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Mapping Peace Journalism: Toward a Shared Understanding of Success

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ABSTRACT

Peace journalism has enjoyed increased attention in recent decades, though this interest does not necessarily correspond to less polarized conflict coverage or more peaceful societies around the world. Although these realities cannot be attributed to peace journalism alone, such disconnects invite a clearer conceptualization of peace journalism and its scholarly development. Analyzing more than 100 studies, this theoretical exploration reviews three primary domains of peace journalism research—as a concept, as a practice and, by extension, as media content and effects—to illustrate the relatively disparate goals and evaluation metrics put forward by each area. The paper offers a conceptual model that bridges levels of analysis and institutional efforts to advance a better understanding of the normative value of peace journalism.

KEYWORDS

Peace journalism; media frames; journalism models; normative theory; conflict reporting; journalism theory

Since peace journalism's asynchronous debut, both as a practice and as an intellectual concept, scholars have attempted to define its theoretical attributes, its practices, and the outcomes of such efforts. The broad appeal of peace journalism resides in its key normative assumption: namely, that more peace journalism should correspond to more peaceful societies. In addition to a growing corpus of academic literature on the topic, organizations like the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have invested in a number of international peace-journalism trainings. In turn, media professionals have begun to discuss and, in some places, practice peace journalism.

However, this heightened interest has not necessarily correlated with the emergence of higher-quality conflict reporting or more peaceful societies around the world. For example, the Institute for Economics and Peace's 2019 Global Peace Index Briefing reports that the average level of global peacefulness has deteriorated by nearly four percent since 2008. In addition, content studies continue to demonstrate decontextualized and polarized reporting on conflicts worldwide (e.g., Budak 2018; Hussain and Siraj 2019; Lichtenstein et al. 2019; Tsarwe and Mare 2019), eliciting critiques of contemporary war journalism. These criticisms often include superficial understandings of conflict and inflammatory language (Allan and Zelizer 2004; Thussu and Freedman 2003), which newer reporting models like peace journalism seek to address.

Of course, peace journalism cannot be held solely responsible for unrealized peace around the world, and no single indicator can comprehensively represent progress made toward more contextualized conflict reporting. Indeed, the media only play one role in the broader social milieu necessary for the peaceful resolution and transformation of conflicts. However, this disconnect between empirical realities and the normative aspirations associated with peace journalism invites further examination. One approach to this end requires revisiting the normative goals of peace journalism and its larger scholarly development. That is, despite the growing interest in peace journalism, what domains of research exist in the study of peace journalism, how have they evolved over time, and where are the sites for increased understanding of the concept to improve conflict reporting and potentially foster peaceful societies?

Tracing the broad contours of peace-journalism research, this theoretical exploration illustrates how peace journalism has enjoyed scholarly attention from a broad swath of disciplinary areas. Communication and conflict-studies scholars have approached peace journalism as a normative concept or approach that, if practiced properly, will contribute to the social conditions necessary for peace. Journalism-studies scholars have examined peace journalism as a professional model for journalism practice, providing a set of actionable principles to be integrated into day-to-day reporting. Scholars of media content are primarily concerned with the extent to which conventions of peace journalism are presented vis-à-vis war journalism and how individuals subsequently perceive and react to their presence. While these domains of study—conceptual use, practice, and media content and effects—are all concerned with peace journalism, they generally assume different approaches to its evaluation.

That peace-journalism research has developed with ostensibly little coordination between these three domains is perhaps unsurprising. In fact, some epistemological perspectives hold that this level of conceptual pliability can circumvent the overdetermination of peace journalism, such that researchers “formalize out of existence the critical questions of power, history, and politics” (Hall 2006, 274). To this point, the goal of this study is not to suggest that those involved in peace journalism should assume a one-size-fits-all approach in its application, practice, or conceptual development in varying geopolitical contexts. Rather, a significant implication of having some shared sense of evaluation is the ability to engage in interdisciplinary scholarly environments. Therefore, a small number of shared evaluation goals across primary peace-journalism research domains (theoretical development, practice, and content and effects), while not exhaustive, may well help peace journalism’s conceptual contributions travel farther in theory and in practice. By putting these domains in closer conversation with one another, along with other interdisciplinary perspectives concerned with conflict mediation, peace journalism’s normative vision may be better unified and, perhaps, fulfilled.

With these goals in mind, the paper proceeds as follows. First, we briefly review the origins of peace journalism and broadly outline its approach. Second, we provide details about how we identified existing peace-journalism research for this study, then review our findings on peace-journalism theory, practice, and content and effects. The paper concludes by providing a model for more integrated peace-journalism research and evaluation across these domains as well as interdisciplinary synergies for the future.

