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## The viability of peace journalism in Western media environments

*Kurzfassung:* In der Literatur über Friedensjournalismus wird sowohl zugunsten als zuungunsten seiner Machbarkeit argumentiert und eine umfassende Beweisführung vorgelegt, die entweder für eines friedensjournalistische oder für eine kriegsjournalistische Praxis spricht (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lee, Maslog, & Kim, 2006; Maslog, Lee, & Kim, 2006). Entgegen Hackett (2006), der die Hindernisse des Friedensjournalismus aus drei theoretischen Perspektiven ableitet – dem Hierarchy-of-Influences-Modell, dem Propaganda-Modell und dem Journalistic-Field-Modell – vertreten wir die Auffassung, dass es in einem westlichen Medioumfeld trotz dieser Hindernisse Möglichkeiten des Friedensjournalismus gibt und diese auch genutzt werden. Der vorliegende, theoretische Aufsatz führt Lee & Maslogs (2005) Friedens- und Kriegscharakteristika zu einer modifizierten Grundstruktur des Friedenjournalismus zusammen, die Galtung's (2000) Modell auf die drei Dimensionen Frieden vs. Krieg, Menschen vs. Eliten und Konfliktlösung vs. Sieg herunterbricht.

*Abstract:* Conversations in peace journalism literature often argue for or against its feasibility in media environments, providing ample evidence of both peace and war journalism practices (Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lee, Maslog, & Kim, 2006; Maslog, Lee, & Kim, 2006). Although Hackett (2006) acknowledges challenges to peace journalism through three theoretical lenses – the hierarchy of influences model, the propaganda model, and the journalistic field model – we argue that peace journalism opportunities do exist and are employed in Western media environments despite those challenges. This theoretical paper consolidates Lee and Maslog's (2005) peace and war characteristics into a modified peace journalism framework that collapses Galtung's (2000) orientations into peace/war, people/elite, and solution/victory orientations.

### 1. Introduction

Conflict is pervasive and inevitable. Although not all conflicts lead to violence, violent conflicts have left a measurable toll of devastation, and it is impossible to quantify the lasting impact of human suffering. As a global community, how are citizens expected to understand the complexities of conflicts in a way that enables conflict resolution?

Peace journalism aims to frame the news in a way to provide a comprehensive understanding of conflict. In a peace journalism training manual prepared for the United Nations, Johan Galtung (2000) identified media as the "fourth pillar," the first three being State, Capital and Civil Society. As this fourth pillar, it is a journalist's "right and duty to make what goes on in one pillar transparent to the other two. The goal is social transparency" (p. 159). It matters if the media's reporting enhances the likelihood of peace or violence. Therefore, media are in a privileged position to serve as advocates or contributors to peace (Peleg, 2006; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000).

Peleg (2006) analyzed the possible impact of peace journalism as a facilitator of peace through the application of conflict theory. Conflict theory states that conflict should be evaluated in terms of the situation (the existence of controversy), attitudes, and behaviors (Peleg, 2006). Attitudes reflect the stigmatizing language or "de-legitimizing processes" (Peleg, 2006: 2) each side uses against the other. Attitudes in conflict are, in turn, responsible for behaviors in conflict—how the parties act in response.

This paper will build on other scholars' attempts to measure peace and war journalism attributes (see for example, Lee & Maslog, 2005, and Lynch & McGoldrick, 2012) through, in an extension of Hackett's (2006) work, the perspective of the propaganda, hierarchy of influences, and journalism as a field theories to assess the feasibility of peace journalism practices in the current global media landscape. As originally categorized by Galtung (2000), peace frames focus on peace, truth, people and solutions; and war frames conversely focus on war/violence, propaganda, elites and victory. Some scholars have further operationalized Galtung's orientations into various characteristics. For example, in Lee and Maslog's (2005) study, they operationalized Galtung's orientations of war and peace journalism into 13 categories each (see Table 1). We argue some of the similar categories defined in Lee and Maslog's (2005) study could be consolidated. Even in Galtung's orientations, we believe there is room for some consolidation. More specifically, if journalists are covering conflict in accordance with peace, people, and solution orientations, their work should already encompass the truth orientation. Therefore, this paper will consolidate Lee and Maslog's (2005) thirteen characteristics into peace/war, people/elite, and solution/victory orientations.

War Journalism	Peace Journalism
<b>APPROACH</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reactive (waits for war to break out, or about to break out, before reporting)</li> <li>2. Reports mainly on visible effects of war (casualties, dead and wounded, damage to property)</li> <li>3. Elite-oriented (focuses on leaders &amp; elites as actors and sources of information)</li> <li>4. Focuses mainly on differences that led to the conflict</li> <li>5. Focuses mainly on the here and now</li> <li>6. Dichotomizes between the good guys and bad guys, victims and villains</li> <li>7. Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses)</li> <li>8. Partisan (biased for one side in the conflict)</li> <li>9. Zero-sum orientation (one goal: to win)</li> <li>10. Stops reporting with the peace treaty signing and ceasefire and heads for another war elsewhere</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proactive (anticipates, starts reporting long before war breaks out)</li> <li>2. Reports also on invisible effects of war (emotional trauma, damage to society and culture)</li> <li>3. People-oriented (focuses on common people as actors and sources of information)</li> <li>4. Reports the areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to the conflict</li> <li>5. Reports causes and consequences of the conflict</li> <li>6. Avoid labeling of good guys and bad guys</li> <li>7. Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties involved in conflict)</li> <li>8. Nonpartisan (neutral, not taking sides)</li> <li>9. Win-win orientation (many goals and issues, solution-oriented)</li> <li>10. Stays on and reports aftermath of war—the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and implementation of peace treaty</li> </ol>
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Uses victimizing language (e.g., destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized) that tells only what has been done to people</li> <li>12. Uses demonizing language (e.g., vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist)</li> <li>13. Uses emotive words, like genocide, assassination, massacre, systematic (as in systematic raping or forcing people from their homes)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Avoids victimizing language, reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping</li> <li>12. Avoids demonizing language, uses more precise descriptions, titles, or names</li> <li>13. Objective and moderate. Avoids emotive words. Reserves the strongest language only for the gravest situation. Does not exaggerate.</li> </ol>

