to highlight the impossibility of standing neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, victim and oppressor.) In other words, taking sides or abandoning neutrality in favour of a moral stance that 'speaks truth to power' is seen as going against the grain of journalistic objectivity.

Another criticism is that peace journalism mistakenly gives too much credence to powerful and direct media effects, ignoring the fact that journalists can rarely stand outside the cultural consensus of the societies in which they live and work. Furthermore, peace journalism is seen as a normative model that fails to take sufficient account of the constraints and dynamics of news production. Here critics cite the complex processes of news production that are subject to organizational and institutional factors such as the economic framework in which the mainstream media have to operate.

On the positive side, Robert A. Hackett has pointed to obstacles to peace journalism that might be overcome through structural change. For example, the difficulties of constructing 'peace' as a compelling narrative, the national basis (and biases) of much of the world's news media and their audiences, the ideological and structural links between media corporations and states, and the way dominant media and states are caught up in relations of inequality. Hackett identifies three possible strategies:

● Reforming the journalism field from within, where much of the impetus is likely to come from victims of war and conflict, from activists committed to peace-building processes, and/or from social justice movements marginalized by current patterns of national or global communication.

● Building a new field, parallel to currently existing journalism in the shape of alternative media organizations supported by civil society and insulated from corporate or state power.

● Intervening in adjacent fields (such as those of politics, or social movements) to change the environment of journalism, the gravitational pulls to which it is subject.[12]

Others contend that, while peace journalism is a relatively new field of study that may have made sweeping statements which experience will temper, this is no reason to reject it. Wilhelm Kempf writes:

'I would argue that peace journalism is far more gracious than any other journalistic orientation in supplying readers with the opportunity to formulate their own stands on current affairs. The approach of peace journalism is geared toward the stimulation and maximization of readers' judgement ability and prudence. By challenging routine coverage methods and by providing the broadest possible range of accounts, peace journalism writers entrust the onus of interpretation to their readers. By doing so they do not treat the audience as a passive monolith, but rather supply an elementary and essential commodity for all readers… In summation, peace journalism is about supplying background for questions rather than furnishing answers.'[13]

A RESEARCH AGENDA

Peace journalism has become firmly established in the global academic community. Researchers have considered its distinctions, claims, and implications in light of established theoretical approaches from several disciplines, among them: peace and conflict studies; psychology; communication; and social movement theory.

Two e-journals in particular, *Conflict and Communication Online* and the *Global Media Journal* (Mediterranean edition) have 'hot-housed' peace journalism ideas, notably by a group of researchers funded by the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research. Their articles have been collected into a book.[14]

Contributions to a research agenda include measuring different cognitive responses to newspaper and television reports about the same story, framed as war journalism and peace journalism respectively, and analysing the content of conflict coverage using criteria derived from the peace journalism schema. Research is also being gathered and publicised through a Peace Journalism Commission of the International Peace Research Association. ■

Notes
1. Lynch, Jake and Annabel McGoldrick (2005). *Peace Journalism*. UK: Hawthorn Press, p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. ix.
3. http://www.peacejournalism.org/index.php?f=data_home&a=1
4. Lynch, Jake and Annabel McGoldrick (2005). *Peace Journalism*. UK: Hawthorn Press, p. 8.
5. Galtung, John (2006). 'Peace Journalism as an Ethical Challenge', *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition* 1(2)
6. Irvan, Suleyman (2006). 'Peace Journalism as a Normative Theory: Premises and Obstacles', in *Global Media Journal: Mediterranean Edition* 1(2).
7. Majid Tehranian (2002). 'Peace Journalism: Negotiating Global Media Ethics' in *Press/Politics* 7(2): 58-83.
8. *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building*, by Elisabeth Rehn & Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (UNIFEM, 2002).
9. *Gender, Conflict & Journalism: A Handbook for South Asia*, by Fiona Lloyd and Ross Howard. UNESCO, 2004, p. 32.
10. See, for example, articles by David Loyn and Thomas Hanitzsch in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007; and 'The Peace Journalism Problem' by Thomas Hanitzsch, in Hanitzsch, Löffelholz, Mustamu (eds) *Agents of Peace. Public Communication and Conflict Resolution in an Asian Setting*, Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (2004).
11.Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998). *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the politics of objectivity*, p. 130. Aurora: Garamond Press. Now distributed by University of Toronto.
12. Robert A. Hackett (2006). 'Is Peace Journalism Possible? Three Frameworks for Assessing Structure and Agency in News Media', in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 5, No. 2.
13. Wilhelm Kempf (2007). 'Peace journalism: A tightrope walk between advocacy journalism and constructive conflict coverage', in *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2.
14. *Peace Journalism – The State of the Art*, edited by Dov Shinar and Wilhelm Kempf. Berlin: Regener, 2007.

