A Digital Quest for Peace: Diaspora Attempts in PalTalk for National Reconciliation

Yonatan Tewelde

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the multifaceted utilization of PalTalk, a popular chat platform, as a secure and inclusive space for vibrant communal discussions among Eritreans, compensating for limitations in physical public spheres. Focusing on peace and reconciliation, exiled Eritreans effectively document human rights violations and challenge dominant state-led narratives on militarism and conscription. The study unveils the nuanced understanding of peace, highlighting barriers posed by mass militarization and participants' aspirations and uncertainties. It acknowledges limitations of peace education without ongoing processes and conducive environments, addressing concerns about truth sharing and debates, including absence of alleged perpetrators and challenges of linguistic accessibility and inclusivity for ethnic minorities. Despite challenges, Eritrean PalTalk platforms contribute constructively through historical documentation, non-violent advocacy, and collaboration with international organizations for justice. Notably, the platform disrupts state-led discourses, unearths concealed stories of violence, breaks the cycle of silence, and questions the normalization of violence in nation-building. This study illuminates the transformative potential of new media public spheres in peace-building efforts.

Keywords: online discussions, chatrooms, peace education, reconciliation, truth sharing

Introduction

State actors in the Horn of Africa have engaged mass media and cultural production apparatuses to rally public support while dissidents and opposition movements used them to mobilize public support to challenge power status quos. From colonial regimes to guerilla armies and post-independence states, the press and broadcast stations in

94

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia were utilized as key tools of propaganda and building hegemonic consent. Guerrilla armies such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) used radio stations and printed materials to inspire the youth to join the armed movements and to flag enemy morale. In today's internet era, activists and dissidents use social media platforms as critical arenas overcoming structural and physical barriers of broadcasting and congregation and work around barriers of state censorship and press repression. With the proliferation of social media, new modes of mass-to-mass communication have made possible novel forms of political engagement and diluted the hegemony of state media institutions and gatekeepers.

This paper presents a case study about *PalTalk*, an audio and text chat platform, popular among Horn of Africa diaspora, exploring on how exiled Eritreans have utilized it as an arena for public discussions and debates. By focusing on the theme of peace and reconciliation, this study gazes at how exiled conscripts crowdsourced recollections in chatrooms to document events and facts relating to human rights violations and countering state led discourses about the nature of militarism and conscription in Eritrea. With the goal of addressing a fundamental question about the role of new media in building peace, this study contemplates on the contextual meaning of peace, departing from the viewpoint that the notion of peace lacks a universally shared meaning (Daley 2014). Theorizing mass militarisation as a barrier to individual and collective liberty and thus as a condition of non-peace, this study tries to sketch the aspirations, questions, and doubts of participants in Eritrean *PalTalk* chatrooms regarding prospects for peace in their homeland.

Diaspora Media and Peace Building

While narratives of war have existed long before recorded history, kept alive by storytellers, cave arts, scriptures, and songs, literature remains vague about positive contributions of media in service of peace. In Europe, the role of printing press in fanning conflicts has been cited in relation to wide readership of emancipatory literature contributing to the toppling of French feudal elites. In the industrial age, the media's role twirled from inspiring the public to criticise and revolt against the state into one of mass persuasion with governments employing radio and television for the strategic mobilisation of their publics. Eventually, as politics and economy blended in the industrial age, marketing and propaganda became the primary mode by which states communicated with their populace (O'Shaughnessy 2017). The full scope of the role of media in building peace after the cold war remains unknown, very likely as a result of the paucity of studies on peace media and the lack of approaches that take the variety of peace-oriented media projects into account (Bratić 2008). This ambiguity has often leant towards negative reviews about media and also as a result of the epistemological approach of studies that typically centered on professional journalistic criteria concentrating on news content alone (Skjerdal 2012).

95

Within the scope of non-news media, there are examples of successful traditional media deployment in conflict prevention and peacebuilding – many of them in Africa. For instance, in Burundi, *Studio Ljambos* produced radio programs where community members contributed ideas for peaceful solutions.[1] The talk show featured oral testimonies and upbeat narratives of ordinary citizens who helped Tutsis during the civil war in the 1990s (Mwangi 2010). In Liberia, *Talking Drum Studios*, a series of soap operas, talk shows, dramas, and public theater launched in 1997, spread messages focusing on peace and reconciliation by addressing pertaining issues such as conflict resolution, disarmament, resettlement of refugees, reintegration of former combatants, and more (Eze 2017).

It remains unclear if new media can replicate such attainment for peacebuilding[2]. There has been skepticism, on one hand, by researchers such as Maya-Jariego et al. (2019), who provide a case study of social media exacerbating the segregation of communities during the Colombian peace process, posing grave obstacles for peace and conflict mediators. In another case, Skjerdal (2009) expressed hesitation in his discussion about Ethiopian diaspora websites' self-stated contributions as participatory, independent, and inclusive platforms. Bearing a similar tone of pessimism, Aghadiegwu and Ogbonna (2015) recount that the internet had been used more for disseminating hate speech than advocating for peace in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

On the other hand, there are optimistic assertions about the potential of new media in building peace, particularly those that operate in diaspora settings. This relates to the notion that new media provide alternative opportunities for the diaspora to speak about opinions excluded from dominant discourses in their home countries (Turner 2008). The African Diaspora Policy Centre stresses that although African diasporas often muddy the political affairs of their home countries, there are indeed cases where their active online participation helped create democratic change. The center notes that such positive engagement by diaspora Africans manifested in the form of disseminating to the public at home content about the value of democracy, establishing contact with domestic political forces, lobbying pressure groups in the West, and contributing expertise to resolve conflicts through negotiation and binding agreements (Mohamoud 2005). Examples of such new media-based diasporic initiatives include the Somali diaspora's use of websites to telecast to the public back home messages about democracy and the rule of law, advocacy against violence, and calls for mitigation of tension (Brinkerhoff 2006). Similarly, a Burundian diaspora website – *Burundinet* – launched during the active conflict in 1995, helped to bridge connections inside Burundi across geographic and ethnic boundaries. The website served as a critical mediation platform where local Burundians negotiated solutions and called upon the government army and rebel groups to stop killing civilians (Kadende-Kaiser 2003). Likewise, a Zimbabwean diaspora website, *NewZimbabwe.com*, is credited as a successful platform that enabled engagement between citizens and authorities to engage in discussions on contentious

issues such as the Gukurahundi genocide of the 1980s (Mpofu 2013).

