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Original Article

Peacebuilding and Social Change Through Soap Opera: The Two Elements of Moral Authority of 'Team Kenya'

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Abstract

Thus far, the success of soap operas in peacebuilding and their contribution to social change have been attributed to the edutainment format they usually take. The edutainment format is indeed an essential element of success, but it alone does not reveal the basis for soap operas' influence on audiences and societies. We therefore argue that for soap operas to have a transformative peacebuilding effect, to contribute to the learning of non-violent engagement with conflict and thereby to enable social change and resilience to violent conflict within societies, they need to do more than educate and entertain: they need to acquire moral authority. This moral authority can only be derived from the combination of two elements: first, edutainment and second, civil norm building. The second element, though indispensable, has thus far not formed part of our understanding of the success of soap operas. To illustrate our argument, we take the soap opera Team Kenya which was created following the 2007–2008 post-election violence to help Kenyans overcome their ethnic-tribal identity conflicts in non-violent ways as a case study.

Introduction

Soap operas have been successfully used in peacebuilding to enable changes in behaviour amongst audiences which, in turn, have led to an increase in social cohesion and non-violent conflict resolution. The idea that their success is based on an edutainment approach – 'entertaining while educating' – has

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been widely accepted. Contrary to this view, we argue that an edutainment approach alone cannot explain the success of soap operas in peacebuilding. Coming up with an entertaining scenario that educates people about the desirability of peace is unlikely to bring about a change in audiences' day-to-day behaviour and way of life. Indeed, successful soap operas, when qualitatively analysed, show that they engage in more than edutainment: they exemplify a sincere attachment to and authen-

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tic performance of the three categories[1] of civil norms underpinning peaceful cooperation: assenting to civil peace, practicing substantive civility, building capacity and civil competencies. Across these categories soap operas do two things: they engage with the civil concerns of the audiences – their desires and fears regarding peace and conflict – and they provide credible solutions and strategies for societies and individuals to overcome enmity and violence in everyday life. And they do this so authentically and sincerely that audiences identify with the plot and recognise soap operas' moral authority thereby enabling these soap operas to influence audiences' behaviour and contribute to social change and cohesion. As such, edutainment is insufficient to explain soap operas' success in peacebuilding. Rather, successful soap operas also engage in civil norm building. However, and thus far, this element has been overlooked. We hope to contribute to the field by showing that it is only through the combination of edutainment and civil norm building that soap operas can acquire moral authority; that is such 'power that [a soap opera] calls forth or inhibits conduct automatically' (Durkheim, 1995/1912, p. 209) amongst audiences. The recognition of moral authority by audiences is the sine-qua-non

> **The recognition of moral authority by audiences is the sine-qua-non condition for sustainable civil peace**.

condition for sustainable civil peace. To reveal the civil norm building element in soap operas and to illustrate the interplay between and complementarity of edutainment and civil norm building we provide an analysis of the soap opera *Team Kenya* (2008–2010). *Team Kenya*, a successful soap opera, provides an example that shows how edutainment – a fictionalised football tournament – and civil norm building – focusing on how a diverse team manages its differences and increasingly functions as a team of equals – act together to bring about moral authority. In Part I of this paper, we provide the conceptual framework used: soap opera in peacebuilding, edutainment and civil norm building. In Part II we focus on the exemplification of the two elements – edutainment and civil norm building – in *Team Kenya* that coalesce into moral authority and ultimately explain its success. By using the example of *Team Kenya*, we hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of how soap operas (and more widely popular fiction) can be purposefully designed to achieve moral authority and therefore be impactful and transformative on society.

Part I: Key Concepts: Soap Opera, Edutainment, Civil Norm Building and Moral Authority

Soap Operas in Peacebuilding

Soap operas can be defined as consisting of 'character-based stories involving dramatic plots, real-life problems and multiple twists and turns' (Bratic, 2013, p. 150). They are 'serial drama[s] in which the main story carries over from one dramatic episode to the next' (Radio for Peacebuilding Africa, 2004/05, p. 4). Though soap operas usually have a main story, they often run various story lines in parallel. As one problem gets solved – often in a dramatic fashion – the next one occurs and becomes the dominant story line for a while. The popularity of soap operas and particularly their ability to engage in

