

# War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts

By Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog

*This study examines the extent to which four Asian regional conflicts involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines are framed as war journalism or peace journalism based on Johan Galtung's classification. A content analysis of 1,338 stories from 10 newspapers suggests that, overall, the news coverage of these conflicts is dominated by a war journalism frame. The Indian and Pakistani coverage of the Kashmir issue shows the strongest war journalism framing whereas the coverage of the Tamil Tiger movement and the Mindanao conflict by the Sri Lankan and the Philippine newspapers reveals a more promising peace journalism framing. The three most salient indicators of peace journalism are the avoidance of demonizing language, a nonpartisan approach, and a multiparty orientation. The war journalism frame is supported by a focus on the here and now, an elite orientation, and a dichotomy of good and bad.*

The news coverage of conflict, including the reporting about war, is grounded in the notion of conflict as a news value. As a result, war reporting is often sensational, sexy, and a mere device to boost circulations and ratings (Allen & Seaton, 1999; Hachten, 1999; Toffler & Toffler, 1994). According to Knightley (2000), war journalism is characterized by an identification with one side or with the home side of the war; military triumphantist language; an action orientation; and a superficial narrative with little context, background, or historical perspective.

In recent years, some journalism scholars have urged journalists to discard war reporting in favor of peace journalism to promote a culture of peace. Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung first proposed peace journalism in the 1970s as a self-conscious, working concept for journalists covering wars and conflicts (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). By taking an advocacy, interpretative approach, the peace journalist concentrates on stories that highlight peace initiatives; tone down ethnic

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and religious differences, prevent further conflict, focus on the structure of society; and promote conflict resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation (Galtung, 1986, 1998). Galtung (2002) observed that traditional war journalism is modeled after sports journalism, with a focus on winning in a zero-sum game. In Galtung's vision, peace journalism approximates health journalism. A good health reporter describes a patient's battle against cancer and yet informs readers about the cancer's causes as well as the full range of cures and preventive measures. McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) described peace journalism as a "broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation."

At first glance, peace journalism runs counter to the time-honored journalistic principle of objectivity that sees the journalist as a detached and unbiased mirror of reality. According to Iggers (1998): "Although few journalists still defend objectivity, it remains one of the greatest obstacles to their playing a more responsible and constructive role in public life" (p. 91). As such, responsible journalism should be about intervention, as McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) argued: "The choice is about the ethics of that intervention—therefore the question becomes 'what can I do with my intervention to enhance the prospects for peace?'"

By focusing on facts and overt events, objective reporting "devalues ideas and fragments experience, thus making complex social phenomena more difficult to understand" (Iggers, 1998, pp. 106–107). Iggers's argument makes a moral case for advocacy journalism—the nonobjective, self-conscious intervention by journalists premised in the ideas of public journalism, development journalism, and peace journalism. Factual reporting of war is a chimera; the ingredients of war—patriotism, national interest, anger, censorship and propaganda—often conspire to prevent objective reporting (see Carruthers, 2000; Iggers, 1998; Knightley, 1975; Van Ginneken, 1998). Pedelty (1995) showed how institutional influences shaped the reporting of the civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s by comparing two reports about the shooting down of a U.S. military helicopter. Written by the same correspondent, one report was for an American paper, and the other for a European paper. The former validated the anger of U.S. officials to legitimize the release of aid to fight the rebels, but the latter sympathized with the rebels.

Like public journalism and development journalism, peace journalism is grounded in communitarian philosophy—namely the commitment to the idea of civic participation, the understanding of social justice as a moral imperative, and the view that the value and sacredness of the individual are realized only in and through communities. Christians, Ferre, and Fackler (1993) urged journalists to abandon libertarianism in favor of communitarianism by adopting a new journalistic standard that gives priority to civic transformation.

The idea that journalists have an active and conscious role to play in promoting peace is controversial nonetheless. Peace journalism may have emerged more than 3 decades ago, but it has not gained wide acceptance among journalists nor attracted adequate attention from researchers. In August 1993, Galtung founded TRANSCEND ([www.transcend.org](http://www.transcend.org)), a nonprofit organization, to advance his ideas of peace, including that of peace journalism. In the late 1990s, Galtung's ideas were picked up by the U.K.-based Conflict and Peace Forums (CPF) that refined

his model through dialogues with journalists. The CPF published four booklets: *The Peace Journalism Option* (Lynch, 1998), *What Are Journalists For?* (Lynch, 1999), *Using Conflict Analysis in Reporting* (Lynch, 2000), and *Reporting the World* (2002)—mainly how-to manuals based on anecdotes. There is little, if any, research on peace journalism, which is all the more relevant today in a world racked by strife and conflict. Few, if any, studies have operationalized peace journalism. Thus, peace journalism made a leap from theory to practice without the benefit of research. This study, as an attempt to fill that gap by operationalizing war journalism and peace journalism in a content analysis, focused on four Asian conflicts: the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) rebellion in Sri Lanka, the Aceh and Maluku civil wars in Indonesia, and the Mindanao separatist movement in the Philippines.