Roots of Peace Journalism

Norwegian scholar and peace researcher Johan Galtung has been credited with coining the term “peace journalism.” His earliest published writings on the topic (Galtung 1986; Galtung and Ruge 1965) condemn the media’s tendency to foreground elite nations, over-emphasize negative events, and neglect the societal benefits of peace. As a result of such criticisms, Galtung (1998) has been instrumental in directly contrasting peace journalism with contemporary war journalism, which is traditionally characterized by a value bias toward violence, as well as a preference for event-based reporting, official sources, and a narrative dichotomy of good and bad (see also Allen and Seaton 1999). As such, war journalists expose truths relevant to their own sociopolitical causes and help, inadvertently or not, to cover up anything outside those bounds (Galtung 2000). As a response to such critiques, peace journalism aims to correct for these biases by framing conflict through the lenses of structural causes, opportunities for peacemaking, and multiparty interactions (Galtung 2003).

While a peace-journalism approach provides many specific areas for intervention, such as counting the grievances of all sides, avoiding demonizing language, and highlighting areas of common ground (Lynch and Galtung 2010), its roots are in framing theory. A news frame, at the core of most scholarly definitions, involves visual or verbal information that directly or implicitly defines a problem, suggests the moral evaluation of the problem, and identifies who or what is responsible for its creation as well as its solution (Entman 1993; Tewksbury 2015; Tversky and Kahneman 1981). Story framing is the focus of much peace-journalism research, particularly with regard to whether the principles of peace journalism, such as people-oriented sourcing, structural causes of conflict, and a win-win orientation, are manifest in news content (Ersoy 2016; Lee 2010; Lee and Maslog 2005). As interest in peace journalism has grown, however, the research area has expanded beyond framing studies to include analyses of discourses, journalism cultures, and other related areas that have brought the need for more integrated research into sharp relief.

Sample

This investigation is based on an analysis of literature and research presented in 106 articles across 39 peer-reviewed journals. The sample was constructed using a keyword search for “peace journalism” in EBSCO’s Communication & Mass Media Complete (CMMC), a database of scholarly literature from more than 600 journals covering a range of communication studies subareas, including linguistics, rhetoric, and media studies. In this first phase, the CMMC search returned 125 results in January 2020.

While the discipline-oriented search allowed us to capture the breadth of journalism-studies research on peace journalism, it does not fully capture the area’s interdisciplinary conceptual development. Thus, a second phase of data collection included manually reviewing the CMMC articles to identify studies not represented in the initial search. This snowball sampling captures peace-journalism writings from adjacent disciplines such as peace studies and sociology. Non-English language articles, book reviews, and studies for which peace journalism was not the primary topic of interest were excluded.

The final sample of literature—published most often in *Conflict & Communication Online* (N = 25), *Journalism Studies* (N = 8), *Global Media and Communication* (N = 7), and *Media, War & Conflict* (N = 7)—coalesced around three domains: conceptual use of peace journalism, peace-journalism practice, and peace-journalism content and effects. Articles then were reviewed and categorized according to whether the primary research objective concerned peace journalism's theoretical development (N = 27), the practice of peace journalism (N = 21), or content and effects (N = 58). Naturally, some articles speak to more than one of these sub-areas. For example, the way that journalists negotiate professional practice has implications for the content produced (Shoemaker and Reese 2014), and most content analyses engage with peace journalism as a theoretical framework while not necessarily theorizing about peace journalism (e.g., Cozma 2015; Greenwood and Jenkins 2015). The “primarily research objective” of each article was determined using multiple indicators. These included: (1) the main research questions and hypotheses; (2) the type of data analyzed (e.g., interviews with journalists versus analysis of news texts); and (3) authors' posited scholarly goals (e.g., building theory versus testing hypotheses versus explaining processes).

Peace Journalism Since Galtung

Theorizing About Peace Journalism

As illustrated by the more than two dozen articles in this category, theorizing about peace journalism has taken many tacks. These include attempts to define, evaluate, and identify salient cultural conditions conducive to peace journalism's success. In addition, scholars have examined peace journalism alongside other theoretical traditions across the communication discipline.

With respect to defining peace journalism, scholars have approached the concept by defining it vis-à-vis the types and stages of conflict. In the case of war reporting, peace journalism can be categorized as “active” or “passive,” with active peace journalism viewed as advocating for solutions and passive peace journalism seen as simply avoiding the primary critiques of war journalism (Benn 2015). Similarly, in the early and ongoing stages of conflict, “de-escalatory” peace journalism maintains a neutral, critical distance from all parties with an openness toward a peaceful settlement. In contrast, when an armistice or peace treaty is imminent, “solution-oriented” journalism encompasses the more advocative dimensions of peace journalism (Kempf 2003), which include a focus on all sufferings and invisible effects of war. Finally, in the case of prolonged or “cold” conflicts sustained by structural inequities, peace journalism has been defined through the lens of critical race theory, which focuses as asymmetric negotiations between groups with uneven degrees of power (McMahon and Chow-White 2011).

