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War Journalism in the Threat Society:
Peace journalism as a strategy for challenging the mediated culture of fear?

Kurzfassung: Die mögliche Entwicklung der Risiko-Gesellschaft zu etwas, das man als eine Bedrohungsgesellschaft bezeichnen könnte, in der Bedrohungswahrnehmungen von der Politik in einem Maße ausgebeutet werden, wie es in der Moderne selten da gewesen ist, stellt in vielerlei Hinsicht eine Herausforderung für den Konflikt- und Friedensjournalismus dar.
Der Kontext des Krieges gegen den Terror als vorherrschende globale Diskursordnung und das Fehlen einer konsistenten Strategie zur Demokratisierung von Nachkriegsgesellschaften, ebenso wie Kriegspropaganda, Wahrnehmungsmanagement und psychologische Operationen als Teil der Medienkriege, die parallel zu den militärischen Operationen geführt werden, verleihen der Diskussion über Relevanz, Tragweite und Anwendbarkeit friedensjournalistischer Modelle und/oder Philosophien in der aktuellen internationalen Lage höchste Dringlichkeit.
Der vorliegende Aufsatz skizziert Ansatzpunkte für eine solche Diskussion in der Bedrohungsgesellschaft.

Abstract: The possible development of the Risk Society into what could be called the Threat Society, in which threat perceptions are exploited in politics to a degree seldom seen in modernity, seriously challenges conflict and peace journalism in many new ways. The context of the Global War on Terror as the dominant global discursive order, and the lack of a consistent strategy for democratisation in post-conflict countries, together with visual war propaganda, perception management and psychological operations as part of the media wars conducted alongside of military operations, all make it urgent to discuss the relevance, reach and applicability of the peace journalism model and/or philosophy in the present international situation. This article outlines points of departure for such a discussion in the Threat Society.

Introduction

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) and environmental issues like global warming and climate change constitute part of what seems to be an historical change from a Risk Society to a Threat Society, with a culture of fear challenging journalism in more dramatic ways than perhaps ever before. Threat perception management has become a central element of politics in general and of identity politics in particular. Fear of 9/11-like events makes it possible for governments to pass emergency legislation and creates a public environment where permanent fear has become the predominant state of mind. In this situation, journalism must find new ways of mobilising public support for democratic and peace promoting ideals (Pludowski 2007). This article focuses on the consequences of these trends for war and peace journalism in late modernity. Risk is a central notion in the debate on the Threat Society. Stuart Allan (2002), for instance, defines risk as: "The chance or possibility of danger (harm, loss, injury and so forth) or other adverse consequences actually happening." In a modern society, it is difficult to imagine a public discourse on poverty and peace without discussing the role of the mass media. In his latest book, Toby Miller (2007) introduces the notion of "Cultural Citizenship" as a tool to analyse the role of the media as an arena for discourses on development and peace issues. He writes: "for cultural studies, cultural citizenship concerns the maintenance, development, and exchange of cultural lineage – a celebration of difference, which is also a critique of the status quo" (ibid.: 23). Understanding the role of the media is essential for understanding a modern global marketplace, because the mass media are themselves part of the WTO negotiations and other arenas of the power struggles between the developing world and the rich "North" (Tveiten 2007). But mass media are also essential in framing and creating an understanding of global issues like terrorism and war (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2004).

The thesis of this article is that the GWOT is not just another war – not even a *new* war – but something of much greater magnitude, namely a global conflict between the dominant, rich power centres of the world and the dominated, poor peripheral peoples and cultures. In addition, it is a conflict driven by and embedded in an emerging trans-national culture of fear. At a discursive level, this would imply a shift from representations of *risks* in terms of probabilities, unforeseeable consequences and uncertainty to representations of *threats* in terms of certainty and predictable negative consequences in the near future (Höijer 2006: 2).

On the one hand, the culture of fear, with its imagined increase in threats and dangers, fosters a widespread desire for knowledge and understanding of the accuracy of these perceptions and the conditions behind one's own anxieties and fears. On the other hand, news journalism is becoming less and less able to satisfy the growing need for reflexivity, probably for a number of reasons that have to do with crucial trends in late modernity. This mismatch between knowledge needs and current media trends can be outlined as follows, with regard to processes of globalisation, the mediation of a culture of fear, changes in the global mediascape, and the increase in visual communication in the media culture.

We will elaborate on the needs and possibilities of a reflexive and conscious journalism in the late-modern culture of fear with a discussion of: first, the shift from the Risk Society to the Threat Society; second, the special features of GWOT discourse; third, the importance of new media; fourth, the implications of visualisation in the media culture and; fifth, concrete findings from an analysis of a Norwegian newspaper's coverage of the Iraq war.

Theoretical background: Journalism in the New World Order

The origins of recent trends in what we might call a global conflict discourse can be traced back to the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. The "new world order," as defined by George Bush senior in connection with the 1991 Gulf War, ushered in a new era of US hegemony. In conjunction with the ICT revolution, all issues concerning 'international' and academic concerns about 'space' in general have changed (Ekecrantz 2007:169). The dramatic events of 9/11 once again altered the 'global discourse order' (Fairclough 2006). The war on terror has shifted the focus, and the power centres in the North have defined a new agenda reflecting their global interests (Miller 2007). The subsequent media flows and failures are part of a larger international problem anchored in our mainstream system (Schechter 2006:79).

Findings from our Gulf War study suggest that the significance of the 1991 Gulf War has been regrettably – and much more than we think – underestimated as a global media event influencing current global conflict formation (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2001, 2004, 2005; Nohrstedt, Höijer and Ottosen 2002). A book published in 2001, *Journalism and the New World Order,* suggests that the 1991 Gulf War 'will haunt us for decades and perhaps centuries to come'. The reason for this prediction was that the 1991 war was a confrontation between the Muslim world and the West. Many Muslims regarded the war as an attack on the Muslim nation (al-Umah), a military coalition with a United Nations mandate led by the United States, fighting what many on the Western side thought was a just war to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The schism between the general public in the Muslim world and in the West, along with its allies in certain Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, can be regarded as helping to create a breeding ground for radical Islamist groups and terror organisations like al-Qaida. The 1991 Gulf War was also a breakthrough for modern propaganda techniques, broadcast live by CNN on a global scale (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2001).

The popular simplistic enemy image of Saddam Hussein as a 'new Hitler', a villain who violated international laws and human rights, framed the global news and overshadowed many of the structural issues involved in the conflict, such as access to oil, religious and cultural issues, and the struggle for political and military hegemony over the entire region. Similarly simplistic propaganda was used by the Western powers and NATO in later conflicts. The Hitler metaphor was repeated during NATO military operations in former Yugoslavia in 1999, this time in reference to Slobodan Milosevic. The concept of humanitarian intervention was further developed and used to justify the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia to stop Milosevic's ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Again, we heard that 'evil' had to be stopped before Milosevic committed even worse crimes (Chomsky 1999).