### **A Frame Perspective to Coverage of War**

Although there exists an excellent body of literature and research on war journalism (e.g., Carruthers, 2000; Hallin, 1986, 1987; Hallin & Gitlin, 1994; Iyengar & Simon, 1994; Knightley, 1975; Lang & Lang, 1994), most of the work on peace journalism is normative or prescriptive, outlining its benefits and detailing how it can be implemented (e.g., Galtung, 1986, 1998; Lynch, 1998, 2003a, 2003b; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000).

Theoretically, peace journalism is supported by framing theory. There is no one standard definition of framing (see Entman, 1993; McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000; Scheufele, 1999), but broadly, news framing refers to the process of organizing a news story, thematically, stylistically, and factually, to convey a specific story line. According to Entman (1993), “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Tankard et al. (1991) described a media frame as “the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (p. 3). Frames package key ideas, stock phrases, and stereotypical images to bolster a particular interpretation. Through repetition, placement, and reinforcement, the texts and images provide a dominant interpretation more readily perceivable, acceptable, and memorable than other interpretations (Entman, 1991).

McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) argued that the concepts of agenda setting and framing represent a convergence, in that framing is an extension of agenda setting. In fact, the concept of framing has been explicated as second-level agenda setting (Jasperson et al., 1998; McCombs, 1994; McCombs & Bell, 1996; McCombs & Evatt, 1995; McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 1997). Object salience is transmitted in the first level of the agenda-setting process. In the second level, framing, or indicator salience, illustrates how the media tell us *how* to think about something—a reprisal of Bernard Cohen’s famous statement that the media tell us what to think about. Framing is found to activate specific thoughts and ideas for news audi-

ences, as seen in the vast body of framing effects research (e.g., Iyengar, 1991; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Sotirovic, 2000).

Several studies have focused on the framing of war reporting. Gamson (1992) identified four frames used in the framing of the Arab-Israeli conflict: strategic interests, feuding neighbors, Arab intransigence, and Israeli expansionism. Wolfsfeld (1997) found that the media's pursuit of "drama" frames in the Middle East conflict accorded the extremists from both sides more than their due share of air time, while drowning voices calling for peace. Carruthers (2000) suggested that the media, subjected to state and military censorship, employed the same values and priorities in reporting conflict as in covering other events. As a result, mass media become willing accomplices in wartime propaganda and may even play a role in instigating conflict. Pfau et al. (2004) found that the embedded journalist coverage of the 2003 war on Iraq was framed more favorably than nonembedded reporting toward the U.S. military.

#### *War and Peace: Two Competing Frames*

Galtung (1986, 1998) viewed peace journalism and war journalism as two competing frames in the coverage of a conflict. His classification of war journalism and peace journalism is based on four broad practice and linguistic orientations: peace/conflict, truth, people, and solutions. In contrast, war journalism is oriented in war/violence, propaganda, elites, and victory. Galtung's labeling of peace journalism as both peace- and conflict-oriented may appear paradoxical, but in reality, peace-oriented journalists must first accept that a conflict exists and explore conflict formations by identifying the parties, goals, and issues involved. The journalists understand the conflict's historical and cultural roots, and by giving voice to all parties (not only two opposing sides), create empathy and understanding. Through careful, consistent, and conscientious application of peace journalism practices, the peace journalist hopes to create a setting in which the causes of and possible solutions to the conflict become transparent. Other peace journalism approaches include taking a preventive advocacy stance—for example, editorials and columns urging reconciliation and focusing on common ground rather than on vengeance, retaliation, and differences—and emphasizing the invisible effects of violence (e.g., emotional trauma and damage to social structure). In contrast, war journalism plays up conflict as an arena where participants are grouped starkly into two opposing sides ("them vs. us") in a zero-sum game and focuses on visible effects of war (casualties and damage to property).

Galtung's (1998) classification of war/peace journalism was expanded by McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) into 17 good practices in covering war. Advice to journalists included focusing on solutions, reporting on long-term effects, orientating the news on ordinary people, reporting on all sides, and using precise language. Maslog (1990) offered a peace journalism manual based on the Mindanao conflict that clarifies differences between Muslims and Christians and, more importantly, their common grounds. Advice included avoiding mention of culturally offensive issues such as the pork eating of Christians and the polygamous practice of Muslims. Another important principle is linguistic accuracy. "Rebels" should be identified as dissidents of a particular political grouping and not simply "Muslim rebels."

In this study, a news frame refers to an interpretive structure that sets specific events within a comprehensive context. Of interest is the actualization of war/peace journalism frames in the news coverage of the four Asian regional conflicts. Based on Galtung's (1986, 1998) classification of war/peace journalism, we posed two research questions:

RQ1: Does the news coverage of the four regional conflicts reflect war journalism and war journalism frames, and are there differences in framing with different conflicts?

RQ2: What are the salient indicators, in terms of frequency, of war/peace journalism manifest in the news coverage of these four regional conflicts?

### Method

This study is based on a content analysis of 1,338 newspaper stories from 10 English-language daily newspapers from the five Asian countries involved in the four regional conflicts.