In Sudan and South Sudan, the internet served the diaspora as a non-violent platform of democratic change. Bashri (2017) discusses the example of three South Sudanese diaspora women who created awareness about the neglected war in their country using live Facebook streams making calls for cessation of the conflict. More recently, the Sudanese Network of Professionals, a diaspora association of at least 17 Sudanese trade unions, advocated against the use of violence, mainly using WhatsApp.[3] Communication between the diaspora associations and protestors was essential in the organisation of non-violent demonstrations that resulted in the overthrow of the dictatorial regime of Omar Al-Bashir.[4]

An African Delineation of Peace

Peace as a concept does not have a universal meaning, although the use of the term is dominantly imagined within the frame of Western discourse (Daley 2014), which is associated with the annihilation of direct violence. There is merit in this pespective, given how violence, particularly in the East African context, has acted as a key currency of bargaining and marking power (de Waal 2015). Alex de Waal builds this argument in his book *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa* where he argues that political actors utilise the threat of violence as common pretext for prolonging conflicts and their despotic rule. Peace efforts that seek to eliminate manifestations of violence however fall within the realm of "negative peace" in Johan Galtung's (1969) terms, different from "positive peace" that is based on the presence of justice, equity, and other desirable conditions such as harmony and prosperity. By overlooking forms of violence that are structural and cultural in form, negative-peace-inspired strategies often serve against the interests of the oppressed because of their preoccupation with ending physical violence. During the civil rights movement in the United States, Dr. Martin Luther King was a strong critique of attempts to return normalcy for the sake of peace. Dr. King's persistence for "positive peace" left an important legacy in peace studies, where his arguments were conceptualised by Galtung and inspired several geographers to study the variations of social and cultural constructions of peace across the world (Megoran, McConnell and Williams 2016).

In her study about peace discourses in Central Africa, Patricia Daley (2014: 75) argues against imposing hegemonic concepts of peace to African contexts stressing that such a transference "promotes norms and practices that are counter to local notions of peace". With a similar emphasis against the adoption of universal ideations of peace, Clapham (2016) argues about the incompatibility of Western peace ideals with the way societies in the Horn of Africa both conceptualise peace and look to pursue it. He underlines that "'peace' is a concept barely known" to pastoralists in the region, particularly to Somalis of the Danakil desert, as "their lives are passed in unremitting struggle against an intensely hostile environment" (Clapham 2016: 330). Clapham notes

how a shared imagination of nationalism and peace is difficult to be maintained in these scorched parts of Africa, where ethnic affiliations define solidarities to clans, sub-clans, and family units. For pastoralists in Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the concept of peace is closer than anything to negotiating disagreements over resources through representatives (Clapham 2016). Clapham contrasts this imagination of peace with the way highlanders in Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea associate peace with an "African stereotype of consensual and communal management" of conflicts (Clapham 2016: 332).

African and Islamic scholar Ali Mazrui, one of the leading advocates of tapping into African cultural resources and traditional *mores* to contain or resolve conflicts, distinguishes a valuable African pattern of "short memory of hate", which he describes as "a remarkable capacity to let 'bygones be bygones'" (Mazrui 1994: 40). Mazrui acclaims Jomo Kenyatta and Nelson Mandela for how, after long unjustified imprisonment, they "emerged without bitterness" (Mazrui 1994: 40) and led their nations on paths of peace and reconciliation. In addition to the value of respect given to elders and ecumenical spirit as powerful cultural resources in the continent, Mazrui underscores the traditional involvement of women in consultations about war and peace and commends the successful contributions played by Winifred Mandela of South Africa, Nothsikelelo Albertina Sisulu of South Africa, and Angie Brooks of Liberia.

The Stain of Colonialism on African Peace

The epistemology of peace in Africa cannot be complete without considering the legacy of European colonialism. Underpinning colonialism's direct, cultural, and structural violence, Galtung (1980: 437) describes how European states sought to create empires through "direct and concrete cultural and political dominance and power relations". Throughout their rule, European colonizers institutionalised military science and technology to "wage wars in the colonies and to destroy future generations of indigenous people biologically and psychologically as they internalized the oppression" (Byrne et al. 2018: 4). As maintained by Mamdani (1996), the effects of the direct and indirect oppressive power that took place in the colonial period persisted long after colonialism as an authoritarian culture of governance in Africa. Similarly, Mbembe and Meintjes (2003) elaborate how the legacy of despotic exploitation and disciplining of African bodies during colonisation resurfaced in the postcolonial era in the form of excess and excessive violence as a mere demonstration of governance power.

During the Italian colonisation of Eritrea, tens of thousands of native conscripts perished fighting wars in in Libya (1922-32) and Somalia (1926-32), and Ethiopia (1935-41) (Chelati Dirar 2004; McLachlan 2011). In a population estimated around 600 thousand in 1935, there were approximately 60,000 Eritrean conscripts, 5,000 of whom were killed during Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia (Del Boca 2003) and more conscripts died fighting against the British at the end of the Second World War. Tiqabo, the central

character of a 1920's Eritrean novel *The Conscript* (Hailu 2013), recognised as one of Africa's earliest known anti-colonial critiques, calls upon his fellow conscripts in Libya to abandon their arms and return home, demonstrating a call for non-participation in violence as an enlightened appeal for peace.[5]

The development of Eritrean national consciousness is intricately associated with colonially induced (1882-1941) transformation of the agrarian and nomadic population into a working-class marked by exploitations in sectors such as transport, agriculture, mining, and building (Megoran, McConnell e Williams 2016). Eritreans commenced modernity as colonial subjects under the disciplinary authority of an alien government wherein their "everyday life was dotted with acts of abuse by Italian colonizers" (Barrera 2003: 82). This experience of the state's authority as a punitive force, unfortunately, was carried into the postcolonial stage in many African cases, as Mamdani (1996) remarks. Negash (2020) goes to the extent of reading the current state of repressive governance in Eritrean as a reincarnation of Italian colonial violence and calls attention to the physical and psychological suffering of Eritrean conscripts, particularly during Italy's imperial invasions in Libya. This argument holds that the postcolonial Eritrean government reproduced the colonial regime's unchecked and ferocious institutions, keeping oppression as a default system of administration through the militarisation of political economies and the conscription of the significant part of the populace.

