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# WRITING ABOUT TERRORISM

Journalistic Methodology and Peace Journalism

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Author: Esbjörn Edvinsson  
Supervisor: Michael Schulz  
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## Abstract

Mass media and journalists have faced criticism from academia due to a perceived tendency to present conflicts without paying sufficient attention to details, instead focusing on 'sensational' aspects, which will attract the interest of readers. Because of this, one academic debate within the field of journalism is whether 'traditional' media has served its purpose and needs to be replaced with newer forms of journalism which seeks to provide a more nuanced and balanced portrayal of conflicts. One of those paradigms is the concept of 'Peace Journalism'. Peace Journalism argues that journalists need to be given new tools to provide a broader, fairer and more accurate way of news reporting. Some of these tools may be to frame conflicts in interlocking patterns, focusing less on 'blame', and attempt to examine how the pursuit of incompatible goals affects the experience of people in conflict areas. The aim of this thesis is to analyze journalistic methodology in practice and provide some practical examples on the challenges that journalists face when they report on events distant in geography from both themselves and their audience. The aim will be achieved by conducting a case study on bombings which have taken place in Lahore, Pakistan and Kabul, Afghanistan. The main research question will try to identify if traces of Peace Journalism can be found in the work of the interviewed journalists. The main question will be complemented by three questions regarding the challenges, strategy and role of the journalist according to the respondents. By using semi-structural interviews, some of the findings in this study is that journalists write on topics which they have no direct experience or knowledge of, that journalists are restricted by factors such as time, space and their audience, and one possible suggestion for improvement is on expanding the use of sources to be more inclusive towards actors from local grass roots. The institutional aspect has also been highlighted as an issue, which Peace Journalism doesn't fully address. The main question for future research would therefore be to what extent institutional factors serves as an obstacle for Peace Journalism to be further implemented within traditional media.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Our perception of other cultures is influenced by many factors, but one of the most prominent is the role of mass media. Lippman<sup>1</sup> wrote that mass media creates a pseudo-environment in people's minds where listeners and readers come to believe that they possess intimate knowledge about places they have never been and people they have never met. Previous studies<sup>2</sup> have criticized "Western" media for covering political situations in distant countries in a shallow way, thereby sustaining ideas and perceptions of different cultures which may not correspond with reality. Some of the explanation to this could be seen in theories of the media as an industry which need to cater to its audience. This leads to news stories being portrayed as consumer friendly as possible, which may lead to a distortion of the conflict that is counter-productive to the resolution of it. Some researchers have criticized how media report on global conflicts. Peter Berglez<sup>3</sup> argues that there is a deficit of news discourses within journalism which seeks to raise awareness of various global realities and their complex relations.

As an alternative to some of the issues which have been highlighted in the way media reports on conflict a new school has emerged which started with the work of Johan Galtung and then has been developed further, primarily by Jake Lynch. This school is commonly referred to as "Peace Journalism", and it seeks to challenge some of the assumptions which are made by traditional journalists and find ways on how to improve medias possibility to contribute to conflict resolution rather than making it worse. Some problematic tendencies which have been identified regarding the global media apparatus would for example be that it in many cases is 'biased'<sup>4</sup>, 'consumer friendly'<sup>5</sup>, or 'distanced'<sup>6</sup>. This leads to imagery which in many cases

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Youssman (2013) *Revisiting Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model: Ex-Prisoners Respond to Television Representations of Incarceration*, *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 35(3), 197-216, pp, 198

<sup>2</sup>Simon Cottle (2007) *Mediatized Conflict: Development in media and conflict studies*. Glasgow: Bell & Bain Ltd, pp.6

<sup>3</sup> Berglez, Peter. (2008) What is Global Journalism? Theoretical and Empirical Conceptualisations, *Journalism Studies*, 9(6): 845-858, pp.846

<sup>4</sup> Simon Cottle (2007) *Mediatized Conflict: Development in media and conflict studies*. Glasgow: Bell & Bain Ltd, pp.6

<sup>5</sup> Noam Chomsky (2008) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 34

<sup>6</sup> Ulf Hannerz (2004) *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.15

could be considered to be simplified or out of context. This lack of context could be seen as the main issue which Peace Journalism seeks to address.