real-life problems and to offer solutions to them have been identified as valuable for peacebuilding over the last two decades. However, it has also been recognised that producing soap operas for peace-building purposes is more complex than producing ordinary soap operas 'because conflict preven-tion/resolution (…) [requires] ideas and concepts which will in turn translate into behavioural changes' (Radio for Peacebuilding Africa, 2004/05, p. 6). As such, soap operas for peacebuilding must somehow aspire to achieve 'perspective-taking with regard to the history of intergroup conflict' (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2013, p. 145) and 'produce an endurable and even attractive dialogue with the prejudices of the past, rather than one fraught with fear and defensiveness' (Nussbaum, 2006, 392) – the hope being that these attributes combined would move people from enmity and mistrust to co-citizenship (also Paluck, 2009) and promote civil-cultural change (Staub & Pearlman, 2009; also Usdin et al., 2005). In other words, for soap operas to be relevant for peacebuilding, they need to represent a 'relatable, convincing [format], and a perfect ground for modelling the resolution of conflict in a non-violent form' (Bratic, 2013, p. 150). They also need to situate their plot in 'a par-ticular history, culture, and socio-economic situation that the members of the audience have in common' (Tufte, 2005, p. 170) and that enables them to recognise and reject stereotypes and preju-dice in order to identify areas of common interest and mutual dependence (Radio for Peacebuilding Africa, 2004/05, cf. 12/13). Many soap operas have translated these aims into concrete plots. For example, *Atunda Ayenda (Lost and Found)* addressed issues of enmity in post-civil war in Sierra Leone and the Rwandan soap opera *Musekeweya (New Dawn)* engaged with the consequences of the genocide, ethnic divides as well as reconciliation and violence prevention. Both have been under-stood as successful and impactful; both have used edutainment as much as they have engaged in civil norm building.

Edutainment

Edutainment brings together two words: education and entertainment. The aim of edutainment approaches – whether in education, through the mass media, or specifically in soap opera – is to facilitate education by presenting the educative content in an accessible and interesting way; some-times, but not always, through engaging the learner actively and in a participatory way such as gaming. In short, edutainment approaches aim to educate learner's behaviour and attitudes (see e.g., Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal et al., 2003) by achieving what has been termed 'second order change'. Based on Watzlawick et al.'s work, Singhal et al. (2006) argue that soap operas often achieve first-order change which can be defined as including 'adjustments within the existing system' but being 'generally reversible', without 'a fundamental shift in values or behaviours' (see Singhal et al., 2006, p. 272). In short: non-transformational. In contrast, second-order change 'requires new learning', a 'change of the existing system' through 'fundamental shift in values or behaviours' (see Singhal et al., 2006, p. 272). In short, achieving transformation requires the building of new civil norms.

Civil Norm Building

Peace is best understood as the ability of civil society to peacefully and non-violently cooperate even in times of deep disagreement and division through the routinised and confident upholding of civil norms. Of these there exist three categories: (a) assent to civil peace, (b) substantive civility and (c) building civil capacity and civil competencies (see Harrison & Pukallus, 2023; Pukallus, 2022). Each of these come with a different set of symbols, metaphors, concepts, vocabulary and images that a community uses in their performance of peaceful cooperation. Though universal, the following three categories are interpreted and communicatively enacted in different local, cultural, historical and political contexts.

As a category 'assent to civil peace' is concerned with how a community engages with its past and envisions its future. Assent is a disposition and a way of conduct because it expresses an on-going individual and collective preference for peace over war. It also paves the way for a future-oriented way of engaging with the past and requires the acceptance of conflicting histories, the challenge of difficult forgiveness and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (Neiman, 2019) through transitional justice (such as truth commissions) and memorialisation as well as local mechanism and rituals aimed at reconciliation and renewal. In effect, assent to civil peace provides the basis for a new social contract accompanied by three types of normative obligations: (1) a commitment to agonistic conflict resolution (Mouffe, 2013); (2) minimal solidarity and the acceptance of reasonable losses (Allen, 2006); and (3) the acceptance of the obligations that arise for all members of the community; that is, in particular, a new way of conduct exhibiting substantive civility.

The category of 'substantive civility' is concerned with the kind of conduct that is required in public life and that underpins peaceful cooperation between members of the community who might not like each other, deeply disagree or who are former enemies that now agree to act as co-citizens in the pursuit of civil peace. It concerns daily interactions with regard to four aspects: (1) 'a concern for the common good' (Shils, 1997, p. 345) that extends beyond self-interest and can act as a motivating factor in the building of practices of cooperation and association; (2) the equal civil standing of all citizen; the respect for which manifest in society's code of conduct for public life; (3) as a regulator of relationships between citizens and finally (4), as a regulator of the way in which disagreements and disputes are carried out between citizens. Substantive civility requires of citizens 'the readiness to moderate particular, individual or parochial interests' (Shils, 1997, p. 345), to express oneself on such a way that displays 'dignity-as-respectfulness' (Pukallus, 2022). Overall, it is through the practice of substantive civility that both trust and solidarity can be generated.

