

# Northumbria Research Link

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**Resilience and Stabilization in post-  
conflict situations**

**The media, communications and security  
nexus**

**Dr. Sarah Bowman**

# What is civil society?

- Taylor (2009)
  - Citizens
  - Institutions
  - Media
  - NGOs
  - INGOs
  - Business
  - Governance
  
  - Strong civil society embedded within societal resilience



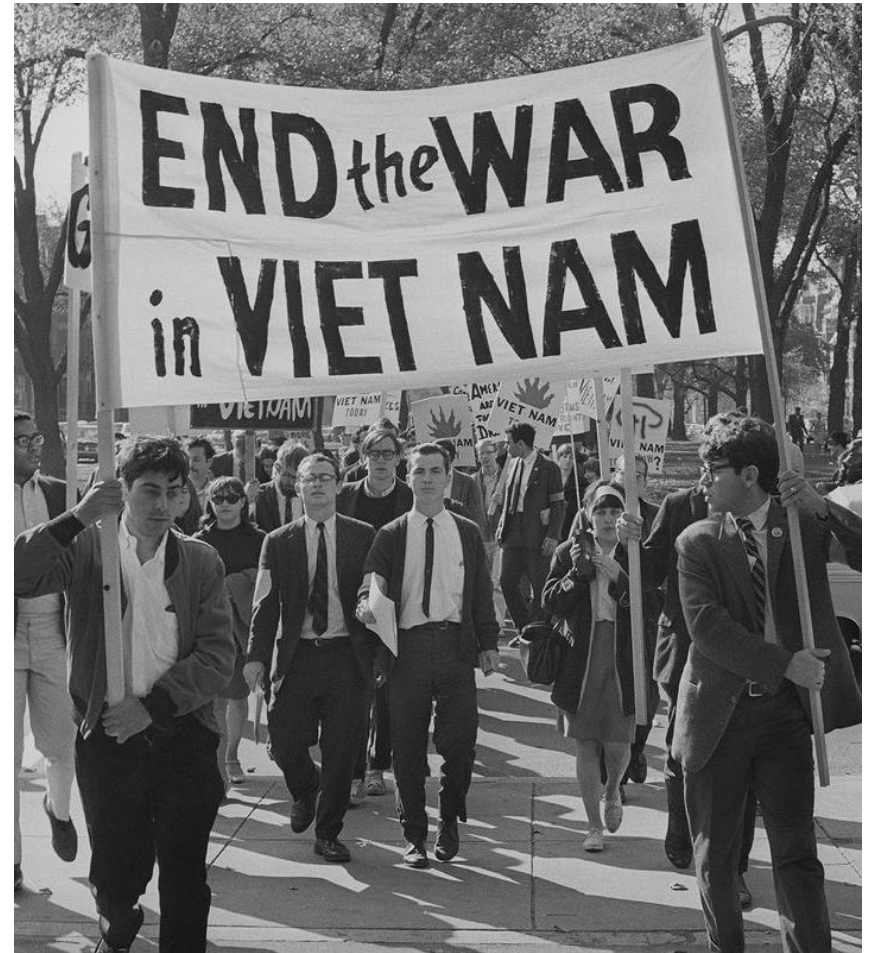
# Structure of presentation

- What's the issue
- What do we know
- Current historical research/methods
- A suggested way forward
- Limitations etc



# What is the issue?

- Communications and media critical in selling war, selling peace (Lowe, 2010)
- To understand better the role of media and communication in post-conflict (or divided) societies – what role do they play and the type of interventions necessary to rebuild/support civil society