The focus of this study will be on two cases which are bombings in Lahore, Pakistan and Kabul, Afghanistan. What do we know about the way Swedish journalists report about violent events that take place far away from Sweden? In order to answer the research questions focus will be on Swedish journalists and how they approach the two bombings which have been selected for this study.

## **1.2 Aim and research questions**

Based on the narrative of journalists who have been interviewed for this thesis, the purpose is to explore their methodology when reporting on terror attacks in distant countries. To do this, a frame of reference has been established in Peace Journalism due to its criticism of mainstream media and constructive approach for suggestions which may improve on journalistic methodology. The aim of study can be formulated into the following research question: In what ways, if any, are the ideas behind “Peace Journalism” reflected in Swedish journalists’ reports about the bombings in Kabul and Lahore in 2016? This overarching research question can be expressed in the following three sub-research questions:

1. How do journalists perceive their role and responsibility in terms of providing context to their reader?
2. What strategies do Swedish journalists use when they write about one of the two cases selected for this study, Kabul and Lahore?
3. What are the primary challenges that journalists deal with when it comes to provide sufficient context for their reader?

## **1.3 Delimitation and Relevance for Global Studies**

There is no lack of scholars who criticize mass media as a global entity. The criticism varies, but generally it can be said that media often is described as ‘biased’ or ‘simplistic’ in its description of the world it is reporting on.<sup>7</sup> The explanations are many, but one that most academics tend to agree with is that journalists give their audience what they want to read. For

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<sup>7</sup> See for example: Ulf Hannerz (2004) *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Peter Berglez (2013) *Global Journalism: Theory and Practice*, New York: Peter Lang, , Herman, Edward S. & Noam Chomsky (2008) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books

many, there are no issues in doing so as that is the role of the journalist; to write for their reader. Others assume a more activist stance and argue that journalists should engage in the material which they produce, and not only write for their audience but also educate it. This is the viewpoint which Peace Journalism assumes, which seeks to provide a framework for how journalists can write on conflicts in a way which reflects the complexity of it, rather than presenting it in a black and white manner as often has been the case within traditional journalism.

This qualitative study deals with how Swedish journalists write about terror attacks in distant countries, and what choices they make in their writing process. The focus of this study deals with conflicts far away from Sweden that has been reported in Swedish media which makes it a natural field of study within the broader field of Global Studies. Due to its broad scope, some delimitations are inevitable. For this study, the choice has been to focus on Swedish journalists and how they write about conflicts which are distant from them in geography. The reasoning is that this will accentuate some of the issues which has been presented in the theoretical framework; that journalists prefer 'sensational' news which will attract the interest of the reader over more subtle nuances such as grass root actors or ethnic and religious context.

The thesis is limited to two cases: the bombings in Kabul and Lahore. One case did not provide sufficient material, and while more cases may have contributed to further knowledge there are two primary reasons for limiting myself to two cases: 1) The practical issue of analyzing the cases being time consuming and 2) The two cases displaying similar issues. It is reasonable to assume that this is due to the purposive sampling, as the cases were selected with a purpose in mind. It is equally reasonable to assume that further cases would overall produce similar data.

One of the findings of this thesis is that immediately after spectacular events such as bombings, there is little room for a deeper analysis to be made by the journalist. Most of the material is focused on the initial aspect, as all of the interviews made have been with journalists reporting on the same day or the day after. A review of the media response after the bombings show that there has been little material of follow ups where deeper analysis has been attempted to be made. This means that the two cases show characteristics described in the theoretical section: that events distant from a local audience are given little attention other than the sensational aspects of casualties, etc. It should be mentioned however that the case of Kabul is increasing in relevance in Sweden due to the refugee situation, and there is an



increasingly amount of material published on Sveriges Radio (SR) which go into detail into the conflict in Afghanistan, such as the situation for the Hazara population.

