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Emphasising Images in Peace Journalism: Theory and Practice in the Case of Norway's Biggest Newspaper

Kurzfassung: Der vorliegende Aufsatz widmet sich der Bedeutung visuell-bildhafter Darstellungen innerhalb friedensjournalistischer Konzepte. Der Autor kritisiert, dass in Studien zur Bedeutung sprachlicher resp. bildhafter medialer Reize auf die menschliche Informationsverarbeitung, die Einflüsse von Bildern häufig unterschätzt werden.
Erfahrungen wie die Diskussionen um die Veröffentlichung der Mohammed-Karikaturen in der Zeitung *Jyllands-Posten*, belegen die Kraft von Bildern in einer globalisierten und digitalisierten medialen Welt.
In der vorliegenden Untersuchung wurden die Berichterstattungen von Norwegens größter Tageszeitung *Verdens Gang* (VG) über Colin Powells Auftritt vor dem UN Sicherheitstribunal angesichts des bevorstehenden Irakkrieges 2003 sowie über den Angriff amerikanischer Truppen auf die irakische Stadt Fallujah (November 2004) als Fallstudien analysiert.
Der Autor konnte zeigen, dass durch eine stärkere Beachtung der visuellen Elemente der Kriegsberichterstattung, wie z.B. Grafiken oder Fotos, der Friedensjournalismus bzw. ein kritischer Journalismus in Konfliktsituationen in seiner Aussagekraft verstärkt werden kann. Aus der Gegenüberstellung der VG-Berichterstattung über den Angriff auf Fallujah und der intensiven empathischen Berichte über die Tsunami-Katastrophe in Asien einen Monat später, wird das Fazit gezogen, dass die Nutzung neuer digitaler (Bild)medien auch für die Weiterentwicklung des Friedensjournalismus sinnvoll wäre.

Abstract: This article suggests that more emphasis should be placed on visual aspects in the concept of peace journalism. The author argues, through theoretical and practical examples, that visual aspects of journalism are underestimated when it comes to analysing how the human brain deals with textual and visual impulses. Examples such as the controversy around *Jyllands-Posten's* publication of the Mohammed cartoons proves the power of the image in a digital and global media environment. Using as a case study the coverage by Norway's biggest newspaper, *Verdens Gang* (VG), of, respectively, Colin Powell's presentation to the UN Security Council before the Iraq War in 2003, and the attack on the Iraqi town of Fallujah by US and Iraqi forces in November 2004, the author argues that by placing more emphasis on visual elements like graphics and photographs, peace journalism can be an ever stronger instrument for developing a critical journalism during wars and conflicts. By contrasting VG's coverage in Fallujah with the powerful and emphatic coverage of the Asian tsunami a month later, the author suggests that new digital media can be a powerful tool for journalists with ambitions to promote peace journalism.

1. Introduction

Authors like Johan Galtung (2002), Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick (2005) have suggested peace journalism as an alternative strategy for critical journalists covering wars and conflicts . In this article, I contribute to the concept by suggesting that, in promoting a peace journalism strategy, more emphasis should be placed on visual elements. I will analyse the coverage of Colin Powell's presentation to UN Security Council before the Iraqi war, and the coverage of the attacks on Fallujah in November 2004, in Norway's largest newspaper *Verdens Gang* (*VG*), as an empirical case study. In my analyses I will pay attention to the textual as well as the visual elements of the news coverage, to provide an overall impression of the news coverage in relation to Galtung's theory. In particular, I will look at the role played by photographs and other visual elements in the journalistic process at the time. At the end of my article I will contrast the lack of attention to the suffering of civilian casualties during the attack on Fallujah in November 2004 with the massive attention, through visual and textual representation, on the tsunami a few weeks later. My ambition is to show what potential peace journalism might have if the digital technology is made available and there is a willingness to use it on behalf of victims of wars.

2. Theoretical approach

As theoretical point of departure I will build upon theories of peace journalism and visual persuasion, and after the theoretical review I will offer some examples, from events other than my own case studies, to underline the power, on a global scale, of photographs and other visual elements in the news agenda. Here, the attention given to the drawings of Mohammed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, and restrictions on photographs of coffins returning from Iraq with US soldiers, are the most powerful examples. The idea is to show what potential visuals and digital technology can have for peace journalism – if the technology is available in war zones and there is a willingness to use it.

2.1 Peace journalism

Peace journalism as suggested by Johan Galtung defines war as a problem in itself and promotes non-violence as a mean of conflict resolution (Galtung: 2002). Galtung's model builds on the dichotomy and contrast between what he calls 'war journalism' and a 'peace journalism' approach.

The model includes four main points where he contrasts the two approaches: war journalism is violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented and victory-oriented. This approach is often linked to a zero-sum game where the winner (as in sports journalism) takes all. This is a prototype of what one could call traditional mainstream war coverage, without the journalists reflecting the fact that media itself is playing a role in the conflict, often escalating conflicts by reproducing propaganda developed as part of media strategies and PR campaigns by the parties involved (Ottosen: 1994).

Thus, the peace journalism approach assumes a moral and ethical point of departure, acknowledging the fact that media themselves play a role in the propaganda war, intentially or unintentially. The peace journalism approach may make the conscious choice to identify alternative options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented approach. It means focusing on possibilities for peace that the conflicting parties might have an interest in hiding. Peace journalism is people-oriented in the sense that it focuses on the victims (often civilian casualties) and thus give a voice to the voiceless. It is also truth-oriented in the sense that it reveals untruth on all sides and focuses on propaganda as a mean of continuing the war (Galtung: 2002: 261-270).

In their book *Peace Journalism* (2005), Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick have further developed Galtung's model and turned it into a practical tool for journalists. They offer an analytical model in the form of techniques of how to practise peace journalism, demonstrated with examples from their own journalistic practice. They argue that the peace journalism option accepts that every war takes places in an atmosphere of propaganda in which the parties often offer confrontation as the only path. By pointing in the direction of a peaceful solution, journalists can offer the audience a broader perspective in a given conflict by using "insights of conflict analyses and transformation to update the concepts of balance, fairness and accuracy in reporting" (Lynch and McGoldrick: 2005:5). They see the potential of peace journalism as the provision of a road map "tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the story they cover and the consequences of their journalism" into what they call the "ethics of journalistic intervention" (ibid.). In summary, their ambition is to raise "awareness of non-violence and creativity into the practical job of everyday editing and reporting" (ibid.).

2.2 Theories of visual persuasion

The analyses of Galtung and Lynch, and McGoldrick, deal mainly with written texts. (A video is also published by Lynch and McGoldrick as a tool in education, putting more emphasis on the visual.) To my mind, there are several reasons for putting more emphasis on the visual elements in the approach to peace journalism. One reason is simply that we remember visual impressions better than verbal (Magnussen and Greenlee: 1998). If we look back at history, visual impressions of war coverage are more present in our memories than written texts. The little girl running screaming along the road after having been hit by a napalm bomb during the Vietnam War is a good example of how such iconic images stick in our memories.

