the people (18%) and of the specialists (74%) (Figures 6 and 7). This makes *Al-Jazeera* more representative of the popular voice and promotes its image more as "the people's channel".

Interest in listening to the public reflects how the public is generally perceived. The traditional perception of Arab citizen viewers is that they are "naive and overly critical, uncivilized and chaotic, unable to demonstrate peacefully" (Chaieb, 2007, p. 71). As Abdelmoula (2015, pp. 106-107) argued, when *Al-Jazeera* gives more airtime to Arab viewers, this reflects a conviction that the public deserve listening to and identifying their needs. This perception represents, in his view, an "enlightening" role by *Al-Jazeera* for helping Arabs acquiring the courage to express their views free of fear without always waiting for guidance. By contrast, when *Al-Hurra* listens less to Arab viewers it endorses their negative image.

The war coverage of the two channels can be mapped by comparing the following aspects: targets (Who/what was the target?), results (Who succeeded?), and the repercussions of the war. Answering these questions will reflect on the representation of the region's identity in both channels, i.e. who is the "other"? What elements are stressed in identity construction?

6.1. Target

Al-Hurra's coverage conveyed the message that the attacks were mainly targeting Hamas and its locations in Gaza. The channel extensively repeated the Israeli assertion that "all the targeted locations belong to Hamas" (Al-'Alamiyya, December 27, 2008). Graphic images mainly showed the destruction of buildings but filtered out civilian casualties and sufferings. *Al-Jazeera's* coverage in contrast conveyed the message that the attacks, or the aggression as was labelled, targeted everyone in Gaza. The two channels employed language differently to present their respective coverage messages. *Al-Hurra*, for example, described people who lost their lives by Israeli strikes as being "killed", while *Al-Jazeera* called them martyrs. Furthermore, *Al-Hurra* labelled the strikes as a bombardment (*qasf*), not as a war or aggression, or even attacks as did *Al-Jazeera*. Israeli military actions were also described as "operations", not war as in *Al-Jazeera* to belittle the wide scale and strength of the action.

Al-Jazeera developed a promo for the attacks showing the scattered corpses of Palestinian police in Gaza while one of the wounded was raising his fingers enunciating Islam's two professions.[5] The promo itself was enough to entice feelings of anger and sympathy as well as recalling the religious aspect. The promo's title was "Gaza under Fire" and "War on Gaza" to indicate that it was a war on all of Gaza, not only on a certain group. *Al-Hurra*, for its part, and after a few days from the beginning of the war, developed its promo in which it showed an unidentified artillery truck and titled it as "War in Gaza." Using the proposition "in" indicates that there were equal parties involved in the conflict without blaming one particular party for waging the war.

Reporting from the West Bank was also different between *Al-Hurra* and *Al-Jazeera*. For example, on December 28, 2009, *Al-Jazeera's* news mentioned, "a Palestinian youth was killed after the 'occupation' forces shot him in Ramallah" (Hasad Al-Yum, December 28, 2008). This piece of news came immediately after reporting from Gaza in a way indicating that the occupation is the same and it kills "here" in Gaza and "there" in the West Bank. *Al-Hurra* reported the same story differently. First, the story came after the news interval contextualizing it among the different reactions to the event. The news read as "a Palestinian youth was killed after clashes with the Israeli forces" (Al-'Alamiyya, December 28, 2008). Noticeable here is how *Al-Hurra* used "Israeli" instead of "occupation" forces. Moreover, *Al-Hurra* mentioned that he was "killed after clashes with the Israeli forces" (Al-'Alamiyya, December 27, 2008). This way, the channel did not directly

[5] This is to profess that there is no God but God and that Muhammad is the messenger of God. ašhadu 'an laa ilāha illa (A)llāh, wa 'ašhadu 'anna Muhammada(n) rasūlo (A)llāh.

blame the Israeli forces for his death by portraying the incident as a result of mutual violence.

In a manner of speaking*, Al-Hurra'*s coverage tried to exonerate Israel from accusations that it was intentionally targeting civilians while *Al-Jazeera*'s was explicitly stressing the deliberation. *Al-Jazeera* made every effort to set the conflict in a broader context, one that recalled painful episodes from the region's post-World War II history. *Al-Hurra*, on the other hand, tried to present the Gaza conflict as either a unique incident or one that was only representative of Israel–Hamas antagonisms.

6.1.1. Success

The two channels introduced different definitions of war failure or success. For *Al-Hurra*, it was a matter of a balance of power, while *Al-Jazeera* considered it as a war of wills and defended the right to resist the occupation. According to *al-Hurra* the operation resulted in a difficult humanitarian situation that needed extensive diplomatic efforts to stop the fighting, not to put an end to occupation as *al-Jazeera* was conveying. *Al-Hurra* portrayed Israel as the war's winner. Reporters repeatedly described the "operation" as a success for Israel, which "feels comfortable and victorious" (Al-'Alamiyya, December 30, 2008). *Al-Jazeera* on the contrary, was stressing from the beginning that Israel was losing the war. The high death toll among Palestinians was itself, according to *Al-Jazeera'*s coverage, a sign that Israel failed to achieve its goals and, therefore, decided to revenge. In other words, while *Al-Hurra* stressed rational material calculations in defining success, *Al-Jazeera* adopted abstract and moral determinants that corresponds more with the cultural beliefs in the region.

6.1.1.1. Repercussions of the War

Al-Hurra was mainly interested in the future of the peace process and the impact of the war on the region. The US role under the then new Obama administration was linked to this discussion. As for the impact of the war, it mainly referred to the future of the regimes, the future of the Palestinian authority vis-à-vis Hamas, the establishment of Israel's power of deterrence and the influence of Islamic extremism.

*Al-Hurra'*s coverage portrayed the Palestinian issue as the major source of Arab-Arab dispute. For example, the presenter of "Free Hour"—Hussein Jardi—asked "is it possible for the Gaza war to become an Arab- Arab conflict?" (Free Hour, January 14, 2008). Whether the war would strengthen or weaken Hamas was a big issue on *Al-Hurra.* The way the discussion progressed in most episodes gave the impression that it was better if Hamas lost, implying that Israel has to take the time to finish its job. Hamas, in view of most "Free Hour" guests was not an option to be considered. Even if it was re-elected, one of the guests expressed, dealing with it was not possible.

Al-Hurra introduced the Palestinian-Palestinian split as irreconcilable the same time it was discussing the possibility of resuming the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis. There were questions about the possibility that the war "would change the face of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular and the situation in the region in general, and whether the Israeli army would be able to put an end to Hamas" (Four Directions, January 2, 2009). Putting these questions within *Al-Hurra'*s broader discussion framework imply that if Israel manages to terminate Hamas, there would be new arrangements that could change the face of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Hamas' failure was, thus, in the best interest of the Palestinian authority as well as for the future of the peace process.[6]

Al-Jazeera's discussion on war repercussions was different. Its main interest was how to reframe Palestinian unity and Arab positions within a broader strategy of resistance. According to many of the guests, as well as the comments of the presenters, Palestinians should abandon the hopeless path of negotiation. According to *Al-Jazeera'*s extensive coverage, Arabs have to reconsider the choice of resistance and support the Palestinian armed groups.[7] In contrast to *Al-Hurra*, *Al-Jazeera* doubted the possibility of reaching any settlement to the conflict without, effectively, engaging Hamas. Moreover, the Palestinian issue, according to *Al-Jazeera'*s coverage, was not a source of Arab divisions. On the contrary, the official Arab-Arab split is responsible for blocking the Palestinian unity talk and deepening the Palestinian–Palestinian rift. Therefore, there was a necessity to overcome Arab divisions and take a united stance against the aggression on Gaza.

6.1.1.1.1. Regional Identity Representation

*Al-Hurra'*s war coverage conveyed the message that the region was suffering from an identity crisis, as divisions were the focal point. This even applied to the Palestinians where Hamas–Fattah split received much focus in comparison to acts of solidarity spread in the Palestinian street. The Palestinian split was also newsworthy compared to the clashes with the Israeli army

6 This was the hub of the discussion in Free Hour in several episodes: January 2nd, January 5th, January 6th, January 11th, January 12th and January 13th.

7 In the episode of December 27, 2008, the spokesman of Hamas in Beirut, Osama Hamdan, said that Israel wants to break the will of the resistance. The presenter interrupted him by saying we do not disagree over specifying what Israel wants. Al-Mawqif al-Arabi min al-'Udwan al-Israili 'Ala Gaza [The Arab Position Towards the Israeli Aggression on Gaza]. Muhammad Krishan. What is Behind the News. Al-Jazeera. Qatar, Doha. December 27, 2008.

in the West Bank. *Al-Hurra* never reported the acts of solidarity and demonstrations in the West Bank and the calls for unity. In this way, the Palestinian "other" was ambiguous: is it Hamas or Fattah? Meanwhile, "occupation" was neutralized. This "assumed" identity crisis led to ignoring Arab street's expression of unity and solidarity. Adding to the identity crisis is the downplayed role of religion in *Al-Hurra'*s coverage. For example, the channel never mentioned the position of the Organization of Islamic Conference or the opinion of famous religious figures.

On its part, *Al-Jazeera'*s coverage reflected a region that suffers from a political rather than an identity crisis. Divisions, according to *Al-Jazeera*, were mainly political in nature as solidarity and unity prevail on the popular level. Arab and Islamic solidarity in this view was a dominant feature of Arab Street. Political divisions themselves were portrayed as a conspiracy facilitated by the collaboration of the region's leaders. Classifications like "moderate" and "extremist" Arab states were refused by *Al-Jazeera* because they were imposed by the US and only worked in Israel's interest.

Arabs' "other," according to *Al-Jazeera,* was well defined. It was Israel that destabilizes the region, works on splitting it and kills innocents. News reported from Gaza and the West Bank was framed in a way that clearly identified the Palestinian, as well as Arabs', "other". It was Israel, not Hamas or Fattah, that was harming the Palestinian people. The occupation was the reason for their misery and split. The channel's coverage accused Israel of trying to embarrass other Arabs by portraying them as accomplices in the aggression. Israel is blamed for all the wrongdoings in the region not Iran or Syria as *Al-Hurra* was conveying.

Al-Jazeera's coverage presented an idealized notion of Arab identity; a monolithic identity founded upon authentic elements that revolve around religion (Islam), language and history. Religion, according to its coverage, was the glue that sticks Arabs together. Activities by religious figures received ample coverage. The channel also used to host religious figures from all over the Islamic world to discuss the religious duties of Muslims in the face of the crisis. Even the language used had religious connotations. News presenters and reporters, for example, frequently repeated expressions like "*nusra*" (religious solidarity).

History was another element that distinguished the coverage of the two channels. *Al-Hurra* focused on the present and future, rather than the past. This was clear, for example, in tackling the issue of democracy and peace between Arabs and the Israelis. The channel was silent on US support for Israeli policies over the years, but President Obama's position with regard to the issue of settlement was a focus point. This focus on the present and future makes the region's identity elastic as it is needed to promote the interests of the more powerful. This also makes the people in the region more amenable to accept the hegemonic ideas that serve these interests.

History in *Al-Jazeera's* coverage, on the contrary, was always alive. The idea of resistance itself is highly representative of Arab history. Resistance has always been a main element in Arab's identity that appears whenever Arabs encounter colonial or imperial threats to their identity. The Palestinian issue exemplifies the high relevance of history. Arab rights, as perceived in *Al-Jazeera*, are rooted in history, therefore, none of these rights should be surrendered. History is thus an indispensable component of the region's identity.

As for language, *Al-Jazeera's* identity construction relies also on the use of standard Arabic. This reflects how the channel's executives perceive the Arab public as one "rather than a multitude of publics dispersed in twenty-two separate countries" (Abdelmoula, 2015, p. 116). Such a unifying factor is absent in *Al-Hurra* where different dialects are heard, particularly the Lebanese one in the beginning. Moreover, *Al-Jazeera's* anchors, reporters and journalists tend to use the rhetorical power of Arabic to affect emotions in a way that influences the Arab public's interpretation of events.

Because identity representation has to resonate with the people, media strategies employed by *Al-Jazeera* have been so far more successful than those of *Al-Hurra*. The former has the reputation as "the people's channel", while the other seems to be out of touch with its audience. As Shibley Telhami (2003) argues:

> "Popular Arabic outlets succeeded because they reflected the hearts and minds of the region on core issues, not because they shaped them….[W]hile there are multiple reasons audiences view a particular station for news, the most critical factor is the extent to which a station reflects their views on issues that matter most to them and to their identity. When a station fails to do this, viewers look for alternatives."[8]

7. Conclusions

The growth of transnational satellite television has challenged Western hegemony over news production. This has great repercussions on the United States and its actions/policies and threaten the effectiveness of its soft power. Arabs and Muslims increased access to information of their production had influenced the way they receive media messages from an outsider. *Al-Jazeera* made it difficult for the US to sell its image and

[8] We can extend the argument by comparing *Al-Jazeera*'s share of popularity during and after the so-called Arab Spring revolutions. The change or fluctuation in its popularity may finds explanation in its representation or challenge of deep rooted ideas, perceptions and identities of its audiences.

empowered an oppositional discourse that calls for authenticity and independence (Lynch, 2006, p. 25). The presence of *Al-Hurra* is representative of the challenges that the US policies are facing in the Arab world because of the influential role of the media. It shows how effective *Al-Jazeera* is to the extent that, as Ann Marie Baylony argued, it pushed the US to "legitimize itself, to defend itself against counter- [hegemonic] claims" (Baylouny, 2005).

The 2008–2009 Gaza War coverage has shown how *Al-Jazeera* stressed history, religion and Arabism as the defining elements of the region's identity. These are deeply rooted popular perceptions of Arab identity. *Al-Hurra* omitted regional history, belittled or ignored the role of religion and focused on regional political divisions. It promoted the image of a region that should get over its past and look forward to the future that marginalizes religion and history.

As this analysis shows, there are three factors that influence the level of success of the two channels. These factors are related to the three Cs (3Cs): context, conception and content. The construction of identity lies at the heart of the intersection between these factors. For a message of public diplomacy to find its way to its targeted audience, a certain kind of harmonic interaction needs to exist between these three components. Any inconsistency among these elements leads to the failure and/or fall of the public diplomacy of the media. This is a preliminary step towards a model for evaluating the public diplomacy of the media. Further examination of these factors in the context of the so-called Arab Spring is still needed to better understand the rise and fall of popularity of the two channels.

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Article

Toward a Model of Strategic Influence, International Broadcasting, and Global Engagement

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Abstract
This article explores how strategic communication, public diplomacy, international governmental broadcasting, and social media networking can be brought together in a system of strategic influence and global engagement. The analysis offers a contrasting approach to various views of public diplomacy or strategic communication which privilege one form of governmental influence over others and treat partial aspects of national persuasion as complete pictures of government communication aimed at foreign audiences. Because so much of public diplomacy literature today emphasizes social media, it is necessary to determine how specific tools of influence such as international broadcasting, can be used in ways that fit new thinking in public diplomacy as well as continuously emerging new media ecologies.

Keywords
international broadcasting; public diplomacy; social media; strategic communication; strategic influence

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1. Introduction

This article explores how strategic communication, public diplomacy, international governmental broadcasting, and social media networking can be brought together in a system of strategic influence and global engagement. The analysis offers an approach to public diplomacy and strategic communication which contrasts with other approaches that privilege one form of governmental influence over others. Some of those approaches treat partial aspects of national persuasion as complete pictures of government communication aimed at foreign audiences. A major problem with both the study of and the implementation of government communication such as international broadcasting is the recurring disagreements about terminology and which governmental entities should conduct specific forms of influence such as public affairs and information operations. A related problem is that new media today as well as old media like radio and TV, are no longer isolated channels of communication, but are part of media systems or ecologies. Because so much of public diplomacy literature today emphasizes social media, it is necessary to determine how specific tools of influence such as international broadcasting, can be used in ways that fit the new thinking in public diplomacy and strategic communication in all areas of communication directed to other nations (national influence) from the United States Government (USG). Thus, the main problem we address here is the fragmented nature of USG influence and the lack of theory guiding present proposals for solving the problem.

We begin by examining the history of American national influence and the emergence of public diplomacy and strategic communication. We then note how power, influence, and national interests are all at stake, as both public diplomacy and strategic communication serve them. We then move to the role of international broadcasting and its possible turn away from a propaganda function, toward a relational one. This includes noting the need for international broadcasting to integrate mass communication with social media and digi-

tal communication. Following that, we use Rhonda Zaharna's arguments about network diplomacy and collaborative public diplomacy, along with Manuel Castells' communication power theory, to build a model of strategic influence and global engagement that can guide international broadcasting into some new functions. The study concludes with an argument about how the model can be used to focus research and debates about ways that international broadcasting can serve both strategic influence and global engagement goals.

Strategic communication (SC) is generally conceptualized as communication done by the USG for purposes of enhancing national image and improving relations with other nations. The term, as applied to political communication, originated with the Department of Defense in 2004.[1] Public diplomacy (PD) is a kind of strategic communication in some views and an alternative to SC in others. The PD term originated in academia and is carried heavily by the State Department (Cull, 2009). Both of these terms refer to national political influence directed toward other nations. Overall, there are two camps of national influence that appear to be talking past each other—strategic influence done by military and intelligence sources, and relational networking for public diplomacy. According to Gregory (2014), public diplomacy is defined as nation-states and other political entities analyzing cultures, attitudes, and behaviors; constructing and managing relationships; and doing persuasion that promotes their interests.

Four terms are defined here for the clarity of the argument to be developed. SC generally refers to either all government persuasion aimed at other nations or populations or to the governmental persuasion more likely done by the military than by the diplomacy community. PD refers to persuasion aimed at other nations or populations that is more likely to be done by the diplomacy community than by the military. Strategic influence refers to governmental or national communication done by any agency or agencies of the government that is designed to change attitudes of other populations. Information operations (IO), while sometime defined as military kinetic information assurance and attack only, actually includes persuasion work such as counter-propaganda (Armistead, 2010).[2] Despite parochial efforts to keep these separate, recurring conceptual intersections make clean separations impossible. This is because the history of American national influence efforts has always involved both strategic influence and cultural engagement, even if new labels have been attached to the same wine bottles. As we move toward a discussion about international broadcasting, it is assumed here that both social media and international broadcasting have specific purposes for political influence and cultural networking.

Soft power is a concept used by scholars to discuss influence which is based on attraction and persuasion as opposed to influence based on coercion or force (hard power). While hard power can work to stop violent actions at times, soft power can work to build relationships and cultural affinities (Nye, 2004). Smart power is used to define uses of both soft power and hard power in relation to contextual factors. As the uses of smart power can be viewed as a system of influence using both hard and soft power as needed, a system of smart diplomacy (with appropriate firewalls) can combine soft diplomacy and hard diplomacy. Consistent with the soft power concept, soft diplomacy is intended to be non-aggressive and focused on relationships and conciliatory communication. On the other hand, hard diplomacy, like hard power, is intended to be aggressive and one-sided with its messages. Hard diplomacy can be used in conjunction with force against violent agents. Examples of hard diplomacy are coercive diplomacy, information operations, counter-ideology/narrative, and refutation broadcasting. Soft diplomacy includes cultural diplomacy, network diplomacy, exchanges, public affairs, and objective broadcasting. It can be used to build soft power attraction and positive national images in conjunction with traditional diplomacy. It may be possible to locate public affairs, cultural networking, exchanges, and some broadcasting and social media networking within the goals of what is now accepted as public diplomacy. Hard diplomacy is likely to involve communication that pressures others into compliance. In contrast, soft diplomacy can be seen in relationship building and cultural exchanges. The concept of soft diplomacy is consistent with the goals of soft power. The concept of smart diplomacy offers an alternative to choosing between either a soft diplomacy (relational) or a hard diplomacy (informational) for situations requiring a mix of both approaches to influence. Smart diplomacy is defined here as diplomacy that uses either hard or soft diplomacy for varying persuasive needs. Clearly, Nye's (2004) concept of smart power provides an analogue for the concept of smart diplomacy offered here.

Global engagement is defined here as two-way dialogue between the USG and other nations or populations, along with more deliberation and debate as opposed to more push-down and one-sided persuasive messages (Snyder, 2013). The Obama administration's approach to global engagement has stressed working with other nations to address shared global issues as well as engage foreign audiences to understand American national interests (Lord & Lynch, 2010). The White House approach to global engagement includes negotiation, dialogue, public diplomacy, and cultural networking. The White House (2010) states "Our communication and engagement with foreign audiences

[1] http://fas.org:8080/irp/agency/dod/dsb/commun.pdf

[2] IO is sometimes incorrectly denoted as an activity or domain limited to military operations, when in fact, IO is also practiced by the intelligence community (IC).

should emphasize mutual respect and interest. The United States should articulate a positive vision…and engage foreign audiences on positive terms" (p. 6). Mutual respect and interests should avoid the problems that Arndt (2005) notes with cultural communication that treats America as the teacher and other cultures as learners.

In building a model of strategic influence and global engagement, we argue that models of mass communication and message diffusion are weak in their ability to explain how international broadcasting and new media can be used for public diplomacy. These models form the foundation of many current arguments about PD and SC. We prefer to employ network theories, specifically, Zaharna's model of network diplomacy and Castells' theory of communication power. These perspectives provide a sound basis for developing theoretical propositions regarding the role of social media used in conjunction with broadcasting channels like Voice of America (VOA). A perspective that unifies strategic communication and public diplomacy as well as mass communication, international broadcasting, and networking communication is presented as a model of strategic influence and global engagement. Scholars have recently noted that "Despite the proliferation of contemporary international broadcasting, research about it lacks theoretical development" (Youmans & Powers, 2012, p. 2149). While no single model can be expected to unify everything important about either public diplomacy or international broadcasting, important progress can be made by offering new models for testing, debate, and heuristic value.

Strategic influence, as used in this article, refers to a combination of strong public diplomacy and strategic communication. It is designed to not only inform, but also to change attitudes (Waller, 2009). Sometimes, this means aggressive communication that counters the communication of other nations or organizations (Waller, 2009). Changing attitudes, commonly known as persuasion, is not seen here as inimical to cultural relations or cultural engagement. Both are parts of a larger system of national influence. National influence is by nature political and serves the national interests and national security concerns of the source nation.

The argument presented here brings together what some scholars in the past separated—strategic communication being done by the military and public diplomacy being done by the State Department.[3] A recognition of the fact that the Department of Defense (DOD) can do public diplomacy and the Department of State (DOS) can do strategic communication, shows that this dichotomy has lost its usefulness. Strategic communication has been used by some experts as an umbrella term that indicates a "whole of government" approach to "unified" or "integrated" communication sent to other populations by the USG. Strategic communication and its public diplomacy are designed to achieve the following national security objectives of the USG: championing human dignity; strengthening alliances against terrorism; defusing regional conflicts; preventing threats from weapons of mass destruction; encouraging global economic growth; and transforming America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. It has become evident that when the U.S. military becomes more involved in civilian affairs, the SC versions of PD predominate more than in areas of conflict than where the military is less involved.[4]

SC and PD stem directly from national security policies. Before terms like SC and PD were used by the USG, it was common to talk about the government providing information, conducting ideological warfare, doing political warfare, and designing campaigns to "win hearts and minds." SC, PD, and IO shared the goal of winning battles not only with military force but with so-called "soft power" or non-military means of persuasion and influence. Because these forms of communication work in parallel, one might see IO as the hard side of soft power, as noted by some IO scholars (Armistead, 2010). One key issue regarding SC today is how much the component disciplines and areas of responsibility should be coordinated or integrated. Coordination does not have to include integration but an integrated approach to national influence can assure that all the various forms of USG communication aimed at other populations are congruent in goals, values, themes, and message strategies.

There is a dual nature of SC and PD that is important to recognize. The twin goals of national influence are a) to promote a better national image and relationships with others, and b) to counter false or negative information coming from other political sources. A current example is Japanese national influence. Most of what Japan does with public diplomacy has the objective of building soft power, or specifically, of employing cultural diplomacy to foster better international relations. One tool employed by Japan to do this is the Japan Foundation. Yet, there is also the accompanying goal of offering an alternative to another nation's soft power outlets, those of China which are known as the Confucius Institutes (Snow, 2014). The USG has many outlets of international broadcasting

[3] We recognize the fact that some scholars use SC as an umbrella term for all USG influence (Waller, 2009). We find it more useful to view SC and PD as two forms of national influence.