## 1.4 Background

### 1.4.1 Kabul

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, the Afghan announced the decision to route the crossing of a trans-national electricity line.<sup>8</sup> The decision led to an anticipation of a higher degree of economic development along the route of the power line. One province who was notably excluded from the route of the power line was the Bamyán province, of which the Hazara population are the predominant group. This led to discontent with the decision of the Afghan government, which eventually led to a large demonstration in Kabul on the 23<sup>d</sup> of July, organized by the group ‘The Enlightenment Movement’. According to this group, their exclusion from the power line is just one of many examples of systematic discrimination of the Hazara population in Afghanistan. During the demonstration two suicide bombers detonated explosives against the crowd, which led to at least 85 civilian casualties and 413 injured. Almost all the casualties were Hazara, most of them men.<sup>9</sup>

Today there are approximately 2.7 million Hazara in Afghanistan. The Hazara used to be the single largest group in Afghanistan, making up around 67 percent of the population. However, their numbers have been severely reduced due to a big massacre that took place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and today the Hazara make up around 9 percent of the population in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

The 2004 Afghanistan Constitution<sup>11</sup> granted the Hazara equal rights, and they were well-represented in the administration of former Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Yet, despite their growing political clout, many of the Hazaras continue to feel discriminated against.

In the 90’s the Taliban declared war against the Hazara, which culminated with mass killings of Hazaras in Mazar-I-Sharif<sup>12</sup>. Oppression of the Hazara has been ongoing ever since,

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<sup>8</sup> UNAMA (2016) *Special Report Attack on Peaceful Demonstration in Kabul, July 23 2016*, pp.3

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp.3

<sup>10</sup> Minority Rights Group International (2017) *Country Profile Afghanistan*:  
<http://minorityrights.org/minorities/hazaras/>

<sup>11</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004) *The Constitution of Afghanistan*:  
<http://www.afghanembassy.com.pl/afg/images/pliki/TheConstitution.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Human Rights Watch (1998) *The Massacre in Mazar-I-Sharif*:  
<https://www.hrw.org/report/1998/11/01/afghanistan-massacre-mazar-i-sharif>

although it has started to improve since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.<sup>13</sup> Lately ISIS has been reported to become more involved in actions against the Hazara, something which is spreading to the civil parts of the society. The Taliban is continuously reported to commit attacks against the Hazara however, often in the form of kidnappings.<sup>1415</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Lahore

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, a bomb detonated in Lahore, Pakistan near the Gulshan-e-Iqbal park, killing at least 75 people and injuring over 340.<sup>16</sup> The park in question was frequently attended by Christians, and as such it has led to speculations on whether the attack was aimed towards the Christian minority or not. These speculations have been complicated by the fact that a majority of the casualties were Muslims, but this may be due to the fact that despite being a Christian area, there are still many Muslims active in the area.<sup>17</sup>

Christians are a minority in Pakistan, a state which on the paper has declared that everyone are free to “belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the state”. In practice, it would seem that at times Christians has been restricted in their freedom to exercise their religion. When asked about the life of a Christian in Islamabad, Rehmat Masih says that “I think being Christian in this place, this Pakistan, is a crime. If we speak out, our corpses will be on the road”.<sup>18</sup> The Christian population in Pakistan has long complained about systematic discrimination and religious extremism putting their communities at risk. “There is a growing sense of insecurity among minorities in Pakistan, and whoever is not a Muslim is not safe in this country” says Cecil Shane Chaudry, executive director of the Christian NGO National Commission for Justice and Peace. Further tensions have risen over a recent blasphemy law in Pakistan, which criminalizes insults towards Islam,

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<sup>13</sup> Al Jazeera (2016) *Who Are the Hazaras?*: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/06/afghanistan-hazaras-160623093601127.html>

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Goldstein & Taimoor Shah (2015) *Afghan Kidnappers Prey on Hazara*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/world/asia/kidnappings-escalate-in-afghanistan.html>

<sup>15</sup> Orlando Crowcroft (2015) *Who are the Hazara and Why do ISIS and the Taliban Hate Them?*: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/kabul-protests-who-are-hazara-why-do-isis-taliban-hate-them-1528243>

