

How to teach War and Peace journalism: professional challenges when encountering propaganda and fake news

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Abstract

This article summarizes the authors' experience from nearly 20 years of teaching war and peace journalism. The theoretical point of departure was Johan Galtung's theory of peace journalism. Through the years, the framework of the course has been developed including wider historical and cultural perspectives, including post-colonial studies, gender perspectives and journalist safety. Since this has been a course with a large proportion of international students, the authors suggest that their participation has enriched the course as well as had an impact on practicing and teaching journalism in many countries.

Key words: Teaching conflict reporting; war and peace journalism; post-colonial studies; discourse analysis

Introduction

Whether working at the home desk, or reporting from the battlefield and in situations of intense conflict, journalists need knowledge based on solid theories and knowledge of history and current affairs, as tools for navigation and contextualization.

Today, fake news has become a household name in public debates. We need to remember that a prominent example of fake news was the U.S.A's 'fact' of the existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction in the year 2003, perhaps the one fake item with the most far-reaching consequences in recent history.

Johan Galtung's model for peace journalism has been used as an important part of teaching war and peace journalism both at the bachelor and master level at our institution, more comprehensively so at the graduate

level. One of the reasons is that the model has been used as a practical tool for journalists in the field (Lynch 2013), and as a theoretical tool to understand the history of peace (Eidsforth & Ottosen 2020). The MA module (20 ETCS), named 'Globalization, War and Peace Journalism' (GWPJ), has been offered at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet, previously Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences) since 2002.¹ More than 200 students from across the world have attended, and the course evaluations have overall been very positive.² Later, some of these students have used the course in their careers as journalists, while others have used it to gain academic journalism training positions in their home countries by implementing a similar course module there.

This article, may be read as an exposé of the benefits of teaching conflict journalism to mature students from several corners of the world. It explains the historical development of the course, through gradual changes of curriculum and approaches, and discusses specific points from critical examination of Galtung's model that may be used as a pedagogical tool in class to raise awareness of issues useful to students as future reporters. Furthermore, it suggests other theoretical approaches to be included, such as post-colonial studies and critical discourse analysis. In the following, we will summarize some of the pedagogical experiences.

A Normative Model ...?

The point of departure for the course curriculum has been Galtung's model on war and peace journalism (see appendix), as well as introduction to post-colonial studies and globalization theories. War Reporting is often linked to a dualistic method, a zero-sum game where the winner takes all. This entails that war coverage in the mainstream media tends towards "a rally-around" the flag approach with national interest overshadowing professional journalist standards when conflicts are presented in breaking news (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2014). One recent example could be the simplistic reduction of the complex conflict in Venezuela to a personal battle between President Nicolás Maduro and his opponent Juan Guaido. Galtung's model offers an alternative approach by putting more emphasis on structural issues like earlier historical experiences with US hegemony in Latin America and the battle for the rich oil resources in Venezuela. A potential consequence of lack of a critical alternative approach is that war journalism can contribute to escalating conflicts by reproducing propaganda and promoting war.

Some critics have characterized Galtung's model for being simplistic and violating the notion of journalist objectivity. BBC reporter David Loyn (2007) is the best-known opponent to the peace journalism model within the journalist community. In a special issue of the journal *Conflict & Communication* online (2007), opponents and defenders of peace journalism discuss the model. Loyn prefers to use terms such as 'truthfulness' and 'objectivity' as journalistic guidelines, even though he acknowledges the limitations inherent in those terms: 'In 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' (Loyn, 2007, p. 5). Loyn's approach seems to underrate the importance of context, including issues such as the presence of propaganda and PSYOPS at the battlefield. A reporter needs to understand that the propaganda-war starts before the actual war. If the reporter is not aware of this (s)he will be unable to warn the public about and be subject to the propaganda trap (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2014). The special issue mentioned above may be actively used as part of an educational model in order to inspire discussion and in a sober manner give the students a variety of arguments in their approach to Galtung's model.