A more sober historical review of these conflicts suggests that the 1991 Gulf War, as well as the 1999 conflict in Yugoslavia, should remind us that in war the overall picture is never black and white. More complex issues such as the colonial heritage of Western hegemony, unresolved border disputes and competition for oil and water resources, not to speak of religious tensions, are all part of a complicated scenario that calls for dialogue and conflict resolution, as suggested in the UN Charter (Galtung 1992; Chomsky 2000). The invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the war in the Middle East in the summer of 2006 involving Palestinians, Israel and Lebanon; the tensions in the Horn of Africa and the bombing of Somalia by US planes in January 2007; as well as the ongoing clashes in Sudan: all remind us that the fault lines underlying the 1991 Gulf War are still there. Every country in the Middle East has a historical legacy of myths and traumas linked to religion and the conviction of being 'chosen'. In the Gulf War, Muslims fought Muslims. Conventional wisdom in the Western world has held that this schism in the Arab and Muslim world was part of the victory. In 1991, acting in the name of the United Nations, the Western world chose a simplistic military response to a highly complex issue, and the consequence may well be a new round of this spiral of violence, as well as the risk of new conflicts and fissures between North and South (Frank, 1992). In 1991 and 2003, we heard that a multinational humanitarian intervention would establish a new framework for democracy in the Middle East. The bombing of Yugoslavia was intended to remove the last communist-style dictatorship in Europe. Democratic rhetoric was also at the core of US propaganda preceding the invasion of Iraq, but recent events speak for themselves. The promise of democracy has faded behind the chaos and violence in Iraq, and the Balkan conflicts are still unresolved, with an uncertain future awaiting Kosovo (Nohrstedt and Ottosen 2005).

The issue of relations between power politics and the UN is part of this global picture. When the US failed to rally the UN behind the war effort in Iraq, it organised the 'coalition of the willing' and invaded without a legal mandate. When the occupation was a fact, the UN was invited in as a 'peace-keeping factor'. The Bush administration defined the UN as 'irrelevant' when, in March 2003, the majority of the member states rejected participating in the invasion. However, by the autumn of 2003, with Resolution 1511 the UN had already assumed *de facto* responsibility for the chaotic situation created by the illegal invasion. In the resolution, the Coalition Provisional Authority (that is, the US-UK force) is said to be 'temporary'. In Article 5, the Authority is asked to 'return governing responsibility and authority to the people of Iraq as soon as practicable' (Prashad 2003). There was an obvious failure to create a stable government after the 2005 election. One of the issues that the media have failed to address is what this will mean for the long-run credibility of the UN. It is also an important issue for the African media, since peace initiatives in conflict ridden areas such as Congo and Sudan are also undertaken in the name of the UN (Østerud 2007).

This broad picture should be seen as the backdrop for a North-South approach to modern war and conflict. In the last decade, Africa has experienced devastating wars in, for example, Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone and Somalia. These wars have been under-reported in the Western media, because they do not represent a challenge to Western interests on the same level as do conflicts in the Middle East and Southern Asia (Thussu 2006). Since news reporting in the South still depends on news flows from the North, these wars are under-reported in Africa as well.

Thussu suggests that because of the colonial past, ordinary people in the South, as well as journalists, have been more reluctant to swallow simplistic propaganda promulgated by power-centres in the North.

Returning to the broader picture of the 'New World Order', we can see the problems inherent in forcibly imposing Western style 'democracy' on a resentful Iraqi population. Obviously the problems of the 'War on Terror' are a challenge for the global media. The contrast between US military operations in the name of 'humanitarian intervention' and 'democracy' and America's simultaneous refusal to accept Hamas's victory in the Palestinian election, to name only the most glaring example, tends to discredit the very idea of democracy. This is a big challenge for the African media, since the relationship between conflict resolution and peace-keeping is defined within the framework of a UN model that has failed in the 'War on Terror'. Norwegian political scientist Øivind Østerud is among those who have documented that the most violent and conflict-ridden areas are the ones where the US has forced through elections in the absence of established democratic institutions or free media. So-called democratic experiments are failing in Iraq, Gaza and Lebanon. In Iraq and the Palestinian territories it has been amply demonstrated that elections and democracy are not the same thing. When Hamas won the elections, Israel, with the full support of the US, refused to accept the results. This resulted in the breakdown of democratic Palestinian structures. In Iraq, the Sunni minority refused to accept its loss in the elections, because the sectarian parties

that won had no policy for reconciliation and nation-building. Thus, 'quick' elections without any foundation in existing structures lead to chaos, because the losers do not believe that those in power will respect minorities. In the Palestinian territories, the Western powers chose to support Fatah, which lost the elections, and this undermined the legitimacy of democracy. Fatah, in the eyes of the Palestinian people, showed itself to be a mere tool of foreign interests (Østerud 2007). According to Østerud, there are two lessons to be drawn from this. The first is that holding elections does not automatically lead to democracy and stability, for if you remove a dictator like Saddam Hussein through military intervention, this may simply open the door to new forms of corruption and undemocratic structures. Elections can thus foster a democratic fiction. Secondly, semi-democracies tend to be more vulnerable to violence than authoritarian systems and real democracies. Semi-democracy provokes resistance and has no power to resist violence. There is no evidence that, in the long run, imposed elections and semi-democracies can serve democracy, since anarchy and violence tend to replace the relative stability that an authoritarian system can provide. Even though this model has failed in Iraq, Afghanistan and Middle East, it is still the chosen model for the UN in Africa.

In Bosnia and Kosovo, this sort of mild neo-imperialism has produced no lasting internalized democracy. Still, it seems that this is the chosen policy of the UN in both Sudan and Congo. In the Congo, we see 20,000 soldiers from the EU and the UN, together with thousands of members of NGOs, equipped with billion-dollar budgets in an attempt to administer the Congo. On the surface, the situation seems calm after the elections in 2006, but instability and violence continue (Østerud 2007). What role can the media play in a situation like this? It is hard to believe the media could play an independent role, given the huge economic interests at stake. Congo is a resource-rich country with a great potential for profit, and the humanitarian explanation notwithstanding, economic interests are a major factor. There is obviously rivalry for hegemony in Africa among the great powers – China, the US and the EU. It is hard to imagine a UN policy isolated from these interests. Nor is it easy to imagine the media uninfluenced by these interests.

In many African countries there is a well-justified suspicion of foreign intervention in the name of democracy, since the parallel to the rhetoric of the colonial past is obvious. The lack of a consistent strategy on the side of the international community for supporting democratic reforms *and* helping a democratic culture to prosper is a lethal weapon in the hands of dictators like President Mugabe in Zimbabwe. This underlines the urgent need for increased efforts to find a viable strategy, for example, a strategy in which journalists and media have a role to play.

Nordic studies of journalism and crises

During the past few decades, several studies and reports about the role of the media in crises and risk communication have been done in the Nordic countries, but there is still a lack of basic research in the field (e.g., Sandberg & Thelander 1997, Dahlström & Flodin 1998, Vettenranta 2005, Bjerke & Dyb 2006). Paul Bjerke and Evelyn Dyb's book *Journalistikk i risikosamfunnet* (Journalism in the Risk Society) builds on the theories of sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens about the risk society and late modernity. Current discussions of journalism often emphasise that contemporary media are too commercial and/or not serious enough. Bjerke and Dyb argue that the risk society has replaced the industrial society and has produced new conflict dimensions and new identities. Contemporary journalism has to be understood and explained using concepts adequate to this society. Journalism should contribute to citizens' perceptions, understanding and responses to their society as one of great environmental risks and growing social uncertainty and insecurity.