Peace for Eritreans is the End of Mass Militarisation

Eight out of ten migrants in the world currently originate from only ten countries, one of which is Eritrea, with more than 300,000 registered refugees in the last decade.[6] This alarming rate at which Eritreans have been evacuating their country would be paradoxical if we only conceive peace in negative terms or the absence of violence to understand the hemorrhaging of Eritrea's minute population of 3.500.000.[7] Curious foreigners and reporters who get the rare opportunity to travel to Eritrea to distinguish the push factors driving the exodus of migration are usually astounded to find calm and orderly cities and towns. Very few, such as a reporter from an Israeli newspaper *Haaretz,* are able to look at the shattered dreams and the hardship and oppression endured by citizens: "The streets in the city center are spotless. There's very little traffic, people walk in the center of the road, no one honks. Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, appears to be one of the loveliest and most pleasant cities in Africa. Orderly and quiet, the place seems like a sort of souvenir from the 20th century. As in Cuba, the cars are mostly old, from the 1960s and 1970s. The many VW Beetles stand out. Italian architectural gems evoke the pre-World War II colonial period. [...] A stranger visiting the city won't sense that anything is amiss. Outwardly, nothing suggests that this is one of the most insular dictatorships in the world, the North Korea of Africa."[8]

Eritreans live under the siege of their own government in a garrison state where local structures and administration are militarized (Tronvoll and Mekonnen 2014). The

population is emaciated by a military autocracy that obliges unrequited servitude and demonises those who evade conscription, punishing them for desertion. Citizens above the age of 18 are required to serve in the army indefinitely. Since 1994 an estimated five hundred thousand young people, a fifth of whom are women, have been drafted into the national service (Menesey 2019). A 2015 report by Amnesty International highlights how forced militarisation impacts people's ability to survive economically, notwithstanding rights to family life, "Conscripts receive limited and arbitrarily-granted leave. Multiple family members – siblings, husbands and wives, and even parents and children – are conscripted at the same time and geographically separated. Conscripts have no say over the nature of the roles they are assigned to, and they frequently are assigned to posts far from their homes and families, all of which disrupt their ability to enjoy family life. Many interviewees told Amnesty International that they saw their spouse, parents, or children once per year. The poor working conditions within National Service include limited access to health care."[9]

The situation is resonant of Foucault's (1984: 172) characterisation of states invested in transforming citizens into productive and subjective bodies similar to those "in a slave economy [where] punitive mechanisms serve to provide an additional labor force – and to constitute a body of 'civil' slaves in addition to those provided by war or trading". Although the use of national service as a post-conflict reconstruction strategy is legitimate, as Eritrean sociologist Gaim Kibreab (2009: 47) explains, its open-endedness engenders resentments that result in widespread evasions and desertion "which in turn are met with cruel punishments to ensure compliance and deter others from evasion and desertions".

Today, for Eritreans, the term "peace," if it means anything, is the end of the pervasive militarisation that permeates every walk of life. The religious populace prays for peace that would end mass militarisation and state-of-emergency, perhaps analogously resonant of Dietrich's (2012) post-modern peace – one that manifests in plurality, small scale, relationality and flexibility. The youth dream of the day where they can walk free without the fear of *gifa* (round ups) or stopped for *menqesaseki* (translated as movement papers – military permits that show that one is on leave or exempt) in street corners and checkpoints. Perhaps peace for Eritreans is the realization of parents' dream for their children's return from the trenches and exile, the realisation of farmers yearning for their ancestral lands nationalised by the state. For Afar fishers from coastal regions, numerous of whom exiled in refugee camps in Ethiopia, peace is their return to the sea to fish and sail to Yemen and Saudi Arabia for commerce as their ancestors did. For the hundreds of thousands of soldiers withering in desolate trenches and laboring with very little pay for more than two decades, peace is the day they reclaim authority over their own lives.

Truth Sharing in *PalTalk* Rooms

The pursuit of peace is contingent upon coordinated activities, cooperation and relationships of trust (Adams and Kurtiş 2012). Convenient in their design for group interactions, new media serve as critical spaces where publics can collaboratively rethink and contest power - in some cases, to radically overhaul institutions, actors and practices (Hague and Loader 1999). In numerous transnational contexts, new media serve as spaces of interaction where diaspora citizens revisit histories and memories (Sassi 2000).

Diaspora Eritreans who were early adopters of *PalTalk* since its launch in 1998, have utilised the medium in novel ways as a space of long-distance political activism. For years, senior and new generation of Eritrean migrants congregated in chatrooms, creating a solidarity hub where they shared memories of their conscription experience in the Eritrean national service and the armed struggle for independence (1961-1991). This article is extracted from an ethnography of this digital community and is constituted by qualitative data in the form of participant observation, interviews and analysis of archived testimonies shared in a *PalTalk* truth-sharing program so-called *Tezareb*.[10] *Tezareb* was held in one of the most popular Eritrean *PalTalk* rooms, *Smer PalTalk* room, run weekly on Tuesdays between 2012 and 2017. *Tezareb* testimonies hosted exiled veteran fighters and service members who shared their memories about violence and inhumane treatments both in the guerrilla independence armies (Eritrean Liberation Front, ELF and EPLF) and in the post-independence state institutions. Administrators of *Smer* room state conceived *Tezareb* as a space for empowerment through empathy and solidarity, breaking a spiral of silence in the Eritrean diaspora.[11]

Talking about traumatic experiences is never an easy task for victims and witnesses who are often emotionally, psychologically, Ibid behaviorally, spiritually and socially wounded (Litz et al. 2009). Eritreans in the diaspora are often deterred from articulating their memories publicly, dreading punitive reprisals from Eritrean authorities ranging from denial of services offered by government offices at home and embassies abroad, and harassment and imprisonment if they dare to visit their country (Hirt and Mohammad 2018). While the fear of being reported to the government has always dissuaded many Eritreans from expressing dissent against their home government (Kibreab 2007), the prospect of participating with anonymous nicknames in *PalTalk* platforms invigorated many to express their personal grievances publicly, albeit pseudonymously.