Concerning objectivity, Lynch and McGoldrick suggest that: 'Peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices, about what to report and how to report it, which create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent, developmental responses to conflict.' (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). Peace journalism as originally suggested by Galtung in a model for alternative and constructive conflict reporting may serve as a suggestion for a new type of investigative reporting. An essential contribution in the proposed education kit is to introduce important professional norms and techniques. Present conflict coverage is often violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented. A potential consequence is that war journalism contributes to escalating conflicts by reproducing propaganda and promoting war (Galtung, 2002). Furthermore, this conventional reporting demonstrates journalism as a field of weak autonomy vs. the political field (Bourdieu, 1998, 2005; Champagne, 2005), not least since media independence in times of war and serious conflict is harder to achieve than in everyday reporting.

Galtung's notion of peace journalism takes a moral and ethical point of departure, acknowledging the fact

1 Until 2015, the course was a part of the Global journalism programme, organized as a joint effort between Oslo and Akershus University College and the University of Örebro, Sweden.

2 Based on anonymous written evaluation forms distributed at the end of the course. In later years, when quantitative measures have been applied, from 1-7, the average has been above 6.

that media themselves play a role in the propaganda war. It presents a conscious choice: to identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented approach. This, in turn, implies a focus on possible suggestions for peace that the parties to the conflict might have an interest in hiding. Peace journalism is people-oriented in the sense that it focuses on the victims (often civilian casualties and civilian survivors) and people's everyday lives, and thus gives a 'voice to the voiceless', one of journalism's ethical ideals. It is also truth-oriented, in the sense that it reveals untruth on all sides of a conflict and focuses on propaganda as a means of continuing the war (Ottosen, 2010). Moreover, the frontiers of peace journalism will be expanded to incorporate complementary models such as human rights journalism to address concerns of professional neutrality of conflict sensitive journalism based on the just peace approach (Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2014, 2015).

Peace journalism approaches can contribute to new courses in journalism schools and universities and inspire new NGOs, as well as new web sites for critical thinking among politicians to meet old and new challenges in this field.

Within the field of peace research, Galtung's model has generally been welcomed, and Majid Tehranian has even called it 'a system of global media ethics' (Tehranian 2002, p. 58). From this viewpoint, the question is whether it works in practice. This question could of course be answered rhetorically by referring to all the university courses, seminars, books and articles on the subject (see examples below).

It works in practice, it is often referred to (Ross & Tehranian 2008). However, when it comes to bridging the gap between this particular field theory and journalistic practice, Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick have, inspired by Galtung, contributed through their textbook *Peace Journalism* (2005), an attempt by two academics with a journalistic background to combine the insights from journalistic experiences with the theory from academic peace studies. Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung have also developed the peace journalism theory building upon Lynch's experience as a journalist in Sky News (Galtung & Lynch 2010, see also Ottosen & Edsforth 2020).

Including Critical Discourse Analysis

Acknowledging the influence of this model does not necessarily mean that one has to accept the entire concept of peace journalism as defined by Johan Galtung himself (Galtung, 2002). The model has strong points, but while introduced to students, should also undergo critical scrutiny. In earlier works, the model has been criticized for underestimating the visual aspects of war and peace reporting (Ottosen, 2008). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is suggested as a supplement to the peace journalism model (Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2014, 2015). A combination of Galtung's peace journalism model and CDA has the advantage of being able to include a historical framework for case studies. Ruth Wodak's (1996) historical approach to critical discourse analysis is a particularly useful supplement to Galtung's model since it compensates for the somewhat strict framework of the model and opens up for an inclusion of long historical perspectives in the analysis. A challenge is the obvious time constraints in one limited course module, but our MA programme also offers particular modules in CDA. Another advantage of CDA is that it is a method for studying communicative action from a linguistic as well as a social science perspective. The concept 'discourse' refers to all kinds of communicative actions, such as language use in written or spoken form, visual images, gestures and behavior (Fairclough, 1995, p. 54; Van Dijk, 1998, pp. 193–4). Since Galtung's model builds on a rather simple dichotomy (war- or peace-orientated journalism), CDA can introduce other aspects and nuances. This includes analyzing what Bourdieu (2005) refers to as 'doxa' (unwritten rules and conventions accepted in the journalist field) which may cause omissions and marginalization of some perspectives, and topics not brought into the news frame; either through journalist self-censorship or censorship and/or repressive action by people in power (see also Lippe, 1991, 2016).

