



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Journalism in Conflict

Dylan Pashley

Avdelningen för mänskliga rättigheter
Historiska institutionen
Kurskod: MRSK61
Termin: VT 2018
Handledare: Rouzbeh Parsi
Omfång: 15741



Abstract

This thesis explores, through interviews, the journalistic norms that influence news workers in Iraq. Investigating their views of news media, its role in providing a space for peaceful resolutions to conflict and the current state of the Iraqi media landscape. After the defeat of ISIS and the prospects of the terrorist organization as viable force in the region have diminished, old fault lines have resurfaced between ethnic, sectarian and political groups. How journalists chart these complex issues is the primary focus of this thesis. The qualitative interviews are interpreted through *Qualitative content analysis*, dependent on theories drawn from Journalism studies. The main theoretical perspectives employed in the study, consists of *Peace Journalism* and the *Liberal Model*. The former can be claimed to situate the actor at the center of reporting, taking an active role in choosing which frames should be salient in an effort to resolve the conflict. The latter, propagates an objective distance to that which is reported, without commenting or slanting a thing called news. Analysis of the material addresses themes of independent media, funding, security and fragmentation of the media space. How local media should operate in conflict areas is also discussed. What the analysis shows is advantages and disadvantages of the theoretical perspectives and their ability to explain as well as categorize the contextual constraints that Iraqi news workers contend with.

Denna uppsats undersöker genom intervjuer de journalistiska normer som påverkar nyhetsarbetare i Irak, deras syn på nyhetsmedia, dess roll i att skapa utrymme för fredliga lösningar och det irakiska medielandskapets nuvarande tillstånd. Under större delen av 2000-talet har Irak varit plågat av konflikter. Nu efter ISIS nederlag och terroristorganisationens minskade makt i regionen, har gamla konflikter återuppstått mellan etniska, sekteristiska och politiska grupper. Hur journalister väljer att konfrontera dessa komplicerade problem är uppsatsens primära fokus. De kvalitativa intervjuerna tolkas genom kvalitativ innehållsanalys, med avstamp i teorier hämtade från journalistikstudier. De huvudsakliga teoretiska perspektiv som används i studien består av *Peace Journalism* och *the Liberal Model*. *Peace Journalism* kan hävdas placera aktören i centrum av nyhetsproduktion för att inta en aktiv roll i att välja vilka ramar som ska vara framträdande, med syftet att lösa konflikten. Medan *the Liberal Model* antar ett objektiva avstånd till det som rapporteras, utan att kommentera på en sak som heter nyheter. Analysen behandlar teman som oberoende nyhetsmedier, finansiering, säkerhet och fragmentering av medieutrymmet. Ytterligare hur lokala medier ska fungera i konfliktområden. Vad analysen visat är fördelar och nackdelar med de teoretiska perspektiven och deras förmåga att förklara samt kategorisera de kontextuella begränsningar som irakiska nyhetsarbetare står inför.

Key words: Journalism, Iraq, Peace Journalism, Liberal Media Model, Independent media, Interview study, Qualitative research, Press freedom, Journalistic norms, Conflict resolution

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Subject of inquiry and aims of the study	2
1.2	Material and delimitation	3
1.2.1	Primary and secondary material	3
1.2.2	Criticism of source material and literature	3
1.2.3	Ethical considerations	4
2	Literature review and prior research	5
2.1	Comparing media systems	5
2.1.1	Theories of transition	6
2.1.2	Peace Journalism	7
2.1.3	Iraqi media system, history and transition	9
3	Theory and methodology	11
3.1	Theory	11
3.1.1	Liberal Media Model and homogenization of global Journalism	11
3.1.2	Peace Journalism	13
3.2	Methodology	16
3.2.1	Semi-Structured Qualitative Interview Method	16
3.2.2	The interview process and ethical considerations	17
3.2.3	Qualitative Content Analysis	18
4	Background	20
5	Inquiry and Analysis	23
5.1	Challenges for Journalism in the Iraqi media Landscape	23
5.1.1	Security	24
5.1.2	Fragmentation and Funding	26
5.2	Approaches to Journalism	28
5.2.1	Independent media	29
5.2.2	Peace media	31
5.3	Journalism in Conflicts areas	33
5.3.1	Local Media and its possibilities for peace	34
5.3.2	De-mystifying lies in the “Fake News” era	35
5.3.3	De-escalation,	36
5.3.4	Positive images to bridge divide	37
6	Conclusions	40
6.1	Discussion	43
	Bibliography	44
	Appendix	47

1 Introduction

The context in which this essay aims to situate itself in is the fast-growing literature of Journalism studies, and how editors and journalists can work towards re-framing war reporting and re-thinking the role of the media in de-escalating conflict. This paper will focus on the practice of using media as a tool, exploring through interviews the views that journalists hold of the current Iraqi media landscape, in addition to the journalistic norms they advocate. The focus will lie on how reporting can better function to aid societies in resolving ethnic and sectarian tensions, avoiding conflict and instead building stable, multiethnic, and multi-stakeholder states without entrenching divisions within a society, practices that in future can bolster democratic institutions.

Front-pages of the press may not convince the public with their arguments; they will however anchor the debate in certain questions.¹ For societies that are in the process of transitioning, from what in the past was an authoritarian controlled media environment, control over and access to a newly expanded civil space often becomes a contentious issue, between new elites and media outlets. Lacking the pre-existing infrastructure to oversee this system, weak regulatory capacities of the state and non-existent professional standards, journalists and media workers are left to contend with an ever pervasive, complex and delicate situation to operate in.²

This is the case of the current media landscape in Iraq, where the pluralism of media has merely functioned to widen the cracks along ethnic and sectarian lines. Instead of fostering independent media outlets, the actions taken by the American provisional government after the invasion, and by successive Iraqi governments, have resulted in most news providers owing allegiance to ethnic/sectarian/political groups.³ How this space can be charted with the aim of resolving the conflict is therefore of interest.

¹ Perse, Elizabeth M. *Media Effects and Society*. Mahwah, N.J.: Routledge, 2000, p. 16.

² Amos, Deborah. "Confusion, contradiction and irony: the Iraqi media in 2010." *Joan Shorenstien Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy Discussion Paper Series D-58*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2010, p. 35-36.

³ Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "The Dynamics of Iraq's Media: Ethno-Sectarian Violence, Political Islam, Public Advocacy, and Globalization." *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*, vol. 25, no. 1, 95-140, 2007, p. 104.

1.1 Subject of inquiry and aims of the study

Journalism taking place in active-conflict areas is confronted with many complex issues, internal and external, that need to be addressed if the media aspires to expedite and support peace initiatives. This is especially true in states that cross a multitude of dividing lines regarding ethnic, sectarian and political groupings. More often than not this is paired with real and perceived historic wrongs and extensive trauma as a consequence of earlier conflicts. As actors situated in and bound by their environment, as mediators of narratives, journalists are poised at a critical nexus of our societies, able to exert great control over what becomes salient in the myriad of possible political actions and subsequent reactions.⁴

The aim of the study is to analyze as well as categorize the opinions surrounding the role of the media in conflict areas, comparing the sentiments expressed in interviews conducted with media workers in Iraq and the two mainstays of media studies; the Liberal Media Model and Peace Journalism. The study will answer the following research questions:

RQ 1. What obstacles are the interviewed journalists faced with in their reporting?

RQ 2. What norms dominate journalist's attitudes?

RQ 3. How do they perceive the medias role in the conflict?

These questions are contingent on an understanding of the journalists' perception of the Iraqi media landscape as well as the current conflict. The role of the journalist and the media, in facilitating peaceful resolutions to conflicts that are exacerbated by hyperbole, hateful media and a discourse of violence, is ambiguous. Journalists are met with contextual constraints and uncertainty coupled to a media in transition. How they their role in a post-conflict/ongoing conflict society, and what factors they aim to influence in an effort to facilitate the peace-process are of interest. This study aims to bring clarity to how news workers contend with these issues in the context of contemporary Iraq.

⁴ Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm." *Journal Of Communication* 43, no. 4, 51-58, 1993, p. 52.

1.2 Material and delimitation

1.2.1 Primary and secondary material

The study's primary material consists of four interviews with media workers operating in Iraq conducted between the 23rd of November and the 6th of December 2017, via Skype.

The participants were; the Editor of an independent media outlet in Iraq, a journalist and deputy editor of a media outlet in Iraq, a freelance journalist based in the Autonomous Kurdish Northern Iraq and a project leader at an NGO that works with press freedom in Iraq. All are thus in some way connected to the journalistic profession in Iraq, although with different backgrounds and ethnic as well as religious affiliations. The participants were chosen by availability. They are referred to as; A, B, C and D.

The secondary material consists of theories and studies in the domain of media studies, drawing mainly from two veins of research; Peace Journalism and Comparative Media Studies. The main contributors to this study are; Jake Lynch, *A global standard for reporting conflict*, that grapples with the recent developments in Peace Journalism studies. Jake Lynch & Annabel McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism*, which is the seminal work of the field and Samuel Peleg, *Peace Journalism through the Lense of Conflict Theory: Analysis and Practice*, relates a view of Peace Journalism through the lens of Conflict Theory. For the Comparative Media Studies Hallin, Mancini et al. *Comparing Media Systems*, is a theory building attempt at understanding different media systems.

The methodology is based on the interview methods presented in Alan Brymans *Social Research Methods*, as well as Jaber Gubrium and James Holsteins *Handbook of Interview Research*, both of which assisted in the creation of the interview guide and the methodological approach to interviewing the participants. Brymans book further gave the foundation for analyzing and categorizing the resulting interview transcripts.

1.2.2 Criticism of source material and literature

The following factors are worth mentioning regarding the primary material. All opinions expressed by the interviewees are their own and do not represent the views of any organization they may be a part of, however, it may be relevant to account for the organizations that they do represent. As all of the respondents are at least superficially connected to one another, with two of the interviewees working for the same media outlet, the third is a freelance jour-

nalist who has been published in this outlet and the fourth works for an NGO that is currently supporting this very same outlet. This casts doubt on the claim that theirs is a widely shared experience among media workers in Iraq, as the study is too small in scope to confirm this.

To reiterate, the low sample size may decrease the possibilities for the researcher to draw any conclusions regarding the actual state of the media in Iraq, however, many opinions expressed in the interviews have been corroborated by secondary material and theoretical framework.

1.2.3 Ethical considerations

As this is an interview study whose respondents work in a dangerous environment certain measures are requisite. The interview data has been anonymized, opting to use the labels of A, B, C and D, instead of their real names. This also allows for the respondents to speak more freely, without fear of repercussions.

2 Literature review and prior research

In the following section key concepts relating to the comparison, transition and media approach will be explained and previous studies relating to the Iraqi media system are described. Any understanding of the current of the current state of Iraqi media is contingent on this information, as will be elaborated below.