Table 1.1: Coding categories for peace and war frames (Source: Lee & Maslog 2005)

Peace Journalism	War Journalism
<b>PEACE/CONFLICT ORIENTATION</b>	<b>WAR/VIOLENCE ORIENTATION</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proactive; reporting on causes and consequences</li> <li>2. Reports also on invisible effects of war</li> <li>3. Avoid dichotomous labeling and partisan reporting</li> <li>4. Avoids victimizing, demonizing, and emotive language</li> <li>5. Win-win orientation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reactive; focus on here and now</li> <li>2. Reports mainly on visible effects of war</li> <li>3. Dichotomizes between the good guys and bad guys; partisan reporting</li> <li>4. Uses victimizing, demonizing, and emotive language</li> <li>5. Zero-sum orientation (one goal: to win)</li> </ol>
<b>PEOPLE ORIENTATION</b>	<b>ELITE ORIENTATION</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Giving a voice to the voiceless</li> <li>7. Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties involved in the conflict)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Giving voice to elite sources of information</li> <li>7. Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses)</li> </ol>
<b>SOLUTION ORIENTATION</b>	<b>VICTORY ORIENTATION</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Seeking solutions (report on the areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to the conflict)</li> <li>9. Stays on and reports aftermath of war – the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Focuses mainly on differences that lead to the conflict</li> <li>9. Stops reporting with the peace treaty signing and ceasefire and heads for another war elsewhere</li> </ol>

Table 1.2: Proposed and revised peace journalism model

## 2. Restructuring peace journalism

Although Galtung's (2000) peace journalism model has gained widespread acceptance by peace journalism scholars, we believe that it could benefit from further simplification in an effort to make the model more digestible to journalism practitioners. As Kempf (2007) argues, peace journalism can be broken down into two elements: *peace* and *journalism*. Journalism, although a form of public communication, is quite distinct from public relations – a tool used by governments and organizations to have a certain effect on the attitudes of external audiences (Hanitzsch, 2007). News publications that have received numerous accolades for their reporting universally rely on the ethic of truth-telling and avoidance of conflict of interest, including maintaining autonomy from government or corporate interests (see *The New York Times* staff, Sept. 2004; *The Washington Post* standards and ethics). These values are even institutionally recognized as tenets of ethical journalism, according to the *Society of Professional Journalists'* code of ethics (SPJ code of ethics).

In fact, many cultures around the world reflect a pattern of accepting professional values of detachment and non-involvement among journalism practitioners (Mellado, Moreira, Lagos, & Hernández, 2012). Mellado and her colleagues also found that only a handful of journalists in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico believed the journalists' role involved conveying a positive image of government or business leadership, or supporting official policies – characteristics of a propaganda-oriented press. News institutions and organizations throughout the Western world, then, continually socialize journalists to accept and practice the ethics of autonomy and truthfulness, regardless of the adopted journalistic model.

Rather than viewing this revised peace journalism model as an attempt to omit or devalue truthfulness in conflict reporting, we argue that through responsible reporting and ethical journalistic practices required in obtaining the other three orientations, truthfulness will prevail. According to Galtung (2000), the truth orientation involves exposing untruths on all sides of a conflict. We argue that this is accomplished through effective conflict exploration, historical perspectives, and a focus on invisible effects (all tenets of the peace/conflict orientation). Additionally, truth prevails when reporting focuses on suffering all over and gives voice to the voiceless (tenets of the people orientation), as well as focusing on structural and cultural concerns (components of the solution orientation). Although peace journalism toes the line with advocacy journalism – a framework of journalism commonly criticized for its similarity to public relations – peace journalism still represents a journalistic model that bears the ethical duty of truthfulness and autonomy. Due to its ethical obligations and normative expectations of peace/conflict, people, and solution orientations, we believe a distinct truth-orientation is redundant.

## 3. Theories

What factors contribute to the way media frames conflict news? Do media theorists' ideas offer another lens by which to make sense of Galtung's advocated mode of reporting, peace journalism? The theories applicable in this consideration include Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model, Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchy of influences theory, and Bourdieu's (1998) journalistic field model. Although Hackett (2006) examined peace journalism through these three theories, he did not undertake a close examination of the feasibility of each characteristic of peace journalism operationalized by Lee and Maslog (2005).

The propaganda model addresses the power government and corporations have in shaping the public agenda through control of the media. In this model, media coverage, especially during conflict, is elite-oriented—what is considered newsworthy depends on the ability of the journalist to relate the conflict to elite nations or focus on elite persons as mouthpieces—and media are not resilient against pressures from corporate ownership, advertisers, or sources. In a similar theory, the hierarchy of influences model assumes various levels of influences shape news content, and media, in turn, are successful in setting the agenda of the public. This theory offers five different levels of influence: micro (media professionals), whose own morality influences content; work routines that structure journalists' practices; organizational influences, including corporate structure and profitability; "extra-media influences" (Hackett, 2006: 4), which include sources, advertisers, technology and other outside factors; and ideological influences. Bourdieu's concept of journalism as a field, however, does not address the influences of media content but rather explains how journalism as a field is its own structured social space. This theory addresses the role of journalism as a field in relation to politics, economy, sociology, history, and other such fields (Bourdieu, 1998: 40). We will now closely examine the consolidated components of Galtung's orientations of peace versus war journalism—peace/conflict; people/elites; and solutions/victory—in light of the three theories.