[4] It is important to note that some of legal strictures on State Department PD do not apply to Department of Defense or military broadcasting. For example, armed forces broadcasting, intended for internal American audiences, is overseen by the DOD, not the BBG. http://afrts.dodmedia.osd.mil/facts/2.pdf?v=1

that clearly serve the constant goals just described. For instance, after 9/11, broadcasting was intended to win hearts and minds of those who might be susceptible to anti-American messages (Snow, 2014).

International broadcasting sources like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Japan's NHK World, Deutsche Welle, and the Voice of America (VOA), are careful to keep perceptions of credibility high while also being diligent in not contributing to any endangerment of national security. Because they are arms of governmental policy and communication offices, these broadcasting sources need both objectivity and service to foreign policy goals of their respective states. Sometimes, as in the case of USG sources like Al Hurra in the Middle East, the central goal of USG broadcasting is to counter the anti-American broadcasting of other nations or groups in the region (Snow, 2014). In a way, international broadcasting is held to the standard of objectivity while also being expected to present American interests in the best light and countering anti-American messages. This is akin to what is continuously expected of both SC and PD.

America's VOA outlet, often compared to the BBC for its objectivity, has become embroiled in the tensions between objectivity and state support we have been discussing. In 2001, the VOA had interviews with violent extremists. The network did this to fulfill its goals of balance, objectivity, and credibility, but critics argued that in times of national crises, international broadcasting should help the nation advocate more than strive to be balanced. In the words of one of these critics, William Safire (2001), "Even in peacetime, news credibility does not flow from splitting the moral difference between good and evil" (para. 14). The State Department apparently pressured the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) to have the VOA back off from interviewing Mullah Mohammed Omar, a key Taliban leader.

The strategic goals of the BBG today are stated as providing accurate and objective news, but also as telling America's story to the world (Price, Has, & Margolin, 2008). The BBG says that it "supports United States national interests through its mission to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy" (BBG, 2013, p. 1). The BBG (2015) claims a weekly audience of approximately 215 million people. BBG broadcasting services include Voice of America (VOA), Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/FRL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN).[5] The BBG is distributing programs in 61 languages to more than 100 countries each week (BBG, 2015). This includes the old media of radio and TV, as well as the new media, including mobile phones and social media. The BBG is independent but is still a federal agency that supervises all government civilian-run international media (Mull & Wallin, 2013). All international broadcasting networks are concerned with national security and are not just sources of news. International broadcasting networks are also a source of strategic influence, however subtle or blatant.[6] This function is consistent with the clear guidelines for the BBG and its international broadcasting that are set out in legislation and policies. American international broadcasting is required to provide all sides of important issues and USG policies, to provide opportunity for debates about the policies, while also advancing USG foreign policy by informing foreign audiences "in a balanced and objective manner" (Weed, 2014, p. 17). Connecting international broadcasting to foreign policy involves an examination of national security concerns that guide the formation of government policies.

2. The National Security Context for Strategic Influence

National security policies must precede strategic communication and public diplomacy policies if the latter are to serve national security interests and goals. The central goal of American national security is to ensure the physical safety of the nation and protecting its national interests. The term "national security" became increasingly common in political discourse after World War II. It is a concern for presidents and statecraft that involves not only military matters, but also security in diplomacy, economics, and national identity (Mastapeter, 2008). An essential part of national security is national power and such power can be viewed as economic, technological, military, diplomatic, and relational. American national security communication has always included discourse that promotes its values and projects it power. While the forms of USG communication are reinvented, re-conceptualized, and reorganized frequently, the underlying mission of bolstering national security remains constant.

As threats to national security constitute a spectrum of threats ranging from conflict to extreme violence and war, strategies for dealing with these threats also have a spectrum ranging from diplomacy and negotiation to all-out war. An implication here may be that choices made by the USG about power options might lead to choices made about what types of SC and PD are optimal for particular circumstances. For example, recent Presidents (Bush and Obama in particular) have chosen approaches to national power that project American power and dominance in certain regions so that SC and PD are guarding the national security ob-

[5] http://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2015/03/BBG_Fact sheet_v18.pdf

[6] This should not imply that influence equates with propaganda. Refuting falsehood can be done with facts and truthful clarification of policies (Arndt, 2005).

jectives and political interests of the White House.

Some observers note that because national influence (SC, PD) is born in considerations of power and political interests of a source nation, it is necessary to have influence that does not shy away from or deny political strategies (Lord & Lynch, 2010). Whether Thucydides giving an account of the Peloponnesian War, Julian Corbett distinguishing German military strategies from British ones, or contemporary Israel contemplating aggressive actions by other Middle Eastern states, political and military theorists have seen the connections between history, geography, cultural, and nation-nation interactions (Mahnken, 2006). The fact that the United States is the most powerful state on the planet affects how it relates to other nations and how it conducts national influence. Strategic culture is a nation-state's set of shared beliefs and modes of behavior that shape its collective identity and method for securing national security (Mahnken, 2006). For example, American strategic culture is imbued with exceptionalism (Mahnken, 2006). This affects how the nation communicates.

Along with the study of strategic cultures as background knowledge for effective SC and PD, it is necessary to consider complex interdependencies in how nations and cultures relate to each other (Freedman, 2013). This includes the study of culture, but also politics, technologies, economics, geography, and intelligence (Gray, 1999). Strategic and systems thinking should accompany SC and PD planning and evaluation, yet there is scant evidence of this now occurring or being recommended in the myriad of reports on national influence. Systems thinking looks at multiple variables relevant to a problem and how changes in those variables affect each other and the entire system (Freedman, 2013).

In addition to the need for basing national influence on political strategies that serve national interests and national security, there is a need for historical realism in narrating the position of the United States in world opinion. It is presently too common to cite the decline of America's national image in the recent past, free of any long-term historical perspective. For example, historians have noted that criticisms of Americans by Europeans go back to the colonial days. We know for example that while Alexis de Tocqueville praised certain aspects of American life, he was also very critical of other aspects such as what he called the "tyranny of the majority." The founding fathers of America like Thomas Jefferson portrayed the new nation as a "chosen country" (Sanders, 2011, p. 15). In the 19th century, English, German, Russian, and French authors were mocking Americans as being vulgar and focused mainly on making money (Sanders, 2011). This kind of historical context is important for understanding why SC and PD professionals struggle so much with how to improve America's image in the world. Critical views of the United States did not originate with 9/11 or the invasion of Iraq despite the fact that recent operations have increased negative attitudes toward the nation.

3. The Need for Strategic Influence

Some observers like Admiral Mike Mullen appear to believe that good policies automatically generate good relations among nations, thereby erasing the need to keep struggling over meanings and strategies for SC. Mullen (2009) argued: "To put it simply, we need to worry a lot less about how to communicate our actions and much more about what our actions communicate. Each time we fail to live up to our values or don't follow up on a promise, we look more and more like the arrogant Americans the enemy claims we are" (p.4). Such thinking can lead to strong criticism of systematic government influence. Some reject or resist strong systematic influence because they believe that it has so often failed in the past. A continual challenge to strategic influence has been the steady flow of criticisms from other nations, even allies, of American presence in other places in the world. It appears that dodging serious discussion about policy concerns with traditional public relations techniques can add fire to the accusations of bad policies and bad intentions (Sanders, 2011).

We noted earlier, there are competing definitions for most terms related to national influence. For example, Snow (2014) observes "There is no one definition of public diplomacy in the literature….Educational and cultural exchange have been a public diplomacy mainstay, as is an international broadcasting operation that targets a global population" (p. 4). It is possible that some of the confusion about terminology in SC and PD is related to a weak sense of historical progression for how Americans respond to national identity, compete with other ideologies and have a reluctance to have strong propaganda in times of peace. Thus, we now look at some historical background.

4. Historical Background

Throughout history, nations have used communication to promote their interests and to warn adversaries about their commitment to their national security. Colonial Americans, in their struggle for independence from England, used personal diplomacy, letters, intelligence, pamphlets, and the Declaration of Independence, to cajole potential supporters in France, Spain, Canada, and other nations to support their cause (Waller, 2008). France promoted its revolution in the 18th century by sending messages directly to citizens of other nations. Like the Alliance Francaise origins in 1883, other nations such as Italy and Germany, established institutes for promoting their cultures. America was generally reluctant to establish a permanent and large-scale ideological agency. Despite its early com-

mitment to cultural diplomacy, the United States is wary of establishing large-scale ideological agencies.

World War I brought the emergence of the Committee on Public Information (CPI). The CPI was the first centralized propaganda agency of the USG. In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson appointed George Creel, a journalist and campaign consultant for Woodrow Wilson's re-election campaign of 1916, to be the director of the CPI. Creel targeted both foreigners and Americans to support the war. Wilson and Creel worked closely together to frame the U.S. entry into the war as idealistic and imperative. Creel framed those opposed to the war as traitors. Creel knew that what he called information was propaganda, but he argued that even information presents what the government wants people to believe. The CPI portrayals were to be based on facts and the public should make the desired conclusions and decisions by examining the evidence presented to them. Creel used the word "information" rather than "propaganda" because he believed the latter was "purposeful lying" (Arndt, 2005, p. 28). It is interesting that Creel once remarked that "people do not live by bread alone; they live mostly by catch phrases" (Freedman, 2013, p. 337). The first official propaganda agency for America was steeped in strategies and tactics of one-way framing and persuasion.

America shut down its CPI propaganda machine in 1919 (Tuch, 1990). During the post-war years, Hitler ramped up Germany's propaganda, in part, by learning from CPI tactics (Pratkanis & Aronson, 1991). Russian Bolsheviks made propaganda a major part of their foreign policy strategies. The British BBC was established in 1922. The Dutch began their international broadcasting in 1927, the French in 1931, and the British in 1932. The fascists in Italy and Germany had unified ideological operations up and running ahead of the United States. The Office of War Information (OWI) was started by President Roosevelt in 1941 and the VOA began in 1942 (Sorenson, 2006). The OWI was created to help define the role of the United States in the world. Russia had already made Radio Moscow an international broadcasting network by the beginning of World War II (Dizard, 2004). Nazi Germany had developed a strong radio propaganda system and Britain had its British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) which began broadcasting international radio programs in 1932 (Dizard, 2004).

Before World War II, the United States was the only major power that did not have a strategic influence or public diplomacy bureaucracy. In 1938, the State Department established a Division of Cultural Relations and programs targeted at the people in Latin America. In 1940, Nelson Rockefeller became the leader of the newly created Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Some political leaders thought that truth was more important than propaganda. There were leaders in the military who believed that wars are fought with weapons and not with words. This changed with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942. Ideological operations became part of war mobilization. While President Roosevelt had witnessed the actions of the CPI during World I and despised that kind of centralized and iron-fisted propaganda, Nelson Rockefeller did not mind blending cultural relations with propaganda and intelligence (Arndt, 2005). Propaganda was enjoined with soft-power culturalism.

All of the nations that fought in World War II used strong propaganda as part of their means of doing battle (Taylor, 2003). British propaganda against the Nazis used some of the same themes used in World War I, such as the Nazis being ruthless and hateful "Huns." While President Roosevelt had officially opposed propaganda, he came to endorse the use of Hollywood movies to support America's war against the Axis powers. Roosevelt commented "The motion picture industry could be the most powerful instrument of propaganda in the world, whether it tries to be or not" (Taylor, 2003, p. 229). Both Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt spoke to their respective populations with popular fireside radio "chats." These radio speeches were designed to fortify domestic confidence in the war efforts.

The end of World War II brought declining interest in ideological warfare, but it increased again with the emergence of the Cold War. Advocates of strong public diplomacy during the Second World War included Nelson Rockefeller and William Donovan, both of whom saw strong strategic influence as necessary to combat the propaganda of the Germans (Arndt, 2005). Both men were outspoken leaders who advocated stronger reactions by the United States to the Nazi regime of Germany. Donovan worked on establishing the espionage service that later became the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and a project to use propaganda to support British resistance to the Germans. Rockefeller lobbied for greater American efforts in Latin America in order to counter German influence there. His efforts led to radio broadcasts directed into Latin America. President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Donovan as head of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI). The COI collected intelligence but also conducted information operations designed to diminish the morale of the Germans. The COI included a unit known as the Foreign Information Service (FIS). The FIS was an effort of William Donovan and President Roosevelt to expand ideological operations far beyond the influence campaign directed into Latin America. In 1942, the FIS initiated radio broadcasts with the name Voice of America. According to Nicholas Cull (2009), the intelligence community (IC) developed the early radio capabilities for the U.S. such as VOA.

While many people questioned the need or desirability of propaganda for a domestic audience, others also questioned the idea of propaganda for other na-

tions during times of peace. Ralph Block (1948), a State Department official at the time wrote that "It is possible that more Americans approve of the use of the atomic bomb in defensive warfare than approve of the use of propaganda to forestall war" (p. 678). The White House shut down the OWI in less than two weeks after the surrender of Japan. President Truman transferred the functions of the OWI to the State Department, where it became part of the Bureau of Public Affairs. The functions of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were transferred to the War Department, including overt psychological operations. One thing to note in this brief historical foray is the tendency of the USG to back off from aggressive communication during peacetime and to have disagreements about how and where to locate and manage national influence activities.

Three key cultural tools for Germany's propaganda chief Josef Goebbels, were radio, news print, and film. Radios were taken over by the Nazis who viewed propaganda as fighting on a new kind of battlefield. The Nazis combined public relations in other nations with their propaganda efforts. There were 300 German-language newspapers in other countries. They had financial holdings in 350 newspapers published in other languages. They also had a news service called Transocean that mixed objective news with propaganda such as anti-British messages. Goebbels hired a pioneer Ivy Lee of the American public relations industry to help him with his propaganda. Ivy Lee helped to do image repair for John D. Rockefeller **(**Hart, 2013). Ivy Lee had worked with the CPI during World War I. Lee was paid $33,000 per year to help make Hitler popular among the German people (Manvell & Fraenkel, 2010).

There was no commitment to truth in Nazi propaganda, just as there is no commitment to truth in pro-terrorist propaganda today. President Roosevelt was accused of serving the Jews. The sinking of the British passenger ship, the S.S. Athenia, was said to have been done not by the Germans (they really did it) but by British leader Winston Churchill. Goebbels was controlling German radio broadcasting by 1933. Listening to radio broadcasts critical of Germany could result in imprisonment. By 1942, Nazi radio broadcasting was reaching out in nearly 30 languages. German Nazi broadcasting even reached America. The point here is that much of what Nazi Germany accomplished in gaining power was related to their propaganda and their propaganda took full advantage of broadcasting. Goebbels noted in his diaries that he was able to use propaganda to build the Hitler Fuhrer mythology (Manvell & Fraenkel, 2010). The Nazis believed that people can be convinced of truths best when the messages are very simple and highly repeated. It took some time for the USG to realize how effective German propaganda was with both internal (domestic) and external audiences. Hitler himself believed that one major reason for Germany losing World War I was the effectiveness of American propaganda. Seven organizations were used by the USG to fight Nazi propaganda and to use communication to help the war against Germany and its fascist allies. Psychological warfare, information services, and propaganda were all used to combat Nazi claims and credibility, as well as to degrade the morale of those who supported Hitler. The three most important organizations were the OWI, the OSS and the Army. The latter two were heavily involved in covert communication projects.

The aggressive propaganda/PD of the Soviet Union and its leader Josef Stalin, convinced American leaders that their nation needed a strong voice against the messages of the Soviets. While the National Security Act of 1947 created the DOD and the CIA, it did not create a central information office like the CPI or the OWI. However, the CIA was given authority to conduct covert psychological operations to counteract the actions of the Soviets. In 1948, the Smith-Mundt Act gave legal authority for overt information campaigns. The law called for official dissemination of information about America, its population, and its policies. One of the stated goals of this law was to enhance understanding among nations (Kennedy & Lucas, 2005). The VOA was run from within the State Department at this time. All of this was done to support U.S. foreign policy which included the Truman Doctrine, and the expansion of American influence.

Like the CPI of World War I and the OWI in World War II, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was established to persuade people in other nations that the United States national interests and national security policies should be supported. The USIA was established in 1953 and was terminated in 1999, when its functions were returned to the DOS. Since 1999, PD and United States SC have been loosely coordinated and subject to competing paradigms and definitions of terms. Still, the history above shows that the United States needs strategic influence and counter-communication at the same time that it favors building cultural relations through various forms of diplomacy. There are few options when so many communication spheres of influence include messages attacking the U.S. and its policies.

5. International Broadcasting and Public Diplomacy

Writing in 1937, Silas Bent noted that messages sent to other nations from the United States and messages sent to America from other nations are both nationalistic and conducive "of better international understanding" (p. 117). He also referred to radio music programs furthering good will. Additionally, he observed that sport coverage of events like the English Derby and the Davis Cup finals "help to give to the world a sense of common possession, if not of solidarity" (Bent, 1937, p. 119). It appears that international broadcasting would be a preferred tool of publicity for both fas-

cists like Hitler and Stalin and anti-fascists like Franklin Roosevelt. Ideological operations became part of war mobilization. The first major technology used was the one used by America's allies and enemies. This was radio and it became the main tool of the Voice of America. The VOA started on February 24, 1942 and its first words were "We shall speak to you about America and the war—the news may be good or bad—we shall tell you the truth" (Snow, 2014, p. 8). The end of World War II brought declining interest in ideological warfare, but it increased again with the emergence of the Cold War.

Before the formation of the USIA, information and ideological operations, both overt and covert, were conducted by the military and the DOS. The latter's Policy Planning Staff established efforts to roll back aggression by the Soviets in Eastern Europe (Dizard, 2004). The CIA, which was the successor to the OSS, secretly ran Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Radio Free Europe was on the air in 1951 (Kennedy & Lucas, 2005). The content of these radio stations was consistent with the DOS Policy Planning Staff goals for challenging the Soviets. At the time of the USIA formation, public diplomacy and information operations were influenced or conducted by the National Security Council, the CIA, the DOS, the DOD, and the White House.

The impetus for creating the USIA was closely related to USG objectives in the Cold War. The goals of the agency were to explain the policies of the United States, counter adversary propaganda, and to help others understand American culture (Arndt, 2005). Cultural affairs officers, who believed that the State Department had started with the right focus on cultural diplomacy in 1938, were disappointed with these goals. They believed that the USIA did not concentrate enough on mutual understanding of other populations along with various types of partnerships (Arndt, 2005).

The 1999 demise of the USIA meant that public diplomacy would be steered officially by the DOS. Two components of the USIA, International Information Programs and the Educational and Cultural Affairs bureau, were now to be run by the undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (Lord, 2006). A third part of the USIA, the Office of Media Research and Analysis became part of the State Department's Intelligence and Research Bureau (Lord, 2006).

American leaders have supported large-scale ideological operations in times of war such as the two world wars and the Cold War. After the Cold War and collapse of the USSR, it was assumed that the USIA was less necessary. Since then, however, the Cold War has been replaced by the present war on insurgencies and terrorists. While there was support for centralized PD during the two world wars and the Cold War, some observers note that the USG was behind our allies in the commitment to ideological operations (Doorey, 2009). During the Cold War, the VOA, which existed before and after the USIA, reached about 80% if the Eastern European populations. In recent times, without the USIA, the VOA has reached only a small percentage of people in the Middle East (Doorey, 2009). Official VOA figures indicate that the VOA reaches 80% of the total American international media audience.[7] From Washington, D.C., the VOA produces more than 70 TV shows and 200 radio programs. VOA services include websites and social media sites.

While there are tensions between SC, PD, and ideological operations between one side of America's international influence and cultural diplomacy and partnerships on the other side, history shows the division is not necessary. Hard power and soft power sometimes work together while soft power can work on its own or in tandem with hard power (Nye, 2004). Cultural diplomacy is preferable to IO but is longer-term and does not address rapid-attack communication from adversaries. The USIA was able to combine soft and hard communication and its effectiveness in the Cold War still presents a model, albeit not without problems, for a unified approach to USG international influence. Unlike the CPI, the USIA was not viewed negatively by the public or Congress in any major sense. Its demise appears to be more related to the USG wanting a more active role for the DOS in PD and some politicians seeking to cut budget costs during another period of peace (Arndt, 2005; Dizard, 2004). The agency had successfully countered Soviet propaganda during the Cold War with VOA, Radio Marti, and Radio Liberty. It also continued cultural diplomacy such as like cultural exchanges and scholarships (Paul, 2011).

6. Controversies Regarding International Broadcasting

While the international broadcasting component of national influence began with radio, it has extended from radio into television, the Internet, and social media today. Historically, international broadcasting has been defined as state-sponsored news, information, and entertainment directed to the populations of other nations (Price et al., 2008). It was once unabashedly associated with necessary propaganda and is now affiliated with PD (Price et al., 2008). One problem with defining it has been the changing technological nature of international broadcasting, particularly in light of the fact that target audiences are no longer necessarily limited to nation-state boundaries. More importantly, there are continuing questions about how objective or state-serving international broadcasting services need to be. There is also the observation that new media and social media diminish the one-way flow that typified radio transmissions.

The questions of objectivity involve issues of both intentional and unintentional support of state themes and positions on foreign affairs (Price et al., 2008).

[7] http://www.bbg.gov/broadcasters/voa

From the early days of shortwave radio to the social media networking of today, international broadcasting has had to balance two competing commitments—one to objectivity in order to maintain credibility, and the other to serving the national security interest of the government it serves (Price et al., 2008). Strong critics of broadcasting for PD argue that the sources are always finding themselves in the role as "missionaries of ideological and cultural hegemony" (Price et al., 2008, p. 154). Others may note that what the BBG and State Department subscribe to in terms of objectivity does not have to be applied by the DOD or intelligence community messaging. Rhetoric about truth telling must therefore be qualified as applied to particular areas of government strategic communication. Traditional state broadcasting and clandestine information transmission are not the same thing (Price et al., 2008).

Some criticisms of international broadcasting assert that actual effects are difficult to identify. The BBG measures total audience size of broadcasts, website visits, program quality ratings by audiences, audience perceptions of program credibility, and audience reach (Weed, 2014). Audience reach is the percentage of audience respondents who watch or listen weekly. Another variable measured is the percentage of audience respondents who say that certain programs have helped them understand current events more (Weed, 2014). Generally, these data are very positive. For example, in 2013, VOA had 100% of its audience rating its quality high, 89% on credibility, and 90% on understanding (Weed, 2014). Still, some critics say that international broadcasting has not moved the needle in regard to advancing U.S. foreign policies and promoting democracy (Weed, 2014). Perhaps some of this disappointment results from an incomplete understanding of what international broadcasting is legally required to do—present objective news in a manner consistent with American foreign policy.

In 2014, a report on international broadcasting for the USG was released by the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. In that report, Nicholas Cull wrote an executive summary making the following observations. What has sometimes been viewed as unmeasurable it now subjected to multiple forms of tracking and analytics. Despite the fact that having more data about audience attitudes and behavior can help adjust programming, there is still the problem of political leaders consulting with public diplomats as they formulate policies (Cull, 2014). The commission report reminds us that international broadcasting is intended to inform rather than persuade. At the same time, it must align with USG foreign policies and work against political extremism.

As a complete reading of the national influence literature reveals, there are many domains of international broadcasting, some of which is done by the BBG. The BBG oversees only civilian messages and networking while the DOD has its own system of broadcasting. Within the BBG family of stations and websites, there are variations of purposes and strategies. Additionally, the intelligence community has covert broadcasting operations, which are obviously difficult to locate and describe.

Historian Ron Robin (2005) argues that "Contemporary public diplomacy appears trapped in a time warp… its architects are creatures of cold war triumphalism" (p. 347). Robin and others declare that American PD has replaced the monster of Communism with a new dragon to slay—terrorism. These critics say that such binary thinking neglects the complexities of identities and changes that should be studied. This line of criticism says that existing approaches to national influence and international broadcasting gloss over the complexities involved in adversarial contexts. Robin (2005) charges that there is no yearning by Muslim populations to be liberated by Americans, but that is what Americans portray in their PD. Robin (2005) says a major problem with the use of American international broadcasting is the assumption by the sources that the receivers lack information, when in fact, they are inundated with various forms of information and communication. In other words, animosity toward the U.S. may result more from negative information rather than a lack of information.

Some critics say that "U.S. public diplomacy has undergone intensive reorganization and retooling as it takes on a more prominent propaganda role" (Kennedy & Lucas, 2005, p. 309). These kinds of criticisms imply that new forms of national influence are no different than those used in WWII and the Cold War, albeit taking new forms and using new technologies. There appears to be some suspicion of new terminology like "new public diplomacy" in such critiques. Such arguments go far as to say that the new public diplomacy, like the old, is not only serving national security, but also imperium building (Kennedy & Lucas, 2005).