1. India: *Times of India* (122 stories); *Hindustan Times* (137); *Statesman* (91);
2. Pakistan: *Dawn* (131); *Pakistan News Service* (261);
3. The Philippines: *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (122); *Philippine Star* (61);
4. Indonesia: *Jakarta Post* (189); and
5. Sri Lanka: *Daily News & Sunday Observer* (145); *Daily Mirror* (79).

The unit of analysis was the individual story, a definition that included "hard" news stories, feature stories, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor. The stories, content analyzed by six mass communication graduate students between March and May 2003, were harvested from issues published during a specific period of conflict: February 15–May 31, 2002 (Kashmir); February 10–17, 2003, and April 1–June 30, 2000 (Philippine Mindanao conflict); August 1, 2001–February 28, 2002 (Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers); and January 19–April 18, 1999, October 1–December 31, 2001, and March 1–August 31, 2002 (Indonesia's Maluku and Aceh civil wars).

These periods represented the most recent peak periods of these conflicts (some of which date back at least 5 decades) at the time of the study. The February 15–May 31, 2002, period was a particularly tense episode between Pakistan and India following a December 13, 2001, terrorist attack on the Indian parliament that was blamed on Pakistan and an ensuing heated exchange of words that sent the two neighbors to the brink of nuclear war. From March to June 2000, former Philippine President Estrada declared an "all-out war policy" against the Mindanao groups, and February 10–17 saw one of the bloodiest skirmishes between Mindanao's Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)<sup>1</sup> and the Philippine armed forces. In the case

<sup>1</sup> The MILF is one of the two Muslim separatist movements in Mindanao, the other being the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The MILF was founded by a breakaway faction of the MNLF in the 1970s. The MILF seeks total independence from the Philippines but the MNLF wants to form an autonomous region.

of Sri Lanka,<sup>2</sup> the LTTE stormed Colombo's International Airport in July 2001. The period of August 1, 2001–February 28, 2002, also covered the timeframe before and after the December 2001 ceasefire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. In Indonesia,<sup>3</sup> the Maluku conflict erupted on January 19, 1999, and raged until mid-April 1999. Thus, the period of January 19–April 18, 1999, was analyzed. Between October and December 2001, the conflict reignited. Hence, a second period—October 1–December 31, 2001—was included. The Free Aceh movement began in the 1950s. Hence, the most recent period of conflict, March 1–August 31, 2002, was analyzed. About half of the stories were obtained from the Lexis-Nexis and Factiva online databases. For papers not archived on databases, such as Pakistan's *Dawn*, the *Philippine Star*, the *Pakistan News Service*, and the Sri Lankan *Daily News & Sunday Observer* and *Daily Mirror*, stories were obtained from the respective paper's online archives.<sup>4</sup> Although searches were initiated by keywords, for example, "Kashmir," all downloaded stories were assessed for direct relevance.<sup>5</sup>

The coding categories for frames, based on Galtung's (1986, 1998) classification, involved 13 indicators of war journalism and 13 indicators of peace journalism. These indicators, used to elicit from the body text of each story which frame—war or peace journalism—dominated the narrative, comprised two themes: approach and language (Appendix). The approach-based criteria included (a) reactivity, (b) visibility of effects of war, (c) elite orientation, (d) differences, (e) focus on here and now, (f) good and bad dichotomy, (g) party involvement, (h) partisanship, (i) winning orientation, and (j) continuity of reports. The language-based criteria focused on language that was (a) demonizing, (b) victimizing, and (c) emotive. For example, a story was judged if it is reactive ("Does it wait for war to break out before reporting it?"); whether it reported mainly on the visible effects of war ("Does it focus on casualties, death toll, damage to property?"); and whether it was partisan ("Is it biased for one side in the conflict?"), and so on. In this way, indexes were produced to measure war journalism and peace journalism. Based on the scores, the coder classified the story as war journalism, peace journalism, or neutral. A score of 1 was recorded each time an indicator was found. When the

<sup>2</sup> The Tamils, who are Hindus, are a minority in Sri Lanka, a country with a Sinhalese-Buddhist majority. In the 1970s, Tamil politicians began demanding a separate Tamil state, or "Tamil Eelam," in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, areas of traditional Tamil settlement. Tamil groups, particularly the LTTE, sought an independent state by force.

<sup>3</sup> Although 90% of Indonesians consider themselves Muslims, Indonesia is not an official Islamic state. In the 1950s, the Indonesian province of Aceh began seeking to establish an independent Islamic republic. Religion also played a role in the civil war in Maluku, which resulted from the conflict between its Muslim and Christian communities.

<sup>4</sup> Pakistan News Service: <http://www.paknews.com>; *Pakistan Dawn*: [www.dawn.com](http://www.dawn.com); *Philippine Star*: [www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com); *Sri Lanka Daily News & Sunday Observer*: [www.dailynews.lk](http://www.dailynews.lk); *Sri Lanka Daily Mirror*: [www.dailymirror.lk](http://www.dailymirror.lk)

<sup>5</sup> Stories that reported on, say, Indian parliamentary debates or political activities but with Kashmir mentioned in passing, or the setting up of foreign businesses or hydroelectric power, were rejected. Only stories focusing on the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir—the violence, casualties, debates, diplomatic activities, political speeches, and developments—were included in the analysis.

total score for peace journalism indicators exceeded the total score for war journalism, the story was classified as a peace journalism story. When war journalism indicators exceeded peace journalism indicators, the story was classified as war journalism. When the scores were equal, the story was neutral.