## 4. Peace/conflict orientation

Although it may seem contradictory to combine peace and conflict orientations as a classification of peace journalism, the idea is that "peace journalists must first accept that a conflict exists" (Lee & Maslog, 2005). They must also report on "the underlying conflict formation, the roots of conflicts," and "the many people of good will

in and outside the arena struggling for an end to violence and transformation of the conflict" (Galtung, 2000: 159). Of Lee and Maslog's (2005) 13 traits of peace journalism, the peace/conflict orientation includes proactively reporting on a crisis long before violence occurs; reporting on invisible effects of war; exploring the conflict through a "win-win" orientation and opportunities for agreement that might lead to a solution; and the avoidance of labeling or using demonizing, victimizing, or emotive language. Conversely, war/violence frames place emphasis on a zero-sum game with one goal of winning (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). From this perspective, journalists present the news using war frames to express an "us-them" orientation and tend to be reactive in reporting, emphasizing the occurrence of violence.

#### **4.1. Proactive versus reactive reporting; reporting on causes and consequences**

The premise of peace journalism relies on the ability of the journalist to first understand the signs of conflict and begin reporting long before violence or war breaks out. The goal is for journalists to educate the public on key issues, bringing in background information on each party, including goals and potential solutions. Ideally, this proactive reporting could help ameliorate the situation before it reaches violence. Proactive reporting depends on the journalist's recognition of tension, disagreement and polarization (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000) and includes coverage or acknowledgement of structural or cultural conflicts.

Similar to the idea that journalists should practice proactive reporting is that journalists should provide comprehensive reporting on the causes of conflict. For example, what is the history between the conflicting parties, what events have led to disagreement, how have the parties suffered in the past? Furthermore, what long-term consequences might result or have resulted from conflict; if the conflict has escalated to violence, what longitudinal effects does the violence have on affected societies?

Is there room for proactive reporting in light of various media theories, such as the propaganda model and hierarchy of influences? Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model addresses the consideration of newsworthiness in terms of elitist interests. According to the theory, newsworthiness follows a socialized ideology premised on money and power. Therefore, to proactively report on causes and consequences of conflict in culturally or geographically distant locations may appear to be a wasted effort—unless the story discusses the impact the conflict may have on elite parties. However, given the United States' vast military and economic connections throughout the world, journalists would not always be hard-pressed to find an angle relevant to the U.S. and other Western audiences. Additionally, reporting on issues related to immigration (such as the Syrian refugee crisis) or income inequality – issues that suggest the potential for violence or other economic disruptions – can be considered proactive reporting.

According to Bourdieu's (1998) journalism as a field model, the journalistic field is autonomous from other socially constructed fields, but still suffers from economic and commercial pressures. Although Bourdieu's theory was constructed as a critique of French television media, the economic and political factors in French media are still factors in other Western media environments and, therefore, pose a threat to peace journalism (Hackett, 2006). Similar to the propaganda model, journalism as a field proposes a threat to peace journalism in the justification of newsworthiness: Entertainment and violence have increasing relevance as news values (Hackett, 2006).

Reese's (2001) hierarchy of influences model also poses challenges for proactive conflict coverage based on the economic concerns of resource allocation in the media environment. Due to a demand for greater profits, institutions are cutting expenses where they can; budgets for international reporting have been slashed over the past few decades, forcing many news organizations to rely on parachute journalists (Ricchiardi, 2006). By definition, the parachute journalist is reactive, jumping into a situation only when violence explodes. Ricchiardi (2006) argues that local reporters or reporters based in a particular culture for a longer period are more knowledgeable about an area's history and culture and have a better understanding of the impact of conflict on the region. Seib (2004) argues that journalists who arrive after the violence occurs have done the public a disservice by not covering the causes leading to the event in a "timely way that might alert the world in time to snuff out the fuse" (p. 24).

Yes, the propaganda and hierarchy of influences theories explain limitations of resources and pressure to produce stories quickly; however, journalists can work to redefine what is considered newsworthy through practice. This implies less production of what the public *wants* to know and more reporting on what the public *needs* to know. The challenge is to cultivate audiences who want to know what they need to know—to encourage a thirst for context. The Internet may be the perfect platform. With every breaking news story and stirring image, news organizations could provide a link to a Q & A, for example, that provides context in perhaps more easily digested nuggets. So, a photograph of a lifeless Syrian child lying on a coastline far from home could be accompanied by an easily updated explainer such as one provided by *Time* magazine, "The 5 Big Questions About Europe's Migrant Crisis" (Bajekal, 2015). The answers would only occasionally need updating but always could be readily available—and visible—to audience members perusing content. Although magazine writers are often given time and space to fully report the complexities of a conflict, hyperlinks provide a relatively inexpensive way to provide audiences with context.

Other multimedia tools may perhaps offer an even more engaging way to help audiences understand conflict from a new perspective, while eliciting empathy. One trend from 2015 involved the merger of news and virtual reality, resulting in *Syrian Journey*, the BBC's interactive game that allows audiences to customize their experience as a Syrian refugee (Edge, 2015). As users interact and make decisions from the perspective of a Syrian refugee fleeing for Europe, they are exposed to survivors' stories (BBC News staff, 2015).

