

Die Friedensjournalismus-Kontroverse The peace journalism controversy

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Editorial

In *conflict & communication online* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2005, nahm ich die Rezension des von Martin Löffelholz (2004) herausgegebenen Buches "Krieg als Medienereignis II. Krisenkommunikation im 21. Jahrhundert" zum Anlass, mich mit Thomas Hanitzschs Kritik des Friedensjournalismus grundsätzlich auseinanderzusetzen.

Die Hauptkritikpunkte, die ich damals gegen Hanitzsch vorbrachte, bezogen sich u.a. auf seine Argumentationsform, die mir zu polemisch erschien und der ich vorwarf, dass sie die einschlägige Grundlagenforschung ignoriere. Mit Friedensjournalismus, so hielt ich Hanitzsch entgegen, sei de facto nichts anderes gemeint als ein kompetenter Journalismus, der den professionellen Normen der Objektivität, Neutralität und Wahrheitstreue gerecht wird und der ein Abgleiten in Propaganda und Public Relations erfolgreich vermeidet. Statt sich mit diesem Programm auseinanderzusetzen, polemisiere Hanitzsch gegen sein eigenes Verständnis von Friedensjournalismus, den er "als Programm der journalistischen Berichterstattung" definiert, "das einen publizistischen Beitrag zur friedlichen Konfliktaustragung leistet" - hinreichend vage, um die Grenze zu Public Relations offen zu halten und dem friedensjournalistischen Projekt realiter nicht zutreffende Dinge zu unterstellen, gegen die man dann zu Felde ziehen kann.

Gegen Ende meiner Rezension sprach ich schließlich die Einladung aus, von beiderseitigen Polemiken Abschied zu nehmen und statt dessen einen auf empirische Forschung gegründeten wissenschaftlichen Diskurs über Friedensjournalismus zu beginnen. Davon könnten beide Seiten nur profitieren, und wer weiß, vielleicht erfülle sich eines Tages sogar Hanitzschs Prognose, dass niemand mehr von Friedensjournalismus spricht - ganz einfach deshalb, weil die Qualität des Journalismus und der Journalistenausbildung dann ein Niveau erreicht haben werde, auf dem kompetente Konfliktberichterstattung, die den professionellen Normen des Journalismus gerecht wird, zur Regel geworden sei.

Mit den Worten "Wer austeilt, muss auch einstecken können" nahm Thomas Hanitzsch meine Kritik damals sehr sportlich auf und meine Einladung spontan an. Gemeinsam haben wir die Konzeption des nun vorliegenden Themenhefts von *conflict & communication online* erarbeitet, in dem zwei der prominentesten Kritiker (David Loyn und Thomas Hanitzsch) und zwei der dezidierten Vertreter (Jake Lynch und Samuel Peleg) des Friedensjournalismus, davon je ein Journalist (David Loyn und Jake Lynch) und je ein Sozialwissenschaftler (Thomas Hanitzsch und Samuel Peleg) ihre Argumente austauschen. Auf ausdrücklichen Wunsch von Thomas Hanitzsch kommt mir als dem Herausgeber der Zeitschrift dabei die Aufgabe zu, die Texte durch das vorliegende Editorial und eine abschließende Synthese einzuklammern. (Dass letztere ebenso wie die anderen Aufsätze dem üblichen Peer-Review-Verfahren unterworfen wurde, versteht sich von selbst.)

Dass die "Friedensjournalismus-Kontroverse" in der von uns konzipierten Form realisiert werden konnte, ist der Kooperationsbereitschaft und Einsatzfreude aller daran beteiligten Autoren und Gutachter geschuldet. Indem es uns gelungen ist, mit David Loyn und Jake Lynch zwei erfahrene Journalisten von höchster internationaler Reputation in dieses Projekt einzubinden, ist *conflict & communication online* auch einen großen Schritt weiter auf dem Weg gekommen, nicht nur ein Diskussionsforum für Geistes-, Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaftler darzustellen, sondern die vielfältigen wissenschaftlichen Perspektiven, unter denen Konflikt und Kommunikation erforscht werden, mit praktischen Erfahrungen in Dialog treten zu lassen.

Editorial

In *conflict & communication online* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2005, I reviewed a book edited by Martin Löffelholz (2004), *War as a Media Event II. Crisis Communication in the Twenty-First Century*. This provided me with an opportunity to offer an in-depth discussion of Thomas Hanitzsch's critique of peace journalism.

The main points of my critique of Hanitzsch concerned his form of argumentation, which seemed far too polemical, and so I took him to task for ignoring the relevant basic research. By peace journalism, I countered Hanitzsch, nothing more is meant de facto than competent journalism that meets the professional norms of objectivity, neutrality and truthfulness and successfully avoids slipping into propaganda and public relations. Instead of discussing this program, Hanitzsch would write against peace journalism as he understands it, "as a program of journalistic news coverage) that makes a journalistic contribution to peace and conflict resolution" - this was sufficiently vague to keep open the borders to public relations and to make what were in fact untrue imputations concerning the peace journalistic project, against which he could then take the field.

Toward the end of my review, I concluded by calling for an end to the mutual polemics and instead to commence a scientific discourse based on empirical research. Both sides can only benefit from this, and who knows, perhaps someday even Hanitzsch's prognosis could come true that no one speaks of peace journalism anymore - quite simply because the quality of journalism and journalistic training will have reached a level where it has become the rule that conflict coverage will be competent and will meet the professional norms of journalism.

With a succinct comment, "Anyone who dishes it out must also be able to take it," Thomas Hanitzsch very sportingly responded to my critique at that time and spontaneously accepted my invitation. Together we have developed the concept of the present topical issue of *conflict & communication online*, in which two of the most prominent critics (David Loyn and Thomas Hanitzsch) and two of the most committed advocates of peace journalism (Jake Lynch and Samuel Peleg), one of each pair a journalist (David Loyn and Jake Lynch), and one of each a social scientist (Thomas Hanitzsch and Samuel Peleg), exchange arguments. At the explicit wishes of Thomas Hanitzsch, I as editor of the journal have undertaken the task of bracketing the texts between the present editorial and a concluding synthesis. (That as with the other papers the latter was submitted to the usual peer review process goes without saying.)

That the "peace journalism controversy" in the form we conceived it could be realized is due in large measure to the energetic participation and cooperation of the authors and reviewers. Insofar as by recruiting David Loyn and Jake Lynch we succeeded in integrating into this project two experienced journalists with outstanding international reputations, *conflict & communication online* has also made a major step along the path to becoming not just a discussion forum for social and cultural scientists, but also to beginning a dialogue between the great variety of scientific perspectives under which conflict and communication are researched, on one hand, and practical journalistic experience, on the other.

Konstanz Berlin
October 2007

Wilhelm Kempf

David Loyn

Qualitätsjournalismus oder Friedensjournalismus?

Der Aufsatz argumentiert gegen die präskriptiven Vorstellungen des Friedensjournalismus; insbesondere gegen seine exklusive Natur und den Versuch, sich als eine neue Orthodoxie zu verstehen; und beschäftigt sich zu weiten Teilen mit der Kritik der Arbeiten von Jake Lynch und Annabel McGoldrick, wie sie 2005 in Buchform sowie in ihren früheren *Reporting the World*-Schriften veröffentlicht sind. Während Lynch & McGoldrick alle anderen Arten der Berichterstattung als 'Kriegsjournalismus' verdammen, der zugunsten des Krieges verzerrt sei, halte ich dagegen, dass Friedensjournalismus das Gegenteil von Qualitätsjournalismus ist.

Viele der Argumente des Friedensjournalismus sind aus den Arbeiten von Johan Galtung abgeleitet, der die 'Kriegsjournalisten' beschuldigt, über Krieg in geschlossenem Raum und geschlossener Zeit, ohne Kontext und unter Vernachlässigung von Friedensinitiativen zu berichten und Kriege 'undurchsichtig/geheim' zu machen. Insbesondere fordert Galtung von Journalisten, die Suche nach Friedensvorschlägen zum Teil ihrer Mission zu machen, die als etwas Kleines, unterhalb der Wahrnehmungsschwelle Liegendes beginnen mögen, dann aber von Politikern aufgegriffen und übernommen werden können. Meine Antwort darauf ist klar und einfach: friedensstiftende Politiker zu kreieren ist nicht die Aufgabe eines Reporters.

Ich betrachte die traditionellen journalistischen Methoden als Versuch, durch Objektivität zur Wahrheit zu gelangen, auch wenn eine perfekte Wahrheit unerreichbar ist; und komme zu dem Schluss, dass ein alltäglicheres Verständnis von Wahrheit, 'Wahrhaftigkeit' dennoch handhabbar und immer noch (nach Thomas Nagel) von Wert ist. Nagels Darstellung hat den Vorzug, dass sie zugleich erklärt, warum Praktiken wie Friedensberichterstattung dafür prädestiniert sind, weniger objektiv zu sein als andere: "weil sie sich zur Übernahme einer bestimmten Perspektive verpflichten".

Der so genannte Journalism of Attachment hat Journalisten dazu verleitet, angesichts der Gräueltaten von Bosnien Unparteilichkeit und emotionale Distanz über Bord zu werfen und in ihrer Berichterstattung Partei zu ergreifen. Meines Erachtens könnte das Festhalten an Objektivität ein nützliches Mittel gegen den Relativismus dieser Journalisten sein.

Ich schließe mit einer detaillierten Betrachtung zweier Fallstudien, Kosovo und Nordirland. Die Lösung der Probleme dort ist in einer besseren Anwendung der bekannten Werkzeuge zu suchen und nicht in einem neuen Werkzeugkasten.

Im einundzwanzigsten Jahrhundert hat sich die Welt von der Clausewitz'schen Vision des Krieges als Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln dahingehend weiterentwickelt, dass diplomatische Lösungen herkömmlicher Art ebenso wie konventionelle Armeen schlechte Chancen haben, der aus asymmetrischen Konflikten resultierenden Bedrohung zu begegnen - 'Krieg inmitten der Völker' ist der neue Slogan. Die Werkzeuge des Reporters müssen geschärft werden, nicht geändert.

Zum Autor:

David Loyn arbeitete mehr als 25 Jahre als Auslandskorrespondent, überwiegend mit der BBC. Er ist einer von nur zwei Journalisten, welche sowohl für Fernseh- als auch für Radionachrichten mit den führenden britischen Preisen ausgezeichnet wurden - Sony Radio Reporter of the Year und Royal Television Society Journalist of the Year.

Er verfügt über beachtliche Erfahrungen mit Konflikten, u.a. Angola, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq. Nach einer Zeit als Korrespondent in Delhi wurde er Mitte der 90er Jahre zum Dritte-Welt-Korrespondenten der BBC mit Sitz in London ernannt. Sein Buch *Frontline - the true story of the British mavericks who changed the face of war reporting* wurde 2006 für den Orwell Preis vorgeschlagen. Zur Zeit schreibt er eine Geschichte des ausländischen Engagements in Afghanistan.

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David Loyn

Good journalism or peace journalism?

This paper argues against the prescriptive notions of Peace Journalism, and in particular its exclusive nature and attempt to define itself as a new orthodoxy. Most of the paper is a critique of the work of Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, in a book published in 2005, as well as their earlier *Reporting the World* series. They condemn all other ways of reporting as 'War Journalism, biased in favour of war.' I argue instead that the opposite of Peace Journalism is good journalism.

Much of this Peace Journalism argument is derived from the work of Johan Galtung, who accuses 'war journalists' of reporting war in an enclosed space and time, with no context, concealing peace initiatives and making wars 'opaque/secret.' Galtung specifically calls on journalists as part of their mission to search out peace proposals which might begin as something small and beneath notice, but which might then be picked up and owned by politicians as their own. My response is clear and simple: creating peacemaking politicians is not the business of a reporter.

I examine the traditional journalistic methods of using objectivity to get at a version of the truth. I concede that perfect truth is unattainable, (and paradoxically the tool of objectivity we use to get there is slippery too.) I conclude that a more quotidian truth, or 'truthfulness' is though a manageable goal. I engage with philosophers who examine objectivity, concluding with the assistance of Thomas Nagel that it does still have a value. Nagel's account also has the merit of explaining how practices such as peace-reporting are bound to be less objective than alternatives, 'since they commit themselves to the adoption of particular perspectives, in effect giving up on the ideal of stripping away as much)as possible.'

I examine the responses of the so-called 'journalism of attachment' framed as a desire of journalists faced by the horrors of Bosnia to cast off impartiality and emotional detachment and take sides in their reporting. I argue that holding onto objectivity could be a useful vaccine against the relativism of 'attached journalists'.

I conclude with a detailed examination of two case studies, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland, arguing that in these complex visceral conflicts, the solution to known problems is better application of old tools, not a new toolbox.

In the twenty-first century the world has moved on from the classic Clausewitzian vision of war as a continuation of politics 'by other means', to a situation where threats of asymmetric conflicts will continually wrong-foot diplomatic solutions, as they are normally constructed, as well as conventional armies - 'war amongst the people' in the new jargon. The tools of the reporter need to be sharpened not altered.

[full text](#)

On the author:

David Loyn has been a foreign correspondent for more than 25 years, mostly with the BBC. He is one of only two journalists to win both of Britain's leading awards in television and radio news - Sony Radio Reporter of the Year and Royal Television Society Journalist of the Year.

He has considerable experience of conflicts including Angola, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq. After a period as Delhi Correspondent in the mid-90's he was appointed the BBC's Developing World Correspondent based in London.

His book *Frontline the true story of the British mavericks who changed the face of war reporting* was short-listed for the 2006 Orwell Prize. He is currently writing a history of foreign engagement in Afghanistan.

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Abstract: This paper argues against the prescriptive notions of peace journalism, and in particular its exclusive nature and attempt to define itself as a new orthodoxy. Most of the paper is a critique of the work of Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick, in a book published in 2005, as well as their earlier Reporting the World series. They condemn all other ways of reporting as 'War Journalism, biased in favour of war.' I argue instead that the opposite of peace journalism is good journalism.

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I conclude with a detailed examination of two case studies, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland, arguing that in these complex visceral conflicts, the solution to known problems is better application of old tools, not a new toolbox.

In the twenty-first century the world has moved on from the classic Clausewitzian vision of war as a continuation of politics 'by other means', to a situation where threats of asymmetric conflicts will continually wrong-foot diplomatic solutions, as they are normally constructed, as well as conventional armies - 'war amongst the people' in the new jargon. The tools of the reporter need to be sharpened not altered.

1. Introduction

Peace journalism is at best meaningless, and at worst a uniquely unhelpful and misleading prescription for journalism in general, and broadcast journalism in particular. I intend to start with a detailed critique of it, drawing mostly from the book by Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick published in 2005,¹ as well as their earlier *Reporting the World* series. I will then set out my views of best practice in reporting, and tackle some of the themes that arose after a piece on this topic that I wrote online in 2003. I will finish with some case studies, highlighting two specific conflicts: Kosovo and Northern Ireland. The conclusions of this piece are those of a practising reporter, but I should stress that although most of my career has been with the BBC, this piece and the judgements in it are all my own work, and should not be taken as an expression of the stance of the BBC on these issues.

Lynch and McGoldrick demand nothing less than a 'revolution' in journalism practice, using this definition: 'Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to cover and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict.'² The opposite of this, ie all other ways of doing journalism, are condemned as 'War Journalism, biased in favour of war.'³ I will argue instead that the opposite of peace journalism is good journalism.

2. Artificial prescriptions

The peace journalism approach describes an active participation that is simply not the role of a journalist, and is based on a flawed notion that the world would be a better place if we reported wars in a certain prescribed way, encouraging peacemakers rather than reporting warriors. This prescription is the more dangerous part of peace journalism, as it tries to define itself as a new orthodoxy. The idea that most reporters currently look only for the epicentre of violence, or are somehow addicted to conflict is absurd. If anything we *under-report* conflict in the world – certainly failing often to expose it in the early days, before major violence breaks out.

Most of the legal framework, and the codes of conduct by trade unions and responsible employers which we live and work in, provide a framework which proscribes what we cannot do – banning the unacceptable. That way we can continue to engage in robust sceptical inquiry, but also keep inside libel laws, and remain on the right side of civilised discourse (so we do not attach gender stereotypes to job descriptions, nor report racial origins, unless relevant to the story and so on.) But what is proposed by advocates of peace journalism is a prescription, defining a way of working which demands that reporters artificially seek out peacemakers. Leaving aside the merits or otherwise of the peace journalism case, this prescriptive nature alone should make it suspect. The searching inquiry carried out into BBC journalism by a former senior news manager Ron Neil in the wake of the Hutton debacle explicitly ruled out this kind of approach, saying 'Highly prescriptive rules inhibit good journalism'.⁴

The Peace Journalists draw on methods and analysis developed by academics engaged in conflict resolution, and quote a list drawn up by the veteran Peace Studies expert Johan Galtung.⁵ He accuses 'war journalists' of reporting war in an enclosed space and time, with no context, concealing peace initiatives and making wars 'opaque/secret.' This last suggestion is the most incomprehensible to me as a reporter who has covered several conflicts. Fighting against the opaque, lifting the cloak of secrecy, and reporting the history, the why as well as the who, how and what of war, are all key parts of reporting as I have seen it practised.

I once heard Galtung speak at a gathering of academics and journalists to discuss the Middle East where he painted a hypothetical picture of peace proposals which might begin as something small and beneath notice, but which might then be picked up and owned by politicians as their own. He exhorted us 'So gentlemen and ladies of the press, how much have you done recently to create such politicians?' My response is clear and simple: creating peacemaking politicians is not the business of a reporter.

He gave as an instance of press 'failure' the lack of reporting of a peace plan put together by the former UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in the Balkans in 1991 before the worst of the slaughter in Croatia and Bosnia. It was not us who did not take it seriously. It was Milošević and his Serb nationalist proxies, echoed in Croatia, who were busy provoking a war. We should get cause and effect the right way round. The peace plan was not dead in the water because it was not reported. It was not reported because it was dead in the water. Galtung's track record at conflict resolution was admirable. But he misunderstood our role and power. One of the most acute observers of that conflict, Ed Vulliamy of the

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1. Peace Journalism – Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick. Published by Hawthorn Press 2005
 2. Op cit p5
 3. Op cit pxvii
 4. Neil Report - www.bbc.co.uk/info/policies/neil_report.shtml
 5. Op cit p6

Guardian, reported that the whole thing was quite clinically laid out from the start in Zagreb and Belgrade, 'There was no place for a shared country in the War of Maps that was already under way behind the scenes. The Serbs and the Croats opposed but understood each other as they resurrected their ancient dreams...For those dreams to be realised, the Muslims of Bosnia would have to be dealt with.'¹ It was one of the comprehensively reported conflicts of modern times. There was context, understanding and compassion in the accounts, although there was also increasing frustration among journalists that what was happening on the ground was not well understood in London, Paris and Washington as governments did not want to get involved. This led directly to the desire to practise so-called 'Journalism of attachment'.

I will return to this theme later. But the key point to be made here is that reporters need to preserve their position as observers not players. Galtung's demand that journalists should become active participants, playing a part in the complex 'cat's cradle' that makes a conflict, is wrong. By *searching* for peacemakers, reporters are immediately on the wrong side of the fence. Reporting and peacemaking are different roles; reporters who give undue prominence to passing peace plans, or search for peacemakers, distort their craft and do not serve their audience.

3. Emotions and trauma

Some of the analysis in *peace journalism* appears to be at variance with my own experience. The authors claim that damage to psychology and culture is 'routinely omitted' by reporters, while there is a 'concentration on visible damage and destruction'. This is simply not the case. Rather there is a strong emphasis now on how people feel, and almost *too much* coverage of 'trauma.' Take the Darfur crisis. It is actually quite hard to get images of damaged villages and of the fighting itself, but the personal suffering, the 'damage to psychology, structure and culture', is not 'omitted', rather it is at the centre of most coverage.

And yet, that is not to say that everything is fine. There is a glibness about much reporting of trauma, meaningless throw-away analysis leading to nonsense lines like 'A community traumatised like this can never recover,' and a preponderance on seeking grief in place of understanding reality. The day after the July 7th bombs in London, an impromptu peace garden was set aside by the Thames, some way from the scene of the explosions, where people could come and sit and sign a book. It was a dignified low-key place, spoilt only by the intrusion of a foreign TV crew. As a BBC reporter at the scene put it: 'The only traumatic thing here is the way this Argentinian reporter keeps coming to ask people why they are not more upset.'²

Ensuring better emotional literacy for reporters in a world that understands this area much better would be useful. Mark Brayne is the Director of 'Dart Europe', a group dedicated to better reporting of traumatic events, as well as better care for reporters who cover them. He wants reporters who cover conflict to be as well trained in this as they might be in understanding defence equipment, not as an optional add-on: 'They are more likely to be authentic and impartial (much better qualities in journalism than "truth" or "objectivity") if they, and their editors, have an understanding of their own psychology and blind spots, and of the psychology of the story and its players. In other words, the media must become much more "emotionally literate".'³ This is not peace journalism but a mechanism for a more complex understanding of context, as well as the safety of journalists in its widest sense. Yes, we need to report emotions better, but not throw out established journalistic tools along the way.

4. Best practice – Truth and objectivity

Brayne's parenthetical throwaway of truth and objectivity provides the cue for the next section of this piece: concerning best practice in journalism. In an otherwise supportive review of a piece I wrote against peace journalism for the Open Democracy website⁴, the distinguished philosopher Julian Baggini took issue with my view that although there cannot be a 'single truth', the *pursuit* of truth should still be the goal of reporters. For him 'the pursuit of truth is impossible if there is no truth to pursue.'

It all depends what we mean by truth. Philosophers like to quote Pontius Pilate's famous question 'What is Truth?' It comes in answer to the only words Jesus offers in his defence in his brief overnight trial: 'For this I came into the world, to bear witness to the Truth'. This is Truth, with a capital 'T', multi-faceted and all-knowing, not the compromised quotidian truth of the average news story (which may still be 'true' in the sense of not being 'false'.) In the metaphysical sense of the word a perfect understanding of truth is not available to any person, and this is what I meant by 'truth' being unattainable. But the *pursuit* of an ideal is surely philosophically coherent, even though we know that we will fall short.

1. Seasons in Hell – Ed Vulliamy St Martins Press p10
2. BBC Radio Five Live 08/05/05
3. www.istss.org/publications/TS/Summer05/media.htm
4. www.openDemocracy.net 20/02/03; Baggini response 15/05/03

Baggini may not agree, but comes to my aid by offering 'truthfulness' in place of 'truth' as the better term to use. He quotes from *Truth and truthfulness* by Bernard Williams, who defines truthfulness as 'a readiness against being fooled and eagerness to see through appearances to the real structure and motives that lie behind them' – a good definition of the reporter's craft, and similar perhaps to the 'ratlike cunning' once famously said to be one of the only three qualifications necessary for journalists (the others being a plausible manner, and a little literary ability).¹

For Baggini there is no such thing as 'the (his emphasis) true account. This is because any account has to be selective, not for any sinister reasons, but because you can't describe any event coherently without leaving out some details...there are many true accounts, and they are made true by the fact that they describe true descriptions of what happened.' So there may be many versions of the truth, all different, but still all as true as each other, since none is false. By striving to be *truthful*, we can do the job well.

But apart from my metaphysical/secular distinction which holds truth to be an impossible ideal, but still worth pursuing, there must surely be other *degrees* of truth-telling (or truthfulness) which are different from the on/off, true/false, definition held to by Baggini. We all know how politicians are adept at speaking in a way which may be 'true' in the sense of not a lie, but still misleading and not the whole truth. The Neil Report is a useful source because it was a rare attempt to define some of these elusive qualities of journalism at a time of great challenge to the BBC. Neil found that while reporters need 'to strive to establish the truth of what has happened as best we can', this is not an exact science. The role of an Editor is to make a judgement without siding with one version of the truth: 'to ensure that the journalists reporting to him/her assess where the weight of expert opinion lies in a story without adopting it as a truth or wisdom. The scale of BBC journalism carries risk.'²

So what about objectivity, the other quality rejected by Brayne, who prefers his reporters to be 'authentic and impartial'? It has a different function from truth. While truth (or truthfulness) may be a *goal*, objectivity is a *tool* to reach it, and an essential one. Baggini supports this wholeheartedly, drawing on the work of Thomas Nagel in *The View from Nowhere*, a deliberately paradoxical title; every view has to be from somewhere. Nagel proves that there is such a thing as objectivity, opposed to subjectivity – giving as an example the physics of light waves as against our perception of colour: one objective, and the other subjective. Baggini says that this relates directly to journalists who can achieve objective reporting by working to remove their particular, local perspectives. 'Sceptics who retort that such biases can never be fully removed are simply stating a trite truism. Of course they can't, and that is why the ideal of pure objectivity – a "view from nowhere" – is chimerical. But that in no way undermines the idea that maximising objectivity is an achievable and worthwhile aim...the idea that journalists should be striving for objectivity is neither anachronistic nor incoherent...Nagel's account also has the merit of explaining how practices such as "peace-reporting" are bound to be less objective than alternatives, since they commit themselves to the adoption of particular perspectives, in effect giving up on the ideal of stripping away as much of these as possible.'

On this analysis, if we accept that objectivity is at least a worthy aspiration, even though not a tool to achieve the 'whole truth', then peace journalism fails a key test by imposing other expectations onto journalists.

How does objectivity work in practice? Anyone who has ever interviewed two observers of the same incident knows that there is no perfect account. Each reporter takes a 'view from somewhere.' When a Russian armoured infantry company arrived in Kosovo out of the blue in 1999, after the NATO bombing campaign but before NATO ground troops, and seized the airport in a sneak raid, a British and a Russian journalist would have covered the same event completely differently. There could be no agreed narrative – but both would use the tool of objectivity to tell the story in their own terms, and in the terms understood by their viewers, listeners or readers. The Russians were greeted as liberators by the embattled Serb minority, who had been cowering in their basements during the long bombing campaign. But they were seen as a major security threat by the American military, in overall command of the operation. (A British commander on the ground disobeyed a direct order to engage the Russians militarily, saying he 'did not want to start World War III', instead surrounding them at the airport, and providing them with water, while a compromise was agreed).

Reporters live in a social context and share a language and certain assumptions with their audience. To help the language of reporting, there is a constant if unspoken dialogue between the reporter and the reader/listener/viewer: shared assumptions that make it easier to report some stories than others, with foreign news the hardest. There is a shorthand saying in the BBC newsroom, 'New readers start here', to describe the clarity and context required to explain some pieces. Others are seen as part of a continuing narrative.

This is not a simple part of the newsgathering process, and there are obvious dangers. The assumptions need to be constantly examined, and some do not help understanding, particularly where they condemn a whole group as evil. Here Lynch

1. Sunday Times – Nicholas Tomalin
2. Neil Report - www.bbc.co.uk/info/policies/neil_report.shtml

and McGoldrick do have useful points to make, even quoting from a piece of mine, that analysed how the demonisation of the Taliban directly affected the course of history, encouraging hardliners rather than moderates in Afghanistan, with dire consequences. It was the hardliners who hosted those planning the events of 9/11.¹ The demonisation, which became a shared journalistic assumption, was something begun by western governments. A fuller understanding of the causes of the rise of the Taliban, and the reasons for their evident popularity, would have better informed both the public and policy makers. (Similar mistakes were made with regard to the reporting of Hamas after their election victory in Gaza and the West Bank in 2006.)

But surely the antidote to this is a fuller context in the reporting of events, not discarding objectivity. Both the reporter and the audience need to know that there is no other agenda than explaining what is going on – that what you read, see on the screen or hear on the radio is an honest attempt at objectivity; that reporters treat any and every event with an informed scepticism, rejecting any attempt to co-opt them into involvement. Better reporting of the Taliban meant finding out what they were about, not promoting 'non-violent responses to conflict'.

5. Objectivity or attachment

Objectivity alone though is not enough. In his revisionist history of the media and Vietnam, Daniel Hallin found that objectivity distorted what was happening because it meant that official accounts were not challenged. 'The effect of objectivity was not to free the news of political influence, but to open wide the channels through which official information flowed, often to keep issues off the political agenda by disguising major decisions as apparently routine and incremental.'² A similar process happened, particularly in Britain and America, although not mainland Europe, in the run up to the Iraq war in 2002/3. Official sources crowded out almost all other voices, so that each day's news coverage became an 'objective' trawl through the laid-on events, but did not tell the whole story. Hallin is quoted in Jean Seaton's towering book *Carnage and the Media*, where she argues that what I have called 'shared assumptions' are actually a highly formalised set of images, as profound as medieval icons, and bringing the television of conflict into the same psychological space as was filled by the circus in Roman times.

For Seaton the response to critics like Hallin, is not to discard objectivity in favour of peace journalism, since the pursuit of facts remains the source of authority of the news. 'Impartiality and objectivity are indispensable tools; rather than criticize the concept, it is more fruitful to consider the structures that support better or worse practice.'³

No analysts of objectivity discard it as ruthlessly as the Peace Journalists. Most others would rather see it put in its proper place, refined but not rejected. Philip Hammond attempts a complex definition of objectivity.⁴ To him it comprises three distinct, though interrelated concepts: truthfulness and accuracy, neutrality, and emotional detachment. 'These are interrelated in that journalists are supposedly dispassionate and neutral so as not to let their own emotional responses and political allegiances get in the way of reporting truthfully.' His *supposedly* gives it away; he does not really believe it. In my experience reporting can be hugely passionate, requiring emotional engagement and human imagination. But it is not about my passion, how I feel. Although the feeling reporter has become a fashionable way of reporting, even on some channels that should know better, the viewer or listener does not want to know how I feel. What they want to know is how people feel on the ground. Reporters are the channel for their passion – not active players. Hammond though is more worried about the loss of another of his three elements in objectivity – neutrality. This has come under hardest attack from 'journalists of attachment' or 'advocacy journalists' as they are known in America.

It was the BBC correspondent Martin Bell, frustrated by the quagmire of Bosnia, who first coined the term journalism of attachment. He no longer wanted to 'stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor'. Similarly in the US, the CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour said 'the classic definition of objectivity can mean neutrality, and neutrality can mean you are an accomplice to all sorts of evil.' But to Hammond, in an analysis of the reporting both of Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s, this approach can end up as being as bad as the 'yellow press' of the 1890s in the US, that was 'thrilled by the consciousness of its moral responsibility'. The dominant journalists' narrative in Bosnia put most of the blame on the Serbs. And although Hammond goes rather too far in wanting to say they were all as bad as each other, his conclusions make uncomfortable reading, blaming some journalists for substituting *attachment* for *neutrality*, closing their eyes to things that don't fit: 'contemporary human rights journalism involves suppressing inconvenient information, distorting public understanding of conflicts, applauding the deaths of designated western hate-figures, and ignoring evidence of the destructive effects of western involvement.' In a harsh conclusion, he finds that this approach can in the end 'legitimise barbarism.' The final death toll in Bosnia was around 100,000, and around 40 per cent of the

1. www.opendemocracy.net 4th April 2002
2. The uncensored war – the Media and Vietnam D.C. Hallin OUP 1986 p35
3. Carnage and the Media – Jean Seaton Allen Lane 2005 p198
4. Moral Combat – Philip Hammond p177 of Rethinking Human Rights ed David Chandler, published Palgrave Macmillan 2002

civilian casualties were Serbs, which was not the dominant narrative of those who reported it.

'News' is what matters, what gets into the political bloodstream, what counts. It can be jagged and visceral and uncomfortable and sometimes it does not work. Every reporter has had the unnerving experience of the exclusive story which dies a death because it is not followed up; it does not have any meaning or 'traction'. That is why the 'journalism of attachment' emerged in the mid-90s in Bosnia. The political establishment in America and Europe did not want to get involved, so they wrote it off as a Balkan tragedy where ancient ethnic hatreds had been awakened. The spin from inside western governments blocking engagement ran counter to the stories of the deaths of tens of thousands and the unravelling of civil society. So the journalists became frustrated. Their reporting was not having any 'effect'. They wanted to be liberated from the yoke of objectivity – to be allowed to 'tell it as it is' – to take a position condemning the Serbs. It was always an elitist demand, giving a special licence to the few.

The 'journalism of attachment' feels like the same self-serving western luxury as peace journalism itself, although at the other end of the spectrum. How could it have been managed for example in a BBC language service newsroom, staffed during the Balkan conflict by Bosnians of all shades, Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, and Albanian speakers from both sides of the Kosovo border? If the Martin Bells and Christiane Amanpours of this world were licensed to report with 'attachment' then these journalists would legitimately ask why it was not all right for them. It is not all right for any reporter.

But the advocates of peace journalism are seeing the spectrum completely differently. They tend to lump everyone else together – those (like myself) who insist on objectivity, including a commitment to neutrality, along with the journalists of attachment who want to be able to name evildoers. For them we are all 'War Journalists'. This single-minded contempt is allied with name-calling: 'Otto the objective Ostrich',¹ digging his head into the sand in the face of all the glittering evidence collected by the Peace Journalists to change his mind. In this caricature Otto is seen to be left only uncovering the 'facts', not the whole nuanced and complex business of impartial objective reporting. Advocates of peace journalism cannot see that holding onto objectivity could be a useful vaccine against the relativism of 'attached journalists', since they prefer their own relativism instead. That's the problem with throwing out methods that work, rather than seeing how they might be made to work better.

There is an arrogance in the analysis by some promoters of peace journalism that is unnerving, as if they are the only guardians of a redemptive flame of truth that will set us free. Lynch and McGoldrick bring together a list of approved non-violent leaders,² included to promote the idea that somehow they are ignored. They are all pretty mainstream, but they are paraded to promote non-violence as an alternative to violence as a solution to the problems of the world. This is more idealistic than most of the rest of the wishful thinking in their book, but it also makes a mockery of the demand that journalists should *seek out* peacemakers. This list, including individuals as well as groups like the mothers of dead soldiers in Buenos Aires, and the rolling Leipzig demonstrations of 1989, is comprised of non-violent protestors who were reported. When activists like these make a difference, they are given proper prominence.

6. Some case studies

The theoretical constructs of peace journalism bear very little relation to how actual conflicts can actually end, and the role of the press. There is actually some nobility in this – believing the best of people, building consensus around peace and not war, and so on – but the world is not a noble place.

In one stark example, the gruesome war between Iran and Iraq finally ground to a halt in 1989, not through any clever peace plan, or complex journalism that understood the whole cat's cradle, but because the US shot down an Iranian airliner by accident. To America's surprise, Iran did not respond militarily, and offered a ceasefire, because they 'could not fight the US as well.'³ Iraq was exhausted by the war and accepted quickly. In the messy, visceral, real world, this random and accidental act of extreme violence, by a potential new party to the conflict, had the unintended consequence of ending a long war.

In the twenty-first century the world has moved on from the classic Clausewitzian vision of war as a continuation of politics 'by other means', to a situation where threats of asymmetric conflicts will continually wrong-foot diplomatic solutions as they are normally constructed as well as conventional armies. The tools of the reporter need to be sharpened not altered.

1. Op cit p195
2. Op cit p78
3. Against all enemies – Richard Clarke The Free Press 2004 p 102

6.1 Kosovo

When fighting broke out in Kosovo in 1998, only two years after the Dayton agreement had finally forced a close to the Bosnian conflict, NATO was much readier to get involved quickly than they had been in the early days in Bosnia. They were willing to bomb the Serbs after 'only' a few massacres. A highly effective guerrilla campaign by the Kosovars secured the end of Serb control because of the willingness of Europe to become engaged militarily. There were not any demands for 'journalism of attachment' from the reporters such as myself who covered Kosovo, as our account became the 'dominant narrative.' Evidence of Serbian atrocities on the ground fitted the willingness of Tony Blair, only one year in office, who saw this as a place where his then unsullied policy of 'moral warfare' could be tested.

The effect of this was that the coverage played into the hands of the Kosovo Liberation Army, whether they engineered the media aspect of their conflict or not. They were hard to work with for the media and hostile to most reporters. But their military campaign was mostly targeted at Serbian and Yugoslav security forces, although some Serb civilians and government employees died as well. The KLA's key assessment was that NATO would intervene if the Serbs retaliated against civilians, which they duly did.

Lynch and McGoldrick see this series of events as 'war propaganda' working because it fitted with 'the established conventions of war journalism',¹ which in their view concealed the true nature of the conflict. Rather than the sequence of Serb atrocity and world reaction ratcheting up towards war in 1999, as the events uncovered by journalists working in Kosovo became the dominant narrative, they see another process altogether. Far from *revealing* things, it turns out with the 20/20vision of a peace journalism analysis in hindsight that reporters on the ground were *concealing* the real course of events. They quote a BBC Panorama programme as uncovering the real extent of Kosovar Albanian perfidy,² breaking ceasefires, and being re-armed by agents from Britain and America. 'This fact was uncovered long after the war by a major BBC investigation; at the time, it was kept deadly secret, since it risked contradicting the basic propaganda narrative of Serb 'repression' of a defenceless population.'

This is not what happened. The truth is that this Panorama was a rather curious essay trying to be clever after the fact, a throwback to the old Balkan analysis that 'they are all as bad as each other.' Its most bizarre rewriting of the facts was to recount *more* incidents of dead Serbs than dead Albanians in 1998, the year before the NATO bombing raids, focusing on the town of Pec in the west, close to some of the most important shrines in Serbian Christian history.

I had spent a fair amount of time in Pec, or Peja, as the Albanian-origin majority call it, during 1998. I had been to several funerals of Albanian Kosovar civilians, shot for nothing in broad daylight, (none of these was in the Panorama). And I been in the streets where surly gangs of Serbian youths, many of them refugees from other parts of Yugoslavia, swaggered and boasted, running an effective curfew that made it too dangerous for the Albanian Kosovar majority to go out after dark. In its clever counter-intuitive way the Panorama programme interviewed instead a Serbian priest, hardly an unbiased witness, who said that it was the other way round, that Albanians persecuted Serbs there.

I had seen as well the horror of crammed maternity clinics, in the back rooms of private houses, and the classrooms in farm buildings, because for more than a decade the Albanian majority had been excluded from access to any state facilities. I had watched Albanian families being burnt out of their homes in the countryside around Pec/Peja in the summer and autumn of 1998, sent into internal exile, camping and dying in the mud in the forests and mountains.

And I thought Lynch and McGoldrick wanted context and background. Very little of this history was in the Panorama account, so intent was it at redressing some kind of 'balance,' and uncovering the 'fact', at the time 'kept deadly secret' that the guerrilla force the KLA increased in confidence and broke ceasefires that winter. What a surprise. The Albanian dead were not in isolated attacks, like the dead Serbs 'uncovered' for the 'major BBC investigation,' so highly regarded by this post-facto revisionist account. They were piled up in dozens across Drenica, in Obrije and Racak, and all the other places that forced themselves into the world's consciousness in 1998/99. The Albanian majority had had enough of rule by Belgrade.

Another part of the alternative history of Kosovo in *peace journalism* puts the strength of the KLA down to the CIA, said to be 'training, equipping, and preparing the KLA for war.' The sole evidence for this is a Sunday Times account, but on it is built the theory that the war was thus engineered by western agents. It does not feel like the whole truth – the KLA had been preparing for several months already – but even if it were, again it can not have been a shock, certainly not worth the emphasis put on it by Lynch and McGoldrick. By this time, there were UN resolutions condemning the Serbs, and active war-planning going on in NATO forces. They would have been failing in their military task if they did not have some discreet forces on the ground already, making contact with the KLA, and yes, surprise, surprise, possibly giving them military assistance. And of course as the fighting intensified, the leaders of Kosovo's majority population, 'long-time advocates of non-violence and a negotiated settlement' were displaced to the head-shaking despair of the advocates of peace journalism; as

1. op cit p 99
2. BBC Panorama 'Moral Combat' 21st March 2000

if keeping Ibrahim Rugova in power was going to lead to eternal peace. Although loved as a symbol, he was a weak and ineffective leader who had failed to make any impact for a decade, and whose worst failure was not bringing Kosovo to the attention of the Dayton negotiators who had forced an end to the Bosnian war in 1995. That left a policy vacuum that was filled by the KLA. But the ludicrous partiality of the Peace Journalists for 'advocates of non-violence' blinds them to proper analysis of what is actually going on.

6.2 Northern Ireland.

The Good Friday agreement to end the conflict in Northern Ireland was an example of a situation where peace could have been lost if the Peace Journalists had had their way. Their demand is for transparency, and yet the way peace was forged in Northern Ireland was in secret talks, leading to a minutely choreographed series of public confidence-building measures. Casting a light on those talks would have killed them. There were discreet contacts between leading figures in the IRA and the British government going back into the years of the Conservative government of John Major, although they were strongly denied at the time. During all of this period the violence continued, and the public stances of politicians remained hardline. Would peace have been better served if journalists had tried to get behind the meaning of the words to unveil what was really going on? Lynch and McGoldrick say that peace initiatives were suppressed by journalists – 'the diligent and broadly based work of peace activists over many years remained below the radar of most newsdesks and reporters.' Hardly. One Northern Ireland peace group won a Nobel Prize for peace in the early years, so high was their profile; they were widely reported since they seemed to be making a difference.