2.1 Comparing media systems

The seminal work of Comparative Media Studies is Fred Seaton Siebert's *Four Theories of the Press*, which classifies media systems into four overarching categories. *Authoritarian*; the state, the reproduction of its institutions and elites, supersedes all other values of mass communication, thus bringing about a harmonious society, *Libertarian*; freedom of the press and the pursuit of truth leads invariably to a pluralism of information, creating the prerequisite underpinnings of a participatory democratic society, *Social Responsibility*; similar to the Libertarian Model, however, emphasizing social responsibility over freedom of the press, *Soviet Communist*; the aim of the media is to uphold the socialist form of government as well as the control of the party.⁵

In the post-Cold War era Siebert's typology has been criticized as inadequate, with Hallin and Mancini publishing an empirical analysis of media models in the Western world. Drawing heavily on Siebert's theories they posit three existing models; *Polarized Pluralist*, *Democratic Corporatist* and the *Liberal Model*.⁶ Although their research postulates the existence of three distinct models, Hallin and Mancini claim that these models are converging along the lines of the Liberal Model. As with Siebert's original study, the scope of Hallin and Mancini's research solely pertains to Western media models, and as such these theories may not extrapolate well to non-Western media. Doubts about this convergence and the triumph of the Liberal Model have also arisen. Admittedly the Liberal Model (and the Americanization

⁵ Siebert, Fred S., Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm. *Four theories of the press : the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1963, p. 6-9.

⁶ Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 11.

of media in general) exerts strong pressure on national media systems. Nonetheless, Miroiu remarks, “despite their similarities, media systems worldwide have their own cultural, historical and economic particularities [...] selecting, adapting or domesticating Western elements to their own local specificities.”⁷

2.1.1 Theories of transition

The process of change, from one form of societal organization to another, is a complex and unpredictable transition. Trajectories of societal transition are not governed by natural law. The result is neither predetermined, nor set, as societies must contend with their own historical particularities.⁸ There is no definitive process of how media systems transition from one model to another, or how to replicate the complex interconnected flows that influence each individual media system. Comparing these transitions can only inform what possibilities have existed and possibilities that may be applicable to other cases as well.

Of these cases the transition in Eastern European Communist media systems is of interest because of several similarities. Arab media in general has been classified as *Authoritarian*, pre-2003 Iraqi media was peculiar, exhibiting more similarities with the Communist model “in which the media were subordinate to state interest and were harnessed to serve only one political party.”⁹ The literature refers principally to three phases of transition, *the preparatory phase, the decision phase and the consolidation phase*;

[...] the preparatory phase in which the media begins the transition during the breakdown of the non-democratic regime [...] the decision phase in which the democratic order is established [...] and the consolidation phase in which democracy is further developed and becomes ingrained in society.¹⁰

After the fall of the Soviet Union many of the formerly authoritarian communist states in Eastern Europe quickly adopted liberal reforms, rescinding state control and censorship. What followed was a marked increase in the number of newspaper publications and media outlets. As media had found its footing and increased influence over the polity, a struggle

⁷ Miroiu, Crisia. "The Triumph of the Liberal Media Model?." *Scientific Journal Of Humanistic Studies* 3, no. 5, 60-65, 2011, p. 63.

⁸ Gross, Peter, “Between Reality and Dream: Eastern European Media Transition, Transformation, Consolidation, and Integration.” *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol 18, 110-131, 2004, p. 112-113.

⁹ Kim, H.S., and M. Hama-Saeed. "Emerging media in peril: Iraqi journalism in the post-saddam hussein era." *Journalism Studies* 9, no. 4, 578-594, 2008, p. 579.

¹⁰ Gross, “Between Reality and Dream.” 2004, p. 111.

between elites, editors and journalists ensued. With the main controversy centering on journalistic independence, as well as how the media should support democracy and a growing space for civil society.¹¹ In this debate journalistic norms have been called into question, journalists have become stuck in the middle between a growing international culture and the pressure exerted within society.¹²

It has been called into question whether the resulting journalistic norms resemble the theories and categories presented above. Segvic postulates that the particular history with communism and the media's role to prop up the single party state has reverberated through to influence the current form of media in several Eastern European states. Positing that a new category of Post-Communist is more fitting, being a mixture of the soviet theories and liberal influence. How it differs is primarily in the level of control. These media institutions no longer function to prop up a single party, instead they must contend with increased market liberalization. What is apparent though is that these governments have not accepted the hegemony of the Liberal Model; their policies are "only a reflection of freedom, rather than stemming from freedom itself."¹³ Not openly censoring media outlets, but finding other ways to suppress information.

The development of Russia after the fall of communism epitomizes this transition. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and an initial liberalization of the media "emerging press freedom and diversity in media outlets were replaced with repressions by new political elites who took over from the old guard."¹⁴ Media outlets critical of this new government were gradually driven out of business or muzzled in other ways.¹⁵

2.1.2 Peace Journalism

Peace Journalism may be more suited for the study of this transition in societies entrenched in conflict, situating itself at the nexus of conflict and placing the focal point on the actors themselves. Prior research in the burgeoning field of Peace Journalism (shortened PJ) has primari-

¹¹ Gross, "Between Reality and Dream." 2004, p. 123.

¹² Voltmer, Katrin and Wasserman, Herman, "Journalistic norms between universality and domestication: Journalists' interpretations of press freedom in six new democracies." *Global Media and Communication*, Vol 10, Issue 2, pp. 177-192, 2014, p. 189.

¹³ Segvic, Ivana. "The Media's Post-Communist Purgatory: A Conception of The Post-Communist Theory of the Press." *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, 2005, p. 16.

¹⁴ Kim, Hama-Saeed. "Emerging media in peril." 2008, p. 580.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 580-581.

ly been driven by Meryll and Lynch, who in their 2005 study defined Peace Journalism as; “when editors and reporters make choices – of what to report and how to report it – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict.”¹⁶ The field is still in its infancy, and clearly defining how Peace Journalism as a set of theories will be operationalized may be challenging. There exists some contention as to how the field diverges from media studies. Academics such as Lynch mean that PJ;

“[...] is a set of distinctions in the journalistic representation of conflicts. Where the dominant War Journalism form is orientated toward violence, propaganda, elites and victory, Peace Journalism seeks creative ways to substitute orientations toward peace and conflict (restoring a sense that the conflict is about something); toward non-elites as actors and sources, and toward solutions to conflict issues.”¹⁷

Keeble understands the field as “extending the mediascape in which professional journalism takes its place as merely one influential form of symbolic production.”¹⁸ To view the field, not as a departure from the established modes of journalism, rather as simply continuing “the tradition of radical journalism committed to progressive social change.”¹⁹

For Hoffmann & Hawkins Peace Journalism is an active ethical stance in relation to the violence “communicated in embedded structures.” By examining these structures, how they reproduce conflict and the discourses that uphold them, “the interventions necessary to produce more progressive forms of peace” become evident.²⁰

Hanitzch’s critique centers on the claim that advocates of Peace Journalism ignore nuances in the media when it comes to war reporting, accusing them of “[highlighting] the exceptional, spectacular and negative.”²¹ Advocates have simply repackaged already existing journalistic stances. Even so, if we accept Hanitzch general critique, what can be said is that Peace Journalism brings together several aspects of Media- and Conflict-Studies, making coherent norms of pre-existing journalistic advocacy and an active ethical stance that the field entails. Furthermore, the fixed models of Siebert, Hallin and Mancini are lacking when dis-

¹⁶ Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, *Peace Journalism*. Gloucestershire UK: Hawthorn Press 2005, p. 5.

¹⁷ Hoffmann, Julia & Hawkins, Virgil (red.), *Communication and peace: mapping an emerging field*, London, 2015, p. xx.

¹⁸ Lynch, Jake. "Peace journalism: Theoretical and methodological developments." *Global Media And Communication* 11, no. 3, 193-199, 2015, p. 194.

¹⁹ Keeble. R. L, “Peace Journalism as political practice: a new, radical look at the theory.” *Peace Journalism, War and Conflict Resolution*. London: Peter Lang, pp.49–68, 2010, p. 50.

²⁰ Hoffmann, Julia & Hawkins, Virgil (red.), *Communication and peace: mapping an emerging field*, London, 2015, p. xix.

²¹ Hanitzsch, Thomas, “Situating peace journalism in journalism studies: A critical appraisal.” *conflict & communication online*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007, p. 1.

cussing the role of media in conflict areas. Journalists in these areas must contend with the dangers of reporting from an active conflict-zone, as well as the structural divisions existing in a society in the process of breaking down and mounting violence.

2.1.3 Iraqi media system, history and transition

Prior to the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, the media functioned primarily as propaganda machinery for the Ba'ath party. Iraqi media can therefore be likened to the Soviet communist model, where the primary function of the press is to uphold the party, and the interests of the state.²² The liberal-democratic form of journalistic training, objectivity in conjunction with the view of the media as the fourth estate and a check on power was during those years non-existent, and has had a difficult birth during the 21st century.²³ Some parallels can be drawn to the transition of Eastern European countries. After the American invasion and the subsequent market liberalization of the media landscape, the amount of privately owned news outlets skyrocketed. Ethnic, sectarian or political groups, with their own agenda, funded most of these news outlets. The result of this market pluralization has been increased fragmentation, primarily stoking tensions between Arabs and Kurds. The federal government has also found ways to censor and suppress independent media outlets in creative ways.²⁴

Study of the modern Iraqi media landscape has been fairly sparse, owing to the fact that the region has continuously been engulfed in conflict since 2003. Academics have primarily focused on external media reproduction, as in the growth of international tendencies and the factors leading up to the American invasion, rather than the internal developments of the Iraqi news media. Although millions of dollars have been poured into the country in an effort to build a new media system, and the proliferation of satellite channels, newspapers etc. has been exponential in recent years,²⁵ other aspects, such as the lack of professionalism and the mediocre quality of news making have seen little attention.²⁶

A noteworthy academic study of the of Iraqi media and its development is Ibrahim Al-Marashi's, *The Dynamics of Iraq's Media: Ethno-Sectarian Violence, Political Islam*, from

²² Siebert et al., *Four theories of the press*, 1963, p. 10-11.

²³ Relly, Jeannine. Zanger, Margaret. Fahmy, Shahira. "News Media Landscape in a Fragile State: Professional Ethics Perceptions in a Post-Ba'athist Iraq." *Mass Communication & Society* 18, no. 4, 471-497, 2015, p. 474.

²⁴ Amos, "Confusion, contradiction and irony." 2010, p. 30.

²⁵ Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "The Dynamics of Iraq's Media", 2007, p. 96.

²⁶ Gross, "Emerging media in peril." 2004, p. 581.

2007 which examines the evolution of Iraqi media during and in the five years after the American invasion, and is an analysis of the different frames employed by media actors as well as their affiliation.²⁷ Al-Marashi finds that Iraqi media is predominantly split down ethno-sectarian lines, in which media outlets are primarily beholden to the interests of these parties.