However, there is empirical evidence that much war reporting in mainstream media is constructed along the lines that Galtung suggests. Empirical findings from scholars such as Lynch (2013), Hackett & Schroeder (2008) are living proofs that his model is indeed a useful research and teaching tool, inspiring readers to deeper reflections. By using CDA as a supplement, we offer a more comprehensive analysis of case studies, including the systematic suppression of certain crucial aspects as well as the voices of ordinary people in the public discourse on war and peace issues. By discussing, through CDA, for example what is not present in a news text, as well as what is taken for granted, backgrounded or highlighted, we can provide examples of complex discursive constructions and structures that may contribute to conflict escalations and wars (Fairclough, 1995; Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2014).

Some scholars have also suggested combining peace journalism theory with other frameworks. Carroll & Hackett (2006) see peace journalism theory in the light of Chomsky's and Herman's 'propaganda model' (Herman & Chomsky 2002) and Bourdieu's field theory. This is an interesting contribution. Hackett's approach is motivated by the question of whether peace journalism can work in practice. He concludes that the need for change in mainstream foreign reporting is obvious and sees peace journalism as a potential supplement. Nevertheless, he argues that peace journalism cannot work without strong support from public opinion appealing for a different kind of journalism (Carroll and Hackett 2006).

Gender perspectives

Gender issues are vital to understand all features of journalism, and therefore, important to address in journalism education. For decades, the journalist profession has been dominated by men, both in terms of division of labour within the profession, in content (women marginalized) and in choice of topics and framing of stories. In this respect, war journalism has not been an exception. The environment among war correspondents is characterized by masculine hegemony (Steiner, 2016). This is about to change. As late as in the 1980s, the student recruitment to our institution was approximately 70 per cent men. The opposite is now the case. How this will change the profession in the future is too early to say. Currently, the majority of foreign correspondents in the Norwegian National Public Broadcasting (NRK) are women.

Galtung's model does not have a comprehensive gender perspective (Lippe and Ottosen, 2016). Studies demonstrate that women reporters are being discriminated in several manners (Orgeret, 2016; Høiby, 2016). The traditional masculine culture in war reporting underestimates women reporters' ability to cover war and conflict on an equal basis with men. Editors often use the fact that women are vulnerable to harassment and sexual abuse as an excuse to exclude them from reporting from conflict zones (Høiby & Ottosen 2015, 2016). Increased violence against journalists is an increasing problem for both female and male reporters. Reporters need editors who take security issues seriously, but they do not need patronizing editors using security as an excuse to keep women reporters away from conflict zones. In addition, female role models have existed for more than a hundred years, and highlighting these experiences is vital (Gellhorn, 1994; Emerson 1985, 1991; Edwards 1988).

Galtung's model, when addressing gender, seems to focus mainly on the role of women as victims, supplemented by a general acceptance that women are more open to peace ideas than are men. He implies that women are more open to positive news (such as peace ideas) than men, who apparently tend to be more interested in negative news: 'violence, where the male hunter-warrior has to be on guard' (Galtung 2002, p. 267 in Lippe & Ottosen, 2016, p.14). Furthermore, he iterates '[...] women should be more interested in peace news than in war news tallies well with the assumption of women as better peace workers/peace carriers. If women believe more than men in horizontal networking for the care of other humans ...' (op.cit.).

Galtung selects the feminist position based on gender difference (see Eide & Orgeret 2015), i.e. that women will be better prepared to work as peace journalists than men, as most of the violence in the world is perpetrated by men (he suggests 90 per cent). He then presents the assumption that the 'vested interest for women to change the situation is obvious; just as there is vested interest for males in preserving the status quo'. He adds '[...] there are also other reasons [...] though this is in no way meant to suggest that the burden of this civilizing mission should fall on women alone. Peace is more holistic than war; women may be more sensitive to a broader range of variables than men' (Galtung 2002, p. 268).