Theorizing about peace journalism also has considered metrics by which to evaluate its impact. Moving beyond the first-generation idea that peace journalism should make conflict more transparent (Galtung 2000), some theorize that peace journalism should create opportunities for societies at large to consider nonviolent responses to conflict (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005). For example, special coverage of negotiations between political parties or arbitration by an outside multilateral organization might lead to changes in public opinion about particular policy solutions. Others suggest that peace journalism

should be evaluated holistically alongside conflict-resolution practice and peace research, collectively contributing to the prevention of conflict and acting as a third party in peace-building (Peleg 2006). To illustrate, this viewpoint holds that the synergy between conflict analysis research, peace-journalism practice, and mediation by peace workers will facilitate and preserve peaceful societies, thus preventing the eruption of violent conflict (Aslam 2016). This merging of perspectives does not necessarily suggest that peace journalism is at odds with these other institutional approaches. Rather, it responds to existing variation in the normative objectives of peace journalism, which ranges from prevention of conflict (Mogekwu 2011), to diffusion of conflict by peaceful means (Lynch 2013), to larger peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts following conflict (Hawkins 2011).

To the extent that variations exist in the conceptualization and evaluation of peace journalism, other theoretically oriented debates highlight the normative societal conditions under which peace journalism can prosper. For example, peace journalism is said to most likely succeed in conflicts that have not yet turned violent; in other words, peace journalism must first take hold in peacetime media systems or within a “culture of peace” (Hanitzsch 2004; Kempf 2017). This is because journalists are unlikely to represent realities that are inconsistent with the lived environments and experiences within which they work (Atay 2016). For this reason, Hanitzsch (2007) argues that the theoretical underpinnings of peace journalism suffer from a naïve epistemological realism, or the assumption that media professionals can reasonably think and act outside of a socially constructed reality. Much has been written on the relationship between news and reality, with growing awareness that news is not a mirror of world, but a representation grounded in selective bias (Schudson 2003).

Extant scholarship also illustrates how peace journalism intersects with or diverges from existing theoretical frameworks in journalism studies. For example, peace journalism has been critiqued as antithetical to the professional norms and news values associated with establishment journalism (Loyn 2007). That is, traditional news values like conflict in storytelling and long-held standards of objectivity are said to challenge peace journalism’s enterprise. In response, some have called for a complete turning away from the norm of objectivity in the pursuit of more peace-oriented conflict coverage (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005; Hackett 2006). Others caution that this radical direction could lead to peace journalism’s classification as a kind of public relations or advocacy journalism, instead encouraging a reconceptualization of the conventional understanding of objectivity (Kempf 2007; Peleg 2007). In addition to disrupting perceived professional norms, some view peace journalism as incompatible with longstanding theories of news values (Fawcett 2002; Hanitzsch 2007). One response to this critique is to suggest that peace be added as “the 11th news value” (Aslam 2016), though journalists may be already engaging with peace journalism through self-reflexive critique of the media’s own role conflict coverage (Mitra 2016). These perspectives highlight individuals’ efficacy to incrementally change existing norms and values by slowly integrating peace-journalism principles into day-to-day journalistic practices (Kelling and Horvit 2017).

Finally, theorizing about peace-journalism studies has attempted to integrate it into the communication discipline more broadly and be in conversation with other schools of thought. For example, Shoemaker and Reese’s (2014) hierarchy-of-influences model can inform how pressures at various levels—media routines, organizational dynamics,

institutional issues, and larger social systems—may help or hinder the production of peace-journalism content (Hackett 2006). Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model highlights how capital and state influence impact peace journalism's prospects for success, while Bourdieu's (1998) field theory considers how journalism's position vis-à-vis other institutional fields, like politics and economics, may shape the practice of peace journalism. As such, peace-journalism scholars have the opportunity to study in greater depth how journalists might seek to exert agency and engage in strategic decision-making processes (Hackett 2006; Kelling and Horvit 2017). Some also have turned to critical theory, leaning on critical discourse analysis, as one way to meet the demand for contextual specificity and larger conversations on war and peacetime discourses (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2015). Lastly, media ethicists have theorized peace journalism as a kind of radical media ethics (Lukacovic 2016), requiring both an "other-centered" ethical position by individual journalists (Atay 2016) as well as pluralist media structures committed to a peace-journalism code of ethics (Tehrani 2002). These examinations highlight various theoretical intersections and departures. Moreover, they illustrate the many ways in which scholars have attempted to engage theoretically with peace journalism over time.