One interesting aspect in the debate on risk-journalism is the relation between the coverage of natural disasters and health risks, on the one hand, and man-made risk such as war and terror, on the other. Findings from research on tsunamis and the attack on the town of Fallujah just a few days before the tsunami suggest that the threshold for publishing details of human suffering is much higher for controversial issues like government sponsored military operations than for natural disasters like tsunamis, where only nature itself can be blamed (Ottosen 2007)

Globalisation and risk

> Any contemporary analysis of journalism and conflict must now also take into
> account the context of cultural and economic globalization ... as well as, more
> specifically, media globalization. (Hackett, 2006:16)

Globalisation, in all its multifaceted forms, has led to increased awareness of risks and threats, even those beyond one's immediate surroundings, and to their being perceived as more threatening than ever before. The horizon of our knowledge of conditions in distant places has broadened, and along with this we have greater insights into global threats to security and health such as terrorism, environmental pollution and epidemics spread either by people or other carriers. At the same time that globalisation is raising the level of risk and threat awareness, it is also making ever-growing demands on people's confidence that society and the responsible authorities can protect their citizens from these dangers. According to Anthony Giddens and others, the nation state has declined in importance, and politicians have for the most part lost control over

the course of development due to the challenge that globalization poses to the national sphere from above, below, and the side. – Power is not only shifting upwards to the global arena, but through decentralization also downwards to the local level and laterally through economic integration across national borders in the form of regional cooperation. The life world now seems chaotic and out of control, which has aroused a widespread sense of disempowerment (Giddens 2000:24, 28, 33). This experience of vulnerability in (late) modern society has, according to Ulrich Beck, led to a shift in the politics of what he calls the "Risk Society" away from being about distributing wealth to instead being about distributing risks (Beck 1992). From the perspective of a society characterized by diminishing trust, where policies are judged according to their successfully distributing risks, it is not far-fetched to predict a development towards an ever greater crisis tendency. Progress has admittedly equipped modern society to more efficiently manage a significant number of threats to its citizens' health and safety, e.g., urban fires and once-endemic diseases such as tuberculosis and polio, but new and old dangers can still cause great harm to both people and property. In recent years, there have been natural disasters (e.g., the tsunami and hurricanes such as Katrina), accidents involving complex technical systems (e.g., air and ferry traffic, nuclear power), and international terrorism, which all provide reminders of society's vulnerability (cf. Boin et al. 2005:1). Furthermore: "The underlying paradigm has shifted from local to global." (Lagadec 2005:3). In sum, the expanded global threat-image consciousness is presumably increasing society's crisis tendency.

This tendency is, however, complicated and notoriously difficult to predict when it comes to contingencies. A number of factors can intervene, like different knowledge and psychological strategies in reception processes, both at the individual and the collective levels. Here though our focus is restricted to the ways media may affect the threat and risk perceptions of the general public. The problem with media in this respect is that they are both carriers of globalisation processes and at the same time constrained by a rather national outlook. The implied media audiences and the framing of the news are both defined within the confines of "methodological nationalism" (Beck 2002; Beck 2006:24 ff.).

Special characteristics of the GWOT discourse

A particularly complex configuration is the global discursive order that has arisen in the aftermath of 9/11. According to Fairclough, the GWOT discourse must be understood in relation to a general change in US foreign and security policy strategy from "soft power" to "hard power." In his analysis, the discourse on terrorism after 9/11 is embedded in a discursive order which connects it with discourses on globalism and the knowledge-based economy. In relation to the latter two discourses, and together with them, it constitutes "a change in the 'nexus' of strategies and discourses which globalism is part of and … a further inflection in the trajectory of globalism itself" (Fairclough 2006:141). In the kind of CDA that Fairclough conducts, the contextual meaning of GWOT discourse can be interpreted by establishing its relation to, on the one hand, post-9/11 changes in international politics – in particular US foreign and security policy – and, on the other hand, the previous hegemonic discourses in the global political arena. In this way he takes account of both continuity and change within the discursive order of globalism. Drawing on Jackson's (2005) study, he further identifies four main themes that characterise GWOT discourse:

1.   This is a new era, posing new threats, which requires new responses.
2.   America and its allies (and indeed 'civilisation') face unprecedented risks and dangers which call for exceptional measures.
3.   Those who pose these risks and dangers are the forces of 'evil'.
4.   America and its allies are the forces of 'good', and their actions are informed by moral values. (ibid. 144)

Fairclough criticises the validity of each of these themes and argues that they are all basically false or distorted. President Bush's statement that after 9/11 "night fell on a different world" is simply not true, according to Fairclough: "...the *argument* is *fallacious*" (p.145; italics in original). The attacks were "serious acts of terrorism," "morally indefensible" and an "indiscriminate assault on innocent civilians," as Fairclough affirms. But that does not make them inherently epoch-changing: "This attack became epoch-changing only because it was self-consciously represented in this way by politicians and officials with the power, partly through their capacity to shape the global media agenda, to make it so." (p.145). The decision to represent the attacks in this way was a legitimizing move, according to Fairclough, which gave leeway to radically new political steps and measures. In a similar vein, he argues that the second theme is "a scare-mongering *overstatement,*" because in comparative terms the terror threat for the American people is not vast and immediate. Rather, expressions of this theme can be interpreted as "attempts to induce fear in order to legitimize policies and actions which would otherwise be unpalatable for many Americans" (p.146). The third theme is beyond the scope of rational argumentation, and representing an antagonist as 'evil' legitimises any number of extreme measures. Following Fairclough's critique, the 'evil ones' cannot be reasoned with, negotiated with or treated as rational beings – the only possible response is war (p.147), After the 1999 Kosovo conflict, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair was the most outspoken promoter of the fourth theme. He claimed that 'values and interests merge', meaning that defending national interests and the common interests of the international community are one and the same thing. However, this seems like a rather disingenuous attempt to lend moral

dignity and legitimacy to some particular nation-states' interests. This is especially so since it is difficult to see "how on balance" the Iraq war has increased the moral good, as Fairclough cynically comments (p.147-48). In conclusion, then, Fairclough rejects all four main themes as invalid, either because they are simply incorrect, or are exaggerations of the actual reality. Besides the contextual and thematic dimensions of GWOT discourse, Fairclough also analyses the semantic use of notions such as 'terrorism' and 'pre-emptive strikes'. He points out, as others have done before, that the term 'terrorism' is notoriously problematic, because it has been "used in an opportunistic way as a catch-all category to brand and condemn a wide variety of forms of the use of force, while excluding others which arguably do constitute terrorism" (p.152). The first problem is whether a distinction is made between terrorism and (legal) resistance. Secondly, in the real world there are violent actions by states that deserve to be called 'state terrorism', yet the practice is to exclude them from the discursive use of 'terrorism' (p.152-53). With regard to the notion of 'pre-emption' frequently used by the Bush administration, Fairclough agrees with Chomsky that American policy cannot be properly called a strategy of 'pre-emptive war', but rather a strategy of 'preventive war', which is not acceptable under international law. As a consequence, Fairclough warns, this terminological slant in GWOT discourse on the side of the war alliance could very easily start a new international arms race (p.154).