Although the particular referents for masculinities and femininities vary cross-culturally, they are inter-related within any one culture. Gender influences all our identities, so that race, age, class, ethnicity, ability and nationality are also gender-specific identities (Lippe & Ottosen 2016; see also Crenshaw, 1989 on intersectionality). Essentializing women reporters in this way may implicitly disregard how reporters of all genders are to a large degree socialized into an existing journalistic field culture, and on the other hand, the fact that male journalists represent a wide variety of approaches.

The Case of Afghanistan

Since Norway has had troops on the ground in Afghanistan since 2002, we have found Norwegian warfare

useful as an illustrative educational case. By critically analyzing Norwegian media coverage, we have tried to raise awareness among students on how to develop a reflexive critical approach of journalistic challenges in reporting from/about foreign countries in a war situation.

During the Norwegian warfare in Afghanistan, the Norwegian media coverage has been influenced by a 'humanitarian discourse' of justification used by Norwegian politicians. Although all the political parties in the Norwegian parliament (Stortinget) agreed to support the U.S.A. after 9/11, and furthermore to contribute to the so-called Global War on Terror (GWT), a large part of the public has been critical about the deployment of Norwegian troops in Afghanistan. One reason for the low proportion of critical reporting may well be that most of the journalists covering the conflict have been embedded with Norwegian or other Western troops.

A powerful exception is one of our former MA course students, who decided to move to Kabul and work there as a freelance journalist. After several critical articles and television reports, he published the book *Drømmekrigen* (The Dream War, Hammer, 2008). This contributed to more critical reporting with an increased focus on Afghan civilians while questioning the purpose and indeed the results of the invasion and warfare. A recent volume treats in-depth the history of the Norwegian presence in the Faryab province, which remained their responsibility for more than a decade (Hammer, 2019).

When Hammer settled in Kabul as a freelance, he was able to create his own network. His independence of Norwegian forces was demonstrated when a Norwegian soldier by accident killed a local craftsman at a control post with his little son as witness and passenger. Hammer was able to trace the son's family and then present the story of the victims, finding the way to the headline in a major Norwegian newspaper.³ Another MA student (Fondenæs 2011) wrote his thesis about this story. Later, both these former students and several others contributed to an anthology on the coverage of the Afghanistan war (Eide & Ottosen, 2013).

Other more recent examples from our exchange students include a series of term papers focusing on journalism in their home country. One powerful example is a student from Pakistan who monitored the tweets of journalists in India and Pakistan around the times of heightened tension between the two countries in early 2019.

By the use of NATO/ISAF propaganda (see below, PSYOPS) through a lookalike newspaper, Sada-e Azadi, the civilian population of Afghanistan has been promised a future democracy, including the liberation of women (Bøe-Hansen in FOFO4, 30/4-2007, p. 87). This fits well into the pattern described by Jemima Repo:

"The parallel is made between the American-backed officials as enlightened and progressive in support of women's rights and westernization, and the Islamists as Islamic fundamentalist ex-warriors still bloodthirsty and insistent on a backward society that oppresses women. The division between good/bad men divides Afghan masculinities into two opposing groups that sustains the US self-image of democratic liberator used in the humanitarian discourse for additional justification for the war. The US and its Afghan supporters are still characterized as woman-friendly, and any association with the Taliban as woman-repressive." (Repo 2006, p. 66).

A gender sensitive approach as mentioned above will pay attention to the differences among men and among women, rather than exaggerating them. What is implied, though, are, first and foremost, representations as intertwined with identity categories such as state, nation, ethnicity and others (Eide 2016b; Lippe & Ottosen 2016).