Despite efforts to characterize peace journalism, its normative value, and how it can work together with other theoretical domains, conceptual questions about peace journalism remain. In particular, peace journalism has yet to formalize its goals and mechanisms for measuring success, a necessary next step if it is to move beyond normative theorizing. Existing media effects research suggests that measuring the impact of peace journalism based on changes in policymaking may be overly deterministic (Tsfati 2017). Instead, evaluating peace journalism alongside other institutions involved in conflict situations provides one pathway forward. To do this, future research may consider a comparative institutional perspective, examining both local media coverage and local political decision-making across conflicts in which violence either escalates or de-escalates over time. These attempts to measure impact beget a higher-order question about the normative goals of peace journalism. If the goal is more peace, peace journalism must first engage with existing challenges associated with measuring peace writ large. These include calls to measure peace against local needs and priorities, capture accurate and independent data, and promote trust-building between public institutions and civil society (International Peace Institute 2017).

This conceptual turn toward cross-institutional evaluation alleviates the implicit pressure for media professionals to alone facilitate peaceful societies, a critique with which peace journalism has long wrestled. In particular, peace journalism unfairly burdens journalists with the tasks of other social systems like politics and law (Hanitzsch 2004). A related question is whether it is socially constructive for peace journalism to take root at all. To avoid a dissolution similar to development journalism, whereby authoritarian rulers coopted the concept for political ends (Waisbord 2009), scholars must critically consider peace journalism's institutional positioning and how it, too, could offset or divert attention from necessary political action that increases justice and prosperity.

Fortunately, once more specific goals and evaluation mechanisms for peace journalism are established, scholars may find that other theoretical discussions come into focus. Peace journalism's pliability as a conceptual tool is evident, as has been demonstrated by its many integrations into existing theoretical frameworks and ideas. With more

congruent metrics for success across peace-journalism research domains, established theoretical conversations can more confidently harness this tool to hypothesize the types of societies in which the practice of peace journalism is more or less likely to take root and have a desired impact. This theorizing can then be tested empirically, providing answers to critiques that have developed over time and ultimately predicting peace journalism's conceptual viability.

The Practice of Peace Journalism

Unlike theorizing about peace journalism, research on the practice of peace journalism is a relatively recent undertaking with the majority of studies published within the last decade, as compared with examinations of theory and content that have roots in the early part of the 2000s.

It is widely understood that many factors influence the practice of peace journalism. Just as Shoemaker and Reese's (2014) classic hierarchy-of-influences model illustrated the myriad ways in which news content could be influenced by societal-, structural-, and individual-level factors, research has identified a similar set of influences on the practice of peace journalism. One such multi-influence typology identifies as influences: (1) structural aspects of the media, such as media platform, editorial processes, and media economy; (2) on-site conflict situation like geography, security, and access to resources; (3) personal attributes of the individual journalist (e.g., professional competency in reporting and understanding of conflict); (4) the political climate, including public attention to the conflict, degree of polarization, and political responsiveness; (5) the influence of various lobbying groups on conflict coverage; and (6) audience interest in content (Bläsi 2004).

This classification can be made more useful by juxtaposing such considerations against the stages of conflict—nonviolent conflict, violent conflict, and aftermath of violent conflict. After all, peace journalism is most likely to take root during periods of nonviolence when factors at all levels have been adequately acknowledged and, when possible, accounted for (Bläsi 2009). As Bläsi (2004, 2009) and Shoemaker and Reese (2014) illustrate, research on peace-journalism practice can likewise be organized into a modified hierarchy of influences that includes: (1) cultural context; (2) industry norms; (3) impacts of organized training and education; and (4) individual journalist perceptions.

Constituting the most macro-level set of influences, *cultural context* is often foregrounded as impacting the practice of peace journalism. Here, studies point to the particular socio-political and ideological orientations in places like Sri Lanka and Nepal (Selvarajah 2021) or regions like the South Pacific (Robie 2013) to explain why peace journalism may be more or less successful under certain cultural circumstances. Such places demonstrate how deep ethnic divisions or political suppression can challenge peace journalism, while countries with histories of violent conflict may be more amenable to peace journalism because the public more readily accepts the prospect of peace (Hackett 2006; Selvarajah 2021). By extension, news-gathering practitioners must negotiate existing frames and myths in a given particular cultural context, requiring a more nuanced approach to accounting for contextual differences of national journalism cultures (Mitra 2018).

In addition, journalism *industry norms* and the prospect for model importation across industries might shape the practice of peace journalism. Specifically, might the tenets of peace journalism be better practiced outside of establishment journalism? To this point, some critics argue that peace journalism is incompatible with professional values and the commercial media structure (Irvan 2006). Farrell and Allan (2015) illustrate these possibilities, pointing to nongovernmental organizations like WITNESS, a human-rights advocacy group that equips citizens with the tools and skills to document human-rights abuses in conflict zones. They suggest that the changing political economy of journalism promotes warlike journalism coverage while citizen footage highlights perspectives more closely aligned with the principles of peace journalism.