The third category is concerned with 'building civil capacity and civil competencies' both at individual and institutional levels. At an individual level, it concerns citizens' recognition of the value and necessity to form co-alignments, coalitions and associations; that is, to work with other in the pursuit of a common goal and for the benefit of society as a whole rather than be driven by mere self-interest. It also relates to civil competencies which include the communicative skills needed to ensure that deep disagreement and division do not lead to violence but can be engaged with agonistically in a variety of communicative formats (also Pukallus, 2022). This third category also extends to the political competences of a citizens often exercised in elections and voting. On an institutional level this category is concerned with the building of fair communicative and legal institutions. Edutainment and civil norm building on their own cannot ensure that soap operas have transformational impact on post-conflict societies – only their combination can.

Moral Authority Through the Interplay of Edutainment and Civil Norm Building

In accordance with the above, the basis for the influence of soap operas on peacebuilding can now be explained in the following way: Soap operas as cultural structures are created by choosing fictional program content that (a) focuses on a mundane topic that appeals to a wide audience such as a national sport, a national tradition, or widely shared experience (see below); and that (b) aligns these topics to the three categories of the civil norms of peaceful cooperation and is able to symbolically perform these. The combination of edutainment and civil norm building provides soap operas with rhetorical force and persuasive power which, in turn, establishes a relationship between soap opera and audience. When audiences identify

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with this fiction narrated in and through a soap opera; when they accept its 'symbolic projection' (Alexander, 2011, p. 83) and make it their own way of life, when the ethical considerations resonate and reveal themselves to be practically relevant, *then* audiences 'are pulled in'. Artificiality disappears' (Alexander, 2011, p. 85) and fusion between fiction and reality occurs and a strong relationship between the soap opera and the audience emerges. It is the interplay of surface and depth (content and meaning) that, when fused, commands attention, compels attachment and directs action (see Alexander, 2011). Fusion happens when the fictional content of the soap opera resonates with the actual civil concerns of the audience. Audiences accept that the categories of civil norms of peaceful cooperation can practically be enacted/performed and sustained under difficult and demanding circumstances – in short, that they can make a genuine contribution to peacebuilding. When fusion happens, soap operas acquire moral authority which means that audiences give them the legitimacy 'to identify, with conviction, right or wrong societal behaviors' (Nässen & Rambaree, 2021, p. 3) and thereby to exercise significant impact on their day-to-day lives and behaviour. It is this that *Team Kenya* achieved, as we will now show.

Part II: Team Kenya and the Achievement of Moral Authority

Team Kenya was produced by Search For Common Ground (SFCG) in collaboration with Media Focus on Africa (MFA) in 2008. It consisted of three seasons broadcast between 2009 and 2011 as a TV version on Citizen TV, Kenya's most popular TV station and as radio version on Radio Jambo. We focus on the first season (consisting of 13 episodes of 25 min each) as it was a direct response to the election violence of 2007/08.[2] *Team Kenya* uses the plot of a fictional football tournament scenario that dramatised how a co-ed team of young football players called Imani FC ("Faith FC") that had to work through 'their fears and biases' in order to 'see one another as individuals' (MFA, no date) rather than the 'the other' in order to be able to play as a team and stand a chance at winning football tournaments.

Team Kenya was popular, successful and influential regarding the behaviour of the audiences. The TV and radio version together attracted a weekly audience of 3.5 million Kenyans (SFCG, 2014). Moreover, DVDs of the show were given to community groups, schools, religious groups, and universities and the broadcasting was supported by a variety of outreach activities including cinema screenings. Its impact was evidenced (qualitatively and quantitatively) by SFCG's systematic and empirically based midterm (2010) and final (2012) reviews, carried out by the University for Peace. In these reports, *Team Kenya* was judged successful in terms of its positive transformational real-life impact on its audience. Specifically, SFCG (2010, p. 1) argued that the 'series is effective because it resonates deeply with aspects of daily life in Kenya; stimulates learning and reflection, and changes viewpoints on certain issues; provides knowledge of how to solve some of the problems addressed; triggers subsequent movements, particularly among youth; and is effective in reaching a wide population'. It was further argued that *Team Kenya*'s ability to resonate with Kenyans' daily concerns – resonance signalling moral authority – led to changes in behaviour in citizens as well as in governance of and the rule of law in Kenyan society (see Abdalla & Gaylor, 2010). Abdalla (2012, p. 21) further claims that *Team Kenya* 'affected participants as a person and citizen (…) through a change in perception and attitude. Many people reported being more open and accepting of others, particularly from other tribes, as a result of viewing the screenings'. Overall, *Team Kenya* 'inspired openness, dialogue and engagement with one another to heal old wounds, and to build peaceful communities' (Abdalla, 2012, p. 42) testifying to its moral authority – audiences believed in the authenticity and relevance of what they saw and applied it to their own lives.