The media as carriers of a culture of fear

In our comparative study of the 1991 Gulf War, we found that the domestication of global news, in the frame of a perspective greatly influenced by the U.S. version of events, played an important role in the overall framing of the Gulf War story (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2001). If we draw a parallel to the global coverage of 9/11, we see that national presentation of local threat is a common feature in many countries, including the case of Norway (Ottosen & Figenschou 2007). Medialisation of threat policies, as well as of politics in general, implies that the media and journalists are increasingly implicated in, and increasingly function as bearers of the culture of fear. For example, both terrorists and their opponents in the Global War on Terror employ media management strategies in their efforts to win the hearts and minds of the general public. However, professional journalists and media companies generally lack effective counter-strategies to these attempts to exploit news journalism's strong preference for spectacular, dramatic and threatening news backed by corresponding visual images.

The role of the media in society has generally become more important, and this is particularly evident in relation to war and conflict, terrorism, and also with regard to risks and threats. Modern wars are waged as both military and media operations (Taylor 1997). For democratic countries engaged in military conflicts, support from the general public is the *sine qua non* for the mobilisation of the necessary resources, not to mention for victory. It can even be argued that without the media, 'public opinion' would be an oxymoron. Some wars can perhaps even be explained by the role of the media, if one considers the heavy media attention given to military conflicts and how this can be exploited to influence political situations and agendas. Was this factor not one of the most important behind the Bush administration's decision to declare war after the 9/11 terror attacks – and for several reasons. First, war attracts media attention to a degree that would not otherwise occur; second, the wartime upsurge in loyalty and patriotism is a great political asset for the current government; and third, not only do journalists tolerate restrictions on human rights during wars, they even accept restrictions on their own activities. Modern terrorism is in fact nearly inconceivable without the communicative possibilities offered by modern mass media (cf. Klopfenstein 2006).

It is obvious that the 9/11 terrorist attacks employed a media strategy of this kind. Both the timing and the targets suggest a ruthless calculation of how the media could be manipulated to further al-Queda aims. When it comes to somewhat less dramatic risks and threats, as, for example, global warming or bird flu, the mediation effects are no less. Political programmes and defensive measures – either individual or collective – would be very different, if they were even possible, without media attention. But the role of the media cannot be properly understood unless we grasp central importance of the fear factor in the media economy. The exploitation of threats and risks is fundamental to news journalism as an institution. Exaggeration and premature warnings therefore pass by the gatekeepers on a daily basis. In relation to the authoritative scientific definition of risk, i.e., risk as a function of probabilities and consequences, the media usually only focus on the factor of consequences. Thus with regard to risk situations of the low probability and extreme consequences type, media logic tends toward worst possible scenario-reporting that may provoke serious problems leading to many kinds of anxiety, excesses of emotional energy and wasteful resource expenditures. In connection with global warming phenomena – that incidentally have shifted in the Swedish media discourse from "risk" to "threat" – the role of the media is vindicated almost to the edge of parody by a television meteorologist who has become a major influence on public opinion, as well as the host of a television series on the topic.

As the key institution in a vibrant public sphere, the media's receptivity to diverse risk and threat images makes it urgent to develop a high level of reflexivity and openness about this problem. But in that respect journalism suffers from an even more serious deficiency. The lack of critical investigative reporting on the threat perception management strategies that the media are exposed to is one of the greatest obstacles for enlightening the public about politics and opinion-building

today. Rarely does one see journalists trying to dig beneath the surface of politically promoted risk and threat messages. The prime example is the mobilisation period before the 2003 Iraq war, when US media in general, and also several British media, failed in their watch-dog function and deceived large parts of their audiences into believing the accusations that Saddam Hussein had WMDs and had aided the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Only very few media bothered to publish any self-criticism when it soon became obvious that the official arguments for invading Iraq were misleading – the noticeable exceptions being *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, which came out with excuses more than a year after the war started. Then US Secretary of State Colin Powell gave a highly profiled speech in the UN Security Council, presenting what he claimed was proof of Iraqi guilt. He later called this event the darkest moment in his career. It would not be completely off the mark for many in the media to say something equally self-critical. In any case, media in other countries – with different political settings – had no special difficulties in finding experts and commentators who questioned the accuracy of the Bush and Blair administrations' claims and thus framed their reports of the Security Council meeting in a more critical tone (Nohrstedt 2005). However, research findings indicate that even the American media displayed some degree of independence with respect to the Bush administration's shifting GWOT rhetorical agenda. This happened when the White House, three weeks into the Iraq war, changed its focus from WMDs to toppling the tyrant in Baghdad. At White House and Pentagon briefings, the press corps kept the WMD focus, but whether that implies more critical reporting in the later stages of the "battle for Iraq" is not entirely clear (Clifton 2007:8).

A special problem for the media is how to handle and critically scrutinise the trans-national processes of perception management, which have become increasingly important due to globalisation. One of the GWOT's more striking characteristics is that the superpower that declared this unique war does not acknowledge any territorial, temporal, cultural, and probably not even any *moral* restrictions on its operations. Consequently, the trans-national dimensions of GWOT discourse are highly essential to how we should understand the impact of the medialisation of this discourse. With respect to the trans-national dimensions, the national outlook of the mainstream media is of course even more troubling, since many of the political, juridical and other consequences of the GWOT are trans-national, for example, the surveillance of travellers, financial transfers, migrants, etc. A case to mention is the CIA air flights carrying suspected terrorists between different countries and continents. Since these activities were approved by the affected countries, it took quite some time before they were brought to the general public's attention. The story apparently only took off after some investigative journalists got in contact with a rather eccentric NGO whose members are fascinated by aircraft spotting everywhere in the industrial world. But it took years before the story hit the newsstands. Normally it is only when national-local politicians or other elite members raise objections against measures that, for example, impinge on civil and human rights that the media can be expected to engage in investigative research on an issue. For the rest, the mediated trans-national GWOT discourse will be situated within the horizons (Nohrstedt 2007a) of what is accepted by the economic, political, ideological, etc., interests that control the big international news providers. Amongst them American ownership and influence are substantial (McPhail 2002; cf. Fairclough 2006:171). But, and this is an important reservation, it is an empirical and open question as to what extent and in what ways trans-national discourses are re-contextualised when "crossing the borders" between different national-local settings. The implication is that it would be wrong to ignore the fact that the globalisation of the media facilitates some steps toward the advent of a cosmopolitan public sphere (Fairclough 2006:171; cf. Beck 2006). In the next section, we will discuss changes in the international media landscape and the subsequent institutional conditions for the emergence of a reflexive, cosmopolitan discourse on the GWOT.

Above we discussed in some detail Fairclough's analysis of GWOT discourse, because we regard it as generally relevant and basically sound, as well as productive for analytical purposes. But our aim in including it in this article is not to accuse the news media of failing to employ this kind of analysis in their daily reporting. Our intention is instead to use it as a tool for discussing the institutional conditions of mainstream media when approaching a global discourse like that of the GWOT. Fairclough's explication of this globally dominant discourse is useful for a diagnosis of what can and cannot be expected of the media. This can help to create a basis for future proposals on how and in what ways news journalism can be improved, both professionally and democratically. Let us sum up what conclusions follow from such an attempt to "measure" the status of ordinary news journalism in relation to the GWOT.