But later there was a different game going on. Ironically the role of reporters in the peacemaking process in the end was the opposite to that promoted by Peace Journalists. They needed to report the bombs and the killing and the public statements while the real peace work went on behind closed doors. Bringing 'transparency' to this process would have killed it dead. Unionist and Nationalist politicians could not be photographed shaking hands, although they may have had good working relations in private. And slow careful analysis of all this did emerge, although the key headlines speaking of hard positions ('No Surrender') to their own communities, remained essential. The 'long war' in Northern Ireland was a unique crucible to study conflict journalism in such an advanced society. The reporters lived in the community, and had an intimate stake in the consequences of their own reporting, rather than being able to fly home.

There is one other piece of the Northern Ireland analysis that deserves attention. Lynch and McGoldrick pay homage to the views of Noam Chomsky, to make the case that journalists engage in 'omission, marginalisation, and distortion' in favour of the class interests of their bosses: 'the elite media...are selling privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product. ...those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites...and share perceptions reflecting their own class interests as well.'¹

On the very next page, they say that 'Business' actually wanted peace in Northern Ireland, for tourism as well as other industries. But those damned inconvenient independent-minded journalists were still going out there and reporting on the killings and the robbery and the intimidation, the daily digest of the long war – 'still stuck in the groove of War Journalism', according to Lynch and McGoldrick. So Chomsky is wrong then? If he is right, if it is true that the media is in the corporate pockets of an 'elite' that determines everything, then the occasional knee-capping would surely have been ignored in favour of tourist features about the booming economy. The fact is that bad things were still going on, and good journalists were finding out about them and reporting on them.

7. Giving oxygen to warriors

It used to be much easier than it was, when the nation was at least perceived by media owners to be supporting military action, and so there was a more cosy fit between media and military. That changed. The four biggest rows between the BBC and the government in the last quarter of a century have all been over reporting conflict. Apart from the most serious, the Kelly/Gilligan affair, there was the Falklands War, when the BBC was condemned for not saying 'we' referring to British troops, US attacks on Libya, when again the BBC was not 'patriotic' enough, and the interviewing of Republican sources in Northern Ireland. The then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said that this gave terrorists the 'oxygen of publicity.' Supporters of peace journalism would applaud her.

One of their constant complaints is that journalists do not take enough notice of the impact of their reporting, nor the reasons why events have been staged (by people seeking 'oxygen'). In *Reporting the World* they quote the former editor of the Guardian, Peter Preston, with approval. He was concerned that the fighting between anarchists and police at the G8 summit in 2001 had dominated coverage. He demanded that there should have been more media introspection, since

1. Necessary Illusions – Noam Chomsky 1989 Zmag Online version. Quoted in Peace Journalism p 197

this was 'street theatre for media consumption...we, in the reporting, are not innocent bystanders, but carriers of oxygen. We are, essentially, the story itself'.¹ It was pretty violent street theatre, rightly leading the coverage, and if it was staged for 'media consumption', no one told the anarchists at the heart of the action, who beat up several journalists and destroyed camera equipment. But Lynch and McGoldrick are even more concerned about the effect of media 'oxygen' on wars than in street demonstrations.

Apart from their long (and wrong) analysis of the media in Kosovo, they have also been critical of the media in reporting the much more complex fighting in Macedonia that immediately followed the Kosovo conflict, and flared up again two years later.

This was a very difficult story to tell. The repression of Albanians was less clear cut than in Kosovo, and so support for the guerrillas was much weaker. The politics of the country were more mature, with mainstream Albanian-origin parties operating publicly in the capital not underground, and there had been a significant foreign military force, mainly of US troops, stationed in Macedonia for several years. There was though one key similarity. Like the KLA in Kosovo, the Albanian-origin guerrilla army, the NLA, wanted to provoke government retaliation against their civilians. Lynch wrote 'If members of a group like the NLA have expectations about the likely response of journalists to their actions, they can only have arisen from the experience of news gone by. If those expectations form even a part of their calculations in planning and carrying out their actions, it means every journalist shares an unknowable proportion of the responsibility for what happens next.'² If this were true, it would impose an impossible burden on reporters. Like adherents of some austere Indian cult, wary of walking in the dust lest they trod on an insect, it would be hard for reporters to do anything at all for sharing a proportion of the 'responsibility for what happens next.' As a former senior BBC news executive Bob Jobbins put it robustly during a peace journalism seminar, 'Conflict resolution is something on which I report, not something in which I engage. A side-effect of my reporting may be that it makes conflict resolution harder or easier, but that's a judgement that is made after our reporting'. This rather sensible thought appeared, rather bafflingly, in *Reporting the World* in a section called 'Beyond cynicism'.³

Nik Gowing has persuasively argued that by 1994/5, guerrilla forces in the Great Lakes crisis that followed the Rwanda genocide, had learnt the media game, particularly the power of the 24 hour live news cycle.⁴ He says that the press were ill-equipped to deal with this. But surely it is just another part of the media equation, like the spin of a government press conference. Foreign reporting, unlike the theoretical constructs of peace journalism is messy, arduous, hazardous, and expensive. And cause and effect is not simple. For example, whatever the NLA may have wanted, it did not 'work' in Macedonia, as it had in Kosovo. NATO did not bomb their perceived oppressors.

There is much concern in the analysis by these supporters of peace journalism about media-savvy guerrillas, but surely the savviest players are the big powers. The former US Secretary of State Colin Powell once enunciated a series of pre-conditions for America to be engaged in conflict, including that the war should be winnable, there should be no other option, and there should be an exit strategy. But the most important condition for the purposes of this discourse is that there should be 'strong support for the campaign by the general public.' Winning that support is now a major part of war planning among western powers, much more powerful than the new awareness of the media among guerrilla forces.

8. Conclusion

This is not to say that everything in journalism is fine. In a world where Fox News, with its ridiculously partisan comic-book view of foreign news, can try to patent the notion of being 'Fair and Balanced', and where most British newspapers take a strong 'line' one way or another on conflicts, there are problems. Seeing the 'Sun' trying to find good news from Iraq has had a sort of black humour in recent months. The affair of Iraq's missing weapons of mass destruction raised searching questions in newsrooms on both sides of the Atlantic as it should have. Research findings showing that *most* of the British television audience believe it is the Palestinians who are 'occupying' territory, not Israelis, should set alarm bells ringing.⁵

But the solution surely is a better application of known methods, not an attempt to reinvent the wheel. The starting points of the intellectual under-pinning of peace journalism are statements of the obvious: eg the presence of journalists influences the events they cover; absolute objectivity is impossible; there may be more than two parties to a conflict. Most reporters are aware of this, and try not to influence events, take a subjective stance, or over-simplify conflicts. The key word is try, and as long as the reader/listener/viewer knows that they are trying, and not bringing another perspective,

1. Guardian – Peter Preston 23/07/01

2. Reporting the World – Jake Lynch 2002 p12

3. Ibid p24

4. www.usip.org/oc/vd/mic/micwebcast.html

5. Bad News from Israel – Greg Philo and Mike Berry Pluto Press 2004 and www.gla.ac.uk/departments/sociology/units/media/israel.pdf

then the contract between them is intact. Reporters are not innocents abroad, but complex decision-makers in an untidy world. The solutions of peace journalism make other demands, seeking a different conclusion to the shared knowledge that journalists cannot achieve perfect detachment, objectivity or context.

Even if one might agree with the Peace Journalists about any parts of their diagnosis, their solutions are often the wrong ones. In the world of press conferences and media opportunities which surround us, the only reporting which matters is off piste – finding out what is really going on. And there is simply not enough of it around. The business of reporting foreign news is under threat from many sources. The deep cuts in commercial revenues and the drive for audiences make it harder to report a wide agenda on mainstream outlets. The collapse of serious documentary-making cuts away another prop for those who want to understand world issues. The tyranny of the satellite dish tends to encourage quantity, sometimes at the expense of quality, on live 24 news channels. These are the real challenges facing journalism, best faced by clear, consistent accurate reporting that attempts to be agenda-neutral, rather than having other expectations, such as conflict-resolution, loaded on board. peace journalism's ethical checklist would fence us in to the detriment of understanding.

I support rather the sentiments of the photographer 'Guthrie', in Tom Stoppard's play *Night and Day*, who says, 'I've been around a lot of places. People do awful things to each other. But it's worse in places where everybody is kept in the dark. It really is. Information is light. Information, in itself, about anything, is light. That's all you can say really.' This is not a *passive* approach, as it is caricatured by Lynch and McGoldrick¹, who pretend that 'Guthrie' is just 'turning over stones', as if there were facts under every one. Enlightenment is a bigger idea than that.

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1. Op cit p183

Thomas Hanitzsch

Friedensjournalismus aus Sicht der Journalismusforschung: Eine kritische Würdigung

Von den meisten Kriegen würden wir keine Notiz nehmen, wären da nicht die Journalisten, die über sie berichten, und die Medien, die ihre Korrespondenten zum Ort des Geschehens schicken. Gleichzeitig geht die Vorliebe der Medien für Kriege und Konflikte häufig zu Lasten eines positiven Beitrags zur Friedensschaffung. Das Konzept des Friedensjournalismus wird deshalb als eine Alternative zur traditionellen Kriegsberichterstattung verstanden. Der vorliegende Aufsatz macht jedoch deutlich, dass die Idee des Friedensjournalismus nur alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen ist, auch wenn mit einem durchaus noblen Ziel. Viele Protagonisten des Friedensjournalismus übersehen häufig die mannigfaltigen Nuancen im Journalismus und heben das Außergewöhnliche, Spektakuläre und Negative der Kriegsberichterstattung hervor. Sie überschätzen den Einfluss der Journalisten und Medien auf die politische Entscheidungsfindung, und sie begreifen das Publikum als eine passive Masse, die mit den Mitteln des Friedensjournalismus aufgeklärt werden muss. Darüber hinaus basiert die Idee des Friedensjournalismus weitgehend auf einer übermäßig individualistischen Sicht, wobei die strukturellen Zwänge im Journalismus aus dem Blick geraten: Hierzu zählen ungenügende personelle, zeitliche und finanzielle Ressourcen, redaktionelle Prozesse und Hierarchien, Zwänge der Nachrichtenformate, die Verfügbarkeit von Quellen sowie der Zugang zum Geschehen und generell zu Informationen. All dies deutet darauf hin, dass die Praxis des Friedensjournalismus keine Frage der persönlichen Freiheit ist. Medienstrukturen und professionelle Routinen können wohl kaum aus der Position des individuellen Journalisten heraus verändert werden. Moderner Journalismus manifestiert sich in Prozessen der organisierten Nachrichtenproduktion, wobei den organisationalen und institutionellen Faktoren Priorität eingeräumt wird, ebenso wie Prozessen der beruflichen Sozialisation. Um einen ernstzunehmenden Beitrag für die Kriegsberichterstattung und ihre kritische Reflexion leisten zu können, muss auch Friedensjournalismus die strukturellen Bedingungen im Journalismus berücksichtigen. Die Debatte um den Friedensjournalismus - und insbesondere um die praktischen Implikationen - muss an die Journalismusforschung angeschlossen werden, wo ähnliche Anstrengungen zur journalistischen Qualitätssicherung unternommen werden.

Volltext

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Thomas Hanitzsch

Situating peace journalism in journalism studies: A critical appraisal

Most wars were not brought to our attention if there were no journalists to report on them and no news media to send reporters to conflict spots. At the same time, the media often give priority to conflict and war at the expense of playing a positive role in attempts to bring about peace. The concept of peace journalism is, therefore, seen as an alternative model to traditional ways of war reporting. This article argues, however, that the idea of peace journalism comes as old wine in new bottles. Although carrying a noble goal, it ignores the manifold nuances in the media and tends to highlight the exceptional, spectacular and negative of war coverage. The idea of peace journalism tends to overestimate the influence journalists and the media have on political decisions; and it often understands audiences in terms of a passive mass that needs to be enlightened by virtue of peace reporting. In addition to this, peace journalism is, to a considerable extent, based on an overly individualistic perspective and ignores the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists: few personnel, time and material resources; editorial procedures and hierarchies; textual constraints; availability of sources; access to the scene and information in general - just to name a few. All this suggests that the conduct of peace journalism is not a matter of individual leeway, and media structures and professional routines cannot be modified from the position of the individual journalist. Modern corporate journalism involves processes of organized news production, thus giving priority to organizational and institutional factors as well as processes of professional socialization. To have any impact on the way the news is made, and its critical scrutiny, the advocates of peace journalism must address the structural constraints of news production. The discussion of peace journalism, and particularly of its practical implications, must be tied to the realm of journalism studies where it resonates with ongoing efforts to promote excellence in journalism.

full text

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Situating peace journalism in journalism studies: A critical appraisal

Kurzfassung: Von den meisten Kriegen würden wir keine Notiz nehmen, wären da nicht die Journalisten, die über sie berichten, und die Medien, die ihre Korrespondenten zum Ort des Geschehens schicken. Gleichzeitig geht die Vorliebe der Medien für Kriege und Konflikte häufig zu Lasten eines positiven Beitrags zur Friedensschaffung. Das Konzept des Friedensjournalismus wird deshalb als eine Alternative zur traditionellen Kriegsberichterstattung verstanden. Der vorliegende Aufsatz macht jedoch deutlich, dass die Idee des Friedensjournalismus nur alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen ist, auch wenn mit einem durchaus noblen Ziel. Viele Protagonisten des Friedensjournalismus übersehen häufig die mannigfaltigen Nuancen im Journalismus und heben das Außergewöhnliche, Spektakuläre und Negative der Kriegsberichterstattung hervor. Sie überschätzen den Einfluss der Journalisten und Medien auf die politische Entscheidungsfindung, und sie begreifen das Publikum als eine passive Masse, die mit den Mitteln des Friedensjournalismus aufgeklärt werden muss. Darüber hinaus basiert die Idee des Friedensjournalismus weitgehend auf einer übermäßig individualistischen Sicht, wobei die strukturellen Zwänge im Journalismus aus dem Blick geraten: Hierzu zählen ungenügende personelle, zeitliche und finanzielle Ressourcen, redaktionelle Prozesse und Hierarchien, Zwänge der Nachrichtenformate, die Verfügbarkeit von Quellen sowie der Zugang zum Geschehen und generell zu Informationen. All dies deutet darauf hin, dass die Praxis des Friedensjournalismus keine Frage der persönlichen Freiheit ist. Medienstrukturen und professionelle Routinen können wohl kaum aus der Position des individuellen Journalisten heraus verändert werden. Moderner Journalismus manifestiert sich in Prozessen der organisierten Nachrichtenproduktion, wobei den organisationalen und institutionellen Faktoren Priorität eingeräumt wird, ebenso wie Prozessen der beruflichen Sozialisation. Um einen ernstzunehmenden Beitrag für die Kriegsberichterstattung und ihre kritische Reflexion leisten zu können, muss auch Friedensjournalismus die strukturellen Bedingungen im Journalismus berücksichtigen. Die Debatte um den Friedensjournalismus - und insbesondere um die praktischen Implikationen - muss an die Journalismusforschung angeschlossen werden, wo ähnliche Anstrengungen zur journalistischen Qualitätssicherung unternommen werden.

Abstract: Most wars were not brought to our attention if there were no journalists to report on them and no news media to send reporters to conflict spots. At the same time, the media often give priority to conflict and war at the expense of playing a positive role in attempts to bring about peace. The concept of peace journalism is, therefore, seen as an alternative model to traditional ways of war reporting. This article argues, however, that the idea of peace journalism comes as old wine in new bottles. Although carrying a noble goal, it ignores the manifold nuances in the media and tends to highlight the exceptional, spectacular and negative of war coverage. The idea of peace journalism tends to overestimate the influence journalists and the media have on political decisions; and it often understands audiences in terms of a passive mass that needs to be enlightened by virtue of peace reporting. In addition to this, peace journalism is, to a considerable extent, based on an overly individualistic perspective and ignores the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists: few personnel, time and material resources; editorial procedures and hierarchies; textual constraints; availability of sources; access to the scene and information in general - just to name a few. All this suggests that the conduct of peace journalism is not a matter of individual leeway, and media structures and professional routines cannot be modified from the position of the individual journalist. Modern corporate journalism involves processes of organized news production, thus giving priority to organizational and institutional factors as well as processes of professional socialization. To have any impact on the way the news is made, and its critical scrutiny, the advocates of peace journalism must address the structural constraints of news production. The discussion of peace journalism, and particularly of its practical implications, must be tied to the realm of journalism studies where it resonates with ongoing efforts to promote excellence in journalism.

Introduction

According to the *Conflict Barometer*, an annual conflict analysis published by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (2005: 1-8), the number of conflicts has more or less continuously risen from 74 in 1945 to 249 in 2005. High-intensity conflicts have, for the most part, shown a regular increase from seven to 38 during the last 60 years. The large number of ongoing conflicts, part of which are carried out with a massive amount of violence, prevent entire regions (e.g. sub-Saharan Africa) from political democratization and socio-economic development. In addition, at least after Munich 1972 and even more so with September 11, 2001, terrorism has entered the picture. Wars are increasingly fought by non-territorial forces and global terror networks, with civilians becoming legitimate targets of bombings and hostages.

At the same time it is increasingly argued that public communication is an important factor in the course of events in times of war and crisis. Most wars and conflicts were not brought to our attention if there were no journalists to report on them and no media organizations to send their reporters to conflict spots. Having seen the endless atrocities of war and standing on the brink of professional disillusionment, many journalists started to ask how they can help to make the world a better place. In a similar vein, critical scholars, usually not from inside the realm of journalism studies, began to promote a vision of journalistic practice which extends beyond modern mainstream journalism and its enduring values of objectivity, neutrality and detachment. This coalition of concerned journalists and critical scholars is bound up by the philosophy of peace journalism.

As many other influential concepts of journalistic practice, such as investigative journalism, public/civic journalism and development journalism, peace journalism has its advocates – and also its critics. The controversy about peace journalism, its virtue, practicability and philosophical tenets, is the reason why the editor of *conflict & communication online* has decided to set up a special issue around this important dispute. I have, on several occasions, argued against peace journalism, although I don't think that this journalism concept is *per se* bad. Peace journalism, as it inherits the values of non-violent conflict resolution, entails a very noble goal, that is, to make society more peaceful, which is particularly important in light of the pessimistic outlook given above. However, I will argue that the concept of peace journalism comes, at least for people familiar with journalism research, as old wine in new bottles. It rests, as I shall show, on a sweeping criticism of current media coverage and often ignores the manifold nuances in the media. While in some respects the basic tenets of peace journalism have already been incorporated in recent media coverage, other demands just seem impracticable if we take the workings of professional journalism into account.

The two faces of peace journalism

The concept of peace journalism has been coined in the 1970s by the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung who is a pioneer in the study of news values (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Peace journalism inherits a normative impetus; it prioritizes "peace" as its central value and analytical starting point. Peace journalism, as a special mode of socially responsible journalism, can be defined as a program or frame of journalistic news coverage which contributes to the process of making and keeping peace respectively to the non-violent settlement of conflicts (Hanitzsch, 2004b: 482).

The advocates of peace journalism draw on a critical examination of the current state of war reporting. Galtung and Vincent (1992: 7) criticize the criteria of news selection that prevail in journalism, most notably the news factors related to negativity, personalization and proximity to elite countries and elite persons. Schicha (1999: 12) complains about the mono-causal explanations of the origins and causes of conflicts, while others expressed their discontent with the fact that the media pay attention to conflicts only when manifest violence is about to occur (Galtung, 1998: 7; Jakobsen, 2000: 132; Kempf, 1999: 20).

Recent developments in war reporting, especially those which became manifest in the coverage of the Gulf War of 1991 and Nato intervention in Kosovo in 1999, have played a crucial role in stimulating a critical debate on conflict and war coverage. Some experienced war correspondents, most prominently Annabel McGoldrick and Jake Lynch, began to promote the idea of peace journalism among their colleagues and established the network *Reporting the World*.¹ McGoldrick (2000: 19-20) described peace journalism as a "new form of journalism" which looks "at how journalists could be part of the solution rather than part of the problem". Lynch (1998: 64; 2002: 22; 2003) situated journalists as "participant-observers" in war zones, as news accounts are "a factor in the sequence of cause and effect" and the people involved in stories adjust their actions according to calculations about the possible effects of media coverage.

There is no single and universal concept of peace journalism, however. The idea of peace journalism is rather driven by a heterogeneous movement which does not always define itself in a clear-cut manner. There are two major strands in conceptualizing peace journalism. One could be labeled *interventionist reporting* and stands in the tradition of advocacy journalism. This form of journalism does actively promote peace through means of public communication. According to the

1. <http://www.reportingtheworld.org>

German political scientist Jörg Becker (2002: 14), the media has the political obligation to participate and stand up for peace of its own accord. Journalism should not only report reality "as it is", rather it should create reality, set examples and call for change. This form of advocacy journalism – to the extent that it is sometimes misunderstood as legitimation for biased coverage – is vulnerable to Martin Bell's (1997: 8) controversial "journalism of attachment" by which he means a journalism that "will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor." What makes this view highly problematic is that journalists presume the power to identify victims and perpetrators (Are those being arrested in Guantanamo victims or perpetrators?) or, referring to Becker's view, to determine the direction of social change.

The second strand in conceptualizing peace journalism is closely related to the "classic" tenets of *good journalism*. This mode of peace journalism is not intended to substitute war propaganda with peace propaganda, but "it does imply dismissing simple antagonisms between 'good' and 'evil'" (Kempf 2002: 71). War discourses should be deconstructed in a two-step procedure (Kempf 2003: 8-9): First, "de-escalation oriented conflict reporting", characterized by neutrality and detachment, entails an emphasis on win-win solutions, questioning of the military logic and exploration of conflict information. In the second step, called "solution oriented conflict reporting", the dualistic construction of the conflict, still prevalent in the first step, will be abandoned. The practical suggestions made by Kempf are sympathetic to Galtung's (2002: 261) distinction between peace/conflict journalism and war/violence journalism, and they are, although based on a different approach, somewhat similar to McGoldrick and Lynch's (2000) "peace journalism manual". The major problem in both approaches is that they tend to address journalists as individuals, whereas the structural constraints of news making fade from the radar. While this issue will be discussed in another part of this paper, we will first have to clarify the position of peace journalism in the realm of journalism theory.

Peace journalism and journalism theory

A clear definition of journalism is especially important in a time in which researchers tend to speak about "journalism" without giving any indication as to what conceptualization of journalism they subscribe to. Some limit journalism to the professional activities of people working for news media; others include Weblogs and other forms of "participative" journalism.

According to the well-known work of George Spencer-Brown (1969: 1), observers define objects by making distinctions. In order to define journalism, we have to draw a line between what is journalism and what is not. An effective way to identify journalism is offered by differentiation theory, which is rooted in the work of Émile Durkheim (1893). Differentiation theory holds that increased complexity, selectivity and contingency of modern society require functional differentiation of social systems (politics, law, economy, education, etc.), each of which fulfills a specific function that is essential to maintain order in society.

Public communication can be conceptualized as one of these social systems, it has evolved to function as common, socially binding reference by permanently (periodically) providing information of immediate topicality (Hanitzsch, 2004a: 48). This common reference is vitally important to society because it allows the co-orientation of the social universe. While less complex societies could maintain social co-orientation, coordination and integration through interpersonal communication, public communication has become central to the organization of modern society (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989: 319). In other words: The emergence and evolution of public communication as a system is a reaction of modern society to the problems caused by functional differentiation and social disintegration.

The system public communication consists of four arenas in which professional communication activities take place: journalism, public relations, advertising and entertainment. These fields differ in respect to two fundamental dimensions (see Figure 1). The first dimension, the *primary information value*, refers to the traditional distinction between fact and fiction. Because communication messages usually contain complex information, the individual scores have to be seen as rather relative to one another: They make up a continuum that stretches from "mostly factual" (+factual/-fictional) to "mostly fictional" (-factual/+fictional). It is important to note that the distinction between "fact" and "fiction" does only make sense on the micro level. That the sky is blue cannot be denied and is therefore an "objective" fact. "Reality", however, is conceptionally situated at the macro level and is essentially made up of an infinite number of facts. Journalists select and judge information which produces an inevitably contingent media reality. Increasing complexity of the factual basis means increasing contingency, which results in a growing number of "factually true" combinations.

The second dimension, *communication goals*, is concerned with the origin of a particular message. Communication goals can come primarily from the outside ("externally defined") and are defined by a client, host organization or particular groups of stakeholders. In these cases a communicated message is usually intended to have a particular effect on the attitudes and/or behaviors of those who consume it – for instance, in terms of purchase decisions, positive perception of a company, etc.). Communication goals can also originate from the inside ("internally defined") and are, at least in the first place, not intended to have a particular effect on the audiences. Journalism, according to this view, is made up of messages which are mostly factual, while the communication goals are primarily internally defined.

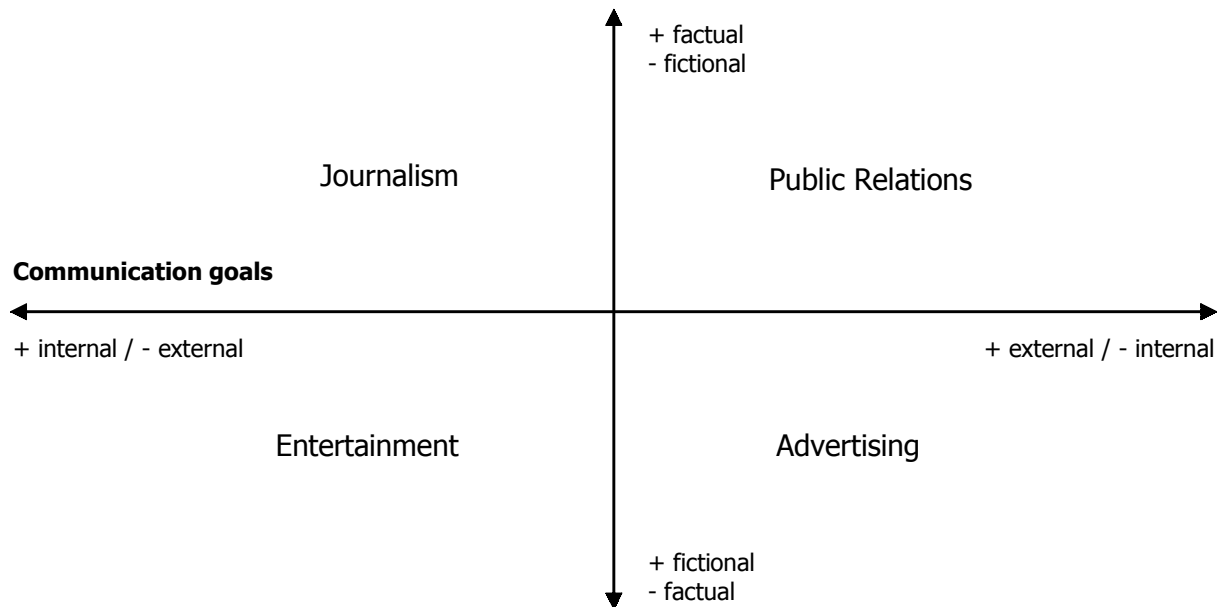


Figure 1: Distinction of journalism, PR, advertising and entertainment

This taxonomy does not attempt to simplify complex social phenomena in binary terms. It does not say that information can be either factual or fictional. To some extent, all fictional stories relate to social reality, the “facts”. In a similar vein, it is not uncommon in journalism to include fictional elements in an article, especially in feature stories or the so-called new journalism. The presented model classifies the forms of public communication in relative terms, holding that some information, for instance, is more factual and less fictional than others. This allows us to capture the existing diversity of journalism cultures, including peace journalism. In the journalism quadrant of Figure 1, the traditional Western understanding of objective and neutral “just-the-facts” journalism would be located in the upper left. The diverse forms of advocacy journalism, on the other hand, would be situated to the right, closest to public relations, starting with high factual content in the upper right (e.g. civic/public journalism, development journalism) and moving in a downwards direction as fictional content becomes more prevalent (e.g. partisan/patriotic journalism). Popular journalism, as a manifestation of entertainment and tabloidization in news-making, would be situated close to the entertainment quadrant.

The two different camps in thinking peace journalism occupy different spaces in the two-dimensional coordinate system: The mode of good journalism is located in the upper left in the journalism quadrant, as it is committed to the professionalism model that emphasizes objectivity, neutrality and detachment. The interventionist mode of peace journalism, on the other hand, is situated closely to public relations and may occasionally cross the line to PR when journalists start to actively engage in conflict resolution.

Peace journalism: a critical review

The promotion of peace journalism among professional journalists has not always met an enthusiastic response. The BBC correspondent David Loyn (2003) argues that peace journalism could compromise the integrity of journalists and confuse their role as neutral disseminators: “Our task is always to seek to find out what is going on, not carrying any other baggage. If there is conflict resolution we report on it in context. We do not engage in it.” While this point of view may seem simplistic, it is a blunt indicator of the dominant professional ideology as it is deeply inherited by many, if not most, journalists in the Western hemisphere.

This professional ideology, which entails the traditional values of objectivity, neutrality and detachment, is not unchallenged in the study of journalism, however. While some journalists argue that neutrality and detachment draws a moral equivalence between victim and aggressor (e.g. Christiane Amanpour, quoted in Hume, 1997: 6), others believe that journalism “is not a neutral and mechanical undertaking but in some sense a moral enterprise” (Bell, 1997: 11). In a similar vein, objectivity has been scrutinized by several scholars. Some argue that journalism is not objective; others that it cannot be objective; and still others that it should not be objective (Lichtenberg 1991: 238). The objectivity debate is an evergreen in journalism studies because it touches upon the philosophical underpinnings of modern journalism or, more specifically, its epistemological foundation.

Some advocates of peace journalism, most notably Johan Galtung himself, subscribe to a naive epistemological view on media coverage. They argue that the practice of traditional war reporting results in a distorted representation of reality (e.g. Galtung & Vincent, 1992: 24; Kempf, 2006: 5). I have argued elsewhere that complaints about a "media-biased reality" actually miss the point (Hanitzsch, 2004b: 486), and there is a growing awareness of the fact that the news is not a "mirror" of reality. Rather, the news "is a representation of the world, and all representations are selective" (Schudson, 2003: 33). Any serious inquiry into conflict coverage must acknowledge that news accounts are inevitably based on cognition and contingent (re)construction of reality. While this insight is partly built into the writings of Lynch and Kempf, peace journalism as analytical concept seems to be prone to epistemological realism. To say that reality can be "misrepresented", for instance by drawing on an "incomplete" factual basis (Kempf 2006: 5), assumes that there is a proper and "true" version of reality. However, every representation is inevitably biased, and any "correspondence" between an objective reality and its representation(s) is hardly possible. In everyday journalism, subjective representations can be objectified provided they cohere with other "facts", that is, with what we already know. An "external perspective", as demanded by Kempf (*ibid*), is neither needed nor possible.

It seems that peace journalism still has to define its epistemological foundation. Such a basis may be provided by standpoint epistemology, a philosophical camp that originated with the feminist critique of the objectivity concept (Harding 1991). Standpoint epistemology holds that less powerful and marginalized members of society enjoy a certain epistemic privilege to see social reality differently from those who dominate society. Such a counter-hegemonic epistemology would require journalists to report conflicts from the perspective of the less powerful and marginalized people. Standpoint epistemology could encourage "journalists to rethink themselves and their craft from the position of marginalized Others, thus uncovering unconscious ethnocentric, sexist, racist, and heterosexist biases that distort news production as it is governed by the dominant news paradigm" (Durham, 1998: 132).

The lack of an explicit-made epistemological foundation is not the only omission made by the peace journalism movement, however. An assessment of the literature reveals that the ideas behind peace journalism as well as its practical implications are often based on an overly individualistic and voluntaristic perspective. This is particularly true for many essays published by (former) journalists, most notably by Lynch and McGoldrick, but also for the work of scholars who argue in favor of a "courageous journalist" (Jaeger, 2002: 29). Their implicit argument seems to suggest that journalists only need to change their attitudes and behaviors, and as a result, they will produce conflict coverage that embraces the values of peace journalism. But this is an illusion.

There are in fact many structural constraints which shape and limit the work of journalists: few personnel, time and material resources, editorial procedures and hierarchies, textual constraints (news formats), availability of sources, access to the scene and information in general, just to name a few. Journalists consistently work under conditions of heavy time pressure, limited resources and tight competition. To the extent that time, space and resources are so limited, journalists need to deconstruct complex and complicated conflicts in terms of ready-made narratives which are easily understood by their audiences. These accessible and commonly shared schemata are particularly salient in news photographs (Griffin, 2004; Trivundza, 2004), and they exactly embody what Fawcett (2002: 221) rightly calls the "constraining nature of the news text". Fawcett further suggests that, in order to encourage journalists to make use of "win-win" frames of conflict, one has "to address the power of these discursive structures, as well as the power of the political and professional cultures within which journalists operate". Wolfsfeld goes even further and maintains that the needs of a peace process are structurally incompatible with the imperatives of journalism:

There is an inherent contradiction between the logic of a peace process and the professional demands of journalists. A peace process is complicated; journalists demand simplicity. A peace process takes time to unfold and develop; journalists demand immediate results. Most of a peace process is marked by dull, tedious negotiations; journalists require drama. A successful peace process leads to a reduction in tensions; journalists focus on conflict. Many of the significant developments within a peace process must take place in secret behind closed doors; journalists demand information and action. (Wolfsfeld 1997: 67)

As a result, the media pays very little attention to the – mostly invisible – successes of preventive diplomacy (Jakobsen, 2000: 133). While media criticism is often concerned with professional news values (Galtung & Vincent, 1992: Chapter 2), it ignores the fact that these values, fundamental as they are in modern journalism, resonate with the expectations of the audience (Eilders, 1997; Tai & Chang, 2002). The main characteristic of news values is that they raise attention; and in our post-modern society public attention is the central currency and thus becomes an increasingly limited good. Consequently, virtually everything in public communication is geared toward public attention, be it journalism, public relations, advertising or entertainment. The mainstream media can ill afford to abandon news values, as this would jeopardize their economic base on which they are forced to operate. Ironically, in order to be successful in the "marketplace of public attention", peace journalism would have to subscribe to the same values as does corporate journalism.

All this clearly suggests that the conduct of peace journalism is not a matter of individual leeway. Modern corporate journalism involves processes of organized news production, thus giving priority to organizational and institutional factors as

well as processes of professional socialization. A long tradition of research suggests that the characteristics, backgrounds and values of individual journalists matter relatively little in the production of media content (Berkowitz, Limor & Singer, 2004; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). "Courageous" journalists and media organizations, when subscribing to the idea of peace journalism, would have to tilt at windmills, unless they reach a critical mass, but this is nothing one should expect for the near future.¹

Another problem of the peace journalism movement is that their sweeping media criticism fails to take notice of the various nuances of journalism. Similar to the routines of war reporting, media criticism tends to highlight the exceptional, spectacular and negative (Calließ & Raue 2004: 200-5) at the expense of the ordinary and positive, and then making generalizing conclusions about "the media". To the extent that media critics tend to focus on regular news broadcasts and the traditional news sections of newspapers, they ignore the existing diversity of media outlets and alternative, sometimes even counter-hegemonic forms of reporting, such as news features, documentaries and specials, which explore conflict formations and the true causes of violence in much greater detail. There are plenty of differentiated accounts that provide a complex and comprehensive picture, but these accounts are not likely to be found equally often in all media. The different functionality of media outlets goes along with manifold distinctions in journalism cultures, not all of which happen to be clear-cut: serious vs. popular journalism, broadsheet vs. tabloid journalism, public service vs. marketing journalism, to name only a few. All these areas of journalism are oftentimes lumped together, no matter the extent of their similarity is actually very little. For this reason, it is simply unrealistic to expect media like the British *Sun*, the German *Bild* or American *Fox News* to tune in the conduct of peace journalism, unless there is a strong audience demand for it. Due to their specific functionality, not all media will be equally receptive to the ideas of peace journalism.

This brings us to the next critical point: Peace journalism, if it is to survive a critical discussion of its analytic value and practical use, must learn to look at fragmented and active audiences instead of a passive mass that needs to be enlightened by virtue of right and proper reporting. Contingent needs in a society result in an increasingly contingent supply, thus leading to a selective use of the supplied products. For media content is strongly oriented to the disparate needs and expectations of the audience, as measured for instance by market research, the segregation into diverse publics reflects the growing disintegration of society. Furthermore, since the uses and gratifications approach took off in communication and media studies, the view of the audience as an active one gained ground. Uses and gratification theorist suggest that the audience actively uses the media as sources of gratification (Blumler & Katz, 1974). Assuming that there are various choices of media outlets, it is believed that people use those media outlets which promise the highest amount of satisfaction.

Because it is highly unlikely that all media will equally subscribe to the conduct of peace journalism, mainstream audiences may ironically choose the media which contain the least amount of peace journalism. There is no indication in audience research that consumers of mainstream media would prefer peace journalism to traditional news (see Bird, 2000: 31; Tai & Chang, 2002: 262). On the other hand, peace journalism is already present – in the outfit of "good journalism" – in many quality news outlets, many of which are public broadcasting organizations (e.g. BBC, ARD, and NPR). Those who seek this kind of conflict coverage can obtain it by means of their selective media use. People who are interested in bombastic, sensational and sketchy conflict coverage will continue to avoid peace journalism and tune in media outlets which serve their preferences appropriately.

The conduct of peace journalism does also become difficult, if not impossible, when applied in certain conflict constellations. For one thing, journalists reporting on conflicts in their neighborhoods do often belong to one of the groups involved in the violence. In these cases it is difficult to remain impartial and to deliver a balanced and comprehensive account of the conflict. Some of us may remember the clashes between religious groups in Indonesia's province Maluku in 1999. Shortly after the province capital Ambon fell into two territories controlled by either Christian or Muslim militias, there was no way for Muslim journalists to enter Christian territory, and vice versa. The only daily newspaper *Suara Maluku* became biased against the Muslim population as its office was located in Christian territory (Hanitzsch, 2004b: 483). In such a situation of hatred, reporter may risk their lives if they try to give both sides equal say. In the midst of an unfolding conflict, journalists and their media organizations can often enough hardly build a bridge between enemies.

The role of the audience is even more important in this respect. It is hard to convince people of the virtue of peace journalism once they engage in a conflict in which their elementary interests, or even their existence, are at stake. When in 1997 and 1998 two newspapers in Northern Ireland, the unionist *News Letter* and the nationalist *Irish News*, published joint editorials as an effort to reconcile the opposed groups for the annual Orange Order parade, many subscribers felt betrayed and indicated that they would terminate their subscriptions (Fawcett, 2002: 216).

In addition to this, there seems to be a tendency among some peace journalism advocates to overestimate the power of journalism. In one of his recent publications Galtung (2002: 260) claims that with more peace journalism, "the conflict in

1. The low significance of individual factors has been acknowledged by some exponents of the peace journalism idea, in particular by those based at the Konstanz University (e.g. Jaeger, 2002; Kempf, 2002: 70, 2003: 3, 2005).

and over Northern Ireland would have entered a more peaceful phase long ago". I believe this is an overly optimistic view. Although journalism does undeniably have an impact on the people, only rarely can journalists move beyond the cultural consensus of their societies in which they live and work. And contrary to what is commonly believed, the influence journalists and the media have on political leaders and decision makers tends to be limited (Jakobsen, 2000; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Wolfsfeld (2004: 33), who hypothesizes a circular relationship between politics and the media, rightly sees the importance of the media in the fact that they *amplify* the impact of political events. Additionally, as public relations is becoming increasingly professionalized and utilized, participants in stories grow to be "media-savvy" (Lynch, 1998: 64), which means they anticipate the workings of journalism in order to get their message through the highly routinized processes of news making.

Conclusion

There is something that makes me suspect that peace journalism is rather mistitled a concept, as it obviously misleads people to conclude that its very intention is the advocacy of peace. Luostarinen (2002: 283) argues that it "is not even necessary to give such journalism a name like 'peace journalism'". Many of the principles of peace journalism are the very essence of excellence in journalism and are deeply embedded in good and many-sided journalism: to make conflicts appear transparent through background information, to give voice to the views of all rivaling parties, to expose lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on all sides and to report on the atrocities of war and the suffering of civilians. It seems that peace journalism oftentimes reinvents the wheel to the extent that it repeats a "classic" debate on quality in journalism that has a long tradition in communication and media research.

Critics may argue that compliance with the values of good journalism is often missing in day-to-day war reporting, but the failures of corporate journalism cannot be overcome by an individualistic and voluntaristic conceptualization of news making. To have any impact on the way the news is being made, and the critical discussion thereof, the advocates of peace journalism must address the structural constraints of news production. The discussion of peace journalism, and particularly of its practical implications, must be tied to the realm of journalism studies where it resonates with ongoing efforts to promote excellence in journalism.