We combine such images in our memories with experience and knowledge from other sources upon which we draw our conclusions and judgements (Eide: 2005). We see pictures in the same way that we view the world in general, and tend to accept what we see as the truth (Klaren: 1996 in Eide: 2005). Daniel Gilbert concludes that "people believe the ideas they comprehend as quickly and automatically as they believe the objects they see" (Gilbert: 1991 quoted by Eide: 2005). Research on the decoding of pictures in the brain also shows that it matters how the pictures are organised on the pages. We remember better, and put more weight on, pictures that are placed on the left side of a page. Rudolf Arnheim puts it like this: "The left side is endowed with special weight; it assumes the function of a strong centre with which the viewer tends to identify" (Arnheim: 1988).

 Susan Sontag suggests that press photographs even have a "deeper bite" than movies or television since they "freeze-frame" events in a single image: "in an area of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form of memorising it" (Sontag: 2003, quoted by Artz: 2004: 81).

Sontag also underlines the role of photography in our collective memories:

The problem is not that people remember through photographs, but that they remember only through photographs. This remembering through photographs eclipses other forms of understanding and remembering. To remember is, more and more, not to recall a story but to be able to call up a picture (Sontag: 2003:89).

It's also timely to quote Susan Sontag in developing the concept of peace journalism, since in the book *Regarding the pain of others* (2003) she already raises the issue of how visual element can mobilise broader perspectives for peace. Referring to Virginia Woolf's book *Three Guineas,* which deals with the civil war in Spain, she introduces the discussion of how all of us can mobilise sympathy for suppressed people and small nations under attack from super-powers. Referring to Virginia Woolf, Sontag mentions the Second World War as a breakthrough for photojournalism, with Robert Capa as one of the founding fathers. Capa and some of his colleagues founded the photo cooperative, Magnum, that actually developed an ethical platform relevant for peace journalism: the members should commit themselves to documenting their contemporary conflicts, free from chauvinist prejudices (Sontag: 2003:34).

Pictures, cartoons and other visual elements play an important role in creating enemy images, which is an important part of propaganda in war journalism (Ottosen: 1995). Since visual persuasion takes a short cut to our emotions (Eide: 2005), the presence of visual elements should play a more important role in the debate about peace journalism. Sometimes, *absence* of pictures is also a problem, since modern journalism, especially television, depends on pictures to tell a story. First of all, therefore, we have to acknowledge that without pictures or other visual elements most stories will never surface in the news. For example, the lack of visual representation has kept important conflicts outside the news agenda in the mainstream Western press in East Timor, Sudan, Somalia, Liberia and Zaire (Zelizer: 2004:116).

In an essay comparing the use of photographs in news magazines' coverage of wars like the 1991 Gulf War, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Michael Griffin underlines the importance of visual images in the framing of stories (Griffin: 2004). His conclusion, after analysing the magazines *Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News & World Report*, underlines the ethnocentric and militaristic approach:

Photo coverage in the US news-magazines routinely supported Washington's 'official' version of events. The American president was prominent in the pictorial coverage, appearing in pictures as a strong and confident leader. US troops, weapons, and military hardware dominated the deceptions, providing an image of a powerful and determined nation ready and able to vanquish its enemies. The enemy itself was reduced to stereotypical emblems. And the subtleties and complications of global economics and foreign affairs remained invisible. Finally, the human and economic costs of war were largely absent from news portrayals (Griffin 2004:399).

Thus Griffin underlines that the photographic image in itself will not draw attention to human sufferings and create sympathy with the victims of war. Representational legitimacy remains tied to power, and visual images in the mainstream are more likely to produce enduring symbols of that discourse than to give us alternative perspectives (Ibid.: 400).

A final argument for putting more emphasis on visual elements in peace journalism is to take seriously the approach by young people in the analytical framework. The fact that young people, to large extent, are not adopting the everyday use of news media from their parents' generation and are paying more attention to visual culture, must be taken seriously by both journalists and media researchers (Sparrman: 2006).

2.3 The power of images

Before diving into the analysis of my own empirical case, I will provide some other examples of the importance of pictures and other visual elements in the news agenda.We were reminded of the power of visual images during the controversy over the cartoons published in Denmark by the right-wing newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30, 2005. In Norway, the cartoons were published by *Magazinet,* a small Christian weekly. In fact, some of the cartoons had already been published by more influential newspapers like *Aftenposten* and *Stavanger Aftenblad* as illustrations, without causing any debate. When *Magazinet* published the drawings this was seen as a conscious move to support *Jyllands-Posten*, and the

magazine received much attention despite its limited influence in Norwegian public debates. In the Muslim tradition, visual representations of the Prophet are forbidden, so it is not surprising that the cartoons offended Muslims across Europe as well as rest of the world. In many countries it also triggered a debate about the border between freedom of expression and respect for religious belief.

The most provocative cartoon showed Muhammad's turban as a bomb; in another, a turbaned figure in heaven implores a group of suicide bombers to stop because "we ran out of virgins!" Muslim clerics denounced the cartoons in their sermons; in many countries, demonstrations were organised to demand an apology. The political crisis in Denmark was evident when ambassadors from Muslim countries requested meetings with officials. Denmark's prime minister defended the paper's right to publish the cartoons on grounds of free speech, and refused to meet with Muslim ambassadors. The media in Europe were divided on this issue. Some supported the Danish prime minister who reduced it to primarily an issue of freedom of expression, but most had a balanced view and saw the dilemmas involved.

By late January 2006, Danish, and in some cases Norwegian, embassies in the Middle East and Asia were approached by angry crowds. What had begun as a local affair had developed into an apparent showdown between Europe (portrayed as either liberal and tolerant or anti-Muslim and neo-colonialist) and Islam (portrayed as either victimised and proud or backward and repressive) – a cardboard 'clash of civilisations' deeply gratifying to both right-wing Europeans and radical Islamists. Much leftist and mainstream publication refused to reduce this to an issue of freedom of expression. *The Nation* (February 6, 2006) stated that the cartoon scandal was about much more than freedom of speech and focused on the power of images in global mediated environment:

'At its heart the controversy is about power – the power of images; the power that divides Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans, the West and the Middle East; the power of radical Islamists to silence more moderate voices – and the responsibility that comes with power. In today's volatile political climate – charged by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, by Israel's construction of the 'separation wall' in Palestine, by the controversy over the hijab and the revolt in the French *banlieues*, by the growth of anti-immigration politics and radical Islam in 'liberal' Europe and by the velocity with which news and rumour travel on the Internet – the point is not *Jyllands-Posten*'s right to publish but its editorial wisdom, its sense of civic responsibility'.

This case is too complicated to be dealt with in detail in this article and my point in drawing attention to it is not to discuss the cartoons and/or the issue of Islam, but, rather, to draw attention to the power of visual images. In a globalised world such a provocative act will not remain local. Through the Internet, the images can be spread within seconds. It was evident that both *Jyllands-Posten*, which wanted to provoke by publishing the cartoons, and extremist Islamite groups, which wanted to escalate the conflict, used the Internet to mobilise support for their causes. Why should not those in favour of dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution use this tool more consciously? In order to do that more efficiently, more emphasis should be placed on visual representation in the peace journalism model itself.

2.4 The power of the narrative?

Pictures of the dead, of bodies and of coffins can mobilise sympathy and public support for the dead and their families, but they can also be regarded as a threat. I will argue that in many cases it is not primarily the content of the image itself, but the context in which it is presented and its symbolic value, that make the difference. To make my point, I will show how dead bodies in coffins can have both the symbolic effect of empathy with the dead and their relatives, in the case of Swedish tsunami victims and as a threat to government policy in the case of US soldiers returning from Iraq.