Journalists who are experiencing a depletion of fiscal resources, rather than temporal resources, can pursue fellowships and other financial assistance and make a case for covering the world's *future* hot spots—places where tensions are brewing and where resources are scarce or unevenly divided. Often, this enables proactive reporting on structural conflict that could manifest into violence. A selling point to both funders and the news organizations' top decision-makers might be Ted Koppel's comment captured in Ricchiardi's (2006: 43) article:

Our enemies are recruiting and planning and preparing all over the world, and we are closing our foreign bureaus down. ...The approach now is, 'Well, don't worry about it. When something happens, we can take a jet and we can access satellites and we'll have it for you in 24 hours.' Have what? ...You'll have the aftereffects. You'll have the result of what you should have been telling America for the last six months. You'll have the crisis after it breaks. You're no longer a warning system.

#### 4.2. Invisible effects

For Galtung, another important component of the peace/conflict orientation is reporting not just on events themselves but also the long-term, longitudinal, or other invisible effects of those events. Visible effects, as defined by McGoldrick and Lynch (2000), are the measurable effects of conflict and violence, such as destruction, fatalities, injuries or displacements. These are the effects typically covered in war journalism pieces; however, peace journalism requires the journalist to analyze the invisible effects of each of these actions, as well, resulting in a larger picture of the realities of all parties involved in the conflict.

For each visible effect, there are several invisible effects that may have more long-term importance (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000; Galtung, 2000). The invisible effects they outline include the hatred that stems from bereavement; a psychological need for revenge and victory, perpetuating the cycle of violence; and damage to the social structure (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). In the long term, failing to address these invisible effects may make the society vulnerable to future violence (Galtung, 2000).

Reporting on the invisible effects shows the public the true long-term consequences of conflict; however, there is a time element involved for the journalist compiling information for a story. Under Reese's (2001) hierarchy of influences model, the work routines of journalists inhibit the ability to dedicate time to fully develop a story exposing invisible effects. One flaw in this theory Hackett (2006) notes is the assumption that Western work routines are universal. Although a shift in Western mass media routines may be necessary to provide journalists the time and resources to build a contextual framework for covering conflict, some journalists already excel at multi-tasking – working on covering multiple in-depth and complex stories at a time – and the journalism profession does honor those who have made the investment. (See, for example, Dele Olojede's 2005 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting for his reports in *Newsday* on the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.) In addition, news organizations also have the option of accepting material from individuals they have vetted. In 2014, *The Atlantic* published a firsthand piece from Hannah Myrick Anderson, a medical school student working in a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan. In her piece, Anderson showed how the Syrian civil war and resulting displacement of civilians had harmed the social fabric of the Syrians living in the camps. Rather than reporting on falling bombs, Myrick highlighted a far less visible effect of the war: the harm to women's health when they did not feel safe using the camp's restrooms. *The Atlantic* was able to share the story with its readers without having to pay to station a journalist in the camp for several weeks.

Of course, the visible effects of conflict may lead to exciting visuals and, as a result, more consumers and higher profits. The hierarchy of influences model, as well as the journalism as a field and propaganda models, helps explain the financial considerations for producing riveting visuals or depictions of violence. All three models, in some way, address the importance of audience size in media's market structures. Developing content according to insight from focus groups, news organizations deliver stories based on what will result in the most viewers, readers or listeners. News executives who are concerned about maintaining an audience "sometimes forsake news gathering while trying to conform to the public mood of the moment" (Seib, 2004: 30). Rooted in commercial interests, news organizations favor sensationalized articles over slower stories. This means there may be more market demand for stories illustrating the violence and visible effects of conflict than articles exploring the invisible and consequential effects of conflict.

However, we believe that modern multimedia trends in newsrooms provide potential to shift this dynamic yet again. In 2015, the *Miami Herald* produced an engaging and interactive series titled "Rats, bugs and 'natural' deaths at nation's largest women's prison" that incorporated testimonials, videos, graphics, and detailed data

throughout six articles (Brown, 2015). Kovacs (2016) credits the skillful, thoughtful use of multimedia elements for this series' high score on the American Press Institute's Engagement Index. This in-depth example of the psychological and physical toll associated with the indecencies at Lowell Correctional Institution for Women exemplifies successful reporting of invisible effects of structural issues.

Additionally, many renowned photographers already seem to gravitate toward covering social issues through a peace journalism lens. Greenwood (2012) highlighted the use of peace journalism frames in coverage of the 2009 presidential election in Iran. Analyzing visual framing in photographs submitted to the Pictures of the Year contest, Greenwood found that the award-winning images were more likely to portray violence or civil unrest. However, the majority of photographs submitted—what photographers deemed their best work—did not contain war journalism frames, but rather non-violent rallies, candidates, women participants, mass crowds, and even the Iranian soccer team. Greenwood's research exemplifies a challenge in the media industry: Although photographers in the field are practicing components of peace journalism and find value in their products, the professional photojournalists who collaborate as Picture of the Year judges perpetuated the notion that sensational war frames merit more attention. Nonetheless, the individual photojournalists doing the work have maintained their own standards for what constitutes excellent journalism.

#### **4.3. Avoid dichotomous labeling and partisan reporting**

A third component of Galtung's peace/war orientation involves his desire for journalists to avoid dichotomous labeling to indicate "good" or "bad" sides of a conflict as is typical in war journalism frames. "Dichotomizing between the bad guys and the good guys involves casting simplistic moral judgment about the parties involved and assigning blame to the party who started conflict" (Lee & Maslog, 2005: 320). Avoiding this component of peace journalism may be tricky for journalists to practice, as Lee & Maslog note, because journalists are prone to assigning roles (i.e., "villain" and "victims") in their stories. However, journalistic codes of ethics call for truthfulness, autonomy, and unbiased reporting (*The New York Times* staff, Sept. 2004; *The Washington Post* standards and ethics; SPJ code of ethics) that when followed would resolve the use of dichotomous language.