At the same time, there are many elements of peace journalism which do not fit the functionality of journalism and the logic of news production. There are some people who opt for an interventionist mode of peace journalism that regards itself as a vehicle for the advocacy of peace and non-violent conflict resolution (e.g. Becker, 2002: 14). These activists may consider using another field of public communication that, by definition, intends to serve a particular cause: public relations. In order to facilitate peace and non-violent conflict resolution by means of public communication, a concept "Peace PR" seems much more appropriate, but for some reason it has not been developed. "Peace PR" can effectively unfold its public potential if the communicated message "sits consistently with the values and imperatives of those who produce news" (Spencer, 2003: 64).

The inherent logic of news production is another limitation of peace journalism. First, it is an unwarranted assumption that, given the salience and importance of news values in public communication, that peace journalism will prevail in a commercial media system that is driven by market forces. Second, because of their specific functionality, some media (e.g. public broadcasting: BBC, ARD, NPR) are more than others (e.g. yellow press: *The Sun* or *Bild*) sympathetic to the ideas of peace journalism. Third, it is difficult, if not impossible, to implement the values of peace journalism in traditional news formats where space and time constraints do not allow a detailed elaboration of backgrounds and causes of violence as well as its consequences. Fourth, and last, the demand for complexity reduction leads to the use of highly standardized narrative schemes which are often not compatible to the demands of peace journalism.

Critics may complain that I tend to take the media structures and routines for granted and treat them as if they were unable to change. This might be true, but the fact of the matter is that media structures and professional routines cannot be modified from the position of the individual journalist. Quite on the contrary: Cultures must change! Although there are, and will always be, a number of committed journalists who have gained prominence (e.g. Seymour Hersh), they tend to be the exception from the rule and, as such, have only limited power to change the system from within.

A peaceful culture is the *precondition* of peace journalism, rather than its outcome. In a culture in which a life has virtually no meaning and violence seems an appropriate measure of conflict resolution, peace journalism is not likely to evolve. While media critics continue to repeat their mantra-like question of why journalism serves society as poorly as it currently does, I think it is time to turn the question around. We should rather ask: What kind of society do we live in that allows and creates a sort of journalism that has no sense of peace?

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Jake Lynch

Der Friedensjournalismus und seine Gegner

Anliegen des Autors ist es, auf die Kritik an den Konzepten des Friedensjournalismus von Seiten des Journalisten David Loyn und des Medienwissenschaftlers Thomas Hanitzsch zu antworten, indem er auf eigene Erfahrungen in Journalismus und Friedensforschung zurückgreift.

Der Autor argumentiert, dass konventionelle Journalisten, wie Loyn, die Trennlinien innerhalb der Friedensjournalismus-Debatte oft falsch ziehen, da sie zu sehr auf Realismus und Faktenhaltigkeit der Nachrichten fixiert sind.. Damit werden zugleich einige der wichtigsten Forschungsergebnisse aus der Journalismus- und Kommunikationsforschung ignoriert.

Auf der anderen Seite argumentieren Wissenschaftler, wie Hanitzsch, dass die konventionelle Art der Berichterstattung akkurater und funktionaler sei als friedensjournalistische Ansätze, indem sie wichtige Ergebnisse der Friedensforschung bewusst ausklammern.

Die Tatsache, dass die friedensjournalistischen Leitlinien und Konzept aus den Ergebnissen der Friedens - und Konfliktforschung abgeleitet wurden, während man sich in der konventionelle Nachrichtenindustrie häufig an nicht-empirischen Konventionen orientiert, spricht jedoch für die Anwendung des Friedensjournalismus in der Berichterstattung über Konflikte.

Ein weiterer Vorwurf an den Friedensjournalismus besteht darin, er beruhe auf einem rein individualistischen Modell journalistischer Arbeit und schenke den realen Arbeitsbedingungen, mit denen Reporter und Herausgeber konfrontiert sind, zu wenig Beachtung.

Diesem Argument begegnet der Autor, indem er die praktischen Bedingungen zwar als handlungsleitende, jedoch nicht als komplett determinierende Einflussfaktoren anerkennt.

Abschließend werden die potentiellen Leistungen des Friedensjournalismus hervorgehoben, welche unter anderem in seinen Beiträgen zur Mobilisierung sozialer Ressourcen und Anstößen zu strukturellen Reformen liegen, so wie in der Umsetzung existierender reformatorischer Konzepte.

Zusammenfassend wird festgestellt, dass die konventionelle Journalismusforschung den Ergebnissen der Friedensforschung zu wenig Aufmerksamkeit widmet und daraus abgeleitete pragmatische Konventionen dem Anspruch eines friedensorientierten Bezugsrahmens der Berichterstattung nicht gerecht werden.

Volltext

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Jake Lynch

Peace Journalism and its discontents

This article is a response to criticisms of peace journalism from a journalist (David Loyn) and a scholar (Thomas Hanitzsch) by one who has recently gone from one profession to the other. It argues that journalists, like Loyn, often misrepresent the dividing lines in the debate over peace journalism because they take an unduly realist view of news and its relationship with the facts. This is tantamount to ignoring some of the most important insights of research into journalism and communications. On the other hand, scholars like Hanitzsch take an unduly conventionalist view, it argues, thereby excluding important arguments about the basis upon which we should prefer some representations of conflict over others, as being more accurate and more useful. Peace journalism bases its claims on observations about conflict, peace and violence by researchers in Peace and Conflict Studies, preferable as a basis for representing conflict to the often-unexamined conventions of the news industry.

Peace journalism is also criticised as resting on an overly individualistic model of journalistic endeavour, attaching too little weight to the importance of structural constraints on the work of editors and reporters. This article acknowledges those constraints as governing, though not fully determining influences; but it also argues that peace journalism can contribute to the mobilization of social resources for structural reform, or for the existing structural provisions for public service concepts in journalism to be applied and carried out.

Furthermore, some research into journalistic representations of conflict is insufficiently attentive to the insights of peace research, as distinct from research on journalism, a shortcoming which, the article says, invalidates some of its conclusions.

full text

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Abstract: This article is a response to criticisms of peace journalism from a journalist (David Loyn) and a scholar (Thomas Hanitzsch) by one who has recently gone from one profession to the other. It argues that journalists, like Loyn, often misrepresent the dividing lines in the debate over peace journalism because they take an unduly realist view of news and its relationship with the facts. This is tantamount to ignoring some of the most important insights of research into journalism and communications.

On the other hand, scholars like Hanitzsch take an unduly conventionalist view, it argues, thereby excluding important arguments about the basis upon which we should prefer some representations of conflict over others, as being more accurate and more useful. Peace journalism bases its claims on observations about conflict, peace and violence by researchers in Peace and Conflict Studies, preferable as a basis for representing conflict to the often-unexamined conventions of the news industry.

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Introduction

Journalists often dislike peace journalism because it is 'too critical'; or rather, many of them dislike the critical self-awareness of journalistic structure and agency inscribed in peace journalism analysis and methods (Loyn, 2003 and 2007; Phillips, 2006). This, I will argue in this paper, is tantamount to a rejection of some key propositions from scholarship on journalism and communications, established by researchers over several decades; chiefly, the structure of foreign news as mapped by Galtung and Ruge (1965). When journalists enter debates about journalism, therefore, the onus is on them to explain why and on what grounds they reject these propositions.

When journalists dismiss peace journalism they tend to champion notions of 'truth' and 'objectivity', as if in counter-position (Loyn, 2007). I will argue that this rhetoric falls short of the real distinctions in the debate over peace journalism, and conceals unexamined prejudices about 'right' and 'wrong'.

Academic writers (such as Hanitzsch, 2004 and 2007), on the other hand, often dislike peace journalism because it is 'not critical enough'; resting, as it does, on normative judgements about the representation of conflict which it uses to suggest that peace journalism is better than war journalism – *as journalism*. I will argue that any meaningful debate about journalism must include some effort to set out the basis on which some forms of representation should be preferred to others.

Then there is the question of journalistic agency. Implicit in most writing about peace journalism is the suggestion that journalists – acting individually and/or collectively – can decide to make some degree of difference to their journalism (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 227-231), and that this will, in turn, make a difference to the train of events and processes on which they are reporting (216-218). Academic hackles tend to rise at this, and I will consider the conceptual framework within which journalism about conflict can be considered, in order to allow for journalistic agency and creativity, and to map the effects journalism can have on the course of conflicts.

Most journalistic work is governed by convention, of course – speed is of the essence, so it would be impossible to formulate responses to breaking news, from first principles, starting afresh every time. Responses harden into conventions in a process governed by structural factors arising from the economic and political interests of the news industry. Notice – 'governed', not 'determined'. I will argue that journalists' own self-awareness and efforts at reform can combine with mobilisations in civil society to challenge and supplement conventions; and that ideas from peace journalism, whether named as such or not, can help.

Lastly, where scholars of communications consider the role of media in conflict, they are often let down by applying an understanding of key concepts – from Peace and Conflict Studies rather than their own subject – which is inadequate, and therefore invalidates their conclusions (Hanitzsch, 2007; Wolfsfeld, 1997). Peace journalism, I shall argue, effectively bridges the gap between these disciplines. Therein lies its novelty and utility for media researchers.

David Loyn (and feathered friend)

David Loyn is a brave and talented reporter, well experienced in many of the world's trouble spots. He is also a fierce foe of peace journalism. David and I have debated these issues several times down the years, both in print and in person. I repeat here what I have said to him on other platforms – in many respects, much of his own reporting *is* peace journalism. He complains (Loyn, 2007: 2) that I propose "highly prescriptive rules [that] inhibit good journalism". One of my purposes here is to suggest that peace journalism as I have defined it – "creat[ing] opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 5) – is more inclusive than he allows.

Where we differ in this debate is chiefly in the lack of critical awareness Loyn brings to bear on journalism in general and his refusal to acknowledge the structural characteristics of news representations of conflict in particular. He concedes that objectivity may be "chimerical"; "anyone who has ever interviewed two observers of the same incident knows that there is no perfect account". He proposes, in other words, that 'imperfections' in journalism can be *explained* by the variance between any two accounts of the same event – as if that is, as it were, 'all there is to it'.

This is an approach to these issues that I have characterised, jocosely, as typical of "Otto the Objective Ostrich" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 195). Loyn (2007: 6) objects to this treatment, but I maintain it is justified. Consider – media studies of the early post-war period gave us the now familiar propositions of gatekeeper theory. Journalists report the facts, and good ones set out to do so truthfully. But 'the truth' and 'the facts', whatever one thinks of the epistemological basis for such concepts, are, by their very nature, larger categories than 'the news'. Some process of *framing* is inevitable in journalism – some facts are allowed through the gate, others kept out.

Then came *The Structure of Foreign News* (Galtung and Ruge, 1965), which proposed that, far from being made at random, gatekeeping decisions on particular stories can be shown to be taking place according to discernible patterns. The bits left out of the picture are always, or usually, the same bits, or the same kinds of bits. News is, in other words, a *systematic*

process. It inhabits and upholds its own set of conventions for representing the world around us, and much – arguably all – subsequent serious research has tended to look for evidence of these conventions and what they are doing *to* the facts as they are being represented.

According to Loyn, the patterns discerned by researchers can be wholly explained by the fact that “reporters share a language and certain assumptions with their audience” (2007: 4). This shows perhaps most clearly the weakness of any argument about journalism which does not attend to ‘Galtung-Ruge’ and its implications – it precludes any real engagement with propaganda, and consideration of how and why it works. Indeed, in Loyn’s latest article (2007), the word propaganda does not even occur, save in quotes from me.

Propaganda sets out precisely to penetrate and transform shared language and assumptions. It does ideological work, in the Gramscian sense of ideology as a set of ideas and symbols made to appear natural, or ‘common sense’ (Gramsci, 1971). Meaningful discussion of the role of media in conflict is impossible without considering propaganda, and to form a useful understanding of propaganda it is essential that these categories be seen as dynamic – the site of constant construction and contestation – rather than as givens, as Loyn apparently does. Hence the ostrich metaphor – his account, and other, similar criticisms of peace journalism by western-employed professional journalists, effectively ignore four decades of scholarship and research. In the face of unpalatable ideas, they prefer to bury their heads in the sand.

This gap in understanding also explains persistent misinterpretations of the real dividing lines in this debate. There is no dispute over a journalist’s duty to “truthfulness”, as Loyn misleadingly suggests. Reporters should report, as accurately and fully as they can, the facts they encounter. Where peace journalism goes further is to call on them to consider how these particular facts, as distinct from a practically infinite number of others ‘out there’, come to meet them; and how they, the reporters, come to meet these particular facts. If it’s always the same facts, or the same kinds of facts, what consequences follow, for the nature of representation produced? How does that representation affect the understanding developed by readers and audiences, and their responses? And how do those responses, or assumptions about them, feed in to the actions and motivations of parties to conflict? These are the real questions in the peace journalism debate.

Conventionalism and realism

Loyn (2007: 4) tells us that Thomas Nagel, the New York University law and philosophy professor, “proves that there is such a thing as objectivity”. It’s a bold claim – so let’s take a closer look. The example Loyn cites is about the physics of light, as opposed to the mere perception of colour – “one objective, the other subjective”. But the wave model, which he regards as proven fact, is actually a way of *describing the behaviour* of light. For some purposes, notably in astronomy, it has to be supplemented with a particle model if observable phenomena are to be fully explained.

Nagel gives a definition of objectivity as a pursuit, rather than a state of grace: “In pursuing objectivity we alter our relation to the world, increasing the correctness of certain of our representations of it by compensating for the peculiarities of our point of view” (Nagel, 1986: 90).

This shows what is wrong with claims for objectivity, even in this attenuated form, when put forward in counter-position to peace journalism. Nagel’s version falls short of the real dividing lines in the debate because it does not specify what we are to use to compensate for the peculiarities – other points of view? If so, which ones? Actually, he tells us, points of view can be measured, not just against each other – a process he calls “human objectivity” – but against an *external reality* whose existence we can intuit, even if it cannot be conceptualised in the (present) structures of human understanding:

“There may be aspects of reality beyond its reach [the reach of ‘human objectivity’] because they are altogether beyond our capacity to form conceptions of the world” (1986: 91).

Loyn, for his part, intuits a metaphysical Truth – going so far as to quote Christ’s testimony in his trial – as a transcendental signifier to anchor his pursuit of truthfulness. Thus anchored, he suggests, we can be content with the truth of a news story as “quotidian... ‘true’ in the sense of not being ‘false’”.

And here is the crux – where Loyn commends “truthfulness” as a goal of journalism, as opposed to falsity, there is no difference between us – how could there be? And where he does succeed in delineating a difference between us, it depends on intuiting the numinosity of a pre-ordained order, which the tenacious reporter can *reveal*, without, therefore, needing to consider the conventions of his or her reporting or their theoretical construction.

This epistemological stance lends a strong moral flavour to Loyn’s strictures, notably when he comes to consider media responses to the ‘Kosovo crisis’ of 1998-99, an example discussed at length by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 98-106). It leads him to describe our account as, quite simply, “wrong”.

We criticise the dominance in media representations of war propaganda, emanating from privileged sources in western governments, swinging public opinion in their respective countries behind a policy of violence. In other words, we assume

sources are active – “trying to create a reality that does not yet exist” (183). Loyn, on the other hand, typifies what we characterise as the journalist’s working assumption that sources are passive, “revealing a reality that already exists” (183). This is, of course, convenient for the authors of propaganda, and there is no shortage of research that says so:

“The media are subject [in the build-up to war] to massive propaganda from the parties involved, and are often without their own knowledge representing the necessary link between the propaganda machinery and the audience. If they are not aware of this potential role themselves, the danger of playing a role as a catalyst for propaganda will be even greater” (Hojjer, Nohrstedt and Ottosen, 2002: 4).

We ourselves argue: “Journalism needs some workable form of reflexivity, analysing and addressing its own role in shaping discussions and creating realities. Without this, it is fated to collude and conceal” (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: *xvi*).

Kosovo reconsidered

Was journalism colluding, then, in the Kosovo case, and what, if anything, was it concealing? Loyn states (2007: 7), as a fact, that the build-up to the bombing of Yugoslavia was a

“...sequence of Serb atrocity and world reaction ratcheting up towards war in 1999”.

Nato’s ‘Operation Allied Force’ (OAF) was, in these terms, the crucial act in a drama of intervention, with the international community riding reluctantly to the rescue of a beleaguered minority, as a reaction when all else had failed.

As it is, Loyn himself allows that Nato countries already had forces on the ground, well before the onset of bombing, “making contact with the KLA [Kosovo Liberation Army] and yes, surprise, surprise, possibly giving them military assistance” (7).

In our account, we quote an episode of the BBC’s own *Panorama* programme (BBC, 2000) which showed how KLA activities at this time, the latter part of 1998, brought about a decisive escalation in the conflict. At that stage, a ceasefire agreement was in place, brokered by the so-called ‘Contact Group’ of the US, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia, and policed by the Kosovo Verification Mission, sent in under the aegis of the Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe.

Perhaps the most widely quoted history of the period – at least in English – is by a journalist, Tim Judah, who points out the crucial flaw in the KVM:

“The KLA were not party to it, and, as far as they were concerned, not bound by it either. As the Serbs pulled back, the KLA followed in their wake, reoccupying positions they had withdrawn from during the summer... [the ceasefire gave the KLA] a reprieve, time to reorganise and rearm, and, as they told anyone who cared to listen, time to prepare for their spring offensive” (Judah, 2002: 189).

Loyn attributes the KLA’s sudden ascendancy as recognised representatives of the Albanian-speaking Kosovar people to the weakness of Ibrahim Rugova, then leader of the main political party, the LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo). Judah explains it as a rather more sinister process, taking place over the winter of 1998-99:

“The KLA was also seeking to stamp its authority on areas that it controlled and to make sure the LDK understood Mao’s dictum that power grows from the barrel of a gun. LDK activists were arrested and according to one UN report, the activity of KLA ‘tribunals’ suggested ‘a pattern of arbitrary arrests and executions’”. (190-1)

The *Panorama* programme, titled ‘Moral Combat’, presented, in essence, a picture of a civil conflict exacerbated by interventions on the part of the international community that were, at best, bumbling and ineffective (OAFish, perhaps) and, at worst, geared towards provoking armed confrontation. Far from appearing “a rather curious essay” as Loyn claims (2007: 7), this version of events has steadily gained in salience, especially as the political future of the province has remained clouded in uncertainty, through a period of UN-sponsored negotiations, and fraught with the potential for causing more trouble in future.

There is an intriguing congruity between Loyn’s favoured mode of analysis, and the approach to conflict issues at a political and diplomatic level in western capitals, especially London. He is typical of many professional journalists, working in those capitals, in refusing to acknowledge the conventions they apply whenever they observe the world around them. (Actually, he goes further than most, albeit writing them off as no more than the inevitable divergence between any two accounts of the same event.)

This fits, as if naturally, with the representation of conflict by politicians and diplomats as a drama of intervention, whether in process or in prospect. What is missing, from both, is any sense that the world we encounter is partly of our own making – evident in recent cases from the ‘7/7’ London bombings (discussed in Lynch, 2006b) to Iran’s supposed ‘nuclear ambitions’ (discussed in Lynch, 2006a).

In Kosovo, the KLA, emerging strengthened from the internationally brokered ceasefire period, resumed its attacks on Serb targets from more advanced positions and with far more effective firepower – thanks to weapons bought with money channelled through German bank accounts – and tactics, thanks to training by the CIA. (The Americans, Judah observes wryly, were the only nation who refused to “fold in” their on-the-ground observers to the KVM.)

The Yugoslav Army rumbled back into the province and began striking, with its trademark lack of discrimination, at Albanian villages in territory the KLA had taken over, in the meantime, from the LDK. The die was cast for war: Judah quotes James Rubin, then spokesman at the US State Department, briefing reporters in February, 1999:

"All of the officials who have worked on this have made it very clear that in order to move towards military action, it has to be clear that the Serbs were responsible" (2002: 212).

Judah goes on to detail the gyrations of Rubin's boss, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in setting the bar in negotiations low enough for the KLA to sign up to an agreement, involving an implicit promise of independence and an agreement that they could keep their weapons; which simultaneously set it too high for any Serb representative to surmount.

Why should the US wish to bring about such an outcome, to move towards military action? The answer would take too long to rehearse in full, but see, for instance, the notorious *Defense Planning Guidance*, drawn up for the Pentagon by a senior official, Paul Wolfowitz, in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and 'Operation Desert Storm' to expel the Saddam Hussein regime from Kuwait (New York Times, 1992). America's top strategic priority, according to this paper, was to maintain "the sense that the world order is ultimately backed by the US". In Europe, this meant:

"A substantial American presence in Europe and continued cohesion within the Western alliance remains vital... we must seek to prevent the emergence of European-only security arrangements which would undermine NATO".

The Rubin press briefing describes the moment Kosovo ceased to be viewed as an international political problem, and started to be viewed as an international military one. If the former, who better to deal with it than the world's foremost international political organization, the European Union? If the latter, who better than the world's foremost military organization, Nato? The main difference between them? US leadership of the latter, but not the former.

The account I give here, in short, re-inscribes the degree of self-interest and complicity by elements of the 'international community', which is written out by formulations such as that served up by David Loyn, of Serb atrocities followed by world reaction. Such is the collusion and concealment that is inevitable in journalism compiled without reflexivity. As well as being the handmaiden of propaganda, it provides the opportunity and incentive for more.

Realism(s)

In epistemological terms, the Loyn view of news, and the official British view of international conflict, would be well described by what Nagel calls "normative realism":

"The view that propositions about what gives us reasons for action can be true or false independently of how things appear to us; and that we can hope to discover the truth by transcending the appearances and subjecting them to critical assessment". (1986: 139)

In scholarly circles, Nagel has tended to attract more critics than supporters, and one of them, Richard Rorty, takes issue with precisely this habit of remitting the discovery of truth to vaguely defined processes like "critical assessment" without clarifying the basis upon which any such assessment would take place. Rorty accuses Nagel of what is, in effect, a category error; presenting his intuitions, that there must be some reality beyond the scope of our structures of understanding, as evidence for its existence:

"Of course we have such intuitions. How could we escape having them? We have been educated within an intellectual tradition build around such claims" (1982: *xxix*).

So, is there anything in the centre, at the root of our perceptions, an underlying reality that is hard and fast? Or do familiar gravitational metaphors such as these – favoured by both Loyn and Nagel – actually mislead us into preferring one representation to another, when in fact both have equal claims on our attention?

This is, in essence, the complaint put forward by Thomas Hanitzsch, in his critique of peace journalism:

"The news is 'a representation of the world, and all representations are selective' (Schudson, 2003: 33)... To say that reality can be 'misrepresented', for instance by drawing on an 'incomplete' factual basis (Kempf, 2006: 5), assumes that there is a proper and 'true' version of reality. However, every representation is inevitably biased, and any 'correspondence' between an objective reality and its representation(s) is hardly possible" (2007: 5).

Where Loyn takes a realist view, and finds peace journalism over-critical, Hanitzsch takes a conventionalist view, according to which, peace journalism is not critical enough. His phrase, "hardly possible" does allow a little wiggle room, however, and he makes the sensible suggestion that "standpoint epistemology" may be worth further consideration in the search for an "epistemological foundation" for peace journalism.

On Hanitzsch's account, standpoint epistemology is, indeed, as its name implies, the exact opposite of Nagel's view from nowhere. Far from calling on us to "transcend" our point of view, or compensate for it, this takes standpoints from which dominant representations can be inspected from the outside. It "holds that less powerful and marginalized members of

society enjoy a certain epistemic privilege to see social reality differently from those who dominate society". There are, in other words, intelligible power relations built in to the acts of representation and understanding, even before they take place.

So far, so promising, especially as it meshes with Stuart Hall's important concept of decoding (Hall, 1980) – that the meanings of media messages are made, at least partly, at the point of reception, in a process influenced chiefly by the socio-economic position of the reader or viewer. A form of journalism that deliberately sought out perspectives from the disadvantaged margins and elevated them into the news could encourage, in Hall's terms, "negotiated" and "oppositional" readings of dominant ideological constructs, thus correcting for some of the effects of journalistic convention.

Hanitzsch leaves it there, as an interesting thread to pull, which it certainly could be. He has not, apparently, read any of my own later material on peace journalism (such as Lynch, 2006a) – the most recent reference is to a short piece published on the Open Democracy website in 2003, my initial response to David Loyn.

If he had, he would have seen that I have been suggesting a second version of realism – critical realism – as another candidate to be the epistemological foundation of peace journalism. Critical realism has been defined thus:

"A way of describing the process of 'knowing' that acknowledges the reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower (hence 'realism'), while also acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence 'critical')" (Wright, 1996: 35-36).

Critical realism begins with the advantage of having been devised explicitly to reconcile arguments in social science which are closely analogous to the ones Loyn and Hanitzsch put forward in their papers:

"On the one hand those who advocated a human and social science which should – after the pattern of the natural sciences – try to ascertain general laws by applying and developing abstract theoretical models; a nomothetic approach. On the other hand, their critics who held that social science should describe empirical reality in all its complexity and diversity; an idiographic approach" (Danermark et al, 2002: 3).

To open consideration of its claims, I will first examine a useful account, by Gilles Gauthier, a French-Canadian scholar, of 'A realist point of view on news journalism' (2005).

This suggests that, at the root of any news story, lurks some 'brute fact', which should be seen as above, behind and beyond the conventions of reporting:

"News always regards a state of affairs that logically precedes it or, in more general terms, information always formally emerges from a necessarily prior reality" (53).

Gauthier readily concedes that most news is based on socially constructed realities, but "the social reality on which the news is based is constructed from a reality that is given, rather than constructed" (53-4).

It is when he comes to consider a real news story that Gauthier comes unstuck, however. The example he uses, as a 'given' reality, or 'brute fact', is the selection of John Kerry as the Democratic nominee for the US presidential election, in 2004. And yet it could be argued that an expectation of the way Kerry's candidacy would be treated by journalists was built in to the calculations of party delegates even as they voted for him.

For many, the turning point in the primaries was 'Howard Dean's primal scream', the former Vermont Governor's rallying call to supporters in the room following his defeat at the Iowa caucus. According to eyewitness reports, Dean's behaviour seemed unexceptionable in the context of an emotional party rally – it was the merciless glare of the TV cameras, framed on the candidate's own head and shoulders, which effectively stripped it of context and made it seem excessive and odd.

What followed was a burst of war journalism – a demolition job on the only candidate who set out both to oppose the war in Iraq and to bypass traditional fundraising mechanisms (USA Today, 2004). The Dean campaign sagged and Kerry was left with a clear run to the nomination. So it was, above all, a media representation that tipped the balance in Kerry's favour by removing his main rival, making this 'brute fact' actually very highly mediated, even as it occurred.

In critical realist terms, Democratic Party members possessed causal powers; their selection process, resulting in the emergence of a nominee, is a mechanism. With Kerry's victory, this mechanism produced an event. But as this mechanism was in motion, and the event occurring, on what critical realism calls the social stratum of reality, others were working on different strata, notably the psychological.

In making their choice, Democrats imagined a sequence of future events – Kerry is received by the media as a credible President-in-waiting; media reporting influences voter reaction in the country; Kerry wins election. Their calculations about likely media responses were based, not unreasonably, on their experience of past media behaviour – an effect we have called a "feedback loop of cause and effect" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 216).

In the context of this debate, critical realism's notion of a stratified reality provides us with a useful – because non-gravi-

tational – spatial metaphor. It models journalism, in this case journalism about the race for the Democratic Party nomination for the Presidency, as both cause, on the psychological stratum, and, simultaneously, effect, on the social stratum.

This may get us off the horns of a dilemma. We do not have to claim that journalism 'reflects' a logically prior reality, avoiding ire from the likes of Hanitzsch; but it also keeps us on the right side of Loyn with his demand that "reporters need to preserve their position as observers not players" (2007: 3). Peace journalism does not call on them to 'cross a line' or *set out* to involve themselves, merely to allow for their journalism as both cause and effect, based on their observer status.

This is what Rorty calls a "pragmatic" position:

"Truth is not the sort of thing one should expect to have a philosophically interesting theory about" (1982: *xiii*);

"[The pragmatist] drops the notion of truth as correspondence to reality altogether, and says that modern science does not enable us to cope because it corresponds, it just plain enables us to cope" (*xvii*).

Such levity draws disapproval from Danermark et al:

"The researchers who adopt this position, what do they think they are doing when they carry out their research? If we were to take this kind of relativism seriously, the consequence would be that we would have to regard all scientific argumentation as completely meaningless" (2002: 17).

However, they reassure us that:

"The criticism of 'naïve objectivism' need not lead to such conclusions. Critical realism bears this criticism in mind at the same time as it tries to maintain the positive claims to a useful and liberating knowledge, which was the basic motivation for the Enlightenment project and for modern science. Realism maintains that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it. And even if this knowledge is always fallible, yet all knowledge is not *equally* fallible" (17) (emphasis added).

If we are concerned to bear down on the fallibility of journalism, to improve it, then we need to look at the terms of what Wright calls the dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known – which means reflexivity – and decide what forms of knowledge are likely to prove less fallible, in a given case – what I have called "anchorage" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: *xvii*):

"When covering conflicts, we can tread down to find solid ground beneath our feet, by studying and applying what is known and has been observed about conflict, drawing on the overlapping fields of Conflict Analysis and Peace Research. We can use this knowledge to help us decide for ourselves what is important, and to identify what is missing from what we are told by interested parties" (*xviii*).

Conflict analysis and peace research

The Structure of Foreign News (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) identified five key factors of newsworthiness in the coverage of international conflict in the Norwegian press:

- Threshold: A big story is one that has an extreme effect on a large number of people. Frequency: Events that occur suddenly and fit well with the news organization's schedule
- Negativity: Bad news is more exciting than good news.
- Unexpectedness: If an event is out of the ordinary it will have a greater effect
- Unambiguity: Events whose implications are clear make for better copy

Johan Galtung later adapted this basic insight to propose a "four-factor news communication model". Negative events, befalling elite individuals in elite countries, were top stories. Positive processes, benefiting non-elite groups in non-elite countries, were non-stories (Galtung, 1998). A classic example – a friend on the London *Guardian* newspaper had spent weeks compiling a feature on efforts to alleviate the growing literacy crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. It was pulled at the last minute in favour of musings on the just-announced divorce of Hollywood stars Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

Peace journalism can be understood as a further adaptation, so War Journalism is

- Violence/war-orientated
- Propaganda-orientated
- Elite-orientated
- Victory-orientated

And peace journalism itself is therefore

- Peace/conflict-orientated
- Truth-orientated
- People-orientated
- Solution-orientated

These categories appear with brief notes in a table Galtung himself drew up in 1997 (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 6). One of the most important distinctions between them is that War Journalism represents conflict as confined to "closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena".

This clearly makes it receptive to propaganda from western governments who either do not perceive, or will not acknowledge, their own complicity in a sequence of cause and effect – the problem (Saddam Hussein, for instance) is located in the conflict arena (Iraq), so that is where the solution is to be found (removing him from power; later, capturing him, then trying, convicting and executing him). It also makes it inaccurate, when compared with the insights gleaned by researchers in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies.

Any journalist knows a news story is supposed to answer six basic questions – who, what, where, when, why and how. When covering conflicts, these correspond roughly to what peace researchers call 'conflict dynamics'. According to one of them, Diana Francis, any statement of the dynamics of a conflict must identify "its history, recent causes and internal composition – the different parties, the nature of their involvement, their perspectives, positions and motivations, and the different relationships between them in terms of power, allegiance and interest" (Francis, 2002, p 28).

By this yardstick, peace journalism, with its preparedness to encompass a broader range of parties, across the conflict formation, is clearly more accurate than war journalism, and preferable as a form of representation. Think back to the build-up to war in Iraq, and news in the aggressor countries, chiefly the US and UK. The small amount of reporting that included America's appetite for oil, and the longstanding policy of successive US governments to secure control over access to global supplies, gave a more accurate representation of conflict dynamics than the majority of reporting that omitted these factors.

Why should this *be* the yardstick? What has the field of Peace and Conflict Studies to commend it, that journalistic representations of conflict should be found wanting, when weighed against it? Its insights have been assembled under the normal safeguards of academic rigour in social science: openness about – and preparedness to justify – starting assumptions for both observation and interpretation; and peer review. Built into social science, moreover, is an allowance for the participant-observer – as soon as you start to observe something, you cannot avoid changing it. In all these respects, there is reflexivity – preferable to the largely unexamined conventions of news.

Peace and Conflict Studies is further distinguished, in terms of content, by acknowledging the potential for the creative transformation of conflicts, and by the insight most readily associated with the Australian peace researcher, John Burton, that behaviour in conflicts cannot be explained solely in terms of power – power gradients, or the struggle for power. There is an irreducible role for human needs (Burton, 1993). In all these respects, it offers accounts of *relationships* in conflict that journalism generally ignores – and, without which, the representations it makes are bound to be distorted.

Another prominent peace researcher, John Paul Lederach, has commented:

"I have not experienced any situation of conflict, no matter how protracted or severe, from Central America to the Philippines to the Horn of Africa, where there have not been people who had a vision for peace, emerging often from their own experience of pain. Far too often, however, these same people are overlooked and disempowered either because they do not represent 'official' power, whether on the side of government or the various militias, or because they are written off as biased and too personally affected by the conflict" (1997: 94).

Despite what Loyn says, they are often overlooked by journalists, too, because they do not represent official sources. Their absence makes news representations, in many cases, misrepresentations – leaving an impression that the hardened positions of leaders on either side are unchallenged within their respective communities, when experience shows that such challenges are always present, and indeed may constitute the first stirrings of change. On this count, too, journalism about conflict would be improved – made more accurate, or less fallible – by attending to the insights of conflict analysis and peace research.

Hanitzsch does not, apparently, set much store by this. In the absence of any informed consideration of issues in Peace and Conflict Studies, his paper unwittingly takes positions and mistakes them for fixed parameters, thus invalidating some of his conclusions.

From the outset, we find him representing conflict very much in the war journalism mode:

"High-intensity conflicts have, for the most part, shown a regular increase from seven to 38 during the last 60 years. The large number of ongoing conflicts, part of which are carried out with a massive amount of violence, prevent entire regions (eg sub-Saharan Africa) from political democratization and socio-economic development. In addition, at least after Munich 1972 and even more so with September 11, 2001, terrorism has entered the picture" (2007: 2).

He apparently discounts state terrorism; he fails to discriminate between different kinds of democratization and socio-economic development, thereby ignoring the catastrophic effects of attempts to impose these, on terms defined by and congenial to outsiders, for instance in Rwanda; and he confines conflicts to their respective arenas (sub-Saharan Africa).

His figures come from the Heidelberg Institute – an august body, to be sure, but it is odd, and surely, in the context of this debate, unjustified, to quote their findings without any comparative or critical commentary on what they decided to look for, and how. For comparison, the Liu Institute's inaugural *Human Security Report* found that the country involved in the highest number of international armed conflicts of any in the world, between 1946 and 2003, was Britain, with 21; France came next on 19 – the US third with 16; the overall number of armed conflicts had steadily fallen since the end of the Cold War (Liu, 2005). The same phenomenon can be sliced very differently, and the basis on which we decide to do so begs to be discussed.

Hanitzsch's lack of critical engagement with issues in conflict and peace most clearly invalidates his conclusions when he comes to consider Gadi Wolfsfeld's study of Israeli media representations of the so-called Oslo "peace process". I have inserted the caveats as a corrective to Hanitzsch's own apparently unquestioning acceptance of the official US/Israeli narrative of these events. He quotes Wolfsfeld's well-known thesis that there is an inherent tension between news values and peace:

"A peace process is complicated; journalists demand simplicity. A peace process takes time to unfold and develop; journalists demand immediate results. Most of a peace process is marked by dull, tedious negotiations; journalists require drama. A successful peace process leads to a reduction in tensions; journalists focus on conflict. Many of the significant developments within a peace process must take place in secret behind closed doors; journalists demand information and action" (Wolfsfeld, 1997: 67).

A study by Leah Mandelzis also identifies problems, vis-à-vis the prospect of peace, caused by media response, but diagnoses them very differently. She interviews Ron Pundak, now Director General of the Peres Centre for Peace and one of those involved in the original 'track two' pathfinding talks leading up to the Oslo Accord. In the first months after Oslo, he tells her, the Israeli media suffered from a "euphoria syndrome" in which the use of terms such as "peace process" and "peace agreements" created an unrealistic discourse:

"We did not sign any peace agreement. The Declaration of Principles was the threshold into which the political negotiations were channelled and no more than that. The Israeli public discourse was surrounded by 'peace with the Palestinians' as a result of the media discourse. It could not be peace when the occupation did not end and siege and oppression continued. The subsequent dissonance was due to the gap between the high expectations created by the media [and the reality]."

"Although the media cannot be blamed by itself (sic) – the government created these euphoric hopes and expectations – but the media inflamed these emotions and exaggerated without analysing the procedures themselves. The media created a euphoria on the one hand, and misunderstanding of a security horizon in a political agreement, on the other hand" (Mandelzis, 2006).

Shinar diagnoses a mismatch between the nature of the conflict – "cultural conflict... characterized by exclusivity, depth, duration, totality and global nature" (2003: 2) – and the nature of the 'solution' offered by such a political agreement:

"The optimism of the agreements, and the less euphoric reality of ongoing violence, did not signify conventional post-war peacemaking. They represent, at best, a changing pattern in the relations of long-standing warring parties" (4).

The problem was not so much the supposedly universal journalist's appetite for drama and novelty, but a failure by Israeli media, at a particular historical moment, to reach out to sources such as the Palestinian poor, on the receiving end of occupation, siege and oppression. Illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory doubled during the years of the Oslo process (1993-2000) – the biggest single underlying cause of the subsequent Intifada, according to the Mitchell Commission charged by the Clinton White House to investigate what had happened, and why. It said:

"The GOI [Government of Israel] should also give careful consideration to whether settlements that are focal points for substantial friction are valuable bargaining chips for future negotiations or provocations likely to preclude the onset of productive talks" (Mitchell, 2001).

Such considerations are glossed over in Wolfsfeld's own account of what caused the Oslo process to break down:

"There was quite a bit of cooperation between the two sides and a certain amount of progress was made over the years. Nevertheless each step towards a final settlement became increasingly painful and frustrating for both parties..." (182).

On the Palestinian side, mainstream media lost credibility and confidence because their efforts to report on the reality staring their readers in the face – the new settlement activity gobbling up more and more of their land – brought harsh repressive measures from the Palestinian Authority, especially after a Presidential Decree forbidding 'incitement', in 1998:

"[Since] The Presidential Decree... there has clearly been an increase in violations and abuses against journalists who write about, meet with or show interest in the opposition" (Siksik, 1999: 40).

If journalists on either side had paid more attention to conflict issues and their effect on human needs, their reporting would have been more accurate. This would have meant bringing readers and audiences 'bad news' in the form of drawing attention to continuing settlement-building, but it would potentially have been more conducive to peace, ultimately, by problematizing this phenomenon and (thereby) incentivizing an effective political response.

Engendering peace journalism

Why didn't they, then? Hanitzsch is right to draw attention to the "many structural constraints which shape and limit the work of journalists" (2007: 5). For Palestinian reporters, covering opposition perspectives on settlement building – perhaps as evidence that the 'peace process' was being misrepresented by officialdom, for its own purposes – risked sanctions and reprisals. Wolfsfeld mentions some of the difficulties for those Israeli journalists who did try to include more Palestinian sources in their coverage – the relative inaccessibility of professional spokespeople for the Palestinian National Authority, compared with the Israeli government, for instance (1997: 110-111).

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) discuss several conventions of journalistic 'objectivity', which predispose the majority of news coverage towards the war journalism end of the spectrum – a bias in favour of event over process, in favour of official sources and in favour of dualism as a template for conflicts (chapter 7).

Hanitzsch complains that calling for more peace journalism, in the face of this, amounts to "an overly individualistic and voluntaristic perspective". The narrow conceptual horizons of Loyn's essay – which, I have suggested, actually goes further than many are prepared to – points up the unexplored scope for encouraging reporters and their editors to reflect critically on their work, and for the provision of safe and welcoming spaces for them to do so. At the moment, a lack of reflexivity on the part of individual journalists acts as a kind of 'force multiplier' for the structural factors Hanitzsch sees as fixed limits to the potential for change.

Then there is evidence that peace journalism is by no means absent from conflict coverage. Ting Lee and Maslog (2005) studied conflict coverage in the Asian press and put the proportion of peace journalism as high as 58%, in one newspaper in Sri Lanka. Lynch (2006a) carried out an empirical content analysis on UK press coverage of the 'Iran nuclear crisis' over a five-month period from mid-2005, finding that the overall 'peace journalism quotient' was about 15%, although some important publications, notably the *Financial Times* (22%), had more.

The latter study concentrated on one prime analytical factor from the peace journalism schema – whether conflict is represented as confined to the conflict arena, in the present day, or whether, on the other hand, it is shown in "open space, open time". Why?

"The distinctions [used for the study] *do* have a strong claim to be considered the important ones when reporting conflict because they foreground the key framing issues in war propaganda. They effectively map out the contested territory" (Lynch, 2006b).