In 2012, as dozens of stories about the oppression and exploitation of conscripts in the Eritrean army were exposed publicly for the first time in *Tezareb,* attracting an increasing number of listeners in *PalTalk*, alerted Eritrean embassies and consulates in Europe and North America launched countercampaigns against *Smer* and other opposition rooms.[12] The main counterargument dispatched by pro-government *PalTalk* rooms such as the *Young EPLF* room and *Alenalki* room was that violence and death were unavoidable during the war, seeking to portray such experiences as necessary

101

and heroic. Administrators of *Young EPLF*, for example, held a weekly book reading program where assigned speakers would recite books published by the ruling party's propaganda department *Hidri*.[13] *Young EPLF* and other pro-government *PalTalk* rooms also promoted other state-sponsored artistic diasporic events such as festivals and concerts, at times inviting state sponsored celebrity singers to appear in *PalTalk* shows during their campaign tours abroad.

It is crucial to note at this point that the Eritrean government has for decades been engaged in what can be characterized as cultural violence against its people, trying to rationalise and downplay the suffering, particularly of the conscripted, through its PR organs. Most writers, singers, actors, filmmakers, poets, painters in the country are recruited as national service or civil service employees in these ideological organs and are compelled to produce propaganda work that commends the leadership and demonise internal and external opponents. Through their songs, poems, theater and film, artists serve as propagandists ever occupied to mask the continued terror and misery of the population. The picture is strikingly reminiscent of how Mbembe and Meintjes (2003) describe the intertwining of experiences of violence to the necropolitical duty of citizenry. In Eritrea, authorities dismiss grievances about atrocities and suffering as treasonous indulgences, defaulting a rhetoric of sacrifice for the nation and a commitment for fallen martyrs. Death in war is transfigured as *meswaeti*, a sacrifice of spiritual caliber. This narrative, however, is not received wholeheartedly by all Eritreans in the diaspora. A fieldnote describing a *PalTalk* session in *Teshamo* room hints at this difference: "all official ceremonies and public meetings in Eritrea are opened with a minute of silence for martyrs. At the beginning of a *PalTalk* seminar in *Teshamo* room, an Eritrean speaker joining from South Africa follows this tradition; although the way he did it had a significant symbolic distinction. He invites the participants in the room to take part in a one-minute moment of silence. Instead of those who died in war however, he requested the listeners in the room to give tribute to those he describes as 'heroically dying and languishing in Eritrean prisons for their democratic beliefs'".[14]

Eritrean diaspora websites provide opportunities for developing counter-narrative voices about Eritrean histories excluded from dominant discourses (Turner 2008; Conrad 2006). It is necessary to note also that voices in the online spheres have not necessarily been voices of the oppressed, but rather "alternative 'elite' narratives" (Rich Dorman 2005). Prominent diaspora websites such as *Dehai.org*, *Asmarino.com*, and *Awate.com*, for example, follow one-way traditional formats. They fall short of qualifying as mass participatory sites because they dominantly host essays by Eritrean intellectuals usually written in English. Besides, in the early days of Eritrean *PalTalk*, intellectuals and renowned war veterans dominated much of the speech in the platform. Yonas, a former national service member, currently living in Italy, recalls that in the first years of the Eritrean *PalTalk* launch, most Eritreans preferred to listen to intellectuals rather than participate in debates citing how valuable the discussions were: "in the beginning,

PalTalk was an intellectual hub where serious debates were conducted. We only used to listen. It was inspirational and educational to listen to people like Alem Meharena. We did not have the intellectual capacity nor the audacity to talk among such distinguished people. Their talks were recorded and replayed in the rooms over and over again, and people would comment and debate about them. Gradually, this changed, and *PalTalk* became a mass debate channel, as people became encouraged to speak about their pain and anger."[15]

The success of Eritrean *PalTalk* in terms of mass participation is related to the breaking of this spell where anyone, regardless of education and writing or computing skills, could talk and debate using their digital devices. A regular chat service for the rest of the world, *PalTalk* became an atypical space for Eritreans - a space of mourning, counting losses, memorialisation and solidarity. Sessions such as *Tezareb* mellowed into hubs, where the sad, the grieving and the neglected congregated in defiance of their watchful government and recollected gruesome scenes from the older armed struggle and the national service that had been kept secret until then. Gebru, 67, who currently lives in Goteborg, Sweden, points to what he describes as a healing gratification of sharing testimonies in *PalTalk*: "[w]e spoke to heal. We talked to feel better and to confront what happened. I was in the ELF, and I never accepted firing arms at *Shaebia* (EPLF). We did not have ethnic tension, religious contest, nor border disagreement. We all left our homes to liberate our nation [from Ethiopia] and to stop the suffering our people were undergoing at the hands of foreign conquerors. Today we all find ourselves in exile. They can now see how pointless our civil war was. It is evident today that it only benefitted Isaias, who wanted to eliminate ELF. We could never talk about this in any public forum because we were driven out from Eritrea, pushed to exile. Now in *PalTalk*, we all remember. Things that happened 30, 40 years ago. It has been that long, and it is not easy to remember everything precisely, but when one person tells a story, another jumps in and adds more details or corrects the narrator if he is wrong."[16]

Moving Past the Troubles: Promoting a more Peaceful Future

Eritrean diasporic anti-government political initiatives are almost entirely polarized and manifest in the exclusion of participation of government representatives and supporters. With acute bitterness against each other, both sides envision of a national future grounded on the triumph of their political goals. State leaders hold hostile stances against those in the diaspora who oppose them and engage exclusively with diaspora Eritreans who are loyal to the regime. Even if there had been an unlikely willingness by the state representatives to engage with dissident Eritreans, it would not lead to rational communication piloted with genuine desire for understanding each other and resolving differences. This quagmire resonates with Jurgen Habermas's contention that communicative rationality is contingent upon a shared belief between discussants about the legitimacy of the topics at hand and the existence of trust that

103

they are not trying to manipulate each other. Habermas notes that when politicians and public relations agents habitually engage in building discourse that promotes agendas they are not necessarily sincere about, their rhetorical deliberations inhibit the rational discussions that can resolve contests of validity claims to reach agreements of some sort (in Peters 1993).