Another study of Iraqi media, *News Media Landscape in a Fragile State: Professional Ethics Perceptions in a Post-Ba'athist Iraq*, by Jeannine E. Relly, Margaret Zanger, and Shahira Fahmy, endeavours to map and analyze the influencing factors on professional ethics among a sample of Iraqi journalists. The findings of the study imply that there exists “a tension between liberal democratic journalism training at the routines level and ideological aspects, in some cases, such as ethnic identity and political ideology.”²⁸

²⁷ Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "The Dynamics of Iraq's Media." 2007, p. 96-98.

²⁸ Relly, et. al, "News Media Landscape in a Fragile State." 2015, p. 488.

3 Theory and methodology

In the following section the theoretical framework, key concepts and choice of methodology will be presented. Also included, the details of how these will be implemented in the coming sections.

3.1 Theory

In this essay, the theoretical perspective consists of two competing approaches, the *Liberal Model* and *Peace Journalism*. I will be employing the typology of each theory to the interview material. Subsequently, it will be used as a tool for generating codes and understanding the primary material.

3.1.1 Liberal Media Model and homogenization of global Journalism

The Liberal Media Model was conceived and developed in the Anglo-American media system (for the purpose of this essay the US media system, which is considered to be the purest Liberal Model, is used).²⁹ The model asserts that the role of the media is to act as a watchdog, also known as the fourth estate and accordingly functions as a check on power. This entails impartial reporting of credible facts in the pursuit of the public's best interest. To gain independence from state control, a process of commercialization took place during the 20th century, eliminating many smaller papers, and creating the media conglomerates that exemplify the American media landscape today. This process has been criticised by contemporary media researchers, who see this position as forcing media outlets to heed the control of business interests and the 'middle-class' rather than functioning as an unbiased political power.³⁰

The highest values that govern journalism and which the media system should strive towards are subsequently; objectivity, neutrality, professionalism and the limited role of the state. *The Objectivity norm* aids in the search for truth, separating fact-based observations

²⁹ Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 228.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 203.

from value laden reporting. It aims to present all sides and arguments in a political controversy, as an unbiased bystander only relaying the facts fairly. The relationship between news and journalists is that of simply stating facts without commenting on “something called news.”³¹ This form of reporting predominates in the liberal media system in comparison with other media systems that have different traditions. These traditions, do as the Liberal Model aim to present news accurately, shunning outright lies and misinformation. There is, however, no such hesitation when it comes to analysis of the news as well as slanting this information in accordance with the journalists’ values or political affiliation.³²

Political Neutrality norm necessitates expressing fewer opinions compared to other media systems, claiming to only distribute facts. Neutral in this meaning does not mean value free; rather they try to position themselves in the middle and catching the mainstream, “cutting across the principal lines of division between the established political forces in society.”³³ As in the case of the US, all major papers have “essentially the same orientation – a centrist one” conforming to “the views of white middle-class readers.”³⁴

Professionalization norm means a shared occupational ideology, a shared ethical stance and perception of reporting. It grew out of a profession with poor pay, which tended to corruption.³⁵ The modern equivalent is traffic based payment or continuation of contract, often leading towards sensationalism.

Characterized by an editorial hierarchy, constraining the individual journalists autonomy to express their own views and using their writing as a platform to further their own political goals. This has two sides; it constrains the owners and their influence over the news-making process as well as constraining journalists.³⁶ In North America the dominant form of professionalism pertains to objectivity. Professional routines are the structural limits placed on journalists by their editors and internalized by media workers with the aim of laying aside their own biases. However “at times, the balance leans toward the owners enough that profes-

³¹ Michael, Schudson. "The objectivity norm in American journalism." *Journalism* 2, no. 2, 149-170, 2001, p. 150.

³² Deuze, Mark. "What Is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered." *Journalism: Theory, Practice, And Criticism* 6, no. 4, 442-464, 2005, p. 448.

³³ Hallin et. al, *Comparing Media Systems*, 2004, p. 210.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 210.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 218.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 225-226.

sionalization actually facilitates instrumentalization of the press.” Not by editors or owners, but rather “subservience to the dominant view among political elites.”³⁷

The limited role of the state, the role of markets and the civil space are the primary drivers in the Liberal Model, examples of this is the self-regulating nature of many media institutions. However the limited role that the state does play in liberal media systems, is important in shaping the development of the media system. Functioning as a market regulator, as it does in many other areas of the capitalist system. Freedom of the press is guaranteed in many cases by the state apparatus (either through practice or through constitutional arrangements) granting journalists certain legal rights and protections, thereby recognizing the importance of the media and freedom of the press in capitalist democracies.³⁸

The homogenization of global media entails that the global media system, albeit composed of diverse and differing national journalistic customs and cultures, has according to Hallin and Mancini begun a process convergence towards the Liberal Model, facilitated by the hegemony of the Anglo-American sphere.³⁹ Journalism across the globe is adopting values and the approach employed in the Liberal Media Model. Other scholars claim that there exists a shared occupational ideology among news workers.⁴⁰ Despite evidence of an emergent global media culture, divergence persists. Media cultures find ways of subverting the liberal hegemony, adopting but transfiguring normative notions of liberal journalism to fit their own pre-existing conceptions.⁴¹

3.1.2 Peace Journalism

Peace Journalism in contrast is more of an active stance, as well as an individual choice. The most general conception of what this perspective means was originally conceived of as “when editors and reporters make choices – of what to report and how to report it – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict.”⁴² As defined above, the concept and theoretical approach is “deliberately non-specific”,⁴³ which makes it useful for this study, as it is not specific to any one type of conflict, or to one

³⁷ Hallin et. al, *Comparing Media Systems*, 2004, p. 225.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 229.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 251.

⁴⁰ Deuze, "What Is Journalism?", 2005, p. 446.

⁴¹ Miroiu, "The Triumph of the Liberal Media Model?", 2011, p. 64.

⁴² Lynch & McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism*. 2005, p. 5.

⁴³ Lynch, "Peace journalism" 2015, p. 193.

type of study. In this essay the actual news articles and their frames produced by actors in the journalistic space will not be the main focus. Rather a restructured theoretical framework based on many of the concepts in Peace Journalism and the Liberal Model are used in deciding what is salient and relevant. This has been done for two reasons; to broaden the reach of the concepts and move away from simply examining the frames that journalists apply to the story, and to explore the social reality of several journalistic actors linked in a post-conflict society.

A journalist is hardly ever simply an observer situated outside all human relations. What this role of an objective observer would entail is an impossible “view from nowhere.”⁴⁴ Thomas Nagel negotiates a compromise; introducing the category of human-objectivity, a view not as an external observer, but rather compensating for bias by seeking out opposing views. Still anchored in an “external reality” albeit admitting the impossibility of relaying objective information.⁴⁵ This, in stark contrast to the notion of journalistic objectivity, does not enable the hidden exertion of power as it acknowledges the implicit bias of the observer and the malleability of facts and truth-claims.⁴⁶

What Peace Journalism academics argue is that “more democratically relevant conflict journalism could facilitate peaceful resolutions of international conflicts rather than military escalations.”⁴⁷ The ontological assumption inherent in Peace Journalism is that people desire peace and security, not war and chaos.⁴⁸ Further, it eschews a view of objectivity as mentioned above, denying the position of the journalist as existing outside of the power structure, able to report from a non-partisan, detached space beyond the discourse of conflict.

Of greater relevance, Peace Journalism creates an alternative frame to War Journalism and is best explained in light of this counterpart. War Journalism reproduces the dominant frames and discourse through portraying the conflict in a binary way, good and evil, villains and victims, us and them. They advocate violence and revenge, with focus on events and battles rather than structures and the war continuum.⁴⁹ What such reporting paves the way for and creates, is a simplistic worldview, a view that exhibits the inability to confront the causes

⁴⁴ Lynch, Jake, *A global standard for reporting conflict*, Routledge, New York, 2014, p. 24.

⁴⁵ Nagel, Thomas. *The view from nowhere*. New York : Oxford Univ. Press, 1986, p. 91.

⁴⁶ Lynch, *A global standard for reporting conflict*, 2014, p. 24-25.

⁴⁷ Nohrstedt, Stig Arne, and Rune Ottosen. "Peace journalism: A proposition for conceptual and methodological improvements." *Global Media & Communication* 11, no. 3, 219-235, 2015, p. 220.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 220-221.

⁴⁹ Peleg, Samuel. "Peace Journalism through the Lense of Conflict Theory: Analysis and Practice." *Conflict & Communication* 5, no. 2, 2006, p. 10.

of conflict, challenges faced by society and its individuals.⁵⁰ By ignoring complexity in favour of ‘easy solutions’ the underlying causes, sociological processes and past trauma are doomed to be repeated. There is no critical self-reflection present in such a lens; rather it simply functions as a mouthpiece of the powerful. All intersectional understanding of oppression, injustice and difference is obfuscated, swept-under-the-rug, while the dominant biases and group identification; nationalism, ethnicity and sectarian, are strengthened.⁵¹

Contrary to this view, Peace Journalism seeks to function as a tool for analyzing the way journalists and editors work with improving media coverage. It acknowledges the role of the media as warmongers and propagandists, even in the pursuit of objectivity. Mainstream media often favours official sources, follows economic interests in their reporting, centers on an ad centered business model, which tends to exaggeration in an effort to drive traffic and clicks.

A peace approach seeks to consciously “identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented approach.”⁵² By exploring and confronting the context of the conflict, portraying it in realistic terms, it gives people a space for discussion and putting forth creative approaches to conflict resolution. It is the view that the media can promote alternative avenues to conflict.⁵³

Violence in this view is no longer situated in a simplistic binary world with one single possible outcome. Instead, it opens up a space for other options; nonviolence, reconciliation and the shared trauma of all parties, rather than the victimization of all groups. This does not imply that there are no perpetrators and victims; on the contrary, it is of utmost importance that all perpetrators, on all sides, are reported on. It is an inclusive journalism that reveals the suffering of all parties and tries to advocate for all groups, with a special focus on those most vulnerable.⁵⁴ When there exists a plurality of agents and voices represented in the media, the conflict loses its dichotomous dimension, which can facilitate the airing of grievances without demonization and lead to solution oriented politics.

What the perspective advocates for is not a form of Peace propaganda to counter or substitute for War propaganda. It is more closely related to the “classic” tenets of good journalism, promoting the deconstruction of War discourses through conflict reporting with an

⁵⁰ Dov Shinar, Wilhelm Kempf (eds.) *Peace Journalism: The State of the Art*. Berlin: regener, 2007, p. 3.

⁵¹ Peleg, Samuel. "Peace Journalism through the Lense of Conflict Theory", 2006, p. 13.

⁵² Nohrstedt, Stig Arne. Ottosen, Rune. "Peace journalism", 2015 p. 220.

⁵³ Dov Shinar & Wilhelm Kempf, *Peace Journalism*, 2007, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 6.

emphasis on “win-win solutions”, questioning the logic of violence and war reporting.⁵⁵ It is reporting that is aware of its own self and its position in society in producing narratives, in the sense that it does not seek to detach itself from the world. Instead it asks society and its audiences to consider the value of alternative responses to fear and violence.⁵⁶

3.2 Methodology

The methodological approach applied in this thesis consists of a two-step methodology; firstly the semi-structured qualitative interview practice lays the basis for data collection. Which will be followed by a qualitative content analysis that assisted in coding the interview answers. In the following paragraphs both of these methods will be presented and evaluated.