Examples may vary, but the shift in political argument supportive of the Norwegian presence in Afghanistan, is a case for in-depth studies. As it became increasingly clear that the US-led warfare did not rid Afghanistan (or the world) of the terrorist threat, more emphasis was put on the promotion of women's rights and girl education (Lippe, 2012; Eide & Skaufjord, 2014), while the plight of Afghan civilians in general, with some prominent exceptions, was not much covered (Moen, 2009, 2013). One may conclude that some of the dominant media discourses shifted from the terrorist threat to one on how a Western *we* had an obligation to save Afghan women; or as Spivak (1988) puts it, to save brown women from brown men. The example above also indicates how a broader post-colonial perspective is beneficial in teaching peace journalism.

Post-colonial perspectives, contrapuntal readings

The historical legacy of Western representation of the non-Western other is of importance, and as new po-

³ Dagbladet, 30/07/2009

⁴ FOFO: Forsvarets Forum, independent magazine published within the Norwegian military.

litical debates on the legacy of colonialism occur (Schipper, 1999; Sardar 1998), such academic approaches are of great importance. Said suggested a connection, albeit not a stable or mechanical one, between hierarchical representation of others (nations, groups) and ideological legitimation of war (Said 1981, 1994, 1995; see also Eide 2011). As a cornerstone within these perspectives, the history of othering processes (Ashcroft et al., 1999) is central to the understanding of hostility, degradation of human beings, groups, minorities, and nations. Our MA module includes such perspectives, taking into account the unequal powers of global as well as national media and their influence. Another challenge is the continuous update of reading lists and teaching schedules to fit global changes, which for example means including the increasing impact of climate change in generating global conflicts (Eide & Kunelius, 2012; Kunelius et al., 2017).

Another issue of importance in journalist and academic analysis of warfare is what Edward Said labels ‘contrapuntal reading’. Simplified, it is a practice of seeing the world from more places than your own. According to Said it entails a:

“[...] simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominant discourse acts. [...] In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalised or discursively stable entities.” (Said 1994, pp. 59-60).

Said emphasizes that contrapuntal reading must take into account processes both of imperialism and resistance to it. As we read it, contrapuntal reading may be seen as a way of interpreting a phenomenon from different places, with different lenses shaped by history, culture and politics, not least including war and oppression. Contrapuntal reading does not mean that in a war situation, all forces need be treated as (un)justified in their violent and non-violent operations. Rather, it opens up for a counter-discursive approach to the discourses of the powerful, warring parties, trying to reveal the silent, brought to silence other (Spivak, 1994). To ‘see the world from another place’ may entail to analyze the situation of the part identified as enemy by the forces of one’s own country, as is done in some daring and controversial documentaries made by independent reporters (see below).

Whose voices?

Dilemmas are evident: In a number of conferences⁵ with journalists and academics discussing extremism, the question on whether to interview/quote extremists (such as Taliban in Afghanistan or Al Nusra in Syria) has created a vivid debate, partly inspired by the ‘No Platforming’-discussions emerging in large parts of the world.⁶ In Afghanistan, journalists previously risked arrest if they did so, but many also think that Taliban, who have threatened and killed journalists, should not be allowed a voice. On the other hand, recent research shows that Taliban spokespersons are indeed cited in Afghan news, and that they, according to some journalists, are more easily accessible than government sources (Eide et al., 2019). Some Norwegian journalists feel it as part of their duty to report on the views and motivations of people joining Taliban or other forces fighting western-supported groups or governments (Refsdal, 2010; Hammer 2016) see also Eide 2016a). To expose students to such dilemmas is a fruitful way of raising awareness when it comes to the complexity of violent conflicts.

Film producer Alain Brigand provides a powerful, illustrative example of global, contrapuntal reading. In 2002, he invited filmmakers from different corners of the world to create short films addressing 9-11-2001 (Brigand, 2002). He gave them total freedom, except for one guideline: the individual film duration should be 11 minutes and 9 seconds. Iranian Samira Makhmalbaf takes her point of departure from an Afghan refugee camp in Iran, where a teacher tries to explain to her young students what happened in the U.S.A. The children cannot imagine this, and are more concerned with two (Afghan refugee) men who recently fell into a well. The teacher voices her fears that Afghanistan (and Iran) may be hit by bombs. Another film, directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo from Burkina Faso, focuses on a group of young boys eager to catch an Osama bin Laden lookalike appearing in the capital Ouagadougou, to receive the ransom promised, which would help the ailing mother of poor Adama, one of the boys. Serbian filmmaker Emir Kusturica shows village women and men commemorating the massacres in Srebrenica, while Kenneth Loach reminds viewers of Chile’s 9-11 in 1973, demonstrating that other nations also have experienced enormous tragedies.