<sup>16</sup> Siobhan Fenton (2016) *Lahore Blast: Taliban bomb kills at least 70 and injures 300 outside public park in eastern Pakistan*: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/lahore-blast-15-killed-and-at-least-30-injured-outside-public-park-in-eastern-pakistan-a6955366.html>

<sup>17</sup> Siobhan Fenton (2016) *Lahore Blast: Taliban bomb kills at least 70 and injures 300 outside public park in eastern Pakistan*: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/lahore-blast-15-killed-and-at-least-30-injured-outside-public-park-in-eastern-pakistan-a6955366.html>

<sup>18</sup> Wajahat S. Khan (2016) *Why It Feels Like a ‘Crime’ to be Christian in Pakistan*: <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/why-it-feels-crime-be-christian-pakistan-n179511>

where critics has claimed it is unfairly wielded against Christians.<sup>19</sup> Despite these tensions, the Pakistani government has implemented a lot of efforts and resources to improve the security for Christians, such as increasing security around churches. It is speculated that this might be what forced the Taliban to target a public park, thus leading to many Muslims being among the casualties.<sup>20</sup>

Minority rights groups describe the problems for Christians in Pakistan as diverse. There have been attacks on churches, mobs against Christian worshipping, as well as disproportionate targeting by the so-called blasphemy law. They also claim that while both Muslims and Christians may have been targeted, the number of Christians involved in the accident was disproportionate to their share of the population, and occurred during the Easter celebration.<sup>21</sup>

When it comes to the bombing, the Taliban splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar has taken responsibility for the action. The group is known to have affiliations with multiple other Jihadist groups operating in the nearby area. They have an outspoken ambition to implement Sharia law and establish a global caliphate. The group celebrates 9/11 as a starting point of expansion of the global caliphate.<sup>22</sup> The Taliban are notorious for intolerance shown towards other faiths as well as antagonism towards the western society.<sup>23</sup>

In an official statement from the group it has been said that “the target was Christians.”<sup>24</sup>, and the purpose of the attack was to send a message to the government that the Taliban have entered Lahore. The day before a statement had been issued by the Afghan Taliban that “Only Islamic rituals can be celebrated in an Islamic country”.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between Muslims have been described as problematic, which may be a contributing factor to the Taliban wanting to target Christians. Some of these tensions are due to the blasphemy law which have been heavily criticized for favoring Muslims over Christians. Temperature was increased due

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Rozina Ali (2016) *A Crisis for Minorities in Pakistan*: <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-crisis-for-minorities-in-pakistan>

<sup>21</sup> Minority Rights Group International (2016) *MRG condemns attack on Christian community in Lahore, calls on Pakistan government to address targeted*: <http://minorityrights.org/2016/03/29/mrg-condemns-attack-on-christian-community-in-lahore-calls-on-pakistani-government-to-address-targeted-violence/>

<sup>22</sup> Bill Roggio (2016) *US State Department Lists Jamaat-Ul-Ahrar as Terrorist Group*: <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/08/us-state-department-lists-jamaat-ul-ahrar-as-terrorist-group.php>

<sup>23</sup> Sten Widmalm (2016) *Political Tolerance in the Global South: Images of India, Pakistan and Uganda*. New York: Routledge, pp. 120

<sup>24</sup> Bill Roggio (2016) *The Target Was Christians, Pakistani Taliban Says of Lahore Easter Attack*: <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/03/the-target-was-christians-pakistani-taliban-says-of-lahore-easter-attack.php>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

to the assassination in 2011 of a governor who opposed the law. The assassin, Mumtaz Qudri, was executed in February 2016 and it is speculated if the bombing could be seen as retribution for this.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. Theoretical framework and Previous research

Many instances can be found where researchers link the media apparatus to the escalation and management of conflict, an aspect which Peace Journalism considers problematic within traditional journalism and therefore seeks to challenge. Generally speaking, the focus of different paradigms could either be on the role of the journalist (such as the case of global journalism) or the role of the news companies (such as the propaganda model). This highlights that the focus of the problem might be either institutional or individual, depending on which school is being used. Peace journalism could be described to be more focused on the individual role of the journalist, providing suggestions on how to report on conflicts in a manner which contributes to peaceful solutions. During the 21<sup>st</sup> century there seems to have been an increased linkage of media's role in both latent and manifest conflict and a consensus that media have a major influence. Even critics of new types of journalism seems to agree that the media does play a role, which often could be seen as negative, with the difference that this could be corrected within the frames of traditional journalism.