This authenticity was based on at least two aspects: first, *Team Kenya* was created and produced locally. Actors and scriptwriters came from the local population and had experienced the election violence as

well as the tribal conflicts that are thematised throughout (SFCG, 2014). This provided *Team Kenya*'s script with credibility and authenticity. Second, the fictional characters came from different backgrounds, had different personalities and exhibited different degrees of self-interest and moral ambiguity. The Imani F.C. characters had to navigate difficulties and challenges of living a peaceful and cooperative life that Kenyans could identify with and relate to in the context of a widely shared experience/tradition. In order to be successful, *Team Kenya* had to display practical reasoning of a persuasive and motivational kind that fused the edutainment format with a desired normative order – and in so doing try to acquire a moral authority that could influence behaviour.

Methodology

We chose *Team Kenya* as a case study to illustrate our argument because of its success which made it a prototype for a new kind of generic soap opera format branded: 'The Team'; a format which 'has aired or is currently on air in 18 countries' (SFCG, 2020) and features civil norm building in its design – possibly intuitively so and yet empirically identifiable.

In order to explain why *Team Kenya* chose a football tournament as the basis for its edutainment approach we draw on literature that shows the peacebuilding potential of sport generally and the importance of football for Kenyans more specifically. It is the latter that ensured that the fictional plot resonated with Kenyans and awoke their interest in watching the soap opera in the first place. We then analysed all thirteen episodes of the first season (approx. 325 min of audio-visual content) via a qualitative content analysis which used the aspects defining the three categories of civil norms presented above as coding categories. To give one example, for assent to 'assent to civil peace' we looked for terms, expressions and metaphors that would show how the past was engaged with, how blame and responsibility were dealt with as well as what kind of references to a common future were made. Coding this way revealed how this category of civil norms was expressed in the episodes both verbally and non-verbally and how it was interpreted in the local, political and cultural circumstances that *Team Kenya* fictionalised so that a wider meaning for Kenyan society could be communicated to its audiences. This was done for each category of civil norms. Examples from the coding exercise are provided throughout as evidence for our claims. The relevant episodes (EP) and time stamps are referred to where appropriate. What this analysis shows is that it is likely that the production team realised, whether consciously or intuitively, that civil peace could only be achieved through cooperation and that this cooperation in turn could only be based on 'voluntary acquiescence' (Durkheim, 1995/1912, p. 247). To encourage such 'voluntary acquiescence', the programme was framed in terms of a desirable and achievable normative order that displayed how diverse civil concerns for peaceful cooperation could be recognised and met. To symbolise this normative order performatively meant explicitly engaging with the three categories of civil norms conducive to peaceful cooperation and to do so in a believable, relatable, accessible and authentic way that influenced the audience's perspectives and behaviour.

The Two Elements of Moral Authority in *Team Kenya*

Team Kenya successfully developed a dramatic plot that resonated with the interests of the audience – football – and grabbed its attention and that could simultaneously exemplify civil norm building. In what follows, we show how the two elements of moral authority – edutainment and civil norm building – were fused in *Team Kenya* and led to its positive transformational impact on the audience and by extension, Kenyan society.

Edutainment: A Fictionalised Football Scenario

There are two practical reasons for the choice of football in *Team Kenya*: first, football (and sport generally) has peacebuilding potential and second, football is Kenya's national sport and symbolises its ability for self-determination.

With regard to the first, the potential of sports in peacebuilding was officially recognised in 2011 when the UN created an interagency task group Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), recognising sports as "a cost-effective and flexible tool in promoting peace and development objectives" (Clarke et al., 2021, p. 2) and representing an 'attractive (…) interventionist tool to foster social cohesion, prevent and reduce conflict and build peace' (Dart, 2022, p. 271). In other words, sports and particularly football has demonstrated its ability to successfully promote 'mutual understanding, conflict reconciliation and co-existence in deeply divided societies (…), in conflict and post-conflict societies' (Krasniqi & Krasniqi, 2019, p. 145)[3] aided by its reach and appeal to a vast and diverse audience. More specifically, its peacebuilding contribution can be seen as five-fold: first, it shows group activity to 'build cohesion across social identity divides' (Mitchell et al., 2021, p. 466) thereby prioritising the good of the team over individual players; second, it shows how teams are governed by rules 'to which all players willingly adhere, [which] may have the effect of inculcating democratic norms and values, promoting tolerance, fairness, and peace' (Mitchell et al., 2021, p. 466); third, 'as an entertainment spectacle capable of commanding the interest of large numbers of people, [sport] provides a platform for symbolic expressions of unity and improved inter-group relationships' (Mitchell et al., 2021, p. 467). Fourth and 'as a forum for the socialization and social participation of individuals, may contribute to a more socially just and inclusive society' and fifth and less relevant to the present argument, 'sport may contribute to peace as defined to include individual well-being' (Mitchell et al., 2021, p. 467). It is this five-fold contribution that has made football a valuable tool in peacebuilding in various initiatives across the world (see Clarke et al., 2021; Krasniqi & Krasniqi, 2019; Rookwood & Palmer, 2011; Schulenkorf, 2010; Sterchele, 2013). What *Team Kenya* has done is build on the potential of peacebuilding in sport by fictionalising and integrating it into the format of a soap opera. This, in turn, shows that it is possible for the fictional mass media, such as soap operas but also novels for example, to benefit from a combination of proven peacebuilding tools – here sport, fiction and the mass media.