In fact, despite the propaganda roots of national influence, it is not necessary for national influence or strategic influence to serve the needs of empire building, hegemony, or political warfare. This makes charges of "cultural imperialism" interesting, but inconclusive. Certainly, information warfare, information operations, and propaganda can be part of a nationalistic strategic influence, but other, perhaps larger, parts can include cultural networking, networking of policies, and collaborative policy directions. There is no realistic denial of national influence (SC, PD) serving the interests of the state, but the interests of the state can move from unipolar to multipolar, and unilateral to multilateral. With increasing interdependence of economic, political, and military systems, there is good reason to expect more attention to the potential of network diplomacy. The question here is how international broadcasting, born in the old paradigm, can contribute to the new one.

Searching for something sinister in national influence campaigns that are used in many ways at various levels of transparency may be more interesting than productive. It is true that the State Department's George Kennan had a plan in 1948 called "organized political warfare," but we must ask why we should expect him to not have such a plan.[8]

There is critical scholarship in the social sciences that views national influence as contemporary propaganda, regardless of new terminology and new approaches to international communication. One argument is against the Obama administration's focus on global engagement. It accuses the USG of using engagement in the same way used in corporate public relations and marketing. The accusation is that this produces contrived dialogue rather than genuine dialogue (Comor & Bean, 2012). Additionally, the use of Public Diplomacy 2.0 is charged with being a means to facilitate and enlarge a PD approach that is not workable. Comor and Bean (2012) suggest that the new public relations "two-way symmetrical model" is simply doing public relations for the public relations profession. They also argue that the co-creational arguments made by new PD scholars are selling something no more effective than the Charlotte Beers marketing approach to extremist terrorism. Moreover, they argue that just as the theory of symmetrical relationships between companies and consumers has not been proven to work, the USG has not explained how it can begin to create such relationships (Comor & Bean, 2012). As for the claims about individual empowerment through Web 2.0 technologies, some say these are more related to Wired magazine articles than empirical evidence (Comor & Bean, 2012).[9]

In the history of PD provided by Michael Schneider (2015), it appears that there is not only the story about America that gets told, but also the story about PD. One interesting chapter of the PD story is the attempt by the USG after 9/11, to gain more worldwide support for what Americans called the "war on terror." The goals were fairly clear, but the communication strategies were not. Between 2001 and 2013, there were 7 different undersecretaries of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the State Department (Schneider, 2015). The point of this observation is simply that consistent leadership in national influence is difficult when the leaders keep leaving. None of the seven stayed on for more than two years. The last two undersecretaries appeared to be more credentialed in journalism than in international relations.[10] Some of the undersecretaries advocated new listening, better relationship building, and newer communication technology efforts (Schneider, 2015). In response to slow and inadequate civilian USG responses to terrorism communication, the DOD developed its own forms of SC influence. In time, the Obama administration developed means to bring together concepts used by both the DOS and the DOD for national influence, particularly against terrorism (Schneider, 2015). Two "whole of government" approaches supported by the White House included the Center for Counter-terrorism Communications (CSCC) and the National Counterterrorism Center (Schneider, 2015, p. 20). The Obama administration makes it clear that its attempt to use SC and global engagement includes efforts to "engage audiences on positive terms," but also "discrediting, denigrating, and delegitimizing al-Qa'ida and violent extremist ideology" (White House, 2010, p. 6).

7. The New Public Diplomacy

The older versions of public diplomacy appear to be more like propaganda than the more recent versions. The newer arguments about public diplomacy advocate more interactive approaches to communication with other nations and populations. While the new media (Internet-based) have not replaced the old media (pre-World Wide Web), there is an important blurring of content production and content consumption in today's media ecology. New media present vast amounts of channels and networking platforms for locating, producing, and disseminating various forms of communication content. While the State Department has attempted to use social media for the constant goals of strategic influence, there is scant evidence of success in this area. Worse yet, there are several examples of DOS disasters in design including the recent video about running to ISIS rather than walking.[11] Perhaps letting go of a dominance paradigm for foreign affairs now still held by the United States government (despite academic claims to the contrary), could make more effective uses of new and social media possible. Clearly, the goals of security and global positioning will direct the influence of activities of the government, despite what labels are given to them.

Many lessons have been learned from the older

[8] http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/65ciafounding3.htm

[9] While these scholars have made points worthy of deliberation, they have not proven that engagement online or offline cannot be improved in ways that free the new approach from the old advertising paradigm.

[10] Richard Stengel, current head, for example is a former editor of Time magazine and journalism professor. (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/221669.htm). The previous head was Tara D. Sonenshine, whose background was in strategic communication for organizations, foreign policy, and media production (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/04/187454.htm). She only stayed on for two years.

[11] This video is attempted DOS information operations: http://www.military.com/daily-news/2014/09/09/state-department-enters-propaganda-war-with-isis.html

days of PD that guide what is now formulated as new PD. One strong lesson is that PD cannot make up for bad policies and PD does not work if it contradicts foreign policies or military operations (Melissen, 2007). New PD is less propagandistic than older PD and requires news skills than those found in traditional PD (Melissen, 2007). It is also focused more on engagement with other cultures. This engagement includes links with civil society organizations and publics through non-governmental channels (Melissen, 2007). Jan Melissen (2007) cautions that too much coordination between policies and PD can create negative impressions. To distance itself as much as possible from propaganda, new PD seeks dialogue and two-way communication as opposed to the one-way persuasion efforts of propaganda (Melissen, 2007). Some of the new PD is related to the cultural relations effort going back to the establishment of the cultural relations office in the DOS in 1938. Efforts at cultural relations stress engagement with other populations in various cultural partnerships, not in the one-way manner of Nelson Rockefeller's efforts in Latin America, but in the sense of long-term trust building (Arndt, 2005; Melissen, 2007). Thus, new PD can conduct traditional persuasion efforts while adding more endeavors for relationship building (Melissen, 2007).

New PD brings a stronger focus not only on cultural relations and trust building, but also networking of interests, cultures, and diplomacy itself. Hierarchical information flow (marketing, propaganda, advertising, public relations) models of PD are challenged today by new PD models that stress policy formation networking and collaborative policy making over unilateral policies sold by good selling techniques (Hocking, 2007). While new PD is less one-way informational than new PD, which is more dialogic and cooperative, we have to question the equation of the old PD with broadcasting. Pamment (2013), for example, states that new PD "represents a break from the 'broadcasting' models and takes advantage of social media to establish two-way engagement with the public" (p. 3). It is important to recognize that international broadcasting, when linked with websites, social media, and other platforms may become more like the converged media we see with other channels.

While our history of international broadcasting necessarily stressed radio, it is very important to note that today's international broadcasting involves much more than radio and TV, as the Internet has provided many new channels over time. For example, the USG's International Information Programs Bureau (IIP) today makes efforts with numerous websites designed to attract young people. These sites along with Facebook, mobile phone apps and other new media appeals, attempts to disseminate important PD information. It also employs various forms of analytics to track what messages are having specific effects with particular types of audience members (Schneider, 2015). The IIP has distributed over 300,000 e-books to other nations (Schneider, 2015). Despite the new media, however, most people in the world still get their information about the world from radio and TV (Schneider, 2015). Such observations make it clear that the USG is updating its technological tools for international broadcasting. The question now is whether or not the messages and the communication strategies are also being updated.

Today's shifts in using international broadcasting for PD appear to stress more two-way communication between PD senders and receivers, and more networking attention which can bring into focus non-state actors who can be influential with various audiences (Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015). After 9/11, USG international broadcasting increased its pro-America news. USG networks like Al Hurra (satellite TV) have to compete with the political news of Arab networks such as Al Jazeera and Al-Arabiya (financed by Saudi Arabia), and have had small effects on attitudes about the U.S. (Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015).

According to Maloney (2015), the use of social media for PD displays its limitations. Maloney argues that the Iranian situation illustrates the possible over-reliance on PD to the exclusion of traditional diplomacy. She argues that the recent negotiations between Iran and America are due to traditional diplomacy, not public diplomacy or digital public diplomacy. With advances in international broadcasting capabilities into Iran, the government there responds with new measures to suppress expansion and effects. Maloney suggests that the strong concern about international broadcasting reflects the effect that international broadcasting is having on Iranians. In 2001, the Iranian government ordered the filtering of all websites that are deemed anti-government or anti-Islam. In 2003, harsher measures were taken including arresting journalists and bloggers. Weed (2014) argues that there are disagreements today about how this form of PD works best in an age of digital media and networking and also the exact ways it contributes to democracy and US foreign policy objectives.

While it is tempting to say that the old PD is faded or fading, studies show that new PD may not be moving as fast in practice as it is in academic discourse (Pamment, 2013). This lag may parallel the disconnect between how scholars talk about social media and democracy and what is actually found in empirical data (Hacker & van Dijk, 2000). One scholar argues "Record a few minutes of video on your phone, post it on YouTube, and millions can watch whatever you have decided is newsworthy" (Seib, 2012, p. 9). The problem with this statement is the fact that posting a video on YouTube might get a dozen views or a million views depending on factors that go well beyond simply posting content. With social media, there is always potential for progress, but it is wise to keep a realistic view of

what changes are actually occurring. One interesting point of separation between older PD and newer PD is that the latter is more likely to build on narrative in an inductive manner while the former is more likely to use grand national narratives that are distributed (Pamment, 2013). Research in IO, done in the battlespace of open confrontations, shows that grand narratives are not likely to work in today's world of asymmetric conflicts (Perna, 2009).

Having reviewed some important aspects of the history of American national influence, how international broadcasting attempts to turn away from old diplomacy and toward new public diplomacy, how strategic influence and global engagement should be used together for national goals, and some strong criticisms and of broadcasting and public diplomacy, we now move into a discussion of how international broadcasting can be part of an integration of mass communication with social media and digital communication.

8. Building a Unified Model of Strategic Influence and Global Engagement

According to Bruce Gregory (2008), PD and SC are essentially the same thing—governmental persuasion. However, Gregory wants to separate PD and SC from information operations (IO). Like Joseph Nye, he combines the concepts of coercion, persuasion, and attraction into the concept of "smart power." Gregory says that PD and SC are open persuasion and IO is covert or hidden persuasion.[12] Gregory also makes the important observation that the DOS and the DOD are not the only stakeholders in PD and SC. There are also private interests and civil society organizations involved in their own ways of doing PD. There is an alternative to using IO which is basically in the arsenal of communication weaponry used more by the military and the intelligence community than by other USG sectors.[13] That alternative is strategic influence as we have been discussing it.

Because there is a full spectrum of threats to national security, it is necessary to develop a full spectrum of security and communication strategies for all of those threats. This is true for both times of peace as well as times of wars and violent conflicts. In Figure 1, the argument is visually depicted as global engagement (cultural relations, partnerships) combining what are often thought of as competitive and exclusive aspects of strategic influence.

The main arguments of this perspective begin with the claim that separations, or stovepipes between SC done by the military, IO done by the military and the IC, PD done by the diplomacy community, and traditional diplomacy are useful for firewalling tactics. However, they are not useful for the integration of necessary goals of communication that best serves national security concerns.

[12] Strategic influence can be overt or covert and can include information operations. How secretive IO is in practice is subject to debate.

[13] Technically, military or intelligence community IO can also include violent actions such as cyber-attacks, electronic warfare (EW) and kinetic attacks on communication or information infrastructures.

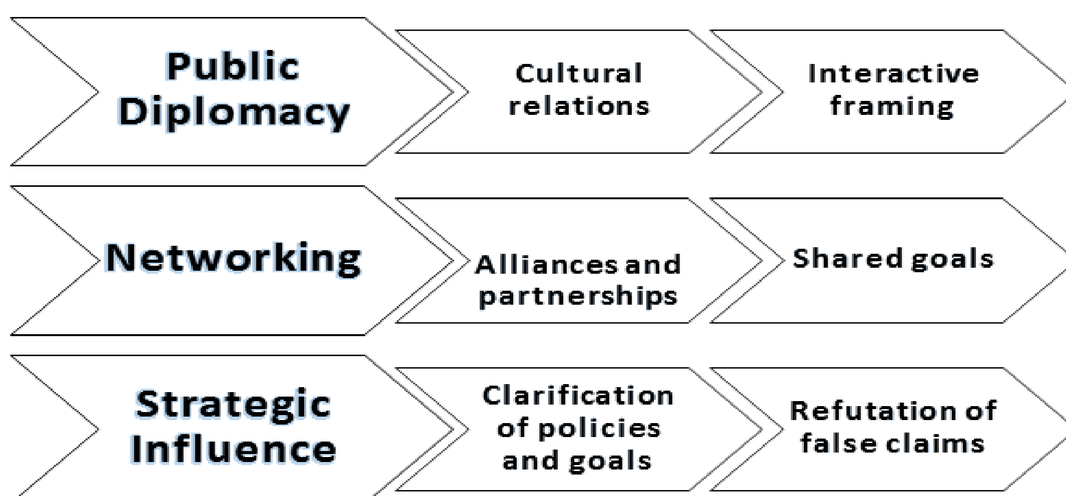

Figure 1. Parallel paths of strategic influence and global engagement.

8.1. Cultural Networking and Global Engagement

Zaharna (2010) maps out a spectrum of national influence that might be useful moving forward in coming years. The older focus on strategic information and influence can work with the newer focus on building relationships in her model. The relational side of a full-spectrum framework focuses on the construction of social structures to advance political objectives. Zaharna's (2010) new vision is based on the argument that SC and PD must include both information and relational perspectives. In fact, she says that the two should be integrated. She uses interpersonal communication as a useful analogy in her view, for recognizing how both relational and informational aspects of communication are essential. Rather than relying so much on battles for hearts and minds, her approach focuses more on building cultural bridges.

After 9/11, Zaharna (2010) notes that the U.S. mainly used transmission (mass communication) models of PD to attempt to generate soft power. However, she argues that connection, relationship-building, and networking approaches, as used by NGOs, appear to be more effective. The U.S. was not generating soft power as much as it was trying to persuade people about it ("wielding soft power"). The older approach stresses message content over message exchange. This transmission model of soft power is essentially a propaganda model as the messages are one-sided, carefully controlled, and designed for changing receivers, not senders. Essentially, you are attempting to get the message receivers to do want what you, the message sender, desire. The goal is about more compliance than collaboration.

Network diplomacy, long advocated by Zaharna (2010), is an alternative to propaganda-based national influence. Networking persuasion or influence builds on the recurrent finding in communication research that the best avenues of persuasion are interpersonal networks. Viewing strategic influence in terms of systems helps us to recognize that various channels of communication have specific functions and also that these functions can change the activity situation of an individual. Thus, a person who normally attends political news with Internet and TV sources, may become a radio news listener during times of driving a car. Network weavers are people in social networks who create network links with others. (Zaharna, 2010). A very important part of influence networks are called hubs. Hubs are people in social networks that have high centrality in the networks—people who through messages pass to get to other members of the network. Many political networks that receive or diffuse PD message are all-channel networks in which there are many hubs and messages are not easily diffused in linear steps or flows. Leadership is shared in these kinds of networks.

Zaharna (2010) notes that narratives are important to these networks because the storytelling helps to produce shared group and network identity. Both strong ties (people you know well and trust highly) and weak ties (people you know but are not close to) are important to network influence and how PD is affected by networks of reception, interpretation, and dissemination. Diversity of network members help bring new ideas and perspectives into social interaction. Members who link diverse groups are known as "cultural bridges." Master narratives are used to frame problems and solutions for networks. Stories are local and master narratives are global. Stories are used to recruit people into networks. Networking approaches conducted with stories and narratives are not the same as mass communication or propaganda model of "telling our story" or narrative. While narratives in the older Information Model are used to persuade and sell and stories are shaped to be marketed, the narratives in the Networking Model are shaped by both senders and receivers.

8.2. New Media Networking and National Influence

Societies with communication that was mainly organized with mass media were known as mass societies or information societies. Societies with communication that is organized mainly with Internet and wireless networking are known as network societies (van Dijk, 2012). Counter-power is exercised in the network society by fighting to change the programs of specific networks and by the effort to disrupt the switches that reflect dominant interests and replace them with alternative switches between networks. Actors are humans, but humans are organized in networks. Human networks act in networks via the programming and switching of organizational networks. In the network society, power and counter-power aim fundamentally at influencing the neural networks in the human mind by using mass communication networks and mass self-communication networks (Castells, 2009, 2010). It is important to note that international broadcasting will have to become integrated with the networks we are describing to optimizes its relevance for national influence.

Castells (2011) describes a new global public sphere for public diplomacy that results from increasing globalization and interconnections with new communication technologies. This argument is idealistic and interesting, but is not as useful as his basic principles of network theory and power. In view of these principles, even smaller nations can join in international debates more than ever before and also increase their influence on how international crises are framed. While we do not agree with his claim that public diplomacy is "diplomacy of the public, not of the government" (Castells, 2011, p. 78), we see merit in Castells' arguments about a possible global sphere of networked citizens of the world having

the ability to deliberate and debate world issues in far easier ways that ever before. While the new electronic spheres of deliberation made possible with emerging network technologies may allow more networking of government, non-government organizations, civil society, and citizens alone, there are opportunities for PD to be used in these spheres for engagement and influence. If online global spaces for people from different cultures are able to facilitate the deliberation of political issues in a kind of online civil society, there may be potential for what Castells (2011) refers to as "the movement of public opinion, made up turbulences of information in a diversified media system" (p. 86). Castells' view of PD is that of networked communication, cultural engagement, and shared meanings.

Castells' work shows that new media networking allows new social spaces where power can be shaped (2007). Castells (2007) describes a trend where "mass media and horizontal communication networks are converging" (p. 238). Thinking shapes norms and social interaction in the new online spaces affect thinking. As Castells (2007) explains, "the battle of the human mind is largely played out in the processes of communication" (p. 239). This is also true of power relations. Perhaps it is also true for the effects of national influence. In the age of mass communication, theories like the two-step flow of communication could explain message diffusion and some aspects of network influence. Today, however in the age of networking and new media, multiple-step theories of communication are required to explain where message are diffused and how networks of influence are affected by SC and PD. We also have to look at media ecologies rather than simple single-media descriptions of effects. This is because people live in multimedia environments and receive from multiple channels and use multiple channels to create their own content as well.

Social media cannot be reduced to one platform of social networking in any attempt to explain how networking operates with new media. Thus, Twitter studies will not say much about Facebook and vice versa and research on one of these will be limited to just one part of social media. This is why it is important to study more than networks of people and to also examine networks of new media and various usages of them dynamically affect various actions of users. While message receivers are always involved in producing meanings for what they perceive in communication, social media allow receivers an increasing amount of control over personal interpretations as they process political content. If this becomes more empirically verifiable, we can suggest that social media are part of a communication ecology that affords more control or influence over how political situations are defined and framed (Altheide, 1995). When we adopt the concept of media ecology or perhaps new media ecology we are led to step past old notions of single users with single technologies accomplishing significant political work.

Social media involve connection technologies used via the Internet for purposes of social interaction with other users. Social networking sites (SNS) include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, YouTube, etc. Each one has its own features and usage affordances. Each can be linked to all of the others in whatever constellation determined by users one by one. Van Dijck and Poell (2013) refer to this as an "expansive ecosystem of connective media" (p. 5). These researchers are careful to avoid falling into the trap of explaining social media by their affordances, either individually or in interoperable linkages. Other researchers observe ways that international broadcasting can be integrated with social media. Tufan (2014), notes that social media and Internet usage provide opportunities for interactivity among users that are not found in typical mass media environments. However, broadcasting sources can easily link to social media platforms that connection spheres of user interactivity to spheres of typical audience reception. Accordingly, "new program formats have been developed that use these platforms to enable listeners and viewers to directly and easily interact with running radio or television programs" (Tufan, 2014, p. 95).

Communication research has long documented the active nature of audiences (Castells, 2007). At the same time, we also know that commercial and political interests affect just how free various new forms of communication actually are in terms of political content. With new media, it is possible to have what Castells (2007) labels "mass self-communication." The key here is expanding horizontal networks of communication that connect global to local messages. Castells describes mass self-communication as a network created by individuals in their personal configurations of Internet, Web, cell phone, and other new media. We suspect we should add all possible media including both old and new, and also offline interpersonal connections. Following the communication power theory of Castells, we can see that power and influence are increasingly related to networks of meaning that are formed in new geometries of multiple communication channels.

Applying Castells theory to international broadcasting cases of message challenges by adversarial groups or nations or state governments, autonomous horizontal networks linked to more global networks can provide a more useful model that old-fashioned point-to-receiver models. This is because the new media/social networks can challenge the information received from governments and adversarial organization. Broadcast media, as used by international broadcasting, should become less one-directional while expanding horizontal networks that converge old media channels and new media platforms (Castells, 2007).

An uncritical view of "Public Diplomacy 2.0" or one that is theory-free can generate beliefs in an exaggerated role for social media and digital communication in

regard to national influence. While much of public diplomacy is offline, online components of influence join in systems of information and social interaction that make the importance of new media fairly clear (Gregory, 2014). As Bruce Gregory (2014) notes, the revolt of the "Arab Spring" involved much more than social media like Facebook. Other facts like corruption, scarcities, TV, military actions, and street activities were also part of the total picture. A great deal of research has yet to be done to sufficiently clarify how the various channels of social media form systems of information flow and influence. The same is true for how the old media and new media work together. As Gregory (2014) argues, "It is easy to argue the importance of technologies in the abstract; it is harder to refine the operational implications" (p. 13).

A system of national influence includes all forms of SC and PD. This can be seen in Figure 2. The propositions used in building this model begin with the need to end the stove-piping of various forms of national influence without making them all sound the same. It also attempts to bring together what has been conceptually separated since the end of the USIA, that is, the separation of strategic influence from public diplomacy. Another proposition concerns that roles of smart diplomacy in determining what blends of strategic influence and global engagement are most likely to be effective in particular situations. A fourth proposition links the various forms of diplomacy, ranging from soft-power oriented forms like cultural diplomacy to more hard-power forms like coercive diplomacy, into the practice of smart diplomacy.

The propositions in the model of national power and influence shown above are grounded in the assumption that strategic influence (strategic communication, public diplomacy) can be logically paired with the goals of global engagement. International broadcasting is assumed to have roles to play in every part of the model. We stress engagement because it appears that enhanced global engagement is the lodestar for much of the argumentation done today about a new PD and the need for network diplomacy. We believe engagement, when genuine, is like the traditional arguments about the "last three miles" of diplomacy.

The reasoning for this model of power and influence is somewhat consistent with the integrated model for public diplomacy argued by Guy Golan. The Golan model has three levels of USG influence domains. The first, called mediated public diplomacy, involves strategic framing and competition over framing. Golan (2015) notes that "Governments must recognize that public diplomacy does not occur in a vacuum" (p. 418). As noted earlier, despite enormous penetration of new media, most people still get a great deal of political information from the old media (Golan, 2015). Ironically, international broadcasting may take on new important roles at the time that they are dismissed by some as Cold War relics. The three domains described by Golan (2015) are mediated public diplomacy, nation branding or image management, and relational or network management. While his model does not approach the totality of USG strategic communication/national influence needs, it does provide a useful model for integrating the PC side of American governmental persuasion. It also provides a useful context for some of the aspects of international broadcasting which need improving.

Golan's (2015) concept of mediated public diplomacy refers to strategic framing. Strategic framing is akin to framing done by political campaigns and involves a competition for agenda setting at both the first-order (setting news and public agendas) and second-order levels (salience, interpretations). Therefore, Golan argues that mass media and public relations theories can be applied in this area of PD. Robert Entman (2008) argues that mediated public diplomacy consists of strong USG attempts, led by the White House to control the framing of American policies. Thus, we can see that international broadcasting has a sustained role in USG frame setting and frame competition.