Conflict reporting does not have to include all the elements called for in the Galtung table if it is to be regarded as peace journalism – different analytical factors, in different situations, will describe the main ideational content. If peace journalism is about creating opportunities for society to consider and to value non-violent conflict responses, then that ought to be enough.

Media activism

It means that peace journalism is possible, and realistic, here and now, for professional journalists, and it can become the focus of media activism. This is not a concept that would make much sense to Hanitzsch, to judge from some of his claims, chiefly:

"A peaceful culture is a *precondition* of peace journalism, rather than its outcome" (2007: 7).

Implicit in this is a rather idiosyncratic definition of culture. There are many – from Matthew Arnold's "right knowing and right doing" to this from Jeff Lewis:

"Culture is the assemblage of imaginings and meanings that may be consonant, disjunctive, overlapping, contentious, continuous or discontinuous... these experiences of imagining and meaning-making are intensified through the proliferation of mass media images and information" (Lewis, 2002: 15).

They are separated by a century and a half; one is simple, the other, sophisticated and complex, but both allow for the essential element that Hanitzsch appears to neglect – that of culture as a site of contestation. Hanitzsch relies instead on structural functionalist theories, notably from Durkheim – focussed, as they are, on questions of societal order and cohesiveness, and tending to relegate or ignore considerations about how power is exercised within societies, and, crucially, resisted. If Galtung-Ruge would be top of Loyn's remedial reading list, then one could recommend Hanitzsch browse in Foucault, to ponder such insights as:

"Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society" (1977: 93).

"Domination [is not] that solid and global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another, but the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society" (96).

Pedely (1995: 5) is one of many writers to see, in Foucault's concept of power as a "productive network", held together by rewards and incentives as well as possible punishments, a key to understanding the pressures and influences on journalists and their work. Power is being exercised, in other words, to inculcate norms of right knowing and doing into all forms of cultural production, including journalism, all the time; it saturates all social interactions to maintain patterns of dominance, or hegemony; and power is meaningless unless it is relational. Power, to *be* power, requires resistance.

Such is the theoretical framework within which the concept of media activism has started to attract more scholarly attention, particularly in relation to social movement theory. Struggles over media representation take manifold forms, which Annabel McGoldrick and I have categorised into "campaigning *through* the media" and "campaigning *on* the media" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2007: 1).

Movements may either set out explicitly to achieve changes in media representation, in other words, or they may turn to the media as a 'lever to pull', in service of their cause – only to find that the routines and conventions of news make it impervious to their message. Hackett and Carroll find "most plausible" the proposition that media activism represents "a nexus – a point of articulation between movements, transforming and lending coherence to the broad field of movement activism as a counter-hegemonic formation" (2006: 199).

It may be true, as Tehranian has argued, that "structural pluralism [in media] may be considered a *sine qua non* of content pluralism" (2002: 58), but, mapped on to this understanding of cultural struggle and social movement, it should be clear that one good way to protect structural pluralism, and campaign for more, is to argue that the content we get shows the inadequacies of existing structures and points up the need for reform.

My own media activism has mostly aimed at effecting change in what Hackett and Carroll categorise as the "system" field rather than the "lifeworld", not least in working with professional journalists to encourage critical self-reflection and equip them with theoretical tools and insights to inspect from the outside, as it were, the structural characteristics of their representations of conflict.

Hackett and Carroll comment:

"We ought not to dismiss journalists as potential allies. Aspects of their material and cultural conditions militate against activism... Still, journalists will mobilize under certain conditions: if they develop connections (ideological and/or personal) with social movements... [or] if their professional status and ideals are blatantly violated" (2006: 201).

One project, called Reporting the World, attempted to provide these conditions, taking the form of a series of seminars in London, the transcripts of which are still posted on the project's website www.reportingtheworld.org.uk

The first of these seminars, in March, 2001, was called to discuss reporting of the conflict involving Israel and the Palestinians, and the first speaker was Tim Llewellyn, a former Middle East Correspondent for the BBC. His opening statement lamented the distortions to BBC and other coverage arising from the application of 'balance' – especially as the situation was, essentially, characterised by the very lack of balance between an occupier and an occupied people.

At the same time, researchers were finding widespread wrong-headedness, among samples of British television viewers, about the basic facts of the conflict, with the pattern of misunderstanding almost exactly matching what the same team identified as missing elements from the story as habitually presented in mainstream media:

"Viewers are extraordinarily confused. Many believed that the Palestinians were occupying the occupied territories or that it was basically a border dispute between two countries who were trying to grab a piece of land which separated them. The great bulk of those we interviewed had no idea where the Palestinian refugees had come from – some suggested Afghanistan, Iraq or Kosovo" (Philo, 2004).

How does this square with Hall's notion of decoding? Does it, indeed, exemplify the complaint from Hanitzsch, that audiences are modelled as a "passive mass" (2007: 6)? Not necessarily. For audiences to produce oppositional or negotiated readings of media messages assumes that they have enough directly relevant personal or social experience against which to measure them.

It is easy to see how this capacity may be widespread, in the case of stories about, say, labour laws, rental prices or unusual weather conditions. It is likely to be less widespread in stories about shadowy global menaces like 'terrorism' or 'weapons of mass destruction', so public reliance on media representations is greater. Indeed, the incursion by international conflict into the news agenda is often seen as a means of asserting control over it – so, the attacks on the US on '9/11' became a "good day to bury bad news", according to one UK government press officer. At such times, "the BBC turns into the Ministry of Information", said another contributor to Reporting the World debates, Tim Gopsill, editor of the National Union of Journalists' monthly magazine, *The Journalist*.

The chief researcher in the study on Middle East reporting, Professor Greg Philo of Glasgow University Media Group, later gave evidence to an independent panel set up to advise the BBC Governors. Among its conclusions:

"BBC output does not consistently give a full and fair account of the conflict. In some ways the picture is incomplete and, in that sense, misleading" (BBC, 2006a: 4).

Elaborating on this criticism, the report echoed the complaint of Tim Llewellyn, five years earlier:

"One side is wholly under the occupation of the other and, however reluctantly, necessarily endures the indignities of dependence. As some of our witnesses noted, this fact itself poses a challenge to a media organisation like the BBC committed, as our terms of reference make clear, to fairness, impartiality and balance. (While fairness and impartiality are legal requirements, balance is a concept adopted by the BBC in seeking to give effect to them.) These objectives, especially balance, work most naturally where the parties to a dispute are on an equal footing. Indeed, without care, a formulaic application of these doctrines, and in particular that of balance, to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could produce coverage which misleads from the outset" (11).

The decision by the Governors to commission their own independent study came in response to a multi-dimensional campaign, waged over several years by media activists from various backgrounds, to trigger corrective mechanisms provided for, at least notionally, under structural pluralism – specifically, the unique governance system of the BBC.

It drew on the insights of peace journalism in mapping out the ideational content of coverage of a vitally important, current story about conflict – the crucial issue, in this case, being, as Lynch and McGoldrick put it:

"AVOID only reporting the violent acts and describing 'the horror'.

If you exclude everything else you suggest that the only explanation for violence is previous violence (revenge); the only remedy, more violence (coercion/punishment).

INSTEAD *show how people have been blocked and frustrated* or deprived in everyday life as a way of explaining how the conditions for violence are being produced" (2005: 29).

The episode shows, perhaps, the potential of these ideas for mobilizing social resources in furtherance of changes to journalistic representations to make them more accurate and more useful, bringing them more into line with well-established expectations that journalism will play a civic role in democracy.

Whether it will have any lasting effect on BBC or other reporting of the conflict is not yet determined, but the team that carried out the main research on the corporation's output, an exercise in quantitative and qualitative content analysis, did hint at a change which they attributed to the very prospect of coming under scrutiny organised under these specific headings:

"The BBC's Board of Governors announced publicly in September 2005 that it was to undertake an impartiality review with respect to the Corporation's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As such we must consider whether the performance of journalists and editors changed in light of their awareness that their coverage was being scrutinised... Given the sensitivity of the subject and the timing of the review in the run-up to Charter Review, it is conceivable that the impartiality review may have had some effect on some of the BBC coverage" (Appendix D).

The corporation's Head of News, Helen Boaden, commented, in an internal publication:

"There was some praise for what we do but also much criticism – not least that we fail to give enough context and history to this highly charged story and that we neglect the Palestinian narrative... In our response, we've tried to come up with practical ways of remedying our weaknesses and building on our strengths" (BBC, 2006b).

As one who was employed, on a regular freelance basis, as a BBC presenter (news anchor) and reporter up to the end of 2006, I can offer a further general impression, that audiences became much more likely to see or hear about the day-to-day experiences of the Palestinian population as they struggled with life under military occupation, through and beyond the review period. There had, in other words, been an increase in peace journalism.

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Samuel Peleg

Zur Verteidigung des Friedensjournalismus: Eine Erwiderung

Der Autor, ein Verfechter der neuen Philosophie, entgegnet den Angriffen von Loyn und Hanitzsch auf den Friedensjournalismus, indem er herausarbeitet, dass der Friedensjournalismus über hinreichend viele neue Einsichten und mutige Prämissen verfügt, um den konventionellen Journalismus herauszufordern und einigen seiner Grundsätzen Paroli zu bieten. Darüber hinaus beruht der Friedensjournalismus auf einer sehr klaren Epistemologie, die auf eine ausgewogene und reichhaltige Konfliktdarstellung abzielt - eine Darstellung, die der herkömmliche Journalismus wegen struktureller, psychologischer und gewohnheitsmäßiger Einschränkungen weder leisten will noch kann. Infolgedessen ist es der Friedensjournalismus wert, als eine wesentliche Entwicklung in der Journalismuslehre und -forschung angesehen zu werden.

Volltext

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Samuel Peleg

In defense of peace journalism: A rejoinder

The following is a contribution to the ongoing debate about the merits and demerits of peace journalism. The writer, a proponent of the new philosophy, answers Loyn's and Hanitzsch's attacks by claiming that peace journalism has enough of novel insights and daring propositions to challenge conventional journalism and defy some of its basic tenets. Furthermore, peace journalism stems from a very clear epistemology, which aims at a more balanced and more comprehensive account of conflict. An account, which conventional journalism, due to structural, psychological and habitual constraints, will not and cannot perform. Consequently, peace journalism is worthy of being termed a significant development in the study and research of journalism.

[full text](#)

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In defense of peace journalism: A rejoinder

Kurzfassung: Der Autor, ein Verfechter der neuen Philosophie, entgegnet den Angriffen von Loyn und Hanitzsch auf den Friedensjournalismus, indem er herausarbeitet, dass der Friedensjournalismus über hinreichend viele neue Einsichten und mutige Prämissen verfügt, um den konventionellen Journalismus herauszufordern und einigen seiner Grundsätzen Paroli zu bieten. Darüber hinaus beruht der Friedensjournalismus auf einer sehr klaren Epistemologie, die auf eine ausgewogene und reichhaltige Konfliktdarstellung abzielt - eine Darstellung, die der herkömmliche Journalismus wegen struktureller, psychologischer und gewohnheitsmäßiger Einschränkungen weder leisten will noch kann. Infolgedessen ist es der Friedensjournalismus wert, als eine wesentliche Entwicklung in der Journalismuslehre und -forschung angesehen zu werden.

Abstract: The following is a contribution to the ongoing debate about the merits and demerits of Peace Journalism. The writer, a proponent of the new philosophy, answers Loyn's and Hanitzche's attacks by claiming that peace journalism has enough of novel insights and daring propositions to challenge conventional journalism and defy some of its basic tenets. Furthermore, Peace Journalism stems from a very clear epistemology, which aims at a more balanced and more comprehensive account of conflict. An account, which conventional journalism, due to structural, psychological and habitual constraints, will not and cannot perform. Consequently, peace journalism is worthy of being termed a significant development in the study and research of journalism.

I. Introduction

Peace journalism has taken a lot of heat recently from researchers and practitioners alike. Though some of the criticism bears merit, one might suspect that to a larger degree, it is the "new-kid-on-the-block" syndrome, which carries the brunt of this attack. In order to be accepted as one of the guys, the newcomer must suffer the taunts and hecklings of the old guard just to prove him worthy of their confidence. Peace journalism is undergoing a protracted right-of-passage ceremony, and it isn't pretty. In this article, I will refer to two of the most prominent critics of Peace journalism — Thomas Hanitzsch, of the IPMZ at Zurich university and BBC correspondent David Loyn. They are united in their disrespect for the burgeoning orientation journalism may take and they don't spare any description to disparage it. They do, however, differ in their emphases and nuances, and some of their concerns have strength that deserves careful and comprehensive response.

II. Objectivity and other alternatives

Hanitzsch and Loyn's disapproval of peace journalism can be collapsed into two major claims: that it is incompatible with the true nature of journalism and that it is redundant because it really means good or better journalism. Each of these claims rests on several, more specific, contentions regarding this new perspective on the conduct of journalism.

The former cluster is an assault on the very essence of peace journalism which I will respond to in a more thorough and systematic fashion. The latter is more delicately expounded, and to it I will relate more briefly toward the end of my rejoinder. In this rebuttal paper, I will take issue with some of Hanitzsch and Loyn's claims with a constructive mindset in order to encourage a productive and beneficial brainstorming of sorts rather than being querulous and argumentative.

Journalism, according to Hanitzsch (2004), ventures to "... facilitate a common, socially binding reference necessary for the co-orientation of the social universe through providing information of immediate topicality" (p.192). Loyn passionately declares that reporters' sole purpose is "to be witnesses to the truth" and such commitment can only be kept by adhering to objectivity, which is "the only sacred goal we have" (2003:4). Such an admirable goal is feasible if and when reporters "preserve their position as observers not players"(2007:3) and if they heed the "only guiding lights of good reporting", which are, in addition to objectivity fairness and balance (op. cit, 2003:1). These are highly determined and staunchly held views about the nature of correspondence and the precepts of authentic journalistic coverage. They are advanced by an experienced reporter and a knowledgeable analyst of journalistic theories. However, strong-mindedness should not be substituted for single-mindedness. When a definition relies on essentially contested concepts such as truth, objectivity and co-orientation, it is bound to have alternative or complementary means of interpretation, thus rendering the definitive statements "the only way" or "the only guiding light" in a rather dubious light.

The concept of objectivity has always been somewhat slippery, and it is mainly evoked when it is perceived to be absent. Few reporters could attest to total neutrality or impartiality. At best, journalists will admit a measure of detachment from their own personal biases in practicing their craft. The critical sociologist Michael Schudson claims that "the belief in objectivity is a faith in 'facts,' a distrust in 'values,' and a commitment to their segregation" (1978). This fascination with gathering and reporting hard and raw data sanctifies the *what is* and foregoes the *what if*. This inclination for emphasizing eyewitness accounts of events and validating facts through a variety of sources to establish a balanced picture of what happened echoes the traditional role of journalism as the *fourth estate*: telling the story independently of the other estates, or authorities, namely, government, religion and business. Unlike the latter three which promote biased narratives of reality, the fourth estate—the press, stands firm in its impartial and unyielding account of the real world. This idea dates back to Thomas Carlyle, when he wrote (1841):

„The affairs of the nation were there deliberated and decided; what we were to do as a nation. But does not, though the name Parliament subsists, the parliamentary debate go on now, everywhere and at all times, in a far more comprehensive way, out of Parliament altogether? Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a *Fourth Estate* more important far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact,—very momentous to us in these times. Literature is our Parliament too. Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings Printing; brings universal everyday extempore Printing, as we see at present.“

This is surely a noble idea but completely unsustainable. Objectivity on an issue, certainly significant and noteworthy enough to be mentioned on the news, denotes more unawareness or even ignorance than a predisposition. A more realistic depiction of the spirit of journalism maintains that objectivity is simply untenable and that journalists should aspire for something like a neutral perspective on any controversial issue. As such, they should carefully study and then report the viewpoints of both sides. It does not mean that the journalist has no stand in the conflict, only that his or her personal opinion does not interfere nor misrepresent the professional conduct of reporting an event "as it is". Unlike objectivity that boasts no opinion and no judgment, neutrality is an opinion restrained and judgment reserved.

Peace journalism asserts that a more appropriate standard for good journalism should be *fairness* and *accuracy*. Within such orientation, taking sides on an issue is permitted as long as the side taken presented accurately and the other side is

given a fair chance to respond. Hence, the improbable attempt at objectivity is replaced by a balanced and evenhanded account, which encourages fairness. Peace journalism, in its emphasis on presenting all sides of a conflict and in its endeavor to contextualize a controversy, accomplishes these measures without compromising the thoroughness of investigation or the accuracy of coverage. In this manner, another possible understanding of what true journalism may be is exposed.

Loyn praises objectivity and truth as the compass for journalists. Reporters need only to witness the truth, he declares, and must always be observers, not players. However, this persistent assertion runs into trouble when posited within the context of some vexing analogies from the recent past. Let us assume for a moment, that the conflict covered is the Second World War and the diligent reporter is dispatched to the Auschwitz death camp. There, beside the gas chambers, he objectively and assiduously illustrates what he sees. The situation is awfully real and horrifically true. The reporter keenly observes what is transpiring before his eyes. Is this good journalism, or is it callousness, collaborating with evil or even betrayal? Is this genuine reality or media reality, to use Baudrillard's intriguing distinction (1995)? Is this even a conceivable scenario, that journalism can maintain its regular routine of coverage and observation under the most atrocious circumstances? Does good journalism require aloofness in order to produce proficient reporting?

This position can be considered excessive and unwarranted. The Holocaust was unique and immeasurably ghastly and evil, and thus it is disadvantageous to use it as a basis for any counterclaim. But my point is deliberately blunt and unequivocal in order to demonstrate how futile and vain objectivity and neutrality may turn out to be. It does not have to be the most calamitous example of the past to spell out the risks of being mere spectators under any circumstances, as daily reports from Darfour, the Congo, Rwanda and Iraq remind us. Similarly, regarding news accounts about AIDS, or cancer, lethal drugs or hideous crimes; do they too stand the test of being conveyed to the public "objectively"? Is it unprofessional to report a major breakthrough in the research of a deadly disease with a distinct supportive slant and emotional relief? Is it dishonorable to firmly take sides against genocide and ethnic cleansing? Is it amateurish to passionately promote awareness against massive raping and barbarism? Do these instances permanently and undeniably belong within the category Hanitzsch characterizes as public relations? His logic is that peace journalism is public relations and not real journalism because "it advocates and promotes a certain way of action", or particular perspectives, as Loyn calls it. This "certain way of action" is actually survival and abolition of war and destruction. Such an accusation is akin to blaming doctors or researchers seeking to cure heart disease for engaging in public relations since they aim to advance a certain way of action to prevent heart failure. Does the necessity of peace truly require that it be "defined by a client or host organization" in order to be presented in a favorable way? Is writing a non vehement description of war akin to promoting anyone's outside agenda? Defenders of the current conduct of journalism might at times muddle the priority scale of the human agent: first there is the family man and the society member who shoulders the human and civil duty to undercut and defame war and violence, the way he may with any other menace which threatens his community; then comes the reporter, who aspires for excellence in his trade. The consecration of the objectivity totem reminds me of Klaus Mann's riveting and disturbing novel, *Mephisto*, a story of an actor who abandons his conscience and continues to act and ingratiate himself with the Nazi party so as to improve his job and social status. When confronted with criticism, he responds: "What do you want from me, I am only an actor!". This is not to say that a comparison can be made between journalists and collaborators with demonic regimes, but only to demonstrate that in covering dire situations such as war, objectivity may sometimes lead us astray despite our good intentions.

Hanitzsch makes an interesting point concerning the viability of objectivity: in close-knit conflicts such as neighborhood quarrels, "it is difficult to remain impartial and to deliver a balanced and comprehensive account of the conflict" (2007:6). I firmly agree with this notion; it is almost impossible to be objective in environments of intimate conflicts, especially deep-rooted ones, fed by unsatisfied basic needs (Burton, 1990; Peleg, 1999). But in today's world, where rampant national, religious and ethnic rivalries are as bonding, obligating and committing as any family feud, such a distinction is no longer valid. In such a struggle-laden reality, peace journalism is not a luxurious delusion but a concrete inevitability.

III. The nature of true reporting

Another attempt to disqualify peace journalism is by claiming its lack of epistemological base. Hanitzsch approaches this issue from several directions, albeit inconsistently. First (2004), peace journalism has a naïve epistemological perspective, then it matured to epistemological realism, since it assumes there is a true and proper version of reality and accordingly, peace journalism attacks conventional journalism as "misrepresenting reality" by showing only partial facts (2007:5). Finally, Hanitzsch admits, peace journalism has no epistemology at all and its proponents need to define it. I concur with Hanitzsch that news does not mirror reality, and that it is based on "cognition and contingent (re)construction of reality" (ibid). However, this does not necessarily mean that there is indeed an immaculate version of reality, only a more considerate and fair-minded one: A version which, in probabilistic and not absolute terms, contains the vagaries of war and diverts the relish of conflict into thoughtful and trustworthy channels to cope with human differences. This, in my book, is a dignified epistemological heritage to pursue.

Hanitzsch identifies overemphasis on individualism and voluntarism as a major weakness of peace journalism. He is convinced that if such prominence is given to the reporter to change her worldview and professional orientation, than it surely must transpire at the expense of the environment, that is- the structural constraints in which the journalist must operate. News coverage cannot ignore its sustaining surroundings and must be responsive to organizational, logistic and economic pressures and conditions. Individual correspondents do not work in a vacuum and cannot alone improve the world or even their immediate vicinity. Although they seem plausible, such allegations misfire: Peace journalism aims at individuals as agents of change and as harbingers of an innovative mind-set toward the ethics and practice of journalism. The goal is to constantly expand this orientation and render it commonplace rather than a passing fad of a handful of eccentrics. By so doing, peace journalism is thoroughly cognizant of the structural confines of the journalistic setting and one of its foremost challenges, as I perceive it, is to mitigate and tone down the effects of structuralism. Perhaps Shinar's question of whether "structural reform is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of Peace journalism" (2007) should be posited as a guiding principle or a working hypothesis rather than a mere speculation to fend off the assertion that "the structure is the message" (Tehranian 2002, Hackett, 2006). The structure occasionally manacles the message, and the message must break free. The skills of peace journalism are indeed earmarked for the individual reporter but are relentlessly in tune with the changing environmental circumstances and consequently provide an opportunity for reform and improvement. Diligent dissemination and adherence to the principles of peace journalism may tame the environment, and making it more congenial to journalists. At a later stage, the individual effort can be aggregated into groups and ultimately into larger communities and societies, fanning public opinion and public debates (Freedman, 2003:3), and eventually turning into a new culture of journalism. Though the above might be perceived as a linear sequence, whereby structural change stipulates the successful work of the individual reporter, this is not the intention. Basically, the environment and the agent co-change together and affect each other at the process. This is truly a dialectical and a cyclical progression of mutual adjustment between a reformed structural conditions and improved journalistic skills.

This leads me to grapple with the seemingly affirmed notion that peace journalism is utterly incompatible with the character of reporting (Wolsfeld, 1997, Fawcett, 2002) or as Loyn ardently proclaims "reporting and peacemaking are different roles" (2007:3) and the subsequent critique that advocates of the new paradigm "overestimate the power of journalism" (Hanitzsch, 2007:6). Though I agree with both contentions, this is precisely the *raison d'être* that propels peace journalism. Conventional reporting, with its emphasis on conflict and violence, its event-focus rather than process-focus and its preoccupation with winners and losers, is irreconcilable with the demands of conflict de-escalation (Kempf, 1999). If journalism is to remain simply a channel to convey information and updates through the eyes of detached though highly professional reporters, it will indeed be overrated by those who expect more. To expect more is to comprehend journalism as a dynamic and creative opportunity to change things for the better, not by an elitist group of writers who know best but by the people themselves. The public will be able to participate, to become aware of issues and dilemmas, to weigh and assess them and make choices for the benefit of all when it is presented with a broad, fair and evenhanded picture. This is the vision and the responsibility of peace journalism: not allow market structure or culture restrictions foil journalistic missions and to raise the bar in terms of accuracy and integrity.

IV. Journalism and conflict

The importance of such a task is heightened in times of conflict, when old war-prone and propaganda-prone journalism rejoices the most and marvels at the drama and sensationalism accrued. Peace journalism is capable of becoming a third side to facilitate communication in times when lack of confidence and mistrust are rampant, and to ease tensions between rivals. Preventing conflict from escalating and diverting it from a destructive to a constructive path (Pearce and Littlejohn, 1997; Kriesberg, 1998) is not merely a journalist's job, but rather, everyone's job. Journalists may potentially employ their aptitude to help contain escalation processes better than an average person due to the nature and expediency of their occupation. Their accessibility to the scene, their research into the background of a given conflict, motivation of actors, decision-making procedures and accumulative and comparative experience from other similar developments enrich their abilities to cope with such dire circumstances (Carruthers, 2000; Dor, 2001). This is where peace journalism steps in: Reporters who unreservedly uphold transparency, balance and sensitized thoroughness in covering disputes, do have the potential to change the course and intensity of events, and this is a power of journalism to be reckoned with.

In order to elucidate how peace journalism can actually contribute to de-escalation, it should be anchored to precepts of conflict theory (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005:33). Every conflict has a conflict environment within which it is nurtured and growing. In his classic spatial model of conflict escalation, E.E. Schattschneider demonstrated that every fight consists of those who are directly involved and the audience of spectators around them. The spectators, writes Schattschneider, are "an integral part of the situation for, as likely as not, the audience *determines* the outcome of the fight" (1960:2, emphasis in the original). Bringing the audience in is the obligation of reporters. They supply the news from the front, or the inner circle, and they inform the readers, listeners and spectators. The more comprehensive the information about the conflict, the more knowledgeable the audience becomes. But it has to be knowledge about the *conflict* as a whole: its roots, back-

ground, participants, their positions, interests, fears, and hopes. This is not advocacy, intervention or attachment. This is certainly not being subjected to an "external" agenda. This is pure and full-fledge reporting with, yes, a normative intention to encumber the evil spirit of war. When reports play down the aura of winning in battle and the glorification of combat; when stories from the front are less exalting in their adoration of audacity and triumph; when news accounts concentrate on suffering and pain rather than annihilation, the expectant audience receives a different picture of the situation and diverse data are then collected in the process of evaluating a conflict. Positions may shift and stands reconsidered as a result of these new insights and the conflict may lose its supporting fuel if the attentive public (Rosenau, 1974) becomes less enthusiastic and less encouraging toward the direct contestants. As a result, adds Schattschneider, "... the bystanders are a part of the calculus of all conflicts" (ibid, p. 4) and contentions expire or prosper according to the ability to sway the opinion of the audience. The route of conflict is determined by the involvement of the critical mass, those bystanders, when *they take sides and interfere*. But by so doing, they cease to be outside actors and become, sometimes very vehemently and assiduously, insiders. This analysis does not minimize the role of the original actors, who incited and mobilized the audience to begin with. The journalists are not outsiders here but go-betweens. They carry the messages of the inciters and if they don't exercise discretion (or professionalism) they become collaborators to the inflammation.

This is what Mitchell (1981), Azar (1984), Burton (1990), Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2005) and others refer to when they elaborate on the cognitive dimension of conflict. This is the most crucial aspect of conflict, whereby images, labels, frames and prejudice are created and aggregated (Peleg 1999, 2002, 2006; Pruitt and Kim, 2004). The cognitive or attitudinal dimension of conflict sustains the behavioral dimension and stimulates the violence associated with it. Peace journalism, when it is methodically and systematically adopted, can rise to this virtuous undertaking. It can mobilize the critical mass to replace the ecstasy of combat with the harmony of concord. Thus, the answer to the initial accusation that peace-making is at odds with the nature of journalism, is that the two can be brought together, or at least the current gap can be attenuated, by modifying the latter in order to better accommodate the former. After all, journalism is about supplying us with proper reports; peace-making is about being able to read such reports in the first place.

The latter point leads me to the cause-and-effect problem, which both Loyn and Hanitzsch address. The two critics join one another in claiming that peace journalism's crusade against conventional reporting is substantially flawed since its causal sequence is wrong: it is not omitted coverage that elicits popular propensity towards war, but a war and violence-prone culture that inspire selective writing. Consequently, the proponents of the "new orthodoxy", as Loyn calls them, should redirect their attempts at changing the world to their societies rather than their fellow reporters. Hanitzsch argues that "a peaceful culture is the *precondition* of peace journalism rather than its outcome" (2004:200) (original emphasis). This is an interesting claim which deflects the onus of social accountability and commitment from the agent to the environment. I agree that a belligerent and masochistic political culture, which extols aggression and worships power, inspires a certain kind of journalism coverage. However, I feel more comfortable with a cyclical rather than a linear causation: a quarrelsome culture is reflected in a confrontational and aggressive press while argumentative journalistic ethic stirs conflictual attitudes among readers. Hence, both agent and surroundings are 'culprits' in fomenting a climate of contentiousness. The remedy, according to peace journalism, is attending both wings of the equation: improve journalistic principles and amend social standards and cultural norms. Social and cultural values are not constants; they are dynamic, malleable and amenable to change. In previous centuries cultural icons were philosophers, poets and heroes. They were role models to emulate and revere. They were the ones who coined new phrases, dressed in the latest fashion and furnished innovative ideas and observations. They set the pace and direction of inventive style and ultimately, paved the way for changes in and of culture. In today's world, cultural promoters are PR experts, advertising wizards and journalists. They are the inventors and disseminators of catch phrases, moods and mind-sets. We live in a communication age, where public spaces are being created in communicational interfaces such as websites, chat rooms, talk shows and news magazines. In these open arenas, journalists who are equipped with the talents of rhetoric, writing and persuasion enjoy a huge advantage. They build a reputation of adroit and competent public figures, which are to be trusted and followed. Thus, when Hanitzsch indicates that "to adhere to the peace journalism philosophy means to divert political responsibilities from politicians and policy makers to journalists" (2004:204) he is correct, save for one small though crucial nuance: it is not to journalists that responsibility is conveyed but to the population at large. Journalists are the go-betweens who empower their constituencies-- the readers, by supplying them with the knowledge to choose and check their elected leaders. This is the democratic, participatory and deliberative face of peace journalism.

V. Journalism – more than an economic venture

The detractors of peace journalism unwittingly belittle the capabilities of reporters in the communication age. A statement such as "journalists demand simplicity" is especially demoralizing. Why should reporters settle for basic, uncomplicated and unsophisticated descriptions in their work, only to gratify what is perceived to be a low threshold of readers' satisfaction? Even if supposedly the current situation and the attention span of the average news consumer is meagre. Why should journalists adjust themselves to such dismal banalities rather than challenge and hopefully bring about a blessed change in

reading habits? This is a rather bleak discernment of human potential, which rests, I am afraid, on the unabashed capitulation to the idol of profit and the abandonment of journalism as the vanguard of social transformation. Peace journalism gives more credit to journalists and their trade. They are sufficiently competent to become agents of change by delivering a full and honest picture of what takes place in the world; an account which is unbound by patriotism, prejudice, injustice, and chauvinism.

Hanitzsch protests "why should journalism ignore its audiences? What is the big deal if the media disregard their audiences' interests and, thus, put at risk their economic existence?" (2004:199). If journalism is purely business, an income source, and nothing more, then he is correct. No laborer should jeopardize his or her livelihood. But if journalism is stripped of all other values except economic ones, then reporters need not be bothered with "non-financially viable" issues such as truth, honesty and fairness. Journalism is a communication channel between writers and readers (Peleg, 2003). However, the influence and adaptation efforts along such a channel are reciprocal: reporters may well heed public atmosphere but they should also endeavor to stir, alter or calm it. Journalists must not enslave themselves to the ever changing moods of their prospective audience because they might lose their integrity in the process and become reporting chameleons. On this point, I tend to concur with Loyn, when he argues: "to help the language of reporting, there is a constant if unspoken dialogue between reporter and reader: shared assumptions that make it easier to report some stories than others" (2007:4). Nevertheless, by admitting this, Loyn digresses from his initial criteria of truth seeking and "what happens" as the gateways to professional coverage. A reporter might run into an ethical dilemma when she encounters a story which rings true but incongruent with the public spirit or with the contemporary *volonté des tous*; should she dispatch the report or not? Peace journalism is more qualified to handle such a dilemma since it relies more on engaging the audience and providing the readers with the fullest extent of information rather than satisfying its audience with selective but propitious facts.

In the social movements literature the term *frame resonance* is used to indicate the attempts of social leaders to reframe their messages to fit the cultural norms and values of their constituencies so that they would resonate with their prospective followers (Snow and Benford, 1988; Oliver and Johnston, 2000; Westby, 2002). But as much as affinity and understanding between reporters and their readers are important, this is not meant to be a spineless maneuvering to satisfy all readers at a whim, not even "shared language and assumptions", as Loyn sees it. Adjusting worldviews, mindsets, idioms, and images, even words, to establish a flowing and understandable communication between senders and receivers, coders and decoders of messages, both sides must be creative and inventive: the reporter by offering the fullest range of information possible, and the reader by exercising a thoughtful and prudent discretion. Regrettably, this is not the setting of the purely commercial journalism world where the reader is king. In the desired alternative world of journalism, the reporter partakes in shaping and reshaping the readers' menu for choice by expanding, not acknowledging, horizons. Peace journalism, which does not placate or courts the public taste, fits right in there. It challenges the conventional wisdom and defies the "taken-for-granted", which conflict and war are especially fraught with. "Impartiality lies in diversity", emphasizes Lynch (2003:3) and peace journalism is the quintessential pursuit of obtaining and maintaining diversity in the coverage of news.

Contrary to Hanitzsch and Loyn's observation that the media has little or no political influence, a growing body of research literature from Lippmann to Postman attests that the potential power of various media channels in molding and affecting opinions can be remarkable (Lippmann, 1925; Wagner, 1983; Postman, 1985). Iyengar and Kinder for instance, conclude in an elaborate experiment that "television news does indeed influence the priorities the American public assigns to national problems ... by calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies and candidates for public office are judged" (1987:63, emphasis in the original). If this is a viable scenario then surely the orientation of normative journalistic work ethos must be attentively practiced for the benefit of a more knowledgeable, and eventually, better society.

VI. The most challenging and the least concerning

The most challenging criticism of peace journalism in my opinion is the assertion that peace journalism uses a wholesale approach in condemning conventional reporting. The advocates of the new philosophy generalize and oversimplify their analysis of current coverage of conflicts when they lump all media channels into a single "war-prone" bracket. Similarly, they relate to news consumers as "a passive mass that needs to be enlightened" (Hanitzsch, 2007:6). This is an insightful and valuable comment. In my sense, peace journalism is certainly at fault here but I would attribute it to the fervor of youth and to the sweeping, all encompassing observations of inexperience. I do believe, however, that despite the diversity of media outlets, the tendency to describe strife and contention in news coverage is overdramatic and sensational. However, were there only one media outlet to broadcast the conventional war narrative, the emergence of peace journalism would nonetheless have been worthwhile. As for capturing the audience as an inert mass and thus, denigrating readers' capacity to independently form their own positions, I would argue that peace journalism is far more gracious than any other journalistic orientation in supplying readers with the opportunity to formulate their own stands on current affairs. The approach

of peace journalism is geared toward the stimulation and maximization of readers' judgment ability and prudence. By challenging routine coverage methods and by providing the broadest possible range of accounts, peace journalism writers entrust the onus of interpretation to their readers. By doing so they do not treat the audience as a passive monolith, but rather, supply an elementary and essential commodity for all readers—the apathetic, the ignorant, the news addicts and the media-savvy, to be used however they see fit. In summation, peace journalism is about supplying background for questions rather than furnishing answers.

The second type of criticism is shorter and gentler. It perceives peace journalism not as an aberration but as a lost and misguided child, needing to be redirected home. Here, the spirit of criticism is softened to "if you can't beat them, join us", that is, if you cannot get rid of the new trend, try to incorporate it into the current paradigm. Hanitzsch acknowledges at some point the merits of peace journalism but adds that it is "... already present—in the outfit of 'good journalism'" (ibid) and therefore, he concludes, we don't really need it. According to him, it essentially boils down to the old discourse about quality in journalism. It is basically an internal debate or kind of a "domestic" affair. This urge to adopt peace journalism is in actuality an attempt to ignore its innovative principles and to preempt the fundamental challenge it presents to conventional journalism. Peace journalism is not merely *good* journalism; it is *different* journalism and a departure from the traditional way of covering news stories, particularly conflict and violence, not only in nuances and emphases but in substance. Peace journalism is not to report what *is seen* but to report what *can be seen*; not simply to reflect reality but to explore reality and unearth what is not ostensibly reflective; to wisely utilize structural and organizational imperatives and to be subdued by them; to regard and cultivate readers' interests but not to be manipulated by them. This is the profound shift in the nature of journalism that the new philosophy offers. For those who were raised on the precepts of standard prototype reporting, some of these novelties may be difficult to accept. By their nature and putative accomplishments, the virtues of peace journalism can certainly be classified as good journalism. However, this is true since peace journalism escapes the confines of the old doctrine— not because it is a more elaborate version of what used to be.

VII. Conclusion

Some fractions of the criticism still baffle me. For example, when Loyn (2003) declares that "news is what's happening and we should report it with imagination and skepticism, full stop", I fail to understand why imagination is needed. If his version of good journalism is merely reporting what is seen, isn't imagination superfluous? In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "the lunatic, the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact". It seems to me that these characteristics would not suit Loyn's devoted reporter. Furthermore, when he writes that "we do not seek out peace-makers unless they are actually successful" (ibid), does he mean that when negotiations fail, or when diplomats disagree, they are not news worthy? As I recall, some famous breakdowns of negotiations or cessations of talks, such as between the Israelis and Palestinians at Camp David in 2000 or regression in cease-fire talks between American and Viet-Cong representatives during the Paris peace process in 1968, were highly dramatic and heightened ratings when they occurred. The peace-makers involved in such unsuccessful attempts were vehemently sought by conventional reporters for interviews and photos.

Less puzzling though disturbing and alarming is the insinuation that peace journalism might "bring memories of authoritarian regimes" in its aspiration for more social responsibility (Hanitzsch, 2004). Though I don't see this as fair criticism, I don't suspect any malice either. The social responsibility associated with sinister political systems is really an alias for obedience and submission. It is a pretense of social order which is imposed from above and an excuse to execute the most horrendous deeds in the name of political conscientiousness. Peace journalism is diametrically opposite: its social responsibility is a bottom-up one and is built on public awareness and people's deliberation. In the same vein, when Hanitzsch hypothesizes whether reporters that incite or stir violence should be silenced "in the name of social stability" (ibid, 2002), he must be aware that, first, incitement and agitation entail by law punitive acts and second, peace journalism abhors censorship. It is the absolute embodiment of information flow and full disclosure.

The fact that few Seymour Hersh's have become famous does not prove that an alternative way to report wars is not feasible; it does mean, however, that much effort still needs to be invested in ameliorating the dominant beliefs about the nature and promise of journalism. When Loyn admonishes that advocates of peace journalism cannot see that insisting on objectivity is "a useful vaccine against the relativism of attached journalism", he fails to see that peace journalism is a more powerful immunization, capable of inoculating the entire body against the absolutism of mayhem and destruction.

Peace journalism has a normative special agenda in the same way that the aspiration for secured and harmonious life is a human normative agenda. Destructive conflict and wars are a threat to all human kind. The cynical few who make fortunes from bloodshed should not be perceived as a legitimate "other party", which does not get a fair share in news coverage. Peace journalism is a tool to bolster the joint effort to expose violence and fighting for what they are and to align people across borders, cultures and loyalties in a common crusade to diminish the exultation of war.

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Good journalism or peace journalism? – Counterplea by David Loyn

In *Peace Journalism and its discontents* Jake Lynch (2007) makes an important point in suggesting that the conventions of news reporting are not set down in stone, but are 'governed by structural factors arising from the economic and political interests of the news industry'.

We can change them and should examine them; I reject his charge that journalists such as myself dislike 'critical self-awareness'. If anything, journalistic self-examination is a growth industry in Britain, with the new Reuters-inspired institute at Oxford, the BBC College of Journalism, and intelligent and thoughtful practical inquiry now commonplace in fora such as the Frontline Club and Guardian Newsroom. The BBC's searching internal inquiries into Impartiality, Trust, and the specific review into coverage of Israel/Palestine, are all parts of a more rigorous approach to the craft – questioning received wisdom and conventional approaches.

Samuel Peleg's *Rejoinder* singles out as peace journalists 'Reporters who unreservedly uphold transparency, balance and sensitized thoroughness in covering disputes.' (Peleg, 2007, 4) I have met many reporters who do that without his peace journalism label. But in the same paragraph he puts himself firmly on the other side of the fence from me by saying that 'Preventing conflict...is not merely a journalist's job, but rather, everyone's job.' No it is not. There are a variety of occupations in which 'preventing conflict' is not a priority. We might argue over what were legitimate uses of military power, ie *intensifying* conflict, but the swift surgical intervention in Sierra Leone by a combination of British troops and mercenaries certainly transformed that country for the better.