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Qualitative Interview Method

A semi-structured qualitative interview refers to a method of interviewing that is less structured than quantitative methods, relying on more open-ended questions and the perceptions of the interviewee. The aim of such a methodology is to understand the individual’s conception of their social reality, their experiences of a phenomenon or situation rather than generating empirical data.⁵⁷ The sampling of respondents was done through an initial contact with the media outlets editor and research about their primary donors, which led to establishing contact with other interviewees.

The researcher follows a script of sorts in each interview, with questions that touch upon fairly specific topics, this is generally known as an interview guide. The purpose of this is to clarify the research questions, the “why” of the study.⁵⁸ However, contrary to a strictly structured interview, more leeway is granted in how the respondent answers the question as well as the follow up questions asked by the researcher. There is a need of more flexibility for how the whole conversation is conducted because of the open ended interview questions, as the emphasis lies on the respondent, their interpretation of the question, their linking of con-

⁵⁵ Hanitzsch, “Situating peace journalism in journalism studies.” 2007, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Lynch, “Peace journalism”, 2015, p. 193.

⁵⁷ Bryman, Alan. *Social research methods*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 466.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 470.

cepts and their perception of the topics raised by the researcher.⁵⁹ Therein lies the advantage of semi-structured interview. It can easily be adapted through varying the order of questions, follow-ups for clarification or when the respondent mentions something interesting that is relevant to the study. It allows for expanding and deepening the conversation if and when information may appear.⁶⁰ The unpredictability of the interviews outcome can therefore alleviate some of the researchers own bias regarding the topic and will also result in a more nuanced primary-material. It is nevertheless important to follow the format and avoid loaded questions as well as leading questions.

3.2.2 The interview process and ethical considerations

Interviewees were contacted via email, in which the purpose and general subject of this study was explained and made clear. This was to ensure that the intended interviewees could familiarize themselves with what topics interview would touch-upon and the study itself in advance in order to properly consent to an interview. The interviews took place over Skype, divergences between face-to-face interviews and interviews conducted over other mediums have been shown to be negligible and thus should not impact the primary data collected for this study.⁶¹

Before the interview commenced the participant was again informed of the study's purpose, how long the interview was planned to last, that they could break off the interview at any time, and that they will be anonymized in the text itself. This has been done with consideration of interviewing persons in precarious circumstances.

As already mentioned above, the interviews were performed based on a Semi-Structured Interview Method, with an interview guide that contained questions prepared in advance. All informants were asked the same questions, although the order of the questions as well as the follow-ups did differ. Respondents were allowed to speak and associate freely, the questions and the format was designed in a fashion to allow them to share their experiences in their own words and communicate what was most relevant for the individual respondent. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed in full.

⁵⁹ Bryman, *Social research methods*, 2016, p. 469.

⁶⁰ Warren, Carol, "Qualitative Interviewing." In *Handbook of Interview Research*, SAGE Publications, Inc. 83-102, 2001, p. 87.

⁶¹ Bryman, *Social research methods*, 2016, p. 492.

3.2.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis is a structured way of processing transcripts. By coding and looking for themes in the underlying unstructured interviews, trends can be shown and made more salient.⁶² The researcher works through the text by labeling relevant parts. What makes something relevant is up to the discretion of the researcher, be it something that is repeated in several places or by several interviewees, or the interviewee may explicitly state that a certain factor is important. The theoretical framework, combined with preconceived theories and concepts aid in deciding between what is salient in the text and in creating the interview guide. This *Directed Content Analysis* aims to confirm, criticize or “extend an already existing theoretical framework or theory.”⁶³

In this essay content analysis will function in conjunction primarily with concepts taken from Peace Journalism and the Liberal Model, aiming to conceptualize underlying patterns. This has been combined with Open Coding, as some important codes may not match the preconceived categories, these will therefore need more justification. After Coding has occurred, they will be grouped into themes, themselves amalgamated codes. These themes do not have to be of the same type, they may refer to distinct concepts, objects, processes etc. or be sub-themes under larger categories. After which the aim is to describe the connections between themes and sub-themes, if there exists a hierarchy between themes or if some themes are more important than others for the actors that have been interviewed. In essence conceptualizing the data on an abstract level.⁶⁴

These categories and the connections between them that are produced will then become the main results of the study that in turn will be analyzed. After the interview result was highlighted according to the code schema, the coding was analyzed by compiling the information so that reasoning, similarities and differences could be distinguished, thus identifying the different motivational phenomena that drive their commitment forward and gaining an understanding of how they perceive their own involvement and their environment, and how they perceive and are influenced by journalistic norms.⁶⁵ The results will then be analyzed

⁶² Bryman, *Social research methods*, 2016, p. 584-585 and in Hsieh Hsiu-Fan & Shannon E. Sarah. Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis, *Qualitative Health Research*, 1277-1288, 2005; 15(9), p. 1278.

⁶³ Hsieh & Shannon, Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis, 2005. p. 1281.

⁶⁴ Bryman, *Social research methods*, 2016, p. 587-588.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 588-589.

and interpreted in the *Inquiry and Analysis* section, in relation to the theoretical framework of Peace Journalism, the Liberal Model and other relevant factors that may arise.

The methodology suited the purpose of my study because of its close relation to the interview method used. The interview data accrued during the first phase benefited from being systemized for the purpose of interpretation; therefore employing a second methodology, gives the study more rigour and increases the chances of the readers' ability to reproduce the results from the raw data. Ultimately though the description of phenomena highlighted in this study, will be the product of my thought-process and salience decided through a biased method, as the coding was done manually. This risk of bias has to be acknowledged as a minor yet potential issue for the study, and taken into account when assessing the reliability of the results. In an effort to mitigate this I have attempted to stay as close to the data as possible. But I make no general claims for the applicability of the results in other domains or fields, nor do they represent the opinions of other actors in the context of media in Iraq.

4 Background

Iraq is in a sense an artificial state, albeit in the same way all nations are. The claim that this is the sole reason for the conflict in Iraq is therefore disingenuous. As an administrative area the creation of what would become Iraq can be traced to the competing interests between the Ottomans and subsequent conquerors from the East. The Ottomans ruled their territory through a decentralized state apparatus out of necessity. Supporting elites and driving division between peoples, ensured the survival of their empire by pitting groups against each other.⁶⁶ However, imperial ambitions among the dominant world powers during the 19th and 20th century, specifically a rivalry between Britain, France, Germany and Russia, that came to a head in the Middle Eastern region, would put an end to Ottoman rule and influence.⁶⁷ The partition came after the defeat of the Central powers, in which the victors carved up a now shattered empire. Dominion over these newly formed states was established under the guise of League of Nations Protectorates.

The British ruled in very much the same way, favouring different groups and fuelling intragroup tensions, as is exemplified in the creation of Kuwait. The coming century was to be a series of unfair exchanges and concessions regarding resources extraction that were granted to British and international corporations, as oil was discovered at the turn of the 19th century near the Persian Gulf, as well as in the plains Northern Iraq, near the city of Kirkuk.⁶⁸ The British Navy ran on oil, access to which they made sure to protect at any cost.⁶⁹ Although the country achieved independence and formal control over its territory, the resources were out of the government's reach, signed away to foreign interests. Under the surface, this unfairness festered, leading to the downfall of the monarchy and the rise of a new order. Quickly, however, the old hierarchy was swept away and replaced by a new structure, the Ba'athist party. And from within its ranks arose a leader that would oversee the creation of the new modernized Iraq as well as genocide and bloodshed.⁷⁰

Saddam Hussein also fuelled these same divisions as rulers before him, by favouring first the religious sect that he was a part of and then the tribal unit in which he consolidated

⁶⁶ Mansfield, Peter. *A history of the Middle East*. London : Penguin, 2010, p. 28-31.

⁶⁷ Polk, William R. *Understanding Iraq : the whole sweep of Iraqi history, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British mandate to the American occupation*. New York : HarperCollins, 2005, p. 61-65.

⁶⁸ Mansfield, *A history of the Middle East*, 2010, p. 255.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 67, 73.

⁷⁰ Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 2005, p. 109, 119.

his power.⁷¹ The media machinery was of course part of his chokehold on power, disseminating propaganda and Saddam's pseudo-nationalist vision for Iraq.

In the 1990s, Western leaders sought to put an end to Saddam's rule (whom they had previously supported). The Gulf War and the subsequent Iraq War in 2002 saw immense casualties and the breakdown of Iraqi infrastructure. Violence surged throughout the country, and the sectarian divide that had been kept in check by Saddam Hussein's oppressive regime spiralled.⁷² The American invasion and the destruction they left in their wake created the breeding ground for the current ethnic strife. The occupation and their subsequent half-hearted attempts at solving Iraq's problems (many of them products of the invasion itself) caused the radicalization and organization of the current forces tugging at Iraq.⁷³ This is not to say that the Americans caused the sometimes millennia old conflicts between groups, what they nevertheless facilitated was the current conflict.

Violence subsided after 2007 for a while until the withdrawal of American troops, which saw a return to oppressive practices, stoking tensions and suppressing the media. Conflicts in the rest of the Middle Eastern region spilled over into Iraq, with an influx of foreign fighters and the formation of ISIS from many ex-Ba'athist party members and Sunni hardliners.⁷⁴ Iraqis may not have to contend with ISIS as an occupying force anymore, but their defeat unfortunately does not spell the end of conflict in the region.

Today Iraq is a contested battleground between internal as well as external actors, several different conflicts are taking place at the same time; Shiite against Sunni, Arabs against Kurds, as well as external interests such as Iran and Saudi Arabia.⁷⁵ Trapped in this conflict are the inhabitants of the disputed area, provinces in Iraq currently under Baghdad's control, but claimed by the Kurdistan Regional Government as well as other minority groups like Turkmen. It is home to a mix of different ethnicities; Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Chaldean Assyrians, as well as religious groups such as Sunni, Shia, Christians and other minorities.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Baram, Amatzia. "Neo-tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's tribal policies 1991-96." *International Journal Of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 1, 1-31, 1997, p. 4.

⁷² Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 2005, p. 170-176.

⁷³ Napoleoni, Loretta. *Islamiska staten*. Lidingö : Fri Tanke, 2015 p. 31.

Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 2005, p. 173.

⁷⁴ Tønnessen, Truls, "Heirs of Zaraqawi or Saddam? The relationship between al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State." *Perspectives On Terrorism* no. 4, 48-60, 2015, p. 53.

⁷⁵ Tzemperin, Athina, Jugoslav Josic, Henry Lanmbare. "The Middle East Cold War: Iran-Saudi Arabia and the Way Ahead." *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 52, no. 4/5, 187-202, 2015, p. 188.