Eritrean *PalTalk* rooms have, for many years, served as platforms of intense debates on how to pursue political change in Eritrea, particularly on the feasibility of non-armed struggle and national reconciliation.[17] Such conversations took place only among government dissidents who recognise a violent past and view injustice and unconstitutionality within the current power system in Eritrea. In this regard chatrooms have been effectual spaces where wide public resentment that lacked a political direction was consolidated through relentless public debates that carried on for years concluding with the budding of articulated political movements in the diaspora. The Eritrean *PalTalk* space in that regard has functioned as a form of a public sphere where strategies for a peaceful future were intensely debated, and in some cases, marked as causes for conflict. Overall, the current study identified the following strategies for peace promoted in Eritrean opposition *PalTalk* rooms between 2000 and 2017.[18] Pacifism, which as a peace strategy involves "the total absence of violence, though not necessarily the avoidance of confrontation per se" (Harris 2018: 130). Pacifism is thus a negative peace and corresponds to traditional values in Eritrea based on Islamic values of non-violent struggle or *la 'unf*. Some examples in Eritrean *PalTalk* rooms include how, between 2011 and 2012, Eritrean Youth Solidarity for Change (EYSC) members staunchly stood in Eritrean *PalTalk* rooms against calls for armed fight advocated by discussants aligned to the *Simret* (Eritrean Youth Solidarity for National Salvation, EYSNS) movement.[19] Similarly, members of the South Africa-based Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (EMDHR) have, for more than a decade, utilized *PalTalk* as a platform to spread their teachings of non-violent struggle from their anti-violence manifesto *Bidho Anxar Atehasasbana* (translated as "challenging our perceptions").[20] As Samuel Bizen notes, since the early 2000s, EMDHR members were effectively able to spread their messages from South Africa to thousands of Eritreans around the world using *PalTalk*.[21] *Bidho Anxar Atehasasbana* highlights a steady normalisation of violence in Eritrea as a default means of resolving conflict and tension and urges Eritreans to consider alternative, non-violent strategies of struggle.[22] The uniqueness of EMDHR's approach of struggle for peace lay in their focus on rooting out what they described as a "culture of resolving conflicts violently".[23]

Several *PalTalk* "peace education" sessions have been conducted in the time frame considered in this study (2000 to 2017). Fashioned as lectures, most of these talks were given by scholars and public figures, including some with international experience in peacebuilding. For example, in September 2014, Dr. Adane Gebremeskel, a peace, security and good governance consultant based in Botswana, addressed audiences

104

in *Harnet PalTalk* room about lessons Eritreans could learn from the post-Apartheid reconciliation process in South Africa. In the question-and-answer session that followed the seminar, he forwarded insights that were relatable to the complexities of Eritrean opposition. Some of his suggestions led to heated debates, such as how his suggestion that rapprochements with the Eritrean government could yield positive results, triggered several skeptical questions and comments from participants. He expanded his arguments by reciting how there had been secrete discussions between the South African government and the opposition ANC (African National Congress) since the mid-eighties, much before the end of Apartheid. In his talk, he pleaded with listeners that there could be well-intentioned officials within the Eritrean government who would want a peaceful transition. Below is an excerpt from his speech: "although it doesn't seem that there is an outstanding power balance that can nudge the regime to sit for negotiations, yet there are hopes. It is possible that some individuals within the Eritrean government and its support base could be reasonable enough to negotiate for a peaceful future of the country."[24]

Activists, such as Dr. Daniel Rezene, endeavored to appeal to *PalTalk* audiences to pursue peace and justice through international law. They used the platform to encourage survivors to testify against perpetrators with the vision of deterring further crimes and building accountable, law-abiding systems. Such efforts that follow legal routes to end conflicts fall within the realm of peace strategy which Harris (2018) labels as "peace through justice" and which works by taking an active stand against structural violence by publicly rallying public opinion for just causes, and by discrediting the violent policies of government leaders.

Globally, there have been increasing attempts to utilize international criminal laws to deter genocides and crimes against humanity based on the premise that future assailants can be alarmed by the prospect of punishment (Nouwen 2018). With similar aspirations, the UN Human Rights Council mandated the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (COIE) in June 2014, which has since been conducting successive investigations about widespread human rights violations in Eritrea.[25] Activists from diaspora organisations pleaded with listeners in *Smer PalTalk* room, urging the audience to volunteer for interviews and testimonies to support the international investigation in the hopes of deterring human rights violations in Eritrea. Although the exact number of *PalTalk* participants who agreed to testify has been kept confidential, the commission reports receiving over forty-five thousand submissions, many of which were submitted electronically.[26] Mekonnen (2016: 232), who was one of the activists campaigning in *PalTalk*, reports that his team benefited from *PalTalk* rooms to recruit volunteers who testified to the commission: "[t]he active involvement of non-State actors [...] has also heralded the successful utilization of one particular tool of social media, which was efficiently used in collecting testimonies and mobilizing support to the COIE process [...] Leaving a detailed analysis of this aspect to future contributions, it needs to be

[emphasized] that online *Paltalk* rooms have played indispensable role in mobilizing Eritrean diaspora communities towards COIE-related activities."

Concluding Remarks

Communal discussions about conflict violence and experiences of trauma are essential constituents of post-violence healing processes (Humphrey 2013). In order to be successful, communal discussions require safe spaces for victims to articulate their loss and to demand answers for unrequited crimes committed in contexts of conflict and despotism. This undertaking is, in fact, a matter of justice, as it was for the nationals of the Solomon Islands who sought "the right to truth" about the whereabouts and circumstances of deaths of civilians in a civil conflict as an essential element of their nation's peace and reconciliation process (Jeffery 2017). The internet can be a great resource in circumstances where safe public spheres do not exist or are constrained. Hutu and Tutsi Burundians in the diaspora, for example, conducted difficult conversations that could not transpire in their country by setting up online bulletin boards to talk about events surrounding attacks on Hutus in 1972 and attacks on Tutsis in 1993, exploring together possibilities for peace and security (Kadende-Kaiser 2003).