In an attempt to stay impartial, journalists should avoid assigning labels based on moral orientation because that label illustrates bias. For example, McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) explain: "no-one ever uses [demonizing labels] to describe himself or herself and so for a journalist to use them is always to take sides" (p. 32); instead, the journalist should refer to the parties by the names they give themselves, or use literal terms in descriptions, such as "bombers" rather than "terrorists." We believe Lee and Maslog's (2005) call for nonpartisan reporting fits here. Similar to the avoidance of dichotomizing language, nonpartisan reporting requires the reporter use the most factual objective phrasing in the linguistics or impressions provided in a story. As journalists provide audiences with context, Galtung (1986, 2000) and McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) ask that they do so as impartially as possible.

Providing accounts of atrocities or, conversely, attempts at resolution, evenly and by all parties of a conflict will help illustrate the conflict in its full context. This means avoiding the focus of one party's wrongdoings and instead reporting all wrongdoings, regardless of the side, and objectively addressing the allegations made by each side. This latter concept includes "making equal efforts to establish whether any evidence exists to back them up, treating the victims with equal respect and the chances of finding and punishing the wrongdoers as being of equal importance" (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000: 32). C.J. Chivers of *The New York Times* shows it is possible for journalists to report on the wrongdoings of their own government. He documents how the U.S. government originally denied military honors to U.S. troops harmed by chemical weapons and shows the long-term consequences to those troops' exposure (Chivers, 2014). Similarly, Chivers and Schmitt (2011) are not afraid to document when NATO airstrikes have destroyed the lives of others. Anthony Shadid did the same in his 2004 Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage on the impact of United States' bombs on the Iraqi people (Pulitzer.org, 2010).

Of course, most news organizations do not have the resources *The New York Times* invested in Chivers and Schmitt's long-term reporting, but the stories' existence points to the ability of components of peace journalism to survive market forces. The stories are also notable because they did not resemble the news content disseminated by embedded journalists that makes both the Pentagon and the public happy because of the bravery exhibited by troops through the reporting, as well as the pure entertainment value of the riveting content—what Seib (2004) refers to as similar to reality programming.

Although *The New York Times* uses its immense resources to investigate issues of public importance, it, too, has often relied on embedded reporters as a means of covering conflict. Having journalists working alongside military units during deployment poses a risk to impartiality during reporting and subjects them to government or military public relations manipulation. If a journalist spends time embedded with the military, there is a chance the jargon used by the military, or even a sense of the journalist as a member of that unit, seeps out in the reporting (Seib, 2004). No longer is the embedded journalist covering a militarized unit as "them," but frequent live

televised accounts may depict the journalist referring to group as "we," threatening that journalist's ability to critically cover the military.

Nonetheless, individual journalists still strive to maintain and protect their independence. For example, when freelance journalist Kevin Sites was embedded with the U.S. Marines in Fallujah, Iraq, he filmed a U.S. soldier shooting a presumably defenseless Iraqi insurgent point-blank. Over the past three weeks, Sites recounts, he had "developed a good relationship" with the Marines (Sites, 2007: 6). While reporting for NBC News, Sites also produced his own war blog, which the troops and their families greatly appreciated – for a time. In his book *In the hot zone*, Sites explains the agonizing decisions he made related to his video as he weighed how best to edit or not edit the video, keeping in mind the need to tell the truth about war, the video's potential impact on the soldier who fired, and public opinion in both the United States and the Middle East. Sites' stated goal is to be a responsible, ethical journalist – not a purveyor of propaganda for the U.S. military. Ultimately, he and his bosses released two versions of his video – a complete one and an edited one that includes the sound of the gunshot but not the image. The ensuing backlash, including death threats and hate mail, from military families and their supporters shows the commercial pressures faced by news organizations that report on the potential misdeeds of U.S. troops, but Sites' action also demonstrates a basic tenet of peace journalism – not avoiding stories that show one's own country as a potential perpetrator of violence.

The propaganda model would assert that government and corporate interests would directly contribute to an "us" versus "them" approach, especially in the context of Western media and in the use of embedded journalists during media campaigns. A rather significant challenge to peace journalism exists in conflict coverage in the journalistic practice of news domestication. Domestication refers to telling the story in a way that renders it more familiar and consumable to local audiences (Gurevitch et al., 1993). From this perspective of news construction, journalists tell stories of events in a way that garners attention and comprehension from their audience. As an outcome of domestication and general public acceptance, news is often constructed to depict dichotomous labels. Sometimes this is due to fear of reprimand for appearing sympathetic to other parties, but often it is ingrained in the journalistic culture. Still, the Chivers and Schmitt examples show the ideologies can be overcome.

#### **4.4. Avoid victimizing, demonizing, and emotive language**

Closely related to acknowledging and understanding bias is an awareness of government-promoted labels (such as "terrorist" or "terrorism") in communicating information. Using precise language, rather than victimizing, demonizing or emotive language, is a key precept of peace journalism.

McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) define victimizing language as terminology that only depicts what has been "done *to*" a group of people and what could be "done *for*" that group of people. The disempowering language includes phrases like "tragedy," "defenseless," "devastated," and "pathetic" (p. 31). They argue that journalists should report in ways that *empower* the people and describe what the people in trying situations have done or could do. An example of this includes the use of feature stories that "accentuate the positive of an individual or individuals in miserable circumstances by finding something innovative they have done to survive. Give a sense of how their day pans out" (Apps, 2009: 263). Empowering the subjects through feature-writing further disseminates the story of their resilience, rather than treats the subjects merely as those afflicted or victims of conflict.