⁵ Conferences hosted by JMIC/OsloMet or Universitas Indonesia, 2016, 2017, 2019.

⁶ The conferences are part of a series of events organized by our department and its international center (JMIC), in collaboration with partners in countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Tunisia, addressing fundamental issues for journalists, and including both academics and journalists. For more information, see <https://blogg.hioa.no/jmic/>. This website tries to develop some global tools also concerning war and peace journalism.

A selection of these short films has been shown at all GWPJ courses since the film series occurred, followed by fruitful discussions, creating an atmosphere of understanding that people interpret realities and act according to their own historical context including war experiences, and social conditions.

Academics and practitioners

Two intensive weeks of lecturing and course work allow us also to include guest speakers i.e. journalists with much experience from covering war and conflicts in Afghanistan, Palestine, the Middle East and elsewhere. The pedagogical model is one of dialogue, including panels where journalists exchange views and/or show photo or video examples, some of them quite controversial, as for example a reporter (Refsdal, mentioned above) who has been embedded both with Taliban in Afghanistan and the Al Nusra-front in Syria.

Students also frequently take part in debates generated by lecturers, and contribute with their very different experiences. Our last programmes (2017, 2019) included student participants from countries such as Afghanistan, Austria, Estonia, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe. We consider their knowledge ‘from the ground’ an extremely valuable part of the learning process and the students highly value such diversity in the classroom. They have faced the challenge of presenting the media situation in their respective countries, as well as speaking of their understanding of selected parts of the reading list, which has led to vivid debates. Furthermore, we bring in colleagues from our own department, widely known for its group of internationally experienced academics, with experiences from many corners of the world. To our advantage, most of our academic staff are experienced both as journalists and academics.

A wider impact

Since the start in 2002, we have encouraged students to write critical term papers and Master theses on Norwegian media coverage of war and conflict. In 2015, we collected some of the MA thesis contributions in an edited volume (Eide & Ottosen 2013). The book was used as a reference when the independent Godal commission⁷ in 2016 published a government-initiated report, which in retrospect was quite critical of the results of 15 years of Norwegian military presence in Afghanistan. This white paper concluded that the sole achievement crowned with success, was proving Norway as a staunch ally to the USA, and thus a loyal member of NATO.⁸

The necessity of teaching students the value of critical public debate, also when our own national forces are at war is obvious. By including lectures on mechanisms in propaganda and psychological operations (PSYOPS), practicing as well as future journalists will learn to hold their own independent ground when faced with the rhetoric of their own government as well as other proponents of warfare.

Another example is the Norwegian bombing of Libya in 2011. Norway took part in the NATO-bombing of Libya, thus violating the UN mandate that through resolution 1973 in UN Security Council suggested the implementation of a no-fly zone to protect the civilian population in Benghazi against an alleged threat from Ghadafi’s military forces (Heier et al., 2019; Ottosen et al., 2013). Norwegian media have shown little interest in looking critically at the propaganda (before the bombing started) that the main purpose of the military intervention was to protect the civilian population in Benghazi (Tunander, 2018). As a main point in the peace journalism approach is to reveal untruths on all sides, Norwegian media could have used a conclusion from a report of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the British parliament, which concludes that the propaganda about Benghazi was a lie.⁹ Unlike the Norwegian commission investigating the Libya-bombing, the British parliament contributed to revealing the untruth ‘on all sides’.