By saying that my job is not about preventing conflict, I am not trying to invoke the Nuremberg defence of 'only obeying orders' but a far more subtle call to the real role of our real functions and role. The reference to the Nazi era is first cited by Peleg (2007, 3) in what he assumes to be a horrifying challenge to journalists to consider what it might have been like to report on Auschwitz. He does not give us enough information about the hypothesis of his case study to answer his shocked rhetorical questions about how normal journalism could have taken place. His appeal to Baudrillard's analysis of the TV war in the Gulf is entirely bogus, since Auschwitz took place in a time of total war, not as an armchair diversion. And who is his hypothetical reporter – a Nazi, a German working in the underground, or a foreigner? If it was the latter, then this reporting might have shortened the war, since at the time the full horror of the death camps was not public knowledge in Britain. If it was a reporter coming in with the liberation forces, then yes, 'good journalism' does require 'aloofness' in Peleg's definition. Consider how Richard Dimbleby, who went on to become the most prominent British broadcast journalist of his generation, reported the discovery of another death camp at Bergen-Belsen:

Here over an acre of ground lay dead and dying people. You could not see which was which ... The living lay with their heads against the corpses and around them moved the awful, ghostly procession of emaciated, aimless people, with nothing to do and with no hope of life, unable to move out of your way, unable to look at the terrible sights around them ... Babies had been born here, tiny wizened things that could not live ... A mother, driven mad, screamed at a British sentry to give her milk for her child, and thrust the tiny mite into his arms, then ran off, crying terribly. He opened the bundle and found the baby had been dead for days.

Peleg, like so many advocates of Peace Journalism, constantly wants the world to be better than it is, and so he shoots the messenger, the bearer of bad news. In criticising Hanitzsch and myself, he compares reporters to doctors. In this analysis Peace Journalism is 'actually survival and abolition of war and destruction.' (Peleg, 2007, 3) So who could be against it?

But what if military intervention were the justifiable and best option? Peleg imposes an entirely pacifist construct onto journalism, making Peace Journalism more than the 'new-kid-on-the-block' (Peleg, 2007, 2), and turning it into a revolutionary position, always taking sides against military intervention.

In his paper Lynch writes approvingly of my own journalism, and I suspect that there is much more that unites us than divides us, in our desired outcome of the kind of journalism that we would like to see, in particular in seeking sources that are outside the official government machine.

We would certainly stand on the same side against for example, the facile certainties of Fox News, or the uncritical media hysteria this summer over the loss of the English toddler Madeleine McCann. We would also I suspect share concern over the lack of discernment in most of the British and American media in the run-up to the Iraq war in 2002/3. This led to more searching inquests in US newsrooms than in Britain, where the titanic struggle between the BBC and the government during the Gilligan affair obstructed other self-examination.

There are lots of things wrong in journalism, but in agreeing that there may be problems, we do not agree over a solution. In my initial paper in this dialogue, 'Good Journalism or Peace Journalism?' I engaged in some analysis of the philosophical underpinning of journalistic tools such as objectivity. In this brief response, I intend to remain on much more practical ground.

Peleg (2007, 2) believes that the concept of objectivity 'is mainly evoked when it is perceived to be absent.' I disagree profoundly. I celebrate it since as a tool it gives me protection against the relativism of Peace Journalism. Peleg (2007, 6) accuses me of believing that the media has 'little or no political influence.' I have never said this. The media has enormous influence, so should be really careful about its methods.

The biggest problem with Peace Journalism is where it puts the reporter. It demands engagement as a participant, rather than recognising that while of course there is no such thing as a transparent observer, the implied contract with the audience is that the standpoint of the reporter is at least an *attempt* to be an observer; we are not there to make peace. This is the crucial difference between the Lynch analysis and my own. He constantly characterises my approach as pretending that there are 'facts' waiting around to be uncovered, 'intuiting the numinosity of a pre-ordained order, which the tenacious reporter can *reveal* (his italics).' My own experience in the field is quite unlike this caricature.

Reporting news is about addressing the complications of a messy, visceral world and constructing a narrative, telling stories, not 'searching under stones.' This may involve shining a light on some dark places, where the peace/solution-oriented seeker for conflict resolution would want to 'frame' the situation in a different way. But if people are out to kill each other then, as journalists, we are not there to stop them.

This is an organic process on shifting sands where we need constantly to examine preconceptions. In my paper I quoted approvingly for example the suggestion made by Professor Jean Seaton in *Carnage and the Media* that the way we report violence is highly stylised, with its own agreed iconography. This kind of examination of the conventions around reporting is welcome. It is a dynamic process, and there are few certainties.

But while I believe that practising journalists are open to probing inquiries about our methods and conventions, I stand accused of ignoring the Galtung analysis, relied on by Lynch. This hypothesis posits that journalists systematically select some gatekeepers and screen out others, in order to prioritise 'negative events, befalling elite individuals in elite countries'. I do not ignore it: rather I reject its practical relevance, and in particular the prescriptive tone that Galtung adopts in order to try to get us to change our ways.

Lynch (2007, 7) fails to throw off my charge of prescription, when he outlines a set of rules that need to be followed. These encourage journalists to seek peace, solutions, and people, (over violence, victory, and elites). The rules also claim the high ground of 'truth' contrasted with 'propaganda'.

The conclusion that normal journalistic practice (condemned as 'War Journalism') is 'elite-orientated', while Peace Journalism is 'people-orientated' is a throwback to the academic arguments that used to take place between bourgeois and Marxist views of history. Peace Journalism demands more of an examination of movements and processes than power. I am not sure it would sell many newspapers.

If all Lynch were saying was that there are some western governments who deliberately skew the case for war, then no one could have any argument with him. As reporters we can and do question and challenge their assumptions, and report those who do so. But power lies in the hands of those a democratic society has elected to hold it.

He goes on to accuse journalists of assuming that 'sources are passive, "revealing a reality that already exists". This is, of course, convenient for the authors of propaganda' (Lynch, 2007, 4). I do not believe that journalists assume any such thing. When conflict is looming, of course politicians 'spin' the war. But if reporters saw it differently we would not stop the war. And Britain has the most confrontational media environment in the world, aided by a certain irreverence on the part of journalists, the physical design of the House of Commons, and the adversarial criminal court system. Testing arguments in public is part of the culture, so that rather than an assumption that sources are 'revealing a reality', there is often an assumption of mendacity. This assumption was characterised by the reported comments of a prominent TV presenter that before every interview with a politician he is thinking: 'Why is the lying bastard lying to me today?' Peleg condemns this as part of the problem. He wants a 'less belligerent and masochistic political culture' (Peleg, 2007, 5) – as meaningful as a Bedouin wanting less sand.

Lynch criticises journalists for ignoring the wider context in the run-up to the Iraq war, because of their 'War Journalism' mindset, so they were 'receptive to propaganda from western governments who either do not perceive, or will not acknowledge, their own complicity in a sequence of cause and effect – the problem (Saddam Hussein, for instance) is located in the conflict arena (Iraq), so that is where the solution is to be found (removing him from power; later, capturing him, then trying, convicting and executing him).' (Lynch, 2007, 8)

This is simply not what happened. From early 2002, a year before the invasion of Iraq, there was little else going on in parts of the British government other than planning the war. We know from the leaked 'Downing Street memo' (<http://www.downingstreetmemo.com>) that with or without the UN, Tony Blair had decided to back the US with British forces, and we know from more recent American interviews that he turned down a specific offer on the eve of the war from President Bush to hold British troops back; Bush knew of his domestic political problems, but Blair wanted to join the war.

It may be the business of 'researchers in the field of Peace and Conflict studies', cited by Lynch (2007, 8), to see all this in a holistic comprehensive way, and to want to find another way out. It was the responsibility of the British news media though to report what was going on, and what was going on then was an unstoppable ratchet towards a major war. There is a continuing confusion with him and Peleg over the function of journalism.

There had been a significant amount of reporting in previous years about the arming of Saddam Hussein, in particular leading to the 'Supergun' affair, when Conservative government ministers in the early 90s were found to be encouraging British businesses to sell arms parts to Saddam Hussein against UN sanctions. But by 2002/3 the story was the war; the how/when/where questions were paramount. Other views were widely reported – the biggest rally in British history, matched in anti-war marches across the world, the polls showing strong opposition to the war, the reservations of some in the military – but the story was the war. The peace/truth/people/solution narrative demanded by Lynch was the business of those trying to stop the war. But reporting demanded other priorities. I have already conceded that British journalism should have carried out more searching inquiries into uncritical reporting of the WMD reports, but this is a small concern compared to the demands made by Lynch.

In another specific case study in his paper Lynch (2007, 4) comes back to the BBC Panorama programme *Moral Combat* that he has praised before. My principle objection to this programme was not, as he supposed, its historical narrative of how a coalition of the willing, outside the normal apparatus of NATO, the UN or EU, went to war. My objection was that it painted the Serbs as victims, and the Albanians as killers.

The course of the unfolding war in 1998-9 in Kosovo is becoming one of the most hotly contested periods of recent history. The international community did not, as he records, ride 'reluctantly to the rescue of a beleaguered minority'. They rode *enthusiastically*, at least in Blair's case, to the aid of what was a *majority* in that clearly defined region. As in Iraq, there was a clear decision to prepare for military action, not as a last resort, but as a new kind of foreign engagement – using armed force for moral causes – outlined by Blair in his Chicago speech, on the fiftieth anniversary of NATO, even while the war was still being fought (<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp>).

The conflict was part of a move by Blair's then new Labour government. He did not want another Bosnia, and was responsive to Kosovar views that they had been left out of the Dayton agreement. Other European countries were less enthusiastic, but were drawn along by British rhetoric. I remember a cartoon in a German newspaper showing Blair wearing an old British 'Tommy' helmet, jumping forward out a trench trying to lead other European leaders cowering behind him.

The war was not prosecuted quickly, because the Americans did not want to commit ground troops, and Serb and Yugoslav forces were competent at hiding from air raids, as they intensified the forced movement of Albanian-origin Kosovars from their homes. But that there would be foreign intervention was inevitable as early as September 1998, several months before the date Lynch chooses. I know this from intelligence sources I met on the ground in Kosovo then.

As a reporter with some acquaintance with this sequence of events, I have never taken a public stance on whether this was a 'good' or 'bad' intervention. But I do know how my reports were used: videos of casualties were copied, ferried to

Washington, and significantly shortened the period before NATO bombing began (Loyn, 2005, 308) Lynch chooses to attack this military intervention in his paper, seeing as a 'civil conflict exacerbated by interventions on the part of the international community that were, at best, bumbling and ineffective,' although he has no sources for his claim that this 'version of events has steadily gained in salience.' (Lynch, 2007, 4)

Lynch has a selective memory too when it comes to examining the 7/7 bombings. He accuses journalists of fitting in with a narrative drawn up by politicians and diplomats that 'that the world we encounter is not of our making' (Lynch, 2007, 4). He must have been watching different programmes and reading different newspapers to me. There was widespread reporting about the impact of Iraq on home-grown terrorism, and the risks of allowing segregated communities to develop in Britain.

Lynch concludes with an exposition of reporting in Israel/Palestine. He misunderstands the reasons for the BBC's internal review into reporting, and does not take account of the background context. This is the hardest story to report in the world, partly because of the huge lobbies that all sides can mobilise internationally.

These lobbies are not evenly balanced. Israel is a recognised state, with a democratic system, and the considerable acts of violence of its forces have an international legitimacy that is lacking from the violent acts of Palestinians.

The international Israeli lobby is well-financed, organised and highly motivated, putting significant pressure on news organisations worldwide to reflect its narrative of the situation. It has disproportionate influence in particular on US policy makers. The Palestinian cause on the other hand, although it has huge international support, is divided, and easy to demonise, particularly after acts of terror inside and outside Israel itself. The divisions between Fatah and Hamas have complicated this situation even more.

The internal BBC review was set up in this context, following academic research showing, for example, as I quoted in my initial paper, that the audience misunderstand who are the 'occupiers' and who the 'occupied'. It was not set up with the peace journalism remedy or construct in mind, but to redeploy traditional journalistic tools in a place where the dominant narrative is too easily hijacked by the most articulate, English-speaking side.

I have engaged in this debate not only because I am concerned about peace journalism muddying the waters of critical analysis of journalism, but also because it is important to keep this door open. Like any other field of human endeavour, journalism needs to look over its shoulder constantly at other ways of doing things, and in particular be aware of the best academic research. Even journalists such as myself, with the 'narrow conceptual horizons' ascribed to me by Lynch, can see that there is something superficially attractive about a campaign to give democratic space to peacemakers.

But artificially clearing this space is editorially suspect. Peacemakers need to fight for the right to be heard as much as any other voices in the raucous market place of news. Yes, Galtung has a point in saying that they are systematically excluded. But then they have not faced the hurdles of winning votes. A democratic system does tend, for very good and proper reasons, to report more on those who have power to change lives than those who do not. It is the responsibility of journalism to reflect the voices of the powerless, but on their own merits, because they are contribute to a better understanding of the world, not because the reporter takes a position promoting their views. Lynch's challenge to me to follow the Galtung hypothesis is based on the belief that Galtung's *weltanschauung* has been 'established' – another closed, concluded, concrete word.

The problem with the Peace Journalism prescriptions and rules is that they actually *exclude* constructive engagement in the kind of research and insights that Lynch promotes. The closed nature of the Lynch response, leaving him in what he might call a 'feedback loop', seems to put peace journalism far outside the daily practice of journalism. His desire to look at this scientifically further alienates him from practical dialogue with practising journalists. His own research into British media, about Iran in a period in 2005, finds that the 'overall peace journalism quotient was about 15%, although some important publications, notably the *Financial Times* (22%), had more' (Lynch, 2007, 10). This is not empirical research, but self-serving analysis setting its own goalposts.

Similarly Lynch chooses to say that much of my own daily reporting is 'peace journalism.' I reject this for the simple reason, as stated above, that I see Peace Journalism as coming from one standpoint. It was not my *intention* to commit Peace Journalism, and that is the key difference. I have met enough lunatics, (although perhaps not enough lovers and poets) in working as a reporter, and absolutely fail to see why Peleg believes that somehow my approach would exclude them. He goes on to deride my belief that we give attention to peace-makers only when they are 'successful.' I agree entirely with this textual criticism, since it is obvious that we report high-profile peacemaking disasters as well. I want to replace it with 'significant'. We report 'significant' peace initiatives, not insignificant ones. The point is that we do not go out *looking for* peacemakers. We go out to find out what is going on, engaging curiosity, and listening to poets, lovers and lunatics as well as everyone else, sifting for the flecks of gold that make the fragile narrative of a single news story on a single day. And yes, we try to report what *can be seen* as well as what is seen, not simply reflecting reality but exploring reality, not being

subdued by organizational imperatives, regarding and not being manipulating readers' interests – all demands made by Peleg of journalism. The difference between me and him is this: he wants to make peace; as a reporter I want to give him and every other viewer, reader and listener the material he needs to do that. But if I am *partial*, taking sides, then my reporting is suspect, and nowadays my perspectives are competing with lunatics, lovers and poets, not just in the field, but in the blogosphere. The only USP of conventional 'mainstream media' is impartiality, and we kick out the props from under us if we lose that.

I think it is all more complicated, and not so certain. In the 24/7 environment with the internet screaming for attention alongside other output, trusted journalists standing on agreed ground are soon going to be at a real premium. We face the challenges of globalisation, climate change, poverty, the compelling new thesis from Naomi Klein (2007) that capitalism thrives on disaster, and US threats to Iran (making conflict a fact all the way from the Mediterranean to the Indus). This world requires far more robust tools than those offered by Peace Journalism.

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It should be fair to criticize even noble ideas – Counterplea by Thomas Hanitzsch

There was this chat that I had in my office just a few days ago. We talked about things we write or would like to write about. When I mentioned that I had published some two or three papers critical of peace journalism, one of my colleagues, quite astonished, spontaneously said: "How could you dare to criticize such a good thing?" – It was this very moment when I realized that criticizing a noble idea may sometimes turn out to be not very pleasant.

When Wilhelm Kempf invited me to participate in this special issue of *communication & conflict online*, I looked forward to an interesting and stimulating debate. I always thought of critique and critical scrutiny as something good and useful because it helps to improve theory and practice. This is particularly relevant in the context of this debate, as the impetus of peace journalism is clearly a critical one.

However, if a progressive movement starts to treat its critics unfairly and disrespectfully, then it runs the danger of turning into a self-contained and totalitarian ideology. The language of Samuel Peleg's (2007, 2f) rejoinder is quite revealing to this fact: He sees critics that are "united in their disrespect" for peace journalism attempting to "disqualify" it by "misfiring allegations", which he, in turn, perceives as an "attack" and "assault" on the very essence of peace journalism.

After all, I think it should be legitimate to criticize even a noble idea without moving on the path of the dark side of the Force or being seen as the Darth Vader of the peace journalism universe. In the introduction to his response paper, however, Peleg (2007, 2) laments that peace journalism has taken a lot of "heat" from researchers and practitioners, then he goes on with unfounded accusations such as the one that suggests that I "disrespect" peace journalism and "don't spare any description to disparage it."

This is, of course, absurd. I have never said or done anything that comes even close to this. As a citizen, I actually like peace journalism very much, but as a journalist and communication scholar, I believe it does not work in its presented form, at least under the circumstances of modern news production. In this short paper I will, therefore, briefly respond to Jake Lynch and Samuel Peleg; and I shall focus my response on their contributions to this special issue.

Jake Lynch: Discontent with discontents

Jake Lynch is an experienced and distinguished reporter who has thoughtfully analyzed the role of journalists in covering conflict and war. He is a good writer and a critical mind; and he very deliberately makes his case for the need of peace journalism. The epistemological approach he favors, critical realism and its notion of stratified reality, is certainly one way to go in conflict reporting and, thus, makes perfectly sense to me. In its most elaborated form, critical realism, according to Bhaskar (1997), assumes three domains of reality: the domain of the real, domain of the actual and domain of the empirical. In the production of news, events fall in the domain of the actual and perceived events in the domain of the empirical (Lau 2004). Yet interestingly, this strand in epistemology holds that critical realism is the *natural* way of knowing, which means that journalists can hardly escape from it. If that is true, then critical realism applies to any kind of reporting, which makes it far less peculiar to the reporting of peace and war.

Standpoint epistemology, the approach that I suggested, and critical realism are not mutually exclusive. In Bhaskar's philosophical approach, standpoint epistemology would fit in domain of the empirical. This would have substantial implications for peace journalists: Any perception of reality would then rest on the values of peace and peaceful conflict resolution – as opposed to an emphasis on conflict and war in traditional mainstream journalism. Standpoint epistemology, therefore, takes into account the normative impetus of peace journalism as outlined by Lynch (2007, 2) who argues that "some forms of representation should be preferred to others."

In a subsequent section of his paper, Lynch discusses the tenets and basic values of peace journalism with reference to his distinction between war journalism and peace journalism. In his adaptation of Galtung's work, he sees war journalism as orientated toward violence, war, propaganda, elites and victories, while peace journalism emphasizes peace, conflict, truth, the people and solutions. However, such a distinction, useful as it may seem in theory, is far too simplistic to capture the complex picture of journalistic news production. Furthermore, the expectation that any coverage of conflicts should identify its "history, recent causes and internal composition – the different parties, the nature of their involvement, their perspectives, positions and motivations, and the different relationships between them in terms of power, allegiance and interest" (Francis, quoted in Lynch, 2007, 8) is so obviously taken out of the context of news making. The downsizing of editorial staff and cutback of resources allocated to reporting has become quite pervasive in corporate journalism. Additionally, in many western countries, most notably the United States, growing clientelism and commercialization accounts for much of the shrinking autonomy of journalists.

Only a few privileged journalists would ever have the chance to keep up with the demands of conflict researchers; and Jake Lynch was clearly one of them. BBC reporters are, by and large and compared to their colleagues in other news organizations, quite fortunately equipped with editorial resources, including personnel, time and equipment. This is clearly one of the reasons why the BBC continues to be the flagship of good journalism. In stark contrast to this, most reporters on this planet simply don't have the time, equipment and autonomy to do what Galtung and peace researchers expect them to do.

Still discussing insights from peace research and conflict analysis, Lynch (2007, 9) then criticizes me for my "lack of critical engagement with issues in conflict and peace." He finds it "odd" to quote the Heidelberg Institute, one of the most reputable institutions in the field of conflict research. What was meant as a brief and illustrative snapshot of a world of conflict and war became, in Lynch's response paper, elevated to an "unjustified" and insufficient conflict analysis. It is safe to say that such criticism is rather unfair.

In a similar vein, Lynch's (2007, 10) discomfort with my "idiosyncratic definition of culture" implicit (sic!) in my writing is also a rather pretextual charge. In my initial article, I did not intend to suggest any particular definition of culture here, although journalistic cultures actually constitute the focus of my research (e.g. Hanitzsch 2006, 2007). I simply think that this debate is certainly not the place to struggle over definitions of culture, which is one of the most contested areas in the social sciences and humanities. Given the ever growing number of definitions, the British sociologist Margaret Archer (1996, 2) once noticed that "[w]hat culture is and what culture does are issues bogged down in a conceptual morass from which no adequate sociology of culture has been able to emerge." While Lynch's own understanding of culture – one that relates to power, struggle and contestation – generally makes sense, it is certainly not *per se* superior to other views.

Samuel Peleg: The peace activist

Samuel Peleg is not only a professor for political communications and political violence but also a long time peace activist. After his military service as a tank commander in the Israeli Army, he became a driving force in the peace movement, most notably in *Peace Now* and *One Voice*. In his response to my initial article, it is rather the peace activist that speaks out, and not the scholar. I wouldn't have any problem with this, if Peleg's rejoinder had cited me correctly.

In his response paper, Peleg (2007, 2) suggests that I allegedly argued that peace journalism is "incompatible with the true nature of journalism". The truth is, I have never written anything like this. I am not sure what the "true nature" of journalism is; and it would be odd to use such an essentialist concept in the analysis of human-made news production. What I actually proposed was an analytical distinction between journalism and other modes of public communication, including public relations, advertising and entertainment. Within the subfield of journalism, one can still find a notable diversity in professional ideologies and practices, from the objective just-the-facts reporting to advocacy journalism.

Peleg (2007, 3) obviously misinterpreted this approach by claiming: "His logic is that peace journalism is public relations and not real journalism because 'it advocates and promotes a certain way of action'." This is clearly a misleading interpretation of what I actually wrote. My contention was that public relations is different from journalism because its communication goals usually originate from the outside, whereas in journalism, communication goals are defined by the journalists themselves and their news organizations. In my view, journalists can clearly have and promote a personal agenda, which becomes manifest most notably in commentary and advocacy journalism. I have not suggested that it would be "dishonorable" to take sides against genocide and ethnic cleansing or that it would be "amateurish" to passionately promote aware-

ness against massive raping and barbarism. But we are in trouble when it is the journalist who identifies the victim and the perpetrator, good and evil, and when it is the journalist who decides if a "genocide" – a massively misused concept – is taking place.

To confound my analytical definition of journalism with any "consecration of the objectivity totem" (Peleg 2007, 3) is certainly unfair; and to evoke Mephisto and the Nazis in this context is clearly bizarre. In my critique of peace journalism, I was never referring to objectivity and objective reporting as a proper alternative. I agree with Peleg that the concept of objectivity has always been somewhat slippery and that few reporters could attest to total neutrality and impartiality. However, his critique is dishonest as he limits the concept to a metaphysical understanding of objectivity as an unattainable ideal. The view of objectivity as a method, on the other hand, is based on the procedural aspects of news production by referring to traditional standards of good journalism such as accuracy, balance, fairness and reliability (Lichtenberg 2000; Ward 1998). Framed in such a procedural perspective, objectivity is clearly possible and highly desirable.

Peleg (2007, 3) also suggests that my critical assessment of the epistemological foundation of peace journalism is inconsistent: "First (2004), peace journalism has a naïve epistemological perspective, then it matured to epistemological realism, since it assumes there is a true and proper version of reality and accordingly, peace journalism attacks conventional journalism as 'misrepresenting reality' by showing only partial facts (2007, 5). Finally, Hanitzsch [sic!] admits, peace journalism has no epistemology at all and its proponents need to define it."

This reading of my critique is rather dubious. As a matter of fact, I argued that *some* advocates of peace journalism subscribe to a naïve epistemological view on media coverage and that peace journalism as an analytical concept seems to be *prone* to epistemological realism. Then I moved on by contending that peace journalism may still have to *define* its epistemological foundation. This is not the same as to say that peace journalism has no epistemology at all. Journalism is "intimately bound up with claims to knowledge and truth" (Ekström 2002, 260); and there can hardly be any dispute over the fact that epistemology underpins *all* approaches to news making.

Conclusion

After all, the major disagreement between Lynch and Peleg and me is related to the much larger question of peace journalism's power to fight against deeply engrained standards of reporting as well as the organizational and institutional imperatives of news production. Peleg (2007, 4) writes that peace journalism "aims at individuals as agents of change and as harbingers of an innovative mind-set [...]. By so doing, peace journalism is thoroughly cognizant of the structural confines of the journalistic setting and one of its foremost challenges [...] is to mitigate and tone down the effects of structuralism." Judging from a thorough review of the literature in the field of journalism studies and from my own experience as a journalist, and having done extensive research myself, I am far less optimistic than Lynch and Peleg.

Like it or not, peace journalism stands at odds with the market-driven demands of commercial news production. Corporate journalism needs to "sell" content to an audience that is as large as possible, while at the same time, low budgets for news production degrade journalism's capability to enlighten society. In other media venues, most notably in public broadcasting and quality newspapers, progressive journalism already found its place, although it may not be called peace reporting but good or high-quality journalism.

In this respect, Peleg (2007, 2) makes an interesting argument: "Peace journalism asserts that a more appropriate standard for good journalism should be *fairness* and *accuracy*." In contrast to Peleg, I argue that exactly these values belong, in a procedural sense, to the basic and long-standing tenets of good journalism. How can peace journalists "hijack" these elementary values of good journalism and still claim that peace journalism is different?

I believe it would be much more acceptable for many reporters in the field if the peace journalism discourse is rather framed as part of the debate over the normative base of good journalism. Suggesting that peace journalism is something fundamentally different would mean to reach only a very small number of journalists who happen to cover conflict and war. However successful peace journalism will become in the future, these few reporters will never reach a critical mass that is needed to change the basic essentials and workings of corporate journalism. Hence, if Lynch argues that the fact that audiences became much more knowledgeable of the Palestinian conflict indicates an increase in peace journalism, I would answer that this is a promising sign of proliferating good journalism.

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It seems that we are captured in the heat of combat – Counterplea by Samuel Peleg

If we are to believe dialectics, then the meeting between the thesis of conventional journalism and the antithesis of peace journalism should create a constructive fusion that will produce in turn, a more lucid, more invigorated and more updated synthesis of journalism. This blessed blending could enjoy the premise of the "old" and the promise of the "new". In the current head-bashing between Loyn and Hanitzsch on the one side and Lynch and me on the other, it seems that we are captured in the heat of combat rather than enjoying the excitement of the blending.

Part of the sparks flare from seemingly uncalled for personal allusions and remarks. They do not serve each of us right. For example, Hanitzsch (2007b) protests my language of using words like "attack" and "assault" in criticizing Loyn's and his articles on peace journalism. These nouns were used figuratively to denote eight or nine objections advanced by the two authors against peace journalism using among others concepts such as irrelevant, miscalculated, naive and lacking an epistemological basis. The reference to assault was not meant in the moral sense of the "dark side" against the "good guys" but was raised to indicate the totality of criticism, which was directed not only at implications and practices of the new theory but also at its very essence and *raison d'être*.

When Hanitzsch (2007b, 2) is uncomfortable with my observations he indicates that "This is the peace activist (in Peleg) that speaks out and not the scholar" as if to suggest that peace activists cannot really engage in analytical and methodical erudite debates perhaps because they are preoccupied rubbing shoulders with sweaty companions in town squares and check-posts. In my case at least, being an activist has made me a better scholar and being a scholar has made me a better activist. But this cco debate is not really about me or anybody else of the discussants in this interesting, but occasionally frustrating, deliberation. It is about a new and imperative idea's right to exist. The history of ideas is fraught with such arguments and dispute about the necessity of innovations. The fault-lines were usually drawn between the advocates of change and the guardians of the familiar, or as Charles Tilly (1978) calls them – the challengers and the incumbents.

Inundating the discussion with disagreeable adjectives such as "bizarre", "dubious" and "dishonest" with regard to my rejoinder, cannot cloud sincere and profound doubts I raised concerning Hanitzsch's approach to peace journalism. But as *soft answer turneth away wrath* (proverbs 15:1) I will do my best to grapple with the Loyn and Hanitzsch response in a mild and evenhanded manner.

If Hanitzsch is so sensitive to being cited correctly, as indeed he should be, he will probably notice that my point about the true nature of journalism (Peleg, 2007, 1) was not a quotation of his words but the general impression that emerges out of his and Loyn's initial articles, and I gather several statements to back this impression up. When he writes, for example, that the journalism quadrant in his model is based on the professionalism mode, which "emphasizes objectivity, neutrality and detachment" (Hanitzsch, 2007a, 4), it reflects a lot of what Hanitzsch believes journalism should be in a quite essentialist manner, despite his claim that he is not "sure what the true nature of journalism is" (Hanitzsch, 2007b, 2). Moreover, if he doesn't have a view of the true nature of journalism, how come he is so certain about the meaning of "good journalism"?

Hanitzsch's analytical distinction of various types of public communication, helpful and intriguing in its own right, still pushes peace journalism out of the box that designates journalism toward the PR box especially when "journalists start to actively

engage in conflict resolution" (Hanitzsch 2007a, 4). So it is indeed a certain way of action which sets peace journalists apart from actual journalists, for a lack of a better word. Conversely to his claim, I interpreted Hanitzsch's writing quite accurately: he certainly accredits the distinction between journalism and PR to what he terms communication goals, but he also adds the activism factor to accentuate the difference. This additional factor is precisely where peace journalism (of the "interventionist" kind) fails to make the grade, according to Hanitzsch's analysis.

David Loyn flatly rejects my comment that conflict prevention is everyone's job. Perhaps I was too general, and thus let me rephrase my statement: preventing conflicts is *everyone who cares* job; and journalists, with their potential to influence public opinion, certainly can. Journalists are what Gamson and Modigliani (1987) call "political sponsors" – they update their readers' political agenda, stimulate their worldview and inspire opinions and values. As such they can contribute a great deal to the contraction of conflict by shrinking public support to leaders and initiatives which espouse belligerent tendencies.

Objectivity keeps surfacing as a tender bone of contention between exponents and antagonists of peace journalism. Hanitzsch contests my defiance of objectivity as the centerpiece for good journalism by admitting that he never regarded it as a proper alternative. However, in every description he supplies of professional journalism, objectivity primes. My examples of Mephisto and Auschwitz may have been staggering, as I myself clearly stated, but they were deliberately chosen to hone the point of how the seemingly naïve façade of objectivity can turn sour in the most extreme cases. I, deplorably but emphatically, disagree with Loyn's assertion that my reference to Baudrillard's analysis was bogus. To far too many people in the world, Auschwitz had definitely been an armchair diversion. To numerous onlookers, the death camps were never actually a part of the Second World War but a sinister and clandestine undercurrent concealed by the glorified blaze of battle and the mundane technocratic machinery of evil (Arendt, 1965). In such a context, I certainly hope Loyn will be more congenial to my theoretical reference.

Loyn (2007, 1) comes to grips with my fictitious Auschwitz report by dissecting it to details: "And who is his hypothetical reporter – a Nazi, a German working in the underground, or a foreigner? If it was the latter, then this reporting might have shortened the war, since at the time the full horror of the death camps was not public knowledge in Britain". But this comment is utterly irrelevant: none of these putative reporters (except, of course, the first option Loyn raises, a Nazi, perhaps someone like the bureaucratic genius Adolph Eichmann, who was "just doing his job". He could have, no doubt, dispatched a brilliant dispassionate and impartial report of a body count) could have been "neutral and objective" in such unbearable circumstances. One simply cannot describe carnage of innocent human beings and remain detached and remote. Worse yet is to camouflage such aloofness as being a professional etiquette: this is making a mockery of the quintessence of morality. By using the honorable Richard Dimbleby's famous Bergen-Belsen description as an example, Loyn inadvertently validates my point: this is a touching and mesmerizing illustration of a keen observer, a cry out against brutality and pointless massacre in a dignified, non tempestuous manner. In other words, this is peace journalism at its best.

Loyn characterizes me and many advocates of Peace Journalism, who I am proud to be associated with, as constantly wanting the world to be better than it is. I passionately admit to that burden and I think it is a noble one, to reiterate Hanitzsch's terminology. Peace journalism is not about shooting the messengers (was that pun intended? We are talking *peace* journalism...) but about sending a message to the shooters that their deeds will not be glorified nor rewarded.

I honestly don't understand the distinction between metaphysical and procedural perceptions of objectivity: the latter is a corollary of the former and is guided by it. No one acts objectively unless he or she believes in the merits of objectivism as a goal and as a principle. One does not posit objectivism at the core of journalism if one perceives objectivism as a mere procedure. Even more puzzling is Hanitzsch's (2007b, 3) concern of "the journalist who identifies the victim and the perpetrator, good and evil, and when it is the journalist decides if a 'genocide' ... is taking place". Who then, should identify and decide: the readers? An international tribunal? If reporters cannot be trusted of being able to distinguish right from wrong, how can they be entrusted with deciding between factual and fictional and having their goals internally defined, as belonging to the journalism quadrant requires? And besides, how complicated is it to identify a genocide when coming across one? I think Hanitzsch's worry, in this respect at least, is exaggerated.

The insistence on peace journalism being principally an updated version of good journalism, and therefore, it is redundant at best and bogus and a "hijacker of good journalism's values" at worse, is erroneous. Peace journalism is not simply good journalism in other words. It is based on a unique and innovative premise that conflicts can be avoided, de-escalated and even resolved by a prudent, profoundly analyzed and fairly written journalistic coverage. In Loyn and Hanitzsch's opinion, this is out of the reporter's jurisdiction. Perhaps the distinction should be stated as the difference between how conflict reports should be written and how they should be read. Peace journalism is geared toward demystifying the mystic of violent conflicts and it operates under the onus of profound social responsibility. It does not advocate peace or conflict resolution, but it is certainly inspired by their prospects. And this is by far a different creature than "good journalism": If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, you can be reasonably sure it is a duck and not merely a fine specimen of the birds' family of Anatidae.

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A reply to the replies – Counterplea by Jake Lynch

David Loyn is right to say that his and my journalistic desiderata would substantially overlap. I have commented that his own reporting could, in many cases, be called peace journalism. He suggests, instead, that the "key difference" between us is that "it was not [his] *intention* to commit Peace Journalism" (2007: 4; emphasis in the original). Boiled down, then, his objections can be seen to rest on an intentionalist fallacy. I reckon peace journalism is better understood as a response to a condition we inhabit.

Consider - few of us, indeed, would set out to 'commit' post-modernism, when deciding to wear 'classic' clothing or listen to 'retro' music, but, in so doing, we are preferring referentiality to originality – a response to the post-modern condition, finding ourselves surrounded by a deep stack of archived narratives and images, endlessly reproduced and disseminated.

It means our lived experience of meaning-making is highly textual, or inter-textual. *The Da Vinci Code*, for instance, appeals to us because it resonates with this experience, by blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction, and by drawing our attention to competing narratives and inconvenient details, which, once retrieved from the margins, threaten to unravel the whole. It plays with modes of reading familiar to us from many contexts; modes we would recognise, in the writings of Jacques Derrida, as deconstruction. While the world's beaches, in 2004, were knee-deep in copies of Dan Brown's best-seller, however, I have yet to see *Of Grammatology* propped open on a deckchair.

Peace journalism became thinkable in the previous condition, the one we look back on as late modernity, with its key critical discourse of structuralism – the insight that, when we observe and represent the outside world, the patterns we discern are structured by the conventions we apply – even if, once again, most of us are unaware of it. Thomas Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962; the English translation of *Structural Anthropology*, by Claude Levi-Strauss, appeared in 1963 and the *Journal of Peace Research* featured Galtung and Ruge's 'Structure of Foreign News' in 1965.

The acts of observation and representation – the work journalists do – had effectively been problematised. Research on the news, in the fields of Communication and Peace and Conflict Studies, became dominated by identification and discussion, based on such methods as content analysis and subject interviews, of conventions operating on the selection of stories, sourcing, narrative structure and so on.

Later, the concept of representation was itself further opened up – 'decentred', to use an idiom from the new critical discourse of post-structuralism – by reception theory, a contribution from exponents of Cultural Studies, notably Stuart Hall (1980). Journalists both 'decode' texts and images, in Hall's words, and 're-encode' them. Editors and reporters may produce negotiated, or even oppositional readings - of corporate press releases, say, or war propaganda. The tension at the centre of journalistic work is between such readings and the effect of conventions governing what can be said, by whom, how, where and when.

The debate over peace journalism picks up on a pervasive sense of paradigm shift, that these conventions have been exposed – the tide of critical awareness has risen high enough to float them off what I have called "sedimented layers of tradition, assumption and definition" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: *xxi*) and break them loose from their moorings.

Alignment and after

The gravitational pull behind the tide – to continue the metaphor – is coming from equal or greater shifts in social, political and economic conditions, shifts underway at least since the end of the Cold War.

How come? News has traditionally been aligned with nation. The commodification of news, enabled by the invention of the rotary printing press in 1843, both accompanied and reinforced the construction of imagined communities. "Print-language is what invents nationalism", in Anderson's words (1991: 134). News about conflict is, traditionally, organised around this alignment to a greater extent than any other – hence the old US newspaper maxim, "One dead American equals 10 dead Israelis equals 100 dead Russians equals 1,000 dead Africans" (Steyn, 2004).

The Cold War held this alignment in place, within the context of larger alignments. As late as 1995, a newsflow study of 44 countries found the United States far and away the biggest focus of international news, with France, the UK, Russia and China trailing in its wake (Wu, 2004: 107). The fact that Rwanda registers nowhere in this study – based, as it was, on data collected within a year of the catastrophic genocide that left up to a million dead – is as good a starting point as any to consider the larger context within which journalistic conventions for the reporting of conflict have come under such sustained scrutiny and criticism.

In brief – Rwanda came to represent a failure of global governance, since the head of the UN military mission there, Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, passed on explicit warnings about the bloodshed to come, months in advance, with an application for a modest number of reinforcements to forestall widescale violence. The reaction? His pleas were rejected, the mission drawn down and Rwandans abandoned to their fate.

The Canadian government convened the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, whose final report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, enshrined the concept of 'humanitarian intervention', up to and including military action, to protect human rights. It quickly became the orthodox view. The head of the UN Department of Peacekeeping at the time of the Rwandan genocide, Kofi Annan, had by now become Secretary-General, and his millennium report, *We the Peoples*, heralded "a more human-centred approach to security as *opposed to* the traditional state-centred approach" (my italics) (UN, 2000).

In other words, human rights – a definitively internationalist concept, belonging to all nations and none – was now to be the paramount analytical factor in international assessments of conflicts and crises. Some influential figures in the journalistic community congratulated themselves on having helped to bring this about. Roy Gutman of *Newsday* identified "the glare of media attention ... and public outcry" as having been instrumental in triggering intervention to prevent "savagery" in former Yugoslavia (Gutman and Rieff, 2000).

The Responsibility to Protect appears to promote the obligation to respond to what it calls "conscience-shocking situations" above even the need to obtain legal cover – and how is our conscience to be shocked, if events such as those in Rwanda drop off the edges of the news agenda? They did so, remember, because the authorities in the nation states that dominate international news flow – the US and UK – had no interest in drawing attention to it. Indeed, as Linda Melvern has shown, in a memorable piece of investigative journalism, they conspired, in closed session of the UN Security Council, to prevent the word, 'genocide' from being used in official communiqués (Melvern, 2006).

The 'hierarchy of death', a phenomenon of the alignment of news with nation, and the underpinning, in turn, for pervasive journalistic conventions of sourcing and framing in representations of the world around us, was now at odds, more clearly than before, with the job many journalists – like David Loyn – aspire to do, and with what I have called "time-honoured expectations" that journalism will provide "a reliable account of what is really going on" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: xv).

The journalism of attachment

Into this context was inserted the concept of 'the journalism of attachment', which Hanitzsch has characterized as: "belong[ing] to the broad area of political public relations as it clearly has the intention to alter attitudes and behaviours of the audiences" (2004: 193).

This is a little unfair, but there is a problem with journalists becoming what one critic called "Solomons of the cyber-age" and framing stories about conflict solely in terms of human rights abuses; not necessarily because of what Hanitzsch, too, reads as intentionality, but perhaps merely by the act of framing. Entman puts it well:

"To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, *in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation*" (emphasis added) (1993: 51-52).

The point is, as Chandler (2002) shows, expectations that allegations of human rights abuse will be met with military intervention can be responsible for prolonging wars – the pursuit of positive peace can imperil negative peace.