2.5 Tsunami victims versus victims of the war in Iraq

When the first coffins of tsunami victims arrived in Sweden on January 5, 2005, draped in Swedish flags, people were moved to sympathy with families of the victims in Sweden and other countries. These were not controversial images. The return of the coffins was covered by the media, and images of the coffins draped in flags were presented as live footage on television and as press photographs in the newspapers.

By contrast, coffins bearing dead US soldiers arrive at American bases almost daily. Their images are banned by the Pentagon. The issue caused public attention when, in the winter of 2004, Tami Silicio published a private photo of a coffin taken at an airbase on the way from Iraq to the US She was dismissed by her employer, Maytag Aircraft, for allegedly violating company and government regulations.

Silicio explained to the media why she took the picture and made it available to the press. The *Seattle Times*, which published the photograph, reported that Silicio received no compensation from them. She said she had not sought to put herself in the public spotlight, and pointed out that she hoped the publication of the photograph would help families of fallen soldiers understand the care and devotion that civilians and military crews dedicate to the task of returning the soldiers home. "It wasn't my intent to lose my job or become famous or anything", Silicio said (*The Village Gate* 22 April 22, 2004).

No television cameras are allowed at Dover, the base where the coffins arrive. Americans rarely see media reports about

bodies returning from Iraq. In order to continue to sell an increasingly unpopular Iraqi invasion to the American people, President George W. Bush's administration tries to hide the unpopular aspects of the war – the grieving families, the flag-draped coffins, the soldiers who have lost limbs.

President Bush does not attend the funerals of soldiers who gave their lives in his war on terrorism. If stories of wounded soldiers are told, they are mostly told by hometown papers, but no national attention is given to the funerals. Christopher Simpson, a professor of communications at Washington's American University put it like this: "You can call it news control or information control or flat-out propaganda".

It has not always been so. Photographs of dead soldiers returning to American soil have historically been part of the ceremony, part of the picture of conflict and part of the public closure for families. Lynn Cutler, a Democratic strategist and former official in Bill Clinton's White House, says this is the first time in history that bodies have been brought home under cover of secrecy: "It feels like Vietnam when Lyndon Johnson was accused of hiding the body bags ..." (quotes from Harper: 2004).

And here we are at the core of the matter. Potentially, images of coffins have the power to stimulate the so-called Vietnam syndrome. The military blamed the press for losing the Vietnam War by demoralising the public with images of body bags and civilian casualties. Subsequently, the word 'body bag' has been taboo in military circles. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the Pentagon began calling them 'human remains pouches' and it now refers to them as 'transfer tubes'. According to Pentagon officials, the policy of banning cameras at Dover dates back to the 1991 Gulf War, under Bush's father (Hoskins: 2004:149). But the policy has been unevenly applied, and at Ramstein airbase in Germany we have seen photographs of soldiers' bodies returning in coffins from Afghanistan (ibid.).

Pictures of incoming coffins were allowed after the terrorist attack on the USS. Cole in 2000, and President George W. Bush received coffins when they returned from Panama and Lebanon with television coverage. In one incident, several media used a split screen showing President Bush, smiling and chatting at Dover Air Force base when coffins arrived after the Panamanian invasion. He was criticised for lack of sympathy and subseqently warned the media against using the split screen in the future (Luostarinen and Ottosen: 2002:125). The ban against showing images of coffins was reintroduced during the invasion in March 2003. The White House ban is, to a large extent, respected. According to Harper (2004), if there are no pictures of coffins being delivered to US air bases, citizens don't think of them. I shall stress the visual aspects of these images. The human mind tends to rely on memory, transforming the past by keeping alive certain images and versions of events, and suppressing or altering others (Hoskins: 2004:149). This is why the Pentagon and other power structures wish to focus on certain images and suppress others. Images of the toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein after the fall of Baghdad, and President Bush's appearance on board the battle ship *Abraham Lincoln* on May 1, 2003, claiming "mission accomplished", were media events constructed to fit into a visual presentation, mainly through television, the latter an interesting propaganda event with powerful visual images of Bush arriving in a masculine manner wearing a pilot's uniform, after allegedly flying part of the distance in the fighter plane himself (Lippe: 2006).

2.6 The visual component in peace journalism

Three years after the Iraqi war started, it is evident that all the claimed reasons to start the war have been proved wrong. Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction – which means that Saddam didn't even pose a regional threat, let alone a global one. There was no al-Qaeda connection or link to the September 11 terrorist attacks, but *because* of the war al-Qaeda has access to a chaotic Iraq. US troops were not greeted as liberators and are now being fiercely opposed by violent resistant groups. By contrast to the powerful images of the Saddam statue falling and the proud arrival of Bush on the *Abraham Lincoln*, the alleged weapons of mass destruction have been invisible. It is an almost abstract threat, but a very powerful one, to build up an enemy image (Gonsalves: 2006). You can't see it but you can create fear by claiming its existence. Later in this article, I will show how the Pentagon compensated for the absence of real pictures of the alleged weapons of mass destruction through digital and graphical presentations by Colin Powell during his presentation at the UN. By uncritically reproducing these images, media helped, on a global scale, to make the non-existent weapons visible to audiences.

Alternative images have also proved powerful in raising awareness of the consequence of war. When the pictures of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison occurred in the media all over the world, human rights and the horror of war instantly became issues. Since no weapons of mass destruction were found, the media used alternative angles in which visual elements played an important role. Many news organisations had been sitting on the story of the abuse of prisoners for months, but, since footage and visual elements are essential in television, the story did not reach a global audience before pictures were available. Amnesty International (AI) had already published reports on prisoner abuse by the summer of 2003 (AI: 2004), which did not become a 'case' until they could be visually expressed through television to a global audience.

2.7 Historical background

In the period before the Iraqi invasion we had an interesting situation: there was a split in the Western elite over crucial issues concerning the coming war (Nohrstedt & Ottosen: 2005), issues such as the UN's position in the conflict, and what threat Saddam Hussein's regime actually represented to regional and global safety, which caused serious differences among nations within NATO itself and within the elite in most NATO countries. Because of this split, we also saw a heated debate among elite media that had traditionally shared a common loyalty to the Western-oriented security policy. In Norway, therefore, we saw a split between the country's biggest newspaper, the tabloid *Verdens Gang* which supported the US line in war preparation, and the biggest morning paper, *Aftenposten*, which supported the Norwegian government's resistance against the war in Iraq (for more details see Ottosen: 2005). Even though similar disparities occurred in many countries, the opposition limited itself to matters such as whether the reasons for going to war could be justified according to international law, and there was no real debate as to whether war, as a mean of conflict resolution in itself, ultimately causes more problems than it solves.

3. The case of portrayals of Colin Powell's presentation
3.1 Case study of Powell's presentation to the United Nations

Colin Powell's address to the UN on February 3, 2003 is an interesting example of the use of visual elements in war propaganda. The speech was given one week before the two weapons inspectors, Dr. Blix and Dr. El Baradei, presented their findings – which were suspected to be negative. As Brigitte Mral has pointed out, the speech should be seen as "an attempt at refuting this expert knowledge in advance, in order to forestall any further protests against war plans" (Mral: 2006:52).