Propaganda and psychological operations

By discussing psychological operations (PSYOPS), we can raise awareness among students, on the debate about fake news being as old as war journalism itself. Phillip Knightley (1986) has through his famous book

⁷ Bjørn Tore Godal is a Labour politician, previously minister of Defense in the Stoltenberg government (

⁸ This conclusion was also supported by journalist Kristoffer Egeberg who in his book *Fredsnasjon Norge* (Norway, the peace nation) after interviews with all Foreign ministers, Ministers of defense and Heads of defense conclude much in agreement with the Godal commission: the main reason for Norwegian military presence through all these years has been to be “a relevant ally” for the U.S.A. (Egeberg 2017).

⁹ The Guardian 14.09.2016: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/14/mps-deliver-damning-verdict-on-cameroons-libya-intervention> Accessed 02.12.2018

The First Casualty proved that false propaganda to promote war has been used by governments to influence the news agenda since the Crimean war. Through PSYOPS operations, the military directly and indirectly influences the news agenda through constructed events. One such famous event was the toppling of the Saddam Hussein statue during the US invasion of Baghdad, Iraq in 2003. This was created by a PSYOPS unit in the invading forces, but was sold to the media as a spontaneous act by cheering Iraqis who supposedly welcomed the forces. Even though journalists at the spot witnessed a military truck tearing down the statue in a half empty square, news media all over the world took the bait and printed false propaganda stories on the front pages (Ottosen, 2009). According to NATO's 'Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations' (2007), PSYOPS have three basic aims:

'a. Weaken the will of the adversary or potential adversary target audiences.

b. Reinforce the commitment of friendly target audiences.

c. Gain the support and cooperation of uncommitted or undecided audiences'. (NATO, 2007, p. 18)

PSYOPS are an integral part of modern warfare. Operating on the borderline between the battlefield and civil society, they have the potential to cause ethical problems by blurring the difference between journalism and military operations and represent a potential threat to journalistic impartiality. Within NATO, the main target of PSYOPS operations is often the people on the ground where a conflict or war is taking place. However, the operations also have consequences for home audiences. The US army has used local television stations as training posts for some of its psychological operations personnel.

Norwegian Armed Forces define PSYOPS (similar to the USA) as: 'Planned operations in times of peace, emergency, armed conflict and war directed at hostile, friendly and/or neutral targets to influence attitudes, emotions and behaviour to achieve political and military aims' (Norwegian Defence Supreme Command, 2000, p. 77). Returning to our case of Norwegian military presence in Afghanistan, a critical approach to PSYOPS operations by Norwegian troops can be used as examples of how the military blur the difference between journalism and propaganda.

Safety and the battle against impunity

Between 2012 and 2018, 631 journalists were killed, an average of two deaths per week. One example is the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi- Arabian consulate in Istanbul. According to UN special rapporteur Agnes Callamard, Saudi officials were responsible for the killing.¹⁰

Earlier research indicates that although killing of foreign correspondents tend to garner most international publicity, it is overwhelmingly local journalists who are killed while reporting on local expressions of war, corruption or the activities of criminal groups. This trend holds across all regions. Political groups, military officials, insurgent groups, militias and criminal organizations have directly targeted and sought to silence the voices of journalists (UNESCO 2016). The issue of impunity is of course the most serious part of this situation when we know that according to freedom of expression network IFEX, nine out of ten violent crimes against journalists are never prosecuted. There is no doubt that violence against journalists will continue as long as the perpetrators get away with such crimes.

Seen against this dramatic background, offering safety training to future reporters as well as research on the safety of journalists has become vital in our course work at several levels.¹¹ Recent research (Hoiby&Ottosen 2016, Harrison 2017) demonstrates the dramatic consequences of impunity. In short, Harrison's conclusion is that journalists are subject to increased physical and psychological attacks, harassment, threats, smear campaigns, arbitrary detentions, deprivation of liberty and kidnapping. Journalists must also live with threats to family, undue political pressure, censorship, false lawsuits and corrupt trials. Legal mechanisms are created to suppress journalists. Anti-terrorism legislation is used to falsely charge and sentence journalists. Another problem is implementation of laws with restrictions towards journalism and freedom of expression. Journalists receive threats and insults, in addition to being subjects to surveillance, blackmail and bribe offers. Media companies are being closed down for political reasons. Experiences of violent threats against journalists may be discussed within the framework of the classical ideals of 'the fourth estate' and fundamental objectives or challenges that conflict journalism has had to cope with in the recent wars.