WACC

taking sides

WACC

The No-Nonsense *guide to*

Peace Journalism

'Peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict.'[1]

Most modern conflicts take place as much in the media as they do on the ground. Today, words, images, and public statements are the 'weapons of choice' of politicians and war-mongers – almost as lethal as arms and ammunition. Journalists – who play a crucial role in shaping public understanding by providing information about conflict – 'bear a heavy responsibility for what they write and broadcast.'[2] Proponents of peace journalism argue that the existing media environment and its practices, which stress sensationalism, immediacy, and in some cases promote propaganda and misinformation, tend to exacerbate conflict rather than contribute to its resolution.

In essence, peace journalism 'provides a new "road map" tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the consequences of their reporting – the ethics of journalistic intervention.'[3] The assumption is that reporting that is more balanced will increase awareness of the issues at stake by:

● Illuminating structural and cultural violence as it bears upon the lives of people in a conflict arena as part of the explanation for violence.

● Framing conflicts as consisting of many parties, pursuing many goals.

● Making peace initiatives and potential solutions more visible, whoever suggests them.

● Equipping people to distinguish between stated positions, and real goals, when judging whether particular forms of intervention are necessary or desirable.

Peace journalism claims that such reporting can transform the context in which parties to a conflict present and formulate their responses. The dominant form, war journalism, commonly frames conflict as a 'tug-of-war' between two antagonists: 'a zero-sum game [in which] anything which is not winning, risks being reported as losing.'[4] Peace journalism both multiplies and divides the parties, creating space for initiatives to be taken, and progress measured, as a positive gain all round.

The relatively brief history of peace journalism goes back to 1997 when Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, the founder of peace studies and peace research, gave a series of lectures at the 'Conflict and Peace Journalism' summer school at Taplow Court (United Kingdom). Participants included journalists, media academics and students from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the U.S.A., who divided their time between lectures, workshops, and debate.

A series of conferences followed at Taplow Court (1997-99), and since then peace journalism has advanced in both theory and practice. Training of journalists has taken place in Indonesia, South Africa,

Liberia, Nepal, Colombia and the Philippines. TRANSCEND, the international network of scholars and practitioners for peace and development, runs on-site courses and on-line training as part of the work of its Peace University (see www.transcend.org).

And the Toda Institute (Japan and Hawaii) is working on designing university-level courses and syllabuses. In addition, professional journalists Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick published the first full-length English-language book on *Peace Journalism*.

Explaining the concept

Johan Galtung describes the mainstream, dominant style of journalism today as 'war/violence journalism', protected by a massive umbrella of rationalizations.[5] In contrast, there are few working models of peace journalism based on the premise that, if contemporary media tend to play a negative role in terms of increasing tensions between and among the many sides of a conflict, media can also play a positive role by promoting peace and reconciliation.[6]

Peace journalism advances a coherent strategy which strikes at the very notion of conflict as a method of settling disputes. It is characterised by balanced reporting at an emotional distance, presenting a broad and multifaceted view of a conflict, and rejecting entertainment and partisan interests. Peace journalism is:
● truth-oriented, exposing lies and deception on all sides
● people-oriented, focusing on suffering on all sides and on people as peace-makers
● solution-oriented, identifying creative initiatives that lead to resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation.

Broadening the concept

The International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism (1983) speak of 'respect for universal values and diversity of cultures'. Principle VIII states that:

'A true journalist stands for the universal values of humanism, above all peace, democracy, human rights, social progress and national liberation, while respecting the distinctive character, value and dignity of each culture, as well as the right of each people freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems. Thus the journalist participates actively in the social transformation towards democratic betterment of society and contributes through dialogue to a climate of confidence in international relations conducive to peace and justice everywhere.'

Peace journalism supports these broad objectives – as does conventional journalism. But peace journalism goes further. It is an effort to transcend the bounds of established practice to open up public mediated discourse to a more inclusive range of people, ideas, and visions that includes space for voices of peace. It encourages journalists and media institutions to review themselves and their practices to produce information that addresses the full array of political, ethnic, social, and cultural injustices.

Majid Tehranian describes peace journalism as: 'A kind of journalism and media ethics that attempts... to transform conflicts from their violent channels into constructive forms by conceptualizing news, empowering the voiceless, and seeking common grounds that unify rather than divide human societies.'[7] Tehranian proposes Ten Commandments for peace journalism that are negotiable and suggestive rather than exhaustive:

1. Never reduce the parties in human conflicts to two. Remember that when two elephants fight, the grass gets hurt. Pay attention to the poor grass.

2. Identify the views and interests of all parties to human conflicts. There is no single Truth; there are many truths.

3. Do not be hostage to one source, particularly those of governments that control sources of information.

4. Develop a good sense of scepticism. Remember that reporting is representation. Bias is endemic to human conditions. You, your media organization, and your sources are not exceptions.