Then, appeals to human rights were instrumentalised, in political public relations, to sway publics behind military interventions in Yugoslavia – the Kosovo case – and Iraq. Yes, Iraq. British Prime Minister Tony Blair intoned, on the day of the worldwide anti-war marches in February, 2003:

"The moral case against war has a moral answer: it is the moral case for removing Saddam. It is not the reason we act. That must be according to the UN mandate on weapons of mass destruction. But it is the reason, frankly, why if we do have to act, we should do so with a clear conscience".

This new line, accompanied by (yet another) 'dossier', this time from the UK Foreign Office, titled, *Saddam Hussein: crimes and human rights abuses*, proved effective in turning public opinion – and parliamentary opinion – and attaining the majorities in both which sent Britain to war.

One of Blair's earlier speeches, in Chicago, set out what he called "the doctrine of international community". That was in April, 1999, as the bombs were actually dropping on Yugoslavian territory, in Nato's 'Operation Allied Force', and it anticipated the arguments put forward two years later in *The Responsibility to Protect*. However, as I have argued, in this series of exchanges and elsewhere, neither OAF nor 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' met the criteria set out in that document as 'precautionary principles', particularly these:

- Right intention: The primary purpose of the intervention, whatever other motives intervening states may have, must be to halt or avert human suffering...
- Last resort: Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing lesser measures would not have succeeded.
- Proportional means: The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective.
- Reasonable prospects: There must be a reasonable chance of success in halting or averting the suffering which has justified the intervention, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction.

In this condition, 'human rights' cannot, on their own, offer what I have called "a vantage point from which to observe and report" (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005: 222). Peace journalism is a fuller and more coherent response to the 'post-aligned' – condition we now inhabit. It permits the inspection from the outside of a human rights discourse that can lend itself – and has lent itself – to campaigns to mobilise populations for violent responses to conflict.

In so doing, it creates opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses. Note – opportunities. If society at large does not take those opportunities, or if people do consider non-violent responses, weigh them in the balance, and decide that, after all, they prefer violent ones, so be it. What we can say is that the effect of journalistic conventions on news representations of conflict is such as to constrict those opportunities. Peace journalism is not about promoting peace – it's about giving peace a chance.

Determinism

Time for the pendulum to swing back a little. If the case for peace journalism should not be interpreted as a form of intentionalism, then neither should it be seen as deterministic. To catch the distinctions, our theoretical net needs to be finer than that which Hanitzsch weaves out of his structural-functionalist threads. It is not that we can judge, finally, which is the 'best' or 'true' definition of culture; rather, to hold a meaningful conversation about peace journalism, we need to conceptualise culture in such a way as to foreground the contestability of cultural practices like journalistic representations and conventions.

The condition we're in *contains* this contestation; without it, we would be in a different condition. Loyn is right to observe that news about conflict is now *increasingly* contestable, viewed as a subject for critical examination, rather than a given. Indeed, I lay claim to a modest share of the credit for that, as a co-founder and director of Reporting the World. It's a shame he attended only our first, rather callow effort; by the end, the level of discussion (as recorded in Lynch, 2004) was much higher.

As a response to what I could call this 'post-aligned' condition, peace journalism is present, and rising. Loyn may dislike the findings of my own study, operationalising peace journalism as a set of evaluative criteria for content analysis (Lynch, 2006), but he should be aware that there are others out there (such as Lee and Maslog, 2005 and Lee et al, 2006) and more are coming (Hackett, 2007, to name but one).

Some of what is being measured may indeed be the result of editors and reporters adopting deliberate strategies to supplement conventions which they see as predisposing the news towards a form we could recognize as war journalism. Some of them may even call it peace journalism; but that should not be seen as a requirement to practise it, or for the rest of us to describe it as such.

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Wilhelm Kempf

Friedensjournalismus aus Sicht der Journalismusforschung: Eine kritische Würdigung

Ausgehend von einem Verständnis von Friedensjournalismus, das diesen nicht als Antipode, sondern als notwendige Voraussetzung von Qualitätsjournalismus ansieht, unternimmt der vorliegende Aufsatz eine Synthese der von David Loyn, Thomas Hanitzsch, Jake Lynch und Samuel Peleg in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2, vorgetragenen Thesen und Antithesen.

Die Aufgaben des friedensjournalistischen Programms sieht der Autor in der Untersuchung der Bedingungen und Möglichkeiten, unter denen Journalisten ihre Arbeit in Kriegs- und Krisensituationen auch tatsächlich besser machen können, sowie in der Bereitstellung und praktischen Umsetzung der Kompetenzen, die dafür erforderlich sind.

Obwohl Friedensjournalismus in der Konflikt- und Krisenkommunikation auf absehbare Zeit eine Minderheitsposition einnehmen wird, kann er auch aus dieser heraus dazu beitragen, den Mediendiskurs über Konflikte transparenter und ausgewogener zu gestalten und die Konfliktberichterstattung vor der verhängnisvollen Propagandafalle zu bewahren, in welche traditionelle Kriegsberichterstattung mit Regelmäßigkeit zu tappen pflegt.

Als Voraussetzung hierfür bedarf es eines kritischen Hinterfragens so mancher Mythen, die der Journalismus mit den Medienwissenschaften teilt, sowie eines klaren Trennstrichs zwischen Journalismus und Public Relations. Insbesondere ist davor zu warnen, die traditionellen Werkzeuge des Qualitätsjournalismus vorschnell über Bord zu werfen. Zwar ist es dringend nötig, das journalismusübliche Verständnis von Objektivität zu revidieren und konstruktiv weiterzuentwickeln; sich von der Forderung nach Objektivität radikal abzuwenden, gefährdet jedoch nicht nur die professionelle Akzeptanz des friedensjournalistischen Projektes, sondern lässt den Friedensjournalismus auch den Vertrauensvorschuss verspielen, der ihm von Seiten der Rezipienten gewährt wird.

Volltext (in Englisch)

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Wilhelm Kempf

Peace journalism: A tightrope walk between advocacy journalism and constructive conflict coverage

Starting from an understanding of peace journalism that regards it not as an antipode, but as a necessary prerequisite of good journalism, the present paper undertakes a synthesis of the theses and antitheses presented by David Loyn, Thomas Hanitzsch, Jake Lynch and Samuel Peleg in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2.

The author locates the tasks of the peace journalistic program in the study of the conditions and possibilities under which journalists can actually do their work better in war and crisis situations, as well as in the provision and practical realization of the competencies that are necessary for this.

Although peace journalism will occupy a minority position in the foreseeable future in conflict and crisis communication, even from this position it can contribute to making media discourse on conflicts more transparent and balanced and protecting conflict coverage from the fateful propaganda traps into which traditional war reporting is continually falling.

As a precondition for this many myths must be critically examined that journalism shares with media sciences, and a clear line must be drawn between journalism and public relations. In particular, journalists must be warned not to prematurely cast the traditional tools of good journalism overboard. Of course it is urgently necessary that the usual understanding of objectivity in journalism must be revised and constructively enhanced; to radically turn away from the demand for objectivity not only endangers the acceptance of the peace journalistic project in the journalist community, however, it also can cause peace journalism to squander the trust bonus that its recipients have granted it.

[full text \(in English\)](#)

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Peace journalism: A tightrope walk between advocacy journalism and constructive conflict coverage

Kurzfassung: Ausgehend von einem Verständnis von Friedensjournalismus, das diesen nicht als Antipode, sondern als notwendige Voraussetzung von Qualitätsjournalismus ansieht, unternimmt der vorliegende Aufsatz eine Synthese der von David Loyn, Thomas Hanitzsch, Jake Lynch und Samuel Peleg in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2, vorgetragenen Thesen und Antithesen.

Die Aufgaben des friedensjournalistischen Programms sieht der Autor in der Untersuchung der Bedingungen und Möglichkeiten, unter denen Journalisten ihre Arbeit in Kriegs- und Krisensituationen auch tatsächlich besser machen können, sowie in der Bereitstellung und praktischen Umsetzung der Kompetenzen, die dafür erforderlich sind.

Obwohl Friedensjournalismus in der Konflikt- und Krisenkommunikation auf absehbare Zeit eine Minderheitsposition einnehmen wird, kann er auch aus dieser heraus dazu beitragen, den Mediendiskurs über Konflikte transparenter und ausgewogener zu gestalten und die Konfliktberichterstattung vor der verhängnisvollen Propagandafalle zu bewahren, in welche traditionelle Kriegsberichterstattung mit Regelmäßigkeit zu tappen pflegt.

Als Voraussetzung hierfür bedarf es eines kritischen Hinterfragens so mancher Mythen, die der Journalismus mit den Medienwissenschaften teilt, sowie eines klaren Trennstrichs zwischen Journalismus und Public Relations. Insbesondere ist davor zu warnen, die traditionellen Werkzeuge des Qualitätsjournalismus vorschnell über Bord zu werfen. Zwar ist es dringend nötig, das journalismusübliche Verständnis von Objektivität zu revidieren und konstruktiv weiterzuentwickeln; sich von der Forderung nach Objektivität radikal abzuwenden, gefährdet jedoch nicht nur die professionelle Akzeptanz des friedensjournalistischen Projektes, sondern lässt den Friedensjournalismus auch den Vertrauensvorsprung verspielen, der ihm von Seiten der Rezipienten gewährt wird.

Abstract: Starting from an understanding of peace journalism that regards it not as an antipode, but as a necessary prerequisite of good journalism, the present paper undertakes a synthesis of the theses and antitheses presented by David Loyn, Thomas Hanitzsch, Jake Lynch and Samuel Peleg in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2.

The author locates the tasks of the peace journalistic program in the study of the conditions and possibilities under which journalists can actually do their work better in war and crisis situations, as well as in the provision and practical realization of the competencies that are necessary for this.

Although peace journalism will occupy a minority position in the foreseeable future in conflict and crisis communication, even from this position it can contribute to making media discourse on conflicts more transparent and balanced and protecting conflict coverage from the fateful propaganda traps into which traditional war reporting is continually falling.

As a precondition for this many myths must be critically examined that journalism shares with media sciences, and a clear line must be drawn between journalism and public relations. In particular, journalists must be warned not to prematurely cast the traditional tools of good journalism overboard. Of course it is urgently necessary that the usual understanding of objectivity in journalism must be revised and constructively enhanced; to radically turn away from the demand for objectivity not only endangers the acceptance of the peace journalistic project in the journalist community, however, it also can cause peace journalism to squander the trust bonus that its recipients have granted it.

Toward the end of the last millennium, peace researchers, journalists and media people began to think about how the potential of the media could be used not only to fuel conflicts, but rather to encourage peaceful conflict settlement and serve as mediators of peace-building and reconciliation processes.

What was initially still an academic project quickly developed into a movement that united under the slogan of "peace journalism" in part quite heterogeneous efforts. And as any movement, it brought about its critics as well: media researchers and journalists who regard the peace journalism movement as an assault on the integrity of journalism and its professional norms.

The present paper takes up the arguments of some of the most prominent opponents and adherents of the peace journalism project and presents a point of view, under which they can be reconciled. If peace journalism is understood the right way, it is not an antipode of good journalism but its necessary prerequisite.

1. Journalism or public relations?

The term *peace journalism* combines two elements that are difficult to harmonize: *peace* and *journalism*.

Journalism is a form of public communication that is subject to professional norms. Because of these norms it differs from other types of public communication, for example, Public Relations.

The professional norms of good journalism include in particular the following: truthfulness, objectivity, neutrality and detachment. For Public Relations these norms are at best irrelevant. The only thing that matters is success. And this success is measured in terms of achieving specific communication aims which are "externally defined by a client, host organization or particular groups of stakeholders" (Hanitzsch, 2007, 2). Typical aims are, e.g., to convince the public of the attractiveness of a product, of the justice of one's own political goals or also of the wrongfulness of a political opponent.

Good journalism differs from Public Relations precisely because it does not aim to influence the public, but rather pursues only the goal of reporting truthfully about reality. As David Loyn, a BBC correspondent and prominent critic of peace journalism, has maintained: "Our task is always to seek to find out what is going on, not carrying any other baggage" (Loyn, 2003).

Good journalism has just one aim: to represent reality accurately. The other characteristics of good journalism – objectivity, neutrality and detachment – are means to reach this aim (Loyn, 2007).

Peace journalism combines journalism with peace as an external aim. It understands itself as "a normative mode of responsible and conscientious media coverage of conflict *that aims at* contributing to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and changing the attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace" (Shinar, 2007, 2).

A goal conflict arises out of this that arouses concern that peace journalism "could compromise the integrity of journalists and confuse their role as neutral disseminators of facts" (Loyn, 2003).

This concern is all the more justified because some supporters of peace journalism seem all too inclined to underrate values like objectivity, neutrality and detachment (e.g., Mc Goldrick, 2006; Peleg, 2007) and to lump peace journalism together with other terms (e.g., Shinar, 2007, 4) "that refer to advocacy models of reporting – such as the 'journalism of attachment' (Bell, 1997), 'victim journalism' (Hume, 1997), 'justice journalism' (Messman, 2001), and 'engaged journalism' (Lynch, 2003)." According to Lynch & McGoldrick (2005, quoted in McGoldrick, 2006, 4), "peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report, and how to report them".

The two together, disregarding the tools of good journalism and understanding peace journalism as a form of advocacy journalism, create a dangerous mix which is prone to abuse the noble goal of peace as a legitimation for biased coverage. Journalism of this kind "will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor" (Bell, 1997, 8). Where this can ultimately lead has been shown in a fateful manner by the journalism of attachment. When journalists go on a "crusade against conventional reporting" (Peleg, 2007, 5), they all too easily become recruits for the propaganda war (Kempf, 2003). But peace propaganda is nothing other than propaganda either, and a peace journalism that crosses the border to propaganda does not deserve to bear the name of journalism. According to a proposal by Thomas Hanitzsch (2007), it ought to be banished to the domain of Public Relations.

A peace journalism that deserves the name is only conceivable as good journalism and requires more than just good will and a moral impetus.

2. Journalistic responsibility

Impartiality and objectivity are indispensable tools of good journalism, and David Loyn is right when he concludes that the reporter's tools need to be sharpened, not altered. "Rather than disregard the concept, it is more fruitful to consider the structures that support better or worse practice" (Loyn, 2007, 5).

As soon as we call for better practice, however, it turns out that truth or truthfulness are not values in themselves. The striving for truth in particular meets an obvious practical need. Truthfulness makes it possible to add to our knowledge stock the experiences of others as guides for our own actions. Since we draw on them all the time, reliance on the assertions of others is an indispensable element of our own everyday life practice. That is, there is a justified interest in being sure that only statements will be made that can be defended in every case (and not just to uncritical or uninformed opponents) (cf. Kambartel, 1968).

This applies in particular to the assertions of journalism, and even more so to conflict journalism. War and peace are events of existential significance that no one can disregard.

When Jörg Becker (2002) maintains that the media have a political obligation to participate in and stand up for peace of their own accord, this is not just the opinion of a German political scientist, but rather the consensus of the legal framework and codes of conduct established by international and national law, trade unions and responsible media institutions.

Art. 3 of the 1978 UNESCO Media Declaration, for instance, states that, "the mass media have an important contribution to make to the strengthening of peace and international understanding and in countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war" (UNESCO, 1979, 102). Also the numerous ethical codes for journalists that apply in almost all the countries of the world give expression to similar self-imposed obligations and contain the obligation to act for peace and against any kind of war propaganda (cf. Becker, 2004).

David Loyn also honors these codes of conduct for providing a framework which enables journalists to engage in robust skeptical inquiry, but also to comply with libel laws and remain on the right side of civilized discourse.

Even if he fears that "highly prescriptive rules" might "inhibit good journalism," Loyn (2007, 2) has thereby approached a perspective that sees no insurmountable conflicts between objectivity and normativity. And with the insight that "a side-effect of my reporting may be that it makes conflict resolution harder or easier," Loyn (2007, 9) comes closer to peace journalism than he thinks.

Journalists are responsible for the way, for how they report; and even the creation of "opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict," as called for by Lynch & McGoldrick (2005, quoted in McGoldrick, 2006, 4), is not an external goal imposed on journalism from outside. The obligation to create these opportunities results directly from the role assigned to journalism in democratic societies.

In that Loyn regards the above-named "side-effects" of journalistic work as mere 'collateral damage' which is to be investigated later, "after our reporting" (Loyn, 2007, 9), he thereby not only distances himself from the concept of – however understood – peace journalism, but rather also attacks the model of good journalism that he intends to defend against it.

Of course professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news coverage. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced (Howard, 2003), and what is demanded is no more than responsible journalism. Without responsibility, good journalism is inconceivable.

Thus we replace David Loyn's (2007) provocative dichotomy of "good journalism or peace journalism" with the normative formula "good journalism = responsible journalism = peace journalism."

3. War discourse vs. peace discourse

Implying that both good journalism and peace journalism need a more sophisticated approach, this formula is no less provocative. Indeed, the idea behind this formula has inspired the work of generations of media researchers and journalists who have criticized the media for falling into the propaganda trap.

David Loyn has a point when he argues that journalistic practices which commit themselves to the adoption of particular perspectives are bound to be less objective than others. But the proximity of mainstream conflict coverage and war propaganda shows that it is not peace journalism which is tied to the adoption of a particular perspective, but on the contrary: the traditional tools of journalism are not sufficient to guarantee good journalism. While "reporters live in a social context and share a language and certain assumptions with their audience" (Loyn, 2007, 4), "propaganda sets out precisely to penetrate and transform shared language and assumptions" (Lynch, 2007, 3).

While in principle conflict is open to interpretation as either a competitive (win-lose) or a cooperative (win-win) process (Deutsch, 1973), conventional war discourse, as initiated by political and military elites and adopted by mainstream journalism and its public, is all about the questions: "Who is the aggressor?" and "How can he be stopped?"

Whether deliberately or not, by adopting this particular perspective, societal discourse reduces conflict to a zero-sum game and becomes a motor of conflict escalation (Kempf, 2003).

Only if it goes beyond such win-lose scenarios can journalism contribute to the transformation of war discourse into a more constructive form of discourse which is guided by questions like: "What is the problem?" and "How can it be resolved?" Broadening the perspective on conflict and opening it to peaceful alternatives, therefore, is the very essence of *de-escalation oriented conflict coverage*, which I have suggested as a first step of peace journalism (cf. Kempf, 2003).

This is neither a highly prescriptive rule which might inhibit good journalism, nor does it imply that we should adopt a particular perspective. On the contrary, it is a rule which only forbids the unacceptable. It is a rule which enjoins journalists to not limit their perspective to that of the war-making elites. It is a rule which prohibits volunteering on the propaganda front.

If this is how we understand it, peace journalism is not an antipode, but rather a necessary prerequisite of good journalism.

If this is what we aim at, we must make clear, however, that our understanding of peace journalism is completely different from the way some of its adherents and critics have interpreted Galtung's demand that journalists should become active participants, playing a part in the complex 'cat's cradle' that makes up a conflict.

David Loyn (2007) is right when he states that reporting and peacemaking are different roles, and that peacemaking is simply not the journalist's role. In addition, it cannot be the function of journalism to mediate between conflict parties, to sit down at a negotiating table with them and moderate their disputes (Kempf & Jaeger, 2005).

Journalism and the media do, however, play an essential role in the societal construction of reality that can be fulfilled in different ways: Through the type of news coverage chosen they can give an impetus either to the escalation or to the de-escalation of conflicts.

So viewed, journalism also does not have to be first an active participant playing a part in the complex 'cat's cradle' that makes up a conflict. It already is and always will be. What peace journalism demands of it is merely to assume responsibility for *how* it fulfills this role.

4. New wine in old bottles?

Already Gjelten (2001) pointed out that there is no necessity for journalists to place their professional abilities in the service of either conflict resolution or prevention: They must simply do their work better – in the frame of the traditional standards of their profession. But if peace journalism is nothing other than good journalism, isn't this just old wine in new bottles, as Thomas Hanitzsch (2007) has criticized? *No, it is not*. For the fulfillment of these standards presupposes specific conflict competencies, and whether journalists possess or acquire these competencies should not be left to chance (Kempf & Jaeger, 2005).

To study the conditions and possibilities under which journalists *can* actually perform their work better, even in war and crisis situations, and to provide the necessary competencies: this is how I understand the program of peace journalism.

David Loyn (2007) also claims that journalists need methods for a more complex understanding of context and would be more likely to be accurate and impartial if they, and their editors, had an understanding of their own psychology and blind spots, and of the psychology of the news story and its actors.

Journalists are themselves members of society and are subject not only to certain institutional pressures (Bläsi, 2006), but also to the same social-psychological mechanisms as other people, particularly to the competitive misperceptions (Deutsch, 1973) which, so to speak, adjust automatically with their own involvement in escalating conflict (Kempf, 2002, 2003).

Although Thomas Hanitzsch (2007) is right in claiming that there are manifold nuances in the media, it cannot be ignored that typical mainstream coverage reduces conflicts to force and violence. It contains little knowledge of the dynamics of conflict and no ideas for alternatives to violence. Even journalists who feel committed to traditional standards of truth and objectivity tend to paint pictures in black and white, often reducing conflicts to simple antagonisms in order to make news stories more exciting, and the conflict more understandable for their public.

Intractable conflicts are demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting and costly in both human and material terms. This requires that societal members develop conditions to facilitate successful coping. One aspect of the conditions provided by war culture is a psychological infrastructure that consists, for example, of commitment to one's own side and its leadership, the maintenance of its objectives, high motivation to contribute, perseverance and readiness for personal sacrifice (Bar-Tal, 1998).

All these mechanisms lend plausibility to an escalation-prone misrepresentation of reality which is typical of mainstream conflict coverage and requires special efforts to overcome.

Thomas Hanitzsch (2004a, 2005) also agrees: "What we need is more quality in journalism." Nothing needs to be added to this other than that it is precisely in conflict coverage that this quality does not establish itself on its own. Professional norms

are necessary, but not sufficient to guarantee good journalism and a more constructive mode of conflict coverage (Shinar, 2007). In order to produce good journalism, journalists need knowledge, competencies and qualifications that go beyond traditional journalistic training and enable them to counteract the escalation-prone misperceptions of reality I mentioned before.

5. Misrepresentation of reality?

While truthfulness is a shared goal which unites most adherents (e.g., Lynch, 2007) and critics (e.g., Loyn, 2007) of peace journalism, it has been challenged by Thomas Hanitzsch (2007), who insists that any objections to a 'media-biased reality' miss the point.

Hanitzsch's arguments are inconsistent and contradictory, however. While he originally held that the version of reality constructed by war reporting is as compatible with classical standards of truth as countless other versions (Hanitzsch, 2004b, 185), he now draws on Schudson (2003) and claims that "every representation of the world is inevitably biased" (Hanitzsch, 2007, 5).

The only thing consistent in Hanitzsch's arguments is that he uses the social construction of reality as grounds to dispute the right to any critique of the media.

But can subjective realities – and particularly the *one* version of reality which is constructed by war reporting – really not be criticized? Can we really not speak meaningfully of misrepresenting reality?

As I have shown elsewhere (Kempf, 2006a), Hanitzsch's argumentation is based on a large number of methodological errors: It is based on an inadequate and logically incorrect understanding of truth and reality, and on a lack of differentiation between facts and meanings, between truth and beliefs, and between objective and subjective realities.

In particular, it is wrong to label the reality constructed by the media as true or false *per se*. The media construction of reality is a matter of meaning-making, and a dispute about its adequacy can only be a dispute which relates it to something outside itself: the facts upon which it rests, the goals it serves and/or the rules it follows.

Only the first of these criteria, the factual basis of media-constructed reality, has to do with truthfulness and objectivity. And as far as facts are concerned, Hanitzsch (2007) is right that media accounts of the facts can be substantiated in everyday journalism only through their coherence with other facts, that is, with what we already know. But this is just as little a counter-argument as the circumstance that we base our constructions of reality on a factual foundation which always remains incomplete.

To criticize the media because they do not possess pure and complete truth would be quite naïve. But this is not the point when Galtung (2002) criticizes the media for reducing conflict to a zero-sum game, or when Jake Lynch (2007) asserts that journalism needs some practical way to analyze and address its own role in creating realities, etc.

What peace journalism criticizes about the media is, to be sure, that specific facts are systematically concealed. But even here the critique is not primarily of the facts themselves, but rather of the escalation potential that unfolds from ascribing meanings that translate the mix of reported and suppressed facts into a comprehensible narrative.

Conflict is an interactive process, and like all human actions it involves (at least) three different kinds of reality. There is one party's subjective reality and the subjective reality of an opponent. While both these realities can only be assessed from within the respective party's perspective, the third kind of reality can only be assessed from an external perspective and shows how subjective realities interact with each other.

In order to evaluate the escalation or de-escalation potential of the conflict parties' reality constructions, an external perspective is needed. And from this external perspective, we may well criticize some reality constructions as biased toward promoting conflict and appreciate others as more balanced and open-minded.

When Thomas Hanitzsch (2007) claims that such an external perspective is neither needed nor possible, he is thereby not just throwing overboard the claim to deliver a balanced and comprehensive account of conflict. He is also depriving editors of any basis upon which they could fulfill their role to make a judgement without siding with one particular version of reality (Loyn, 2007). Not just peace journalism, but any type of good journalism is thereby rejected.

6. Naive and illusory?

In order to support his rejection, Hanitzsch (2007, 5) imputes to peace journalism an "overly individualistic and voluntaristic perspective, which seems to suggest that journalists only need to change their attitudes and behaviors, and as a result they will produce conflict coverage that embraces the values of peace journalism."

There are in fact many structural constraints which shape and limit the work of journalists: constant time pressure, chronic lack of space, limited budget, censorship and disinformation, editorial staff expectations, the needs of the public, the laws of the market, etc. On the basis of a systematic analysis of the process of producing conflict coverage and a great number of expert interviews with experienced conflict reporters from radio, television and the print media, Burkhard Bläsi (2004, 2005, 2006) has dealt in great detail with this and studied the suitability of peace journalistic models for practice. Constructive conflict coverage proves accordingly to have future prospects that can, however, only gain broader influence through permanent changes in specific journalistic routines, attitudes and competencies.

Robert Hackett (2006) has also thought critically about the prospects of realizing the principles of peace journalism in practice. His theoretical study considers three conceptual frameworks for analyzing the relationship between journalism and other relations and institutions of power in order to identify the tasks, challenges and potential strategies for the peace journalism movement: Herman & Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model, Shoemaker & Reese's (1996) hierarchy of influences model and Pierre Bourdieu's (1998) notion of journalism as a field. According to Hackett's analysis, the barriers to peace journalism include the difficulties of constructing 'peace' as a compelling narrative, the national basis (and biases) of much of the world's news media and their publics, the ideological and structural links between media corporations and states, and the embeddedness of dominant media and states in relations of inequality. Nonetheless, he concludes that there are many niches in the system where it is possible to practice and find a constituency for different and experimental forms of journalism.

Peace journalism is not as naïve as Hanitzsch assumes. But Hanitzsch has taken account neither of the work of Bläsi and Hackett nor of the basic research on the acceptance and effects of peace journalism.

One of his chief arguments is that "the mainstream media can ill afford to abandon news values, as this would jeopardize the economic base on which they are forced to operate." This is a serious argument, and peace journalistic basic research has been working on this already for some time – not only theoretically, but also with a range of empirical and experimental studies. Even if a final assessment can still not be made, it appears that Hanitzsch's recommendation of holding to traditional news factors is based, on the one side, on an inaccurate portrayal of news factors as absolute and, on the other side, on a naturalistic error.

Recent studies of news coverage on the Middle East conflict during the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (Annabring, 2000; Kempf, 2003) and of German press coverage of France after the Second World War (Jaeger, 2003, 2004, 2005) have shown that news factors are not rigid entities, but rather are dealt with by the media in quite flexible ways.

Beyond this, it is logically inadmissible to infer from the way media news coverage *is* that this is what the media public *wants*. Even if one thinks that news factors are "selection structures of public communication whose scope includes not only journalism, but also its public" (Hanitzsch, 2004b, 188), this cannot obscure the fact that news factors theory was only derived from the content analytic study of media news coverage and not, for example, from a study of public preferences.

Recent studies show, however, that the public is much less oriented in its preferences to news factors like simplification, negativism and personalization than is commonly assumed. Thus Wolling (2002) found that information quality is an essential factor for the evaluation of news coverage programs, and as Eilders (1997) has shown, the better they are already informed, the less readers orient themselves to traditional news factors.

As experimental studies have demonstrated (Bläsi, Jaeger, Kempf & Spohrs, 2005; Jackson, 2006; Kempf, 2005, 2006b; Möckel, 2007; Schaefer, 2006; Sparr, 2004, Spohrs, 2006), traditional escalation-oriented conflict coverage is in fact not better suited to awakening reader interest, but rather de-escalation oriented peace journalism has the same potential. De-escalation oriented coverage is not only perceived by recipients as more balanced, it also awakens greater interest in further information.

Not only the media, but also the public are much more flexible than news factors theory claims, and peace journalism *does* have a public. Recipients are also more competent and more interested in differentiated conflict representation than is commonly assumed.

The economic pressures that confront peace journalism result less from the dependence of the media on their public than from their dependence on advertising revenue and the pressure on media concerns to harmonize their reportage with the interests and ideologies of economic, political and military elites (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Hanitzsch (2007, 7) is thus not entirely mistaken in fearing that "a peaceful culture is the *precondition* of peace journalism rather than its outcome." A peace journalism that goes beyond de-escalation oriented conflict coverage can probably only be employed comprehensively when peace is actually on the political agenda.

This is also one of the reasons why peace journalism should be thought of as a two-step process, as I have proposed in Kempf (2003, 115ff).

In the first step, during the hot phase of a conflict, a limitation to *de-escalation oriented conflict coverage* is appropriate. Here there is a need first of all for objective, distanced and respectful reportage which is fair to all sides, does not further heat up the conflict, but rather takes a critical distance from war supporters of every stripe and makes the public aware of what a high price a violent solution to the conflict will entail for all participants.

Proposing solutions, however, does not appear to be appropriate in this phase. At this point in time there is an especially high risk that reportage will be unreflectively rejected as unreliable or as hostile propaganda. Therefore the primary aim in this phase can only be, first of all, to find a way out of a fixation on force and mutual destruction, to open the public's eyes to a detached standpoint and to deconstruct the polarization of the conflict parties.

Only in a second step can we proceed to *solution oriented conflict coverage*. Here the focus is placed on a construction process following the deconstruction stage, in order to work toward reconciling the opponents and to search for ways they can co-operatively resolve their differences.

A consensus favoring this step is, however, only possible when the hot phase of the conflict is over and every voice calling for moderation is not automatically perceived as hostile. Accordingly, however, it is urgently necessary that the phase of working through the conflict and achieving reconciliation must be introduced and supported – among other things by conflict reportage that actively searches for peaceful alternatives and actors and dedicates itself to the question of how peace processes can be introduced and peace consolidated.

Only as a consistent minority position can solution-oriented conflict coverage make a contribution already during war to a step-wise deconstruction of war discourse.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be maintained that there are definite chances for the practical implementation of the peace journalistic program, and it can make an urgently needed contribution to assuring the quality of conflict and crisis journalism. That in the foreseeable future peace journalism will remain in a minority position need not represent an obstacle. Even from this position it can contribute to structuring media discourse on conflicts in a more transparent and balanced way and to protecting conflict coverage from the fateful propaganda traps into which traditional war reporting seems to be continually falling (Jaeger, 2002).

As preconditions for this I see only two things: First, there is a need for a further intensification of basic peace journalistic research and the critical examination of so many myths which journalism shares with media studies. News factors and public preferences are, for one thing, two different things which must be kept separate; good journalism is not a description of the current state of conflict coverage, but is, in contrast, only practiced by relatively few journalists, and the professional norms and tools of journalism are, of course, indispensable, but not sufficient to ensure good journalism.

Second, however, caution is imperative, so that the critique of the journalistic mainstream does not throw the baby out with the bath-water. Thus it is not only appropriate, but also urgently necessary to question the conventional journalistic understanding of objectivity (see McGoldrick, 2006), to free it of its inadequacies and constructively further develop it. To radically turn away from the call for objectivity, as suggested by Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) or Hackett (2006), not only endangers the acceptance of the peace journalistic project in the journalistic community, however, but also twists peace journalism into a form of advocacy journalism, which leads directly to PR and propaganda and can squander the trust bonus which its recipients grant to peace journalism.

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Eran Halperin & Daniel Bar-Tal

**Der Zusammenbruch der israelischen Friedensbewegung: Einflüsse des
Prämierministers Ehud Barak auf die öffentliche Meinung in Israel, Juli 2000
Februar 2001**

Die vorliegende Studie beschäftigt sich mit dem tiefgehenden Einstellungswandel, welcher in den Sommer- und Herbstmonaten des Jahres 2000 innerhalb der jüdisch-israelischen Öffentlichkeit und insbesondere unter Sympathisanten der Friedensbewegung beobachtet werden konnte.

Als bedeutsamer Einflussfaktor auf den plötzlichen Wandel der öffentlichen Meinung werden Informationen angesehen, die von Ehud Barak zum damaligen Zeitpunkt publiziert wurden. In diesem Artikel sollen zunächst die bedeutsamen Ereignisse und Fakten beschrieben, die Informationspolitik des Premierministers evaluiert und abschließend die Einstellungsänderungen der jüdisch-israelischen Öffentlichkeit dargestellt werden.

Die klassischen Modelle der Medienwirkungsforschung von Hovland und Kollegen dienen hier als konzeptueller Rahmen, um die Wirkung der massenmedial verbreiteten Information auf die Einstellungen der Öffentlichkeit zu untersuchen.

Hovland geht in diesem Modell davon aus, dass massenmediale Beeinflussungseffekte durch die Art der Kommunikationsquelle, die Eigenschaften der Zuhörer und den Inhalt der Botschaft hinreichend erklärt werden können.

Den Modellannahmen entsprechend wird also in dieser Studie der Einfluss von Ehud Baraks Informationspolitik auf die Einstellungen der (friedensbewegten) jüdisch-israelischen Öffentlichkeit untersucht.

[Volltext \(in Englisch\)](#)

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Eran Halperin & Daniel Bar-Tal

The fall of the peace camp in Israel: The influence of Prime Minister Ehud Barak on Israeli public opinion July 2000-February 2001

The present paper tries to analyze the significant changes in Israeli Jewish public opinion, and especially among peace supporters, that occurred in the summer and fall of 2000. It proposes that particularly influential factor in the psychological earthquake the Israeli public underwent was the information provided by Ehud Barak. The paper presents the major events and the major sets of information coming from Ehud Barak, evaluates the validity of the provided information validity and then describes the changes that Israel's Jewish public went through. In order to analyze the persuasive effects of the information, we use the classical work of Hovland and his colleagues, which was done in the 1950s, as a conceptual framework. They suggested that the key to understanding why people are persuaded lies in the study of the characteristics of the communicator (source), the content of the message and the characteristics of the audience who receive the message. We analyzed the persuasion process of the Israeli Jewish public in this line.

[full text \(in English\)](#)

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Eran Halperin & Daniel Bar-Tal¹

The fall of the peace camp in Israel: The influence of Prime Minister Ehud Barak on Israeli public opinion: July 2000 – February 2001

Kurzfassung: Die vorliegende Studie beschäftigt sich mit dem tiefgehenden Einstellungswandel, welcher in den Sommer- und Herbstmonaten des Jahres 2000 innerhalb der jüdisch-israelischen Öffentlichkeit und insbesondere unter Sympathisanten der Friedensbewegung beobachtet werden konnte.

Als bedeutsamer Einflussfaktor auf den plötzlichen Wandel der öffentlichen Meinung werden Informationen angesehen, die von Ehud Barak zum damaligen Zeitpunkt publiziert wurden. In diesem Artikel sollen zunächst die bedeutsamen Ereignisse und Fakten beschrieben, die Informationspolitik des Premierministers evaluiert und abschließend die Einstellungsänderungen der jüdisch-israelischen Öffentlichkeit dargestellt werden. Die klassischen Modelle der Medienwirkungsforschung von Hovland und Kollegen dienen hier als konzeptueller Rahmen, um die Wirkung der massenmedial verbreiteten Information auf die Einstellungen der Öffentlichkeit zu untersuchen. Hovland geht in diesem Modell davon aus, dass massenmediale Beeinflussungseffekte durch die Art der Kommunikationsquelle, die Eigenschaften der Zuhörer und den Inhalt der Botschaft hinreichend erklärt werden können. Den Modellannahmen entsprechend wird also in dieser Studie der Einfluss von Ehud Baraks Informationspolitik auf die Einstellungen der (friedensbewegten) jüdisch-israelischen Öffentlichkeit untersucht.

Abstract: The present paper tries to analyze the significant changes in Israeli Jewish public opinion, and especially among peace supporters, that occurred in the summer and fall of 2000. It proposes that particularly influential factor in the psychological earthquake the Israeli public underwent was the information provided by Ehud Barak. The paper presents the major events and the major sets of information coming from Ehud Barak, evaluates the validity of the provided information validity and then describes the changes that Israel's Jewish public went through. In order to analyze the persuasive effects of the information, we use the classical work of Hovland and his colleagues, which was done in the 1950s, as a conceptual framework. They suggested that the key to understanding why people are persuaded lies in the study of the characteristics of the communicator (source), the content of the message and the characteristics of the audience who receive the message. We analyzed the persuasion process of the Israeli Jewish public in this line.

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1. Introduction

Societal public opinion reflects the experiences, beliefs, values, identifications, attitudes and emotions of society members. It is fluid and can change as a result of various factors. A leader, as one of these influencing factors, may have an enormous impact on public opinion. This influence is based on a leader's capacity to influence the course of events themselves and thus the lives of the public, or alternatively, on the ability to persuade at least a large part of the public, regarding its interpretations of the reality. The leader's ability to persuade public opinion is significantly related to the extent to which his/her supporters perceive him/her as an "epistemic authority" (i.e., a source that exerts determinative influence on the formation of an individual's knowledge, see Kruglanski, Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, Sharvit, Ellis, Bar, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2005, for a detailed overview of this concept).

Though different scholars have described the process of influence on public opinion in different ways and from various perspectives (see for examples: Gitlin, 1980; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), there is a vast agreement that events and information are among the most basic cornerstones of any such process. In other words, above and beyond the specific process, leaders may influence and shape public opinion via at least two ways that are relevant to the present case: a. initiate *major events*¹ that can affect experiences of society members, either directly or indirectly; and b. provide major information "to enlighten the reality" of society members (Bar-Tal. & Sharvit, in press). Major events may be violent conflicts, wars, or peace agreements. They are often accompanied by "political waves" which according to Wolfsfeld (2004), are a result of massive media and public attention. They create new conditions that require psychological adaptation, cognitive reframing, attitudinal-emotional change and behavioral adjustments, and, as such, they often have a profound effect on the thinking, feelings and behavior of society members and on the functioning of society as a whole.

Major societal information refers to information supplied by an epistemic authority about a matter of great relevance and importance to society members and to society as a whole. It has wide resonance, involves society members, occupies a central position in public discussion and on the public agenda, and forces society members to reconsider and change their psychological repertoire. Major information does not create observable changes in environmental conditions and, therefore, does not provide experiential participation in event's experience, but consists of information that eventually may change the conditions in a society, influencing society members' thinking, feelings and behavior.

The present paper, by analyzing a specific case, focuses mainly on how a leader may shape public opinion by supplying major information. Society members often have no direct access to political or military information and therefore must rely mostly on information provided by their leaders and by other sources, such as the mass media (Little, 1988; Mutz 1998; Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000; Kinder, 2003; Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). But leaders, who are the focus of this paper do not necessarily provide truthful or complete information (e.g., Denton, & Holloway, 1996; Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000; Kurtz, 1998). All this can be crucial because of leaders' formative impact on public opinion, and thereby on the course of major events which determine the well being of their society and of the international community.²

It should be noted that the release of major information and the occurrence of major events often take place concurrently, or closely follow each other, and both are related to the leadership which initiates at least a part of the events and provides most of the information to the public. A leader, after providing major information, may initiate a major event based on this information. For example, President Bush provided major information about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and then initiated the war in Iraq. In addition, major events, especially those that are initiated by human beings (such as the invasion of Cambodia in 1970 or Al Qaeda's Sept. 11th, 2001 terror attack on the US), may be accompanied by major information which is provided to shed light on the events.

In the current paper, we will analyze a specific case study in which three sets of major information were transmitted by a leader and later by mass media. Then we will suggest that they were adopted by a large sector of the public., The analyzed case concerns the information provided by the then Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, regarding the events before and after the Israeli-Palestinian Camp David summit in July 2000 and about the outbreak of the second Intifada in September

1. A *major societal event* is defined as an event of great importance occurring in a society; this event is experienced either directly (by participation) or indirectly (by watching, hearing or reading about it) by society members, causes wide resonance, has relevance to the well-being of individual society members and to society as a whole, involves society members, occupies a central position in public discussion and on the public agenda, and implies information that forces society members to reconsider, and often change, their accepted psychological repertoire (Oren, 2004). They can be carried by the nature (e. g., earthquake), or be a result of human decisions (e. g., war), or both (e. g., famine).
2. The world at large experienced just such a case, with severe consequences for the entire international community, when U.S. President Bush, government officials and intelligence agencies provided the major information that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction in violation of UN resolutions and supported terrorist activities of organizations such as Al-Qaeda. This information was presented to the public shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, and served to mobilize American society for a military attack on Iraq. It evoked feelings of threat, fear and anger. It is clear that subsequently many Americans supported the war against Iraq – something they most likely would not have done were it not for the information they received.