Notwithstanding the value of peace education in protracted conflicts, peace education is critically dependent on the existence of ongoing peace processes and conducive environments to the development of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence (Levy 2014). Both conditions are absent in the Eritrean political context because there have neither been peace processes that involve state actors nor opportunities for dissident Eritreans to bargain with the state as legitimate actors. A related concern is associated with the notion that peace communication is not necessarily "good" in its nature, and despite its aim at obliterating conflict, it might end up re-triggering it (Davies 2005). This skepticism holds virtue especially considering that truth sharing and other forms of debates in Eritrean opposition *PalTalk* platforms take place in the absence of the alleged perpetrators. While exposing such crimes can potentially help in deterring further crimes, it is not clear if talking about collective memories and exposing previously unknown crimes is not going to incense participants and accelerate conflict and hatred.

There is also a shortcoming associated with running national discussions such as *Tezareb* in the dominant Tigrinya language, as this can pose a linguistic barrier for exiled ethnic minority citizens from expressing their opinions and engaging in debates articulately. With the exception of a few invited speaker guests from minority nationalities, the roles of individuals from such ethnic groups in *PalTalk* rooms remained minimal over the studied years. Moreover, the concerns, challenges and goals raised in discussions in popular rooms such as *Smer* were largely incognisant to the ordeal of minority groups such as Kunama, Bilin and Afar who experienced other types of injustices such as land grabbing and restrictions on natural resource use.[27]

Overall though, in response to the debate on whether media can contribute positively to building peace, Eritrean *PalTalk* platforms have contributed some constructive undertakings in the time frame covered in this study (2000-2017). These include promoting historical documentation and memorialization, non-violent struggle and cooperation with international organisations to pursue justice from international bodies. The most significant accomplishment Eritrean *PalTalk* can be credited with, however, is the breaking of the spiral of silence in the diaspora resulting in the unveiling of dozens of concealed stories of violence and human rights violations that took place in Eritrea during the armed struggle and in the post-independence era. As an essential element of the Eritrean diaspora public sphere, the Eritrean *PalTalk* platform has played an instrumental service in challenging state-led discourses that tend to normalise violence and suffering as necessary components of nation-building.

Yonatan Tewelde is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Communications and Humanities at Penn State Harrisburg.

Notes:

1 - Asgede Hagos, *Greater Horn of Africa Peace Building Project, Case study Six, Media Intervention* in *Peace Building in Burundi - The Studio Ijambo Experience and Impact*, "Management Systems International", March, 2001.

2 - New media, also referred as digital media, gained prominence with the release of Web 2.0., a second-generation set of internet technologies that are either entirely or partly online, see Marwick (2013). New media encompass protocols and tools that are highly social, affordable, and so accessible that they encourage users to create and interact with content, bringing about a shift from spectatorship and consumerism into immersive participation and co-creation; also see Dovey (2008).

3 - The solidarity bond between the Sudanese diaspora and those at home had already been in place before the revolution when the diaspora activists began recruiting volunteers in Sudan to buy meals for the poor during the fasting season of Ramadan. See Y. Elbagir Y., *How Sudan's Diaspora Uses Social Media to Marshal Ramadan Meals*, "The Guardian", 7 July 2016, www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/07/sudan-culture-giving-galvanised-support-aid-donors (last accessed on 28 February 2020).

4 - Khalid Albaih, *How WhatsApp is Fueling a 'Sharing Revolution' in Sudan*, "The Guardian", 15 October 2015, www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/15/sudan-whatsapp-sharing-revolution, (last accessed on 6 March 2020).

5 - Negash Girmay, "Unexplored Histories, with Ghirmai Negash and Dawit L. Petros", in *The Power Plant,* 21 July 2020, www.vimeo.com/440427190 (last accessed on 5 August 2020).

6 - UNHCR, "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019", 2020, www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf, (last accessed on 18 July 2020).

7 - UNICEF (2023), *Eritrea: Humanitarian Action for Children*, https://www.unicef.org/media/131891/file/2023-HAC-Eritrea.pdf, (last accessed 28 May 2023)

8 - Tamara Baraaz, Eritrea's Capital is Lovely. But Scratch the Surface and You'll Find a Terrifying Reality, "Haaretz", 4 July 2019, www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-eritrea-s-capital-is-lovely-but-under-the-surface-is-a-terrifying-reality-1.7088041 (last accessed on 18 July 2020).

9 - Amnesty International, "Just Deserters: Why Indefinite National Service in Eritrea has Created a Generation of Refugees", www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR6429302015ENGLISH.PDF (last accessed on 27 July 2020).

10 - *Tezareb* (translated as "speak out" in Tigrinya) is an emancipatory call for speaking out as a form of rebellion and overcoming fear.

11 - Interview with Rezene Abraha, Online, 6 November 2019.

12 - Interview with Rezene Abraha, Online, 6 November 2019.

13 - Some of the books read in the pro-government *Young EPLF PalTalk* room discussion session were: Dirar (1996), Berhe (1995), Beyene (2009).

14 - *Teshamo PalTalk* room discussion session, 7 June 2014.

15 - Interview with Yonas Habteslassie, Online, 6 December 2019.

16 - Interview with Gebru Frezghi, Online, 12 January 2020.

17 - Jurgen Habermas distinguishes this type of communication as "communicative rationality" describing it as a communication process that involves contesting "validity-claims" ("truth", "rightness" and "sincerity") and is conducted to ultimately resolve differences through discussion to reach an agreement. See Peters (1993) and Niemi (2005).

18 - In order to conceptualise conflict obviation and peacebuilding conversations conducted in Eritrean *PalTalk* platforms, this study applied Ian Harris's (2018) philosophical framework, which outlines seven strategies for peace: peace through strength, pacifism, peace with justice, institution building, peace through sustainability, peace through communication, and peace education.