Examples of demonizing language include "vicious," "cruel," "brutal," and "barbaric" (McGoldrick and Lynch, 2000). The use of these terms reflects the journalist's moral judgment of the action and confines the journalist to one side of the conflict, as well as furthers the emotional appeal of the supposedly afflicted side toward violence. In this sense, journalists should report what they know about specific events and give as much information as possible regarding the reliability of other reports or descriptions of the wrongdoing (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). In other words, the peace journalist should follow the maxim for good writing: show, don't tell. Precise details about events are better than demonizing labels. They also are more truthful.

Similar to demonizing language, the use of emotive language can further escalate conflict by emotionally resonating with audiences. McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) suggest reporters avoid words such as "genocide," "tragedy," or "massacre," and instead be precise about what is known. Not to be confused with minimizing suffering, the avoidance of emotive language is merely an attempt to maintain rationality in reporting and "reserve the strongest language for the gravest situations" (p. 32). In other words, carefully chosen words are more accurate and more truthful.

Peace journalism requires that a Western journalist reporting for a Western audience not be a product of the dominant ideology, where othering and ethnocentrism lead to both dichotomous labeling and emotive, victimizing, or demonizing language. Propaganda theory, the hierarchy of influences model and the journalistic field model all acknowledge the importance of public acceptability to economic factors (i.e., ratings); therefore, it could be risky for journalists to appear as sympathizers to groups determined by the government or populous as evil or bad. For example, if military or government media representatives discuss conflict in terms of demonizing

language ("terrorists," "savages," etc.,) media must be conscious of this terminology and find language that is not prone to propagating violence or fueling hatred (just as discussed in dichotomous labeling).

In a study of conflicting frames used by Australian press and Indonesian press in "War on Terror" coverage, Mahony (2010) found that the Indonesian press was more likely to contextualize acts of violence from militant groups according to the group identities behind the attacks, rather than the Islamic affiliation. In addition, "the main topic of 7.6 percent of the Indonesian articles in this sample was the rejection of the bombers as Muslims because their violent acts and hate-filled values were incongruous with the peaceful principles of Islam" (Mahony, 2010: 747), whereas the majority of articles analyzed in the Australian sample contextualized acts of violence as terrorism by Islamic extremists or Muslim radicals.

Reuters addresses the use of descriptive and specific language labeling in its handbook on journalism, expressing the expectation that reporters avoid "referring to specific actions or events as terrorism or terror, or to individuals or groups as terrorist, unless actually quoting someone" (Reuters Handbook on Journalism, 2015). Reuters clarifies that it is the responsibility of the reporter to communicate the identity of subjects or context of events with specificity to avoid using generally ambiguous terms. The Reuters guideline arguable paves the way for actively choosing not to directly quote officials using demonizing labels.

#### **4.5. Win-win orientation**

Galtung's fifth component of the peace/war orientation is using a "win-win" approach: Peace journalism frames should depict the solution of the conflict in terms of the best possible outcome for each party. Rather than report with a zero-sum orientation, Galtung calls for journalists to examine the possibility of a win-win approach. Journalists could identify potential win-win scenarios by revealing the nature of the conflict—asking, "*who is involved*," "*what are the goals of each party*," "*what issues are important to each party*," and "*where are the relevant parties willing to negotiate*" (Galtung, 2000)?

Additionally, framing the news in conjunction with a "win-win" orientation does not appear to detract from audience interest. In a series of experimental studies, Kempf (2005) measured responses to escalation- and de-escalation-oriented news articles on three events in the former Yugoslavia, where escalation-oriented frameworks focused on "win-lose" scenarios, identified an aggressor, and reported on ways to stop the aggressor. De-escalation-oriented frames addressed the overarching issues of a conflict and how they could be resolved. Through this experiment, Kempf found that news with de-escalation frames had the same effect as escalation frames in arousing audience interest. Although many studies illustrate the complexity of the relationship between media frames and audience interest (Kempf, 2005; Möckel, 2009; Schaefer, 2006; Thiel & Kempf, 2014) - often depending on text format, gender of audience member, *a priori* mental modes, and other contexts - it has not been empirically determined that escalation-orientation frames are more appealing or interesting among news viewers, readers, or listeners.

Conflicts are rarely simple (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000; Galtung, 2000). The journalist should expand on the situational factors leading up to the conflict to include the goals and perspectives of the affected smaller groups, increasing the likelihood of developing a broader range of conflict outcomes and better definition of what resolution may entail for each side of the conflict. This tenet implies journalists must alter the questions asked of their sources to identify the reasoning behind the conflict and overall goals of all stakeholders.

#### **5. People/elite orientation**

Galtung's people orientation calls for giving voice to the voiceless and recognizing that ordinary people can present worthy ideas that contribute to peace. From Galtung's perspective, peace journalism would focus on suffering of all people from every side of the conflict. This orientation stresses the value to providing a voice to those who may otherwise be voiceless, including women, the elderly, and children (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000) and focusing "on common people as actors and sources of information" (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Alternatively, war journalism frames focus on "our" atrocities—the suffering of "our" victims—and typically portray elitist efforts toward peace, opposed to peace journalism's focus on all peacemakers, not just elite.

##### **5.1. Giving a voice to the voiceless**

This people-oriented approach to journalism means sourcing information from the people engaged in and affected by the conflict, who may not otherwise be heard. Done correctly, these interviews or analyses can help a journalist understand and report the invisible effects of war, violence and conflict.