1. The contextual and re-contextualising perspective that emphasises the inter-discursive relation between the GWOT and previous discourses on globalism and the knowledge-based economy is notoriously absent in conventional news reporting. Reasons for this are, among others, that internationally in the mainstream media all discussions and references to hegemonic ambitions and strategies are regarded as views and not facts, and if not raised by the conventional sources, such as politicians and members of elites, are not considered even worth reporting. This also has a lot to do with what has been called "the epistemological horizon" of news journalism, namely the professional assumption of a transparent reality accessible through observation and interview techniques (Nohrstedt 2007a). But, in addition, the inter-discursive relations discussed by Fairclough are all located on a supra-national level related to policy-making in agencies like the World Bank, IMF and the G8 summits, and as such beyond the conventional national outlook of the mainstream media. Consequently these types of policies and powers are under-reported in the media.
2. Of the four themes mentioned by Fairclough, three are of a kind that has rarely – if ever – been challenged and scru-

tinised by the news media. Without denying the existence of a few critical voices here and there, it is evident that the first three are aired again and again by the media. Basically this is because they are part of the political rhetoric of the remaining superpower and its allies, with their dominant position as news sources and agents in international politics. Hence, in this case the main explanatory factor is news value as understood and employed by the journalistic profession. In addition to this factor, there are shared interests between the hegemonic trans-national elites represented in the Bush administration and in the international media, such as CNN, BBC World, and so on.

3. The only theme that has been opened up for public scrutiny and discussion seems to be the fourth, i.e., the claims by the Bush and Blair administrations that they were the forces of "good" acting on moral grounds in international politics. Here one can note that this critical attitude is not primarily found in the mainstream media in the USA, but rather in the media of other countries. The main explanation is that leading politicians in, for example, France, Germany and Russia, objected to the military intervention strategy promoted by the US and the UK. In their respective countries' media this opposition received a lot of attention, which further contributed to a radically different framing of coverage than in, for example, the mainstream US media (Nohrstedt 2007b).

4. When it comes to the semantic means, it goes without saying that the vague and unspecific usage of the terrorist label has been repeated uncritically by most mainstream media, both in the USA and in Europe. It has furthermore been exploited in political disputes as a convenient rhetorical weapon to create sympathy for a wide range of superpower policies. Even in situations where such support would be difficult to obtain, as in the Balkans, and for policies of 'otherism' and the exclusion of Muslims, the terrorism theme is appropriated in attempts to legitimise such specific local policies (Erjavec & Volcic 2006). Due to the news value mechanism mentioned above, the notion of "pre-emptive" war has certainly also penetrated the media very extensively. But, we might add, in this case it has not been appropriated to the same extent for local use, mindful of the escalation in the Middle East in connection with the Iranian nuclear programme and the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. Once again, the main explanation is that the representatives of other nation states have "balanced" the US influence on the media outside the USA. One can probably also conclude that the terrorism concept, as well as the GWOT concept that the Bush administration frequently and immediately attached to the 9/11 attacks, and for very good reasons, was far easier to accept worldwide than the related concept of "pre-emptive war." In part this is because the former terms were linked to horrifying assaults against innocent civilians, whereas the latter is linked to a controversial US security strategy. And it is also in part because the latter was introduced into US rhetoric at a later stage than the former, after the first traumatic shock effects had worn off.

If this were a first attempt to assess the institutional shortcomings of news journalism in relation to GWOT discourse, we would want to avoid the impression of a totally gloomy situation with nothing good to expect from news journalism as regards conflict resolution and peace building. Let us very briefly – since these findings have been reported elsewhere – mention just three trends in Swedish war journalism, from the so-called Gulf War of 1990-91 to the 2003 Iraq War. Firstly, the media are giving increasing attention to the "true face" of war, i.e., to the suffering of civilian populations and civilian victims of warfare. Secondly, the conditions of war journalism are increasingly receiving attention and are the object of self-critical reflection. The involved parties' attempts to manipulate reportage by more or less sophisticated means and propaganda strategies have to a certain degree become news material. This has led various media to express reservations about the reliability of their reporting and encouraged audiences to be more critical. Thirdly, visual material has been given an ever-increasing amount of space, which, however, has not been accompanied by greater reflexivity. Unlike the contents of texts, the contents of visual material have not been subjected to the same critical scrutiny, and this has not produced warnings to media audiences (Nohrstedt 2007b).

It is too early to tell whether these findings have more general or international relevance. But they may hypothetically be regarded as reasons for some optimism with regard to the media institution and its role in violent conflicts. What about the new media in this context? Will they change the balance in conflicts between media-management strategists and journalists? In the next section we will try to make a preliminary assessment.

New media – a global public sphere with increased pluralism and alternative discourses?

The global mediascape has become more pluralistic, and new alternative media are challenging the mainstream media. Al Jazeera and other Arab broadcasters are competing with the dominant Western media on the global 24/7 (twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week) news market. Furthermore, the emergence of the Internet and different forms of information traffic, communication and debates has led to speculations and hopes for a more deliberative and more globalised public sphere. Let us comment on the different types of new media in a step-wise fashion. But first, an overall conclusion seems worth mention: The so-called marketplace of ideas has grown at a remarkable speed, with new "markets" of competition where dominance is challenged by newcomers, at the same time as previous success stories are continually being copied and modified with uncertain outcomes. To make a prognosis in this field is thus extremely difficult.

The history of the trans-national media started of course long before the emergence of satellite television, cable systems and the Internet. Even before the news agencies there were print media that reached international audiences. But we will leave the historical part at that and concentrate on more recent developments, i.e., from 1989 onwards, with a special focus on media and international conflicts. It is common knowledge that the Gulf War of 1990-91 gave CNN a commercial breakthrough as the leading provider of international visual news. CNN was the first broadcaster to take full advantage of the skyrocketing demand for war images and had the resources to meet requests from national television companies all over the world. In Sweden, for example, the national news agency found that many of its clients switched to CNN for immediate live footage from war theatres. The dominance of US propaganda in media coverage internationally was massive, according to a number of studies made at the time (e.g., references in Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2001; Kempf & Luostarinen 2002). This cannot be explained merely as a CNN effect, because the international political situation and the fact that the UN had sanctioned the military intervention encouraged journalists and the general public to take a pro-alliance view. But CNN's strong commercial position meant that the channel had an impact on the "media war" as waged on worldwide television screens. This conclusion stands in stark contrast to the media war over the 2001 Afghanistan war and the 2003 Iraq war. Al Jazeera had been established in the meantime and turned out to be a strong competitor for CNN, not only in the Arab world, but also internationally. With the unique accreditation to air footage from Kabul under the Taliban regime, the Quatar-based channel could provide visual news material highly valued in the international television market. In the Iraq war, the competition had increased even more, as well in the Arab speaking world, but together with other television channels in the region, Al Jazeera continued to be a strong competitor for CNN, BBC World, and other Western trans-national companies. Not least with the result that civilian suffering and innocent casualties received increased visual attention in television reports that resonated with the compassion discourse (Nohrstedt, Höijer & Ottosen 2002; Höijer 2004; Nohrstedt 2007b). In its Iraq war coverage, Al Jazeera was considerably more critical of the war than the major American television networks (Aday et al. 2005).