### 2.1 Theory

#### 2.1.1 Peace Journalism

There is research which suggests that news coverage often inflict value based bias upon the conflicts which they are reporting on.<sup>27</sup> In its extreme, such a type of journalism could be referred to as “war journalism”, and is considered to enforce the conflicts which are being reported. Peace Journalism could be seen as a critique of this approach, and a response in method. Using peace journalism, choices can be made such as for example about what to report and how to report it in order to create opportunities for non-violent responses to conflict. When speaking of “choices”, some would say that journalism is nothing more than reporting “facts”. However, there is often an infinite amount of fact to choose from, which

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Kaplan (2016) *Why the Taliban targeted Christians*: <http://www.ibtimes.com/why-taliban-targeted-pakistans-christians-lahore-attack-underscores-religious-2344263>

<sup>27</sup> Jake Lynch (2015) *Peace Journalism: Theoretical and Methodological Developments*, Global Media and Communication, vol.11 (3) 193-199, pp.198

means that journalism is not so much about presenting facts as it is about choosing which facts to present and in what way to present them.<sup>28</sup> One could for instance take the example of a bombing. It is an undeniable fact that a bomb has gone off, and where it has exploded can easily be determined. What is more controversial though is to estimate why the bombers have performed this action, and determine the process leading up to it.

Peace journalism could be seen as an ‘antidote’ to war journalism, and it does so through the following steps:

- Exploring background and context of conflict transformation, presenting causes and options of both sides
- Give voice to the views of all rival parties, from all levels
- Offer creative ideas for conflict resolution, development, peacemaking and peacekeeping
- Expose lies, cover-ups and culprits on all sides, reveal excesses committed by and suffering inflicted on peoples of all parties
- Pay attention to peace stories and post-war developments.

*“Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what to report and how to report it – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict.”<sup>29</sup>*

Traditional journalism could be criticized for its black and white thinking and lack of complexity. Conflict analysis has been suggested as a tool to provide a broader, fairer and more accurate ways of news reporting. A few steps on such an analysis is:

- Frame the conflict as a complex interlocking pattern of fears, inequalities and resentments which can be overcome by implementing complex and interlocking solutions.
- Focus less on who is to ‘blame’, and focus more on cultural and structural factors which perpetuate the conditions for violence.

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<sup>28</sup> Jake Lynch (2015) *Peace Journalism: Theoretical and Methodological Developments*, Global Media and Communication, vol.11 (3) 193-199, pp.198

<sup>29</sup> Jake Lynch & Annabel Mcgoldrick (2005) *Peace Journalism*, Stroud: Hawthorn, pp.5

- The focus of reporting should attempt to venture beyond mere articulate positions of each party, to examining how the pursuit of incompatible goals affects the lived experience of people in the conflict area<sup>30</sup>

Peace Journalism claims that media generally have a tendency to be highly reliant on the narratives of official sources, which mean that it sometimes can overlook grassroots perspectives.<sup>31</sup> This is seen as a problem as it skews the way the conflict is portrayed, and not all perspectives are given enough room in the public space. Media also have a tendency to dwell on sensational angles, such as the one of death and destruction brought by a bomb attack. In such a situation, there are some hard facts which media easily can reconstruct; a device has detonated, casualties are high, and there is chaos. What is more difficult to portray is questions such as why the bombers did it, what process was leading up to it, and what their grievances and motivations were. Such a narrative lead to little room for peace initiatives, as there are no underlying causes visible and therefore nothing to ‘fix’.<sup>32</sup>