Research on the practice of peace journalism also has focused on the impact of *journalists' education and training*. For example, studies have shown senior reporters were more likely to practice peace-journalism principles than their younger counterparts (Abunales 2016). In addition, some evidence suggests that peace journalism training of aspiring journalists may increase its practice, as demonstrated in the run-up to the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, a country marked by a history of electoral violence (Adebayo 2016). In addition, journalist trainings increase conflict-sensitive coverage of sociopolitical issues, thereby supporting the development of peace-journalism workshops or journalism-education courses (Lynch 2007; Ottosen 2010).

Finally, *individual journalist perceptions* and predispositions can shape the practice of peace journalism. For example, journalists are more likely to support and practice peace journalism when they perceive their role as one of an active participant in societal well-being (Andresen, Hoxha, and Godole 2017; McIntyre and Sobel 2018). These findings underscore ongoing endeavors to understand how journalists' role conceptions contribute to the formation of journalistic cultures, some of which may be more or less open to models like peace journalism (Hanitzsch et al. 2019). Moreover, efforts to diversify journalist sourcing toward more civilian-oriented perspectives are partially contingent on journalists' perceptions of alternative approaches, such as the use of nonofficial online sources. Though reporters may be skeptical of implementing peace-journalism practices that can uproot more traditional news practices like source verification, they generally consider online sources to be better representations of public opinion (Rodny-Gumede 2012). In some instances, a lack of awareness precludes practice. For example, interviews with journalists of foreign news organizations in South Africa demonstrated broad interest in more constructive conflict coverage, though journalists had little knowledge about peace journalism (Rodny-Gumede 2016). To complement what qualitative work exists, efforts to quantitatively assess journalist attitudes toward peace/war framing have been undertaken through the development of survey instruments (Neumann and Fahmy 2016).

This proposed hierarchy of influences invites compelling questions about peace journalism in practice. The first relates to the practice of peace journalism outside of journalism. Guided by framing theory, peace journalism exists mainly as a checklist of normative criteria, and thus could very well serve as a model for communication more broadly defined. In this vein, some have demonstrated its utility in alternative news beats like climate change (Hackett 2017), where socio-environmental and political factions have long been at odds. As well, other areas in which conflict is inherently embedded provide viable contexts of research: Peace-journalism principles can be applied to political

address where elites strike out at one another to enact policy or sway public opinion; online deliberation, which includes clashes by users on markedly different sides of issues; and nongovernmental organizations that continually vie for issue ownership via their communication strategies. Such investigations provide a window into the institutional or contextual factors that give rise to or dissuade practices associated with peace journalism. They also invite perspectives from outside journalism-studies circles, including political communication, organizational communication, and science and technology studies, providing clues to how the principles of peace journalism are more or less viable under certain institutional circumstances.

The second set of questions relates to the mechanisms of influence by peace journalism in practice. For example, journalist trainings have been shown to improve journalists' perceptions of peace journalism (e.g., Adebayo 2016), but the exact causal mechanisms at work are less clear. Do these trainings directly and immediately influence what journalists perceive to be good practice, or do they simultaneously raise the awareness of news editors who in turn exert organizational pressure on journalists to cover the conflict in a particular manner? What explains why some individuals may be more likely to practice peace journalism than others? Further, the rise of new media and digital platforms presents challenges as well as opportunities for what journalism means today. The shifting technological landscape therefore provides a fruitful area of research on the practice of peace journalism within news organizations and for individual journalists. Relatedly, who is best positioned to practice peace journalism? Future research should consider whether the normative goals of peace journalism are better pursued by practitioners local to or external to the conflict being covered.

Peace Journalism Content and Effects

Research on peace journalism understandably has focused on how this particular genre manifests itself in the media, and a review of content studies illuminates the breadth of work to date. First, peace journalism covers a broad swath of conflicts, not just interstate war. These conflicts are both current and historical (Cozma 2015) in nature and present at the domestic and regional levels alike. It has even been applied to war on drugs (Lacasse and Forster 2012), international terrorism (Anderson 2015; Ogenga 2012; Sharif and You-safzai 2011), and immigration debates (Carter, Thomas, and Ross 2011). In addition, the geographical breadth of regions studied is vast: Studies have examined countries from all six habitable continents, with the overwhelming plurality of work involving conflict in a single country.

These content studies predominantly analyze newspapers and other easily captured and easily accessible content such as photojournalism (e.g., Fahmy and Neumann 2012; Greenwood and Jenkins 2015) and television news bulletins (e.g., Milioni et al. 2015; Ozohu-Suleiman 2014). A smaller number of studies engage radio (Cozma 2015; Wilson and Devere 2013) and talk shows (Lichtenstein et al. 2019). Methodologically, the vast majority of the investigations are conducted using quantitative content analysis, with fewer researchers relying on textual analysis (e.g., Carter, Thomas, and Ross 2011; Perez de Fransius 2014), critical discourse analysis (e.g., Budak 2018; Hussain and Rehman 2015), and framing analysis (e.g., Ersoy 2016; Greenwood and Jenkins 2015; Nelson 2019).