Building upon this and related to the second reason, football is Kenya's national sport and therefore seen to deeply resonate with Kenyan society. Introduced to Kenya in the early twentieth century by British colonisers, football was swiftly embraced and adapted by its indigenous peoples and its appeal has only grown ever since (Njororai, 2009). Although instrumentalised by colonisers to consolidate Britain's rule, football allowed for the expression of 'values such as courage, endurance and individual skill (…) [-] qualities admired in village recreational activities' (Njororai, 2009, p. 870). Exempt from many of the repressive rules imposed by colonisers, the football stadium became a space to express 'dissent and displeasure against the political class, administrative control and power' in colonial times (Njororai, 2009, p. 872) and correspondingly, became a symbol for (ethnic) self-determination, regional orientation, and self-expression for Kenyan society. From 1963 when Kenya gained independence from Britain football continued to possess the symbolic power of being associated with a form 'of "national culture"' (Alegi, 2010, p. 54) and identity. In its year of independence, the Kenya National Football League was established, and its imminent independence was celebrated with the 'Kenya Independence Cup' ('Uhuru Cup') tournament' in the newly build 'Africa Stadium' (now Nairobi City Stadium) (see Cruickshank & Morrison, 2013). It was only when Kenyan national football became associated with both corruption and poor management that Kenya's youth started to look abroad for inspiration (Siundu, 2011; Waliaulay, 2021). Nevertheless, for Kenyans football has remained a nation-defining sport.

By using a fictionalised football scenario, Team Kenya provided Kenyans with a reminder of their ability and capacity for self-determination – an ability that they were now supposed to use to reengage

with and in the performance of the civil norms of peaceful cooperation as a means for freedom and independence. As shown below, the message was that Kenya's future very much depended on its collaborative and associative capacity. It is this appeal to Kenya's potential for self-determination that is harnessed and built upon in Team Kenya's civil norm building approach and that ultimately forms part of the basis of its moral authority.

Civil Norm Building: The Three Categories of the Civil Norms of Peaceful Cooperation in Team Kenya

To ground its civil norm building approach and exemplify behaviour in accordance with the categories of the civil norms of peaceful cooperation, *Team Kenya* draws on three dominant metaphors (reminiscent of Mitchell et al., 2021): first, Imani FC, a football team, represents Kenyan society and its attempts to cope with its divided nature. Second, the rules that govern football represent civil conduct. Third, *Team Kenya* attempts to show unity and the Team's ability to overcome divides by emphasising the need for inclusivity and equality (mixing team members of different ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds) in the pursuit of their common aim. It is through these metaphors and their symbolic settings that the exemplification of peaceful cooperation becomes something the audience can actively engage and identify with. It is in this way that *Team Kenya* presents Kenyan society with an alternative version of itself in terms of a cooperative and peaceful normative order, which is symbolised performatively through the character-based stories and dramatic plots of the programme across the three categories of civil norms of peaceful cooperation:

Assent to Civil Peace in Team Kenya. Generally, and regarding assent to civil peace, *Team Kenya* emphasises behaviour that expresses an endorsement of the rule of law, a rejection of vigilantism and difficult forgiveness throughout its first season. This includes calling out malpractice and criminal behaviour (EP9; EP10), rejecting nepotism. corruption (EP7; EP8) and vigilantism (EP4). Instead, the need for cooperation with authorities is emphasised (EP8; EP10; EP12). Decision-making is encouraged based on competence and facts rather than past experiences or personal feelings (EP5). There is also an exemplification of difficult forgiveness and being future-facing. When it becomes apparent that Abbas has been tempted with bribery, Coach (the name given to the trainer) demotes him as team captain and appoints Johari instead (EP4). Coach then finds out that Johari is from the same tribe that killed his wife (EP5) in front of his eyes; an event he is still deeply traumatised by. However, given that Johari displays excellent leadership skills which are beneficial for the team, he decides against hanging on to blame and excluding Johari.