2000. We want to say explicitly that we do not suggest in anyway that the information provided by Ehud Barak was manipulative or mal-intentional. On contrary there is evidence that he believed deeply in what he said to the Israeli public (Baltianski, 2005; Edelist, 2003). Nevertheless, we believe that the provided information by him had an influence on the Israeli public opinion and affected course of events. Thus the main goal of the paper is to elaborate the reasons for the changes in Israeli Jewish public opinion in general and especially among the peace supporters (called also doves or leftists), following the noted events and the information about them provided by Ehud Barak. We realize that the study has obvious limitations of elucidating causality- this is the nature of real life field studies in which it is impossible to control fully all the variables and get all the needed information. Still there is value in this line of research as it attempts, with data and inferences, to tap important phenomena of political life that have importance for the understanding of human behavior (Bar-Tal, 2004; Himmelweit, 1990; Israel & Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel, 1984). To this end we will first briefly describe the events and the major sets of information supplied. This will be followed by short discussions regarding the credibility of these sets of information. We will then examine how this information was received by Israeli Jewish society as a whole and specifically by the so-called "peace camp", who accepted it as major information and eventually lead to change of their views. In the final part of the paper we will try to explain why the major information provided by Ehud Barak was accepted as valid. This explanation will be based on the conceptual framework of persuasion, originally suggested by Hovland, Janis and Kelley back in 1953.

Although it is beyond the scope of the paper to deal at length with the issues of mass media and public opinion, we would like to say few sentences about each of them, because the study refers to them, before beginning the analysis.

Leaders, as one of the most influential socializing agents, use the mass-media as a mediator in order to reinforce their impact on public opinion (Little, 1988). Hence, in many cases, the media not only reflects the existing changes in public opinion, but also plays a role in creating them by providing leaders' new information and knowledge and then amplifying them (Gitlin, 1980; McQuail, 1994). The role of the mass-media becomes even more pivotal in times of peace negotiations or war (Norris, Kern & Just, 2003; Wolfsfeld, 2004), especially when changes take place in the political environment. Then, according to Wolfsfeld (2004) mass media tends to provide temporal and narrative structure by constructing a frame and later validating it. It is this frame that provides the particular meaning to the provided information (Gitlin, 1980). By framing the information in a specific way, the presentation suggests particular organizing story line, which points out to its scope and essence, the underlying causes, possible consequences and thus provides a particular enlightenment for its understanding. Consequently, frames shape the view of the mass media's consumers about specific issues (Iyenger, 1991, Mutz, 1998).

Through the years the Hebrew mass media has played an important role in shaping the Jews' view of the Arab-Israel conflict and of Arabs, mostly in line with official narrative provided by the government and the Israeli army (see for example, Cohen, Adoni & Bantz, 1990, Liebes, 1992). This is especially true during times of crisis and holds till these days (Dor, 2004; Naveh, 1998; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Moreover, the Israeli public relies almost entirely on information from the formal Israeli channels of communication, especially on issues related to conflict and security, in spite of the fact there is access to foreign channels as well (Naveh, 1998). This reliance serves as a basis for a formation of relatively uniform public opinion which holds an essential role in a society by mediating and accommodating social change (Shamir & Shamir, 2000). The influence of the media is especially pronounced when the elite supports the information supplied by the leader (Carmines & Stimson, 1989; Shamir & Shamir, 2000; Zaller, 1992). Zaller suggested that in most cases' the public does not have alternative salient information, in a world in which events are ambiguous and in which the public must regularly have opinions about matters that are of importance to a society. As result, public opinion may often accept the discourse of the leaders and elite, and then may form erroneous, biased or false interpretation of the situation (Page & Shapiro, 1992).

2. Two major events and three sets of major information

Background

On May 17, 1999, with the election of Labor Party leader Ehud Barak as Prime Minister, many supporters of the peace process felt a new surge of hope. After the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish radical fundamentalist in 1995 and the victory of Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu over Labor party candidate Shimon Peres in 1996, the election of Barak led many to believe that peace finally was near. In his election campaign, Barak had promised to continue the heritage of Yitzhak Rabin and to seriously and vigorously advance the peace process. Surprisingly, sooner than anyone expected, after less than two years in office, in February 2001, Barak lost a new election to the Likud leader, Ariel Sharon, without having achieved any significant progress towards promised peace with Syrians and Palestinians. Barak's truncated term in office was a huge disappointment to peace supporters inside Israel and abroad. During the elections of 2001 and 2003 many of them left the "peace camp" and voted for the Likud leader (in 2001) or for one of the center-right political parties in the 2003 elections (Arian & Shamir, 2004).

The cardinal question then is - what are the factors which influenced the change in Israeli public opinion within such a short time? In our perspective, the answer to this question can be found in two major events that took place between July 2000 and January 2001, and three sets of major information which were provided to clarify these events. *Thus, our overview does not include Barak's entire term in office, but focuses only on the crucial period which began a few weeks before the Camp David summit and ended few months after the beginning of the second Intifada.* The following section will present these major events and sets of information and also evaluates the validity of this information.

Major information about the necessity of convening the summit meeting

The first major information concerned the necessity of convening a summit meeting between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Prime Minister Barak provided the major information that the time had come for crucial decisions in the negotiation process with the Palestinians (Drucker, 2002; Pressman, 2003; Sher, 2001; Swisher, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2004). This implied that Israelis were ready for historical compromises and that this was the moment that would reveal whether the Palestinians really wanted to settle the conflict peacefully.

The idea of convening the summit meeting came from Barak, who had to convince President Clinton of the need for it and twist the arm of Arafat to participate (Quandt, 2001, Ben Ami, 2004). Arguments to proceed with negotiations on the final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at this particular time, in this particular format, were advanced by Barak, who believed that he could convince the Palestinians to accept his proposals. They were related to the particular circumstances of Israeli and US politics (the disintegration of the government coalition on the Israeli side and the approaching presidential elections in the USA) and the personality of the Israeli leader (Edelist, 2003). Barak wanted to go for all (that is, achieving "an end to the conflict" and "an end of the claims", Edelist, 2003, p. 342) or nothing. According to Edelist, an authorized Barak biographer, Barak said, "I am sure that it is possible to achieve a settlement. But I am not sure that I have a partner who understands the extent of the opportunity" (p. 337). Later he said "Our intention is to empirically examine whether there is or there isn't a serious Palestinian Authority which is ready to proceed to the end goal" (p.342).

A number of Israeli and Palestinian leaders and negotiators warned that the Camp David summit was not well-prepared and that Barak's demand for an end to all claims in the final settlement could not be achieved (Ben-Ami, 2004). Moreover, both Israeli intelligence and the Foreign Ministry specified the terms that the Palestinians could accept as a resolution of the conflict, terms that Barak could not offer. In June 2001, Major General Amos Malka, who headed the IDF Intelligence in 2000, said "Yasser Arafat was determined to reach some sort of resolution in 2000. That determination did not stem from the symbolism of the year but from his desire to fulfill, at least for the most part, a strategic vision based on four components: (a) an independent state; (b) Israel's return to the 1967 borders with amendments, minor concessions, and compensation via exchange of territories; (c) the designation of East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state; and (d) the finding of an appropriate solution to the refugee problem. These components represented his four red lines and demarcated the range of his flexibility" (Malka, 2004, p. 20). But Barak ignored these warnings and interpretations (Kaspit, September 13, 2002) and set the terms for what a few journalists described as an impossible and insufficiently prepared summit meeting (Drucker, 2002; Kaspit, September 17, 2002). This view is also corroborated by some of the American participants in the summit (Lessons of Arab-Israeli negotiating, 2005).

The first major event: The Camp David summit

The first major event took place on July 11-24, 2000 when top-level delegations of Israelis and Palestinians met at Camp David, in Maryland, with the participation of a U.S. team led by President Bill Clinton, to try to reach a final agreement and end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the two sides did not succeed in reaching an agreement and the peace summit failed. As noted, due to the fact that the summit was closed to the media and because summit's discussions were confidential, information provided by leaders with regard to the failure of the summit is crucial.

Major information about the Camp David negotiations and the outcome

When negotiations ended without reaching an agreement, Barak provided major information, saying that he had done everything, leaving no stone unturned in the search for peace by making an extremely generous and far-reaching offer at Camp David, that Arafat had refused to accept it, while not making any counter proposals. This left the responsibility for the failure solidly on the side of the Palestinians (Ben-Ami, 2004; Drucker, 2002; Enderlin, 2003; Pressman, 2003; Sher, 2001; Swisher, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2004). This important information was supported by statements from U.S. President Bill Clinton (who convinced Arafat to join the summit only after promising that in case of failure he would not put the blame on the Palestinian side) and from almost all Israeli participants at the Camp David conference. Subsequently, almost all of the country's political, social and religious leaders, as well as the Israeli mass media, intensely circulated this information time and time again (Dor, 2001, 2004; Harel, 2005; Swisher, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

This major information affected the construction of Israelis' view of events, especially because of Barak's proposals with regard to Jerusalem, which had broken the taboo about dividing the city ("re-united" in 1967). It implied that while Israel had made its ultimate compromise and had "given everything", Arafat and the Palestinians refused to accept the offer. This meant that Arafat and the Palestinian leadership were not interested in resolving the conflict through compromise and in a peaceful way, and that they were still striving to annihilate Israel. This intention was directly implied because provided information stated that Palestinian delegation insisted on the right of return for millions of Palestinian refugees to Israel.

The campaign to blame the Palestinians was well-prepared in advance, and was extremely successful, especially in Israel, but also abroad (Ben, July 21, 2001; Drucker, 2002; Weymouth, July 23, 2001, see also a detailed description by Wolfsfeld, 2004). It focused mainly on Arafat, presenting him as "not a partner" for a peace process. Baltianski (2005), who was Barak's spokesman during the Camp David summit, said that the information about "no partner" was solely Barak's spin in his first press meeting after the summit. According to Baltianski, Barak genuinely believed he had the ability to convince Arafat to make the agreement and if he could not convince Arafat, no one would and this will be a sign that Arafat does not want a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

By now, there are numerous published accounts of the negotiation process in Camp David that come from individuals with different world views (e.g., Ben-Ami, 2004; Enderlin, 2003; Hannieh, 2001; Hussein & Malley, August 9, 2001; Kacowitz, 2005; Klein, 2003; Lessons of Arab-Israeli negotiating, 2005; Pressman, 2003; Pundak & Arieli, 2004; Rabinovich, 2004; Ross, 2004; Rubinstein, 2003; Shamir & Maddy-Weitzman, 2005; Sher, 2001)¹. These and numerous other accounts criticize not only Palestinian behavior, but also the insufficient Israeli proposals, Barak's negotiation conduct and lack of American preparation, among other factors. It is clear that the disagreement over Temple Mount significantly contributed to the collapse of the Camp David summit (Ben-Ami, 2004; Globes, July 25, 2000; Klein, 2003; Steinberg, 2002). It also became clear that, while from the Israeli perspective, Barak's offers were unprecedented and far-reaching, from the Palestinian perspective they were far from satisfactory, since according to the proposed terms, the future Palestinian state would not have been a sovereign, contiguous and viable state, since it would be divided into three separate enclaves covering 87-88% of the West Bank and the entire Gaza Strip, without control of the Jordan Valley for many years to come (Pressman, 2003; Pundak & Arieli, 2004). In addition, some of the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem (e.g., Sheikh-Jarah, Wadi-Joz, Silwan) would be kept under Israeli sovereignty with neighborhood autonomy and Israel would retain sovereignty over the Temple Mount (Klein, 2003). The acceptance of the Clinton proposals in December 2000 by Israel and the offering of further concessions to the Palestinians at Taba indicate that the Camp David proposals were in fact not the most far-reaching ones that Israel could offer. On these two occasions Barak improved the Israeli offer. Moreover, there was a fundamental orientation gap between the Israeli and Palestinian positions at the Camp David negotiations. While the Palestinians demanded, in principle, that UN resolutions should be the basis for the negotiations leading to a realization of objective rights stemming from international legitimacy, the Israelis wanted compromise and a fair solution based on the existing situation, mainly concerning security and the settlements (Ben-Ami, 2004; Lavie, 2003).

The second major event: The beginning of the Second Intifada

The second major event began on September 28, 2000, when violent conflict erupted. Triggered by the visit of Israel's then opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount, where the holy mosques of the Muslims are located, Palestinians began disturbances accompanied by stone throwing, demonstrations and shootings. These were met with violent responses by Israeli security forces.

Israelis and Palestinians remember the beginning of the Second Intifada in different ways so that we are talking here about collective memories rather than historical facts. With regard to the hard facts, during the first four days of the uprising, 39 Palestinians and five Israelis were killed; by the end of October, 141 Palestinians were killed and about 500 were injured, while 11 Israelis were killed and one was injured. During the months of November and December of 2000, 186 Palestinians were killed and about 540 were injured. In the same period, 31 Israelis were killed and 84 were injured. From the beginning of the Intifada in September 2000, until April 1, 2001, 409 Palestinians were killed and about 1740 injured and, during the same period, 70 Israelis were killed and 183 injured.² During the first months of the Intifada, the Palestinian uprising consisted mostly of both spontaneous and organized demonstrations that were met with excessive military power by Israel. With regard to terror attacks, Palestinians shot mostly on Israeli cars in West Bank roads, and at soldiers. In November 2000, a bomb went off in the Jerusalem market and later in Hadera. Then, on March 1, a bomb exploded in a taxi. The first suicide attack took place on March 28, 2001, east of Kfar Saba (after the election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister in February 2001).

1. It should be noted that there has been relative agreement in many of these accounts about the details of the proposals and procedures of the negotiations. But firm disagreement has remained with regard to their meaning, implications, and especially as to the evaluations of the responsibility for the failure of the summit.
2. The numbers of the Palestinian casualties were taken from the Palestine Red Crescent Society – www.palestinrecs.org and those of Israelis from the Israeli Foreign Ministry- www.mfa.gov.il, where the nature of the events is also described.

These facts indicate that Israeli army and police responded to the Palestinian popular uprising with great force. The numbers of casualties on both sides reveal the indiscriminate use of fire power by the Israeli army, which caused massive killings including many innocent civilians of all ages (Drucker & Shelah, 2005; Harel & Isachroff, 2004). The Israeli army was well-prepared for the outbreak of the uprising, and decided to use force in order to teach the Palestinians a lesson.¹ During the first 30 days of the Intifada the Israeli army fired over million bullets and shells. Kaspit wrote, "In the political system, as well as in the military system, it is considered possible that the destructive reaction of the IDF and the blow that Palestinians suffered in the first weeks led to a deterioration of the situation and an escalation in the violence" (Kaspit, September 6, 2002, p. 8, see also Drucker & Shelah, 2005; Harel & Isachroff, 2004; Hirsch, 2004; Peri, 2002). The army got the freedom to use extremely excessive force (Drucker & Shelah, 2005). But even with the high degrees of freedom, it was granted from above, in some cases the Israeli army still ignored the orders of the political echelon when it tried to moderate the level of violence (see Drucker & Shelah, 2005; Kaspit, September 6 and 13, 2002; Michael, 2004; Pedazur, 2001; Peri, 2002, 2005). Shlomo Ben Ami, who was Foreign Minister and the Minister for Public Security at this time, wrote in his memoirs that there was

"a gap between the directives of the political echelon and their translation in the field. It was a structural failure that was expressed in the political echelon-army relationship; as well as in the political echelon-police relationship, with regard to the ability of the political echelon to govern and control the dynamics of events in the field and the reaction of the operational echelon" (Ben Ami, 2004, p.295).

Major information about the beginning of Intifada and its course in the first phase

Later, after the violence began, major information coming from Barak, the Israeli government and from a number of military figures² was that the outbreak of the Second Intifada had been well-prepared by Arafat and the Palestinian Authority (Dor, 2001, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2004). This was the government explanation, even though at the beginning of the violence most of the intelligence sources interpreted the events differently (Bar-Siman-Tov, Lavie, Michael, & Bar-Tal, 2004; Dor, 2001; Drucker & Shelah, 2005). Nevertheless, very soon all security and government sources rallied behind the major information which was continuously disseminated by the media. As the violence continued, both government and military sources and much of the media kept providing information to the effect that the goal of the Palestinians was to destroy Israel; according to this major information, Israel was engaged in a war for its survival (Bar-Siman-Tov, et al., 2004; Dor, 2004, 2005; Feldman, 2002- see also interviews with Ehud Barak in the Haaretz magazine supplement, September 6, 2002 and with Moshe Ya'alon, former Israeli Chief of Staff, in the Haaretz magazine supplement, August 8, 2002). Also, governmental and military sources continuously repeated major information stating that Arafat was personally responsible for every terror attack and that Palestinian leaders (especially Arafat and leaders associated with him) were not partners for negotiation because of their involvement in terror and their refusal to fight terror (see reviews by Bar-Siman-Tov, et al., 2004; and Swisher, 2004). And so the campaign "there is no partner for peace negotiations", which began immediately after the Camp David summit went on. Barak even openly explained later on that the negotiations that continued until the elections of 2001, including the Taba talks, were not genuine but kept going only because of "general political considerations" so that Israelis should not be held "responsible for the cessation of the political process before the end of Clinton's tenure in office" (Barak, June 17, 2003)

In contrast to the popular major belief perpetuated by Ehud Barak and some of the high ranking military officers, an alternative narrative, which by now has gained a wide basis of factual support, suggests that Arafat did not plan the Intifada, but that it erupted spontaneously and then evolved, at least partially, due to the overwhelming forceful responses of the Israeli army, on the one hand, and the lack of political incentives to stop it, on the other. This alternative narrative has been advanced by the Intelligence Branch of the army (the commander and the head of the Palestinian desk), as well as by the evaluation organs of the General Security Service and Mosad (all professional intelligence agencies). As Ami Ayalon (Major General in the Reserves and head of the General Security Service until half a year before the beginning of the Intifada), put it,

"The Al-Aqsa Intifada was initially a popular phenomenon, spontaneous and lacking a clear political objective. ... The PA chairman has been drawn into this violent whirlpool, and to stop it he must create political hope." (2004, p. 16)

This view was also supported by Yuval Diskin, who was at that time deputy to the head of the General Security Service and later headed it (Asenheim, June 10, 2005; Haaretz, February 10, 2005), Matti Steinberg, advisor on Palestinian matters to the Head of the General Security Service (Steinberg, 2002) and high official of the Mosad who was asked to investigate the eruption of the Intifada (Drucker & Shelah, 2005).

1. The preparations were made in view of intelligence evaluations that Palestinian disturbances might take place in a situation in which Israeli-Palestinian negotiations would be stalled and Arafat would unilaterally declare an independent state. In such a case, Israel planned to initiate punishing steps. No intelligence data suggested that Arafat would retreat from the idea of two states and initiate a wide-scale violence to destroy the State of Israel (Drucker & Shelah, 2005; Lavie, June 13, 2004).
2. The most notable propagators of this information at the time were Chief of Staff Saul Mofaz, Deputy Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon and Chief of the Research Unit in Intelligence Branch Amos Gilad.

Amos Malka (Major General in the Reserves who headed the Intelligence Branch of the IDF during the beginning of the Intifada) challenged Amos Gilad's professional integrity

"During my entire period as head of Military Intelligence not a single document came from the research department including the assessment that Gilad claims to have presented to the Prime Minister. It is obligatory under the work regulations, that no document can leave the research department without getting the approval of the head of the division" (Eldar, June 11, 2004)

and he added,

"I did everything I could. I went to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee several times and submitted reports to the Chief of Staff. Nowhere did I say that I accepted the conspiracy theory that Oslo was a plot to eliminate Israel. To my regret, Mofaz [current Defense Minister and then Chief of Staff] and Bogey [Moshe Ya'alon, former Chief of Staff], his deputy, ignored what I said. What Gilad said suited them better, and therefore they adopted it." (ibid)

Malka insists that even after the peace talks gave way to hostilities, the Intelligence Branch did not revise its assessments. Neither did the research units at the Shin Bet, the Foreign Ministry and the Office of the Coordinator of Activities in the territories adopt the thesis that the Camp David summit had revealed "the Oslo plot".

Ephraim Lavie (colonel in the reserves), who headed the Palestinian desk at the Intelligence Branch of the IDF, said that he "could determine, unequivocally, that in written formal evaluations of the research department formulated during my service from summer 1998 till February 2002, there was no intelligence basis for the conception existing today", (Lavie, in an interview with Yoav Stern, June 13, 2004, p. B3). Drucker summarized Ehud Barak's problematic narrative by writing

"This Intifada was unnecessary in the bad case and could have been stopped in the earlier stages, in the good one. More seriously: The heads of state sold us a false tale on its basis we went to war. Anyone who thought differently and said so was thrown aside. Raw, pure intelligence reports were trashed. People like Bogey Yaalon and Amos Gilad put together a narrative which was based more on their private whims than any solid intelligence. ... No one was willing to contradict the dominant opinion". (Drukker, 2005, p.7)

At this point it is important to show that the described crucial sets of information, especially the one about the outcome of Camp David summit meeting and the other about the beginning of the Intifada, were transmitted in the mass media to the Israeli public. Two studies investigated newspapers reports about the noted events: The study by Harel (2005) content analyzed the reports of the Camp David Summit and Dor (2001) examined the reports about the beginning of the Al Aqsa Intifada in three major Israeli newspapers, Haaretz, Maariv and Yedioth Ahronot. The findings of these two studies show that the three newspapers transmitted the information propagated by Barak and others very saliently as news. These sets of information were presented as the dominant narrative, while the alternative information was marginalized. Thus the Israeli public was massively exposed at large to the information that Barak provided to the mass media.

It is therefore interesting to see now whether Israeli public accepted these sets of major information.

3. Changes in Israeli Jewish public opinion

In order to monitor the changes in Israeli public opinion throughout the relevant period, we systematically collected the lion share of Israeli public opinion surveys that focused on attitudes that are related to our case study. More specifically, most of the data we have used is based on two bulks of large scale representative surveys that were conducted in Israel between 1999 and 2002. The first is the National Security and Public Opinion Project (Arian, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002)¹ and the second is the Peace Index (Peace Index, 2000-2002).² The added value of both projects is their prolonged and representative nature, which enabled us to cautiously provide some insights about trends in Israeli-Jews public opinion. In addition to these two projects, in order to accurately serve the goals of the current study, we have conducted our own survey during March, 2002, among a representative sample of the Israeli population (N=430).³

In general, it can be said that the Israeli public formed a hegemonic opinion that was in line with Barak's information. With regard to the major information about the outcome of the Camp David meeting, data from the peace index carried out at

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1. The surveys presented here were conducted in: January 25-March 7, 1999 (N=1203); January 24-February 26, 2000 (N=1201); April 12-May 11, 2001(N=1216); January 29-February 27, 2002 (N=1264). All surveys were prepared, conducted, and analyzed by Asher Arian and the fieldwork was done by Machshov research institute (Arian, 1999, 2001, 2002).
 2. The Peace Index Project is conducted at the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and the Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution of Tel Aviv University, headed by Ephraim Yaar and Tamar Hermann. All the telephone interviews were conducted by the Machshov research institute, apart from the 2002 survey that was conducted by B. I.Cohen Institute of Tel Aviv University. The surveys were conducted in: July, 2000 (N=509); October, 2000 (N=585); November, 2000 (N=575); March, 2001(n=578); May, 2001 (N=570); August, 2002 (N=588). , All samples represent the adult Jewish and Arab population of Israel.
 3. The survey was prepared and analyzed by us and the fieldwork was conducted by Smith research institute in 24-25 March, 2002. The current analysis is based only upon the Jewish part of the sample which consisted of 385 adult participants.

the end of July 2000 showed that 67% of Israeli Jews believed the Palestinian side to be entirely, or mainly, responsible for the failure of the Camp David summit. Only 13% thought that the Israelis were either solely or largely responsible, and 12 percent thought that both sides were equally responsible for the failure (Peace Index, July 2000). Two years later, in August 2002, 92% of Israeli Jews believed that the Palestinians did not fulfill their commitments as specified in the Oslo agreement, while 66% believed that Israel did fulfill its own part (Peace Index, August 2002).

With regard to the last set of major information, the polls showed that in November 2000, about 80% of Israeli Jews blamed the Palestinians for the eruption of the violence (Peace Index, November 2000), and in 2002, 84% of the Israeli Jewish respondents thought that the Palestinians were solely or mostly responsible for the deterioration in the relations between them and the Israelis, while only 5% thought that Israel was solely responsible (Arian, 2002). In addition, the polls showed, as early as October 2000, 71 percent of the Israeli Jews thought that Arafat behaved like a terrorist, in comparison to two years earlier when only 41% thought so (Peace Index, October 2000).

These findings are only specific examples of the "psychological earthquake" (Bar-Tal & Sharvit, 2007), which public opinion in Israel experienced during the first year of the second Intifada. The promises Barak made after he was elected in 1999 were welcomed by the majority of the Israeli public; they expressed optimistic and conciliatory attitudes. In a national survey carried out by Asher Arian between January 25 and March 7, 1999, during the election campaign, he found the following opinions, presented in Table 1 (see Arian, 1999a). But about twenty months after Ehud Barak had taken office, a major change in public opinion could be observed. A large number of dovish and centrist Israeli Jews dramatically changed their views in comparison to the ones they had expressed in 1999. In a national survey carried out by Asher Arian between April 12 and May 11, 2001, a few months after Barak's loss in the elections, the following responses were found (see Arian, 2001, 2002 and Table 1 for selected findings):

Responses	1999 Survey	2001 Survey
Reported enhanced feeling of personal security since the peace process began in 1993	80%	
Reported that personal security became worse since the peace process began		63%
Preferred peace talks over strengthening military capacity	69%	47%
Believed peace would be maintained during the next three years	68%	35%
Thought that signing peace treaties would actually mean an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict	67%	30%
Supported the Oslo process	70%	58%
Thought that only through negotiations would terror attacks be curtailed	59%	
Favored unleashing IDF to fight terror		52%
Believed that the majority of the Palestinians want peace	64%	46%
Wanted a continuation of the peace talks	63%	42%
Believed that there was a military solution to the conflict		47%
Did not believe in a military solution to the conflict		41%
Reported that violence decreased their willingness to make concessions		38%

Table 1: Results of National Surveys – 1999 and 2001 (Arian, 1999a, 2001, 2002)

In addition, the peace index of May, 2001 found that 70% of the Israeli Jewish public estimated that Arafat personally lacked the desire, or the capability, of signing an agreement to end the conflict with Israel, even if Israel agreed to all his demands – and that he would make additional demands aimed at foiling the agreement; and 80% believed that Palestinians would not honor an agreement signed by them (Peace Index, May 2001). In March 2001, 72% of Israeli Jews thought that more military force should be used against the Palestinians (Peace Index, March 2001, see review of Israeli Jews' reactions in Bar-Tal & Sharvit, in press). In general, the Oslo Index, which assesses the extent of support for Oslo accord, showed a drop of 6 points during the analyzed period (Peace Index). [issue?]

Another major change took place with regard to the self-categorization of Israeli Jews into leftist and rightist camps,¹ a change that reflects a major polarization in Israeli society. While through the 1990s Israelis were more or less stable in

1. This is the major and long-serving division of opinion in Israeli society regarding the solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict, which has been used for years. While leftists (starting from Labor voters to the left) are in favor of compromise and support the idea of land for peace, rightists (starting from the Likud voters to the right) are less compromising and support keeping at least substantial part of the territories occupied in the 1967 war because of security, national, historical and/or religious reasons.

their self-categorization, the events and the information after the 2000 Camp David meeting caused a major change. While in the early nineties about 36% categorized themselves to the left and about 39% to the right of center (Arian & Shamir, 2000), in May 2002 only about 19% categorized themselves to the left and 48% to the right of center. The rest categorized themselves at the center, or did not know where to categorize themselves (Maariv, May 10, 2002).

These data are of special significance because they mark the scope of the change. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that, in general, hawks (i.e., rightists) carried uncompromising views through the 1990s and rejected possible settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians (Arian, 1999b; Peace Index). They objected to the Oslo accord in principle, and specifically to the concessions granted during the Oslo process. During the era of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, they carried on a campaign to delegitimize Rabin's peace policy and Rabin personally (Avineri 1995; Karpin & Friedman, 1998; Peleg, 2001). A campaign against any compromise was also conducted during Barak's term by the same segment of society. Thus, during the period under discussion, this part of the population did not change the general direction of their views – the previously described crossing of the lines took place mostly among doves (i.e., leftists and many of the centrists).

As noted, in order to deepen the understanding of the dynamics that underlined the public opinion change, we have carried out a poll in March 2002. The results revealed that *29% of Israeli Jews reported that "before the Camp David summit they believed that the Palestinian leadership had sincere intentions of reaching peace with Israel, but today they do not believe it"*. Fifty-six percent reported that they did not formerly believe in the sincerity of Palestinian intentions and that they continued feeling this way, and only 8% continued to believe in the sincere intentions of the Palestinians to reach peace with Israel. Among those who voted for Barak in 2001, responses were as follows: 43% changed their beliefs for the worse, 23% continued to mistrust the Palestinians and 29% continued to trust them.

Although we realize that various factors influenced the described change in Israeli Jewish public opinion, we suggest that the major information provided by Ehud Barak at various points in time played an important role in this change, especially among peace supporters (i.e., leftist and centrist camp). Violence itself during the first 5 months of the Intifada cannot explain by itself the dramatic change of the public opinion and especially by doves and centrists. We believe that the data shows that the framing of the events had an effect. This assumption is based on the following foundation: violence, including terror attacks, during the periods of September 2000 and February 2001 was not very different from other periods of confrontations, like for example during the first Intifada (1987-1991) or even in 1995-1996. In these periods, in spite of the violence, no major changes in public opinion were observed with regard to possible peace process. On contrary, during the first Intifada, the support for the establishment of the Palestinian state increased (Oren, 2005). Similarly, studies showed that during 1995-6 no changes took place with regard to the willingness of the Israeli public to compromise (Arian, 1999) and its view of Palestinians (Oren, 2005). Again, in this period there was even a slight increase in dovish views (Arian, 1999). Measures of support for the Oslo Agreement assessed by the Oslo Index corroborate these findings (Peace Index).

Finally, of special importance for the validation of our claim are more results of our survey from March, 2002, which show that when those who changed their trusting opinion of the Palestinian leadership (29% of the entire sample) were asked to indicate the reasons for this change, 85% noted, as the first or second reasons, choice of the Palestinians to use terror instead of negotiation to achieve their goals and 58% noted the rejection of the Barak offers in Camp David summit. Both reasons reflected the information provided by Barak. Thus in the next section of the paper we will try to explain why the leader of the peace camp, Ehud Barak, had such a profound effect on the public opinion at large and especially on the peace supporters.

4. The influence of Ehud Barak on Israeli public opinion: Social psychological explanation

The question that must be addressed in this section is why the sets of major information provided by the Israeli leader, Ehud Barak and perpetuated by the mass media were accepted by the majority of the Israeli Jewish public opinion as valid and influenced public opinion in Israel, especially the doves and centrists.

Social psychology has developed a number of conceptions through the years that deal with the problem of persuasion and attitude change (see the reviews by Chaiken, Wood, & Eagly, 1996; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Petty & Wegener, 1998). It is beyond the scope of this paper to review this line of work, but we concur with Petty and Wegener (1998) who wrote that the classic question asked by Lasswell (1948) "who says what to whom with what effect?" that was well researched by the seminal work of Hovland and his colleagues in the 1950s (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Kelman & Hovland, 1953) and well advanced by McGuire's research (1969, 1985) provides a proper framework "for those interested in selecting variables for applications of persuasion theory for over half a century" (Petty & Wegener, 1998, p. 342). This assumption is well documented and validated by McGuire (1995). We also think that conceptual framework of Hovland et al (1953) outlines the list of variables that allows us to examine the influence of the leader Ehud Barak. These authors suggested that the key to understanding why people are persuaded lies in the study of the characteristics of the communicator (source), the content of the message and the characteristics of the audience who receive the message. We will analyze each of these components.

Yet, before displaying a detailed analysis of each of those components, it is important to note that although the present paper focuses on the specific role of Ehud Barak in the change of public opinion in Israel, the social context – the resumption of violence on September 29, 2000 also played a pivotal role in that process. Recently, Markus (2004) have claimed that social context is "the most common source of individual feelings, thoughts and actions" (p. 3). No doubts that in extreme situations, like the one discussed in the current work, this statement gets a redoubled force. First of all the newly erupted violence as such caused a sense of threat and fear, which in turn affected people's views of the Palestinians and the peace process (Bar-Tal, 2004). Second, it confirmed the provided major information about the Palestinians' violent strategy. Third, the violent events supplied a conducive background to accept the major information provided by Ehud Barak, because it created threat and fear.

The communicator: Ehud Barak

Through the years it has been well established that a number of variables relating to characteristics of the source have meaningful effects on the acceptability of a message by an audience (Hass, 1981; Petty, & Wegener, 1998). One of the first variables investigated, and which received much attention, is *credibility*. Hovland et al. (1953) suggested that communicator credibility is composed of two components: *expertness*, which refers to the degree with which the communicator is perceived as a knowledgeable source and *trustworthiness*, which refers to the communicator's unbiased intent (motivation) to communicate information (see for example studies by Allyn, & Festinger, 1961; Eagly, Wood, Chaiken, 1978; Kelman, & Hovland, 1953). Ehud Barak had the two above noted characteristics, at least in the eyes of his supporters (Kaspit & Kfir, 1998).

First, he was considered as the expert on security matters, which is viewed in Israel as the most important knowledge for leading the nation (Bar-Tal, Jacobson, & Klieman, 1998; Yaniv, 1993). He had the image of a "number one soldier" in Israeli history; he had been the most-decorated soldier, and had had experience as a successful head of the Intelligence Branch IDF and Chief of Staff. In addition, he was considered as one of the top experts in the field of relations with the Palestinians (Edelist, 2003; Kaspit & Kfir, 1998). Finally, Ehud Barak was presented to the public as an extremely intelligent person with extraordinary analytical skills. All these attributes caused Ehud Barak to be perceived as an expert on political matters, and especially on matters of security and the peace process. We believe that this image contributed to the wide acceptance of the sets of major information he generated, regarding the failure of the peace process and the Intifada.

Trustworthiness is the second and most important element of credibility (Hovland, et. al., 1953). It is related to the perceived intentions of a certain communicator in a specific situation (e.g., Allyn & Festinger, 1961), especially to an evaluation of what kind of interest he/she has in communicating particular information. When a communicator takes a position against her or his own interest, then this is perceived as trustworthy (Kelman, & Hovland, 1953). Ehud Barak's information was perceived in this line. Barak claimed that he had sacrificed his entire political career in order to unmask Arafat's strategy to destroy Israel and Palestinians' ill intentions (Wolfsfeld, 2004). He was elected to pursue the peace process began by his political mentor, the assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, but ended up declaring Arafat unfit as a partner for negotiations and for the peace process. This information negated the continuation of Rabin's policy and the promised pursuing of the peace process. Indeed Barak's claims reduced his own chances for reelection: after making compromises which were far reaching in the eyes of the Israelis without getting favorable responses from the Palestinians, whom he later presented as having seriously negative intentions towards Israel (Peace Index, January 2001). In view of this, Barak, with this particular information, was perceived as trustworthy in the eyes of the majority of Israelis.

Of special importance for the analysis of our case is the variable of similarity. It was suggested that sources that are similar to the recipients of the message are more persuasive than those that are dissimilar. Perceived similarity increases likeability and trust. In the political context, people learn to rely on knowledge from sources they believe to hold political positions similar to their own rather than on knowledge from sources with different political opinions (Sears & Freedman, 1967; Bar-Tal, Raviv & Raviv, 1991; Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv & Abin, 1993). This variable explains the earthquake in opinions that took place among the peace supporters. Ehud Barak was their leader and not only was he similar to them, his credibility in their eyes was especially high. Ehud Barak was the leader of the peace camp and was supposed to lead it to peace, in the way of Itzhak Rabin: information coming from him was persuasive to them and as a result many of them changed their opinion. We assume that the same information provided by a "dissimilar" leader, from the right, would not have been accepted as valid. As Wolfsfeld suggested, "the fact that a Labor prime minister was leading the initial attack against the Palestinians ensured the ultimate success of the anti-Palestinian frame" (2004, p. 205). Indeed, Ehud Barak, as the leader of the left served as an epistemic authority to many of the peace process supporters, that is, he served as a source on whom people rely in their attempts to acquire valid and reliable knowledge (Kruglanski et al., 2005).

The message: Sets of major information

The conceptual framework we have adopted suggests that, in addition to the important role of Barak as a communicator, the communication itself played a role in the persuasion process (Petty & Wegener, 1998). Barak claimed that Arafat did not intend to reach peace agreement at Camp David and arrived there after already preparing the second violent uprising. Thus, according to Barak, the outbreak of the Intifada was not spontaneous, but aimed to achieve by violent means the Palestinian goals that had not been achieved through the peace negotiations.

This message had two main features: a high level of simplicity and extremely negative and threatening contents. According to conceptual work and empirical studies in psychology, these characteristics enhance persuasion (Baron & Byrne, 2003; Petty, & Cacioppo, 1981; Rogers, 1983). The simplicity of the message was reflected in its clear cut "good-bad" binary, presenting the Palestinians as perpetrators and Israelis as victims and attributing all responsibility for the peace summit's failure to Arafat. This narrative could only lead to one conclusion – stop negotiating and fight terror.

Furthermore, it seems that the extreme negativity of Barak's message also contributed to its persuasibility. This argument, regarding the forcefulness of negative content in changing attitudes, is well-documented in the psychological literature which generally claims that negative events and information tend to be more closely attended and better remembered and that they strongly impact evaluation, judgment and action tendencies (see reviews by Cacioppo & Berntson, 1994; Christianson, 1992; Kanouse & Hanson, 1971; Lau, 1982; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990). Hence, the negative nature of Barak's information and interpretations of events, associated with his threatening message regarding the future, could serve as another explanation of its major influence on public opinion.

Moreover, the information corresponded to the dominant narrative of the Israeli Jewish society as reflected in its collective memory and ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal & Salomon, in press). This narrative focuses on the following themes: the existential threats and dangers to which the Jewish people and the Jewish state in Israel have been and are still, exposed: it focuses on the history of victimhood of the Jewish people, and in particular as a result of Arab violence. This narrative also presents a positive collective image of the Jews in contrast to negative stereotyping of Arabs, and especially Palestinians. Of special importance is the collective memory regarding Jews' persecution in the Diaspora and particularly its climax, the Holocaust, during World War II (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992); as a nurtured key memory, this sensitizes Jews to possible threats. All these themes are widely shared by Israeli Jews, acquired at a very early age; they are well known even to those Israelis who later in one way or another disavow the narrative or parts of it (see for example, Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Firer, 1985; Podeh, 2002). A recent study by Sharvit (2005) has shown that when this narrative is measured implicitly, it is found that even dovish Israeli Jews hold it. We suggest thus that Barak's information contained all the themes noted above: existential threat, self victimhood, positive self-collective presentation and delegitimization of the rival. Therefore, since the message was relevant and engaging, it was easily absorbed, fitting within the existing already dominant societal repertoire. This is not surprising in view of the consistent findings which indicate that individuals are selectively attentive and well absorb information that corresponds to the knowledge they store (Bransford, 1979; Smith, 1998).

In addition, much has been written about fear-arousing messages (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Higbee, 1969; McGuire, 1968). In general it has been suggested that fear causes people to attend to information and process it, in order to develop a coping strategy, especially when they are vulnerable to it (Dillard, 1994; Meijnders, 1998). Review of the literature shows that individuals tend to be persuaded by fear-arousing messages, especially when the fear is of medium level (Boster & Mongeau, 1984; Sutton, 1982). These findings were replicated in the political arena, where it was observed that fear-arousing messages are used by politicians, including in Israel, to enhance their persuasibility (e.g., Pratkanis & Turner, 1996; Rosler, 2005). Barak presented fear-arousing information to the Israeli public about the destructive intentions of the Palestinians, in general and the Palestinian leader, in particular. Those were medium-level fear arousing messages, because Israel is perceived by its Jewish citizens as a state that is capable of coping with threats posed by the Palestinians (Arian, 2001). It is assumed thus that this feature also contributed to the acceptability of the information by the Israeli Jewish public.