19 - Interview with Robiel Negash, Online, 11 December 2020. EYSNS movement had a base in Ethiopia and recruited Eritrean refugees, and was in favor of Ethiopia's involvement in supporting Eritrean opposition groups. See Tronvoll K. and Mohammad A.S., "Eritrean Opposition Parties and Civic Organisations",

NOREF Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre, 2015, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/187262/9f9d5d39a-fa27ee550f5632f9b6d03e4.pdf (last accessed on 27 March 2019).

20 - EMDHR, **ብድሆ አንጻር አተሓሳስባና፡ ንመሰልና ባዕልና** *(Challenging Our Perceptions: Our Pursuit for Rights)*, Pretoria, South Africa: EMDHR, July 2006.

21 - Interview with Samuel Bizen, 15 November 2019.

22 - According to Samuel Bizen, EMDHR's manifesto **ብድሆ አንጻር አተሓሳስባና** *Bidho Anxar Atehasasbana* was written based on a conceptual framework of non-violently toppling dictators explained in a book called *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (Sharp 2003).

23 - For a discussion about the importance of cultural mentalities and conceptions of the world as a more adequate approach to peace education than concentrating on conflict as a form of aberration see Levy (2014).

24 - *Harnet PalTalk* room discussion session, 27 September 2014.

25 - UNHRC, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, A/HRC/32/47", June 2016 www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColEritrea/A_HRC_32_CRP.1_read-only.pdf (last accessed on 9 December 2019); also see Keetharuth S. (2018), "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea", 11 June 2018, www.reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/G1914037.pdf (last accessed on 8 December 2019).

26 - UNHRC, "Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea", 2015 www.securitycouncil-report.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_hrc_29_42.pdf, (last accessed on 16 July 2020).

27 - For a discussion of how the Eritrean state's modernisation macro-policy took away Kunama lands to settle highland farmers and deported Eritreans from Ethiopia, collapsing the Kunama peoples' traditional management of natural resources in the Gash-Setit, see Naty (2002).

References

Adams G. and Kurtiş, T. (2012), *Collective Memory Practices as Tools for Reconciliation: Perspectives from Liberation and Cultural Psychology*, in "African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review", vol. 2, n. 2, pp. 5-28

Aghadiegwu U.C. and Ogbonna U.A. (2015), *The Rise of Hate and Peace Journalism in the Nigerian Democratization Process: the Place of the New Media,* in "Communication Panorama African and Global Perspectives", vol. 1, n. 1, pp. 1-16

Barrera G. (2003), *The Construction of Racial Hierarchies in Colonial Eritrea: The Liberal and Early Fascist Period, 1897-1934*, in P. Palumbo (ed.), *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, pp. 81-115

Bashri M. (2017), O*nline Communities, Conflict, and Diaspora: The Case of South Sudanese Women*, in O. Ogunyemi, *Media, Diaspora and Conflict*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 223-234

Berhe, S. (1995) *Wefri Sigre-Dob, Asmara, Aman Publishers*

Beyene, T. (2009) *Kab Riq' Hifnti,* Asmara, Hdri Publishers

Bratić V. (2008), *Examining Peace-Oriented Media*, in "Areas of Violent Conflict. International Communication Gazette", vol. 70, n. 6, pp. 487-503

Brinkerhoff J.M. (2006), *Digital Diasporas and Conflict Prevention: The Case of Somalinet.com*, in "Review of International Studies", vol. 32, n. 1, pp. 25-47

Byrne S., Clarke M.A. and Rahman A. (2018), *Colonialism and Peace and Conflict Studies*, in "Peace and Conflict Studies", vol. 25, n. 1, pp. 11-23

Chelati Dirar U. (2004), *From Warriors to Urban Dwellers. Ascari and the Military Factor in the Urban Development of Colonial Eritrea*, in "Cahiers d'études Africaines", vol. 44, n. 175, pp. 533-74

Clapham, C. (2016), P*eace in the Horn of Africa, i*n: *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace,* New York: Springer, pp.325–335

Conrad B. (2006), *Out of the "Memory Hole": Alternative Narratives of the Eritrean Revolution in the Diaspora*, in "Afrika Spectrum", vol. 41, n. 2, pp. 249-71

Daley, P. (2014), *Unearthing the Local: Hegemony and Peace Discourses in Central Africa,* in F. McConnell, N. Megoran, and P. Williams (eds.), *Geographies of Peace: New Approaches to Boundaries, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution*, London, New York, I.B. Tauris, pp. 75-106

Davies L. (2005), *Evaluating the Link between Conflict and Education*, in "Journal of Peacebuilding & Development", vol. 2, n. 2, pp. 42-58

De Waal A. (2015), *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*, New York, John Wiley & Sons

Dietrich, W. (2012). Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture, New York, Palgrave Macmillan

Dirar, S. (1996) *Ertrawyan Command: Qiya 18 Dekayik* [*Eritrean Commando: 18 Minutes of Marvel*], Asmara, Hdri Publishers

Dovey, J. (2008), *Dinosaurs and Butterflies - Media Practice Research in New Media Ecologies*, in "Journal of Media Practice", vol 9, n. 3, pp. 243-56

Eze C.B. (2017), *Conflict and Peacebuilding in West Africa - The Media as Foes or Friends,* in "School of Information and Communication Studies", Kumasi, University of Ghana.