In retrospect, it can useful to see how the visual elements in Powell's presentation played an important role in his attempts to convince a global television audience. In many countries, there has been a lot of critical journalism in the last few years because of the difficult development in Iraq (Edwards and Cromwell: 2006). Most of the arguments now used by the media were also available before the war, and many of the arguments against the war could have been raised by mainstream media before the war (Solomon: 2004). The big question is: what difference would it have made if the media could have prevented the war through critical peace journalism on a global basis? One such opportunity was missed when mainstream media accepted Powell's presentation, too easily, as facts and evidence. Could the visual presentation have impressed the journalists to such an extent that they lost their critical senses? The multimedia show included satellite photographs, audio records, alleged audio records from informants giving the exact numbers of different substances that could be transported in certain directions, illustrated with graphical constructions of vehicles, and so on. Prestigious papers such as *The Washington Post* and the *The New York Times* were also deceived. In an editorial, *The Washington Post* declared that after Powell's talk "it is hard to imagine how anyone could doubt that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction" (quoted from Zinn: 2006b). At least *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* had the decency, one year later, to apologise to their readers for this poor journalistic performance (Nohrstedt and Ottosen: 2005).

Two years after Colin Powell's powerful presentation to the UN Security Council with 'proof' of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, he himself admitted that such weapons didn't exist at the time, adding that his performance would stick in his mind as a shameful event. What if the media, globally, and also in the countries included in the 'coalition of willing' had, at that time, looked more critically at Powell's performance in the UN Security Council? In what follows I will focus on the need for the concept of peace journalism to strengthen the significance of its visual aspects.

3.2 Colin Powell's presentation in *Verdens Gang (VG)* as a case study

As the point of departure for my empirical case study I will look, in retrospect, at how the visual elements in Colin Powell's presentation to the UN Security Council was used to convince public opinion of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, using the coverage in Norway's biggest newspaper, *Verdens Gang (VG),* as an example. *VG* has a tabloid format and is regarded as one of the biggest commercial successes in the history of the Norwegian press. Through a combination of tabloid stories, presented on the front page, with quality journalism and serious political commentary, it has successfully targetted a stable and loyal mixture of readers. *VG* is owned by the media company Schibsted, one of three companies controlling a majority of Norwegian newspapers. It has been known as one of the most loyal supporters og Norway's membership in NATO, and a strong advocate for the relationship with the US as a cornerstone of Norway's security policy.

3.2.1 *VG*'s coverage on February 6

VG carried a front page article on February 6 entitled 'This is why the US will go to war' (see illustration above). Inserted into the small picture of Powell above it, the title, with a yellow background, proclaimed: 'Look at his evidence' and was accompanied by two small pictures taken from his presentation offering alleged evidence from sites where the weapons were hidden. The so-called evidence was linked directly to the title. These were very powerful propaganda images and the reasons to go to war were explicitly attributed to the alleged weapons of mass destruction, through these visual elements.

An editorial with the title 'The time-glass is about to run out' signalled *VG*'s framing, more supportive of the US than that of other Norwegian media (Ottosen: 2005), and which fitted well into the framing of the front page, pointing a finger at Saddam Hussein as being responsible for the situation by keeping weapons of mass destruction.

The title of the main story, 'Sabotage', referred to Iraq's failure to cooperate with the UN weapons inspectors. The 18 articles on the topic presented a broad spectrum of viewpoints, both from countries which supported the US and from Norwegian supporters like the prime minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik. An interview with him, in which he found Powell's presentation 'convincing', was placed prominently next to the main story. Critics such as Nelson Mandela, and others expressing doubt about Powell's argument, were presented in briefs or small side stories accompanied by small photographs. The three main stories about Powell's presentation used a US-friendly framing, with titles like 'The sabotage', 'Saddam's arsenal' (see illustration below) and 'The terror network'. The framing was conclusive and supportive of Powell's allegations. The three articles were basically a repetition of Powell's arguments – with him as the only source (Ottosen: 2005). The picture of Colin Powell holding up a small piece of 'evidence', introducing the anthrax theme, is in itself a powerful image, for even though the picture was hardly *real* evidence (did Powell actually bring anthrax into the room?) it connoted danger. It takes a careful study of the words Powell used to see that he actually avoided the issue of whether there was anthrax in the tube (Mral: 2006:55). The combination of the general danger caused by anthrax during the fall of 2001, when the US Senate closed and two postal workers were killed amid a hint that Saddam Hussein might have produced 25,000 litres of the chemical substance, makes a strong statement. Since the existence of this amount could not be proved, the little tube in Powell's hand is compensation – a commanding visual image that people will remember better than the figures he mentioned (ibid.)

The graphical presentation of American satellite equipment accompanied by the small title 'This is how US observes (from outer space) Saddam's war machine' (Slik overvåker USA Saddams krigsmaskin) also connoted 'scientific proof'. The digital illustrations, which were still pictures from live drawings incorporated in Powell's presentation, were intended to demonstrate how the illegal chemical weapons were moved around in trucks from place to place – strong evidence that can't be disputed, since we 'see' it. Here, I will refer back to some of the theoretical perspectives mentioned in the introduction. Research in this field shows that we react emotionally to images before they reach our consciousness and they are kept in our memory as 'truths' (Barry: 1997:18).

VG's combination – supportive text and visual elements – is essential. The title indicates Iraq's aggressive intention, and the role of the US is simply to keep control of the danger. This fits well into Galtung's model for war journalism, in which he warns about a dichotomy where, of two parties, one side is presented as the holder of 'scientific thruth'. *VG*, through the pictures and graphics presented by Powell, his physical demonstration of the 'proof', provides solid evidence of war journalism. No real arguments and facts are attributed to the 'other side' and its evil intention. The evil is presented through the title, and the reader is invited to think along the lines that a confrontation is the most likely outcome of this scenario, thus breaking with Galtung's suggestion for peace journalism: "Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture making conflict transparent".

It should be noted here that on the following day (November 7), *VG* reduced its propagandistic approach by drawing more attention to the criticism of Powell's presentation through a major article in which Norwegian experts gave it low 'grades' (Gir USA beviser nær stryk). In this article, a Norwegian military expert was quoted as saying that Powell offered no real proof of the existence of WMD and that the total amount of the coverage on that day sent a 'mixed message'. Another article, with the title 'Alarm of poison' (Giftalarm), quoted US sources as saying that Americans all over the world might be subject to attacks by biological and chemical weapons. This could be interpreted as a follow-up to the media strategy of US authorities to create fear after Powell's presentation. In the same article, President Bush was quoted as saying the US had proof that Saddam Hussein had cleared use of chemical weapons and that the UN Security Council must either show strength towards Iraq or risk becoming a laughing stock. One of *VG's* own commentators criticised the Norwegian prime

minister for hiding behind the Security Council and not establishing a clear policy of his own. Even if a text tries to reduce the impact of the previous message, the visual part of the message will not be deleted and ironically enough the article that seemingly criticized Powell from the previous day, was also illustrated with images from Powell's own presentation (Bernt and Eide 2006). Social psychologists emphasise that we are more likely to accept a message as true if the text is accompanied by visual elements that support the message in the text (Crick: 1994). Barry argues that human beings have an "inherent bias towards accepting what we see as true" (Barry: 1997). I will therefore argue that the combination of textual and visual elements in *VG*'s coverage of Powell's performance in the UN had a supportive function for what has retrospectively been shown to be false US propaganda. It was a clear example of what Galtung, in his model, calls war journalism.