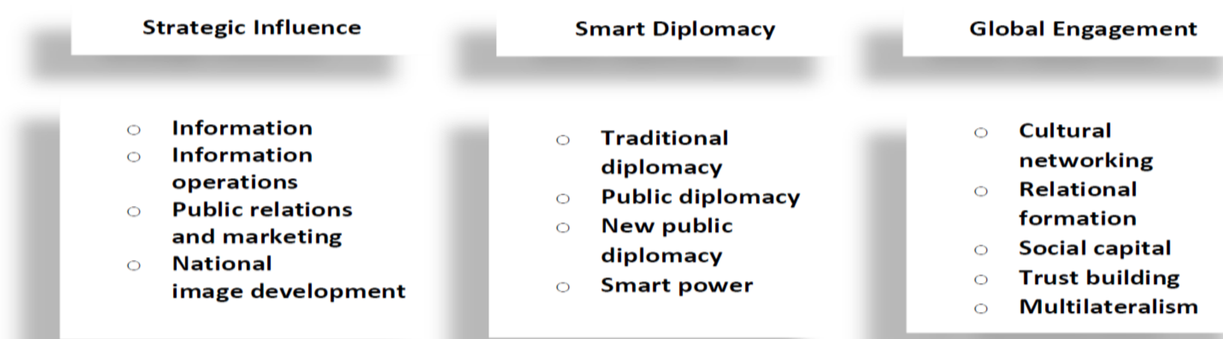

Figure 2. Model of strategic influence and global engagement.

Golan's (2015) second PD domain is nation building and reputation management. The problem with this domain is that it can rely too much on persuasion strategies imported from business—marketing, advertising, etc. On the other hand, branding can work if media framing has already successfully framed a nation is positive ways (Golan, 2015). More important, perhaps, is Golan's (2015) third domain, relationship formation and management. This third view assumes that increasing positive long-term relationships between Americans and others in the world can improve America's image as well as increase the nation's soft power.

8.3. Culture and International Engagement

Cull (2013) observes that engagement with other cultures to the extent that policies involving them, are related to effective listening and feedback processes. Foreign policy is adjusted to foreign opinion, not simply thrust at it. Cull (2013) argues that cultural exchange where both sides of the exchanges learn about each other. He also makes the case that broadcasting that is objective news lowers filtering. Objectivity is perceived as more ethical than propaganda and ethical communication is generally more persuasive. On the other hand, he acknowledges that a nation has to respond to the types of strategic communication used by its adversaries. When the USSR was found to be using intense psychological warfare against the U.S., the latter decided to do the same.

Military analysts have found that America has trouble communicating with other nations and cultures because analysis of existing "background conversations" present in the cultural contexts is sparse. With poor analysis of cultural terrains and contexts, no amount of PD modeling will have significant effect on populations who resent America policies. Background conversations are cultural backdrops which add contexts for producing and understating explicit conversations (Perna, 2009). For example, American soldiers saw no harm in placing an American flag over the head on a statue of Saddam Hussein they helped to pull down. To the Iraqis, the action symbolized what was in their background conversations, that is, that Americans are conquerors (Perna, 2009). For the kinds of political changes that America seeks with using SC and PD, it is necessary to use communication platforms like international broadcasting linked to new media, social media, and interpersonal networks to challenge the background conversations and replace bad ones with good ones when possible. It is easy for people with similar cultures and poetics to use social media and new media networking (Seib, 2007). But a more important challenge for national influence and international broadcasting is how you get people with dissimilar backgrounds to network.

8.4. Strategic Influence

While cultural relations and networks are very important to new public diplomacy, it is also critical to remember that there are adversaries also putting out their own SC and PD messages. If we look at Iran, for example, it is inadequate and non-explanatory to simply list channels that send signals into that nation. Instead, we have to study the SC and PD done by the Iranian government as contextual background for where USG influence is likely to have significant effects. As America has its arsenal of international broadcasting channels, the Iranian government has its Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) system (Tiedeman, 2005). Iran has no equivalent of Smith-Mundt Act restrictions on propagandizing its domestic audience. The IRIB employs 24 languages for its messages (Tiedeman, 2005). While some of its broadcasting aims to familiarize other nations with Iran's history and culture, its Voice of Justice programming is focused on criticizing American interventionist policies (Tiedeman, 2005).

In over three decades, Iran and the U.S. did not have formal diplomatic relations. Despite recent negotiations and a recent famous deal over Iranian nuclear programs, both national governments remain suspicious of each other. In recent years, however, the DOS has developed some online strategies for increasing dialogue and trust-building (Fialho & Wallin, 2013). The online tools are used along with other forms of PD and also traditional diplomacy. In 2011, the DOS launched the Virtual Embassy Tehran. The purpose for this Web hub is to increase communication between the USG and Iranian citizens (Fialho & Wallin, 2013). It has the dual roles of promoting mutual understanding and refuting misinformation. One goal is to shape the views of Iranian youths (Fialho & Wallin, 2013). This site provides what Fialho and Wallin (2013) call "virtual engagement" (p. 3). About 50% of Iranians use the Internet today, but the Virtual Embassy Tehran website was blocked by the Iranian government soon after it opened (Fialho & Wallin, 2013). However, despite the fact that most of the site hits are coming from outside of Iran, the DOS believes that Iranians view the site using proxy servers (Fialho & Wallin, 2013). In additional to the virtual embassy, the DOS has a Farsi Facebook page, a Twitter account, Google+, YouTube, and a Farsi blog. The DOS believes that 60% of the Facebook visitors are inside of Iran (Fialho & Wallin, 2013).

Another area of concern for strategic influence in counter-terrorism and counter-propaganda. Seib (2011) argues that PD can be used to prevent terrorism, acting as a preventative measure. However, he also acknowledges that PD can be used to counter terrorist messages. This is what is commonly known as counter-propaganda, but counter-propaganda does not have to become propaganda itself. In other words, truthfulness and factuality can be used to challenge

propaganda. This may be a major role that international broadcasting continues. Propaganda and counter-propaganda increasingly come from multiple media sources and ecologies of media (Althiede, 1995; van Dijck & Poell, 2013). While our news media constantly reminds us of how terrorist groups like ISIL use social media for persuasion and recruiting, we hear little about how populations subjected to terrorist intimidation can use social media to develop resistance forces against the terrorists (Seib, 2011).

8.5. Persuasion Theory and Social Science

The model proposed here uses theories from communication studies, psychology, and network science to guide its arguments about influence. The USG uses many theories from science and social science to inform its influence operations, whether they be PD or IO. However, they are argue that there are still many uncertainties as to which approaches work best when attempting various processes of political persuasion.

Larson et al. (2009) present a military model of governmental influence. They call it "influence operations" (p. 5). They correctly note that influence is conducted by three major spheres of the USG—DOD, DOS, and the IC. Two theoretical views adopted by these military scholars are diffusion theory and social network analysis. The former provides useful generalizations about opinion leaders and how interpersonal communication can aid the transmission and acceptance of message. The latter informs the influencers about key network members and how ideas move through networks. They also use the persuasion methods advocated by international relations expert Alexander George. George (2003) recommends that influential third parties, working with moderates rather than hardliners, and encouraging constituents to pressure their leaders are effective means of using direct methods of influence in international situations. George's work is called actor-specific because it argues that influence outcomes depend on characteristics of leaders involved, the nature of their conflict, and various situational factors.

Larson et al. (2009) make note of the many theories of persuasion available for operational use by USG influence experts. These theories include Expectancy Value Theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and Cognitive Dissonance Theory. They argue that many of these theories lack sufficient explanation and prediction of actual behavioral change to be as useful as required by influence operations which attitudes, behaviors, and reason have to be tracked across time to measure dynamical changes in relation to message changes. They note that marketing research suffers from the same application problems as some of the persuasion research, observing, for example, that about half of advertising spending may be wasted on efforts that have little or no desired effects (Larson et al., 2009).

The science of influence that concerns these practitioners is how to influence the decisions that are made by target audience, not in labs, but in complex social and political environments. Thus, they develop a model from multiple theoretical sources to attempt a scientific approach to gaining message entry into social environments and specific persuasive effects for those messages. This is akin to campaign persuasion described by persuasion theorists. The communication involved uses multiple levels of progressive effects and many channels to carry key messages. Their observations are consistent with the need in communication studies to use multi-theory, multi-level approaches to message design (Monge & Contractor, 2003)

These experts gravitate toward expectancy utility models of influence. Such models are used by IC for persuasion. Their goals include not only influencing positive audiences but also adversarial ones and doing so in ways that account for the complexities of political contexts. For example, where there are two opposing forces and one involves the U.S., they look for actor variables, conflict variables, and situational variables to determine what kinds of diplomacy may or may not work. Their expectancy utility models include data regarding identification of key groups that can exert influence, ranges of policy outcomes, policy preferences, and estimates of how much groups consider various issues. The science of such modeling comes from research done on political decision making, voting behavior, and game theory. Such a model employed in 2002 predicted the U.S. would win the war on Iraq in 2003, that Saddam Hussein would fall, and that a prolonged insurgency would follow (Kugler, Tammen, & Efird, 2004; Larson, et al., 2009). Snyder (2013) also argues for more reliance on social science when analyzing what might work better in PD.

8.6. Networking and System Roles for International Broadcasting

Advocates of new public diplomacy and social media in strategic influence in general, believe that networking is a strong positive alternative to the message transmission approaches of the past, including international broadcasting. During World War II, and the Cold War, it was possible to assume that other populations were in need of more and more accurate information provided by the U.S. and its allies. However, such an assumption of information deficits today may be problematic due to the rapid and widespread of information through the Internet and its multitude of connection technologies. As Joseph Nye (2004) notes, the challenge of transmitting scarce information is thing of the past. Nye also argues that an abundance of information today can actually produce a scarcity of attention. Strong

critics of public diplomacy today argue that international broadcasting is stuck in past views of influence that were the beginnings of Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America. Robin (2005) makes the crucial point that today the adversaries facing United States are employing open information rather than censorship to confront the U.S. This may suggest the continuous need for both information and counter-information.

Some observers doubt that international broadcasting has a useful role today, in a time far different from the origins of this kind of broadcasting, namely World War II and the Cold War. Wimbash and Portale (2015) argue that the missions among the international broadcasting networks need to be brought into better alignment. Because these networks are part of the USG, they should not try to be like CNN or other government-free sources. Perhaps they can be fair and informative without pretending to be highly objective. Calling the present state of USG international broadcasting "outdated and ineffectual," Wimbash and Portale (2015) argue that the present international broadcasting structure and practices should be terminated (p. 6). Hillary Clinton recently labeled the role of international broadcasting as "defunct" (Wimbash and Portale, 2015, p. 7). Yet, even some of these critics believe that international broadcasting can be reorganized into a useful part of strategic communication and public diplomacy.

Network theory allows us to see how networking can easily trump old schemes for broadcasting. Social media networks can bypass traditional sources of agenda-setting, framing, and control. Traditional broadcasting misses the power of networking with Internet-based connection technologies like smartphone and social media sites.

Both Zaharna and Castells reflect current communication research regarding how people are using horizontal networks to produce both a "connective mindshift" and also new ways of exchanging information and sharing interpretations of events in the world (Zaharna, Fisher, & Arsenault, 2013, p. 1). Recent descriptions of new media and social media platforms indicate network structures but not what people do those structures (Zaharna, 2013). What they accomplish with those structures is central to the model we propose here. Collaboration by using the structures is new public diplomacy and collaborative diplomacy which serve the objectives of both strategic influence and global engagement.

Communication networks online are only one part of human networks. Another part is constituted by offline communication that is also part of the network formations and interactions. Unlike certain systems that work within organizational boundaries, like political systems, networks can cross all kinds of boundaries, including some cultural ones. As Seib (2012) notes "Technology propels broader social networks" (p. 125). Nodes (people) in a social network not only link to each other but can also link to the people in each other's networks. Thus, one network can be a node in another network (Seib, 2012). Scholars of international politics have observed that nation-state sovereignty remains powerful, yet nation-states are having to work together more due to the expansion of global connectivity and international interdependencies (Slaughter, 2004). When these connections work well, nation-states work on common goals. It is in this historical and political context, that international broadcasting must seek some new roles and sustained relevance.

In the World War II and Cold War days of international broadcasting, messages were pretty much point-to-many and served mainly as propaganda or counter-propaganda. Today, we see that international broadcasting can become more interactive by including more interviews and debates which allows more two-way communication on a traditionally one-way platform. With new media, international broadcasting can also incorporate more interactive Internet-based channels like Twitter, which allow feedback rather than transmission alone.

While some scholars are breathless about PD 2.0, others doubt that it has much utility. Snyder (2013) for example, says that the hoped for effects of social and new media on PD effectiveness have not been demonstrated. He argues "The Internet is an extraordinary tool that has made communications far faster and easier...but its utility in reaching across barriers and biding people to on another—the core hard work of public diplomacy—remains feeble and limited" (p. 92). To experts like Snyder, figures about Twitter followers, Facebook likes and Internet traffic give little information about what is most important for national influence. To cement his argument, he notes that President Obama noted that he has less Facebook friends than Sponge Bob. This does not deny the possible benefits of social media for national influence. Snyder (2013) calls attention to the fact that social media platforms facilitate information sharing.

Still, while new media and social media are fashionable, most people in most countries are more likely to obtain their political information from old media like TV. A 2015 Nielsen report on media usage by in the world[14] indicates that 76% of Internet users like being connected anywhere, anytime, as well as 24/7 connectivity (Nielsen, 2015). TV remains popular and online users appear to enjoy using social media to discuss with others what they have viewed on TV (Nielsen, 2015). Apparently, we are in a multiple-screen era as 47% of the respondents said that they are engaged in social media as they watch TV. As for TV itself, the

[14] This study used a sample of 300,000 online users in 60 countries. Retrieved from http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2015-reports/total-audience-report-q1-2015.pdf

study shows that most respondents prefer television sets rather than other devices for viewing video programming.

New interactive roles for international broadcasting are visible the data regarding new media ecologies. Online media like social media can be used to reinforce traditional media transmission. As Snyder (2013) observes "social media, the Internet, and traditional media all reinforce each other" (p. 96). As journalists look to new media for topics and stories, an increasing amount of user-generated content can enter old media agenda-setting processes. Also what is covered in old media can diffuse into social media discussions and debates. Caution of course, is in order, one realizes that only ⅓ of the world's population is actively using the Internet (Snyder, 2013).

8.7. Applying Network Theory to International Broadcasting

Much of what is written about the political uses of new media and social media is anecdotal, backed by little systematic empirical analysis, and often devoid of useful theoretical reasoning. For this reason, we offer some basic principles from network theory that can offer a more sophisticated approach to examining international broadcasting roles in new media ecologies. Some scholars have noted the disconnect between national influence theorists and practitioners. Pamment (2013), for example, observes "Whereas theorists of the new PD have tended to point to the normative potential of dialogical and participatory PD, practitioners tend to be motivated by short-term self-interest, and adopt new PD communization models only when it suits them" (p. 127).

Listing new connection technologies like smartphones and chat apps use for political communication is not theory, nor is it science. Inferring persuasion effects from simple exposure to messages has long been exposed in communication studies as fallacious pursuit. Skeptical musings about social media activism by Malcolm Gladwell or Utopian musings by Clay Shirky are interesting, but not explanatory. In contrast, network theory offers specific principles of communication complexity and organization that bring to focus the role of international broadcasting within systems of information flow and social interactions. Despite differences in conclusions about the exact political effects of new media and social media, there is general agreement that these new technologies provide new and emerging forms creating and sharing information as well as connecting to others (Seo, 2013).

There is nothing extraordinary about online information usage, but online social relationship formation across various national and political boundaries opens up opportunities that may involve political networks that share political viewpoints including some that discourse violence and encourage democracy. To understand more about how social media are associated with behaviors related to democracy, more research is needed about what activities and collaborations are occurring with social media in relation to building or fortifying democracies. Of course, participation is important but participation can be democratic or undemocratic. Topics like Public Diplomacy 2.0 need much more empirical and theoretical analysis. The basic principle of networking and relationships is that people use networks for long-term connections and mutual message exchange. Important aspects of social networks that make them work well to meeting their relational goals are trust, positivity, commitment, and others (Seo, 2013). International broadcasting can enter the complexity of new media systems and ecologies by interconnecting with other channels, both old and new.

Communication networks are complex systems. They cannot be explained by studying single nodes or components. Understanding how a network works required knowledge of the various types of interactivity in the network (Caldarelli & Catanzaro, 2012). Some parts of a network, such as the international broadcasting component of a media network, can grow in relation to design while others such local social and smaller-media networks may growth through unplanned self-organizing processes. Network theory applied to our model can help to identify where the dynamics of network influence emerge in complex systems of multiple channels and dual purposes (influence, relationships).

One of the most useful findings in network theory research is that of preferential attachment. Preferential attachment refers to new nodes in a network (people in a human network) seeking to link to older nodes with lots of network connectivity (Caldarelli & Catanzaro, 2012). The older nodes that keep attracting more and new nodes become what are known as hubs (Caldarelli & Catanzaro, 2012). For old or new media, the more visibility, the more new links that are likely. Sociologists once found that women rated a man in a picture higher when he was surrounded by many other women than when he was alone in the photo. This is an example of the preferential attachment principle (Caldarelli & Catanzaro, 2012).

Research on political communication done online indicates that people tend to sort themselves into preferred networks. One study, for example, showed that users of Democratic and Republican blogs have few connections to each other across party lines (Caldarelli & Catanzaro, 2012). In taking advantage of network study findings, professionals working with international broadcasting may be able to take advantage of what is called social spreading, the tendency of people to mimic the behaviors of their social contacts (Caldarelli & Catanzaro, 2012). Indeed, if smoking and obesity are increased by social networking, it may be expected that political ideas can be as well.

9. Conclusions

When public diplomacy rests on vague notions of soft power and cultural networking, key issues of power, dominance, and manipulation, which affects worldviews of our nation, are continuously glossed or missed. Said differently, appeals to soft power to build more positive American images may be futile when strong negative images are being formed in relation to American use of hard power occurring at the same time. However, this does not mean that soft power obviates the use of hard power, but rather that a dialectic and complex approach to power, communication, and security must guide various forms of strategic influence, including international broadcasting.

Today's communication ecology constitutes what some call a global information sphere or a global communication system. What is done with international broadcasting in this system is not simply a matter of technological challenges, but also challenges of purposes and goals and scholars continue to question how national influence (including public diplomacy) serves national interests and national security concerns. The argument presented here attempts to develop a model linking strategic communication, public diplomacy, and other forms of national influence including strategic influence. The presented model of strategic influence builds in propositions about the need for both assertive and challenging communication and globally engaging networking and shows how international broadcasting can be part of this coordinated effort. Combining or coordinating strategic influence with cultural networking can bring out an alternative to soft diplomacy/soft power and hard diplomacy/hard power dichotomies, and instead offer the alternative of smart power coupled with smart diplomacy. Smart diplomacy uses both strategic influence and networking to serve national security goals as well as goals of international cooperation and global engagement.

The analysis and model construction presented here makes four important contributions to the study and development of national influence efforts. First, we provide some ways of bringing together two domains of national influence that are artificially separated—strategic influence and cultural networking. Second, we use communication theory to produce a new unified model of national influence. Third, we offer the concept of "smart diplomacy" as an analogue to smart power. Fourth, we apply network theory to those aspect of national influence that increasingly involve networking.

As all research projects have limitations, we acknowledge two that appear in our work thus far. First, we have done mainly historical and meta-theoretical analysis with few empirical data sets to support our claims. Second, we have not yet cracked the code of how to stop the endless flow of terminology struggles in the study of SC and PD. Future research should build more on process and less on terminology. Yet determining which process is most important at any point in time will still be debatable.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Mediated Public Diplomacy of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: The Synergistic Use of Terrorism, Social Media and Branding

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Abstract
This study aims to provide an initial theoretical model for understanding and analyzing the mediated public diplomacy strategy of virtual states. It examines the mediated public diplomacy strategy of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its ability to synchronize terrorism tactics with communication strategies to gain media access and exposure, push news frames that serve its interests, and target stakeholders with a dual message using sophisticated branding strategies that resonate with cultural values and help it ultimately recruit supporters and deter foes.

Keywords
Arab media; framing terrorism; ISIS; mediated public diplomacy; mediated terrorism

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1. Introduction

Few public diplomacy researchers have contextualized their studies within rigorous theoretical frameworks (Entman, 2008), and most of the research has largely focused on governments as the sole agents of public diplomacy (Gilboa, 2008). With few exceptions, scholars have mainly examined US public diplomacy efforts, excluded non-state actors from the discussions, and ignored communication theories and models, such as framing and branding, which can help explain public diplomacy strategies (Gilboa, 2008). However, thanks largely to the ubiquity of formerly inaccessible public diplomacy communication tools—particularly digital, mobile and social media—mounting evidence points to non-state political actors using public diplomacy methods and sophisticated communication strategies to achieve their goals of targeting foreign publics. This is especially true for what Seib (2011) refers to as "virtual states" that aspire to establish real states. A case in point is the group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

ISIS's terrorism and communication strategies have lately seized the attention of analysts and researchers, particularly western scholars and journalists who are startled by the group's ability to globally recruit thousands of Muslim women and men from western states, as well as some recent converts to Islam (Hagopian, 2015; Franz, 2015; Neumann, 2015; Schmitt & Sengupta, 2015; Vidino, 2014). International news media routinely report on "ISIS's 'slick' propaganda apparatus, western recruits becoming radicalized through social media, and the U.S. government's sluggishness—or outright ineptitude—in fighting back on the Internet" (Gilsinan, 2015). Long multimedia feature stories with catchy headlines, such as "Jihad and Girl Power: How ISIS Lured 3 London Girls," (Bennhold, 2015) have become commonplace in the daily news digest. Even

western intelligence organizations are worried about ISIS's "extraordinary command of seemingly less lethal weapons: cutting-edge videos, videos shot from drones and multilingual Twitter messages" (The Straits Times, 2014). According to Gartensteing-Ross (2015), key to ISIS's success is its "production of tightly choreographed and slickly produced videos…, its apparently deep understanding of how to catch the Western media's attention, and [its] exceptionally skilled coordinated distribution of its content on platforms like Twitter" (p. 2). The consensus seems to be that ISIS is "winning its propaganda war against the United States and other Western powers" (Gartenstein-Ross, 2015).

However, many of these reports may have missed the point and inadvertently served ISIS's goals of capturing international media attention to further strengthen its brand and reach more recruits. Moreover, the focused attention on ISIS's terrorism and brutality has helped it gain further ground, a characteristic dilemma of covering terrorism acts that highlights the symbiotic relationship between media and terrorism (Viera, 1991; Wilkinson, 1997). Terrorism, unlike other war strategies and criminal acts, is primarily a "means to win media attention and news coverage" (Nacos, 2002), especially by fledgling non-state actors with limited access to dominant or legacy mass media and desperate for publicity, recognition and legitimacy. At the same time, terrorism, as a combat strategy, is essentially a psychological warfare tactic (Ganor, 2004; Schmid, 2005). While ISIS has been using terrorism simultaneously as a psychological warfare method and as part of its innovative public diplomacy mechanism—the latter being the focus of this study—it is difficult to analytically separate the two when it comes ISIS's overall public diplomacy objectives, especially the recruitment of supporters. In fact, ISIS's brutal terrorism images ensure spectacular international media coverage while simultaneously carrying threatening messages that aim to deter its enemies. Meanwhile, ISIS also disseminates messages of recruitment, justification and calls for action. For example, less than 24 hours after ISIS attacked Paris on November 13, 2015, an ISIS-produced recruitment video (released originally in November 2014) resurfaced and circulated widely online. The video featured three French citizens burning their passports and calling on French Muslims to join the fight in Syria/Iraq or conduct attacks inside France (Bora, 2014). ISIS's extremely violent spectacles are also often embedded with recruitment messages specifically targeting nationals attracted by the terrorism act. For instance, videos of ISIS's mass beheadings disproportionately emphasize the diversity of the executioners, "ensuring that the foreign fighters [are] clearly visible and sparking a rush [by the media] to identify them" (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 76). This indicates that, through these beheadings, ISIS primarily aims to recruit foreign supporters, even as it strengthens its ominous and terrifying image.

To be sure, public beheadings have been used by many groups in the past (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 2), but ISIS has raised this heinous act to a new level by integrating it within its propaganda machine, dramatizing it with cutting edge production and storytelling techniques, disseminating it widely using social and mass media, and aligning it effectively with its brand to serve its public diplomacy goals of converting and recruiting foreign supporters—all while simultaneously using it as a psychological warfare tactic to deter enemies. Through this strategy, ISIS has not only taken advantage of the global reach of social media, but has also forced mass media frames that serve its narrative and goals.