⁷⁶ Stefan, Wolff. "Governing (in) Kirkuk: resolving the status of a disputed territory in post-American Iraq." *International Affairs (Royal Institute Of International Affairs 1944-)* no. 6, 1361-1379, 2010, p. 1361-1363.

Kirkuk as a city and as a region in the disputed areas is pivotal, both as an economically important hub, as well as a border region between administrative centers in post-ISIS Iraq. Anything that occurs in the province will reverberate through the region as well as the Iraqi nation. Therefore, an unbiased media that can bridge the divide between ethnic and sectarian groups as well as lessen friction between competing groups is foundational for the future existence of the Iraqi federation as well as the stability and feasibility of coexistence.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Stefan, Wolff. "Governing (in) Kirkuk." 2010, p. 1376-1379.

5 Inquiry and Analysis

In the following section, the systematized codes will be presented under themes and exemplified by quotes from the interviews. The theoretical framework plays a two-part role in this paper: in the coding phase and the creation of the interview guide, as well as a perspective of understanding the views and thoughts of the interviewees. When comparing the approaches, Peace Journalism can be claimed to situate the actor at the center of reporting, taking an active role in exerting their will in an effort to resolve the conflict. In contrast to the Liberal Media Model, that propagates an objective distance to that which is reported.

The results of the study will be presented in three main themes; *Challenges for Journalism in the Iraqi Media Landscape*, *Approaches to Journalism* and *Journalism in Conflicts areas*. Under each main theme there are several sub-themes that make up the body of the results, each of these are comprised of codes and concepts arrived at through analysis of the interviews conducted. The interviewees are referred to as; A, B, C and D.

In the first part, current challenges to the media system in Iraq is presented. The respondent's views of these challenges are explored, characterised by a general distrust of media institutions and ethno/sectarian fragmentation and the lack of professionalism as well as factors that aggravate the current circumstances. In the next theme, the approaches that respondent's employ in relation to media and its components, as well as factors that create "good media" are delved into. The last section of the study will examine what local media can do to aid in solving the conflict.

5.1 Challenges for Journalism in the Iraqi media Landscape

When asked about the current effects of the media and the state of the Iraqi conflict all respondents mentioned the emerging Fault line between the federal government and Kurdish autonomous region. The unresolved conflict between the two parties and the clash over jurisdiction may, according to the respondents, lead to a deeper conflict and confrontation. Although it seems to be dormant for now, B remarked, that "there is a media war"⁷⁸ playing out with sectarian and ethnically affiliated groups egging on the rival parties. A common view

⁷⁸ B, 23/11/2017

expressed, was that a lot of media outlets work on deepening the conflict, bringing up and exaggerating the differences between groups, creating tension and conflict for political gain rather than resolving it. As was the case of the “media war” that occurred before and after the capture of Kirkuk.

The general consensus was that this kind of warmongering media aims to provoke other groups in an effort to cement their own social cohesion, through deepening the divisions and viewing the conflict as binary i.e. “win-loose” as well as “us-them.” Journalism, as a result of this, has a very bad reputation in Iraq according to B. For D the future of journalism in Iraq is bleak;

I can't really see a future for journalists as a group being able to hold power accountable, I think they're just part of the problem. I don't think [the media] is part of the solution in terms of creating accountability and transparency and many journalists unfortunately are extremely close to politicians, powerful people. That's how they survive, and I don't blame them.⁷⁹

In line with Peace Journalism, divisive media is viewed as part of the problem, but it should and could be part of the solution. Their response to the current issue is the need for media outlets and institutions that function in a professional objective and unbiased manner. As a watchdog that can communicate and critically analyze underlying problems, relay information to the populace and which enables them to make informed decisions about the future and their relations to other groups.

5.1.1 Security

Another issue raised in the interviews was security. As C put it: “Doing your job can get you killed.”⁸⁰ A, B, C and D all raised the issue of physical security in regards to moving around and gaining access to areas that are controlled by different groups and militias as well as a lack of respect for the journalistic profession (its impartiality etc.) and the rule of law, as many operate outside of it. As B expressed it: “problems start in these areas because of this there is tension between the Iraqis and the Kurds. It just kind of creates a security void. Extremist organization can easily exploit that.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ D, 6/12/2017

⁸⁰ C, 30/11/2017

⁸¹ B, 23/11/2017

There is a general lack of security and unpredictability present in every situation. In a matter of hours journalist may move in between areas controlled by several groups, attempting to work in areas where they are afforded no protections either from the state or the groups currently in control of the area. Journalist D claimed that anyone of these groups could arrest a journalist for any reason, and even if the journalist got away unscathed it could take up to 2-3 days to clear up the matter. Further, D brought up the role that ethnicity plays in gaining access to areas, ethnicity has an impact on your ability to move around, which also becomes more difficult as the conflict heats up. As there exists little trust between these groups in society, it makes the journalists' job more difficult. If you don't belong to the group you are interviewing many may regard you with less trust to convey the message.

C spoke of the general security challenges journalists are confronted with in their day-to-day work in areas with no guarantee of safety. There exists a "No-mans-land"⁸² in between the warring factions. In the power vacuum that is the disputed areas, everyone aims to impose their own views and will. Beholden to no one, violence against journalists goes unpunished. This is coupled with the problem that B highlighted regarding addressing violations of journalists rights. According to B there exists very little to no regulations for the protection of journalists. Even when things are brought in front of a court, there is a general lack of education and application of press laws.

The main issue then, is how to actually protect their bodily autonomy and safety in the disputed territories. This problem is further exacerbated by what B, C and D claimed is a common view, that "politicians have no respect for journalists or the media, viewing them simply as tools to be used for their own agenda."⁸³ In these areas, the first victims of the conflicts are always the local journalists. Peace Journalism as well as theories of transition and the Liberal Model underestimates the structural constraints that working in these environments entail.

As journalist D put it: "the environment is not conducive to journalism",⁸⁴ further D remarked that unless you are working for an international outlet and able to be embedded, its difficult to move around, hampering local journalism. This is in-and-of-itself problematic. Freelance journalists are forced to risk their lives every day. To change this, A conveyed that: "First of all you have to look at the enabling environment, what obstacles are there to free

⁸² C, 23/11/2017

⁸³ B, 23/11/2017

⁸⁴ D, 6/12/2017

independent media?”⁸⁵ In the context of Iraq there is a needed for protection measures to ensure the safety of journalist. The Journalists interviewed are impartial when it comes to who controls the disputed territories; they simply need to feel safe while doing their job. “If you have an accountable regime in these areas, be it the Iraqis, the Kurds, whoever, it doesn't matter as long as it's accountable and transparent. I think it helps stabilize Iraq in the long term.”⁸⁶

5.1.2 Fragmentation and Funding

Most groups have their own media outlets. From the local level up to the national level fragmentation is systemic. Liberalization has led to an uneasy transition, paving the way for a media that is beholden to different political and commercial interests. This was a consistent view among the interviews, exemplified by B who claimed that;

Media is affiliated to political economic forces in Iraq who have a specific political agenda, or military, economic etc. That means that journalists working for those organizations are unfortunately not free to publish the way they would like to publish, because they must forward a specific agenda.⁸⁷

The majority of misunderstandings between the different groups stem from a partisan and biased local media, which exacerbates the conflict and exaggerates differences. Because media is divided across these lines, it generates and enables the already existing historically negative relationships between communities. As individuals primarily get their news and trust media outlets from their own respective groups, cross-communication that could facilitate mutual understanding is largely absent. This shows that media in Iraq is at its core antagonistic and views the conflict in binary terms of win-loose, as C poignantly said “if any ethnic group has the upper hand, they see it as some sort of threat to them.”⁸⁸

Politicians, religious groups and other organizations that control media outlets directly or indirectly, through ownership and advertisement respectively, have an enormous power when it comes to agenda setting, and according to all respondents this power is actively used in the “affiliated” media sector. Further, they have a negative effect on the survival of other

⁸⁵ A, 30/11/2017

⁸⁶ D, 6/12/2017

⁸⁷ B, 23/11/2017

⁸⁸ C, 23/11/2017

media outlets by competing for funding in an already saturated media environment, swallowing up resources and crushing independent media in the process. Journalist D asked the poignant question “Why would [politicians] set aside funding for journalists to be critical of them, its not in their own interest.”⁸⁹ The role of the state, in this case, is limited in its regulatory capacity if not non-existent. It cannot be seen to meet the requirements of a Liberal Model. As a result, independent media institutions in Iraq that aim to hold politicians accountable are few. This has led to misunderstanding abounding and the proliferation of lies. Which underlines the problems Peace Journalism criticizes in antagonistic media. B made the point that “it basically runs down to who owns the media, and to what extent are they able to report independently from the political and ideological mission of the media owners.”⁹⁰

As mentioned above there is a persistent view that Iraqi media is fragmented across political, sectarian and ethnic lines, a divide that has only expanded after recent events. This tension came to a head during the autumn of 2017 and the retaking of the Kirkuk province as well as the surrounding oil fields by the Iraqi Federal government from the Semi-autonomous Iraqi-Kurdistan. According to many of the respondents this led to the collapse of the Iraqi press along ethnic and sectarian lines.

Not only media ownership is problematic, funding in general is complicated. Funding from outside of Iraq is uncertain as it relies on the goodwill of NGOs and charities. Often grants are project based and not a stable source to ensure continuing operations. National funding comes at a price, namely a change to the editorial line of the media outlet. They are often “not interested in journalism, just propaganda”⁹¹ D claimed. Many times influential and powerful people set up media outlets to protect themselves, or “bribe” them by promising ad revenue. As there are no normative constraints on owners or journalists stemming from a journalistic culture, the business sector becomes part of the problem. They compound and worsen an already de-legitimized profession. This is analogous to a common critique of commercialization in the Liberal Model mentioned above.

Outside funding therefore does give more leeway in what and how something is reported, as: “Donors don’t generally interfere directly in the newsroom or the editorial line”.⁹² The enigma, however, is how to make these news outlets sustainable and viable. All the in-

⁸⁹ D, 6/12/2017

⁹⁰ B, 23/11/2017

⁹¹ D, 6/12/2017

⁹² B, 23/11/2017

interviewees remarked that funding from outside sources is unsustainable, and is mainly aimed at short-term projects, thus can never sustainably fund a project or give the journalists working for these the security needed to develop in their field according to D.

Respondent A expressed how inadequate current funding and business models are in addressing the changing situation. The online sphere has had a profound influence on old established financing models; advertising is less lucrative, making ad based operations very difficult to be self-sustainable. Even when advertising is a possibility it often ties an outlet to a certain view, and according to D, powerful actors use this to their advantage. In a shrinking advertising market, media ownership, especially in the context of Iraq becomes an issue. The feasibility of independent media is therefore severely questioned, with the challenges to business models and the profitability for media outlets in post-conflict and active conflict areas being immense.