Routledge New Directions in  
Public Relations and  
Communication Research

Edited by Ian Somerville,  
Owen Hargie, Maureen Taylor  
and Margalit Toledano

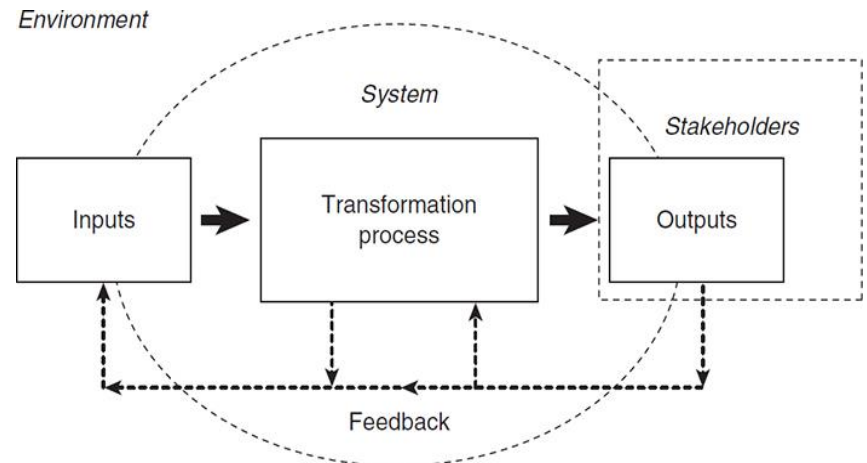
Foreword by Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

# International Public Relations

Perspectives from deeply  
divided societies

# What do we know

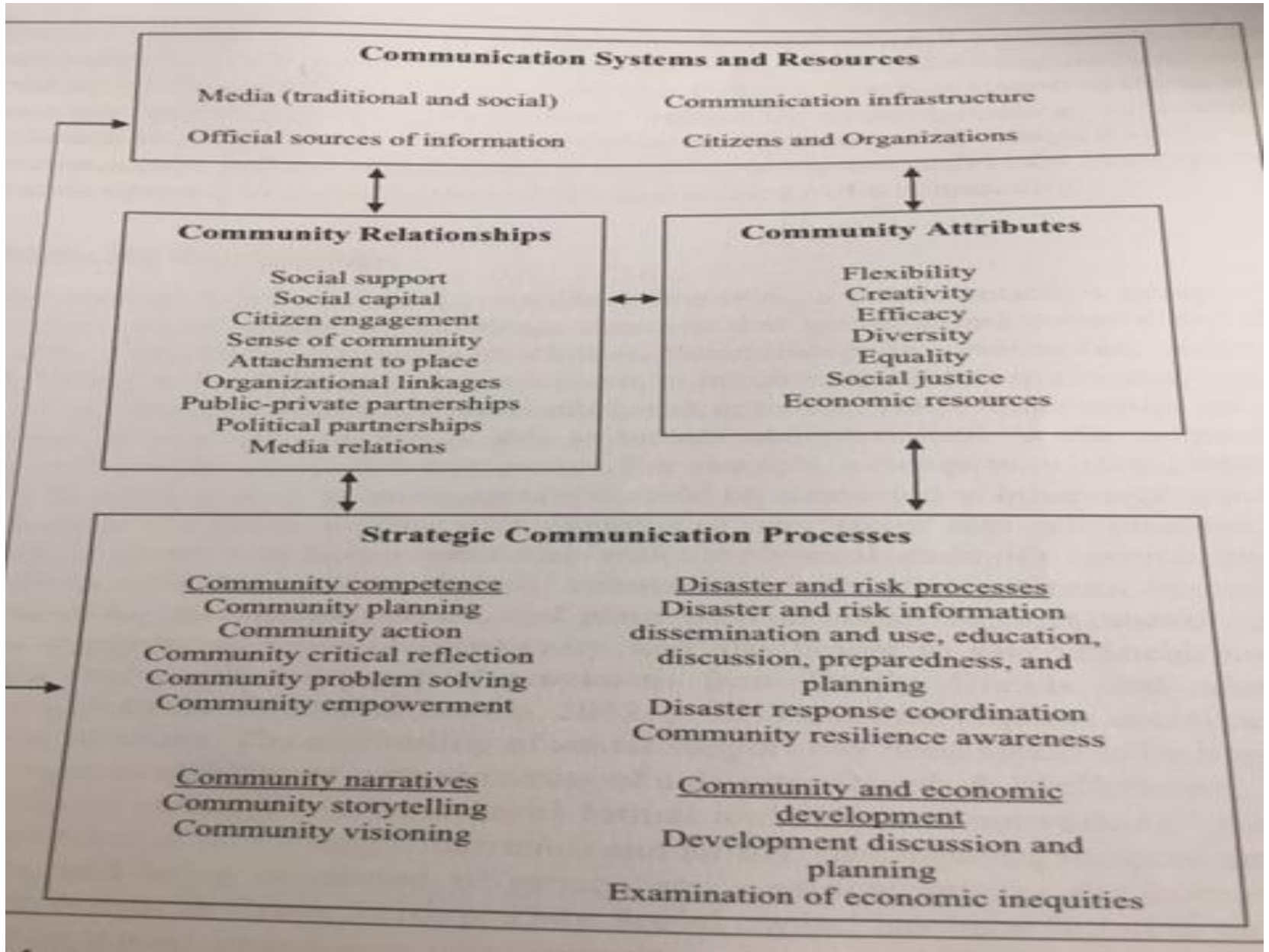
- Communication, in some form, central component of all community resilience models (Houston et al., 2015) - natural and manmade disasters
- Community resilience = collective activity to foster recovery, adaptive capacities (Norris et al, 2008)
- Capacities: communication and information; community competence; social capital and economic development = strong link to systems theory