Across these examinations of content, a necessary follow-up question concerns how researchers conceptualize peace journalism and whether some degree of consistency exists across conceptualizations. A recent effort by Gouse et al. (2019) investigates this puzzle by examining how war and peace have been operationalized in quantitative peace-journalism scholarship. Following a meta-analysis of 41 peer-reviewed articles that use content analysis, they categorize the findings by type of violence studied, solution orientation type, coverage period, and war/peace indicators. Notably, they find that the majority of articles investigate news coverage of direct violence using a war/peace indicator of elite versus people-oriented coverage.

As the corpus of work on peace-journalism content grows, similar questions about conceptual congruency will be asked beyond quantitative content analyses. For instance, most content studies are undergirded by theories of framing, though the conceptualization and operationalization of war- and peace-journalism frames differ markedly across projects. Conceptually based on Galtung's (1986, 1998) classification of war/peace journalism, Lee and Maslog (2005) identified 13 indicators each of war journalism and peace journalism that further sort into two main themes: reporting approach and language. This approach to identifying war- and peace-journalism frames is popular, as demonstrated by the large majority of content studies that invoke its use (e.g., Ersoy 2016; Fahmy and Eakin 2014; Hussain and Siraj 2019; Nelson 2019; Shinar 2009), including adaptations for visual frames (Fahmy and Neumann 2012; Greenwood and Jenkins 2015).

However, others have chosen to move beyond this framing approach, which is primarily concerned with events, locations, timing, and actors, and toward other defining frames. In the context of Nigeria, Demarest and Langer (2018) investigated frames associated with ethnic, religious, political, and economic causes of conflict, alluding to peace journalism's emphasis on structural explanations. In addition, more qualitative studies have used Entman's (1993) problem definition and inductive thematic analysis to examine news content and construct frames illustrating the relative presence of peace journalism (Lichtenstein et al. 2019; Mensah 2015). This variance in such conceptualizations should give scholars of peace journalism pause, as similar inconsistencies in framing theory more broadly are well documented. As others have argued, such breadth leads to challenges in meaningfully tracking conceptual development over time (Borah 2011; Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar 2016). Moreover, many content studies adopt individual conflicts as the unit of analysis. Though interesting in its own right, doing so tells us little about how peace journalism changes at a more macro level, including whether interventions work or journalism cultures change.

Related to these content studies, extant scholarship on peace journalism also explores news-content effects on individuals. Not only does traditional war journalism prevail over peace journalism, but citizens recognize their relative presence in the news. In a war-free country like Malaysia, members of the public report local media emphasizing war news over peace news. Moreover, they perceive most war-related news in local media to stem from international and global news organizations and view these news as oriented toward more powerful actors and less objective and fair than they should be (Ibrahim et al. 2013).

Perceptions notwithstanding, what effects does peace journalism have on audience members? Compared with individuals exposed to stories framed as war journalism, those who see peace-journalism frames of the same stories are more likely to attribute

systemic causes to the conflict and advocate for more cooperative and collaborative solutions to the problem (Lynch and McGoldrick 2012). In addition, audience members who watch television news constructed from peace journalism concepts feel more hopeful and empathic (McGoldrick and Lynch 2016) and provide more in-depth narrative responses than those who watch news framed as war journalism (Lynch and McGoldrick 2013). Such emotional responses—feeling soothed or reassured—are borne out by psychophysiological data that involve changes in heart rate (Lynch, McGoldrick, and Heathers 2015).

Alongside such findings are studies that illustrate the nuanced process by which peace-journalism effects emerge. As Kempf and Thiel (2012) illustrate with their Germany-based experiment, peace frames of violent events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are perceived to be more balanced, less partisan or biased, and more comprehensible. However, the degree to which audience members adopt the frames depends on their prior knowledge and extant attitudes on the conflict, consonant with the media effects literature on *a priori* mental models (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2001).

Even alongside these contributions, the effects of peace journalism remain understudied as compared to the popular interest and resources allocated to its practice. This can be partially attributed to the lack of theorizing around normative goals and evaluation measurements, such that it is unclear which outcomes are most suitable for effects research. For example, evidence suggests civilians' attitudes change after exposure to peace journalism, but how do these fold into larger questions of policymaking or opportunities for "society at large" to consider nonviolent responses? For these questions, peace journalism may again draw on existing work in political communication. After all, attitudes often translate into political expression or action (Glynn et al. 2018; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), the most functional link between civilian and political actors.