A peace journalism approach at this stage should, rather, warn the readers of the power of the visual images, and raise questions about the claim that they prove anything at all, rather than reproduce the images uncritically.

4.   A case Study of the battle of Fallujah
4.1   The coverage in *VG* of Fallujah

My next case study will be *VG*'s coverage of the attack on Fallujah in November 2004. I will argue that under-reporting about Fallujah, *VG* journalists' reluctance to see the battle of Fallujah within the framework of the whole conflict, including the start of the war, was based on *VG*'s own false evidence as presented by Colin Powell and reported uncritically by itself. I will also argue that the pictures and other visual elements in this case confused the readers more than educating them about the actual events. This lack of visual evidence of the true nature of the attack served the interest of the aggressor, since little attention was drawn to the damage done to the city, the civilian casualties, etc. Using Galtung's model of war journalism, one could argue that this coverage was not 'people oriented', offering no evidence of the destruction of the city and the consequences for the civilian population. This was the pattern followed in most Western media.

4.2   What really happened in Fallujah

All inhabitants were asked to leave the city before the attacks started. Those remaining would be treated as hostile com-batants. This was despite the fact that many of the poor people had nowhere else to go, and it was doubtful that everyone received the message about the urgency of leaving the city. Facing this ultimatum, around 250,000 people fled the city, while the remaining 50,000 were trapped and cut off from food or medical care (Phillips: 2005:43).

Burhana Fasafa, a Lebanese journalist working for the Lebanese TV station, KBC, said in an interview with the *The News Standard* that he witnessed US war crimes in person while reporting from inside Fallujah: "Americans did not have inter-preters with them", Fasafa said, "so they entered houses and killed people because they didn't speak English. They entered the house where I was with 26 people, and [they] shot people because [the people] didn't obey …even just because the people couldn't understand a word of English" (quoted from Jamil: 2005:328-329). Many refugees have told similar stories (ibid.).

In an article in the media-critical magazine *FAIR*, Norman Solomon made a point of the fact that the US took control of the local hospital to stop journalists getting photos of casualties:

At the outset of the new assault, US forces captured Fallujah's general hospital. 'In terms of the information war, the hospital was indeed the most strategic of targets,' international correspondent Pepe Escobar writes. 'During the first siege of Fallujah in April, doctors told independent media the real story about the suffering of civilian victims. So this time the Pentagon took no chances: no gory, disturbing photos of the elderly, women and children … the civilian victims of the relentless bombing (quoted from Solomon: 2004).

The true facts of what took place inside Fallujah were scarcely reported in Norwegian media. Solomon referred to the jour-nalist Fadhil Badrani, a resident of the city reporting for the BBC World Service, as saying that "a medical dispensary in the city centre was bombed". He added: "I don't know what has happened to the doctors and patients who were there. It was last place you could get medical attention because the big hospital on the outskirts of Fallujah was captured by the Amer-icans on Monday. A lot of the mosques have also been bombed. For the first time in Fallujah, a city of 1,200 mosques, I did not hear a single call to prayer this morning" (Solomon: 2004).

While the Western media were downplaying the available information about the suffering of Iraqi people in Fallujah, many Arabic-language outlets had a different news agenda. But in these media, too, very few pictures were available. Escobar reported in the November 11 edition of *Asia Times Online*: "The main story playing in the Arab world in the past 24 hours is that of Mohammed Abboud – who saw his nine-year-old son bleed to death of shrapnel wounds when his house in Fal-lujah was hit because he could not venture out to go to a hospital. Abboud had to bury his son in his own garden" (quoted from Solomon: 2004). Thus the information to implement a peace journalism perspective, and report on human suffering as a consequence of the war, was available for those who wanted to find it.

4.3 The empirical data

I searched for the word 'Fallujah' in *VG*'s database in the electronic archive Retriver and got five hits with content on the attacks on Fallujah in the period November 7 to December 31, 2004. The dates were November 7, 9, 11, 15 and 17. On the basis of these findings I went through these issues on microfilm, since the electronic archive does not include photos. All the stories were news items dealing with the military operation. I will analyse them according to Galtung's model for peace journalism. All were originally published in Norwegian; I will translate the relevant parts into English.

4.3.1 Article 1

The first article was published on the day the attack on Fallujah started, November 7. The dateline was Jerusalem and the title was 'The Americans will clean Fallujah (Amerikanerne vil renske Falluja)'.

One picture (see illustration above) accompanied the story, showing stripes of phosphorous grenades along the skyline but having no explanation in the form of a subtext. As an illustration to the story, the picture offered no meaning. We now know that these phosphorous grenades were used by the US forces (see the film 'Fallujah, the hidden massacre' by Sigfrid Ranucci). The irony in this is that while the US falsely accused Saddam Hussein of being a global threat because of his WMD, US forces used weapons that are illegal to employ against civilians, since they cause massive internal burn wounds when they hit a human body. It should be noted here that even though the Pentagon admitted the use of phosphorous grenades it claimed they were used only against military targets, despite the film mentioned above having suggested that civilians were also hit. From a peace journalism point of view this picture could have been used to explain the human costs of the war. By including the word 'clean' in the title of the article, *VG* can be slated for sanitising the warfare. If the actual meaning of the picture had been explained to the reader it might have given a more realistic picture of the real consequences of the war instead of an abstract image.

If we go further into the text we find the following elements which fit into Galtung's model for (traditional) war journalism:

- Focus on conflict arena (closed space, closed time and exists in arena): the town of Fallujah in a limited period of time with one goal – to win. An alternative, peace-oriented angle would, rather, have put the Fallujah case in a historical context, which would include explaining the resistance as a result of the illegal occupation in 2003.
- Two parties: the Iraqi government and the US invasion forces on one side and the rebels (constituting the resistance forces in Fallujah) on the other. An alternative, peace-oriented angle would have focused on conflict formation explaining that the vast majority of the Iraqi population opposed the occupation. Instead of explaining the broad poten-

tial for resistance, *VG* is narrowing it further by ending the article with the information that the force of between 1,000 and 1,500 is headed by Omar Hadid and contains radical Muslims from Syria and Jordan. Hadid's group is linked to al-Qaeda's 'top man' in the region, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Here it is implied that the resistance are 'foreigners' with links to international terrorism.

• Who threw the first stone? The time space in the article is narrowed, so that the attack on Fallujah seems the 'natural' answer to two attacks the day before, when 34 people were killed in the neighbouring town of Samarra. Eleven of the victims were identified as women and children. In another neighbouring town, Ramadi, 20 US soldiers were wounded. An alternative peace-oriented angle would have presented open space, open time, with alternative outcomes dealing with historical issues from the occupation in 2003, as well as the colonial past.

The one-goal solution from Galtung's model is underlined by quotes from both sides ruling out negotiation and non-violence. The leader of the US soldiers, Lt. Col.Gary Brandl is quoted: "We shall clean Fallujah of rebels". Interestingly enough, *VG* left out Brandl's most extreme hate speech, reported in CNN and other US media, where he claimed: "We're on a mission from God. A mission to liberate the Iraqi people from evil".

VG's use of war journalism is underlined by the quote from one of the rebels claiming that "For us the alternative is fight the Americans or die". In this *reactive* manner, waiting for violence before reporting, the predictable outcome will be more violence. This is underlined by another sentence in the article: "Fundamentalists have mined buildings and are ready to use suicide bombers, car bombs, snipers and booby-traps connected to explosives in the battle against US soldiers."