# Communication and Information

- Narratives
- Responsible media
- Communication skills and infrastructure
- Trusted sources of information
- All scholars agree inc. Pfefferbaum and Neas et al. (2013) = systemic resilience
- Communication ecology perspective that includes:
  - Organizational
  - Mediated
  - Interpersonal
  - But also PR which is about developing relationships and community
  - Multimodal approach





A communication and media approach to community resilience (Houston et al., 2015: 274)

# Methodology

- Philosophical position: social constructivism, interpretivist and exploratory
- Case Study (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998 and Yin 2002)
  - Interviews with those on the ground (Albany Associates, FCO)
  - Citizens involved in post-conflict territories
  - Conceptual lens: systems
- Content analysis
  - Media coverage re: narratives
  - Documents re: UN, UNICEF, UNESCO

- A case study is: *“a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context”* (Yin, 2002:13)



Thematic Analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 388)

# Case Studies



- Bosnia (and the Baltics) from the late 1980s
  - By 1991 wealthier republics of Slovenia and Croatia seceded from Yugoslav Federation
  - By 1992 Bosnia fell into civil war on independence and end of free media and rise of state control of information
  - Collapse of civil society
  - Following Dayton Peace Agreement influx of NGOs – media relations? Rise of alternative media
  - Role of media inc. social and grassroots interventions to create a ‘Euro-Baltic identity’

# Case Studies

- Somalia (civil war 2009-present....)
  - Changing media actors and embryonic press freedom
  - Role of media reporting in driving/preventing violent extremism
  - Accountability of state security institutions and media and security services relationships – training sessions
  - Community initiatives in those areas recovered from Al-Shabaab control – town hall debates, sporting activities, networks to build resilience, consultation forums



# Case Studies

- Nigeria (a paradox)
  - Nigeria suffers a variety of complex political problems including inequality, corruption, oil disputes, national disunity, media and the Boko Haram insurgency
  - Growth of grassroots organisations eg Peace Initiative Network
- But also:
  - Centre for Democracy and Peace Building (NI)
  - Darfur, Western Sudan (local scriptwriters, weekly radio drama since 2013, diverse communities)
  - Establishment of communications regulators and public service broadcasters



# Way Forward

- Through case studies attempt to:
  - Identify elements of community resilience post conflict
  - Better understand organisational linkages and role of media and PR in this
  - Reflect on the role of multi-disciplinary teams and collaboration to support specific interventions

## **resilience:**

“[t]he capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or future development of the system.”

—Ann Masten, Professor, University of Minnesota  
College of Education and Human Development

# Final Reflections: Pillars of Peace

- Think about how this work links to Institute for Economics and Peace framework:
  - Well functioning government
  - Sound business environment
  - An equitable distribution of resources
  - An acceptance of the rights of others
  - Good relations with neighbours
  - Free flow of information
  - High level of human capital
  - Low levels of corruption



# Limitations

- Qualitative
  - Bias
  - Sampling
  - Access
  - Reliability
  - Replicability
- 
- But still worth doing....



the world  
is full of  
interesting  
things...



# References and Further Reading

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