Team Kenya also exemplifies a new social contract (as a sports team but also as Kenyans) and the accompanying three types of normative obligations. The social contract is mainly emphasised through a continuous discourse on the need for teamwork accompanied by relevant symbols such as a team chant and the singing of the Kenyan anthem at matches with all players placing their right hand on their hearts. The value of and need for non-violent agonistic conflict resolution is also continuously emphasised in *Team Kenya*. For example, after Imani FC secures a victory over Shalom FC in friendly match, a conflict occurs when Abbas, an Imani FC player, aggressively breaks up a scuffle between a man and his girlfriend. The conflict is exacerbated when an Imani FC supporter accuses the Shalom FC supporters of 'always messing with our girls' (EP9 20:48). Johari tries to intervene but is too late and a brawl breaks out between the two groups of supporters. However, players from both Imani F.C. and Shalom F.C. separate the fighting supporters by forming two human walls in order to prevent further violence or injury. Both Imani FC's coach and the assistant coach walk into the free space created between the two camps, flanking Jacob 'Ghost' Mulee[4] who urges the brawling crowd to calm down by reminding them that football is supposed to bring people together and that players and supporters from both teams share a common goal; that is, to create a peaceful and 'good' future: '[W]e are supposed to play as brothers and sisters. […] [W]e have

lived together for so long … as brothers and sisters from different tribes […] the future is good when you are disciplined, but like this, forget it guys, ok? Let's not lose our focus' (EP9 22:03) thereby encouraging them to reject violence and focus on building a shared future. The teams and their supporters finally shake hands and part ways peacefully, thereby renewing their assent to civil peace.

Team Kenya also thematises the need for the acceptance of reasonable losses – not every player gets their way. In fact, everyone must abide by the same rules and by doing so each player displays their commitment to peace in terms behaviour and obligations (EP1 16:30). As Coach (EP1 23:44) puts it: '[a]s long as you are going to be here, and as long as I am the coach of this team, you are going to play by (…) the rules of the team!'. That prioritising the common goal of winning on the pitch is important but still difficult for the new team can be seen in the nonverbal communication that accompanies the series' dialogues. For example, in episode 1 Coach says: 'We have a great task ahead of us, and that is to win the tournament. Therefore we must forget all of our tribal differences [the camera focuses on team members exchanging looks of suspicion], if we want to play as a team' (EP1 24:43). This difficulty is seen to be overcome through the extension of good sportsmanship beyond the pitch (i.e., minimal solidarity) which is demonstrated by players learning to refrain from finger pointing and scapegoating when something goes wrong (e.g., losing a game) and practicing constructive reflection instead (i.e., collectively rewatching the game and identifying points for improvement). It is this assent to civil peace as exemplified and interpreted in *Team Kenya* that grounds the second category of civil norms.

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Substantive Civility in Team Kenya. When the football camp starts, both coaches and players struggle with the idea that women are equal to men, both on the pitch and beyond (EP1). Although expected from a co-ed team, players of different sexes initially reject their obligation to collaborate on the football pitch (EP1 09:57; EP1 15:12). This lack of substantive civility between male and female players is sustained by language that enforces gender stereotypes and stigmatisation. However, change in attitude and behaviour (and therefore redemption) is portrayed as possible: Whereas at first Coach stigmatises female players based on their appearance, sneering 'there is no hair salon around here, alright? So you might consider cutting that hair' (EP2 05:57), he later asks his male team players why they would think that they could play and win without the girls, why they blocked them and did not pass the ball to them. The girls' ability is recognised by the investor and initiator of Imani FC, Mr Bukenya who voices his surprise at the performance of a female player by proclaiming that 'she was brilliant today … for a moment I thought she was one of the boys!' (EP5 17:28). This remark signals that the coach starts to accept the idea that girls can play as well as boys and engages in the practice substantive civility – even if it is new for him.

Substantive civility – equal civil standing – towards the formerly 'ethnic other' is also exemplified when the team is in the process of electing a team captain. Ben is shocked that Johari (his sister and teammate) wants to vote for Kezia who belongs to the tribe that allegedly burnt their family's house. Johari, annoyed by Ben's stigmatisation of Kezia, answers bluntly, 'I did not see her do it' (EP2 17:44) thereby rejecting generalized blame and assumed guilt. By showing simultaneously the lack and presence of substantive civility, *Team Kenya* exposes the audience to alternative points of views and ways of treating co-citizens. This enables the audience to reflect upon and make their own choice regarding how they, in turn, interact with their co-citizens. The soap opera also emphasises and exemplifies behavioural change thereby rejecting the idea that the status quo is all that is achievable. For instance, when forced to share a room based on randomised allocation, Kezia and Tina's relation is initially fraught with negative stereotypes regarding the other's tribe and socio-economic background. While Kezia, for example, refers to Tina as 'smelly' and says that people of 'her

blood' cannot be leaders, Tina strikes back by calling her a 'pregnant mouse' (EP1 and 12; EP2 08:50; EP4 21:26). However, living together and sharing each other's day-to-day experiences allows for the emergence of basic solidarity ultimately leading to the development of a close friendship between the two over the course of the season.