This raises the question of how journalists can be objective without financial independence, or job security. Beholden to the whims of powerful individuals or advertisers, following a code of ethics in these circumstances becomes difficult, which in turn weakens the legitimacy of all reporting, even articles that do not conflict with the interests of business. As A puts it “we’re all afraid of fake news and want good quality news, but no one is willing to pay for it.”⁹³ The bottom line for any project from the disputed areas and any other post/active-conflict is and will always be funding.

5.2 Approaches to Journalism

What is apparent from the interviews, is that the respondents hold shared views on both how the media should report in Iraq as well as what the aim of that reporting should be. They should report objectively and professionally, but also work for social change by giving a voice to the people that have suffered because of the conflict. These views correspond to many aspects of the Liberal Model and Peace Journalism. The views are not conflicting, they augment the other as will be shown below.

⁹³ A, 30/11/2017

5.2.1 Independent media

The most prominently featured aspect touched upon by all the interviewees was the need for and prospect of independent media in Iraq. Independent media according to most respondents is fair, objective and factual, following the basic principals of journalism. For them independent media, although not the definitive solution, can have an impact on the conflict and its resolution. These basic principles are similar to the definition of the Liberal Model reviewed above, especially concerning the objectivity norm and the political neutrality norm. According to one respondent, these principals are epitomized as “don’t assume anything.”⁹⁴ Fulfilling its watchdog function, that aims to create accountability in society and function as a fourth estate, with checks and balances on power and its use. It “should be very basic, which means responsible and professional”⁹⁵ and concentrate on taking its public function. To report independently from power structures and corruption. Achieving this is difficult enough, therefore getting away from one-sided reporting is the main concern for many of the interviewees.

D spoke a lot about the role that Independent media can play in informing people properly, and by his standard Iraq doesn’t currently have media institutions capable of this. As mentioned above in section on challenges to journalism in Iraq, this is the main concern because of the extreme fragmentation and bias apparent in the current media system. In conjunction with the challenges of professionalism, achieving this goal is seen as the main problem going forward. The code of ethics and the goals that all actors interviewed expressed, corresponds with the generally accepted normative notions of liberal journalism. This is not surprising, as explained above several studies have identified the undergoing spread of a common ethical code and a certain perception of professionalism especially regarding concepts as objectivity, fairness and facts.

Professionalism is deeply interlinked with the concept of independent media, and the impartiality that it entails. As a concept it intersects both Peace Journalism and the Liberal Model, being an important aspect of the latter. What then is professionalism in their eyes? According to B and C it is an attempt at impartiality beyond allegiances to any group or kin, the adherence to a code of journalistic ethics. This code entails the following; everyone has the right to their own opinion, no matter their ethnic, religious or political leanings, as long as

⁹⁴ D, 6/12/2017

⁹⁵ A, 30/11/2017

these biases are accounted for and do not effect the work in the newsroom. In the newsroom and the editorial line a sort of detached impartiality rules, which should not be influenced by any actor, external or internal. Closely linked is what D calls the basic principles of journalism, to be fair, unbiased and relay accurate information, through confirming reports with multiple sources and comparing them to the official story. When an event occurs the reporting should show both sides and try to be fair and accurate. The essence of this occupational ideology is the premiering of facts and the external impartial view, and this is achieved through acting like a professional, which in this context entails to an extent embracing the philosophical underpinnings of the Liberal Model.

According to all the respondents the most prevalent challenge to Iraqi media was professionalism, or the lack of a professional journalistic code of conduct. As one respondent put it “there is no real journalism in Iraq [...] what is published is just slightly above rumours.”⁹⁶ This does not apply to every news outlet but the vast majority of outlets are viewed as biased, seen to be fabricating news and forwarding a biased agenda. Professionalism, as stated by all respondents, is non-existent in Iraq. Journalists are predominantly “not objective, unbiased, provide no analysis, no investigative reports and no proper reporting.”⁹⁷ They function as mouthpieces for the official line, simply reporting what the powerful in society claim without questioning, or they forward a specific line of thought without introspective critique. D proclaimed; “part of the problem is the journalistic community, their commitment to journalism.”⁹⁸ Another problem highlighted especially by B and C was the difficulty of finding journalists that are willing to bridge the sectarian gap, who have journalistic training or who subscribe to a professional ethos and who believe in the project, especially concerning the recruitment of female reporters.

Challenges to professionalism and the subsequent rise of a journalistic corps with a collective occupational ideology arise primarily from two factors, the lack of funding or it being connected to actors with their own interests, which in turn has led to the fragmentation of the media landscape as well as the erosion of trust and independent position of journalist in the eyes of the people. It is the structure; the framework within which journalism operates that has destroyed its credibility.

⁹⁶ D, 6/12/2017

⁹⁷ C, 23/11/2017

⁹⁸ D, 6/12/2017

B and C claim that a truthful media can aid in decision making, having the correct information which isn't slanted with obvious bias will lead to better outcomes than the sectarian media currently prevalent in Iraq. This is achieved in the case of B by not submitting to the pressure of reporting on a story first or supplying continual news coverage, rather they employ restraint and aim to get all the facts right as well as double checking what they actually report rather than publishing hearsay. They try to be objective and professional and always discuss what the implications of this piece of news will be. Questions such as; "is it interesting? One-sided? Informative? Gender-sensitive?"⁹⁹ This conscious reporting shows an important aspect of editors and journalists making active choices in how they frame news stories. Touching upon the main vein of thought in Peace Journalism.

5.2.2 Peace media

The role of media in conflict areas is complex, largely because of the complexity inherent in the conflicts themselves, as is shown in the opinions and answers given by the respondents during the interviews. The conflict has had an impact on the opinions expressed by the interviewees, as well as how they relate to the role that media can play. These opinions are not in stark contrast to the Liberal Model of impartiality and objectivity, rather they operationalize these concepts and approaches with the aim of resolving conflicts.

What journalist D saw as the most important aspect of journalism, and the goal of the profession, was the act of bearing witness to the occurrences and subsequently to relay this information to the public accurately, in an unbiased and fair way. The weight placed on witnessing hints at a slight variation and divergence between the actors attitudes, the latter conveys a sense of nearness and the portrait of human suffering through a microscopic lens while the former attempts to achieve accuracy through permitting the differing views to compete against each other. Witnessing events unfold as well as individual human fates, is a way to improve the reporting of the journalist.

For the media outlet that B and C work at, what is relevant is that the whole cycle of conflict must be highlighted, showing the rationale of both sides. Contact with the local population was perceived as an important factor for creating a media that can represent the people

⁹⁹ B, 23/11/2017

and report on issues that are important for them rather than focusing on simply national issues such as the economy.

We do believe that projects like this have an impact. Our contact with local people and their feedback tells us that we can have an impact on them and people can change. We've even got feedback from local people, our audiences who suggest how we should work on different issues.¹⁰⁰

Having a presence at the local level is an effective way to build trust, as the locals are more likely to share information. It was also put forth as an avenue for airing grievances, as well as being known as a trusted news source. In this way media can function as a tool for peace and conflict resolution in accordance with theories of Peace Journalism. It's the fact that people believe that they can get in touch with this outlet, or that, they can make a difference if they have some information. D has a similar line of reasoning, when people are well informed they are capable of exercising good judgement and can make the right decision.

So it's a combination of all these factors that can help produce professional outlets that can inform the public well. As respondent A further claimed outside NGOs as well as actors within Iraq have been effective in putting pressure on the government concerning the issue of journalists safety. In the interview A firmly believes that by highlighting problems it becomes a moral obligation for the government to take legal action directly when journalists are killed. A means that these organizations can reach large audiences and raise controversial issues, and that a multipronged approach that includes NGOs, media outlets and other actors can put pressure on government officials. It at least becomes a way for the people's voices to be heard. Either way the media outlets that raise questions that are legitimate and factual will bolster their own credibility, thus further increasing the trust they enjoy.

What the media can do to bring about peaceful solutions according to respondent A, is to work in the interests of the people. The people A refers to are the vulnerable groups of society e.g. internally displaced peoples who through trustworthy media can return to their homes. Instead of reporting on violence in dichotomous way, they choose to orient themselves towards what A called "ordinary people as actors and sources."¹⁰¹ Reporting for society at large, valuing de-escalation and factual reporting over warmongering situates their answers in an active approach towards resolving conflicts rather than aggravating them. They

¹⁰⁰ B, 23/11/2017

¹⁰¹ A, 30/11/2017

provide an opportunity for considering other options and responses. They aim to go outside the traditional view of independent media and actively influence the conflict

The goal of reporting for A, B, C and D, is base level sensitivity to cultural norms, being considerate and treating the interviewees “as people”¹⁰² rather than stories. Having normal conversations, showing empathy and understanding, trying to understand their suffering even though it is next to impossible. In their writing, they try to convey the face-to-face meeting. The state of the framework is nevertheless problematic, with security forces and other actors situated as obstacles making it very hard for independent media outlets to operate.

Further, such a media can function as a memory of Human rights violations, as well as uncover those responsible, hold perpetrators accountable when the efforts of the state are either not enough or non-existent. Reporting on subjects that aids people and the reconciliation of their communities further bolsters trust building. Independent media outlets need to find avenues and spaces where change can be affected, showcasing the possibility of an alternative media-landscape. They want to be watchdogs, however, with the aim of creating an alternative future for the region.

Reporting truthfully and objectively has led to these media outlets increasing their reach according to A. By raising controversial issues and forgoing hyperbole and ideologically biased reporting, there can be a shift away from warmongering media. This view touches upon the base belief that a well-informed polity has the capability to make rational choices, but exposes the underlying conception of peace as the rational choice for the masses who undoubtedly will be the victims of conflict. Their interests are nevertheless often in direct conflict with elites whose power base is built on the conflict and national infighting. What Peace Journalism then needs is a theory of how these masses can gain sufficient power in their societies to counteract elite dominance, a theory of overcoming inequality in the media system.

5.3 Journalism in Conflicts areas

The interviews showed that a great deal of pragmatism is practiced because of the contextual constraints. Everything must be done in relation to the conflict, which is shown in how they

¹⁰² C, 23/11/2017

relate to reporting and what they chose to make salient. Journalism has become a form of advocacy, and they aim to use the media for finding other options and spaces for people to resolve their problems, air their grievances. This in contrast to what they call the affiliated media, which seeks to advance the position of only certain groups. Such lines of reasoning show similarities to the approach championed in Peace Journalism literature.

5.3.1 Local Media and its possibilities for peace

Even though the respondents espouse a certain perception of independent media, it differs from the dominant thought of the Western Liberal Model in one important aspect, they do not claim to distance themselves from what they report or place themselves outside of a fragmented society. For them, there is no “view from nowhere.” This corresponds more closely to a Peace Journalism approach.