Foucault M. (1984), *The Body of the Condemned*, in P. Rainbow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon Books, pp. 170-78

Galtung J. (1969), *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*, in "Journal of Peace Research", vol. 6, n. 3, pp. 167-91

Galtung J. (1980), *Essays in Peace Research*, Copenhagen, Ejlers

Hague B.N. and Loader B.D. (1999), *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision Making in the Information Age*, Psychology Press, Hove

Hailu G. (2013), *The Conscript: A Novel of Libya's Anticolonial War*, Athens, Ohio University Press

Harris I.M. (2018), *A Philosophic Framework for Peace Education*, in M. Brown and K.G. Brown, *Nonviolence: Critiquing Assumptions, Examining Frameworks*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 127-44

Hirt N. and Mohammad A.S. (2018), *The Lack of Political Space of the Eritrean Diaspora in the Arab Gulf and Sudan: Torn Between an Autocratic Home and Autocratic Hosts,* in "Mashriq & Mahjar Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies", vol. 5, n. 1, pp. 101-126

Humphrey M. (2013), *The Politics of Atrocity and Reconciliation: From Terror to Trauma*. London & New York, Taylor & Francis

Jeffery R. (ed.) (2017), *Transitional Justice in Practice* [online], New York, Palgrave Macmillan US, http://link.springer.com/10.1057/978-1-137-59695-6 (last accessed on 28 September 2019)

Kadende-Kaiser R.M. (2003), *The Internet's Mediation Potential in Protracted Conflicts: The Case of Burundi* in R. Latham (ed.), *Bombs and Bandwidth: The Emerging Relationship Between Information Technology and Security,* New York and London, The New Press, pp. 268-78

Kibreab G. (2007), *The Eritrean Diaspora, the War of Independence, Post-Conflict (Re)-Construction and Democratisation,* in J.U. Dahre, *The Role of Diasporas in Peace, Democracy and Development in the Horn of Africa*, Lund, Research reports in Social Anthropology, pp. 97-116

Kibreab G. (2009), *Forced Labour in Eritrea*, in "The Journal of Modern African Studies", vol. 47, n. 1, pp. 41-72

Levy G. (2014), *Is There a Place for Peace Education? Political Education and Citizenship Activism in Israeli Schools*, in "Journal of Peace Education", vol. 11, n. 1, pp. 101-19

Litz B.T., Stein N., Delaney E., Lebowitz L., Nash W.P., Silva C. and Maguen S. (2009), *Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy*, in "Clinical Psychology Review", vol. 29, n. 8, pp. 695-706

Mamdani M. (1996), *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism,* Oxford, James Currey

Marwick, A.E. (2013), *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age*, New Haven, Yale University Press

Maya-Jariego I., Peña-Leiva A.D.L., Arenas-Rivera C. and Alieva, D. (2019), *Personal Networks, Social Media, and Community Cohesion in the Strategies of Peace-building Agents in Colombia to Counteract the Segregation of Displaced Populations*, in "Journal of Community Psychology", vol. 47, n. 6, pp. 1300-12

Mazrui A.A. (1994), *Africa: In Search of Self-Pacification*, in "African Affairs", vol. 93, pp. 39-42

Mbembe J.A. and Meintjes L. (2003), *Necropolitics*, in "Public Culture", vol. 15, n. 1, pp. 11-40

McLachlan S. (2011), *Armies of the Adowa Campaign 1896: The Italian Disaster in Ethiopia*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing

Megoran N., McConnell F. and Williams P. (2016), *Geography and Peace*, in O.P. Richmond, S. Pogodda and J. Ramovic (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 123-38

Mekonnen, D.R. (2016). *The Case for Crimes against Humanity in Eritrea: Assessing the Reports of Two un Fact Finding Mission,* in "Journal of international humanitarian legal studies", vol. 7, n. 2, pp. 221-256

Menesey (2019), ሳዋ፡ ዕቱብ ምርጫ ንው*ሓ*ስ *መ*ጸኢ, in «Menesey», vol. 63, July 2019

Mohamoud A. (2005), *Mobilising African Diaspora for the Promotion of Peace in Africa*, Amsterdam, SAHAN Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek & Adviesbureau

Mpofu S. (2013), *Social Media and the Politics of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe*, in "Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies", vol. 34, n. 1, pp. 115-22

Mwangi M. (2010), *The Role of Radio in Peace Building in Burundi, 1995-2005: A Case Study of Studio Ijambo*, PhD Dissertation, University of Nairobi

Naty A. (2002), *Environment, Society and the State in Western Eritrea*, in "Africa", Vol. *72*, n. 4, pp. 569-97

Negash (2020) "Unexplored Histories, with Ghirmai Negash and Dawit L. Petros", in *The Power Plant,* 21 July 2020, www.vimeo.com/440427190 (last accessed on 5 August 2020).

Niemi J.I. (2005), *Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Rationality: The Foundational Distinction Between Communicative and Strategic Action,* in "Social Theory and Practice", vol 31, n. 4, pp. 513-32

Nouwen S.M. (2018), *The International Criminal Court and Conflict Prevention in Africa*, in V. Kudrat and T. Karbo (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Peacebuilding in Africa*, New York, Springer, pp. 83-102

O'Shaughnessy N. (2017), *Marketing the Third Reich: Persuasion, Packaging and Propaganda*, London, Routledge

Palumbo P. (2003), *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present*, Berkley, University of California Press

Peters J.D. (1993), *Distrust of Representation: Habermas on the Public Sphere*, in "Media, Culture & Society", vol. 15, n. 4, pp. 541-71

111

Rich Dorman S. (2005), *Narratives of Nationalism in Eritrea: Research and Revisionism*, in "Nations and Nationalism", vol. 11, n. 2, pp. 203-22

Sassi S. (2000), *The Controversies of the Internet and the Revitalization of Local Political Life*, in K. Hacker and V. Dijk (eds.), *Digital Democracy: Issues of Theory and Practice*, London, Sage Publications, pp. 90-104

Sharp G. (2003), *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*, Massachusets, Albert Einstein Institution

Skjerdal T.S. (2009), *A Critical Look at the Digital Diaspora: Perspectives from Ethiopia*, in K.S. Orgeret and H. Rønning (eds.), *The Power of Communication: Changes and Challenges in African Media*, pp. 311-47

Skjerdal T.S. (2012), *The Somali Media and their Peace-Building Potential*, in "Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies", vol. 11, n. 1, pp. 27-50

Tronvoll K. and Mekonnen D.R. (2014), *The African Garrison State: Human Rights & Political Development in Eritrea*, New York, Boydell & Brewer Ltd.

Turner S. (2008), *Cyberwars of Words: Expressing the Unspeakable in Burundi's Diaspora,* in "Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies", vol. 34, n.7, pp. 1161-80

112