The war journalism index ranged from 0 to 13, with a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 2.60 (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .72$ ). The peace journalism index ranged from 0 to 13, with a mean of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 2.73 (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ). Apart from examining the war/peace journalism frames, other variables studied included the story type (news, feature, opinion), story length, and source (local, foreign/national news agencies, wire service).

In terms of intercoder reliability, a coding of 100 stories produced Scott's pi of between .76 and .93, with the following ranges: reactivity (between .81 and .91); visibility of effects (between .81 and .85), elite orientation (between .80 and .90), focus on differences (between .82 and .89), focus on here and now (between .88 and .92), dichotomy of good and bad (between .84 and .88), party orientation (between .81 and .87), partisanship (.88 and .93), winning orientation (.80 and .86), continuity of reports (between .76 and .83), victimizing language (.81 and .85), demonizing language (.82 and .90), and emotive language (between .88 and .93).

## **Findings**

Of the 1,338 stories, 1,018 (76.1%) were "hard" news stories; 134 (10.0%) were features (10.0%); 121 (9.0%) were opinion pieces including editorials; and 65 (4.9%) were others that included letters to the editor and speech transcripts. Only a small number of stories—137 (10.2%)—were produced by foreign wire services such as AP, CNN, BBC, Reuters, and AFP. That the majority (1,201 or 89.8%) were produced by local sources was unsurprising given the conflicts' local nature. Of the 1,201 stories produced locally, 1,156 (96.2%) were written by the newspapers' own reporters, compared to 16 stories (1.3%) sourced from national news agencies, and 29 stories (2.4%) contributed by freelancers, academics, and members of the public.

### *RQ1: A Dominant War Journalism Framing*

Out of the 1,338 stories, 749 stories (56%) were framed as war journalism, compared to 478 stories (35.7%) framed as peace journalism, and 111 stories (8.3%) that were neutral. Overall, in the sample, the war journalism frame was more dominant than peace journalism or neutral frames,  $\chi^2(2, N = 1,338) = 459.771, p < .0001$ . In terms of country, the newspapers differed in their war/peace/neutral framing of stories,  $\chi^2(4, N = 1,338) = 150.834, p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .237, p < .001$  (Table 1). The strongest war journalism framing was in the Kashmir coverage by Pakistani and Indian newspapers, followed by Indonesian, Philippine, and Sri Lankan papers' coverage of the respective conflicts. Conversely, the strongest peace journalism framing was from Sri Lanka, followed by the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. The following discusses the patterns of framing for each country's newspapers.

**Table 1. Distribution of War Journalism and Peace Journalism Frames Across Countries**

Country	Frame			n
	War journalism	Peace journalism	neutral	
India	223 (63.7%)	100 (28.6%)	27 (7.7%)	350 (100%)
Pakistan	291 (74.2%)	73 (18.6%)	28 (7.1%)	392 (100%)
Sri Lanka	69 (30.8%)	130 (58.0%)	25 (11.2%)	224 (100%)
Indonesia	91 (48.1%)	79 (41.8%)	19 (10.1%)	189 (100%)
Philippines	75 (41.0%)	96 (52.5%)	12 (6.6%)	183 (100%)
TOTAL	749 (56%)	478 (35.7%)	111 (8.3%)	1,338

$\chi^2(4) = 150.834, p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .237, p < .001$ .

*India-Pakistan (Kashmir)*. Although the war journalism frame was the strongest in the coverage of Kashmir by the Pakistani and Indian newspapers, there was a significantly higher proportion of war journalism frames observed in Pakistani papers (74.2%) than for Indian papers (63.7%),  $\chi^2(2, N = 742) = 10.886, p < .005$ ; Cramer's  $V = .121, p < .005$ . Excluding the neutral frames, the difference in war/peace journalism stories also was significant between the two countries,  $\chi^2(1, N = 687) = 10.802, p < .005$ ; Cramer's  $V = .125, p < .005$ . The distribution of war/peace/neutral stories also differed among the five newspapers,  $\chi^2(8, N = 742) = 23.104, p < .005$ ; Cramer's  $V = .125, p < .005$ . The strongest war journalism framing was seen in the Pakistan News Service; nearly 80% of its stories were framed as war journalism, followed by the *Statesmen* (67%), *Hindustan Times* (66.4%), *Pakistan Dawn* (65.6%), and *Times of India* (59%). The Pakistan News Service, a national news agency, had the highest number of war journalism frames among the 10 news outlets. Overall, stories produced by or sourced from national news agencies had a significantly higher proportion of war journalism frames (78.7%) than stories from independent news organizations (50%),  $\chi^2(2, N = 1,338) = 76.383, p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .239, p < .001$ . However, excluding the Pakistan News Service, the Indian and Pakistani papers did not differ significantly in their war/peace/neutral frames,  $\chi^2(6, N = 481) = 3.539, p < .739$ .