However, the role of Al Jazeera is controversial. In the Middle East region it has been pointed to as the leading star guiding the way to rapid change in almost the entire television market (El-Bendary 2003; see also El-Bendary 2005), but also as a Trojan horse of the US and Israel, as well as an agency promoting a Pan-Arab public sphere (Sakr 2007). Leaving aside the impact of the Arab television channels, when comparing satellite-television channels with nationally relayed television channels, the research findings are not completely consistent. In one study the results indicate that "dominant" framing, i.e., standardised news from primary definers like politicians and other authoritative sources, is more or less equally frequent in satellite and in national television news reports (approximately every fifth item). But with regard to in-depth reportage, for example features in which different views are presented and discussed, satellite news are more generous (eight percent compared to four percent). Simon Cottle regards this somewhat hopefully, because it may indicate that the new media architecture supports a "politics of pity – or a politics of shame" (Cottle 2006:37). Since his results are not specified for the different satellite channels (the group includes BBC World, CNN International, Fox News and Sky News Australia), the findings are hard to interpret. Another study reports contrary findings, i.e., that compared to national television channels in Canada and the USA, the cable channels CNN and Fox News were both "much more consistent with the Administration's framing … Fox News, however, presented the Administration's framing with unusual intensity in a number of ways" (Clifton 2007:20).This also seems to confirm the results of other studies of Fox News, showing the channel to be one of the strongest and most unabashed supporters of the war in Iraq (Aday et al. 2005).

The Internet offers a number of facilities and formats for communication and news services that go beyond the usual one-way flow. Interactivity is technically speaking the most unique feature of many of these new media. But it is far from clear to what extent and for what purposes the new ICT is being used. Generally speaking, contrary to expectations, deliberative democratic communication has not flourished (Buskqvist 2007; cf. Hacker & van Dijk 1999). For war journalism the findings to date create an ambivalent picture. First, a study of what can be called *hybrid* media will be mentioned. In a study of Iraq war news on the home pages of *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Al Ahram* and Al Jazeera, it was found that the "Arab media were clearly more critical of the war than the two Coalition newspapers," with the Quatar-based television channel much more critical than the Egyptian newspaper's homepage (Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern 2007:162, 164). In sum, the web pages did not differ from the pattern that would be expected had the study respectively compared the printed and televised versions. If we turn to representations of violent conflicts in the more unique forms of Internet-based information, like chat-rooms and blogs, the question remains as to what extent they are truly alternative media compared to conventional press, radio and television. From general re-mediation theory it would follow that new media and old media mutually influence each other in the permanent drive towards increased immediacy, leaving not much hope of dramatic shifts between different media generations (Bolter & Grusin 1999). This general conclusion also seems in fact to be confirmed when it comes to war reporting. Oliver Boyd-Barrett, for example, contends that alternative online news sources, e.g., blogs, may be important as counter-hegemonic media, although their roles are somewhat contradictory and uncertain. On the one hand, they "reframe" news stories which are first published in the mainstream media and in that way lend them new meaning and deprive them of their status and legitimacy. But on the other hand, the information in blogs depends so heavily on the mainstream news media as sources that these alternative online news sites may simply be contributing to the formers'

dominant position (Boyd-Barrett 2007). And in the GWOT, the information warfare that has been going on in the traditional mass media has gained ground on the Internet, with terrorist activities and counter-terrorism being fought out electronically. A multiplicity of information and sources, as well as reduced time frames as defining features of Internet communication on web pages and chat rooms, also seems to be gradually affecting the traditional news media, with the consequence that the gatekeeper function is diminishing (Klopfenstein 2006).

In addition, large numbers of youth feel this is just "more of the same" and are turning their backs on traditional news media altogether (Ottosen 2007b). As an alternative they are seeking cultural and visual stimuli in entertainment and new digital media like computer games, films and interactivity in the blogosphere. Myspace and Youtube seem more interesting for millions of media users than BBC World, Fox news or Al Jazeera. Some of these new media offer a critique of the mainstream media and encourage general media reflexivity (Figenschou 2006). If journalism as pursued in the latter continues to be unable to meet these challenges, it might be marginalised altogether. It seems plausible that traditional journalism may not be able to manage, because it would require an entirely new professional epistemology than the one that has been its trademark so far, i.e., an epistemology assuming a completely transparent reality (Nohrstedt 2007a).

The power of visual images

The visualisation of the media culture is another trend that confronts news journalism and media reflexivity with increased challenges. Terrorists as well as anti-terrorist organisations have improved their efforts and skills in managing the media by video, photo and other visual means. Governments and military organisations have, for example, been successful in developing visually based media strategies in times of crisis, through PR agencies, PSYOPS and disinformation. Through different kinds of visual spin techniques, power centres have been able to influence the journalistic framing of global events and the images of oppositional policies and movements.

Visual components play a major role in PSYOPS (Psychological Operations). We will offer a few examples to clarify this. It is obvious that there is a combination of visual persuasion and organised PSYOPS campaigns to influence the news agenda. We can see this with regard to the dismantling of the Saddam statue when US forces entered Bagdad, with regard to the so-called "rescue" of Jessica Lynch during the ground offensive in Iraq, and to the attempt to link the alleged threat from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi with the attack on Fallujah in November 2004 (Eide and Ottosen 2006).

Before offering analyses of these empirical cases, we will underline the importance of pictures and other visual elements in the news agenda (based on Ottosen 2007). One reason to put more emphasis on the visual aspects of journalism is simply that we remember visual impressions better than verbal ones (Magnussen and Greenlee 1998). We view pictures in the same way we view the world in general. We tend to accept what we see as true (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 from Eide 2005). Research on how the brain decodes pictures also shows that it matters how pictures are arranged in page layouts. We remember better and place more weight on pictures on the left-hand side of a page. Rudolf Arnheim expresses it this way: "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 memorizing it" (Sontag 2003; quoted from Artz 2004:81).

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). The acrimonious debate on the Mohammed caricatures published in *Jyllands-Posten* provoked a global controversy about freedom of expression, intercultural relations and religious tolerance (Ottosen 2007). Since visual persuasion takes a shortcut to our emotions (Eide 2005), the presence of visual elements should play a more important role in the debate on peace journalism. Sometimes the *absence* of pictures is also a problem, since modern journalism, especially television, depends on pictures to tell a story. First of all, we thus have to acknowledge that without pictures or other visual elements most stories would never surface in the news. A lack of visual representations has kept important conflicts outside the news agenda in the mainstream Western press in such cases as East Timor, Sudan, Somalia, Liberia and Zaire (Zelizer 2004:116).

Michael Griffin underlines the importance of visual images in the framing of stories 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 (Griffin 2004). He relies on an analysis of the US news magazines *Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News & World Reports* for his conclusions. Thus Griffin emphasises that a photographic image in itself does not create an awareness of human suffering and empathy with the victims of war. Representational legitimacy remains tied to power, and visual images in the mainstream media are more likely to produce enduring symbols of mainstream discourse than to give us alternative perspectives (ibid.: 400).

The framing of a story in television news depends on what photos are available, but the same footage can be inserted in quite different frames. During the attacks on Afghanistan in October 2001, the BBC filmed desperate Afghan refugees in camps and later sold the images to ABC. The US broadcaster changed the framing of the story and blamed the Taliban rather than the US bombing for their desperate situation (Miller 2007: 85-86).