For example, when ISIS executed a captured Jordanian Air Force pilot by burning him alive, international news, especially pan-Arab satellite news, widely broadcasted the 22-minute video in which the group used cutting-edge production and video editing techniques and powerful storytelling routines to parade the savage act. But throughout the video were ideological messages promoting ISIS's cause, glorifying and justifying its brutality, and sending chilling threats to those who oppose it. Inadvertently maximizing the reach of ISIS's intended message, news channels—including Al-Jazeera and Fox News (2015)—incessantly played these images but focused primarily on the gruesomeness and brutality of the murderous act and on the group's ability to produce high quality videos. However, the relentless coverage served ISIS's goals by spreading its terror and carrying its intended threats. More importantly, the media attention reconfirmed ISIS's grand "jihadist" narrative and bolstered its justifications.

Seib and Janbek (2011) emphasized that "the modern communication model used by terrorist organizations is audience based, meaning centered, culture dependent and always tied into an ongoing narrative stream that is part of the socio-political context in which these organizations operate" (p. 1). In fact, ISIS's unrestrained cruelty has almost always carried justifications and subscribed to a grand "jihadist" narrative, and its violent messages are balanced with more positive content that shows life as normal and abundant in the newly established Caliphate (or Khilafah)—a state that transcends modern day borders and is ruled by a single political and religious leader according to Islamic law. Those baffled by ISIS's recruitment abilities should realize that the group carefully contextualizes all its acts within widely accepted and legitimized grievances that millions of Arabs and Muslims share (Zafar, 2014), including decades of injustice in Palestine, the brutality of Arab authoritarian puppet regimes propped up by western powers, and the western colonial legacy that has left the region weak, impoverished, underdeveloped and divided, as well as a history of discrimination against minorities living in western countries.

ISIS misses no opportunity to manipulate these grievances and sensationalize symbolic victories

against this western colonial legacy. Take for example the video that dramatized the removing of a small section of the Iraqi-Syrian border, a symbolic act that signaled the re-unification of Muslim lands. Dubbed "the breaking of the borders," the ISIS-produced video captured dramatic moments of military vehicles crossing the borders and saluting teary-eyed local men waving the ISIS flag. Similar messages emphasized the dissolution of the Sykes-Picot borders—a reference to the secret 1916 British-French agreement to divide the Levant into spheres of influence, which led to the modern borders of Middle Eastern states. This act even resonates with many anti-ISIS individuals in the region—including seculars and non-Muslims. Such symbolic victories against deeply rooted historical grievances are further wrapped in a cloak of religious legitimacy, imbuing them with an aura of divine righteousness and a sense of inevitable expansion and victory. During the same campaign, ISIS promised to "break the borders" of Jordan and Lebanon and to free Palestine. It demanded that all Muslims swear allegiance to its leader and help it establish the Caliphate.

Beyond these grand symbolic acts, ISIS uses branding strategies to differentiate itself from the many other extremist Islamic groups and to maximize its political interests and instill its brand values into audiences around the world. Branding and marketing strategies are not only used by corporations and political parties, but also employed by terrorist groups—a matter vastly understudied (Gilboa, 2008). While it might sound absurd that any group would aim to brand itself as a gang of ruthless, thuggish murderers, it is precisely these characteristics combined with the duality of the ISIS brand message that provide the group with immense resources to reach global audiences, recruit foreign citizens, promote its ideology and achievements, inspire fear, and establish legitimacy.

Although seemingly similar to other extremist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS has differentiated itself as a brand using several key strategies. It provided itself as a solution and an alternative—yet familiar and glorified—response to the aforementioned grievances that resonate with young Muslims around the world, particularly through the idea of a strong Caliphate, and it embodied consistent media messages through real-world actions and achievements, and therefore created the illusion of authenticity and unity (Atwan, 2015). Its branding apparatus has worked both at the micro and macro levels: From minute details, such as the notorious Guantanamo orange jumpsuits that many geographically disconnected ISIS subsidiaries force on their captives to create the illusion of a unified group and cohesive action, to the simultaneous waves of social media messages synchronized with waves of military actions on the ground that aim to dictate news frames and command the attention of global news agendas. As a result, ISIS has managed to rapidly beat its competition and recruit an unprecedented number of foreign fighters and supporters, arguably its most startling success (Atwan, 2015; Franz, 2015; Neumann, 2015; Trofimov, 2015; Vidino, 2014).

In totality, ISIS's brutal practices and terrorism strategies synchronized with elaborately produced media content, carefully managed social media campaigns, and a consistent brand strategy have resulted in global media spectacles and omnipresent news coverage of the group. This, in turn, has allowed it to achieve international notoriety within a few years of its debut on the international arena. Undoubtedly, ISIS today is the most infamous terrorist movement of our time and has "instituted transformative changes in strategy messaging, and recruitment" (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 7). Regardless of ISIS's fate, these tactics will probably be utilized by emerging groups, which makes examining such a phenomenon worthwhile.

But this study goes beyond the description of ISIS's "innovative propaganda and unprecedented manipulation of social media, and its recruitment of foreign fighters" (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 7) and aims to offer an initial theoretical model that captures the intricacies of this phenomenon and helps delineate innovative public diplomacy strategies of non-state actors or virtual states (Seib, 2011) by building on Entman's (2008) cascading network activation model and Wolfsfeld's (1997) political contest model and a host of modern branding strategies and digital and social media tactics. More specifically, it proposes a preliminary theoretical model of public diplomacy that takes into consideration the characteristics of virtual states that are willing to use terrorism and are capable of mastering branding strategies, storytelling techniques, and social media methods to effectively achieve their public diplomacy goals, especially the recruitment of foreign publics.

The study claims that ISIS's synergistic use of terrorism, social media, effective storytelling, and branding achieves at least five public diplomacy aims: Gain mainstream media exposure and push advantageous news frames; create the illusion of a powerful unified group; project a favorable image to target global audiences; recruit supporters in foreign states; and portray life under the Caliphate as a sustainable alternative lifestyle to the West and as a response to deeply rooted grievances. While this model simultaneously achieves psychological warfare aims, these are not the main focus of this study.

Therefore, this article attempts to answer the question: What are the characteristics of ISIS's public diplomacy strategy that make it so successful in gaining media exposure, pushing advantageous news frames, reaching global publics and subsequently recruiting foreigners? The exploratory study uses a purposive sample of videos, Tweets, news releases and other social media activities that coincided with major ISIS-instigated events, such as high profile executions and

major military achievements, including the "breaking of the borders" between Syria and Iraq. Most of the analyzed content is produced by Al-Hayat Media Center (2015), ISIS's official media arm, but the analysis also includes nongraphic videos and content produced by other ISIS subsidiaries. While the analysis examined the content of these texts, the focus was also on their timing and synchronous release. The analysis also included the news media coverage of such events and examined original ideological documents produced by ISIS and other Islamist leaders.

2. Mediated Public Diplomacy and Upward Cascading Frames of Terror

Scholars have yet to agree on a unified definition for public diplomacy (Gilboa, 2008). Seib (2012) offered a simple initial definition: the "element of diplomacy that involves a government reaching out to a public, rather than to another government" (p. 64). Wang (2005) noted that public diplomacy aims "to communicate and cultivate on behalf of a nation-state a desired image and reputation, and to build common ground and understanding among nations and peoples" (p. 32). However, most scholars today concede that non-state actors also utilize public diplomacy for their own aims, which may or may not be for "common grounds or understanding" (Gilboa, 2008; Rasmussen, 2009; Seib, 2012). Gilboa (2008) offered an extensive critique of the conflicting, contradictory and confusing definitions of public diplomacy in the literature and attempted to differentiate between public diplomacy and other forms (such as media diplomacy) by focusing on the act of using "the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies" (p. 58). Gilboa also expanded the list of public diplomacy tools to include "media framing, information management, PR, nation branding," among others (p. 58). Consistently but more parsimoniously, Entman (2008) differentiated his theoretical construction of mediated public diplomacy from other public diplomacy theories by focusing on specifically targeted and short-term aims that utilize mass media and the internet "to increase support of a country's specific foreign policies among audiences beyond that country's borders" (p. 88). Entman defined mediated public diplomacy "as the organized attempts by a president and his foreign policy apparatus to exert as much control as possible over the framing of U.S. policy in foreign media." This transparently U.S.-centric definition also assumes a developed democratic state that offers some press freedoms and internal contests over news frames. In this context, Entman extends his cascading network activation model—which explains the manner in which U.S. foreign policy frames are contested and/or accepted in U.S. news coverage—to a mediated public diplomacy model. In the latter model, the likelihood of U.S. frames attaining parity or at least a realistic chance to compete with news frames in foreign countries depends on the degree of cultural congruence between the U.S. and the target country, which makes the model applicable to other states.

But what if the framing originates from a virtual state? Seib (2011) notes that "virtual states are increasingly significant factors for foreign policy strategists who address issues ranging from public diplomacy to counterterrorism" (p. 17). He defines three levels of virtual states: recognized virtual states or the extension of a state through its globally dispersed diaspora; de facto nations or quasi-states that have yet to gain legal recognition, such as Palestine and Kurdistan; and finally "non-state actors such as terrorist organizations that use media-reliant networks to establish themselves as quasi-states" (p. 18). Viewing extremist non-state actors as virtual states helps us better to understand these resilient organizations' military, political, financial, and communication efforts (Seib, 2011). This approach also repositions these groups as more capable actors with the potential to achieve their goals. It circumvents the stereotypical depiction of these extremists as backward psychopaths living in caves and commanding rag-tag gangs of incompetent fanatics, when in reality many of them have achieved military, political and economic feats that surpass the accomplishments of many existing states (Atwan, 2015). More importantly, viewing a group like ISIS as a virtual state allows for a more rational and objective assessment of its mediated public diplomacy strategy, especially in regards to its goals to reach and recruit foreign citizens through intentional news framing efforts that position it as a credible remedy for real grievances that resonate with thousands of potential recruits dispersed around the globe.

However, how can we place these virtual states within Entman's mediated public diplomacy model, especially when their cultures are diametrically incongruent with most state cultures around the world, let alone western democracies? According to Entman's degree of cultural congruence conception, ISIS's initiated news frames will have no chance of competing in this uphill battle with cultures that fundamentally contrast with the essence of such virtual states. But what if the intended news frames are so vivid, dramatic and powerful (Moeller, 2000) that many news institutions have no choice but to include them, at least partially?

Terrorism spectacles can often create such powerful news frames. Scholars have noted the centrality of publicity as the defining characteristic of terrorism (Nacos, 2002) and have metaphorically described media as "terrorism's oxygen" (Seib & Janbek, 2011). What's more, those who use terrorism as a propaganda tactic are well aware of the media's ability to instill fear and anger among a widely distributed audience (Seib & Janbek, 2011). Non-state actors typically cut off from

access to dominant mass media and desperate for publicity and the recognition of their cause often use terrorism to force themselves onto the news agenda and gain such publicity (Nacos, 2002). Given this symbiotic relationship between terrorism and media (Wilkinson, 1997), news coverage of terrorist attacks creates a dilemma for journalists (Viera, 1991). When news institutions cover terrorist attacks, they are simultaneously serving the terrorist attackers by offering them publicity, recognition and legitimacy. And news institutions, particularly in a democratic state, can rarely resist covering terrorism, especially when these attacks target their own compatriots or the interests of their nations. Even if they manage to ignore covering such highly newsworthy events, this often forces the terrorist group to escalate its attacks even further to a point where it's impossible to ignore (Seib & Janbek, 2011).

In this sense, terrorism turns Entman's model on its head by pushing news frames up the cascading network, and the matter becomes more complicated in a media ecology where anyone can produce and disseminate information at a global scale (Hoskins, Awan, &, O'Loughlin, 2012).

3. Political Contest over News Frames and the Duality of the Terror Message in a Networked Arena

Terrorism may ensure temporary media exposure, but it does not necessarily guarantee the perpetrator will win continuous media access, reach the intended audiences, or receive the intended framing, especially for a fledgling virtual state. In his attempt to understand the influence of two unequal sides competing for media exposure, Wolfsfeld (1997) advanced a political contest model to explain how media coverage is shaped and in turn shapes the struggle for control over outcomes. He differentiated between the "struggle over access" and the "struggle over meaning."

When it comes to struggle of over access, Wolfsfeld (1997) noted that political power could be translated into power over the media by increasing a player's "value to the media" and decreasing its "dependence on the media." The value to the media construct is measured by four variables: political/social status, organization/resources, exceptional behavior, and control over political environment—four matters that ISIS has succeeded in elevating, as discussed below. Dependence on the media is measured through political access and need for external support—both matters that seem less important in the current era of social media networks and easy access to communication and production technologies, as delineated in the next section.

On the other hand, shaping the context of the message or the "struggle over meaning" relates to the ability of political antagonists to better understand the media's construction of news frames in order to influence such framing (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Although Wolfsfeld gave the strong political player an advantage over the weak challenger in promoting its own news frames, he attributed part of the latter group's success to its ability to construct an effective message that reverberates with existing news frames. In the post-9/11 era, ISIS has surprisingly been able to capitalize on—rather than be damaged by—the "war on terrorism" frames that dominate much of global news coverage of the Middle East. Wolfsfeld noted that although it is the political player that tries to promote advantageous news frames, the media play an important role in adopting these news frames. Consistently with Entman (2008), Wolfsfeld (1997) explains, "The construction of media frames of conflict is an interactive process in which the press attempts to find a narrative fit between incoming information and existing media frames."

Applying this model to ISIS, it is obvious that the group was able to quickly build political and social status by winning military battles and, as mentioned earlier, playing on the grievances of many Arabs and Muslims (Atwan, 2015). It was also able to bolster its organizational and communication mechanisms and build immense military and financial resources while simultaneously gaining control over its political environment by occupying large swaths of land and controlling lucrative natural resources in Syria and Iraq (Atwan, 2015; Stern & Berger, 2015). ISIS has shown dexterity for propaganda as a means of building credibility and establishing legitimacy, using social media and cyber technology for both recruitment and intimidation purposes (Farwell, 2014). Moreover, ISIS's engagement in exceptional behavior has been unsurpassed recently. Its brutal tactics, including spectacular terrorism, mass killings, public beheadings of soldiers, journalists, and aid workers, and the abduction, rape and selling of women of religious and ethnic minorities are only matched by their willingness to showcase such criminal acts through online videos and social media. ISIS's extreme brutality has even appalled Al-Qaeda's leadership (Mohammed, 2014).

The above has helped ISIS win the struggle over access, but what about the struggle over meaning? For a weaker contender to be in a position to impose even a few news frames, it must be able to initiate the frames and push them up the cascading network, an onerous challenge for a group that does not have any control over dominant mass media. However, online social networks and advances in digital media production tools have offered such weaker groups immense opportunities to craft sophisticated messages and disseminate them (Seib & Janbek, 2011).

In the past, extremist groups that used terrorism to achieve media coverage relied almost completely on mass media gatekeepers to initiate the dissemination of news about their attacks. Today, these groups have the ability to craft, initiate and widely disseminate their information through social media without facing cen-

sorship from mass media. "Most mainstream news organizations impose standards that rule out graphic images from terror attacks, but the perpetrators of such attacks might disseminate those images throughout the Internet… to audiences that are smaller but are considered high-value such as potential recruits" (Seib & Janbek, 2011, p. 11). Although most mainstream media censor and filter content produced by ISIS, even the slightest coverage of ISIS terrorism offers it immense advantage over other competing extremist groups in this networked media arena. Even negative mass media coverage offers ISIS credibility and name-recognition and tips select audiences to seek independent and unfiltered information about it—the first step toward building a relationship with the group, buying into its brand, and falling victim to its recruitment.

What's more, online social networks are highly compatible with terrorist groups' decentralized loose network and horizontal rather than hierarchal structuring, especially for recruitment and radicalization purposes (Seib & Janbek, 2011, p. 20). In this way, ISIS's decentralization has proven to be an asset for its propaganda efforts too. Since thousands of individuals are peddling ISIS's propaganda, it is much harder to counter (Melchior, 2014). Still, for ISIS to be able to push its news frames and content online, it also needs to circumvent the social media filters.

For more than a decade, many extremist groups have engaged in a cyber war in which they've struggled to keep their online content and social media accounts afloat. Each time social media companies find a way to track and eliminate terrorists' content and accounts, the terrorist groups' tactics evolve. Stern and Berger (2015) chronicled the progression of terrorist organizations' early use of individual and official social media accounts, to the use of bots and mobile phone apps that automate the spread of messages, and the most recent leveraging of crowdsourcing strategies. At first, social media services were able to easily dismantle the official accounts that promoted terrorism by banning them. Despite the ability of many organizations to recreate other accounts, it took considerable time for them to rebuild credibility. In some cases, such as al-Shabab—the terrorist organization that attacked Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2013, Twitter kept eliminating their accounts until al-Shabab eventually gave up (Farwell, 2014; Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 144). However, ISIS innovated a reliable strategy. Instead of relying on centralized accounts that could be easily identified and "wacked," ISIS opted for decentralized crowdsourcing, in-house designed apps and bots, and hashtag hacking. In a memo sent to supporters, ISIS described its Twitter crowdsourcing strategy as based on a system of four tiers of supporters: head supporters, diligent supporters, general supporters, and silent supporters (Al-Hamad, n.d.). Each tweeting campaign follows a consistent and predicable pattern:

> "After being posted and authenticated by official ISIS members, a second-tier group of several dozen online activists would retweet the link with a hashtag, then retweet each other's tweets and write new tweets, all using the same hashtag. Other activists would upload the release to multiple platforms, so that it could be found even when Internet providers pulled the content down. [A] third tier…would repeat the process on a larger scale." (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 155)

The strategy creates what is called a Twitter storm, where hundreds of tweets with consistent hashtags at coordinated times "cross the threshold that would trigger trending alerts," thereby exposing such tweet to a wider audience and generating more activity (p. 155).

These Twitter storms are coordinated with spectacular terrorist acts that ensure at least brief mass media attention, but more importantly create a synergy with the online communication campaign. The overall outcome is not only optimal reach and exposure guaranteed by the terrorism spectacles, but also consistent frames reaching various ISIS stakeholders.

With regards to these intended news frames, it is important to recognize that ISIS's global media operation has two key narratives: one for recruitment purposes and to keep the support of its domestic audience, and one for an audience it considers its enemy, although in most cases the same message achieves both aims. For the latter group, ISIS uses terrorism as a psychological warfare tactic. It wants to frighten its foes, deter counterattacks, demoralize enemy fighters, and coerce conversions (Melchior, 2014), an outcome that spectacularly worked during ISIS's invasion of several major Iraqi cities in June 2015 (Beck, 2015). But for its domestic/recruitment audience, ISIS uses terrorism to initiate and push propaganda that in turn reaches recruits and supporters. This is not to say that the messages that target recruits are devoid of blood and violence or that somehow the supporters ignore the violent imagery. On the contrary, much of it contains horrific bloody content, and shows beheadings and mass killings (Trianni & Katz, 2014). However, their violent videos—even the most gruesome executions—offer careful and often lengthy justifications for such acts. For example, the notorious 22-minute video that showcased the execution of a captured Jordanian pilot contained over 15 minutes of content that justified the climactic act of burning him alive, including several minutes showing the captured pilot walking through the rubble of an area he supposedly assaulted, interspersed—through parallel editing techniques—with shots of killed civilians being pulled out from under the leveled buildings.

Therefore, from a communication perspective, ISIS's propagation of terror—its psychological warfare—and the recruitment of supporters to its vision of

building a new society go hand-in-hand, and both sides of this image are often simultaneously propagated (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 113). What's more, ISIS is intentional in its effort to display its own atrocities and violence "to awaken potential recruits to the reality of the jihadis' war and to intimidate enemies by showing the price they would pay for their involvement" (p. 115). In the *Management of Savagery*, a blueprint for jihadists to establish the Caliphate, the pseudonymous author Abu Bakr Naji (2004) advocated the escalation of violence in order to attract supporters and effect polarization between enemies and advocates (p. 46). The second section of the document, entitled *Path to Empowerment*, explicitly explained how to "attract new youth through…conducting operations that attract people's attention" (p. 17). Stern and Berger (2015) noted that the vast distribution of such "violence porn" over the internet has led to:

> "the birth of a media model that has been transformed, expanded, and refined to a science….ISIS has made its name on the marketing of savagery, evolving its message to sell a strange but potent new blend of utopianism and appalling carnage to a worldwide audience…. ISIS is using beheadings as a form of marketing, manipulation, and recruitment, determined to bring the public display of savagery into our lives, trying to instill in us a state of terror." (p. 3)

This "media model" seems to be working efficiently, as the number of western recruits by an extremist Islamic group has been the highest ever recorded in modern history, while the notoriety of ISIS has reached epic proportions on a global scale. The estimated number of global recruits who had joined the fight in Syria and Iraq by early 2015 has exceeded the estimated 20,000 foreigners recruited in the 1980s to fight in the Afghanistan war (Hagopian, 2015; Neumann, 2015). Some reports have indicated that up to 30,000 foreign fighters from 100 countries have joined ISIS in Syria/Iraq since 2011 (Schmitt & Sengupta, 2015). Especially disturbing is that many recruited women and men are relative newcomers to Islamic observance (Trofimov, 2015) and about a quarter are recent converts to Islam (Barrett, 2014). This indicates that the group is gaining appeal well beyond its fundamentalist roots. And the more foreigners it recruits, the broader its recruitment apparatus becomes. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence found that a surprisingly high number of western citizens fighting with ISIS are using social media to recruit even more westerners (Carter, Maher, & Neumann, 2014).

The dual narrative strategy of ISIS means that the struggle over meaning is achieved for both opponents and supporters simultaneously. ISIS's messages can be described as following a winner's narrative that "depends on the group projecting an image of strength and momentum" (Gartenstein-Ross, 2015, p. 3; Stern & Berger, 2015). While most audiences who receive the ISIS news frames via the mass media will be horrified, a select curious minority will pursue further information about the group online. For the opposing audience, ISIS inspires fear, demonstrates strength, and sustains a credible threat. For the curious minority, ISIS activates interest and potential fascination, while social media reframing provides the opportunity to initiate and build a relationship in the hopes of ultimate recruitment.

But in addition to scaring foes, justifying brutal violence, and reaching recruits, ISIS also wants to make "jihad" seem like a sustainable lifestyle. ISIS fighters not only publish grim pictures of themselves with guns and tanks, but also of everyday life—fighters playing football, swimming and enjoying feasts (The Straits Times, 2014). They want to "show that they are the sexiest jihadi group on the block" (Trianni & Katz, 2014). Through effective branding, ISIS has produced high quality promotional material that brands its efforts as manly, cool and rebellious (Breslow, 2014; Melchior, 2014).

4. The Rebellious ISIS Brand: A Response to a Global Existential Crisis

There is little doubt that ISIS possesses a deft command of social media and is more skilled at using it for recruitment than any other group (Atwan, 2015), but ISIS is not the first group of Islamic extremists to use social media to propagate its messages. However, no group thus far has succeeded in marketing itself the way ISIS has, and none have made social media such a central (and public) part of their recruitment efforts (Stern & Berger, 2015). While in the past extremist groups operated in secretive online forums, ISIS has spread its message—in many languages—through tens of thousands of publicly accessible Twitter and Facebook accounts (Melchior, 2014). Using professionally produced videos and propaganda, ISIS reaches young, alienated and disenfranchised Muslims with a cause that they perceive is worthwhile (Trianni & Katz, 2014). Its' media content competes with high quality TV programs and news material produced in the West. ISIS so far has demonstrated that it deeply understands branding and marketing, has first class media producers, and is adept at using the latest technology (Melchior, 2014).

However, no amount of activity on social media would ordinarily make someone leave everything behind and take such radical positions without a compelling narrative. ISIS's strength also comes from its success in branding itself and differentiating its story.

Branding entails imbuing products with an emotional dimension with which people can identify (Gilboa, 2008, p. 67). The contemporary concept of a

product brand, or a consumer's mental image of a product, has widely been implemented for "state brands," with the aim of creating emotional resonance for global publics with the image of a place (Van Ham, 2001). What's more, state-branding strategies could easily be utilized by non-states, including extremist groups (Gilboa, 2008; Wang, 2005). It may seem counterintuitive to think of ISIS as a brand, as most brands we think of have positive associative networks, but what is a modern brand if not a community of "people driven by a common belief system"? People adhere to such brands and attract others who share common beliefs (Hanlon, 2015). Deconstructing the ISIS social code that fuels its brand community helps explain how, even as it creates terror, ISIS also captures imaginations of its target audiences. Perceiving ISIS as a brand reveals that it has all the makings of a successful one: it responds to an ideal, provides a fascinating rebellious and adventurous story, offers a distinct position, and is grounded in real action and proven success.