*Indonesia*. Overall, there was a significant difference in the distribution of war/peace/neutral frames in the *Jakarta Post*; 48% of the 189 stories were framed as war journalism, compared to 41.8% framed as peace journalism and 10.1% as neutral stories,  $\chi^2(2, N = 189) = 47.238, p < .001$ . Excluding the neutral frames, there was a higher proportion of war journalism frames compared to peace journalism frames, but statistical significance was absent,  $\chi^2(1, N = 170) = .847, p < .357$ . The *Jakarta Post* published 110 articles on the Free Aceh movement and 79 on the Maluku conflict. Comparing the Aceh and Maluku conflicts, however, 37.3% of articles about Aceh were framed as war journalism, compared to 54.5% as peace journalism, and 8.2% neutral. In contrast, the Maluku stories showed a more salient war journalism frame—63.3% compared to 24.1% peace journalism, and 12.7% neutral. Clearly, the *Jakarta Post's* coverage of the two conflicts did not share the same pattern of war journalism, peace journalism, and neutral frames,  $\chi^2(2, N = 189) = 17.610, p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .305, p < .001$ . Excluding the neutral

frames, the difference in war/peace journalism frames between the two conflicts was also significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 170) = 16.738, p < .005$ ; Cramer's  $V = .314, p < .001$ .

*Sri Lanka.* The Tamil Tiger coverage by the Sri Lankan papers showed the strongest peace journalism framing. Of the 224 stories from the *Daily News & Sunday Observer* and *Daily Mirror*, a higher proportion of peace journalism stories was observed—58.0% compared to 30.8% war journalism stories and 11.8% neutral stories,  $\chi^2(2, N = 224) = 74.473, p < .001$ . Excluding the neutral frames, the war/peace journalism distribution was also significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 199) = 18.698, p < .0005$ . The two papers differed in their distribution of war journalism, peace journalism, and neutral frames,  $\chi^2(2, N = 224) = 7.080, p < .05$ ; Cramer's  $V = .178, p < .05$ . Of the 79 stories from the *Daily Mirror*, 20.3% were war journalism stories, 64.6% were peace journalism, and 15.2% were neutral. Of the 145 stories from the *Daily News & Sunday Observer*, 36.6% were framed as war journalism, 54.5% were peace journalism, and 9.0% were neutral. Thus, a significantly higher proportion of peace journalism frames was found in the *Daily Mirror* than in the *Daily News & Sunday Observer*. Excluding the neutral frames, the two papers also differed in war/peace journalism frames,  $\chi^2(1, N = 199) = 18.698, p < .0005$ ; Cramer's  $V = .212, p < .05$ .

There was a significant difference between the framing of stories before and after the December 2001 ceasefire<sup>6</sup> between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE,  $\chi^2(2, N = 224) = 30.199, p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .367, p < .001$ . Prior to December 2001, more war journalism stories were observed, whereas after December 2001, more peace journalism stories were found. Of the 153 preceasefire stories, 40.5% were war journalism stories compared to 45.8% peace journalism stories and 13.7% neutral stories. Of the 71 postceasefire stories, only 9.9% were framed as war journalism compared to 84.5% peace journalism stories and 5.6% neutral stories. Prior to the ceasefire, the two papers demonstrated a significant difference in distribution of war/peace/neutral stories,  $\chi^2(2, N = 224) = 14.377, p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .199, p < .05$ . Before the ceasefire, the *Daily News & Sunday Observer* produced 51.5% of war journalism stories, compared to 38.4% of peace journalism stories, and 10.1% neutral stories. After the ceasefire, war journalism stories in the *Daily News & Sunday Observer* dropped to 4.3% while peace journalism stories increased to 89.1%. Before the ceasefire, the *Daily Mirror* published 20.4% war journalism stories, 59.3% peace journalism stories, and 20.4% neutral stories. After the ceasefire, the *Daily Mirror's* war journalism stories remained at 20.0% while peace journalism stories increased to 76.0%. As a result of an increase in peace journalism stories, there was no significant difference in the postceasefire distribution of war/peace journalism stories between the two papers,  $\chi^2(2, N = 224) = 4.538, p < .103$ . In summary, with the ceasefire, there appeared to be a clear change from a war journalism framing to a peace journalism framing in the *Daily News & Sunday Observer*. On the other hand, the change was less obvious in the *Daily Mirror* because it had a strong peace journalism framing prior to the ceasefire.

<sup>6</sup> In December 2001, the United National Party won the national election. Unilateral ceasefires were declared. In February 2002, with Norwegian facilitation, a joint ceasefire accord was forged, but the peace process broke down again in 2003.

*The Philippines.* Compared to the other four countries, the Philippine newspapers' framing of war/peace journalism stories was less clear. Although the papers produced disproportionately more peace journalism stories compared to war journalism stories, statistical significance was absent,  $\chi^2(1, N = 171) = 2.579, p < .108$ . Including the neutral frames, of the 183 stories published by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and the *Philippine Star*, 41.0% were war journalism stories, 52.5% were peace journalism, and 6.6% were neutral,  $\chi^2(2, N = 183) = 62.656, p < .001$ . Of the 122 stories from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 34.4% were war journalism, 59.0% were peace journalism, and 6.6% were neutral. Of the 61 stories from the *Philippine Star*, 54.1% were framed as war journalism, compared to 39.3% peace journalism, and 6.6% neutral. As such, there was a significant difference in the distribution of war/peace/neutral frames across the two papers,  $\chi^2(2, N = 183) = 6.840, p < .05$ ; Cramer's  $V = .193, p < .05$ .