According to Galtung<sup>33</sup> one key criteria of traditional journalism when it comes to reporting about conflicts in ‘distant’ countries is the criteria of ‘consonance’. Consonance implies that a conflict which take place in a country of ‘low international rank and/or considerable cultural distance’ not only needs to be ‘extraordinary’ (usually in the negative sense), but it also need to relate back to the audience to which it is presented.<sup>34</sup>

A further recommendation of Peace Journalism is that Peace Journalists should aspire to *enable* debate rather than *leading* it.<sup>35</sup> That is, journalism should create opportunities for audiences to consider and value non-violence solutions to conflict. Peace Journalism addresses what would happen if society where to choose other responses, and leading scholar Jake Lynch say that in such a case “there is nothing more journalism can do about it, while remaining journalism”.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Jake Lynch (2002) *Using Conflict Analysis in Reporting the Peace Journalism, Option 3*, Transcend, pp.2: <https://www.transcend.org/tms/about-peace-journalism/2-peace-journalism-for-journalists/>

<sup>31</sup> Jake Lynch & Annabel McGoldrick (2000) *Peace Journalism: What is it? How to do it?* Reporting the World, pp.17

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pp.17

<sup>33</sup> Jake Lynch (2013) *A Global Standard for Reporting Conflict*, Routledge pp. 15

<sup>34</sup> Jake Lynch (2013) *A Global Standard for Reporting Conflict*, Routledge pp. 15

<sup>35</sup> Jake Lynch (2015) *Peace Journalism: Theoretical and Methodological Developments*, Global Media and Communication, vol.11 (3) 193-199, pp.193

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp.193

Part of enabling debate is highlighting the importance to constantly reflect on how news value is created and maintained. Determining news value is often an implicit criterion that guides journalists in their selection and construction of different news narratives. Typical characteristics which has been identified in previous studies are for example violence, negativity, unambiguity and elite people. Peace journalism seek to expand upon this set of criterions by adding a so called third dimension which encompass characteristics such as grassroots, context, and of course peaceful resolution.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.1.2 Objectivity

Objectivity within the field of Peace Journalism is not considered to be a fixed thing, but rather it is constituted by a diverse set of ideas and practices which serve only as a general model for how to define and evaluate news. One of the main goals when it comes to define objectivity is to be accurate in information about the world, which implies that a journalist should have the ability to separate facts from opinion.<sup>38</sup> Objectivity also implies that a journalist should be free from outer influence, and present a fair and balanced description of the events which they report on. In this regard, objectivity could be considered a counterpoint to propaganda.

Objectivity within the frames of Peace Journalism is not undisputed, as it is considered to constitute an epistemological challenge to the so-called objectivity regime.<sup>39</sup> Objectivity according to Peace Journalism is a matter of representation, not reality reflection. As such it opposes itself to the traditional notion of objectivity, which Peace Journalism considers to be too predictable in its priority of some issues over another, most notably war over peaceful conflict transformation. One issue is that journalists may find themselves caught in a ‘feedback loop’ where they recreate anticipated framing of facts, often in the interest of powerful actors with interests which may not align with a peaceful response.<sup>40</sup>

It is grounded in this issue that Peace Journalism seek to establish itself as a challenger to a epistemological basis of detachment, calling for journalists to align themselves in a position where they can reflect over institutional shortcomings which may have an effect on the way they frame conflict. This is not to say that Peace Journalism don’t consider truth telling to be a vital component of journalism, but rather it seeks to question why some facts are privileged

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<sup>37</sup> Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, Jake Lynch, Robert A. Hackett, eds. (2011) *Expanding Peace Journalism: Comparative and Critical Approaches*, pp.43

<sup>38</sup> Seaga Shaw, et al. *Expanding Peace Journalism*, pp. 37

<sup>39</sup> Lynch & Mcgoldrick 2005, pp.218

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, pp.218

and others not. This could be seen as a rejection of a positivist stance that journalism's purpose only is to report, as well as the relativist position where there is no truth to be found in the midst of the propaganda. Peace journalism balances these two schools to offer an interdisciplinary core of peace and conflict studies which is reflexive about its normative commitments, open to justification, and aware of participant-observer interaction.<sup>41</sup>