First case: the rescue of Jessica Lynch

The Jessica Lynch story has been used to show the blurred line between fact and fiction in war propaganda (Ottosen 2004). The story of her capture by the Iraqis and her rescue by US Special Forces became one of the great patriotic moments of the conflict. The propaganda story turned out to be pure fiction. She was not wounded in battle, but rather was injured in a car accident. For a PSYOPS operation, how she was hurt was irrelevant. The point was to frame the story to distract from the problems with the war and to avoid evoking the Vietnam syndrome.

If we look at the foreign news pages in *Verdens Gang* (*VG*) on April 2, 2003, the day the Jessica Lynch story broke, we find a double page in *VG*'s first edition under the headline: "A whole family wiped out." A huge photo showed an emotionally overwhelmed man, Kazem Mohammed, together with several corpses in a coffin. We learn from the story that his entire family had been killed by bombs dropped in an American air raid. This was a rare moment when civilian casualties were in the forefront of *VG*'s coverage. On the same day, *VG* published a second edition. By then, the spin story of Jessica Lynch had broken. In the second edition, the story of Kazem Mohammed was reduced to a much shorter piece. The picture of the crying Mohammed is now quite small, and one of the pictures of his family in the coffin has disappeared. Most of the space on the double page is now occupied by the joyful face of Jessica Lynch under the headline: "Prisoner of war Jessica (19) free." In the story, Pentagon sources explain the "rescue-operation" and add that the past few days have been used to hunt for Ali Hassan al-Majd, "the man who in 1988 allegedly was behind the gassing of 5000 Kurds in North-Iraq." The contrast between the beautiful, seemingly innocent Jessica and the bestial Hassan al-Majd bears all the marks of a PSYOPs operation (Eide and Ottosen 2006). The conflict between good and evil is established, and the new framing draws attention away from the civilian casualties in the first edition. The combination of enemy images and visual attention to the attractive female soldier is also interesting in a gendered perspective (Lippe 2006). There is a striking contrast between the bestial image of Ali Hassan al-Majd and the appealing young woman representing the US armed forces, which were nevertheless responsible for the death of Kazem Mohammed's family. And here we touch the core of perception management. The intention with PSYOPS is to establish positive connotations for the US presence and to demonize "the others." In this respect, the attempt to create links between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaida, and to link many different forms of resistance to al-Qaida, is an essential element.

Second case: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Fallujah

In an earlier study, Rune Ottosen analyzed *VG*'s coverage of Fallujah (Ottosen 2007). Based on that study, we will look more closely at the PSYOPS operation during the attacks on Fallujah in November 2004 and show how the purpose of the operation was to establish a justification for the attack that left Fallujah in ruins with thousands of civilian casualties. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was killed by US forces in May 2006, has been portrayed by both the Bush administration and the Western media as the mastermind behind the "insurgency" in Iraq, which was allegedly responsible for the massacres of Iraqi civilians. The Bush administration, in official statements, including presidential speeches, national security documents, etc., has repeatedly asserted the need to "go after" Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Osama bin Laden and other alleged al-Qaida contacts (Chossudovsky 2006).

The Washington Post revealed that the role of al-Zarqawi had been deliberately "magnified" by the Pentagon to build support for the US War on Terror (ibid.). The senior commander responsible for the Pentagon's PSYOPS operations was Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, a deputy director at the US Central command (CENTCOM), which directs operations in Iraq and Middle East. He revealed to *The Washington Post* the existence of a plan to link al-Zarqawi to the "insurgency" in Fallujah. It has been shown that part of the PSYOPS campaign was based on invented stories that claimed detailed plans for terror attacks had been found on al-Zarqawi's computer. Disinformation and war propaganda are an integral part of military planning. What the *Washington Post* failed to mention was its own role in sustaining the al-Zarqawi legend. Disinformation regarding the War on Terror has been fed into the news chain through PSYOPS and information campaigns in an attempt at "perception management." In Fallujah, the siege of the city, which resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, was described as a battle against the "Zarqawi network." *The Washington Post* distributed the false information from the PSYOPS campaign without informing its readers. This PSYOPS operation obviously had an influence on the coverage in *VG*. Returning to the theoretical work by Rudolph Arnheim presented earlier in the paper, Arnheim made a point of the fact that it is easier to remember pictures placed on the left-hand side of a page. It can be argued that editing the page in this manner encourages us to see the war from a U.S. perspective (Arnheim 1988).

The pictures in the story and the subtitles connote fanaticism and defeat. The fighters look like bank robbers, but are doomed to lose (because they are too few). A small picture of the alleged rebel leader al-Zarqawi is placed under the fighters, linking them visually. The enemy image of al-Zarqawi as the key al-Qaeda figure in Iraq is essential here.

If we look at the text more closely, we find that even though the lead of the article 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" al-Zarqawi tells us that: "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 Iraq expert Michael O'Hanlon is quoted as fearing that "al-Zarqawi and his men will use many thousands of civilians in the city as living shields." The US soldiers are let off the hook as to responsibility for any civilian casualties, since they are solely targeting the rebels: "Last night the heavens over Fallujah were lit up, while overwhelming military power hammered away at the rebels" (*VG* November 9 2004, quoted from Ottosen 2007).

Instead of explaining the broad potential for resistance, *VG* narrowed it further by ending the article with the information that the force of between 1000 and 1500 is headed by Omar Hadid, and the force contains radical Muslims from Syria and Jordan. Hadid's group is linked to al-Qaida's "top man" in the region, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Here it is implied that the resistance is made up of "foreigners" with links to international terrorism.

The operation named "Dawn" could, according to *VG,* turn into the fiercest street battle the Americans had fought since the Vietnam War and the battle over the town of Hue at the time. *VG* portrays the resistance as "a desperate and sometimes invisible enemy that knows the city and every house as well as its own pocket." Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld is 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." The rhetoric in the quotes from Rumsfeld includes all the signs of propaganda: "Success in Fallujah will be a setback for the terrorists in the country," said Rumsfeld during his press conference at the Pentagon yesterday. At that time 42 rebels had been killed. To balance this, *VG* quotes a doctor in Fallujah who, according to AP, told of about 12 civilian casualties and 17 wounded, among them a five-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy. In his speech, Rumsfeld uses a "job" metaphor to describe the attack. This is uncritically used by *VG* in its story. The quotes were: "This is a difficult job," however, this time Rumsfeld promises "to complete the job and not stop the way the Americans did in April." Referring to war with a "job" metaphor is common in war propaganda (Luostarinen and Ottosen 2002).

A more detailed explanation would be to contextualise the November massacres against the background of the failed operations in Falujah in April of the same year. That would indicate a possible hidden agenda of revenge for the humiliation that U.S. soldiers suffered at that time. To quote a story from the same journalist on April 1, 2004: "The scenes from Fallujah were so grotesque that U.S. television viewers were shielded 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 on telephone wires." The images of the corpses of U.S. soldiers were published in many Western media and were obviously humiliating for the U.S. Thus revenge could be seen as a hidden agenda in the attack six months later, but it was never dealt with in the Norwegian media coverage (Eide and Ottosen 2006).*VG* readers received little information about the situation facing the civilian population in Fallujah. Of course, this must be seen in the light of the circumstances in which these five articles were written. The Pentagon's media strategy was to control access to information. It is not our intention to moralise about the journalists 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 (based on Ottosen 2007). *The Guardian* printed a fully illustrated supplement on January 11, 2005 – to our mind an effective example of peace journalism, since it used photos to document the massive destruction of the city and the consequences for the civilian population. Iraqi medical doctor and writer Al Fadhil entered the city on December 24 and documented the effects of the war through diaries and photos. He talked to the remaining civilians, who blamed both the US forces and the resistance fighters, who didn't care about their fates and their ruined city. He viewed the city centre on December 24 and wrote: "By 10 a.m. we were inside the city. It was completely devastated, destruction everywhere. It looked like a ghost town" (Fadhil: 2005). Using photographs, he documented destroyed mosques and ruined homes, corpses, derogatory slogans in English daubed on bathroom mirrors.