#### *RQ2: Indicators of War Journalism and Peace Journalism*

Based on a frequency count of 5,220, the three most salient indicators of war journalism were a focus on the here and now (17.6%), an elite orientation (15.4%), and a dichotomy of the good and the bad (10.3%; Table 2). Through a here-and-now perspective, the war journalism stories confined a conflict to a closed space and time, with little exploration of the causes and long-term effects of the conflict. Reporting only on the here and now is a common practice by newspapers—focusing on what is happening on the battlefield, the military clashes, and the casualties, with very little backgrounding.

These stories also tended to focus on the elites, that is, political leaders and military officials, as actors and sources of information while ignoring the foot soldiers who fight the wars and the civilians who suffer the consequences of wars. 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. For example, the *Pakistan News Service* reported: "The Indian government's fake elections in the held valley will not deter them. Despite giving them the right to self-determination, the Indian government had stepped up its brutal activities against innocent people in occupied Kashmir" (Khurshid, 2002).

The three most salient indicators of peace journalism, based on a frequency count of 9,104, were avoidance of demonizing language (15.9%), nonpartisanship (13.8%), and multiparty orientation (12.8%). In avoiding demonizing language, the journalists provided more precise titles and/or descriptions of players. By being nonpartisan, journalists showed that their stories were not biased for one side in the conflict. In pursuing a multiparty orientation, stories gave a voice to the many parties involved. For example, the Sri Lankan *Daily Mirror* covered the work of a peace group: "The Peace Support Group in a statement signed by prominent activists (names) said it was abundantly clear that the electorate had endorsed a revitalization of the peace process and dialogue with the LTTE" (Cassim, 2001).

An examination of the Kashmir coverage, which showed the most salient war journalism framing among the four conflicts, revealed that the Indian and Pakistani war journalism framing was dependent on the following war journalism indicators (based on a frequency of 3,558): a focus on the here and now (548 or

**Table 2. Indicators of War Journalism and Peace Journalism**

	Frequency (%)
<b>WAR JOURNALISM APPROACH</b>	
Reactive	278 (5.3)
Visible effects of war	468 (9.0)
Elite-oriented	806 (15.4)
Differences-oriented	477 (9.1)
Focuses on here and now	916 (17.6)
Dichotomizes the good and bad	537 (10.3)
Two-party orientation	327 (6.3)
Partisan	472 (9.0)
Zero sum orientation	197 (3.8)
Stops reporting and leaves after war	4 (.07)
<b>WAR JOURNALISM LANGUAGE</b>	
Uses victimizing language	266 (5.1)
Uses demonizing language	326 (6.2)
Uses emotive language	146 (2.8)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,220 (100)</b>
<b>PEACE JOURNALISM APPROACH</b>	
Proactive	143 (3.7)
Invisible effects of war	151 (3.9)
People-oriented	355 (9.1)
Agreement-oriented	337 (8.7)
Causes and consequences of war	233 (6.0)
Avoids labeling of good and bad	413 (10.6)
Multiparty orientation	497 (12.8)
Nonpartisan	535 (13.8)
Win-win orientation	230 (5.9)
Stays on to report aftermath of war	22 (.6)
<b>PEACE JOURNALISM LANGUAGE</b>	
Avoids victimizing language	205 (5.3)
Avoids demonizing language	617 (15.9)
Avoids emotive language	146 (3.7)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,884 (100)</b>

15.4%), the use of elites as actors and sources (501 or 14.1%), a partisan approach (390 or 11.0%), and an emphasis on differences (344 or 9.7%).

The Sri Lankan newspapers' coverage of the Tamil Tigers, which exhibited the strongest peace journalism frame, was supported by the following peace journalism indicators, based on a frequency of 1,148: an avoidance of good-bad label (155 or 13.5%), a nonpartisan focus (148 or 12.9%), a multiparty orientation (119 or 10.4%), and a win-win approach (10.1%).

*Other findings of interest.* There was no relationship between story type (news, feature, opinion) and distribution of war journalism and peace journalism stories,  $\chi^2(6, N = 1,338) = 8.612, p < .197$ . Whether a story was written as a news story, a feature piece, or an opinion piece had no bearing on the framing of the story as

war journalism or peace journalism. However, there was a positive correlation between story length (paragraphs) and peace journalism framing ( $r = .156, p < .001$ ). The longer the story, the more likely the story was framed as a peace journalism story. Conversely, there was a negative relationship between story length and the war journalism frame ( $r = -.186, p < .001$ ). It is conceivable that longer stories allow journalists more time and effort to investigate an issue or event more fully and thoughtfully. Longer stories may permit journalists to move beyond reporting of facts into some analysis. Unfortunately, news hole allotment is a complex affair, subject to not only editorial judgment but also commercial interests.