Synergies and Next Steps

The preceding review of existing research on peace journalism illustrates the breadth of its contours. That is, scholars have considered peace journalism as an intellectual concept, a practice, and as news content having specific effects on individuals. However, as demonstrated, these domains of research have developed asynchronously and consequently evaluate the concept disparately. Those interested in peace-journalism content and effects commonly use the presence or absence of peace-journalism frames and conventions in text, while scholars interested in practice most often rely on journalists' perceptions and attitudinal shifts following introduction to or training in peace journalism. Where impact metrics are concerned, theorizing on peace journalism is perhaps most conceptually dissonant, alternating between peace journalism's contribution to conflict prevention, de-escalation of ongoing conflict, and peacebuilding post-conflict.

These domain-specific evaluation approaches are useful to individual studies and have allowed the study of peace journalism to incorporate many different theoretical, methodological, and epistemological perspectives over time. However, such heterogeneity in goals raises questions regarding peace journalism's normative value and evaluation more broadly. If peace journalism is to be relevant, both in theory and in practice, then its normative vision must be sharpened. To this end, two research directions are particularly opportune. First, it is clear that peace-journalism research can benefit when its different domains of researchers engage in closer conversation. For instance, conceptually

clarifying and operationally defining “successful” peace journalism—even while evaluation must necessarily respond to local sociopolitical realities—has significant implications for how peace journalism might be practiced and how it might impact those who consume some news content.

To demonstrate the advantages of a cross-domain approach and illustrate how such synergies might develop, Figure 1 presents a heuristic model designed to foster more integrated peace-journalism research. Because normative theorizing on peace journalism feeds inextricably into all studies conducted on practice as well as content and effects, the heuristic model focuses distinctively on peace-journalism content and practice. As studies on content and practice engage in closer conversation with one another, scholars interested in peace journalism will be forced to re-examine the normative and, by extension, measures by which to evaluate peace-journalism effects.

The model is not a theory, as it does not predict relationships between practice and content. Instead, this framework highlights points of intersection, where future research may contribute to increased understanding of the interplay between these two domains. To this end, and reflecting the hierarchy of influences previously presented, the model identifies four primary areas where research has been conducted on peace journalism as practice (left). The figure highlights influences on practice at various levels ranging from the institutional (macro) to individual (micro). Such impacting factors include the *cultural context* where news content is produced, prevalent *industry norms*, peace-journalism *training and education* the journalist may have had, as well as that journalist’s background and *individual conceptions* of peace journalism (Bläsi 2004, 2009).

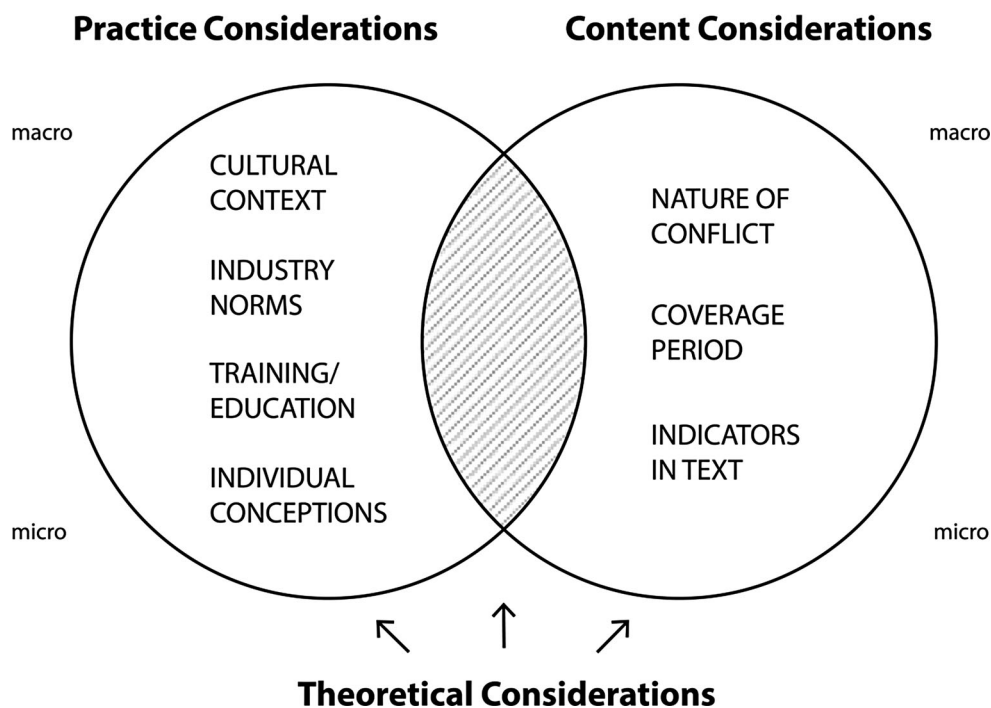


Figure 1. Integrative model for peace-journalism research.