Team Kenya appears to deliberately play around with the moral ambiguity of characters and situations in order to make the series relatable and authentic, allowing it to demonstrate ways to navigate and overcome such instances without adopting a top-down didactic approach. The use of humour and tropes also contributes to the series' appeal. For instance, the character of Priest, a sharp-witted youthful gangster struggling with his past, represents a typical 'anti-hero'. Coaxed into criminality at a young age by his "street family",[5] Priest initially opts for violence over dialogue on several occasions and hides his criminal activities

Assenting to civil peace and the need for forgiveness require the display of substantive civility with regard to those who aim to be reintegrated into civil life.

from his teammates (EP1 22:24; EP5 16:20; EP11 02:40; 06:48). However, he comes to see that what befell him could have happened to anyone and that the team constitutes a new chance at life. Yet, while struggling to break free from his street family and trying to change his life for the better, he worries whether he can will be fully accepted by his teammates due to his criminal past. Noticing that 'something is off', his fellow players gain his trust by asking him what is going on and being open minded and supportive. They listen without judging to his past-life story and his struggle to remain 'on the right side, to do good, and be loved' (EP10 21:48). What this shows is that assenting to civil peace and the need for forgiveness require the display of substantive civility with regard to those who aim to be reintegrated into civil life.

What is exemplified is that achieving substantive civility is trying and full of challenges but that it can be achieved. The achievement is symbolised in *Team Kenya* through a gradual replacement of the use of metaphors of otherness, stereotypes, enemy images, and stigmatisation with language and actions that reflects a spirit of equality, solidarity and trust (cf. EP13 01:14 - 1:53; EP13 18:41). *Team Kenya* also emphasises the importance of communication and communicative skills. It shows how the use of degrading language leads to conflict be it of ethnic/tribal (EP7 12:14; EP1, 23:29; EP4 21:26; EP5 01:12), economic (EP2 21:50) nature or gender-based (EP1 15:45; EP3 18:00) nature whereas a fair engagement with the other leads to the success of the team and enables individuals to feel a sense of genuinely belonging to the team.

Building Civil Capacity and Civil Competencies in Team Kenya. Imani FC itself is an association that brings a diversity of members together. Some come from broken families or are orphaned, some have engaged in criminal activity while others were internally displaced by the election violence. They are of different genders, ethnicities and socio-economic statuses and would possibly never have thought of working together, of meeting each other or of having to put self-interests aside to work towards a common

Team Kenya *exemplifies the need for associative and cooperative life despite difference and disagreement by showing that peaceful cooperation needs to be learned and is often difficult to put into practice.*

goal: victory on the pitch. *Team Kenya* exemplifies the need for associative and cooperative life despite difference and disagreement by showing that peaceful cooperation needs to be learned and is often difficult to put into practice. As Coach recalls, he was worried when he first met the players as he wasn't sure whether they would be able to work as a team. However, when watching Imani FC play their final match, he "realise[s] how far [they] have come. How much we've invested, both as *individuals* and as a *team*" (EP13 11: 42, italics added). *Team Kenya* also focuses on the importance of legal institutions to bring about justice. It does so by showing how a team member, Tina, who was raped during the civil conflict identifies her perpetrator and reports him

to the police (EP9). Her rapist is prosecuted and stands trial yet is not convicted of the crime due to a lack of medical evidence and a 'glaring lapse of time in reporting the crime' (EP9 19:32-20:37). However, the judge sympathises with Tina and highlights the importance of rape victims to come forward as soon as possible to allow for a thorough investigation and hence, justice. Here the series shows the relationship between assent to civil peace – the rejection of vigilantism – and capacity building: justice through legal institutions. Additionally, on important occasions, the press is used as a mechanism for transparency and accountability as well as to advocate on behalf of peaceful cooperation (EP1 07:14, 08:00, 09:10; EP7 20:50; EP11 11:43-11:26; EP13 06:28). For example, and following a brutal attack on Kenzia's brother, Mr Bukenya convenes a press conference to ensure that the crime is widely known and that tribal violence is publicly condemned as an unacceptable solution to conflict. Moreover, when Mr Bukenya passes the mic to the team captain during the press conference, it is stressed that not only he, but all players of Team Kenya [symbolically all Kenyans] share this sentiment (EP7 17:37).