The most successful brands target powerful ideological contradictions produced by society. People tend to value brands primarily for their cultural and identity-building values: "Through popular culture, society paints a picture of its ideals….People strive for these ideals and experience tensions when how they understand themselves differs from the standards society has set" (Lagace, 2002). Such contradictions create a deep need for new identities and world views that help reconcile these tensions.

Imagine the tensions millions of observant Muslims face on a daily basis, especially those with a conservative religious upbringing living in western societies in a post-9/11 world of rampant discrimination and prejudice against Muslims. From dress codes and customs, to food and worship traditions, to proper relationships and beyond, many struggle to reconcile their ideals with the existing social realities and standards. But regardless of religion, globally many disenfranchised youth today struggle with modernity's moral, economic and social tensions. Giddens (1991) referred to this phenomenon as "personal meaninglessness" or a sense that "life has nothing worthwhile to offer," a fundamental symptom of modernity explained as the "repression of moral questions which day-to-day life poses, but which are denied answers" (p. 9). Emancipatory politics often emerge as responses to such existential crises, and this provides opportunities for new social movements to capitalize on such tensions and provide radical and rebellious alternative world views.

But can we pinpoint the characteristics of such potential recruits? Decades of research on the psychological characteristics and social-economic statuses of those who become terrorists have reached no simple answers and have certainly not offered singular identifying characteristics. According to Stern and Berger (2015), what is required is a combination of internal needs—including perceived benefits of becoming an extremist group member or potential psychological and material benefits—and external factors, which deal with perceptions of momentous world events, especially injustices. In other words, a "mix of political sentiment, religious belief, and personal circumstances is required" (p. 83). The power vacuum that was brought about by the second Iraq war and the Syrian civil war has provided much of the external factors, especially within the greater global "jihadist" narrative, which ISIS has deftly manipulated (Atwan, 2015). But while the internal religious motivations may have provided the necessary attraction to ISIS's cause, these were not sufficient for a person to uproot himself and risk his life to fight for that group. Other internal and external factors would have played an important role, factors such as acceptance and reinforcement from specific recruiters or a person's social network and longstanding grievances and a sense of alienation (Stern & Berger, 2015, p. 82). This study does not argue that online videos and social media have magically somehow persuaded some people to join ISIS, but instead it emphasizes that the capabilities that social media offer—especially the two-way one-on-one interpersonal communication capacity—have played a major role in such recruitments. For example, according to Stern and Berger (2015), the growing number of foreign fighters on social media has helped with the recruitment effort by providing commentary on the conflict and detailed logistical information for potential recruits on how to travel to Syria/Iraq.

It becomes less surprising, therefore, to fathom why some young Muslim westerners, especially women, have been lured by the ultra-conservative ISIS brand—albeit a rebellious brand that responds to their many grievances and reconciles the moral contradictions between their ideals and their current circumstances. Attempting to explain how three young British teenagers left their comfortable middle-class lives in the UK to join ISIS, Bennhold (2015) notes that the young recruits came "from a world in which teenage rebellion is expressed through a radical religiosity that questions everything around them. In this world, the counterculture is conservative. Islam is punk rock. The headscarf is liberating. Beards are sexy." Indeed, the ISIS brand has cleverly responded to their "vulnerabilities, frustrations and dreams, and fill[ed] a void the West has so far failed to address" (Bennhold, 2015) by capitalizing on what Gartenstein-Ross (2015) referred to as the narrative of the broader "jihadist movement." Although Gartenstein-Ross noted that conflating this broader narrative with ISIS's appeal causes observers to overlook important vulnerabilities in ISIS's propaganda strategy, we would argue that ISIS's keen efforts to conflate its propaganda with that of the broader "jihadist movement" itself makes its narrative attractive and persuasive by offering it legitimacy among a broad target audience, even beyond Muslims. Indeed, its nar-

rative serves as the basis of a counterculture for alienated and disenchanted youth of various backgrounds, as evidenced by the converts joining the ranks. What's more, although ISIS's extremist, selective and distorted interpretation of Islam offers the ideological basis of its claims, Islam itself is not the main appeal and drive for such recruits, especially considering most of those who join ISIS are not very knowledgeable about Islam (Barrett & Myers, 2014). "[T]he religion really is a gloss over a much deeper desire for a sense of identity and purpose and belonging, and they want to participate in something….They want some sort of definite direction to take, which can lead, at the same time, to a very personal internal sense of fulfillment" (p. 3).

At the core of ISIS's brand ideal is the Caliphate, a response to the incoherence and tensions many recruits face in their lives in western societies, a response that offers closure, coherence and a resolution to a deep existential crisis. In the absence of the alternatives, fundamentalist ideologies offered a quintessential fit to satisfy just such cravings: "They want to remake the world, and find only jihadism as an alternative ideology because there is nothing else left out there…it is the most obvious counterpoint to the west" (Trofimov, 2015). Beyond closure and coherence, ISIS's ideology also offers a form of significance. By joining the fight, recruits believe they can earn a larger-than-life status as heroes and martyrs and win a place in history. Finally, the Caliphate is meant to represent a world where, in theory, Muslims are re-empowered—politically and economically—and where they will no longer be wronged. They are given back their agency, their power, and their glory. "Like the Communists, [ISIS] promises universal welfare, free medicine and social justice….A lot of young people have the same idea that the capitalism-centric western system is not for them, and that another society is being set up" (Trofimov, 2015). Furthermore, the Caliphate is an alternative world where the Muslim is desired and successful, rather than being alienated and considered a nuisance, a message perpetuated by many rightwing western politicians and the practices of western states in dealing with Muslims, such as the Abu Ghraib scandal, which reconfirmed the notion that the West is hostile not only to Al-Qaeda but to Muslims in general (Spens, 2014).

The ISIS brand strategy is consistent with Sachs's (2012) theory that successful brands have to actually live their story and take action rather than just tell it. However, for that story to stand out in a world of media fatigue and cynicism, it has to also be distinct (Moon, 2010). ISIS offers both real action and a distinct story. For decades, al-Qaeda talked about re-establishing the Caliphate, but it never took action towards that goal, focusing instead on attacking the West. ISIS, on the other hand, did: "By capturing expansive territory and heavy weaponry, and flush with wealth…, ISIS claims to have taken a major first step toward righting what it sees as this ancient wrong, creating a unified Muslim state that will subsume existing nations" (Shane & Hubbard, 2014). This differentiates it from any other extremist Islamic group, and more recruits are lured by its success in creating an Islamic state (Yan, 2015). "Young people look at ISIS and say, 'By gosh, they're doing it!'," and ISIS continues to portrays itself as "restoring idealized eras of earlier Islamic history," an idea that resonates with some Muslims around the globe (Shane & Hubbard, 2014).

Beyond that, the ISIS brand offers the promise of extreme adventure and conquest. ISIS has mastered the art of empowering its adherents and making them the heroes of the story, acting as mentor and guide to them, a crucial step in building a successful following (Sachs, 2012). It seems that the exciting desire to participate in a battle prophesied a century and a half ago is a strong motivator to join ISIS's ranks (Barrett, 2014). Some foreign fighters are youth who are mainly looking for adventure, purpose, and outlets for their violence, and ISIS provides them with just that (Trofimov, 2015). "The group attracts followers yearning for not only religious righteousness but also adventure….And, of course, some people just want to kill—and ISIS welcomes them, too….ISIS operates in urban settings and offers recruits immediate opportunities to fight" (Cronin, 2015). But it does not stop there. ISIS also offers the opportunity for sexual conquest, yet another distinguishing aspect of its brand. In al-Qaeda, there is no place for sex. Subsequently, al-Qaeda's brand is unappealing for young western recruits seeking sexual thrills. For the al-Qaeda recruit, sex comes after marriage (Cronin, 2015). ISIS's sales pitch encourages all forms of conquest, including sexual slavery and rape, and even justifies such horrendous acts as religious duty (Callimachi, 2015).

Stengel (2011) found that the ideals that drive the most successful brands could be grouped into at least one of five fields he calls "fundamental human values" that improve people's lives. These fields are: eliciting joy, enabling connection, evoking pride, inspiring exploration, and impacting society. Analyzing a sample of videos produced by Al-Hayat Media Center (2015) demonstrates how the ISIS brand messages contain all five of these fields. Images that activate experiences of happiness are abundant, from scenes of children running around, laughing and eating cotton candy and ice cream, to adult men in public goofing around and enjoying the outdoors. The videos use common plain folk characters and settings that aim to enable connection, such as local business owners and shoppers in bustling marketplaces. Also common are messages that instill a sense of pride and confidence, including images of markets flowing with abundant produce, businesses operating as usual, running electricity and water, and people going about their daily lives in peace and tranquility. Other messages insinuate support and harmo-

ny, as demonstrated by united shouts that the Caliphate is here to stay. Several shots that emphasize normalcy and exclude any images of death and destruction—accompanied by sound bites confirming that barely any planes are flying above their heads—reconfirm that the Caliphate is not a war zone but a normal livable place. Even western cultural references play a part in the group's brand messages. Take for example some popular hashtags, such as #JihadiFitness and #LittleMujahid (McCoy, 2014). ISIS has even posted pictures of its fighters playing with kittens and eating Nutella. These images communicate the message that, despite it being Islamic, ISIS promotes its people's welfare (Farwell, 2014). This brand image is important in ISIS's recruiting strategy, especially in relation to its potential foreign audiences and supporters who may never actually come into physical contact with fighters or the Caliphate (Gartenstein-Ross, 2015). They will instead judge the group through "the image it has cultivated through social media and online strategic messaging, and on the mainstream media's reporting" about its victories and overall standing (Gartenstein-Ross, 2015).

Despite containing diverse content, the analyzed videos produced by Al-Hayat Media Center had the same ultimate objective: to portray the Caliphate as a functioning, better, and viable alternative to the West. Through that message, ISIS seeks to illustrate "jihad" as a sustainable lifestyle. Indeed, in most videos, life in the Caliphate seems to be completely normal, abundant, prosperous and secure, an image that could be pursued as the public diplomacy goal of any country.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the mediated public diplomacy strategies of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It highlighted the group's ability to implement sophisticated public diplomacy methods through a combination of terrorism tactics synchronized with communication strategies to gain media access and exposure, push news frames that serve its interests, and continually produce and disseminate a consistent brand and target defined stakeholders with a dual message using advanced branding strategies that resonate with cultural values and help it ultimately recruit supporters and deter opponents. By viewing ISIS as a virtual state (Seib, 2011) and building on the theoretical models of Entman (2008) and Wolfsfeld (1997) to understand how the group is able to gain media exposure and push news frames up the cascading network through the synchronized use of terrorism and a sophisticated branding and social media marketing strategy built on a dual message that simultaneously deters perceived opponents and attracts potential supporters, one can better examine and understand its powerful and successful mediated public diplomacy strategy. While this study was an initial step towards advancing a theoretical model for mediated public diplomacy of virtual states, future research will require deeper empirical examination and a more complex methodological design in order to build an elaborate theoretical model to address this matter.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Target Gutahuka: The UN's Strategic Information Intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Abstract
This paper examines the nature and impacts of two information intervention radio programmes broadcast on Radio Okapi—the radio service of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A matched randomization technique was used to assign Rwandan Hutus and Congolese autochthons in South Kivu to listen to either of the two programmes within their naturalistic contexts for 13 months. At the end of the treatment, participants' perceptions of barriers to peace; descriptive and prescriptive interventions; victimhood and villainity; opportunities for personal development and civic engagement; and knowledge of repatriation processes were assessed in 16 focus groups across four contexts. The study concludes that international media intervention programmes that provide robust information and a platform for objective analyses within a multiple narrative and participatory framework can enhance greater engagement with nascent democratic reforms, positive perception of long term opportunities for personal development and empathy with the ethnic Other.

Keywords
demobilisation; dialogue entre Congolais; disarmament; Gutahuka; repatriation

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1. Introduction

The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) officially ended in 2002, but it has remained one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. 5.4 million people have died from war–related causes since 1998 (IRC, 2008), representing about 10% of the country's population, and two million people have been displaced (UNHCR, 2009). The involvement of combatants from neighbouring countries, particularly Rwanda makes the DRC conflict highly complex and intractable (Afoaku, 2002; Autesserre, 2006; Crises Group, 2009; Feeley & Thomas-Jensen, 2008; Nest, Francois, & Kisangani, 2006; Prunier, 2009; Swarbrick, 2004; Thakur, 2007; Turner, 2007).

Though the Rwandan conflict itself ended in 1994, it continued in the DRC when the Hutu genocidaires along with millions of Rwandan refugees crossed the border into the DRC. Despite the presence of some 20,000 UN peacekeepers, Rwandan Hutu militants continue to operate in the eastern region of the DRC principally under the banner of *Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda* or Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). There has also been the Rwandan Tutsi-led M23 armed group operating in North Kivu province. The UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC)[1] is one of the world's largest UN Missions and the

[1] On May 28 2010 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1925 (2010) to extend the mandate of MONUC. Effective July 1 2010, Resolution 1925, renamed the Mission as the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO). Still acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, MONUSCO places more emphasis on supporting and stabilising the DRC's military, law enforcement and justice institutions and consolidating the peace. Throughout this paper however, the old acronym MONUC is used to refer to the UN Mission in the DRC.

most expensive. An essential element of MONUC's Public Information Operations (PIO) is Radio Okapi. Radio is easily accessible and is a very popular medium in the DRC. A rich oral tradition, low literacy rates, poor infrastructure (which limit the growth of other media such as television, newspapers and internet) are some of the factors that make radio the main communication medium in the DRC. These factors informed the focus of this research on the radio component of the UN Mission's PIO.

Moreover, the UN's Radio Okapi is unique in many ways. It is structurally and operationally different from previous UN Mission radio projects. Its operation is "outsourced" to a Swiss-based NGO—Hirondelle Foundation. While previous UN Mission radio stations were directly operated by the Mission's Public Information Department, Radio Okapi is operated by Hirondelle Foundation but under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of MONUC. Interestingly, Radio Okapi sets its own news and information agenda.

Hirondelle Foundation has a policy of providing only objective and impartial information in crises areas. Contemporary understanding of the extent to which "objective information" can change prejudiced perceptions of the Other and violent behaviour is vague. Also limited is our understanding of what works in terms of the content of Information Intervention: the approach that provides objective information without any embellishments or the psyops approach broadly defined as planned operations to "convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence emotions, motives, objective reasoning" with the intention of inducing or reinforcing foreign attitudes and behaviour favourable to the originator's objectives (Joint Publications, 2010).

Within the UN itself there are contesting narratives and a seeming ambivalence over what approach works during peace support operations in crises states. Jean-Marie Etter, Hirondelle Foundation's President, believes that "in the long run, in areas of violent conflict, an informative approach—which may have fewer results in the short term, but will be more solid and will build confidence in the long term—will eventually be preferred," (Domeniconi, 2004, p. 45). There has not been any empirical research on the ground to prove what approach works over time. Moreover, while there have been increasing interests on the role of the media in transforming conflicts in crises states, impacts of actual media intervention activities in ongoing conflicts have remained under-studied. The purpose of this study is to fill the gaps. It is a multi-method qualitative study—combining participatory, quasi-experimental and field based focus group methods. The study examines the nature and impacts of two intervention radio programmes broadcast on Radio Okapi. To build a clear picture of the ideological leanings of both organisations, a series of interviews were conducted with leaders of Hirondelle Foundation and MONUC's Public Information Staff between November 2006 and March 2010. The interviews were unstructured. They were controlled dialogues between the author and the interviewees—in some cases face to face, in others by phone and in some other cases online using either Skype or email exchanges. Comments from the interviews and online exchanges provided a sound basis for defining and streamlining the core ideological debates of the study.

2. The Significance of this Research

This study is a reminder that radio as a communication medium is still a powerful tool of mass communication and indeed worthy of continued research. In an era where the Internet is the main buzz–word, researchers and research funders have been understandably more attracted to new media and Internet communications. With increasing interest and research funding going the way of online deliberation spaces, radio research is once again threatened with a return to the doghouse, to borrow Hilmes', (2002, p. 8) parody.

The study of radio has not been particularly attractive to 21st century media scholars and indeed funders. The disinterest dates back a bit more. In the past four decades, the study of popular culture has bloomed. But this bloom has unfortunately excluded Radio. Michele Hilmes attributes what she calls the negative "academic legitimation" of radio since the 1960s to the medium's "cultural marginality" and "low brow roots" (2002, p. 6). Indeed, since the late 1960s Radio has increasingly been considered as low profile and inferior to other more technologically enhanced media such as Television. By the 1970s, as Hilmes has noted, industrially, culturally, historiographically, and theoretically, Radio had been rendered invisible by the temper of the times. But Radio's ostensible degeneration into a "vast cultural wasteland" (Squier, 2003, p. 1), did not apparently affect international radio because it actually bloomed during the cold war as a tool for propaganda and public diplomacy. During the cold war, Radio Free Europe, the VOA, the BBC and other International broadcasters expanded and took on more strategic importance in the international affairs departments of sponsor nations. Rawnsley has substantially filled the gaps on the use of radio as a propaganda tool during the cold war (1999, 1996).

As a tool for psyops, public and cultural diplomacy, "surrogate radio" continues to occupy the attention of key Western Governments and their intelligence agencies in borderlands including Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, etc. This work calls to mind that in Africa, beyond the realms of Western Governments' use of radio for strategic purposes, radio remains the most popular medium of communication—used frequently by the UN,

NGOs and Governments to reach citizens. Its misuse during the Rwandan genocide demonstrates its potentials. A strong oral tradition, a social and cultural fondness for storytelling, and devotion to radio borne out of absence of other means of mass communication, makes radio a potentially powerful tool for transforming conflicts not only in sub–Saharan Africa but also in North Africa and the Middle East.

Moreover, radio impels the Pan–African philosophy of *Ubuntu*—inspiring sharing, commonality and communitarianism. Group listenerships to radio in rural areas provide a meeting point for exchange of stories and affinity, but more importantly a key anchor-point for sharing—sharing not only the radio receiver and the listening processes, but also meaning. This study draws attention to this reality about Africa and harps on the imperatives of designing Information Intervention approaches that leverage on these elements. The work argues that the approach in Africa has to depart from the Western perception of an individualised radio audience or "listener". Ethnographic observation of radio listeners in Uvira in South Kivu province of eastern DRC showed that radio audiences are not aggregates of individuals but are social entities bound together by shared histories, cultural ties and local epistemes. Media messages are consumed not individually, but collectively. Meaning is collectively negotiated and shared among culturally inter–dependent beings. This has far–reaching implications on the design and implementation of information contents for audiences in rural Africa. Current Western libertarian approach of seeking to achieve psychological impacts on "individuals" will have to give way to a more interactive approach aimed at achieving social impacts.

3. Background to the UN's Information Intervention in the DRC

It is necessary to emphasise the importance of the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRRR) programme to the transformation of the DRC conflict. It is critical to our understanding of conflict transformation processes in the DRC because the presence of thousands of armed militia from neighbouring Rwanda has been the main reason for the endurance of the DRC conflict. Indeed, the presence of foreign armed groups is damaging to internal security in the DRC. It also represents a standing obstacle to the improvement and normalisation of relations between the DRC and its neighbours. (Swarbrick, 2004). The objective of the DDRRR programme is to solve this problem. The central purpose of MONUC's Mission after the successful conduct of general elections in 2006 was how to control the situation in the eastern DRC where most of the Rwandan Hutu FDLR elements are based. Moreover, other militant groups refused to disarm while the FDLR exists.

After the Lusaka ceasefire agreement was signed with belligerent forces in the DRC in 1999, MONUC was mandated by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to enforce the agreement. Paragraph 8.2.2 of the Lusaka Agreement had envisaged that the UN Mission would be involved in "tracking down and disarming armed groups…working out such measures, persuasive or coercive, as are appropriate for the attainment of the objectives of disarming, assembling, repatriation and re–integration into society of members of the armed groups" (1999, para. 8.2.2e). MONUC however chose to principally pursue the "persuasive" rather than the "coercive" element of the agreement particularly regarding the disarmament and repatriation of FDLR elements in eastern DRC. According to Swarbrick (2004) this was the point where MONUC differed significantly in its approach to DDRRR from what was envisaged by the Lusaka agreement.

A hint to the UN's DDRRR approach was given in the July 15 1999 Report of the Secretary General on the UN Preliminary Deployment in the DRC. The report noted that "a purely military solution appears to be impossible, if only because the forces most able and willing to impose a military solution have clearly failed to do so" (para. 22). Instead of military engagement, the Secretary General noted the need for the establishment of a well-funded, well planned and long term programme of disarmament and demobilisation, but emphasised the need for a robust public information component—"the benefits of such a programme will need to be widely publicised in order to attract the fighters now under arms" (para. 24). This has underlined the UN's strategic communications approach to DDRRR in the DRC.

The radio magazine programme, *Gutahuka* ("go back home" in Kinyarwanda) was created specifically for the purpose of persuading ethnic Hutu combatants to voluntarily surrender and join the DDRRR process. MONUC's Spokesman, Madnodje Mounoubai said the founding purpose of *Gutahuka wa*s to speak to "individual combatants" of the FDLR in particular and Rwandan Hutus in the DRC in general to lay down their arms and return home. According to him, *Gutahuka* is an "alternative to military pressure" and was designed to fulfil the DDRRR mandate of the mission. He said *Gutahuka* is "a response to the difficulties to reach the FDLR combatants and an attempt to get information to non-combatants…to provide them with information on how they can go back to their country on a voluntary basis" (M. Mounoubai, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

It is important to point out that whereas other programmes on Radio Okapi are produced by Hirondelle Foundation staff, *Gutahuka* on the other hand is produced directly by MONUC. It is broadcast once a day in the early hours, Monday to Saturday. *Gutahuka* specifically targets Rwandan Hutus in Eastern DRC and seeks to convince them, particularly FDLR combatants, to re-

turn to Rwanda. The programme can be roughly grouped into three segments. The first explains the DDRRR process and the second segment features "true stories" of ex-combatants who have returned to Rwanda. Families of ex-combatants as well as former FDLR Commanders that have returned are also interviewed in the second segment. Usually they talk of conditions in the Rwandan homeland and urge fighters to set aside their fear and return. The third segment is the call by the narrator on combatants to take up MONUC's offer of repatriation while it is still possible. *Gutahuka* conveys three levels of normative appeals: Descriptive Norms, Injunctive Norms[2] and Subjective Norms. As shown in Figure 2, the programme also explains the DDRRR processes and the financial benefits involved for returnees depending on their status.

By interviewing ex-combatants and their extended family members, perceived norms are tied to the group identity of not only the FDLR network but also the Hutu ethnic group, to appeal as it were, to their sense of oneness, not only as a rebel network but also as a family. In every edition of *Gutahuka,* MONUC fulfils Rimal and Real's definition of descriptive norms in seeking to influence perception about "individuals' beliefs about how widespread a particular behaviour is among their referent others" (2003, p. 185). On the other hand, Hirondelle Foundation, as earlier pointed out, prefers an approach that provides objective information and rigorous debates among contending factions, so that audiences can make their own decisions (Jacob, 2010, 2015).

This study maps the discourses and impacts of the contending ideologies through the prism of two radio programmes that represent the two ideological leanings. The two intervention radio programmes studied in this research are: *Dialogue entre Congolais* (Dialogue between Congolese) and *Gutahuka*. *Dialogue entre Congolais* (*Dialogue* hereafter) is a political news–magazine programme broadcast twice daily, Monday to Friday, on Radio Okapi. It explains the peace process and gives opportunities to belligerents to discuss their grievances openly. It is produced by Hirondelle Foundation's Radio Okapi staff. It can be argued that the communication philosophies or ideologies of MONUC and Hirondelle Foundation are represented and reproduced in *Gutahuka* and *Dialogue* respectively.

4. Methodology

In assessing the nature of impacts of the two programmes, "influentials" among Congolese autochthons and Rwandan Hutus across four towns in South Kivu, eastern DRC (Fizi, Mwenga, Uvira and Walungu) were selected using a refinement of Eric Nisbet's (2006) engagement model of opinion leadership. From the influentials' pool, a matched randomization technique was used to assign Hutus and autochthons in South Kivu to listen to either one of the two radio programmes within their naturalistic contexts for a period of 13 months. Autochthon control groups listened to *Gutahuka* while Hutu control groups listened to *Dialogue*. Peer researchers, selected from the participants were trained to monitor listenership for the entire period. At the end of the treatment, outcomes of perceptions of barriers to peace; perceptions of descriptive and prescriptive interventions; perceptions of victimhood and villainity; perceptions of opportunities for personal development and civic engagement; attitudes toward members of other ethnic groups as well as knowledge of MONUC's DDRRR processes were assessed in a total of 16 focus groups moderated and recorded by the peer researchers. The peer researchers were fully trained for their responsibilities.