The model looks to extend these areas by overlaying primary approaches to studying peace-journalism content (right). Adapted from Gouse et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis of peace-journalism content-analytic studies, these areas of content research—nature of the conflict, news coverage period, and peace-journalism text indicators—range from macro content-presentation considerations to more micro concerns. More specifically, studies interested in gestalt qualities of peace-journalism content analyze the *nature of conflict* studied. For example, scholars can elect to study “hot” or “cold” conflicts (McMahon and Chow-White 2011) or they may choose to investigate structural (e.g., Batool, Yasin, and Khurshid 2015) as opposed to direct violence (e.g., Lee and Maslog 2005). Macro considerations also refer to the scope of analysis, such as whether the examination concerns distinct frames specific to one conflict event versus the construction of larger peace/war discourses over time or space (e.g., Budak 2018; Hussain 2016). Content studies concerned with the *conflict coverage period* take a more meso-level approach, interested broadly in whether news content covers conflict before, during, or after violence (e.g., Carter, Thomas, and Ross 2011; Fahmy and Neumann 2012). This interest follows from the normative premise that peace journalism should adopt a more proactive stance than traditional war journalism, focusing comprehensively on structural causes and long-term impacts of violence (Lynch and Galtung 2010). Finally, studies focused primarily on peace journalism *indicators* examine the presence of text conventions and specific peace-journalism framing devices, such as elite- versus people-oriented sourcing and solution orientation (e.g., Lacasse and Forster 2012; Lee and Maslog 2005; Shinar 2009).

Importantly, peace-journalism content studies consider variables and concepts across these categories. However, such examinations remain analyses of content without considering the process by which such content is created and the necessary impact this has on its output. Thus, this cross-domain model serves as a tool with which researchers can begin to examine peace-journalism content and practice within the same frame of reference. It is unlikely that all content or practice considerations can be examined within a single analysis, though the heuristic model provides a set of considerations within each domain that should be in conversation with one another when possible.

For instance, scholars interested in journalistic practice might examine how journalists in war-ravaged countries differ from those in countries facing economic injustices in what they perceive to warrant conflict coverage. Content studies may consider whether text indicators such as word choice differ across geographic regions and how such differences relate to larger cultural nuances or language-use patterns. Similarly, content studies that adopt a more longitudinal perspective can demonstrate changes in journalism practices over time, such as whether industry advances in digital and algorithmic journalism offer opportunities for drawn-out conflict coverage that space restrictions of print cannot afford. Finally, investigations of journalistic practice should examine how reporters understand peace journalism and the processes by which they translate such perceptions into story framing decisions.

More generally, understanding how journalists or other communication professionals practice peace journalism can refine normative theorizing and contribute to better understanding the explanatory variables in content studies. After all, content is influenced substantially by the individuals who produce it (Shoemaker and Reese 2014). Beyond providing theoretically and pragmatically useful research questions, such cross-domain studies will begin to build toward shared evaluation metrics, ultimately shaping collective

understanding of peace journalism's societal value. Thus while our integrative model proposes points of intersection between practice and content considerations, these sites of synergy are never fully devoid of theoretical or normative considerations. In other words, we are not suggesting that peace-journalism research reduce its impact to the number of parties quoted or peace treaties signed following publication simply for the sake of formalizing metrics, but rather that some goals are articulated and revisited across peace-journalism domains and future conceptual developments.

In addition to cross-domain research, if the normative goal of peace journalism is peaceful societies, what institutional collaborations and triangulations—between journalism cultures, media systems, public opinion, and policy—are most conducive to effective peace journalism? Here, the project of peace journalism benefits from interdisciplinary perspectives. To illustrate, historians can contribute by providing common characteristics of media systems in peaceful societies across time, while sociologists are well positioned to analyze the social orders most conducive to peaceful conflict resolution. By the same token, economists and political scientists bring perspectives about the motivations for violence and frameworks for negotiations, all necessary considerations for peace journalism as a normative concept and practice.

In closing, this theoretical exploration has suggested several related, and yet distinct, approaches toward the study of peace journalism. Our focus on the broad contours of peace-journalism scholarship is such that our sample of articles is not exhaustive of all peace-journalism research ever published, and indeed, we did not intend it to be. The three research domains transcend individual studies and allude to broader trends in peace-journalism literature. However, the normative vitality of peace journalism depends on conceptual bridge-building, both between these specific research domains and across disciplines. Of course, existing research domains of peace journalism—as a concept, as a practice, and as media content and effects—are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, it is precisely because these areas necessarily overlap that more intentional cross-dimensional work is needed. The normative vision of peace journalism is rooted not only in better conflict coverage, but in the emergence of more peaceful societies, and this is an inherently interdisciplinary ambition. As such, its success is predicated on not only on the coordination of its disparate research domains, but also its integration with interdisciplinary and cross-institutional perspectives.

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