The context of Iraq and the current conflict has forced them to focus on the background of conflict and aiding in its resolution. They all perceive their form of journalism as advocacy, a view of journalism that differs from traditional modes of the Liberal Model. What the interviews show, is their belief in the ability of people to make right decisions when accurate information is provided to them. Although B expresses the view of the project as a means to resolving the conflict, their main focus lies on the people themselves, they aim to show “the positive side of being together, so there's good images, good experiences of people who want to work.”¹⁰³

B and C remarked that National media outlets can't possibly cover the particularities of these places, and are more often focused on what is happening in centralized institutions rather than the smaller cities or conflict areas after the fighting has died down. Fragmentation on the national level is so systemic realizing change may be difficult. “Media should be locally rooted”,¹⁰⁴ as they can delve into specifics in a way that national media has no possibility to do. According to A there is a need for local media to play quite a substantial role, and concentrate their reporting on the disputed territories because of the possibilities and openings. When you start at the local level, you can also show that people can work together. Where conflict is prevalent is also often where the lines cross, nationally and regionally.

¹⁰³ B, 23/11/2017

¹⁰⁴ A, 30/11/2017

They all displayed tempered optimism when speaking of the potential role of the media. Respondent A nevertheless cautioned not overestimate what media can do, warning that the crisis is still here, “we haven’t hit the bottom yet”,¹⁰⁵ “the Iraqi media is in pieces.”¹⁰⁶ The current media sector is fragmented and increasingly failing in its mission to report factually. As A puts it, civil society shrinking and freedom of the press are global issues, so many of the challenges are not specific to Iraqi media. What happens globally will influence how local media can operate.

5.3.2 De-mystifying lies in the “Fake News” era

All interviewees exalted the impact, reach and instantaneous character of social media. Unfortunately it has also made fake news more prevalent. This is coupled to the problem of professionalism, or apparent lack of professionalism. In an effort to counteract the spread of disinformation especially B and C try to de-mystify lies and resolve conflicts with correct information before violence has a chance to erupt. They choose to take an active stance, in line with a Peace Journalism approach.

D spoke of social media as a crucial tool for journalists today as almost everyone has a smartphone, even soldiers at the front lines of the conflict. B chose to focus on the opportunity that social media has when it comes to reach of newspaper circulation compared to traditional print media. A talked more of citizen journalism, how access to the social media has made everyone a potential journalist or source. However the Internet has a double role to play and social media is problematic because of many aspects. There is no context or analysis, and many times the analysis that accompanies posts are less well-researched journalism and more hyperbole and political manipulation.

Although the respondents were primarily positive in regards to the changes the online media environment has contributed to (more citizens journalism, easier to circumvent censorship etc.) they held several critical views. Foremost was the prevalence and ease of publishing so called “fake-news.” Not per se a new thing in the context of Iraq, as journalist B remarked, it is simply a new word for an old problem.

¹⁰⁵ A, 30/11/2017

¹⁰⁶ C, 23/11/2017

In their view, the strengths that make social media a useful tool are also the factors that can effectively sow discontent and conflict between groups. Its very easy to publish, which has lead to everyone functioning as a sort of journalist without proper training or regard for how things are framed, posts can be edited, sources are seldom cited nor is there any methods easily available to confirm reports, which in turn leads to hearsay and rumours spreading. The public in general is not competent in source criticism, which could be seen as an oversight in Peace Journalism perspectives that fail to take into account the need for education and media critique among readers. Coupled with the fact that many seek to reaffirm their own beliefs trusting blindly reports that do exactly that further inflaming the divide.

According to one respondent the Iraqi press has no journalistic integrity or professional ethics, being one step above rumour mills. Which is exacerbated by the individuals' behaviour when using these platforms (poor source criticism, re-publishing and spreading rumours, poor digital hygiene, participating in the news-making process in destructive ways). New media has created tremendous possibilities in terms of spreading information and circumvent censorship, reducing costs for independent media outlets and increasing their reach. It has also opened up a space that is fraught with pitfalls and dangers, as costs have fallen for all actors and made possible news making outside traditional media institutions.

An independent media can dispel these lies, avoid conflict and create a space for dialogue. But it forces independent media outlets to put out the fires that the affiliated media starts. These same outlets not only forward an agenda, but also discredit independent media outlets that try to report objectively from the scene of the conflict. Journalist B and C both actively try to put a stop to false reports, but the sheer numbers are overwhelming.

5.3.3 De-escalation,

Media for the interviewees must aim to support conflict resolution, while not aggravating intra-group tensions. It can and should play a positive role in shaping the immediate surroundings and stabilize local regions. Currently the majority of media outlets spread misinformation, "deepening the conflict and bringing about more problems."¹⁰⁷ In this media landscape independent media outlets are crucial in counteracting fake news and producing well-made and professional content. By providing correct information, the situation can be de-

¹⁰⁷ C, 23/11/2017

fused. Having a close relationship with locals, as well as building trust through accurate reporting is crucial. Addressing the needs of the public is also a tool in directly affecting outcomes, as well as building the possibilities for future development.

Working with other organizations and creating multi-stakeholder cooperation can spread the scope of a project, lead to an accelerated pace and reach of the media outlet. Independent media is crucial for counteracting fake news, but the prerequisite of this is a professional media corps, capable of producing high quality reporting. In terms of news, D's view is that the majority of Iraqi journalists do not produce good articles even though they have funding.

For B and C a more active approach is important, "the first step is to diffuse the situation by providing correct information",¹⁰⁸ in an effort to counter fake news fabricated by affiliated media. In this way the media can be used as a tool for peace. This type of arrangement must originate from the people according to A, B and C, so they can contribute, share ideas and grievances. B specifically pointed out that "on the social level people have a good relationship, [with] no problems living side by side [...] they want peace, but politicians cause conflict to further their agenda"¹⁰⁹

All agreed that an orchestrated front, working with other organizations, is needed to curb the destructive forces that Fake News unleashes. To de-escalate the current conflict and to avoid future problems there needs to be an effort made with the aim of constructing a media-space free from the bombardment of fake news. Here especially targeting the younger generation, the most active social media users, is paramount.

5.3.4 Positive images to bridge divide

By showing positive images, sharing good experiences as well as encouraging cooperation across the ethno-sectarian divide independent media outlets can highlight the positive side of togetherness, and multiethnic society. Instead of focusing on minor differences imagery of shared heritage and common interests prevail. It is important to highlight these commonalities especially in the disputed territories as;

¹⁰⁸ B, 23/11/2017

¹⁰⁹ C, 23/11/2017

Every ethnic and religious group considers Kirkuk to be theirs. Conflicting groups think that's if any ethnic group has the upper hand in Kirkuk, it's some sort of threat to them. We do believe that achieving peace in Kirkuk, equals achieving peace across the country. And we do believe that war in Kirkuk it equals war across the country.¹¹⁰

What local projects like this can demonstrate is the possibility of such ventures breaking the continuum of violence and hate. A cornerstone of this is Multiethnic and Multilingual reporting in areas that are inhabited by diverse ethnic groups that may or may not share a common language. Having journalists stem from different ethnic backgrounds facilitates a better and more responsible understanding of the community. They can show that multiethnic media can work, that the media can function without sidelining a religious or ethnic group and bridge the differences. As in a Peace Journalism approach, articles based on objective journalism are never a threat; rather they can show and critique violent structures as well as make possible new creative ideas for conflict resolution.

These, at first small projects, can have a big impact in diffusing tensions and creating competing narratives for why conflict exists as well as forward solutions that do not stay in the binary logic of win/lose. Further, forging alliances with other groups and expanding the project, recruiting allies in other domains outside of the media, is critical for creating a space for civil society at large to act in the benefit of the people.

D gave the view that the success of projects that aim to work across these divides boils down to that media outlets need journalists from various ethnic groups who work together, which helps them understand the communities that they aim to serve. Which is essential when working in such areas. Conflict in these areas are mainly exacerbated by tensions between groups, coupled with a security void when the state apparatus loses its ability to actively diffuse or police these areas, which in turn becomes the breeding ground for extremism. These regions function as flash points, where the issues inherent in multicultural societies come to a head. Friction is unavoidable without dialogue. But if different communities have the same fact-based information, a media where they can share grievances, then people can solve problems amongst themselves. If you can create the opportunity for dialogue, people will figure out how to build a shared future. Having this contact with local's shows these projects have an impact.

¹¹⁰ B, 23/11/2017

Truthful dialogue is needed to overcome divisions, and to highlight the shared dimensions of the conflict. Trauma in Iraq is a universal factor uniting all peoples; nonetheless if such a discussion does not move away from simple antagonistic rhetoric it can only deteriorate already tense relations.

Trauma could be mutual ground for various parties, various groups to come together and find a solution but often you have political parties that take advantage of the situation and try to present themselves as more victimized. They've suffered more. But if people are operating on their own I think it would come some form of agreement that would be mutual ground, for just basically talking to each other.¹¹¹

By specifically highlighting the positive sides of cooperation and giving a different view of the future of Iraq, communities that are split by ethno sectarian ties as well as political ideology can be given the chance to bridge that gap. At this face-to-face level B, C as well as D believes that people can solve their qualms with each other, aided by a truthful media.

The interviews show that the respondents raised many aspects of both theoretical perspectives, including the presence of weaknesses because of contextual constraints. These have forced them to adopt pragmatic approaches to otherwise accepted normative notions of journalism. What is evident though is the potential usefulness of applying the theoretical perspectives on media in transition, and their use as tools for journalists in their reporting.

¹¹¹ D, 6/12/2017

6 Conclusions

This thesis, explored through interviews, the attitudes of media workers and their perception of how the media operates, as well as how it could operate to promote peace and reconciliation. The study focuses on the topic in the context of Iraq, a state that has gone through radical changes and a rapid transformation of their media system during the better part of the 21st century. This transition has changed the role of the press, from an *Authoritarian Communist model* of the media propping up a single a despotic regime, to a media system aspiring towards liberalization and freedom of the press. Iraq could be claimed to be in the decision phase of transition as evidenced by a rapid increase in the number of media outlets, aided by the accelerating spread of access to the Internet cutting costs of publishing. However consolidation of democratic norms seems weak. In this new environment, the Iraqi media is left to grapple with both old and new forms of journalism as well as its function in democratic society. The result has been severe growing pains, coupled with a reassessment of the duties a journalistic profession has in relation to society.

Many of the respondents' views intersected or could be claimed to closely resemble each other. The journalists in this study expressed belief in notions of democratization and responsibility as well as the need for an objective and professional journalist corps. Elements of a Liberal Media Model that for the moment being, have not materialized across the board. Normative notions of liberal journalism may dominate the views of those interviewed, however, a large portion of the Iraqi media landscape, faced with physical dangers political, ethnic, sectarian and economic pressure, and a society enveloped in conflict, is increasingly breaking down across ethnic and sectarian lines of division. From the interviews, it is apparent that debates about the meaning of a free press and the responsibilities that it entails have not been settled. The issue nevertheless is not only centered on norms and ideals, independent media does not equal non-partisan, or non-political, rather it is editors and journalists becoming political players rather than pawns of politicians.