In 2018, Afghanistan topped the list of countries in which journalists were killed. Numbers vary between 16 and 20, probably since some media workers (who are not considered journalists) may have been ex-

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24146&LangID=E> Accessed 04.05.2019

¹¹ The course presents fresh research on the safety issue, and participants are encouraged to take part in further safety training

cluded from international statistics, while local monitors include them since some attacks target media institutions. Journalists in Afghanistan report that they and their employers take more safety measures than before, and many have been subject to both threats and physical injuries. This recent research reveals that far from all receive adequate safety training (Eide et al., 2019).

Recommended: a multi-perspective

Successful attempts have been made to include courses in war and peace journalism in some other institutions. There is evidence to suggest that these courses have had an impact on the careers of some course participants and have affected the ways in which they report on conflicts, influenced by the peace journalism model (Ottosen, 2010).

As a result of academic courses such as the one examined here and a related one in Sweden, we suggest a definition of Sustainable war journalism as follows:

- *Promote free speech and access to public information with changing legal and social norms. Safety as opposed to impunity.*
- *Meet professional standards of quality considering the special conditions of new wars. (An example is legal issues in connection to cross-border drone attacks from Afghanistan into Pakistan.)*
- *Provide citizens with reliable, objective news from multiple sources, contrapuntal reading.*
- *Pursue editorial independence in well-managed enterprises.*
- *Protect professional independence in relation to other institutions (See also Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2017, p. 218).*

By raising awareness among our national and international students about the above perspectives, we hope to improve critical reporting on national and multinational military forces, and raising awareness about the structural framework in military-media relations. Courses such as the one we have presented also enhance sensitivity about other tough confrontations that may arise in diversified, complex societies, and steps towards a solution-oriented journalism.

Simultaneously through attending these courses, the students are offered a pedagogical tool useful for their roles as educators of future journalists. This is a role several students have already taken on, in countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, South Sudan, and Uganda.

Last, but not least, our experiences demonstrate the necessity of wider historical and cultural perspectives, including post-colonial studies and gender perspectives. To approach journalism in this sensitive area, there is a constant need to work to improve and develop existing models of analysis, and generate an atmosphere of open debate, including perspectives from students who have a wide range of experiences from countries and regions more conflict-ridden than the peaceful Nordic one.

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Appendix I

Johan Galtung's model of peace journalism published in Galtung (2002)

PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM	WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM
<p>I Peace/conflict-orientated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore conflict <i>formation</i>, <i>x</i> parties, <i>y</i> goals, <i>z</i> issues, general 'win, win' orientation • open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture • making conflicts transparent • giving voice to all parties; empathy and understanding • see conflict/war as a problem, focus on conflict creativity • humanisation of all sides; more so the worse the weapon • <i>proactive</i>; prevention before any violence/war occurs • focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/ culture) <p>II Truth-oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expose untruths on all sides • uncover all cover-ups 	<p>I War/violence-orientated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation • closed space, closed time, causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone • making wars opaque/secret • 'us-them' journalism, propaganda, voice, for 'us' • see 'them' as the problem, focus on who prevails in war • dehumanisation of 'them', more so the worse the weapon • <i>reactive</i>: waiting for violence before reporting • focus only on visible effects of violence (killed, wounded and material damage) <p>II Propaganda-orientated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expose 'their' untruths • help 'our' cover-ups/lies

III People-orientated

- focus on suffering all over; on women, the aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless
- give name to all evil-doers
- focus on people peacemakers

IV Solution-orientated

- peace = non-violence + creativity
- highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war
- focus on structure, culture, the peaceful society
- aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation

III Elite-orientated

- focus on our suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouthpiece
- give name to their evil-doers
- focus on elite peacemakers

IV Victory-orientated

- peace = victory + ceasefire
 - conceal peace initiatives, before victory is at hand
 - focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society
 - leaving for another war, return if the old war flares up again
-