Finally, *Team Kenya* endorses the importance of building capacity through (a) offering opportunities based on merit rather than socio-economic status (EP1 07:40, 09:22) thereby endorsing the importance of equal opportunities to combat civil jealousy and injustice and to ultimately resolve tribal violence; (b) voting as a tool for (direct) democracy and as a problem-solving mechanism. For instance, the team votes on whether to skip a training to be able to support Tina in court – all vote in favour and the outcome is relayed to Coach for final approval (EP12 15:11; cf. EP2 07:42, 17:44; EP8 01:15). More importantly, and recognising the relationship between voting and representation, the Team wants to elect its own team captain rather than having one appointed by Coach. By running its own election, the team learns to accept reasonable losses and to follow majority decisions.

Conclusion

Thus far the success of soap operas in post-conflict setting has solely been attributed to the use of edutainment. This paper has argued and empirically shown that this is only part of their success: for soap operas to be transformational they must combine edutainment and civil norm building where the latter is to be accomplished through the use of a dramatic plot that is relevant and that can exemplify and illustrate behaviour in accordance with the categories of civil norms. The requirement of civil norm building has been intuitively and implicitly recognised by soap opera producers, but this is the first time that the element of civil norm building has been empirically shown. Correspondingly, for a peace-building soap opera to acquire moral authority it minimally needs to be judged by its audience as being sincerely and genuinely attached to a set of fundamental beliefs, principles and/or civil norms – a set that resonates with the individual and collective concerns of the audiences. Importantly, it has to persuasively fuse these fundamental principles with existential authenticity through fiction.

The argument of this paper and its exemplification in the case study of *Team Kenya* has two wider implications: first, this paper provides a method that can be used to analyse any post-conflict soap opera (whether radio or TV) via a civil norm building approach and thereby help develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between soap opera and audience (fusion) and its success. Alternatively, where soap operas do not manage to have transformational impact, this method will lay bare the lack of engagement with civil norm building and thereby explain its failure. Second, the paper also provides a method that can be used to produce soap operas and their dramatic plots. Practitioners who engage in the production of soap operas should attempt to understand the post-

Practitioners can purposefully integrate civil norm building into the design of future soap operas thereby developing a more targeted approach and further increasing sopa operas' transformational capacity.

conflict setting they operate in terms of what categories of civil norms have been undermined and diminished during the conflict and which need urgent rebuilding. Such an analysis of the 'state of civil norms' enables them to ensure that dramatic plots are as relevant as possible and engage with the civil concerns of the audiences as close to reality as feasible. In other words, practitioners can purposefully integrate civil norm building into the design of future soap operas thereby developing a more targeted approach and further increasing sopa operas' transformational capacity.

Finally, this paper points to the fundamental importance of the fictional mass media – popular fiction – in peacebuilding and shows how they can skillfully combine a variety of peacebuilding tools to engage with audiences and have genuine impact on their daily lives. Soap operas are just one example of the fictional mass media but there is no reason why novels, folk tales, poetry and other forms of popular fiction shouldn't be used for civil norm building in post-conflict societies.

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Notes

1. By 'category' we mean an opaque structure of thought necessary for understanding how we think about 'something' (in this case peaceful cooperation) and how we explain and act on this 'something' (see Berlin, 1999).
2. Kenya's post-election violence was essentially caused by a conflict about tribalism and landownership (Bau, 2013). On 27 December it was declared that Mwai Kibaki (Party of National Unity) had won the Presidential elections against opposition leader Raila Odinga (Orange Democratic Movement). This result was disputed, the election process considered flawed, even rigged, and a two-months conflict ensued which ended through a power-sharing agreement signed by Kibaki and Odinga – the National Accord and Reconciliation Act –in February 2008.
3. This is not to say that football in and of itself is necessarily an activity characterised by peaceful cooperation but is also characterised by fierce competition, aggression, injury and can be misused as an exercise in nationalism (see Cardenas, 2016) or colonialism (see Giulianotti, 2011).
4. The importance of the message is underlined by this cameo of Jacob 'Ghost' Mulee. Mulee, a famous Kenyan association football coach coached Kenya's national team 'The Harambee Stars' for several years, including 2007–2008. Mulee also works as a presenter for Radio Jambo (the radio channel where The Team aired in 2009) and founded his own coed football school, 'Liberty Academy', in 2008 which produced The Harambee Star's striker, Michael Olunga. Through this cameo, fact ('real-life) and fiction are blended, which enhances the authenticity and thereby the moral authority of the series.
5. Priest's background story reflects the exponential growth of so-called organised 'street families' in Kenya's big cities – essentially youth groups getting involved in illegal activity (theft, drugs, prostitution) to survive.

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