The fact that all the inhabitants were ordered to leave the town was disguised through the sentence "The Americans hold the opinion that 80 per cent of the inhabitants have fled the town'. This, combined with the expression 'clean' in the title and the description of the event as an 'operation', sanitises the warfare, blaming the rebels rather than the occupation forces for the situation.

According to the model for peace journalism, journalists must expose 'untruths on all sides'. *VG*, on the contrary, covered up the unpalatable facts that could blame the occupation forces as aggressors. The photograph of phosphorous grenades could have pointed in another direction, but it is not commented upon or contextualised. It's just a spectacular image, causing more confusion than clarity.

4.3.2 Article 2

The second article, titled 'Promises a bloodbath – US's biggest street-battle since the Vietnam War is taking place tonight', was published two days later (November 9) and written by the US correspondent of *VG*. Three pictures accompanied the article. Two above the title symbolise the 'two party-element' in Galtung's model. To the left we see pictures of two US soldiers pointing their guns at an unknown target. In the background we see another US soldier on the top of a tank looking through his binoculars. The picture connotes firmness without any focus on potential victims. The subtitle to the picture goes like this: 'Besieged city: US forces were placed in strategic positions around Fallujah before they last night stormed the streets of the city hunting for Iraqi rebels'. I will here remind of the theoretical point I made earlier – that the left side of the picture is more easily remembered. These images of the US soldier stand for firmness in a defensive manner. As a contrast, the picture to the right 'confronting' the American soldiers, shows rebels and signifies threat and danger. Two of the rebels have their faces hidden, one by a Palestinian scarf and the other by balaclava hood. The two-party layout with two pictures 'confronting' each other on the page fits well into Galtung's win-oriented dichotomy. The civilian population is totally absent.

At this point I will again draw attention to the point made by Rudolph Arnheim in the theoretical overview earlier in the chapter, that we tend better to remember the picture placed on the left side. It can be argued by editing the page in this manner we are shown the war scene through a US perespective (Arnheim: 1988).

The subtitle was: 'Tough street matches: Masked rebels fought yesterday in the streets of Fallujah against the US force, even though some suggested there are as many as 5,000 rebels in the town, they are outnumbered by the Americans'. The picture and the subtitle connotes fanaticism and defeat. They look like bank robbers but are doomed to lose (because they are too few). The third and last picture is a small portrait of the alleged rebel leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The enemy image of al-Zarqawi, as the key al-Qaeda figure in Iraq, is essential here. He personified the enemy image after the arrest of Saddam Hussdein and until he was killed by US forces in May 2006. The Pentagon has admitted retrospectively that a an operation of psychological warfare (PSYOPS) upgraded al-Zaqawi's role in the insurgency to create the image of a strong enemy. This PSYOPS-operation included a false letter supposedly written by al-Zaqawi and claimed by the Pentagon to be found in his computer (*Washington Post*: April 10 2006). With this information at hand it's interesting to see how central al-Zaqawi is in *VG*'s Fallujah coverage.

If we look closer into the text we find that even though the lead of the articles states that 'thousands of American soldiers stormed the streets of Fallujah', the title, including the expression 'bloodbath', refers to the rebels. A statement from the

'feared' Abu Musab al-Zarqawi tells us: "Let us stand up with all our power and use all that is dear to us when we fight them". The rebels also get the blame for potential civilian casualties when the Iraq expert Michael O'Hanlon is quoted fearing that "al-Zarqawi and his men will use many thousand civilians in the city as living shields". The US soldiers are off the hook for the responsibility for any civilian casualties, since they are only targetting the rebels: "Last night the heavens over Fallujah were lit while the overwhelming military power hammered on the rebels".

The operation named 'Dawn' might, according to *VG*, have developed into the most difficult street battle the Americans had fought since the battle over the town of Hue at the time of the Vietnam War. *VG* portrayed the resistance as "a desperate and sometimes invisible enemy that knows the city and every house as well as its own pocket".

American Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was quoted as saying that the purpose of the battle was to "strangle the rebellion in Iraq once and for all. And to clear the ground for the elections in January". His rhetoric includes all the signs of propaganda: "Success in Fallujah will be a setback for the terrorists in the country", he said during his press conference in the Pentagon the day before. At that time 42 rebels had been killed. To balance this, *VG* quoted a doctor in Fallujah who, according to AP, told about 12 civilian casualties and 17 wounded – among them a five year old girl and a ten year old boy. The metaphor 'job' was used by Rumsfeld in his speech to describe the attack and uncritically used by *VG* in the story. The quotations were: "This is a difficult job"; this time, however, Rumsfeld promised "to fulfil the job and not stop in the way the Americans did in April". The war represented by the metaphor 'job' is commonly used in earlier war propaganda (Luostarinen and Ottosen: 2002). A more detailed explanation of the failed operation in April could be a way to help the readers to contextualise the event, since a possible hidden agenda for the massive attack on the town of Fallujah could be revenge for the humiliation to which the US soldiers were exposed at the time. To quote a story from the same journalist on April 1, 2004: "The scenes from Fallujah were so grotesque that US television viewers were protected from the pictures. At least two bodies were dragged through the streets by a car. One body was dragged by its feet. The corpses were hung in telephone-wires." The images of the dead bodies of US soldiers were published in many Western media and were obviously humiliating for the US. Thus, the issue of revenge could be seen as a hidden agenda in the attack six months later. But the issue of revenge was never an issue in Norwegian media coverage.

To return to the November 9 article: an alternative interpretation to *VG*'s suggestion that the public was protected from these images is that the images were censored so as not to trigger the so-called 'Vietnam syndrome'. These scenes could trigger the same kind of feelings that made President Clinton leave Somalia in 1993, after similar scenes took place in Mogadishu.

Dehumanisation of 'them' is an important factor in war/violence journalism. In its elite-orientation it also tend to focus on 'our suffering' through enemy images. One could ask why the readers were not reminded of these scenes when Rumsfeld sent his soldiers to "fulfil the job". In the November 9 article, the Vietnam syndrome is indirectly dealt with at the end. In an interview with CNN, the Iraq expert Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute claimed that great civilian losses would be "a catastrophe" for the Americans and the fragile Iraqi government. Here, elite-orientation and ethnocentrism are evident. The real victims of the war (the civilian Iraqis) are invisible and not mentioned at all as part of the catastrophe. Since they are not presented through pictures and are merely randomly mentioned in the text, it is almost as if they don't exist (Griffin: 2004).

4.3.3 Article 3

The next article was published on November 11, with the title 'Slaughterhouse for hostages found'. This article was also written by the US correspondent of *VG*. The introduction goes like this:

"The Iraqi government soldiers have come across 'the slaughterhouses' in Fallujah where as many as 30 hostages may have been beheaded on camera. The macabre findings were made when soldiers fought their way from street to street through the Iraqi town which for a long period has been the safe haven for the terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his feared men."

The article is illustrated with three small pictures of the hostages, each of them blindfolded, with same subtext on each, 'BEHEADED', followed by the names of the victims. Obviously, the pictures focus on the three Western hostages as the victims of the attack. The portraits of the hostages create sympathy since we identify more easily with people of whom we can get a visual impression (Gilbert: 1991).