Focus group membership was restricted to a maximum of 10 participants to avoid overcrowding. A matched randomization technique was used to assign participants to focus groups based on sex, age, combat status and civic status. This technique helped to reduce inter-group heterogeneity. Tables 1 and 2 show the demographic characteristics of participants at the focus groups in the two networks.

Focus group comments (which were recorded verbatim) were analysed and integrated to show patterns and inter-relationships across contexts and networks and subsequently interpreted within the larger structure of the research enquiry.

This methodological approach was chosen because of lessons learned from the limitations of most media influence studies very aptly outlined by McGuire (1986) to include no clear measurement of exposure to the media programme and poor or no clear measurement of a causal relationship between the programme and the outcome. To transcend these limitations, a laboratory-based approach seems ideal. However, while laboratory–based experiments with their implicit controls and artificiality can precisely map causal impacts, they lack the ability to compensate for the psychodynamic variables that underlie the actions of combatants and the interactions between militants and/or villains and victims in a conflict situation. Moreover, variables of the "real world situation" such as the social semiotics of the conflict itself, including media reports and the knowledge thereof; rumours and other socially transmitted information; emotions of fear, guilt, anger, trauma and sadness due to personal loss or even rape are ignored in laboratory studies. Paluck (2007) who has used a similar approach combining field observational and experimental methods writes that "artificiality is particularly damaging in media impact because media consumption is truly the sum of all its social and phenomenological parts" (p. 24). On the other hand, while field–based studies using observational, focus group or

[2] Injunctive norms describe consequences for non-compliance with a prescribed form of behaviour.

Table 1. Demography of Hutu ethnic network Focus Group discussants.

Contexts	Uvira		Walungu		Fizi		Mwenga	
Programme	G	D	G	D	G	D	G	D
Mean Age	32	33	38	36	32	31	32	33
Sex (% women)	30	30	30	30	30	30	40	30
Combat Status (% ex-combatants)	40	40	20	20	50	50	30	30
Civic Status (% Married/Co-habiting	30	30	20	20	20	20	30	30
Cellule Listenership Compliance (%)*	100	98	98	97	98	96	95	94
N	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Notes: Sample demonstrating balance between listening groups in Hutu Groups. G = Gutahuka listening cellule; D=Dialogue listening cellule. *Cellule Listenership Compliance (CLC) percentages were derived from participants' recordings of listenership in their monthly log-book returns in each cellule.

Table 2. Demography of autochthon network Focus Group discussants.

Contexts	Uvira		Walungu		Fizi		Mwenga	
Programme	G	D	G	D	G	D	G	D
Mean Age	43	42	33	33	33	34	32	31
Sex (% women)	30	30	30	40	30	40	40	40
Combat Status (% ex-combatants)	0	0	30	30	20	20	10	10
Civic Status (% Married/co-habiting)	80	80	50	50	60	60	70	70
Cellule Listenership Compliance (%)*	91	97	80	87	86	90	76	78
N	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Notes: Sample demonstrating balance between listening groups in Autochthon Groups. G = Gutahuka listening cellule; D = Dialogue listening cellule. *Cellule Listenership Compliance (CLC) percentages were derived from participants' recordings of listenership in their monthly log-book returns in each cellule.

interview techniques parade the real world situation, they are restricted in terms of their competence in mapping out clear causal pathways that link exposure with response. Also, it is usually based on self–reported exposure which may not be accurate. Moreover, one of the setbacks with most media impact researches, despite whatever technique used, is the tenure of exposure. Such studies are usually too brief to capture the entire process of exposure. The duration and/or repetition of the media programme are rarely captured whereas most media intervention programmes run over a long period of time. *Gutahuka* and *Dialogue* for instance have been broadcasting for over seven years. This length of time as Paluck (2007, 2009) has suggested can introduce reinforcements and familiarity effects on the relationship between presenter and listener thus engendering feelings of loyalty and emotional attachment to the programme. It can also create apathy or even resentment.

Furthermore, because of the conflict situation in the DRC (involving clandestine and guerrilla armed groups) and the peculiar foreigner/indigene crises in South Kivu, a research methodology that draws maximally on ethnic membership is imperative. A participatory approach involving the communities researched offered a unique opportunity for monitoring listenership in the first instance; for frankness and reflexive engagement with questions during focus group discus-

sions within a setting that is inartificial and uninterrupted by "outsiders". Moreover, focus group moderation by trained peer researchers recreated contextually organic social conversations which were critical to the research.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Perception of Prescriptive Transformations in Dialogue Listening Groups

When asked about their beliefs concerning what needed to be done to achieve peace and development in their communities in particular and the country in general, an interesting pattern emerged in *Dialogue* groups' comments across the two ethnic networks. The comments reflected the salient themes in the programme *Dialogue*. Participants did not express specific ways and means through which sustainable conflict transformation (or peace and development) can be achieved in their communities or in the region but in all contexts they talked about structural elements which they linked to poor leadership both at regional and national levels. In two of the contexts, (Uvira and Mwenga) corruption was specifically mentioned as one of the main impediments to conflict transformation—a salient topic on *Dialogue*. This pattern significantly departs from the control group where participants across contexts mostly talked about relational issues of *autochthony* and *allochthony* (foreigner). Basically, autochthon *Gutahuka* listeners reasoned that if foreigners (primarily Rwandan Hutus) left the country, there would be peace—reflecting the underlying meaning of *Gutahuka's* "go back home" message.

The emerging implication here is that *Dialogue* participants perceived prescriptive transformations along the trajectory of structural interventions not necessarily within the rubric of immediate issue or relational concerns such as presence of foreigners, but on the imperatives of credible political leadership. While immediate issue concerns are by no means less important or less urgent, an understanding of the imperatives of credible leadership in transforming the problems of the DRC suggests a collective consciousness of the role of a legitimate or democratically elected government in transforming deep–seated socio-political issues. This is important in a country that has seen over 40 years of corrupt authoritarian government out of some 55 years of independence. It suggests a new appreciation of values of good governance and accountability. The sharp contrasts between their beliefs and those of their contemporaries and in some cases neighbours and close Others that listened to *Gutahuka* during the period validates the influence of the programmes on participants' opinions regarding issues that concerned them and their normative beliefs about transformation.

5.2. Engagement with New Democratic Values and Reforms in Dialogue Groups

In addition to patterns of more factual, logical and objective expressions of perceptions of barriers to peace and a deeper understanding of structural conflict transformation factors, perception of civic engagement was investigated in relation to *Gutahuka* control groups. Across the two ethnic networks, *Dialogue* participants' comments showed a greater sense of responsibility and ownership of democratic reforms. When commenting on their engagement with community self–help projects and new democratic processes they used words such as "my responsibility" (Walungu Group), "an obligation" (Fizi Group), "our community" (Mwenga). There was also evidence of participants' involvement in civic duties and other active expressions of civic engagement during the course of the programme. For example in Walungu, an autochthon participant said he has started calling-in during phone-in programmes on the local radio although he said it was expensive to make the phone calls, but added "If I don't do it who would? We can't leave it and hope that somehow those up there would know what we think" (Walungu Group). In Uvira another autochthon *Dialogue* participant said he has recently (during the course of the listenership) taken part in a conflict resolution meeting organised by MONUC's Joint Protection Teams (JPTs) in Uvira where he had opportunity to talk about communal issues of interest and wished there were more of such opportunities. Also, a *Dialogue* participant in Fizi said his church is involved in supporting de–mining activities, but although he is not directly involved since it is not in his hometown, he believed it was an obligation to take part in community efforts such as building schools, maternal care and birth centres among others. Across all contexts and networks, *Dialogue* participants perceived themselves as stakeholders in their society's wellbeing. Another interesting pattern is that participants in *Dialogue* groups all linked opportunities for personal development to stability, peace and development in their region. Expressions used included: "if there are roads and security…" (Uvira group); "if things are stable…" (Fizi group); "security on the roads…" (Walungu group) and "there has to be peace first" (Mwenga group).

Another pattern noticed across contexts among the *Dialogue* participants was the perception of civic engagement as needful. They also had a positive perception of opportunities for their personal development in the DRC as well as a sense of optimism or hope for a better future for their communities. This cannot be said to be the case with *Gutahuka* listeners who in most contexts were more inclined towards short-term needs such as "food in the stomach" (Walungu group), "worried about my own stomach" (Fizi group) etc. The implication is that *Dialogue* listeners linked attainment

of their personal development goals with a stable society in the DRC. Stability is constructed within frames of not only absence of war, but also infrastructural development—roads, bridges as well as general security. This explains their perception of themselves as stakeholders in their community's wellbeing. Patterns in beliefs expressed in *Gutahuka* groups in both networks were fundamentally different. Participants did not talk about any civic engagement activity there were involved in. Their comments suggested that they perceived politicians as being responsible for the wellbeing of their community and that the political system offered no opportunities for civic engagement.

Expressions of normative beliefs about new democratic values and descriptive interventions by Hutu *Dialogue* listeners show a pattern that matches those of autochthon listeners. In their discussion of descriptive interventions, Hutu *Dialogue* listeners firstly, displayed very good knowledge of ongoing intervention efforts of the DRC government (although they believed the interventions were weak and half–hearted); secondly there was a pattern of Hutu *Dialogue* listeners claiming a stake or ownership of transformation processes. Although they all acknowledged that political participation for them is limited by their identity and restricted citizenship, they were as optimistic as the autochthon *Dialogue* groups of the DRC government's ability to fix the issues if things were done right. Unlike *Gutahuka* listeners across both networks, Hutu *Dialogue* listeners across contexts saw intervention activities as being within the trajectory of the DRC's elected government. This supports patterns observed among Autochthon listeners who saw credible political leadership as an essential element in conflict transformation processes. Among both autochthon and Hutu *Dialogue* listeners there is a strong pattern of engagement, a sense of ownership and relatively greater factual, logical and objective expression of issues.

Moreover, autochthon *Dialogue* listeners expressed a more favourable attitude toward Rwandan Hutus than did autochthon *Gutahuka* listeners. When asked about what they imagined their relationship with the ethnic Other would be in the future, *Dialogue* participants talked mostly about the impediment of Citizenship. Participants said there was no systematic framework and transparency of regulations for attaining citizenship which has been used as a political tool by successive governments in the DRC. There was the underlying reasoning among *Dialogue* participants across contexts that when crises of citizenship are resolved, communities could then decide to forge ahead together as a people.

The most revealing expressions of autochthon *Dialogue* participants' attitude toward Hutus was in their comments about who they felt were the worst victims of the conflicts. There was an interesting pattern across all contexts of autochthon *Dialogue* listenership groups. All groups talked about Hutu refugees as being among the worst victims of the conflict. The empathy with Hutus was strong among participants and evident in their tone. For example in Fizi, a participant said "It is hard not to feel for them (Hutus)…haunted and hated by everyone". In Uvira, a participant expressed a view that is very rarely expressed among non-Hutus: "genocide has been committed against them (Hutus) but everyone is talking about Tutsi genocide". In Walungu, participants said no one can ever tell what Hutus have gone through since they fled Rwanda in 1994. These sentiments were in contrast with those expressed by the control *Gutahuka* listening groups. In the autochthon *Gutahuka* groups, there was no mention of Hutus as victims of the conflict at all. But women (mainly pregnant women) were identified as the worst victims. Also, with exceptions in Fizi, autochthon *Gutahuka* listeners across all contexts wanted all Rwandans—both Hutus and Tutsis to leave. When asked to talk about their imagination of future relationships with other ethnic groups, again except in Fizi, *Gutuhuka* listeners said they did not think it would ever be possible for all ethnic groups to integrate and live together peacefully as a community. They also said it would not be possible to have a unified army involving all the ethnic groups because they thought it would be difficult to get all the groups to transcend their personal interests and that of their ethnic groups to work together within a unified Congolese security force. Again there was an exception in Fizi on this. Overall, participants across listening groups in Fizi felt far more comfortable with the ethnic Other than participants in the other contexts. This is possibly because in Fizi, there has been a long history of mutually beneficial relationships between Hutus and autochthons not only in inter–marriage but also in trade. For years, both groups have lived side by side with each other and conflicts have been very minimal between them. Indeed, in Fizi, MONUC does not even have the kind of robust presence such as Joint Protection Teams and Company Operational Bases (COBs) deployment like they do in the other towns. This illustrates the relative calm in the territory when compared with the other towns.

Among Congolese autochthons there is a strongly noticeable pattern of contrasts between both listening groups' perceptions of Hutus. There is a pattern of empathy and constructive engagement evident in *Dialogue* listeners' attitude towards not only Hutus but also the ethnic Other in general, but most noticeably among the Hutus. Perceptions of Hutus as victims of the conflict reflect a sense of empathy with the Hutu refugees in their communities. Granted, expressions of sympathy may not necessarily reflect actual sympathetic attitude of listeners toward Hutus, but they are suggestive of what they think about the Hutus which in turn inform attitude. Furthermore, the discussion approach used in the focus groups was designed to assess attitudes through cognitive processes and not direct

questioning. So participants did not (in this case) have to answer direct attitude measurement questions such as "what do you think of the Hutu?" But they had the latitude to talk about whoever they felt were affected or afflicted most by the DRC war. A pattern in answers across contexts suggest a linkage between the programme listened to and perceptions of victimhood in general and victims of the conflict in particular. *Dialogue* participants expressed the need for a process where Hutus can access Congolese citizenship. Citizenship in the DRC is a highly politically contested issue. This is because it confers various rights, benefits and entitlements including land ownership. So this further shows that they have a positive attitude toward Hutus in contrast to *Gutahuka* listeners who believed integration both at the community level and within the army was impossible.

Arguably, *Dialogue* can positively influence regular autochthon listeners' attitude toward Rwandan Hutus. This is attributable to the transactional nature of the programme. The programme is based on a model that illustrates mass communication as a horizontal or transactional process. By creating a platform for rigorous debates of key issues that confront the community as a whole, the programme encourages audiences to participate in evaluating the current situation, to perceive the current situation based on the different positions debated and to interpret the debates in a way that fits their own peculiar episteme. This interpretation can either lead to convergence or divergence within the communication network (please see Kincaid 1993; Rogers, 1995; Rogers & Kincaid, 1981).

Indeed, *Dialogue* represents a transactional media regime that draws on communitarian media values. It seeks to collectively negotiate social construction of the common good and engages Radio Okapi as a member of the community—constantly debating and exploring the common good. Regular exposure of community members to *Dialogue* created a new reality or new sets of mediated norms among listeners, built not necessarily on the historically dysfunctional patterns of social relations or solely on the subjective norms of political elites or guerrilla entrepreneurs, but on a reconditioning of objective and subjective norms using the tools of credible and interactive media. Objective norms are ongoing events that constitute the bases or backdrop for discussions in *Dialogue*. Subjective norms purveyed by elites are refined into a more transactional mode—involving debates on the issues rather than the top-down peddling of subjective norms in *Gutahuka.* These have implications on contemporary debates on the normative role of the media particularly in crises societies, and its influence on beliefs and attitudes toward the Other.

5.3. Process of Perception Change in Dialogue Groups

It is very important to explore in greater detail how *Dialogue* influenced perceptions and attitudes of listeners so significantly. The paper will argue that this was achieved through a transactional process of exposure to information about the current situation, ideation, interpretation and (re) evaluation of ongoing events or current situation—to achieve changes in personal perceptions.

5.3.1. Exposure to Current Situation

By first talking about the event to create a background to the debates, *Dialogue* exposed listeners to the *objective reality* of ongoing events at local, national and regional levels (or current situation) with its implicit inter-relationships. Participants were also directly exposed to some of the events through either the media or during their daily lives.

5.3.2. Ideation

Ideation involves evolution of knowledge of the issues in contention as selected, clarified and discussed in *Dialogue*. It connotes a knowledge process that evolves along with exposure to ongoing events, clarification, discussion and personal evaluation of the issues debated on *Dialogue.* Ideation was achieved at three transactional levels—first direct exposure to ongoing events or objective reality; secondly, exposure to clarifications and discussions in *Dialogue;* and thirdly, through a process of personal evaluation and re-evaluation conditioned by personal interpretation, clarifications, discussants' perspectives and proposals on *Dialogue* (please see Figure 1). Ideation was not constant but dynamic—constantly changing along with a constantly changing objective reality and the (re)evaluation thereof. Constantly evolving events, debates arguing for different sides of the issues not only enhanced ideation but also led to series of evaluations and re–evaluations both at personal and group levels. In the perception process, ideation was constantly refined by exposure to real world events (and the variables that underlie them), as well as exposure to reconstructed versions or debates of some of those events on *Dialogue.* Exposure to reconstructed realities in turn conditioned participants' interpretation of objective realities. There were indeed cases where participants used the same arguments, logic and phrases used by their preferred *Dialogue* discussants to buttress their points during focus group discussions. The process of ideation also underlined participants' understanding and interpretation of the issues which led to either their disbelief or affirmation of previous beliefs or even adoption of a whole new set of beliefs. Importantly, knowledge derived from clarified discussions of issues on *Dialogue* enhanced an understanding of the Other's issues hence potentially achieving mutual understanding and agreement.

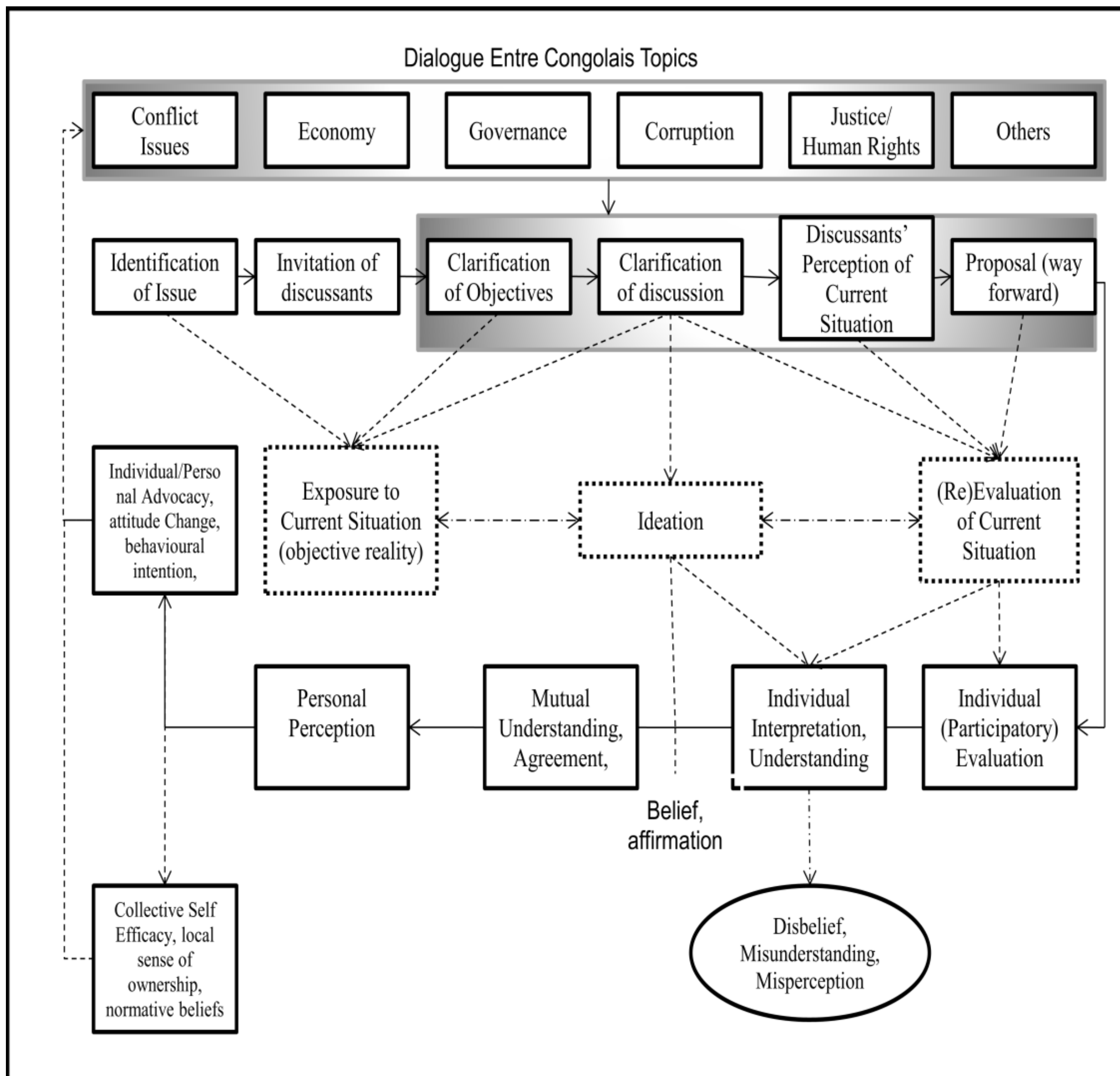

Figure 1. Process of perception change in *Dialogue* groups.

5.3.3. Re-Evaluation of Current Situation

Three salient elements in *Dialogue* defined participants' constantly evolving evaluation of realities: clarifications of topics (in *Dialogue,* discussion issues are first explained and the background information provided); *Dialogue* discussants' expressions of their discursive perceptions of the issues clarified based on their own world view; and proposal for a way forward on the issues—usually summed up by the moderator. Throughout the process of listening, each participant's impressions of the issues and related phenomena were constantly redefined along with their understanding and interpretation of the issues. Understanding and personal interpretation of the issues were influenced by each participant's re–evaluation of the issues after exposure and greater knowledge. Comments at focus groups reflected not only a greater depth of knowledge on issues but also a larger breadth of analyses by individual participants on the issues.

5.3.4. Personal Perception

Personal Perception of the issues relating to conflict transformation processes, intervention mechanisms and the impediments thereof reflected, not necessarily the views purveyed by discussants on *Dialogue*, but a new stream of perception borne out of personal interpretation, mutual agreement and understanding. Conflict transforms perceptions of self, the Other and the issues in contention (Lederach, 1995, 1997). Lederach's works have shown that a salient impact of conflict on the communication patterns of conflict groups is a decreased ability to articulate one's intentions in a manner that is credible and devoid of propaganda and rhetoric. When compared with the control group, *Dia-*

logue–treated participants shared meaning in a more robust and reflective manner. Moreover individual participants re-engaged with the ethnic Other, based not on the negative descriptive languages found in the control groups' expressions, but on an objective and logical evaluation of the self, the Other and the contending issues such as citizenship and barriers to peace. At personal levels, personal advocacy was noticed in participants' comments about various community engagement activities they had become involved in since their participation in the research. At group levels, although there were lesser agreements on topics discussed, there was a greater level of collective self-efficacy, and collective sense of ownership of transformation processes.

In summary, *Dialogue* discussions were horizontal and transactional. They enabled individual and group level evaluation and re-evaluation of the different positions purveyed by discussants. New levels of perception that emerged from understanding and belief promoted individual advocacy, perception and attitudinal change. In situations where the new thinking is transmitted through social or informal means within the community, social impact can be achieved through collective self–efficacy which in turn can have actual effects on the events discussed on *Dialogue*.

5.4. Ethnic Awareness and Perceptions of Victimhood in Gutahuka Groups

Congolese autochthons exposed to *Gutahuka* expressed more awareness of the ethnic and political divisions that can deter future social and political relationships. Across contexts, except in Fizi with its peculiar socio–cultural blend of Hutus and autochthons, *Gutahuka*-exposed autochthons were pessimistic about possibilities of a unified Congolese army involving all the ethnic groups including settled Hutus. This contrasts with opinions of *Dialogue* listeners who recommended that questions of citizenship be resolved once and for all to enable communities to integrate peacefully. Generally, *Dialogue* participants believed there were opportunities for integration and a mutually rewarding relationship across ethnic groups if issues of identity and citizenship were resolved. A salient pattern of difference in beliefs between the listening groups is that *Dialogue* listeners showed more empathy towards Hutus than listeners of *Gutahuka.* In discussing their perceptions of Victimhood, Autochthon listeners of *Gutahuka* did not see Hutus as victims of the conflict whereas autochthon *Dialogue* listeners across all contexts believed Hutus were among the main victims of the conflict, implying as it were, a greater sense of empathy towards the Hutus. In one of the *Gutahuka* groups (Mwenga), Hutus were even identified as the Villains. *Dialogue* listeners' perception of Villainity centred on corrupt politicians.