Finally, it has been suggested that repetition of a message increases the likelihood of its awareness, comprehension, and eventually acceptance (Caccioppo & Petty, 1979). In addition, repetition increases a message's acceptability through increase of its perception as truthful (Arkes, Boehm, & Xu, 1991) and familiarity (Jacoby, Kelly, Brown, & Jasechko, 1989). Information provided by Ehud Barak was repeated numerous times not only by him, but by many of the major local sources of information: military authorities, political and social leaders, journalists, and even major intellectual and cultural personalities, who influence peace supporters (Dor, 2001; Wolfsfeld, 2004). It should be noted though that even during the fall of 2000 alternative information was available, though infrequently and not in salient places. There is no doubt that massive continuous exposure had an enormous impact on the acceptance of the information perpetuated by Ehud Barak.

In sum we suggest that the characteristics of the information provided by Ehud Barak facilitated the acceptance of the message.

The audience: Israeli Jewish society

The last element of Hovland et al's (1953) conceptual framework is the target audience- in our case Israeli Jewish society. As we already suggested, members of Israeli Jewish society, including supporters of the peace camp, were highly susceptible to persuasion due to their contents, their history and their needs at the juncture. First, of all we have to remember that a substantial portion of Israeli Jewish society, the hawks (mostly supporters of the right wing parties), objected to the peace process and held uncompromising positions, distrusting Palestinians and their leader, viewing them as terrorists and believing their ultimate goal was to destroy Israel. They accepted the information eagerly because it confirmed already held beliefs and in fact it showed them how right they had been, objecting to the peace process in the first place.

We want to focus on those Jewish Israelis who voted for Ehud Barak in the 1999 elections, supported his peaceful policies, but then accepted his message, changed their views during the fall of 2000 and moved to hawkish positions. Part of Barak's voters were moderately rightist or centrist, who trusted the new leader and were ready to give him the opportunity to conduct his policy of peace process (Arian & Shamir 2000). But they were highly susceptible to persuasion when the leader changed his views, because they had only hesitantly supported Oslo agreement. This relatively large group of people came to believe that if Barak, their favorite and pragmatic leader, had not managed to reach a viable agreement, in spite of his far reaching offers, then, there really was no Palestinian partner for a peace agreement.

Beyond this particular group, other Barak voters from the peace camp had two main characteristics that made them susceptible to Barak's information. First, as noted before, they had been socialized to hold contents of the Israeli Jewish narrative as it evolved during the long period of intractable conflict, which included societal beliefs of collective memories and ethos of conflict (Bar-Ta, 2007; Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006) The contents of these beliefs sensitize Israeli Jews to situations of perceived collective threats, especially of Palestinians (Liebman, 1978; Segev, 1991; Zafran & Bar-Tal, 2003). Thus when threatening information is presented by the leader, then by the government and military establishment, and next is circulated by the mass media, the held narrative serves as a greatly facilitating basis for its acceptance.

Second, a society that finds itself in a violent conflict has to fulfill the basic needs of its members (Bar-Tal, in press; Burton, 1990). It is especially important to satisfy the need for a meaningful understanding of the conflict (Berkowitz, 1968; Maddi, 1971; Reykowski, 1982) and for a positive self-image (Maslow, 1954; Tajfel, 1981). As it became clear that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be renewed, Barak's major information directly and successfully fulfilled both those needs for most Jewish Israelis. Barak's information was coherent, meaningful and simple: The Israeli side had tried to do everything possible to achieve peace and was willing to make very far reaching compromises and, therefore, Israelis, as a society, could feel good about their part in the conflict. On the other hand, it was very obvious and clear cut who was to blame (Yasser Arafat) and from now on, in Barak's perspective, the reason for fighting was rightful and meaningful – defending the basic interests of the Jewish state against the Palestinians who want to destroy it.

5. Conclusion

The present paper has tried to analyze the reasons for the changes in the Israeli Jewish public opinion, and especially among the peace supporters, during the summer and fall of 2000. There is no doubt that the massive protest and acts of violence carried out by the Palestinians during the *first months of the Intifada* were cognized by the majority of Israelis as threatening their personal security and collective well-being (see Peace Index and Arian, 2001, 2002). Having said that, it can be assumed, that violence itself in *the fall of 2000* could not have caused this major earthquake in public opinion. The Palestinian violence during the months of September 2000 – February 2001 was of limited scope and not all that different from violent confrontations in the past. Therefore, we suggest that the crucial factors in the psychological earthquake experienced by the Israeli public in the fall of 2000 was the information provided by Ehud Barak, framing the major events of the summer and fall of 2000 in a particular way. That is, we do recognize that the major events of Camp David and beginning of the Intifada had an effect on public opinion. But our point is that the determinative factor in this effect was the interpretation of these events. They do not stand by themselves, but only within the framework in which they were presented to the public. It was the provided information that gave meaning to the events. This major information stated that Barak had offered everything that Arafat had refused to accept the offer, that he intended to eradicate Israel and that he insisted on the right of return of millions of Palestinian refugees to the State of Israel; that he had planned the Intifada and had returned to tactics of terror. This information was accepted by the Israeli establishment and was transmitted massively by most of the media.¹ Eventually the information presented by Ehud Barak was accepted by the great majority of Israeli Jewish society during an early phase of the confrontation, and had a determinative effect on peace politics in Israel and thus on the course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In fact, the provided information has come to serve as a formal hegemonic and popular collective memory among Israeli Jewish society about the Camp David summit and the beginning

1. It should be noted that information providing an alternative account to the events was available and publicized, but was not advanced by the mass media, had very limited exposure and was not accepted by the great majority of the public.

of the Second Intifada. We suggest that the wide acceptance of Barak's information was a result of a rare coinciding, at a particular point of time, between the social context, a leader (i.e., Ehud Barak), a receptive audience (i.e., most of Israeli Jewish society), information and specific environmental conditions (i.e., violence).

Barak, who was never an ardent supporter of the Oslo accord, provided a devastating blow to the peace camp, after he was elected as its leader.¹ In line with our analysis, it can be assumed that the same information provided by Likud leaders would have been met with suspicion by peace camp members. Barak had a major influence on the dovish and centrist members of Israeli society. What the Likud party and its leaders did not succeed in doing during those years, Ehud Barak, the leader of the Labor party and his associates, helped to achieve. At present, Israeli society does not have a strong peace camp, and it is important to understand the factors that greatly facilitated its disintegration. The beginning of its demise is at least partially due to the effects of provided information. Later, dramatic suicide terror events greatly enhanced this trend and justified it.

Saying all these, we would like to note that this type of study cannot unequivocally suggest the line of causality. It provides data and analysis that provide a perspective to the understanding of political phenomenon and which has to be judged on the basis of the consistency validity as suggested by Popper (1972).

In summary, the paper points out that while major events have a significant role in shaping public opinion, these events do not stand by themselves, but are illuminated by major information that frames them in particular perspectives. This is so because society members lack information about events, and many events are inaccessible to the general public. In these cases, the public depends on the information provided by leaders or other sources. In an open, democratic society it is the role of the media, academia and other institutions and channels of communication not to take the information propagated by leaders for granted, but to examine it skeptically and try to reach valid information, if exists and provide it to the public. In the case described, most of the channels of communication failed to shed light on the events as they took place, in spite of the fact that factual information was available and even published. Moreover, the same phenomena take place in other societies too and therefore it is of great importance to unveil their basis and dynamics.

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1. As a paradox, Ehud Barak who helped to create an atmosphere of existential conflict with Palestinians lost the elections in February 2001 to Ariel Sharon, the leader of Likud party. Many of the voters trusted the information provided by Barak, perceived the changing context and moved to the right. They preferred during the Israeli-Palestinian violent confrontation forceful leader as Sharon, ex general and an extreme hawk, who opposed the peace process with the Palestinians and had come to stand for forceful activities and a powerful determination to curtail the Arabs, and especially the Palestinians.

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Linda Nassanga Goretti

Angewandter Friedensjournalismus: Evaluation der Berichterstattung über den Konflikt in Norduganda

Der vorliegende Artikel befasst sich mit einer Analyse der Berichterstattungen über den Konflikt in Norduganda so wie den friedensjournalistischen Konzepten, die sich aus den Ergebnissen der Analyse ableiten lassen.

Als Untersuchungsmaterial dienten die Berichte einer privaten und einer staatlichen Tageszeitung über einen Zeitraum von drei Jahren.

In der Studie wurden folgende quantitative und qualitative Variablen erhoben: Häufigkeit der Berichterstattung über den Konflikt, journalistische Form der Berichterstattung (Nachrichtmeldung vs. andere Form), Autor (Journalist vs. nicht-Journalist), Stellenwert und Platzierung des Berichts, Ausgewogenheit vs. Parteilichkeit der Berichterstattung, Sprachstil und Haltung, inhaltlicher Fokus, Beachtung von Friedensbemühungen und Verwendung von Bildern.

Die Einleitung beschreibt zunächst Annahmen über Konfliktkonzepte und Erklärungsmöglichkeiten für die Ursachen andauernder Konflikte in heutigen Gesellschaften.

Basisannahme ist, dass die Macht- und Ressourcenverteilungen innerhalb einer Gesellschaft von deren Mitgliedern unterschiedlich gerecht empfunden werden. Diese Interpretationsunterschiede bieten die Basis für Konflikte, die im Verlauf zu Bürgerkriegen eskalieren können. In diesem Rahmen werden im Folgenden die Hauptursachen für Konflikte auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent erklärt.

Weiterhin liefert der Artikel spezielle Informationen über den Hintergrund des Konflikts in Norduganda, wo seit der Machtübernahme durch Präsident Museveni im Jahr 1986 bürgerkriegsähnliche Zustände herrschen.

Ein Überblick über die Publikationsformen zeigt, dass die meisten Berichte über den Krieg in Form von Nachrichtmeldungen publiziert wurden, und es nur in seltenen Fällen ausführlichere Features gab. Damit wird deutlich, dass die Nachrichtenmedien bzw. die entsprechenden Journalisten zu großem Teil sowohl dafür verantwortlich sind, was die Bevölkerung über den Krieg erfährt als auch dafür wie der Krieg in der Öffentlichkeit wahrgenommen wird.

Aus dem Vergleich einer regierungsnahen und einer privaten Tageszeitung wurde deutlich, dass die regierungsnaher Zeitung größtenteils verzerrt zu Gunsten der Regierung berichtete und damit klar Partei ergriff, während die private Zeitung einen versöhnlicheren Ton anschlug und in ihren Berichten Informationen beider Konfliktparteien berücksichtigte.

In der privaten Zeitung fanden auch Friedensaktivitäten Berücksichtigung, wenngleich diejenigen der Regierung überrepräsentiert waren.

In der anschließenden Evaluation dieser Formen der Berichterstattung, widmet sich die Autorin den entsprechenden Konsequenzen.

Eine Stärke jeder Form der Medienberichterstattungen über den Krieg wird darin gesehen, das Interesse der Bevölkerung an dem Thema zu verstärken.

Auf der anderen Seite konnte die Autorin über die Betrachtung von Art und Inhalt der Berichterstattung eine starke Selbstzensur der Journalisten beobachten, die einer friedensorientierten Berichterstattung über den Krieg im Weg steht. Diese Selbstzensur wird teilweise durch die Anti-Terror-Verordnung erklärt, welche es zu einem Staatsverbrechen macht, für Terroristen potentiell nützliche Informationen

zu veröffentlichen. Neben dieser Verordnung werden jedoch noch weitere potentielle Störfaktoren in der Umsetzung des Friedensjournalismus diskutiert.

Abschließend gibt die Autorin praktische Empfehlungen, wie der Friedensjournalismus zur Unterstützung des Friedensprozesses in Norduganda besser umgesetzt werden könnte.

Volltext (in Englisch)

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Linda Nassanga Goretti

Peace journalism applied: An assessment of media coverage of the conflict in Northern Uganda

The paper explores how peace journalism has been applied in Uganda basing on an assessment of findings from a survey on the media coverage of the conflict in northern Uganda. The paper analyses the findings from the print media coverage of 2 newspapers for 3 years that were used as sample. The analysis considered several quantitative and qualitative variables including: frequency, type of stories (news vs non-news), authors of stories (journalists vs non-journalists), placement/prominence of story, balance in the story, information sources, language and tone, focus, peace initiatives and use of photographs.

The introduction gives an overview of the concept of conflict and why we continue to have conflicts in society. The paper posits that since all people in society cannot have the same definition of a situation all the time, especially regarding the distribution of power and resources, disagreements and conflicts arise, which in extreme cases escalate into armed conflicts or wars. The paper looks at the major causes of conflicts in Africa and gives a background to the conflict/war in Northern Uganda, where the fighting has been going on since 1986, when President Museveni took over power.

A synopsis of the findings showed that most of the coverage on the war was done by journalists in the form of news stories, with a few feature articles. This implies that journalists are largely responsible for what people get to learn about the war. Depending on the way journalists report about the conflict, people's perceptions will be influenced accordingly.

The analysis showed that the government paper was largely biased towards government and confrontational in its reports, while the private paper used a more conciliatory tone and was more balanced by using various sources for their stories. There was fair coverage of peace initiatives, although this focused most on government efforts. An evaluation of the coverage showed that this had its strengths and weaknesses. While the media had helped in raising awareness about the war, there was self-censorship amongst the journalists, partly due to the Anti-terrorism Act, which makes it a capital offence if a journalist gives information that can aid terrorism. The paper looks at some obstacles that prevent journalists from giving objective reports when reporting on conflicts/wars. The paper concludes with some recommendations on how peace journalism can be consciously applied to contribute more meaningfully to the peace building process in Northern Uganda.

[full text \(in English\)](#)

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In der anschließenden Evaluation dieser Formen der Berichterstattung widmet sich die Autorin den entsprechenden Konsequenzen. Eine Stärke jeder Form der Medienberichterstattungen über den Krieg wird darin gesehen, das Interesse der Bevölkerung an dem Thema zu verstärken. Auf der anderen Seite konnte die Autorin über die Betrachtung von Art und Inhalt der Berichterstattung eine starke Selbstzensur der Journalisten beobachten, die einer friedensorientierten Berichterstattung über den Krieg im Weg steht. Diese Selbstzensur wird teilweise durch die Anti-Terror-Verordnung erklärt, welche es zu einem Staatsverbrechen macht, für Terroristen potentiell nützliche Informationen zu veröffentlichen. Neben dieser Verordnung werden jedoch noch weitere potentielle Störfaktoren in der Umsetzung des Friedensjournalismus diskutiert. Abschließend gibt die Autorin praktische Empfehlungen, wie der Friedensjournalismus zur Unterstützung des Friedensprozesses in Norduganda besser umgesetzt werden könnte.

Abstract: The paper explores how peace journalism has been applied in Uganda basing on an assessment of findings from a survey on the media coverage of the conflict in northern Uganda. The paper analyses the findings from the print media coverage of 2 newspapers for 3 years that were used as sample.

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Introduction

It is important to appreciate the concept of 'conflict' in order to place the discussion in context. Conflict has been defined differently by different scholars, but generally has to do with a situation of disagreement over an issue which may destabilise peaceful and harmonious co-existence. Howard (2003:6) defines conflict as 'a situation where two or more individuals or groups try to pursue goals or ambitions which they believe they cannot share'. Conflict may also be viewed simply as a situation where there is an absence of peace and harmony. Conflicts are often linked to war, but not all unstable situations lead to armed conflicts or wars. Usually only under extreme conditions do conflicts escalate into war.

There have always been conflict situations, even as far back as biblical times. We may well ask why no one has ever solved the problem of conflict. One reason could be that because people are so different, they tend to interpret situations differently. Due to divergent perceptions, it is often hard for them to reach a common understanding, and conflicts thus tend to arise. Definitions of situations or events strongly influence people's socio-economic and political status in society. Those in the higher strata tend to impose their definitions on those in lower strata, who may not always accept the same definition.

Because all societies experience some forms of disagreement and conflict, conflict has come to be regarded as a universal societal possibility. There is no society where all members are always in agreement on all aspects of the system, especially regarding the distribution of power and resources. So it is important to look at how conflict management can promote peaceful co-existence. Since journalists report on the important events in society, they will inevitably find themselves having to report on wars and/or conflicts.

Before delving into an evaluation of conflict coverage, the paper looks briefly at the major causes of conflict, specifically in Africa, after which some background is given for the conflict/war in Northern Uganda. The paper examines some perspectives on the concept of peace journalism in the context of the principle of objectivity demanded of professional journalists. An overview is offered of Ugandan media, followed by a synopsis of findings from a research project on media coverage of the war in Northern Uganda. Based on this, the coverage is evaluated, identifying its strengths and weaknesses as means of promoting peace. Finally, recommendations are made for better use of peace journalism to contribute more effectively to the peace-building process in Northern Uganda.

What are the major causes of conflict in society?

The causes of conflicts and wars vary from society to society and over time. These are as varied as the many conflict situations that arise, since no two situations are likely to be identical. David Francis (2004), Director of the African Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Bradford, identifies 6 common causes of conflict and wars in Africa. These are: self-determination, secession, interstate, superpower-orchestrated, identity-based (ethnic-religious wars) or resource-based ones.

A study conducted in Uganda on Conflict Management Skills for Sustainable Decentralisation (Nkurunziza, 2002:6) reached similar conclusions. It was found that under the decentralised system of governance, conflicts were due to: high levels of corruption, limited resources, ignorance about the decentralised system, personal interests of leaders, religious differences, political differences, weak regulatory legislation, socio-economic disputes and mistrust among leaders.

Africans have become wary of the overly simplistic ideas about conditions in Africa held by many in the Western world. Allegedly Africans 'are lazy, violent, have no capacity to manage their economies, enjoy killing each other, etc.' Unfortunately, the recent history of Africa does little to dispel these misconceptions. Otherwise how can we explain the perennial food shortages and civil wars? In Uganda, for instance, fighting has been going on in the northern part of the country for the past 21 years! A journalist should be acquainted with the dynamics of conflict and war situations, if he/she is to do meaningful analytical reporting under such conditions.

Background to the conflict/war in Northern Uganda

Uganda can be broadly divided into 4 regions; Northern, Western, Eastern and Central. Under democratic governance, each region is supposed to be represented in the government, but in practice the President's home region tends to dominate both the government and the economic sector. This creates problems in sharing the 'national cake', as each region competes for its due share. This has resulted in conflicts fuelled by ethnic differences like the current conflict in Northern Uganda, which has been going on since 1986.

Although Uganda is said to be steadily recovering from the turmoil of dictatorial rule and economic decline, the different parts of the country are not benefiting equally from the peace concluded by the National Resistance Movement government. There has been fighting in the northern part of the country ever since President Museveni came to power in 1986 after 5 years of armed struggle.

Whereas the other regions of the country enthusiastically welcomed the new government, it was different in the North. The ouster of former President (Obote), who was from the North, meant that his followers lost their powerful positions in the army, ministerial posts, ambassadorships, control of semi-state bodies, etc. Each government makes its own appointments, which are often based on nepotism and are used to reward its supporters.

Some of the soldiers in Northern Uganda refused to lay down their arms. Various groups continued to wage war against the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government. Some later surrendered, but the *Lord's Resistance Army* (LRA) under Joseph Kony is still fighting. The government's *Uganda People's Defence Force* (UPDF) has so far failed to end the fighting there.

Apart from the many lives lost, the abduction of children, the maiming and killing of civilians, rape and defilement, planting of land mines, attacks on Internally Displaced Persons camps and killing civilians, ambushes on vehicles, including transports of medicine, food and other humanitarian assistance, the war has destroyed much of the region's infrastructure, leaving hardly any economic activity still going on. A large part of the region is very insecure, and many people have been moved to Internally Displaced Persons camps, which are overcrowded and suffer from poor hygienic conditions.

Reporting on conflicts and war situations using peace journalism

The media are key weapons in any war or conflict situation. Each of the warring parties tries to win public support through the media. The competing sides manipulate the media in an effort to mobilise populations by concealing the grim realities of death and atrocities, while they demonise their enemies. This is especially true of state-controlled media. These are exploited to churn out hate rhetoric, distorted facts and floods of propaganda, fanning the flames of fear and hatred of 'the enemy', while glorifying the national struggle and its leaders (IWPR, 2004:168). Media can, however, also be used positively to promote conflict resolution through peace journalism.

Peace journalism focuses on media influence, rather than on the mere presence of professional news media outlets. The media thus become facilitators of positive change, rather than mere disinterested professional observers/reporters (Howard, 2002:4).

One of the cardinal principles of journalism is objectivity, which means that a journalist reports as an outsider or non-participant in news events. However, this viewpoint has changed over time, whereby journalists are no longer just conveyors of information or neutral observers of society, but rather directly engaged actors (IWPR, 2004:168).

The concept of objectivity during conflicts and wars has been a subject of intensive debate among communication practitioners. Based on his long experience as a BBC war correspondent, Martin Bell (Hojjer et al. 2004:13) rules out the possibility or need for 'objectivity' in war reporting, arguing that objectivity cannot stop the suffering and massacre of innocent civilians. Bell has been supported by others like Michael Ignatieff and Noam Chomsky (ibid.), who view this type of journalism as 'humanitarian intervention'. Others hold contrary views, e.g., John Pilger (ibid.), who insists on the principle of objectivity, reasoning that journalists could otherwise fall into the 'propaganda trap' by not exposing 'the real interests' of the parties involved or the 'true face of the war'.

Although the two schools of thought differ in their interpretation of objectivity, what really matters is to focus on the rationale behind this principle. Ideally, it should ensure that the media serve the public interest. In respect to peace reporting, the interpretation of objectivity depends heavily on how a journalist defines his/her role or social responsibility. Howard (2003) ably sums this up in the introduction to *Conflict Sensitive Journalism*: 'Professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced'.

From this perspective, Galtung (Opubor, 2001:30) explains that good reporting on conflict is not a compromise or a matter of taking a little news from both the left hand and the right, but rather it favours peace journalism as opposed to what he calls 'war journalism'. He affirms that peace journalism stands for reporting truthfully on the views of all sides in disputes, as opposed to being a mere mouthpiece for propaganda and misinformation.

Peace journalism should not be viewed from what the Institute of War and Peace Reporting calls the 'agenda-setting approach'. In the latter, the journalist plays an important role as an agent of change, depending on how he/she 'colours' the article with language, tone and choice of terms. The journalist should instead work towards promoting cross-community dialogue, with a view to building bridges across confrontation lines, identifying areas of agreement rather than discord and highlighting positive, often non-official developments on the ground (IWPR, 2004:172). The journalist's aim should thus be to strengthen the peace-building process.

Sabiiti (2001) offers a guide to what she terms 'a peace-builder's perspective' that could be applied in peace journalism. These include:

- Understanding the scope of the conflict
- Skills in conflict analysis (source of conflict at different levels, surface or symptomatic, demands and positions)
- Root causes of the conflict (interests and needs of the various groups)
- Impact of the conflict (the players and their motives, roles and attitudes)
- Skills in transforming conflict (communication skills, negotiation skills, co-operation, mediation skills, reconciliation)
- The ability to distinguish the people from the conflict, so that the journalist is tough on the conflict but soft on the people/victims

Overview of the media in Uganda

Print media

After independence, apart from *Munno* (a newspaper published in Luganda), most newspapers folded, while new ones were founded. The government has always published a government newspaper, but with a change of names under different regimes – *Uganda Argus*, *Uganda Times*, *Voice of Uganda* – the present one is called *The New Vision*.

Before the media laws were liberalised in 1983, the government-owned newspaper had no serious competitors. Although there was no specific legislation barring new newspapers, the environment was not conducive to their operation. With media liberalisation and a more tolerant government, several private newspapers are currently being published.

There are three English-language dailies, including the government-owned *The New Vision*, with the highest circulation of about 30,000 copies. An independent paper, *The Monitor*, which has a circulation of about 26,000 copies, closely follows it. Another daily, *The Red Pepper*, has a circulation of about 18,000. A daily published in Luganda, *Bukedde*, has a circulation of about 20,000. Weekly papers include: *The East African*, a regional paper owned by the Nation Group of Kenya, *The Weekly Observer* and *Sunrise*.

The government has also tried to publish in regional languages, but without much success, as the circulation is still mainly within the regional towns and does not reach out into rural areas. There is *Orumuri* for the Western Region, *Bukedde* for the Central, *Etop* for the Eastern, and *Rupiny* for the Northern.

Broadcast media

Radio

After the media were liberalised and Radio Uganda, which was previously the only radio station, lost its monopoly position, over 150 FM stations were set up. Whereas Radio Uganda offers a variety of programmes in 28 languages, including English and Swahili, the new FM stations mainly broadcast commercial and entertainment programmes. Although the equipment used by Radio Uganda is obsolete, it has an important advantage over the other stations, because it covers the whole country, unlike the FM stations, which broadcast only within a limited range. With government support and funding, Radio Uganda can afford to obtain news countrywide, particularly through the Information Officers stationed upcountry.

Television

Like Radio Uganda, government-owned Uganda Television was for a long time the country's only television station. After liberalisation, 10 other private stations began broadcasting. Except for Uganda Television, which mainly carries local programmes, the bulk of the programming offered by the other stations consists mainly of imported English-language programmes.

Media coverage of the war in Northern Uganda

The analysis of media coverage of the war in Northern Uganda presented here is based on findings from a study of coverage of the northern war made in January – February 2004. The study, commissioned by the Media Foundation for West Africa (Kadiolo, 2004), analysed coverage over 3 years: 1998, 2000 & 2003, focusing on five media organisations. For print, *The New Vision* and *The Monitor* were chosen, as they are the national dailies and have the highest newspaper circulation. While *The New Vision* is government-owned, *The Monitor* is an independent, private paper. For broadcasts, 3 radio stations were used: the government-owned Radio Uganda, Rhino FM and Radio North. The latter two are privately owned.

This presentation will focus on news coverage in the print media. A content analysis was done of articles providing information on the war in Northern Uganda. The sample consisted of the first six months of the three years and was further progressively narrowed down to a week of each month (i.e., 1st week of January, 2nd week of February, 3rd week of March, etc.). The analysis considered several quantitative and qualitative variables, including frequency, type of story (news vs.

non-news), authors of stories (journalists vs. non-journalists), placement/prominence of story, balance in the story, information sources, language and tone, focus, peace initiatives and use of photographs.

Synopsis of the findings

In each paper, 425 articles were analysed. *The New Vision* had more coverage, with 253 (60%) articles, while *The Monitor* had 172 (40%) articles. Of these, news stories constituted 77%, while features constituted 13%. Articles written by non-journalists (opinion pieces, editorials, commentaries and letters) made up 9%. This analysis shows that most of the media coverage of the war was done by journalists, as it was mainly presented in news stories and feature articles. The implication is that journalists are largely accountable for the media reports on the conflict in Northern Uganda.

An analysis was made of the balance in the articles, based on how much coverage the *Uganda People's Defence Force* (government forces) received, as opposed to the rebel forces of the *Lord's Resistance Army*. The major focus of each story was used to assess this, e.g.: Was the main actor in the article the *Lord's Resistance Army* or the *Uganda People's Defence Force*?

On average, there were more stories on the *Lord's Resistance Army* (64%), as compared to 36% for the *Uganda People's Defence Force*. *The New Vision* focused more on the *Uganda People's Defence Force*, with 52%, and devoted only 48% of its articles to the *Lord's Resistance Army*. *The Monitor* focused 80% of its articles on the *Lord's Resistance Army* and only 19% on the *Uganda People's Defence Force*.

One cannot fail to notice the big differences in the focus of coverage. *The New Vision* had a difference of 4% between coverage of the *Lord's Resistance Army* and the *Uganda People's Defence Force* (in favour of the latter). *The Monitor* had a difference of 61% (in favour of the *Lord's Resistance Army*). *The New Vision* was more balanced in its coverage of the fighting forces.

The differences can be partially explained in terms of ownership. It is hardly surprising that a government paper would devote more coverage to the *Uganda People's Defence Force* and less to the *Lord's Resistance Army*, with a narrow range of 4%. One could question the high coverage of the *Lord's Resistance Army* in *The Monitor* and the very low coverage of the *Uganda People's Defence Force*, with a range of 61%.

	Lord's Resistance Army			Uganda People's Defence Force		
	N.VISION %	MONITOR %	AVRG. %	N.VISION %	MONITOR %	AVRG. %
1998	48	73	61	52	21	37
2000	19	88	54	81	12	47
2003	77	80	79	23	25	24
AVRG.	48	80	64	52	19	36

Table 1: Focus on the forces involved in the fighting

Examining the placement of the articles, it was found that *The Monitor* had more front page stories, with 24%, while *The New Vision* had 16%. Considering that usually political and business stories dominate the front page, the stories were given relatively high prominence.

	NEW VISION					MONITOR				
	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)	RANK	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)	RANK
UPDF	41	31	34	35	1	17	28	19	21	3
LRA	2	0	2	1	5	13	8	3	8	5
Local Res.	11	6	14	10	4	32	36	10	26	1
Dist. &govt.	22	46	28	32	2	21	12	33	22	2
Others	24	14	21	20	3	15	16	30	20	4
All of above	0	3	1	1	5	1	0	6	2	6

Table 2: Major sources of information in war reports

Another variable examined in the study was the sources of information used in war coverage. While on average the *Uganda People's Defence Force* /Army was the most important source, this held only for *The New Vision*, with 35%, compared to

21% for *The Monitor*. The major sources for *The Monitor* were local residents, with 26%, in contrast to 10% for *The New Vision*.

District and government officials were second highest for both, with *The New Vision* having 32%, and *The Monitor* 22%. In order of importance of the sources, for *The New Vision* the *Uganda People's Defence Force*, district & government officials, other players and local residents stood out, while the *Lord's Resistance Army* and all the other mentioned sources were in last place. For *The Monitor*, the ranking was: local residents, district & government officials, the *Uganda People's Defence Force*, other players and the *Lord's Resistance Army*, while all the other mentioned sources were last.

A comparative analysis shows that *The New Vision* relied most on the *Uganda People's Defence Force* or Army sources, while *The Monitor* relied more on local residents as sources. The distribution is more evenly spread for *The Monitor* than for *The New Vision*. For instance, the *Uganda People's Defence Force* plus district & government officials account for 67%, which is over half of the sources for *The New Vision*. For *The Monitor*, this is 43%, which is less than half of their sources.

Both papers had relatively few reports that relied on the *Lord's Resistance Army* as their source. *The New Vision* had 16%, while *The Monitor* had 8%. We can conclude that *The Monitor*, which drew on a broader spectrum of sources and used more reports from non-governmental sources, offered more objective reporting.

The language or tone used in the reports was analysed and grouped into the categories confrontational, biased or conciliatory. Confrontational articles took the stance that there was a 'zero-sum' conflict going on and used negative, emotionally charged words to characterise one of the sides, such as 'rebels', 'terrorists', etc., which tends to aggravate rather than reduce mistrust and fighting. Other articles were biased in that they were slanted heavily toward one side (*Lord's Resistance Army* or *Uganda People's Defence Force*). These portrayed one side positively, while neglecting to give information on the other side's position or portraying it negatively. Other articles took a conciliatory tone, seeking to encourage a 'win-win' attitude in the interest of all sides and encouraging peaceful conflict settlement.

Most articles in *The New Vision* were confrontational, accounting for 41% of the reports, while for *The Monitor* this was only 22%. In the case of *The Monitor* reports, most were conciliatory, accounting for 73%, compared to 36% for *The New Vision*. The biased reports were 23% for *The New Vision* and 5% for *The Monitor*.

	NEW VISION				MONITOR			
	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)
Confrontational	31	46	45	41	23	4	40	22
Biased	43	10	17	23	9	4	1	5
Conciliatory	26	44	38	36	68	92	59	73

Table 3: Tone used in the war articles

A comparative analysis shows that almost 2/3 of *The New Vision* reports were either confrontational or biased, while 1/3 were conciliatory. For *The Monitor*, it was the opposite, with over 2/3 being conciliatory and less than 1/3 confrontational or biased. Because a large percentage of the reports in the government-owned paper (*The New Vision*) used as sources the *Uganda People's Defence Force* or the Army, which are directly involved in the conflict, it is not surprising that most of them were confrontational or biased.

The major source of *The Monitor* reports was local residents, who have borne the brunt of the conflict. These appear to be tired of the fighting and want a peaceful settlement or negotiation rather than a military solution.

	NEW VISION				MONITOR			
	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)
Abductions	45	30	45	40	35	23	27	28
Killings	25	33	25	28	46	54	49	50
Displacement	25	27	25	26	19	23	23	22

Table 4: Coverage of civilians in the war zone

The survey also analysed the amount of media coverage devoted to civilians in the conflict zones. Both papers focused more on abductions and killings, with *The New Vision* having 68% and *The Monitor* 78%. Less space, 26% in *The New*

Vision and 22% in *The Monitor*, was devoted to the displacement and/or plight of civilians, especially in the Internally Displaced Persons camps. It was also noted that *The New Vision* gave more coverage to displacements, although most of it was event-based, while *The Monitor* offered more analytical feature articles.

The study also explored media coverage of the various conflict-resolution efforts by actors including the government, local leaders, NGOs, foreign missions, etc.

	NEW VISION				MONITOR			
	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2003 (%)	AVRG. (%)
Government	27	45	29	34	86	40	62	63
Local Leaders	40	18	42	33	7	40	25	24
Other Actors	33	36	29	33	7	20	14	14

Table 5: Coverage of peace initiatives

Both papers gave the most coverage to government peace initiatives, with *The New Vision* having an average of 34%, while *The Monitor* had 63%. *The New Vision* had a more even distribution in its coverage of all peace initiatives, with a range of only 1%. *The Monitor* largely focused on government initiatives, with a range of 49% between government initiatives and those of other actors.

The study found that photographs were minimally used. *The New Vision* used more photographs (17%) than *The Monitor* (6%).

General evaluation of coverage

Strengths

The media have helped to raise public awareness of various issues related to the conflict in Northern Uganda, both within the country and outside. The media reports have generated public debate on socio-economic and political issues in the country.

Through disclosures in the reports, the media have played a major role in promoting transparency and holding the government and other institutions accountable. The media have also contributed to strengthening the observance of human rights, especially through reports on the situations of children and women in Northern Uganda and the conditions in the Internally Displaced Persons camps.

Informed by reports on the suffering of the population and the destruction of infrastructure in the Northern region, other Ugandans and the world at large have come to appreciate the plight of the people in Northern Uganda, particularly that of vulnerable groups such as children, women, the disabled and the elderly. This has encouraged various institutions for humanitarian and other forms of assistance to provide aid to the victims in the North. Reports on the atrocities committed have provoked international condemnation of rebel leader Kony and his *Lord's Resistance Army*.

The government-owned paper (*The New Vision*) has begun devoting space to a variety of different groups, including the rebel groups in Northern Ugandan. This has helped change its image from that of a mouthpiece for government propaganda to that of a more balanced, objective paper. Similarly, the private paper (*The Monitor*) now gives space to government views, so that it is no longer seen as merely an anti-government paper.

The coverage has reflected an improved level of professionalism compared to the past. Often in the past, the government paper largely covered only pro-government activities, while the other papers concentrated on criticising government programmes.

Weaknesses

In most conflict and war situations, balanced coverage often necessitates 'muckraking' about the secrets of powerful, influential, highly-placed public actors. Often, however, journalists are afraid to provoke the powerful and either avoid such stories or censor their reportage and do not analyse controversial issues in depth and objectively.

Due to the nature of the war situation, journalists are largely dependent on the army for their security. For instance, they have often used army helicopters and other vehicles to cover the war in Northern Uganda. This compromises their independence and autonomy to do their own investigations on the ground and to write objective reports.

The choice of language and/or terminology poses still another problem for journalists. For instance, the government is very hostile to papers that claim there is a 'war' going on in Northern Uganda. President Museveni and other officials insist that there is only an 'insurgency by bandits/thugs and terrorists' who do not know why they are fighting. "Calling Kony's escapades war is being extravagant with words; at most this is a terror campaign," President Museveni has said. (Kony War: Diplomats in Trouble. *The Weekly Observer*, 25-31 March 2004)

Another weakness is revealed by the controversy over the pictures included in news reports. The media have often been accused of insensitivity because they publish emotionally disturbing atrocity pictures. Cases in point are pictures showing corpses scattered on the ground (*The New Vision* 23 February 2004) and a photograph of a badly scalded child (*The New Vision* 24 February 2004).

It has often been said that the first casualty of war is truth. This has been very evident in reports on the numbers of dead, which mostly do not tally. Depending on who was killed, government sources give higher totals for *Lord's Resistance Army* fighters killed and lower numbers for civilian dead, while the *Lord's Resistance Army* boasts of higher numbers of *Uganda People's Defence Force* soldiers they have 'demobilized'.

After an attack on the Barlonyo Internally Displaced Persons camp on 21 February 2004, Army Spokesperson Major Bantariza claimed that 80 civilians were killed (*The New Vision* 23 February). *The Monitor* (23 February) put the number of dead at 192, based on information provided by the area MP, Charles Angiro, whereas *The Monitor* reporter who filed the story said he had personally counted 173 bodies. Another report in *The New Vision* (23 February) estimated a total of 186 dead. Later the bodies were exhumed and pathologists counted 143 bodies (*The New Vision*, 17 March). For the journalist who uses several sources, it is difficult to establish and report the correct number of dead. The public is equally at a loss in deciding which figures to accept or whom to believe.

The expenses involved in doing an investigative report in a conflict or war situation are quite high. Often journalists depend on stage-managed events, press releases or information from press briefings given by the Information Department, the Spokesperson from the Ministry of Defence and various government officials, as well as briefings by various political groups.

The government has sometimes intimidated journalists by labelling them 'terrorists'. This is a serious charge in Uganda. Under the Anti-Terrorism Act, any journalist who aids terrorists by revealing sensitive information is committing a capital offence, which could result in a death sentence. This greatly increases self-censorship among journalists.

Recommendations for better peace journalism in Uganda

Journalists should take their privileged position seriously and exercise the attendant power responsibly, especially in reporting on conflict and war situations. We need no reminders of the role that Radio Mille Collines played in fuelling the genocide in Rwanda. The media should encourage peace and reconciliation through peace journalism, rather than reporting in ways that perpetuate the conflict or war situation.

Training in investigative reporting should be a prerequisite for all journalists. Most objective, balanced reports require some degree of investigative research, so journalists reporting on the war in Northern Uganda need skills in the right way to obtain information, including interviewing skills.

Upholding media ethics is another key issue in peace journalism. While journalists know that conflict reporting differs from reporting under normal conditions and is fraught with ethical challenges, they should never forget their duty to serve the public interest, rather than narrow individual or group interests.

One strategy could be through networking, where journalists share experiences locally as well as between different countries. Apart from learning from each other, there will be synergies among different media which will have an increased impact on the peace-building process. As pointed out by Conciliation Resources Media and Conflict in Africa, more focused investigation by working journalists of regional, national and community-level conflicts can increase their contribution to the prevention or resolution of potentially devastating social and political conflicts (www.c-r.org/prgs/aficmed.shtml). The Northern Uganda Journalists Association needs to be revitalised, as it is no longer very active.

Journalists should acquire public relations skills to help them obtain information even from sources that are hostile and uncooperative. In describing his experience in war reporting, Ugandan journalist Shaka Ssali, editor of the Voice of Africa at the VOA, points out that news reporting on conflict is much harder than it might seem. He explains that the media must learn from people on the ground, the victims themselves, the government that makes the decisions and the opponents involved in any conflict. He cautions journalists against arrogance and advocates the exercise of humility as the best way of obtaining information from the public (Sabiiti, 2001).

Journalists should acquire the ability to weigh alternatives and make quick judgements. As in many other conflict situations, there is not always time to refer decision on what to include or exclude to an editor, especially with the broadcast media, e.g., when doing live broadcasts or 'on location' reporting.

Even if access to information in the possession of the government is constitutionally guaranteed under Article 41 of the Constitution and the Access to Information Act, government officials do not always release information, claiming that it may jeopardise national security or that it can cause public disorder. Journalists need to establish contacts with unofficial sources and obtain information from local people. When informants ask to remain anonymous, this wish should be respected, since disclosure could endanger the lives of the sources or their family and friends.

Journalists should always be mindful of the language, tone and words they use. These should not be confrontational or biased in such a way as to increase the divisions among the parties to a conflict. Journalists should avoid words that prejudice their public, such as 'terrorist, rebel, fanatic', etc. As pointed out under 'Guidelines for Conflict Sensitive Journalism' (Howard, 2003:16), such words imply taking sides and make the other side seem stubborn and unwilling to negotiate. It is advisable that the parties concerned should be referred to with the names they themselves prefer.

Conclusion

Change always affects people differently, depending on their socio-political and economic situation. Journalists consciously or unconsciously report about change and any resulting conflicts in society. It is therefore imperative that journalists be acquainted with the social, political and economic systems with which societies are organised. As is often pointed out, a journalist should be a 'Jack of all trades', meaning that he or she should be able to report on a wide range of topics. To acquire this competence, journalists must sharpen their sense of curiosity by keeping themselves informed on current affairs at the local, national, regional and international levels. This will enable them to become more analytical when reporting on conflicts with a view to encouraging peaceful solutions.

It is not possible for everyone to obtain first-hand information in conflict and war situations. Journalists should never forget their responsibility to keep the public informed in ways that do not escalate conflict or war situations. Their aim should be to contribute to resolving conflict or war peacefully; in other words, journalists should be able to practice peace journalism.

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