Foreign wire stories contain more war journalism frames and fewer peace journalism frames than stories produced by local sources, including the papers' own correspondents,  $\chi^2(2, N = 1,338) = 7.964, p < .05$ . One explanation is that reporting by foreign wire services is less involved and more detached, as seen in the shorter stories. Stories produced by local sources are significantly longer than stories produced by foreign wire services,  $t(1,336) = 6.133, p < .0005$ . The mean length of a locally sourced story is 12.98 paragraphs compared to 8.77 for a foreign wire story. Another explanation is that Western foreign news agencies tend to report violence and conflict more saliently than any other news stories from developing countries (e.g., Hachten, 1999; Hess, 1996; Riffe, Aust, Jone, Shoemaker, & Sundar, 1994; Rosenblum, 1979). Developing nations dominate international news coverage when they are the scenes of disasters or violence. Hess (1996) found that the actions of foreign governments, when related to violence and conflict, have the greatest chances of getting reported by U.S. media. It is not surprising that the traditional war journalism frame prevailed more in foreign wire copy than in local copy.

## **Discussion**

This study offers a quantitative contribution to a topic that has received mostly normative and anecdotal discussion. By operationalizing Galtung's (1986, 1998) classification of war/peace journalism, this study measured the framing of conflicts by Asian newspapers. The findings can help mass media training institutions customize peace journalism programs and build a case for offering such courses. It is hoped that this exploratory study will generate hypotheses for examining the framing effects of war/peace journalism on public opinion and policy making.

Clearly, the coverage of the four Asian conflicts is dominated by war journalism. Pakistan and India, embroiled in a decades-old territorial battle over Kashmir, have demonstrated through their five newspapers that media continue to adopt a knee-jerk, unreflective kind of coverage of conflicts, with little consideration for long-term, peaceful solutions. The strong war journalism framing by Indian and Pakistani papers is not unexpected. The conflict between the two countries runs deep. They have fought three wars, including two over the mostly Muslim region of Kashmir, which was divided between them after independence from Britain in 1947. The Kashmir issue, among the four conflicts examined, is perhaps the most

acrimonious, involving not only the divisive factor of religion but also the minefield of national sovereignty. It is likely that the media reflected their government's stands; a country's media are not likely to remain neutral in a conflict involving its government (see Bennett, 2003; Carruthers, 2000; Hiebert, 2003; Keeble, 1998; Knightley, 1975; Reese & Buckalew, 1995; Van Ginneken, 1998).

The case of Sri Lanka may offer some encouragement to peace journalists. That a significant number of stories were framed as peace journalism may be surprising for a country that has faced 2 decades of violence. A possible explanation is that August 1, 2001–February 28, 2002, was a period when the government and LTTE were attempting negotiations under international pressure for a peace treaty, although violence persisted. In 2000, the Sri Lankan government had asked the Norwegian government to be a peace facilitator.

Are peace journalism stories a simple reaction to what is going on with a conflict (i.e., ongoing negotiations) or genuine, self-conscious intervention by journalists to help promote peace? Context could have influenced the reporting. The shift from war journalism framing to peace journalism by Sri Lankan papers after the December 2001 ceasefire agreement may reflect a conscious effort by journalists to promote a culture of peace through peace journalism. It is also possible, however, that the change of government and attendant changes in policy toward the LTTE could have motivated journalists' peaceful orientation. Certainly, the measure of a true peace journalist lies in his work during a conflict, not after the conflict. Three Sri Lankan journalists who were interviewed revealed a clear awareness of peace journalism. One journalist explained, "Peace journalism is an important tool for crafting our reports. We feel that newspapers owe a moral duty to society to promote peace with the Tigers." The journalists denied that their papers' peace journalism news work is a reaction to ongoing peace negotiations.

There is a large body of literature documenting governmental influence on the work of journalists in conflicts (e.g., Bennett, 2003; Carruthers, 2000; Combs, 1993; Hiebert, 2003; Keeble, 1998; Lynch, 2003a, 2003b; Reese & Buckalew, 1995). Keeble (1998), who studied British coverage of the 1991 and 1998 Iraq crises, suggested that the media serve a crucial propaganda function, not only through an elite conspiracy but also an ideology of reporting by adhering to a set of routines, constraints, expectations, and myths. Reese and Buckalew (1995), who studied the news framing of the Gulf War, observed that "the interlocking and reinforcing triangle of government, news media and corporate needs works together to further a culture supportive of military adventures such as those in the Gulf" (p. 41). One small comfort does come from the *Daily Mirror's* strong peace journalism framing prior to the ceasefire, although the true picture of the *Daily News & Sunday Observer's* strong war framing prior to the ceasefire is less clear. What is clear is that media outlets within the same cultural and political context do not frame the same event the same way. Another example of context shaping coverage is the *Jakarta Post's* dissimilar framing of the Maluku and Aceh conflicts. At the time of the study, the Indonesian government and the GAM (Free Aceh Movement) were on their way to the negotiating table. The Swiss-based Henry Dunant Centre brokered a peace deal between the two parties on December 9, 2002, a major breakthrough in 26 years of hostilities. Hence, a stronger peace journalism fram-

ing was evident in the Aceh coverage. In the case of Maluku, the conflict was still raging, hence the stronger war journalism framing.