5. Give voice to the oppressed and peacemakers to represent and empower them.

6. Seek peaceful solutions to conflict problems, but never fall prey to panaceas.

7. Your representation of conflict problems can become part of the problem if it exacerbates dualisms and hatreds.

8. Your representation of conflict problems can become part of the solution if it employs the creative tensions in any human conflict to seek common ground and nonviolent solutions.

9. Always exercise the professional media ethics of accuracy, veracity, fairness, and respect for human rights and dignity.

10. Transcend your own ethnic, national, or ideological biases to see and represent the parties to human conflicts fairly and accurately.

The gender dimension

There is a significant gender dimension to peace journalism. The Platform for Action that emerged from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) identified women and media as one of 12 critical concerns for advancing gender equality. It was given impetus by Resolution 1325 (2000) on 'Women, Peace and Security' of the UN Security Council which broke new ground in recognizing that women have the right to participate at all levels as decision-makers in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building processes.

However, Resolution 1325 failed to make the connection between gender (the socially constructed differences between women and men that determine how people are perceived and how they are expected to behave as men and women), conflict, and media. In response, UNIFEM commissioned the report Women, War and Peace (2002), which stated the need to put women in the picture both as producers and subjects of media information with regard to conflict reporting.

The report especially called for:
● Increased donor resources and access for women to media and communications technology, so that gender perspectives, women's expertise and women's media can influence public discourse and decision-making on peace and security.
● UN, government, private and independent media to provide public information and education on the gender dimensions of peace processes, security, reconciliation, disarmament and human rights.
● Donors and agencies to support the training of editors and journalists to eliminate gender bias in reporting and investigative journalism in conflict and post-conflict situations, and to promote gender equality and perspectives.[8]

There are, of course, journalists and media practitioners who do question the status quo and who act as catalysts for positive transformation. There are those who go even further:

'Aware of the power of media, they seek to marshal the skills and resources of journalism as a tool for directly transforming attitudes, promoting reconciliation and reducing conflict. Their explicit intention is to produce behavioural change through their writing or broadcasting.'[9]

This approach is called 'intended outcome programming' and it bears a close resemblance to peace journalism. It raises questions about impartiality and fairness, but it also contributes significantly to gender parity and peace-building.

Peace journalism in practice

In 2007 Subaltern Forum, an organization of journalists based in Kathmandu, Nepal, produced and broadcast fortnightly radio programmes on non-violent conflict resolution. The aim was to help prepare the country for democratic elections to a Constituent Assembly and the peaceful transition of Nepal from a monarchy to a parliamentary republic following the protracted civil war. WACC supported these efforts under its programme 'Communication for Peace'.

Naya Nepal (meaning 'New Nepal') offered a mix of news items, commentary and popular music aimed at informing people about the impending political and social changes in the country. Leading political figures Ram Chandra Pudel (Minister of Peace and Reconstruction), Krishna Pahadi (a human rights activist and leader of a citizens' movement for democracy and peace), and Bishnu Neupane (leader of a movement for proportionate representation of women in the 'new' Nepal) all came to the studio to be interviewed.

Similarly, media pundits offered their views on developments in Nepal. Kamala Shakya, chief editor of Nawa Talash Weekly, talked about the role of women in restructuring the State. Ameet Dhakal, news editor of the English-language daily The Kathmandu Post, outlined the roles and responsibilities of the interim government in resolving the problems facing the country on its road to peace.

One episode of Naya Nepal reported on the many people who have disappeared. Hundreds of people have gone missing in Nepal in connection with activities by government forces, rebels and Maoists. Bardia is the district with the highest number of disappearances. It is in a remote part of Nepal and is the hardest hit by decade-long violence. The radio team visited the district to prepare a special report.

On another occasion journalists went to Karnali Pradesh, one of the most marginalized and underdeveloped regions of the country. Here, people have minimal access to basic resources and have been virtually excluded from the nation's development and peace processes.

These fortnightly programmes were especially successful in highlighting the concerns of marginalized people in the country whose voices are largely ignored. The voices of the Tharu (the largest tribal group), Kammayas (ex-bonded labourers) and Madhesis (a deprived community in the Terai valley) were heard in several episodes.

Subaltern Forum was able to demonstrate peace journalism in practice in a country emerging from civil violence and undergoing new political and social change. Balanced reporting focusing on the positive impact of proposed developments was welcomed on all sides.

Controversy among journalists

Peace journalism is not without its critics.[10] Opponents of the concept raise a number of objections. One is that peace journalism is an unwelcome departure from objectivity that could compromise the integrity of journalists and confuse their role as neutral disseminators. In other words, peace journalism rides roughshod over traditional journalistic values of objectivity, neutrality, and detachment. Hackett and Zhao have argued otherwise:

'We can recognize that all knowledge is constructed and nevertheless affirm the possibility of distinguishing between "truer" and "falser" depictions of reality – in the sense of identifying more or less coherent and comprehensive accounts.'[11]

With regard to detachment, peace journalism is criticised for promoting a 'journalism of attachment' (an expression coined by BBC correspondent Martin Bell