### 2.1.3 Criticism of Peace Journalism

According to David Loyn<sup>42</sup>, long-time foreign correspondent of the BBC, the peace journalism approach describes an active participation that simply isn't the role of a journalist to do. Truth and objectivity are disputed when it comes to the debate between peace journalism and traditional journalism. Loyn does not argue strictly against the statement that there may be no objective truth, but he doesn't consider this an excuse not to attempt to pursue truth as much as possible as a journalist. While Truth with capital T may be exclusive to divine powers, a journalist may instead be truthful, which is defined as 'a readiness against being fooled and eagerness to see through appearances to the real structure and motives that lie behind them'. While truth is the goal, objectivity is the tool with which this goal can be met. The practice of peace journalism considers itself to be less objective than any alternative, since it commits itself to the adoption of particular perspectives.<sup>43</sup>

Thomas Hanitzsch is also critical towards peace journalism.<sup>44</sup> For Hanitzsch, the purpose of journalism is to facilitate information gathered from many sources, and present this in a cohesive and condensed manner for its audience. He makes a distinction between journalism and the three fields of public relations, entertainment and advertising, as none of these are aspiring to be factual without having an intended effect. The role to influence an audience falls under public relations according to Hanitzsch.

Hanitzsch opposes the claim of Peace Journalism that traditional media represent a distorted version of reality.<sup>45</sup> For Hanitzsch, there is no way for media to provide an 'objective' mirror of reality, rather it can only seek to show a representation, and representations by nature are selective. Another problem within Peace Journalism is that it overestimates the influence of

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<sup>41</sup> Seaga Shaw, et al. *Expanding Peace Journalism*. 42

<sup>42</sup> David Loyn (2007) *Good journalism or peace journalism?* Conflict & Communication Online, pp.4

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, pp.4

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Hanitzsch (2004). *Journalists as Peacekeeping Force?* Peace Journalism and Mass Communication Theory, Journalism Studies 5(4): 483-495, pp.492

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, pp.492



the media structure on journalism. For instance, Peace Journalism is incorrect in its assumption that media only report atrocities and violence, as previous studies have highlighted coverage of journalists considering it their primary duty to report on the suffering of civilians.<sup>46</sup> One of the areas which Hanitzch propose that Peace Journalism could be looked upon is the role of journalists on the individual level. For instance, how do journalists see their role in society? How do they deal with structural constraints?<sup>47</sup>

A third problem is that journalism is treated with poor contextualization, Hanitzch argue Peace Journalism tend to hold journalism responsible for virtually every aspect within the society. But the criteria on which news selection are selected isn't dictated by journalists but is a response to the needs of its audience. Audience studies have shown that what people are most interested in is stories of natural or human made disasters. Unfortunate as it may be, this is the reality that journalists need to adhere.<sup>48</sup>

The criticism of Peace Journalism is relevant since it can be identified in the response of the journalists interviewed in this study. Peace Journalism is also clear that it opposes the traditional interpretation of objectivity. Due to this critical stance against traditional objectivity, the traditional definition of objectivity has been included in order to be more precise in what it is exactly that Peace Journalism seeks to challenge. The problem of being restricted by an audience is within the context of the traditional journalism dismissed as a 'reality which journalists need to adhere'. This aspect is another which Peace Journalism seek to challenge and be proactive in highlighting issues which are important for the reader to understand the context of the situation being presented.

The purpose of using Peace Journalism as a theory is due to its critical approach of traditional media, which suffers from issues which have been highlighted by previous research. The theory in combination with previous research has led to the focus of this study, which is to look at the individual journalists' role and how they perceive challenges demonstrated by previous research, such as geographical distance, audience dependency and reliability on external sources.