Although there are promising signs in the use of peace journalism frames in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, a closer examination of the pattern of war journalism and peace journalism indicators reveals that the peace journalism framing is highly dependent on criteria of a less interventionist nature, for example, an avoidance of good–bad labels, a nonpartisan approach, a multiparty orientation, and an avoidance of demonizing language. These four indicators, although important in the overall scheme of peace journalism laid out by Galtung (1986, 1998), are mere extensions of the objectivity credo: reporting the facts as they are. These indicators do not truly exemplify a strong contributory, proactive role by journalists to seek and offer creative solutions and to pave a way for peace and conflict resolution. For example, journalists often simplify storytelling by allowing only a set of villains and a set of victims in their stories about conflict. Thus, the inclusion of a multiparty orientation is a significant step forward in the peace journalism calculus, but it does not take the story significantly beyond reporting the facts.

In conclusion, the pattern of salient indicators supporting the peace journalism frame falls short of Galtung's characterization of peace journalism as an advocacy and interpretive approach oriented in peace–conflict, people, truth, and solution. Although there is some demonstration of journalists' understanding of the conflict by mapping it out as consisting of many parties, there is little in terms of a solution-seeking approach, and more disappointingly, not many peace journalism stories are supported by a people orientation. With little focus on ordinary people, and without finding out whether their position as stated by the elites is reflective of the true feelings on the ground, there is little that journalists can do to empower the ordinary people. The work of journalists follows predictable rituals, and reliance on elites is a ritual. The literature on news sourcing suggests that reporters depend heavily on official sources that they perceive to be authoritative, credible, knowledgeable, and powerful, and on official definitions (e.g., McLeod & Hertog, 1998; Paletz & Entman, 1981; Sigal, 1973; Tuchman, 1978). The peace journalism frame also did not receive adequate support in terms of journalists focusing on a conflict's causes and consequences. Without this understanding, solutions cannot be found.

Many studies have conveyed the concept of framing as an unconscious act shaped by journalistic routines, social norms and values, time pressures, organizational culture and constraints (see Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978), but theoretically, framing studies have neglected to explore framing as a conscious act by journalists. As noted by Gamson (1989), the motives behind a journalist's framing of the news can be unconscious, but may also involve intent. Scheufele (1999) rightly observed that this particular link between journalists' individual-level variables and media frames "deserves more attention than it has received" (p. 117). The concepts of reciprocity, intent, and motive in news framing, with the attendant implications, warrant a closer examination, especially in the news coverage of war, where a potent cocktail—patriotism, anger, censorship, propaganda—can be found. Framing effects research has found that news consumers respond to journalists' framing of a socially important event rather than to the actual event

itself. Peace journalism, as a conscious and deliberate act by journalists, can offer significant insights on an unexplored aspect of framing theory.

This study has several limitations. The stories were downloaded from online archives. As a result, the prominence of a story's display could not be determined. Many of the coding categories used for assessing narrative content were conceived by Galtung (1986, 1998) as a form of prepublication criteria, posing a challenge for this content analysis of published stories. This study also was limited by its use of English-language Asian daily newspapers. Future research should consider the vernacular press.

### Appendix Coding Categories for Frames

#### War journalism

#### Peace journalism

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##### APPROACH

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Reactive (waits for war to break out, or about to break out, before reporting)              | 1. Proactive (anticipates, starts reporting long before war breaks out)                       |
| 2. Reports mainly on visible effects of war (casualties, dead and wounded, damage to property) | 2. Reports also on invisible effects of war (emotional trauma, damage to society and culture) |
| 3. Elite-oriented (focuses on leaders & elites as actors and sources of information)           | 3. People-oriented (focuses on common people as actors and sources of information)            |
| 4. Focuses mainly on differences that led to the conflict                                      | 4. Reports the areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to the conflict               |
| 5. Focuses mainly on the here and now  | 5. Reports causes and consequences of the conflict  |
| 6. Dichotomizes between the good guys and bad guys, victims and villains                       | 6. Avoid labeling of good guys and bad guys   |
| 7. Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses)                                     | 7. Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties involved in conflict)                  |
| 8. Partisan (biased for one side in the conflict)  | 8. Nonpartisan (neutral, not taking sides)  |
| 9. Zero-sum orientation (one goal: to win)   | 9. Win-win orientation (many goals and issues, solution-oriented)                             |

**Appendix, continued**

10. Stops reporting with the peace treaty signing and ceasefire and heads for another war elsewhere

10. Stays on and reports aftermath of war—the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and implementation of peace treaty

**LANGUAGE**

11. Uses victimizing language (e.g., destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized) that tells only what has been done to people

11. Avoids victimizing language, reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping

12. Uses demonizing language (e.g., vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist)

12. Avoids demonizing language, uses more precise descriptions, titles, or names

13. Uses emotive words, like genocide, assassination, massacre, systematic (as in systematic raping or forcing people from their homes)

13. Objective and moderate. Avoids emotive words. Reserves the strongest language only for the gravest situation. Does not exaggerate.

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