From a propaganda model perspective, this tenet is unlikely to exist. War journalism frames are elite-oriented and focus on leaders throughout the peace process and rely on elites as sources of information. The propaganda model supports this notion of source favoritism and asserts that one influence on media is the reliance on



government for information. However, this is not the case in all media practices. The flaw in this theory assumes that media across the globe rely on government-fed information and operate consciously according to elite influences (advertisers, owners, etc.) Elaborating on this further, the hierarchy of influences model addresses the work routines of journalists and the tendency to contact government sources in military or conflict zones. Numerous studies have documented U.S. media's reliance on official sources on foreign policy issues (Bennet, 1990; Entman, 1991). For peace journalism to prevail, journalists must somewhat detach themselves from government sources and seek perspectives otherwise unheard. Understandably, mainstream media cannot altogether ignore the leaders of their countries; however, not all journalists need to go to the news conferences or briefings. Some can spend time with civilian sources and develop an understanding of non-elitist viewpoints. Indeed, sometimes that reporting is honored as was Anthony Shadid's work for *The Washington Post* on the Iraqi people's "struggle to deal with the legacy of war" (Pulitzer.org, 2010). Ricchiardi (2006) asserts that reporters familiar with the history and culture of an area are more likely to know whom to talk to in seeking information or new perspectives. Although war journalism reporting cannot be altogether avoided, perhaps it can be mitigated through peace journalism stories. Of course, finding local sources requires more effort. Galtung and Ruge (1965) acknowledged that decades ago: The more culturally distant an event occurs, the higher the tendency to report on elite interests, such as how the event will impact elite nations.

## 5.2. Multiparty orientation

A more people-oriented approach naturally allows for a multiparty orientation, another component of the people/elite orientation. Giving weight to all voices affected by the conflict may establish the journalist or media entity as sympathetic to parties castigated by the public for political reasons; however, Seib (2004) argues, "patriotism does not require backing down from truth" (p. 32). In conflict resolution, the more solutions or alternatives to violence, the more likely the conflict can be resolved in amicable or peaceful ways (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). Therefore, threats to this characteristic of peace journalism are similar to those discussed in the sections related to dichotomous labeling, using particular language and "win-win" orientations.

According to McGoldrick and Lynch (2000), the peace journalism approach requires journalistic insight into each party's sentiments, fears, resentments, and grievances. This also includes highlighting grassroots peace initiatives—parties working to create dialogue between conflicted parties. In a 2012 study, Lynch and McGoldrick analyzed the effect of peace/war frames on Australian and Filipino audiences and found significant effects on the viewers' sense of *hopelessness*, where exposure to peace journalism stories that "gave a voice to all parties—not merely the government and main opposition party" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2012: 1047)—left viewers feeling less hopeless, less scared, and less disgusted.

## 6. Solution / victory

The solution orientation in peace journalism aims to capture peace initiatives and present information in a way that exposes structures, cultures, and opportunities for peaceful coexistence. Recognizing that conflict does not always lead to violence, this framework offers hope that peace can be achieved before and after violence breaks out. Peace journalism encourages emphasis on the aftermath of the conflict and active engagement in the community on behalf of the reporter to continue coverage of the conflict-stricken state as it achieves resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). Conversely, war journalism's victory orientation assumes peace can only be achieved as a product of victory and ceasefire. Contradictory to peace journalism's obligation to report on the aftermath of conflict, war journalism implies that the media depart from the conflict area and only return if violence arises again (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). In other words, war journalism accepts the government's view of when a conflict is over. Peace journalism is dependent on verifying the truth by staying in the area and continuing coverage.

### 6.1. Seeking solutions

Understanding the goals of each party may help the journalist identify commonalities or a basis for solutions. Galtung (2000) argues that the "Golden Rule" of conflict states, "a conflict with only two parties and the same goal (like territory, control, victory) exists only in abstract models. Real life conflicts are more complex: there are more parties, more goals" (p. 82). By recognizing the expanse of stakeholders and each party's goals, the journalist can report on patterns or combinations of interests and goals that could lead to solutions and resolution.

Using the example of Search for Common Ground's news service as a non-governmental organization that produces "balanced and solution-oriented articles," Peleg (2006) believes conflict resolution reporting can effectively dissuade public support for conflict continuation by limiting sensational stories that drive the desire for retaliation or violence, and instead focus on providing balanced and contextual accounts. "Such a balanced and composed account, devoid of the cutthroat anticipation for action does not serve the stimulation of readers

toward supporting the escalation of conflict" (Peleg, 2006: 15). Journalists practicing peace journalism, therefore, would be encouraging public discourse on events and conflicts that were reported in a way that promoted "constructive perspectives"(p. 14), leading to enlightened public discourse.

In an almost identical argument, Hackett (2006) proposes that the journalistic field, in the context of social structure, is weak, and one solution that enables peace journalism as a practice is the ability to limit "the dominance of mass media" and challenge the traditional definition of institutional journalism through the use of "oppositional and grassroots Internet-based outlets" (p. 10). Common Ground News Service is accomplishing just this by providing representative reporting outside of a mass-mediated institution.

## **6.2. Reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation**

The popular focus in war journalism frames consists of the reporting on the *here* and *now*, with little emphasis on post-violence or post-conflict reporting (Galtung, 2000; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). Peace journalism favors the idea that journalism should report on the conflict's aftermath, no longer pontificating on what the long-term effects may be, but observing and reporting on how the conflict affected stakeholders and invisible effects that are still developing. This stage of reporting relies on the journalists' ability to maintain contact with the afflicted people and area to continue the story of the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation.