If we return to the text, we again see that the inhabitants of Fallujah are invisible. The hunt for terrorists justifies the massive attacks on the city. The findings of the 'slaughterhouse' and the hunt for the named evil-doer follow the pattern of enemy image oriented journalism so typical of war-journalism (Ottosen: 1994). The point is underlined by the mention of another hostage situation, where the family of the head of the interim government, Ayad Alawi, are the worthy victims. Only at the very end of the article is the civilian population of Fallujah mentioned: "Ten thousand, maybe as many as 100,000, civilians are supposed to still remain inside Fallujah and yesterday AP reported that the inhabitants will soon be out of food". This dramatic piece of information is not highlighted through pictures or any other visual effects that will help us to remember it.

4.3.4 Article 4

The fourth article, 'Body of Western woman found', also focused on the Western hostages. Dated November 15, it was accompanied by a picture of a soldier looking down at a blanket which obviously hid a body. Two small pictures, of a Polish-Iraqi woman and a British woman, suggested that one of them was the one covered by the blanket. The subtext under the picture went: "Horrible sight: US forces came yesterday across the mutilated body of a Western woman". This picture also focuses on the Western victims as the 'worthy' victims of the attack on Fallujah. We can identify with the women since we can see their faces and get to know their names.

The article was written by a staff reporter and had the following lead:

The body of what probably was a Western woman was found badly treated without arms and legs in Fallujah yesterday. The woman is most likely one of two foreign women reported missing lately.Her arms and legs are missing, she has her throat cut and her stomach cut open. She has been dead for a while… says Benjamin Finnell who has examined the woman at an American field hospital according to the news agency AP.

This story can also be read as propaganda to justify the attacks. The reference to the field hospital is interesting since one of the first things the US and Iraqi government soldiers did was to take control over the hospital on the outskirts of the city, to prevent reporters form showing civilian casualties as was the case in the battle over Fallujah in April.

The November 15 article is clearly 'victory oriented' since the security adviser Qassem Dawoud is quoted by AP, claiming that the battle for Fallujah was over. He claimed that mere pockets of resistance remained. One of the inhabitants of Fallujah was quoted at the end of the story; Abu Mustafa was quoted by Reuters, stating that: "The situation is very difficult. We have neither food nor water. My seven children suffer from diarrhoea. One of my sons was wounded by a grenade explosion last night. He is bleeding, but there is nothing I can do to help him'

In this, the civilian population is given a voice, but the blame is not put on the attacking forces.

4.3.5 Article 5

The last article was published on November 17 and is important since it's the only one during this period with a critical angle towards the US forces and shows there was a certain balance in *VG*'s coverage. The picture accompanying the article shows an American soldier pointing his gun at a body on the ground. The subtext explains the situation: "Shocking: the shocking pictures of a US soldier shooting a wounded Iraqi were yesterday shown on television worldwide". The article was written by the US correspondent of *VG* and was titled: 'Was waiting for help – shocking pictures shake US and the world'. The story is about a man shot at a mosque, caught in the lens of the embedded NBC journalist Kevin Sites. The lead goes like this: '"He pretends to be dead!" the American soldier is yelling. Then he puts the gun against the wounded Iraqi and pulls the trigger. Immediately the wall behind him is covered with blood'.

The reporter explains how the pictures have shocked the American public. It's explained as a possible war crime: the wounded and unarmed Iraqi was placed in the room by another US unit, to wait for medical assistance. The scene is explained by Pentagon sources to have resulted from previous incidents in which rebels have pretended to be dead. One of the friends of the soldier who is now under investigation was allegedly was killed in this way. Lt. Gen. John Sattler is quoted as saying: "We obey the laws for armed conflicts and maintain a high standard of responsibility".

Even though some aspects of the warfare are mentioned critically and the situation for the civilian population is cited a couple of times, the main stories as well as the pictures follow the pattern of a war- and violence-oriented journalism. The focus, with a win-oriented angle (the US and Iraqi forces are gaining control) is on the conflict. The worthy victims (Western hostages) are highlighted while the unworthy victims (the civilian population in Fallujah) are mentioned briefly without being linked to the behaviour of the attacking forces. It's more that they happened to be in the wrong place than anything else. Indirectly, it's implied that they are responsible for their own situation, since they did not leave the city as requested by the US forces.

4.4 The unworthy victims

The readers of *VG* received little information about the situation facing the civilian population in Fallujah. Of course this must be seen in light of the circumstances in which these five articles were written. The Pentagon's media strategy was to control the access to information. It is not my intention to moralise about the journalist at *VG*, but, still, in retrospect it is intriguing to see what was missing in these articles and, interestingly enough, British newspapers such as *The Guardian* were able to print critical articles about Fallujah with many pictures to underline the massive destruction. So the information was available soon afterwards for those who wanted it. *The Guardian* had a fully illustrated supplement on January 11, 2005 – to my mind an effective piece of peace journalism, since it used photos to document the massive destruction of the city and the consequences for the civilian population. The Iraqi medical doctor and writer, Al Fadhil, entered the city on

December 24 and documented the effects of war through diary and photos. He talked to remaining civilians who blamed both the US forces and the resistance fighters who didn't care about their destiny and their ruined city. He entered the city centre on December 24, and wrote: "By 10 a.m. we were inside the city. It was completely devastated, destruction every-where. It looked like a city of ghosts" (Fadhil: 2005). Using photographs, he documented destroyed mosques and ruined homes, dead bodies, insulting slogans written in English on bathroom mirrors.

After the 'liberation' of Fallujah in December 2004, some civilians were allowed to return on Christmas eve, the same day that Fadhil entered the city. Thus, two days before the tsunami that caused hundreds of thousands of deaths, and massive damage, in several countries, those who wanted to return to the destroyed city of Fallujah were funnelled through five checkpoints, their fingerprints taken along with DNA samples and retina scans. Residents were to be issued with badges showing their home addresses, and it was an offence not to wear them all the time. In an effort to thwart suicide bombers, civilian vehicles were banned from the city (*The Independent*, December 11, 2004).

Before the attacks on Fallujah on November 7, Lt. Gen. John Sattler told his soldiers that the town "is being held by hostages by mugs, thugs, murderers and intimidators" (CNN, November 7 2005).

According to the NGO Iraq Body Count, 800 people were killed in Fallujah. Between 572 and 616 were civilians, of whom more than 300 were women and children. Omar Dhahir, an Iraqi author living in Denmark, offered an alternative explana-tion: "The more people they kill the more resistance they will meet". General Tommy Franks expressed the US policy of being uninterested in civilian casualties: "We don't do body counts".

The medical journal *The Lancet*, on the other hand, took an interest in the civilian casualties. How many civilians had died in Iraq since the invasion in March 2003? The answer is more than 100,000. Before that, UN organisations estimated that the sanctions against Iraq during Saddam Hussein's time – half of them children under 16 – cost the lives of between 500,000 and 1,000.000. It did not stir up half the attention directed at the tsunami that dominated the global media envi-ronment at the same time. Obviously it is a task within the model of peace journalism to give a voice to these voiceless.

In the following I will reflect on the reason for this, and on the potential of the Internet and of digital pictures such as from mobile telephones equipped with cameras.