There is thus a striking contrast between *The Guardian,* which chose to find available alternative sources to document the horrors of war, and *VG,* with its conventional use of PSYOPS based information distributed by elite sources, which had the aim to draw attention away from the civilian casualties and the horrors of war.

Peace journalism as a strategy of reflexive and conscious journalism?

Peace journalism has been proposed as an alternative journalistic programme. It relates to dissident voices in opposition to the naivety of conventional, uncritical war journalism and peace and conflict research. As a professional credo, peace

journalism has developed counter-strategies and an alternative agenda. The basic idea is to escape from the war propaganda trap of symbolically constructing armed conflicts as polarised, black and white, zero-sum games. However, precisely this form of representation and storytelling is the staple stuff of the journalistic profession, and it cannot be easily replaced. If the traditional media themselves are unable to transmit alternative perspectives and voices, the danger is that those segments of the global village that feel marginalised will turn to terror in order to make a difference in the media agenda. Peace journalism, as proposed by Johan Galtung (2002), defines war as a problem in itself and promotes non-violence as a means of conflict resolution. Galtung's model builds on the dichotomy and contrast between what he calls 'war journalism' and the 'peace journalism' approach. Peace journalism has inspired individual journalists to look for alternative framing in a news environment highly influenced by propaganda and PSYOPS, but the question is whether this is enough to have an overall impact on the global news agenda, where such forces play a strong role in shaping the cultural and political atmosphere (Miller 2007).

Galtung's model includes four main points with which 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 journalists reflecting on the fact that media itself play a role in conflict, often escalating conflicts by reproducing propaganda developed by the combatants as part of their media strategies and PR campaigns (based on Ottosen 2007).

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, intentionally or unintentionally. The peace journalism approach may make a conscious choice to identify alternative options for readers/viewers by offering a solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented approach. This means focusing on possibilities for peace that the conflicting parties may have an interest in hiding. Peace journalism is people-oriented in the sense that it focuses on victims (often civilian casualties) and thus gives 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 another means of conducting war (Galtung 2002: 261-270).

In their book *Peace Journalism* (2005), Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick have further developed Galtung's model and transformed it into a practical tool for journalists. They have themselves been employing the model in media such as SKY and BBC. They offer an analytical model in the form of techniques for how to practice peace journalism, illustrated with examples from their own journalistic practice. They argue that the peace journalism option accepts that every war takes place in an atmosphere of propaganda in which the parties often present confrontation as the only alternative. By pointing in the direction of a peaceful solution, journalists can offer their audience a broader perspective on a given conflict by using the "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" and what they call the "ethics of journalistic intervention" (ibid.). In summary, their ambition is to introduce an "awareness of non-violence and creativity into the practical job of everyday editing and reporting" (ibid.).

Peace Journalism can be seen as a normative mode of responsible and conscientious coverage of conflict that aims at contributing to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and changing the attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace (Shinar 2007). Shinar maintains that Peace Journalism criticizes media preferences for violence, simple descriptions, combatants, conflict, "sport-like situations" and lack of interest in peace-related stories and topics. In contrast, Shinar suggests a focus on:

1. Exploring the backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation and presenting causes and options on every side so as to portray conflict in realistic terms, transparent to audiences;
2. Giving voice to the views of all rival parties;
3. Offering creative ideas for conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping and development;
4. Exposing lies, cover-up attempts and the culpable on all sides, revealing the excesses committed by, and the suffering inflicted on, people of all parties;
5. Paying more attention to peace stories and post-war developments than to regular coverage of conflict;
6. Promoting realistic and judicious attitudes with respect to the success that Peace Journalism may have in overcoming resistance and rejection, as well as criticizing excessive enthusiasm on the part of Peace Journalism supporters (Shinar 2007).

Preliminary conclusions

We have developed some ideas in this paper that can serve as a point of departure for the further discussion of the conditions for creating a suitable national news agenda in a globalised media environment (e.g., Lynch & McGoldrick 2005). Given the theoretical points of departure and the empirical observations mentioned above, it seems important to consider

the extent to which the peace journalism model (PJ) is suitable for facing the present global situation. Even though peace journalism can offer a working tool for individual journalists in chaotic newsrooms, we raise the question of whether this is enough to change a global news agenda highly influenced by PSYOPS and perception management. The findings presented here using examples from the war in Iraq in general, and during the fighting in Fallujah in particular, call for a greater focus on how journalists and media researchers should meet these challenges. Supported by recent literature, we suggest that the capability of power circles in the military industrial complex to influence the global news agenda through PR techniques and perception management is much greater than has been supposed up to now (Schechter 2006). We would suggest that the following additional problems be discussed further:

Assuming that it is correct to state, as we have done in this article, that the Global War on Terror (GWOT) has much more encompassing effects than any previous war – even compared to the so-called 'new wars' – the peace journalism strategy seems deficient in a number of ways. It focuses on situations of military violence and how they are reported, i.e., it is re-markably content oriented, instead of focusing on polarisation and mobilising processes, including threat policymaking, which eventually may lead to open violence. In this respect, PJ could probably learn from crisis communication research, which focuses more on the processes and mechanisms that explain the emergence of crises. Since both terrorism and counter-terrorism are nurturing a culture of fear, both internationally and domestically, it may be more suitable to examine the role of the media to try to find the kind of cultural and sense-making activities that tend to create a shift away from the Risk-Society and the Threat-Society.

1. Overall, our reflections, based on Fairclough's analysis of GWOT discourse and the previously mentioned empirical observations on the Iraq war, indicate that the media alone are able to resist threat-policy strategies to only a very limited extent – or not at all. The main reasons for this conclusion, mentioned above, are: 1) the narrow nationalistic outlook of mainstream journalism; 2) the professional epistemology that assumes a transparent reality; and 3) jour-nalism's lack of reflexivity when it comes to visual material. Due to these and perhaps also to lesser factors, rather than expecting journalism and the media in general to resist threat-policies, it seems that media logic in many ways provides the means or mechanisms with which such policies can be easily pursued, and with great success, event-driven, sensationalism, immediacy, etc. – by strategists who are competent to master them.
2. The conflict resolution activities and PJ courses and seminars offered by NGOs or journalism schools are certainly very important for resistance to the proliferation of threat-policies. But it seems to us that they are too media-centred and that something equivalent to the Stockholm Peace Research Institute or the Norwegian Peace Research Institute is needed in the media sector in order to counter the increasingly threatening features of the GWOT discursive order. In combination with a UN based early warning system for new, upcoming media waves of threat-policy, such institu-tional reforms might turn the tide of the fear culture engulfing the news media in late modernity. In relation to the UN policy for democratisation, with its focus on elections and legal reforms in authoritarian countries, such a media monitoring institute could fill a gap in attempts to support democracy and human rights using journalistic means.

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