It had been envisaged at the beginning of the study that exposure to the Other's programme would deepen an understanding and empathy with the Other's issues, but the reverse has been the case in autochthon listeners of *Gutahuka.* They perceived Hutus as the problem and expressed the normative appeal in *Gutahuka* that peace in the DRC is linked to FDLR militants (embedded in Hutu communities) repatriating to Rwanda. Interestingly, Hutu *Dialogue* listeners had mixed perceptions of Victimhood and Villainity that did not show any particular pattern. Again, this reflects the discursive and analytical nature of the programme *Dialogue*.

Beliefs expressed by autochthon listeners of *Gutahuka* have far–reaching implications on contentious debates on the impacts of exposure to contents meant for the Other in deeply divided societies and the overarching debates on the role of the media in reinforcing dominant power relations in the society. There has been a retinue of interesting scholarly works that support the position that the media convey mainstream outlooks and normative beliefs about behaviour (Barak, 1994; Gerbner, Signorielli, & Morgan, 1982; Signorielli & Morgan, 1989; among others). Indeed, Barak (1994) has observed how media contents identify heroes, villains, and neutral characters and associate them with specific traits, beliefs or forms of behaviour and in other cases label and stigmatise certain activities and individuals or groups as antisocial, deviant or undesirable. He posits that such associations have relative implications on social control. Also, Mutz (1998) has written brilliantly on the "impersonal" nature of influence by media portrayals of attitudes, beliefs or experiences of collectives outside an individual's personal life space. She has argued for "impersonal influence" to be taken more seriously because of its potential to expand contemporary understanding of social influence processes from media portrayals of indirect associations. This research provides important evidence within the spheres of Barak's (1994) "symbolic deviance" and Mutz' (1998) "impersonal influence". By constantly calling on FDLR militants to repatriate, *Gutahuka* labels or stigmatizes Hutus in general as deviant and undesirable. This is because there is a social reality that associates the FDLR with Hutus and vice versa, which in turn creates unspoken assumptions and cognitive framing of the Hutu Other as "foreign", "unwelcome", "deviant" and "undesirable" among autochthon listeners of the programme. Although autochthons are not the target audience for the programme, they are as exposed if not more exposed to it as the targets themselves—more exposed because FDLR militants in the forests are prevented by their commanders from listening to the programme for fear they would be convinced to surrender. Obviously Radio is not selective in its reach; hence audiences who are not targets of a particular intervention programme but are exposed to it do end up consuming the programme. In the case of *Gutahuka*,

although MONUC presents the programme in Kinyarwanda—the language spoken among Hutus in Rwanda, most Congolese in the Kivus understand and speak Kinyarwanda fairly fluently having lived side by side with Rwandans for several years. For non-targets, *Gutahuka'*s messages construct "symbolic deviance"—involving unspoken assumptions, associations and framing of the FDLR combatant as an "unwelcome" or undesirable Hutu. This in turn impugns on non–Targets' perception of the Hutu Other. The "Otherization" of Hutus is further deepened by media reports of joint military activities against the FDLR. An autochthon *Gutahuka* group member in Mwenga said of Hutus: "there must be a problem with you when everybody is pursuing you". The result is what Barak (1994) terms "symbolic punishment" through stigmatisation or labelling of the Hutu Other as antisocial, deviant or undesirable. Such negativity may not be expressed explicitly in *Gutahuka* but dynamic interactions of *Gutahuka*'s messages and implicit normative appeals with unspoken assumptions rooted in an epistemic association of the FDLR with Hutus and vice versa lead to the construction of symbolic deviance not intended by the programme creators.

Although *Gutahuka'*s messages and normative appeals (see Figure 2) are intended to restore peace in South Kivu by achieving voluntary repatriation of FDLR elements and Hutu civilians, they do have negative implications on social relations between autochthons and the Hutu Other when considered against the backdrop of a social reality or discursive formation that associates the FDLR with Hutus and vice versa—an association taken for granted or unaccounted for in the programme. By problematising the FDLR-Hutu, *Gutahuka* created or deepened animosity towards Hutus among autochthon listeners in three of the four contexts researched. In the fourth context, Fizi, there is a historical reality that supports a mutual alliance and cordial relations between the autochthons and Hutus. This in turn is supported by local influentials that purvey localised subjective realities or norms. Fizi Participants' engagements with objective realities or ongoing events and with the mediated reality of *Gutahuka* were thus conditioned by stronger historical and subjective realities which make up the discursive formation of their society.

In the other contexts however, *Gutahuka* further reinforces the dominant power relations by depicting the FDLR as the problem and not the breakdown in social relations and other structural causes of the conflict. The result has been a "we-they" cognitioning and expression of relations between the autochthon "self" and the Hutu Other. This is evident in a comment by an autochthon *Gutahuka* listener in Walungu: "They (Hutus) have raped thousands of our women, killed thousands of our young men, stolen everything they can steal, they are the ones that have kept us where we are today".

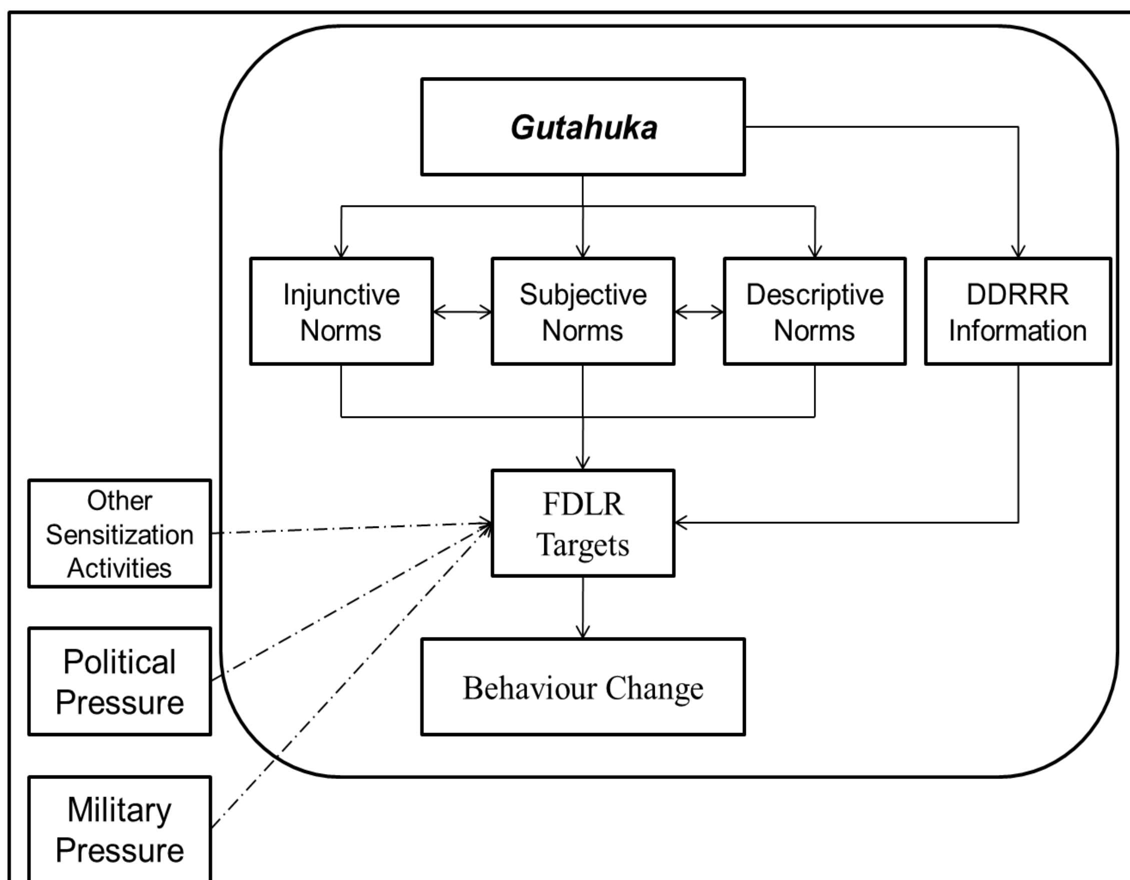

Figure 2. Appeal to norms: The *Gutahuka* communication strategy.

The calibration of the Hutu as a normative Other is only evident among autochthon *Gutahuka* listening groups. Although living within the same contexts with Hutus, and having regular interpersonal interactions with them, perception of Hutus in three of the contexts seem to be influenced more deeply from *Gutahuka* representations of the FDLR/Hutus than from their day-to-day interactions with them. This corroborates Mutz' position that people respond "to a media–constructed pseudoenvironment—rather than their immediate personal experiences or those of friends and acquaintances" (1998, p. 6).

At a broader level, media (re)constructed reality is not necessarily about the direct persuasive or influence potentials of media messages that set out to change behaviour or a viewpoint. Mediated reality is the media superstructure's refinement of the subjective reality (or opinions or experience of influential collectives) purveyed by elites or political/military actors to influence citizens (as in the case of purveyors of subjective norms in *Gutahuka*). Because of the media's expertise in matters that are beyond the realm of citizens' personal experiences, they are perceived as more reliable sources of information. Mutz (1998) has argued that media content is particularly well suited and used as a credible channel of information about such collective subjective realities. Essentially, in the context of a violently divided society where, as Lederach (1997) has written, perceptions of self, the Other and the issues in contention are constantly altered resulting in a "contaminated" interpretation and understanding of the Other's intentions, media intervention contents have strong potential impacts even on non-Target listeners. As findings have shown, non–Target listeners exposed to contents aimed at changing the behaviour of the ethnic Other resulted in more negative perceptions of the Other compared with participants that listened to a political debate programme—*Dialogue*. In the communities researched, participants were exposed to a communicative sphere that drew on four contending realities with varying degrees of potential impacts on interpretation and engagement with mediated contents: Historical Reality, Objective Reality, Subjective Reality and Mediated Reality.

5.5. Contending Realities in Narrative Frameworks of Dialogue and Gutahuka

Participants' comments during focus groups show that communication patterns of groups researched were overwhelmingly rooted in their memory or knowledge of previous conflicts, events or interrelationships. Historical realities define the epistemes within which metaphors, memories, discursive practices and communication patterns of each network are negotiated. Hugh Miall (2004) has argued that collective memories are a salient element that should be of interest to conflict transformers because memories of past conflicts determine groups' expectations in future relationships and significantly determine their behaviour toward the Other and how meaning is shared. In this study, key influentials or purveyors of subjective realities were themselves influenced by historical realities which in turn infected their communication patterns. Participants in the focus groups were at the intersection of a triad of realities that in addition to other factors defined their perceptions. Those exposed to a mediated reality that did not provide a platform for objectively engaging and debating with the historical and subjective realities in the triad were subjected to the normative influences of those realities in their engagement with media contents. Exposure to the Others' media contents within a communicative sphere or intersection that is hostile to the Other created a stronger negative opinion of the ethnic Other. The tendency to blame the Hutu–Other for the misfortune of the autochthon-self was intensified with exposure to the Hutu–Other's behaviour change messages. In each context studied, historical realities defined how participants expressed their views, how programme messages were interpreted and the various ways they sought alternative mediated or socially transmitted information that met their peculiar needs (please see Figure 3). Exceptions were found however among participants exposed to a media platform where the contending realities were confronted and debated.

6. Conclusion

Radio is a ubiquitous mass medium—generally received by all within the reach of the transmitting station. Hence there are possibilities that non–Targets may be exposed to behaviour-change contents not meant for them. This study engaged with the question of how disparate networks operating within homogenous contexts engage with information products meant for the Other. There is evidence in this research that exposure of non-targets to behaviour change contents meant for the Other can create hostility against the targets. Congolese autochthons exposed to *Gutahuka* during the period did not develop a sense of affinity with the Hutus as envisaged, but hostility. Across contexts, they expressed the belief that if Hutus and all Rwandans left the DRC there would be peace, reflective of the normative appeals in *Gutahuka* that portray the armed group, the FDLR as barriers to peace. Epistemic associations between the FDLR and the Hutu impelled autochthon participants to express sentiments of undesirability regarding not only the FDLR but also the Otherised Hutu. Here was arguably one of the sharpest contrasts between perceptions of Autochthon listeners of *Dialogue* and their *Gutahuka* listening counterparts. Autochthon *Dialogue* listeners were more empathetic with what they saw as plight of the Hutus.

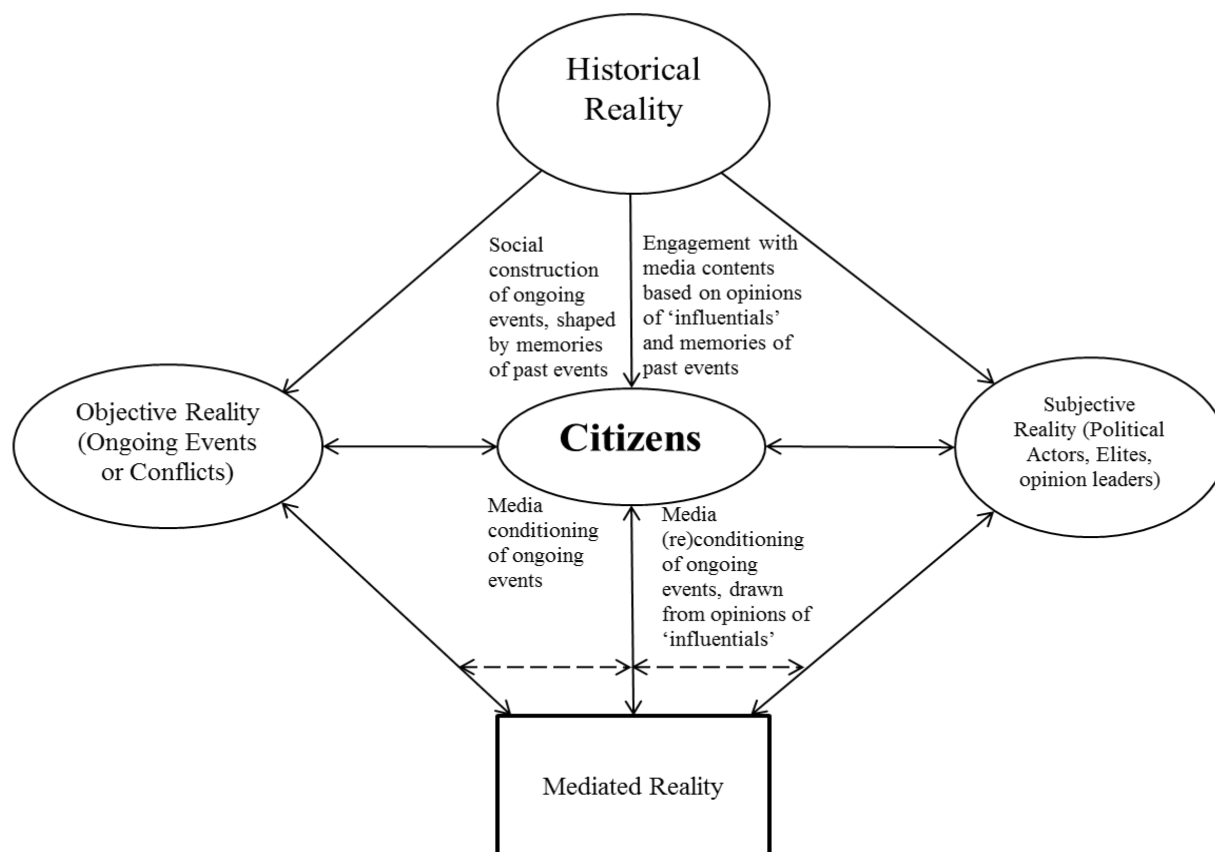

Figure 3. Contending realities in conflict settings.

Across all contexts of the study, they identified Hutus as one of the main victims of the war and expressed emotions of empathy to their plight. Among the *Gutahuka* listeners, there was no mention of Hutus at all (even passively) as victims of the conflict. The emerging implication is that *Dialogue* listeners were more analytical of the conflict situation and the dynamics thereof including issues of causality, casualty, victimhood and villainity, and the various military operations targeted at the FDLR (but inevitably also fatally affecting Hutu civilians and refugees) as a basis for their perception of Hutus as victims. *Gutahuka* listeners on the other hand perceived the various military operations against the FDLR as evidence of the undesirability of not just the FDLR fighter but also his (the fighter's) family. Simply put, the same objective reality of military operations against the FDLR elicited two fundamentally different perceptions from listeners within the same network and contexts based on the nature of intervention programmes each was exposed to.

Two critical implications emerge. First, hate contents are not only the ones that are overtly hateful. Messages targeted at specific groups for the purpose of achieving behavioural change can lead to alienation and hostility toward the Target group by the Other (non–target) groups exposed to the messages. The implication is that media intervention contents that purvey a narrative without first understanding how it interacts with other epistemic narratives, metaphors and historical realities on ground run the risk of deepening rifts between groups and escalating the conflict. Another implication is that contextually associated individuals or social groups do not always have homogenous interpretation, perception and/or decoding of media messages. At the core of these discursive perceptions is the ideological orientation of messages audiences are exposed to and how they interact with historical and subjective realities on ground. Whereas *Gutahuka* called on FDLR militants to disarm and return, *Dialogue* encouraged objective and pluralistic analyses of the conflict including the crises situation and the underlying issues within a narrative framework that demands of listeners a level of iterative evaluation, understanding and interpretation to achieve individual and collective belief or disbelief. This can explain why *Dialogue* listeners across contexts and networks perceived failed interventions of the DRC government as one of the main barriers to peace. This shows that *Dialogue* listeners' construction of conflict transformation processes and conflict multipliers rest on the activities or inactivities of the democratically elected government in the DRC and not the presence of Hutu "foreigners". Though dissatisfied with the intervention activities of the government, *Dialogue* listeners' responses showed they perceived the government as endowed with the legitimacy and political license needed to tackle the problems.

An essential ingredient in the democratic process of the DRC—a country that has experienced over 40 years of brutal military rule out of about 55 years of self-rule, is recognition of the legitimacy of the democratically elected government and the new institutions set up to support democracy and good governance. Importantly, *Dialogue* participants' discussions of prescriptions for conflict transformation centred on specific actions the government and its institutions could take to achieve peace. Interestingly, autochthon *Dialogue* listeners did not see any ethnic group as a barrier to peace, and neither indeed did Hutu *Dialogue* listeners. Whereas Hutu *Gutahuka* listeners saw the "Tutsi government" of Rwanda as the greatest barrier to peace, Hutu *Dialogue* listeners saw the inactions of the Congolese Government as barriers to peace—corroborating the perception of autochthon *Dialogue* listeners of the Go-DRC's legitimacy and capability to live up to its mandate if supported and if issues of corruption are solved.

Through the programme *Dialogue,* Radio Okapi performs more than mere cognitive functions of providing objective information. The programme also undertakes interpretative functions including analyses, evaluation, assessments and comments. Discussants in some cases are not only the authors of the cognitive and interpretative elements of *Dialogue* but also the authors of the very issues they seek to interpret. Through the programme, they are able to present their arguments within their own narrative frameworks. Their narrative frameworks are different from the narrative frameworks in Radio Okapi's news discourses with its inherent gate–keeping appendages. Arguably, this represents the liberal democratic role of Radio Okapi in the DRC. By mediating objective realities of ongoing events and subjective realities purveyed by political elites, *Dialogue* provides elites a raw forum to criticise policy decisions and to comment on other issues of popular concern while also affording citizens an opportunity to participate in the questioning, evaluation and interpretation processes.

Despite its good work however, Radio Okapi has had an immensely difficult time in the DRC, with two of its journalists killed[3] and several others intimidated by armed gangs[4]. In the eastern region of the country, Radio Okapi has faced the ever–present allochthony/autochthony (foreigner /local) crises in terms of questions of foreign content and ownership in a region where citizenship and nationality are contested issues. Though the station has an array of programmes aimed at various networks and actors in the DRC conflict, there is the potential risk of a crisis of message—what message for whom and with what effects on other groups? Besides, although, Radio Okapi is directly run by Swiss based Hirondelle Foundation, it is joined at the hip with the UN and is subject to reservations local folks have about UN peacekeepers. In its over 10 years in the DRC, the UN has had to deal with various controversies regarding its Peacekeepers—ranging from accusations of rape, arms dealing, trade in conflict diamonds and coltan, to negation of their responsibility to protect civilians under threat of violence.

Contemporary works on Information Intervention have tended to concentrate on rationalising intervention. There have been far lesser studies on the nature of intervention, the framework for intervention and the composition of interveners. Krug and Price (2002) have made a compelling case for and proposed a module that can be generically applied in post-conflict settings. But their module is focused primarily on regulatory frameworks and issues of governmentality, media reform and governance.

This work extends the frontiers of the discussion by exploring, not only the actual contents of intervention media but also the impacts of specific contents on groups in societies violently divided along ethnic cleavages. Today, Information Intervention and Public Diplomacy activities by foreign states, NGOs and IGOs as a tool for Peacebuilding or preventing genocide have become normatively acceptable in the international community. For example, in 2009 the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) in Somalia outsourced a major PIO component to a communication consulting consortium after an openly advertised bidding process which drew tenders from NGOs including Hirondelle Foundation. While various factors determine the outcome of UN procurement processes, the UN's decision to award the contract to a private consulting consortium is instructive. If anything, it suggests that the UN is becoming more confident with its new outsourcing of public information components. Part of the UNSOA outsourcing deal, is a Radio component—Radio Bar-Kulan which is run by Okapi Consulting—a member of the consortium[5]. Along this trajectory, this study moves the debates from questions of legitimacy of media intervention to questions of who should intervene as well as the nature and effectiveness of specific media intervention contents and their impacts in real world settings.

Furthermore, the methodological approach used in the study moves the debates beyond prediction models and/or retrospective rationalisations frequently

[3] Radio Okapi Journalist Didace Namujimbo was shot dead in Bukavu in November 2008 by unknown gunmen, 17 months after another Radio Okapi Journalist Serge Maheshe was also killed in Bukavu.

[4] The most recent being the brutal beating on August 7 2009 of Paulin Munanga, Radio Okapi's Provincial correspondent in Lubumbashi by security agents of Agence Nationale des Renseignements, (ANR) while covering a demonstration by human rights activists in Katanga.

[5] Okapi Consulting has nothing to do with Radio Okapi. It is a South African-based private consulting company headed by David Smith, former MONUC's Chief of Public Information.

used in media impact evaluation processes of this nature. The research was designed bearing in mind the affinity for narratives and story–telling of the communities researched. It was built on real time, real world subjects and contexts involving working with real people within real contexts of an ongoing conflict setting—intact with emotions of fear, anger and guilt as well as rumours and other socially transmitted information which have potentials of affecting audience engagements.

Findings provide instruments with which operational researchers or media intervention practitioners can compare predictions and rationalise impacts as they happen, in future conflicts. Furthermore findings have implications on contemporary understanding of the relative importance of communication models and their interactions within conflict settings where the media is used as a tool for violence or for transformation and Peacebuilding.

The implication of findings in this study is that contents for African audiences need to draw and build on the rich oral traditions and traditionally transactional processes of information and meaning sharing. Such contents should first map existing narratives to identify conflicting messages. Secondly, explore using participatory processes, new narratives that transcend historical realities within which conflict parties weave their narratives. Thirdly, design the new narratives within an interactive framework that engages with and challenges conflicting ones.

Information intervention is a concept worthy of continued debates. Within the realm of Public Diplomacy, information intervention figures prominently, not as an appendage for explaining mandates or rationalising an intervention, but as a virile tool for stimulating public debates on the common good. And within military spheres of psyops, information intervention figures, not only as a force multiplier but as a key component of strategy. This study emphasises the need to keep the approaches that underlie both doctrines far apart particularly during the post–conflict reconstruction phase.

In summary, findings of this study show that in violently divided societies, Information Intervention approaches aimed at achieving attitudinal and/or behavioural change by appealing to social norms can be ineffective if not counter–productive. But an informative approach involving the use of narratives that stimulate discursive discussions on the common good, a collectively imagined future and issues of good governance can open up a sphere for participation, social interaction and civic engagement.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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