5. Contrasting *VG*'s Fallujah coverage with the Asian Tsunami
5.1 New technology, sympathy and professionalism – the tsunami coverage in *VG*

The tsunami struck the shores of many Asian countries on December 26, 2004, just two day after the first Fallujah civilians were able to return to their shattered city. In the above analyses I have documented how little attention Norway's biggest newspaper paid to the thousands of civilians who lost their lives, were wounded or lost their homes through the massive military attack on their city. Since the tsunami occurred with massive force in the news so soon after the attacks on Fallujah, the contrast is striking. In the case of Fallujah, some Arab media like Al Jazeera used new technology to publish some of the damage and civilian suffering. In 1991 during the Gulf War, CNN enjoyed a monopoly on 24-hour coverage seven days a week, and controlled the images on a global scale. Since Al Jazeera was established in 1996, this monopoly has been broken (Figenschou: 2004). In his book *No true glory. A frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah*, Bing West, who sees the war from a US military perspective, puts it like this: "Every battle now has a global audience. The April 2004 siege of Fallujah was lost on the playing fields of digital technology. As Lt. Gen. Conway put it, Al Jazera kicked our butts" (West: 2005: 322). Even though the images of massive destruction of the city were available from Arab media, Western media showed little willingness to use them.

The human tragedy following the tsunami that struck the shores of several countries causing as many as 220,000 deaths, was visualised immediately and media worldwide published many reports that led to a mobilisation that the world had hard-ly seen before. Money, medicine, relief kits and other resources were collected, expressing sympathy with the victims. Many tourists were killed alongside the local population even though the latter has to pay the long-term costs of the tragedy. In countries like Norway and Sweden, the authorities, and in particular the foreign ministries, have been berated for doing too little too late for the tourists from their own countries. Here, *VG* and other news media did a remarkable job both crit-icising the government and at the same time giving the public the information the government failed to give (Hansen: 2006). In Norway, the authorities were taken to task for failing to provide an overview of the death tolls. In the first few days after the tsunami struck, government sources claimed that hundreds of Norwegian had died. The accurate number turned out to be 84 of the 3,500 who had spent their holidays in the tourist resorts hit by the waves. Several media picked up this criticism and lived up to their reputations of watchdogs, contributing to the unfavourable reports published in the months following the crisis. For me, the most important issue is why the media fails to be a collective watchdog in a similar manner when the human suffering is caused by man-made wars

5.2 *VG* and the tsunami

Returning to the biggest Norwegian newspaper, *VG*, I am unable here to undertake a systematic review of the tsunami coverage, but will contrast some aspects of the tsunami coverage with the Fallujah coverage, focusing on the visual representation. A few minutes after the tsunami struck the shores of Thailand, *VG* got the news from one of its readers at the beach. At once, *VG* mobilised readers and asked for reports on the missing as well as documentation through photos sent via mobile phones. At 4.56 a.m., three-quarters of an hour before the Norwegian News Agency (NTB) sent out an alert message about the tsunami, *VG* had received a message from a reader on a roof in Phuket. The first pictures on the ground were not sent through the international agencies but came from one of *VG*'s readers via his mobile phone. Minutes after the tsunami struck, *VG* published the news online. Through contacts on the ground, *VG* was able to get its first interviews with victims. While the government offices were closed during the Christmas holiday the public got little information, and the information they did get was, in most cases, wrong. As a flexible and professional news organisation, *VG* called in more staff and published new information all the time. Its webpage soon became a central point for practical information about where to seek help, flight information, information on hospitals, etc. Viewers were asked to report missing persons and that information was double checked with the information received from government sources. Four days after the tsunami struck, they were able to conclude that the most likely number of Norwegian deaths was 85, whereas at the same time different government agencies had lists of missing containing 8,000 names, and everything was chaotic (Hansen: 2006).

The media contributed actively to collecting money, and worked as a collective force for humanitarian relief operations. Visual communication was essential, both in documenting the incredible forces of the tsunami and in documenting the human suffering. Global television channels such as CNN and BBC World, as well numerous Internet pages, could give detailed accounts through satellite pictures that were made available (Digital globe-gallery). The human tragedy was instantly documented in living-rooms all over the world. It was a global media event – the world became a single place, as Roland Robertson has characterised the globalisation of media (Robertson: 1992). Why did the media image on a global scale become a force for human sympathy that was totally missing during the massive attack on Fallujah just a few weeks earlier? I will suggest the following as at least a partial explanation:

1. The tsunami caused damage to Western tourists as well as local people. The us-and them-factor was less important for a while, since all were 'in the same boat': *we*, somehow, all were struck (Eide: 2002).
2. The tsunami was caused by nature and no government could be blamed. Thus there were neither media restrictions to prevent the flow of information nor media strategies to draw attention away from the event (Ottosen: 1994)
3. Digital technology, including cell phones with cameras and satellite-telephones, were available immediately. In Fallujah, Pentagon restrictions on media access made a point of keeping cameras away from the battlefield. *VG* and other Western media did little or nothing to raise awareness of the restriction, or to focus on the human suffering in Fallujah. Unlike with the tsunami, responsibility for the events in Fallujah was identifiable: the most powerful military machine in the world.
4. In the aftermath of the tsunami, the local hospitals became information centres for journalists and relatives, while the US took military control over hospitals in Fallujah to avoid visual documentation of the wounded and dead.

6. Conclusion and summary

I have tried to show how the combination of visual representation of digital pictures distributed by mobile telephones, and the possibilities for global distribution and publication on the Internet, have a huge potential to promote sympathy for human suffering which is an important aspect of promoting peace journalism. In the case of the tsunami, the victims were able to reach sympathy and help on a global scale. The challenge for peace journalism is to learn from these experiences and transfer them to war zones. The Iraqi war is an interesting case for studying the visual aspects of war journalism. The visual component in the propaganda presented by Colin Powell to the UN was intended to mobilise world opinion to support a war.

Reporting from the war zones should include the propaganda environment which, in modern warfare, is a part of the battlefield. Media self-reflexivity and certain themes should be on the checklist for all journalists covering war and conflicts. One important issue here is self-criticism of pitfalls and shortcomings in supplying fair and accurate reports – with respect both to immediate corrections and to comprehensive evaluations retrospectively after major operations or wars (Nohrstedt and Ottosen: 2005). In retrospect, the least one could expect from *VG* when it has obviously has been responsible for distributing the false allegations by Colin Powell to the UN Security Council before the war, was that it should make an apology to its readers as the prestigious papers *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have done.

Peace journalists should bring alternative perspectives into the news agenda to give the public an alternative way of thinking regarding the dichotomy of only two parties and one potential winner and one loser (Galtung: 2002). By focusing on all parties and seeing the potential for conflict resolution, peace journalism should reveal untruths on all sides and avoid

the elite-oriented propaganda trap (Kamalipour and Snow: 2004). The use of visual counter- propaganda by distributing photographs of victims of acts of war sent by mobile phone, and circulating them on the Internet, could be a tool in these efforts.

As pointed out in the comparison of *VG*'s coverage of the tsunami with the attacks on Fallujah, modern technology offers new methods for mobilising sympathy for human suffering through visual documentation. Since the military will try to control access to the battlefield and will restrict the possibilities of disseminating controversial images, human rights groups and peace journalism should use the Internet and digital technology to focus on the 'true face' of war when the media fail to do so. Here we can learn from *VG*'s use of its own readers to mobilise more readers into sending images via the Internet.

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