To help prevent recurring conflict, media should focus on the issues that remain and may still fuel hatred, resentment, or future violence; and asking, "what is being done to strengthen the means on the ground to handle and resolve conflict non-violently, to address development or structural needs in the society and to create a culture of peace" (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000)? In many ways, the journalists are serving as watchdogs holding the government accountable for sustained peace after a treaty or deal have been reached.

The theoretical implications already addressed in the sections on proactive reporting and reporting on causes and consequences hold true for this characteristic, as well. Economic and political factors restrict the way news organizations continue coverage after peace treaties or resolution begins. Parachute journalists now may simply navigate to a different region area to cover a new story (Ricchiardi, 2006). This eliminates continual post-conflict coverage on the reconstruction, rehabilitation and long-term resolution. When news organizations can only schedule periodic updates from the conflict region, perhaps a solution is to seek funding through new startups that are dedicated to connecting freelancers and editors, similar to dating websites (Dyer, 2014). Companies like Storyhunter work to "match editors' needs and journalists' story ideas" (Dyer, 2014: 34). In addition, other groups, such as Reporters Without Borders or Human Rights Watch, also provide financial assistance and on-the-ground training to reporters in conflict zones (Hammer, 2014).

## **7. Conclusion**

As Hackett (2006) also discovered, the propaganda model, hierarchy of influences model, and journalism as a field theory all present challenges for peace journalism; however, in consolidating and exploring the characteristics of peace journalism outlined by Lee and Maslog (2005), we have found evidence that peace journalism can and does exist in Western media environments. In other areas of the world, predominantly conflict-stricken territories, there are media and training organizations that dedicate resources to developing "responsible" reporting of conflicts. A great example of peace journalism at work is Search for Common Ground (Peleg, 2006). By acknowledging that conflict is inevitable, but violence is not, Search for Common Ground's Common Ground News Service strives to bring people together, share goals and differences, and find solutions to conflict before violence breaks out, during war—working to end violence—and in the aftermath (About CGNews, Common Ground News Service).

Although institutions like Search for Common Ground are active in conflict areas, there needs to be a mass mediated standard for responsible reporting of conflict and violence. Reporting on the here and now is not enough to educate and inform public opinion; conflict coverage should involve dismissing the notion of being a reactionary journalist and instead telling a story providing historical context from all sides of the conflict. Even in the face of economic constraints, news organizations can find creative ways to partner and/or train local news organizations of conflict-stricken areas, to procure contextualized and impartial accounts of the precursory events, ongoing struggle, or aftermath.

Indeed, even mainstream profitable news organizations recognizing the need to extend conflict coverage in war zones find a way, as evidenced by the resources devoted to coverage by Chivers, Schmitt, and Shadid. From a historical perspective, the argument against peace journalism based on limited funding or resources should be reconsidered. Western media cannot rely on parachute journalism to construct the news in its full context. Through no fault of the journalists, it is unreasonable to expect parachute journalists to become an expert in the history and culture of all geographic areas included in their coverage. Instead, news organizations should

cooperate with non-profits such as Reporters Without Borders or Human Rights Watch to help provide the contextualized content needed to regain the public's appetite for news that illuminates rather than provokes.

Hackett (2006) concludes that one solution to enable peace journalism, as a practice, is the citizens' power in demanding a better media. From an entertainment value perspective, peace journalism frames have no less power than war journalism frames in "awakening reader interest" (Thiel & Kempf, 2014), and Lynch and McGoldrick (2012) found that audiences felt "less hopeless" after viewing peace journalism pieces. Therefore, perhaps it is not necessarily in the public's hands to demand peace journalism practices, but is a responsibility of educational or media institutions training journalists to ensure journalists and future editors understand the value and impact of fully contextualized reporting, as well as its newsworthiness as public need-to-know information. Journalism training should also address how reporters can identify systematic bias of sources and motivations of sources in providing information. Understanding the motivations of sources and the bias implied in such words as "terrorist" or "terrorism" will help news organizations produce content that is more congruent with peace journalism.

It does not seem so far-fetched to think characteristics of peace journalism could be incorporated into codes of ethics or used to describe responsible conflict coverage, if they are not already addressed. Reflecting on Greenwood's (2012) study, photojournalists submitted what they deemed to be their most award-worthy work to the Pictures of the Year competition, and from a framing perspective, the majority of submissions did not depict violence. The challenge in Greenwood's example, then, is the institutional desire to award war journalism photographs depicting violence, and the lack of reinforcement by the judges by not awarding peace journalism photographs.

Evaluating the current and past states of conflict coverage across the globe, there is hope for peace journalism even in the challenges imposed by governments, institutions, and professional routines. Although Western media may have to rely on a paradigmatic cultural shift in the journalism industry to fully acknowledge and understand the benefits of peace journalism reporting, international organizations that focus on providing comprehensive and holistic coverage have already been small-scale exemplars for peace journalism viability. The hope for institutional change, then, may rely somewhat on the ability of journalists to incrementally integrate peace journalism methodologies into current journalistic practices. Journalists should embrace peace journalism for its ability to help audiences make sense of and resolve conflict. Numerous characteristics of peace journalism suggested by Maslog and Lee (2005) already incorporate the idea of truth- rather than propaganda-focused reporting. The overall concept of truth-telling, then, is a given that becomes operationalized in the details of reporting all sides of a conflict, the causes and consequences, and the voice of the voiceless in ways that do not dehumanize or demonize.

Future research could include the prevalence of peace journalism frames in conflict coverage by Western media organizations. Additionally, have institutional accolades, such as the Pulitzer Prize, acknowledged or awarded peace journalism? Findings of this research could be impactful in understanding the current state of global conflict coverage, as well as cultural acknowledgement of the importance and value in peace frames.

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