The interviewees of this study show a similar convergence of norms observed in other states in transition. Moving towards a global understanding of how the media should operate. Adopting the normative values of objectivity, professionalization as well as the watchdog function of the media. Attesting to the dominance of Western discourses and the hegemony of the Liberal Model exerting pressure on Iraqi media system. Yet these values are domesticated and changed to fit the context and particular history of Iraq. They operationalize these

values and use them to advocate for fact-based dialogue between groups, diverging from Western notions of how the media should operate. They simply can't afford not to.

Independent media in Iraq faces the same controversy that outlets globally have to contend with, commercialization. Proponents argue that commercialization is a measure to lessen state control in the traditional view of Liberal Media Model; critics would allege that this forces media outlets into the hands of business interests. As the respondents expressed many outlets currently operating in Iraq are connected to either business or politics. Being affiliated in this way undermines their legitimacy, and erodes trust in the media, which many linked to the news media professions loss of status, which in turn reinforces the lack of professionalism, and leads to fragmentation of the news-field, which leads to stronger tension between groups, and less trust in society in general.

The spreading of misinformation, facts taken out of context, twisted to fit an agenda or blatant lies in Iraq is so rampant that it sows the seeds of distrust between communities. The respondents put effort into countering this by ascribing ideology higher value than group affiliation. They try to position themselves outside the current media spectrum, reaching beyond the lines of ethnic, political and sectarian division, underlining the importance of the people and their ability to communicate and through that, solve grievances. Conforming to doctrines of Peace Journalism, employing a solution and truth oriented approach. They take an active stance against the affiliated media, opting to create a space for other possibilities through their choices in topics as well as who should be heard in the news. The lack of funding though is admittedly threatening the future of all independent publications.

All respondents recognize a general lack of security as the most pressing matter confronting journalists. The security void in the disputed areas created by the patchwork of different armed factions, has made access to sources and traveling extremely dangerous, if not impossible. Group affiliation is often a barricade to working in these areas. All expressed a dim view for the future of journalism in Iraq. How the media can fulfill its role as the fourth estate in this environment is severely questioned.

Peace Journalism and a Liberal Model may overestimate what journalists can realistically achieve in these environments. Structural constraints, as already mentioned, such as lack of security and funding are serious issues with few solutions. In conjunction with a near non-existent regulatory body and the problems experienced in with the legal system, what can be said is that the Iraqi environment is not conducive to critical, factual and informative journalism. The overarching structures and outside constraints cannot be altered by individual editors or journalists, albeit they are an integral part of a changing media system.

A pragmatic approach to news making as well as to the role of the media is therefore viewed to be important. The interviewees interpret their mission through a frame of social responsibility. This responsibility they express moves well beyond the Liberal Model, as well as the social responsibility theory, emphasizing the importance of the people and their possibilities to air grievances as well as the use of the media in reconciliation. Calling out all wrongdoers rather than fixating on the out-group or viewing the conflict in a dichotomous way. Immersed in the conflict, they see themselves as actors who seek to resolve the conflict, employing peace frames that liken many of the principals that make up Peace Journalism. Journalists cannot separate themselves from the conflict without doing it in relation to the conflict and existing divisions.

Working across these divisions is a must for all interviewed, even for simple access reasons or credibility. By not pledging allegiance to a certain group, they can play an active role in promoting democratic values as well as tactics of non-escalation, dispersing lies and falsehoods, creating alliances across society, and promoting justice. Unearthing the underlying reasons for the conflict, and presenting other options and being transparent to their audience. Being aware of and giving a voice to all views, especially the voices of the people in areas most effected by the conflict. Offering new perspectives on togetherness and showing the positive ways that people from different groups can come together and allow them to resolve the conflict. Paying attention to stories that impact the people of the area, more than the regular coverage of conflict. Communities that are split by ethno sectarian ties as well as political ideology can be given the chance to bridge this gap. By showing that multiethnic media can work and that the media can function without sidelining a certain group. When people share the same information, there can be a proper discussion. At this face-to-face level people can solve their qualms with each other, facilitated rather than hampered by the media. Ethnicity or religious belief does not have to be an obstacle if you share the same principles of truth.

Their views are a medley of different approaches, and are not easily classified into a single model. The theoretical perspectives can function as overarching goals, however, as is apparent from the interviews, when faced with the reality of a society in conflict, neither approach can ever be fully implemented and a great deal of pragmatism is required. Contextual constraints have an impact on how these journalists are able to report, as well as what they view to be of relevance to report on. If seen as an active stance rather than a complete theory for how the media should operate, the respondents seem to adopt many of the principals of the Peace Journalism perspective and the Liberal Model. But there are no easy solutions or

designs for how post-conflict societies should transition, a domain in which both models are lacking in clarity.

6.1 Discussion

The primary shortcomings of this study lie in its scope. The low sample size and the respondents close relationship to one another decreases the accuracy and generalizability of the results. The relatively weak theoretical perspective also complicates already existing issues with interpreting the study results. Peace Journalism is still in its infancy as a field of study, lacking in epistemological rigor and unfit as a grand theory of journalism.

Moving on, what would be important is to increase the sample size, conducting research both empirically by formalized questionnaire and qualitative interviews. Further, social media as a medium for news making is ever expanding, its importance for the future of news dwarfs traditional print media. However the literature regarding its influence on societal change as well as media habits is currently incomplete and inadequate.¹¹²

¹¹² Tack Rouzbeh Parsi för handledningen, Louise Burenby för all hjälp på vägen och Douglas Pashley för korrektur läsningen

Bibliography

Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "The Dynamics of Iraq's Media: Ethno-Sectarian Violence, Political Islam, Public Advocacy, and Globalization." *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*, vol. 25, no. 1, 95-140, 2007

Amos, Deborah. "Confusion, contradiction and irony: the Iraqi media in 2010." *Joan Shorenstien Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy Discussion Paper Series D-58*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2010

Baram, Amatzia. "Neo-tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's tribal policies 1991-96." *International Journal Of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 1, 1-31, 1997

Bryman, Alan. *Social research methods*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2016

Deuze, Mark. "What Is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered." *Journalism: Theory, Practice, And Criticism* 6, no. 4 (November 2005): 442-464

Dov Shinar, Wilhelm Kempf (eds.) *Peace Journalism: The State of the Art*. Berlin: re-gener, 2007

Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm." *Journal Of Communication* 43, no. 4, 51-58, 1993

Gross, Peter, "Between Reality and Dream: Eastern European Media Transition, Transformation, Consolidation, and Integration." *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol 18, 110-131, 2004

Hallin, Daniel C. and Paolo Mancini. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004

Hanitzsch, Thomas, Situating peace journalism in journalism studies: A critical appraisal conflict & communication online, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007

Hiseh Hsiu-Fan & Shannon E. Sarah. Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis, *Qualitative Health Research*, 1277-1288, Nov 2005

Hoffmann, Julia & Hawkins, Virgil (red.), *Communication and peace: mapping an emerging field*, London, 2015

Keeble. R. L, "Peace Journalism as political practice: a new, radical look at the theory." *Peace Journalism, War and Conflict Resolution*. London: Peter Lang, 49-68, 2010

Kim, H.S., and M. Hama-Saeed. "Emerging media in peril: Iraqi journalism in the post-saddam hussein era." *Journalism Studies* 9, no. 4, 578-594, 2008

Lynch, Jake and McGoldrick, Annabel, *Peace Journalism*. Gloucestershire UK: Hawthorn Press 2005

- Lynch, Jake. "Peace journalism: Theoretical and methodological developments." *Global Media And Communication* 11, no. 3 193-199, 2015
- Lynch, Jake, *A global standard for reporting conflict*, Routledge, New York, 2014
- Mansfield, Peter. *A history of the Middle East*. London : Penguin, 2010
- Miroiu, Crisia. "The Triumph of the Liberal Media Model?." *Scientific Journal Of Humanistic Studies* 3, no. 5, 60-65, 2011
- Nagel, Thomas. *The view from nowhere*. New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1986
- Napoleoni, Loretta. *Islamiska staten*. Lidingö, Fri Tanke, 2015
- Nohrstedt, Stig Arne, and Rune Ottosen. "Peace journalism: A proposition for conceptual and methodological improvements." *Global Media & Communication* 11, no. 3, 219-235, 2015
- Peleg, Samuel. "Peace Journalism through the Lense of Conflict Theory: Analysis and Practice." *Conflict & Communication* 5, no. 2, 2006
- Polk, William R. *Understanding Iraq : the whole sweep of Iraqi history, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British mandate to the American occupation*. New York : HarperCollins, 2005
- Perse, Elizabeth M. *Media Effects and Society*. Mahwah, N.J. Routledge, 2000
- Relly, Jeannine. Zanger, Margaret. Fahmy, Shahira. "News Media Landscape in a Fragile State: Professional Ethics Perceptions in a Post-Ba'athist Iraq." *Mass Communication & Society* 18, no. 4, 471-497, 2015
- Segvic, Ivana. "The Media's Post-Communist Purgatory: A Conception of The Post-Communist Theory of the Press." *Conference Papers - International Communication Association*, 2005
- Siebert, Fred S., Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm. *Four theories of the press: the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1963
- Stefan, Wolff. "Governing (in) Kirkuk: resolving the status of a disputed territory in post-American Iraq." *International Affairs (Royal Institute Of International Affairs 1944-)* no. 6, 1361-1379, 2010
- Tønnessen, Truls, "Heirs of Zarqawi or Saddam? The relationship between al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State." *Perspectives On Terrorism* no. 4, 48-60, 2015
- Tzemperin, Athina, Jugoslav Josic, and Henry Lanmbare. "The Middle East Cold War: Iran-Saudi Arabia and the Way Ahead." *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 52, no. 4/5, 187-202 2015,

Voltmer, Katrin and Wasserman, Herman, "Journalistic norms between universality and domestication: Journalists' interpretations of press freedom in six new democracies." *Global Media and Communication*, Vol 10, Issue 2, pp. 177-192, 2014

Warren, Carol A. B. "Qualitative Interviewing." In *Handbook of Interview Research*,: SAGE Publications, Inc, 83-102, 2001

Appendix

Interview Guide

Firstly inform the interviewee about the purpose of the survey, how long the interview is planned to be, that they can stop at any time as well as the fact that they will be anonymized in the final study and that they will receive the report when it is ready

The following is the Interview Guide, the actual questions put to the respondents were marginally different, follow up questions were specific to each interview as a discussion organically unfolded and are not included.

- Q1. What is your primary objective as a journalist?
- Q2. What do you pay special attention to in reporting?
- Q 3. What challenges have you had to overcome and how have you changed this approach?
- Q 4. What dangers do you face in reporting from the disputed territories?
- Q 5. What would you characterize as the main challenges in the Iraqi media landscape?
- Q 6. What in general, if at all, should be the media's role in resolving conflict?
- Q 7. How can local media effect change?
- Q 8. How do you aim to work for this goal?
- Q 9. How do you view the difference between Old media and New Media?
- Q 10. What is in your opinion the significance of the disputed territories?
- Q 11. What is your personal view on the future growth of the media in Iraq and its direction?
- Q 12. What have been your greatest accomplishments?