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Hanitsch (2004). Journalists as Peacekeeping Force? Peace Journalism and Mass Communication Theory, Journalism Studies 5(4): 483-495, pp. 490

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pp.492

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 493

## 2.2 Previous Research

### 2.2.1 Media and Conflict

Media's role in conflict is a key issue within Peace Journalism who considers traditional journalism to be dominated by 'war journalism', meaning a biased form of journalism not contributing to the solution of conflicts. This section will describe some further contextualization of medias role in conflict, raising questions on how to provide deeper context as well as the institutional framework which limits the journalist in doing so.

Cottle<sup>49</sup> define 'Conflicts' as the struggle between opposing interests and outlooks. In his studies, he has shown that in some cases it could be said that these *solely* originate from the media. While the core of what defines a conflict is easily described, further special characteristics become slightly more complicated. Conflicts may be latent or manifest, structurally determined or purposefully enacted, objectively real or subjectively perceived, etc. Whatever their origins, conflicts are defined through the words and actions of human beings as they engage in disputes and discussions.

When it comes to medias role in conflicts, terms such as 'bias', 'distortion' and 'propaganda' shouldn't be too heavily relied upon, yet they cannot be completely discarded. These concepts are present when looking at media, but they are too simple to completely analyze the complex nature of media. Cottle<sup>50</sup> presents a few research questions to dwell deeper into this complex nature, such as:

- Who, and by what means, gain access to the media stage to promote and discuss conflicts?
- How have conflict been shaped by different media genres? How can old and new media better serve as conflict facilitating tools?
- How are conflicts defined and evaluated in the media?

These research question can be seen related to the objective of Peace journalism in several ways. The first question regarding who gain access to the media stage, relate to the proposal of Peace Journalism to be more inclusive towards grassroots movements and actors. This aspect is something which will be presented in the result, as the interviewed journalists have

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<sup>49</sup> Simon Cottle (2007) *Mediatized Conflict: Development in media and conflict studies*. Glasgow: Bell & Bain Ltd, pp.6

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, pp.6

displayed a tendency to rely on more established global actors, in particular the news bureaus Reuters and AFP. The second and third question are closely linked to Peace Journalisms critique of traditional media and relates to the research question ‘What strategies do Swedish journalists use when they write about one of the two cases selected for this study, Kabul and Lahore?’.<sup>51</sup>

One of the more prominent works on how media functions is Chomsky and Herman’s propaganda model,<sup>52</sup> which postulates five general classes of filters which describe the type of news that is presented in the media; ownership of the media, media’s funding sources, sourcing, flak and anti-communism (anti-ideology). The purpose of the propaganda model is to explain mainstream media’s behavior and performance by their corporate character and integration into the political economy. It is argued by some that the fifth class, anti-communism, was more relevant in a cold war setting so in newer editions it is updated to include anti-ideology in general to better correspond with the challenges of today. The essence of the anti-communism is that it is portrayed as the ultimate evil and a grave threat against the security of western society. One possible substitute for anti-communism within a contemporary setting would be anti-terrorism, which in a lot of the medial rhetoric is portrayed as the greatest contemporary threat.<sup>53</sup>

One consequence of the mainstream media often being large companies or part of conglomerate is that information presented to the public will be biased with respect to these interests. Since such spheres often extend beyond the scope of media, there are financial interests which may be endangered due to certain information. The second filter of advertising lead to news stories often being portrayed in a way which is as consumer friendly as possible. Since media need to attract advertising in order to cover their expenses they are reliant on this. Stories that may conflict with buyers’ moods will therefore be marginalized or excluded from the coverage. The filter of sourcing has produced a side effect of the “moral division of labor”, where reporters’ merely state facts given to them by other actors, also known as the concept of media as repeaters.<sup>54</sup> Some of the filters which the Propaganda model proposes to shape the work of journalists has been identified during the conducted interviews. The second

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<sup>51</sup> Simon Cottle (2007) *Mediatized Conflict: Development in media and conflict studies*. Glasgow: Bell & Bain Ltd, pp.6

<sup>52</sup> Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky (2008) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp.29

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp.29

<sup>54</sup> Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky (2008) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, 3,14,18,29

filter which refers to journalists being consumer friendly has mostly been confirmed, as it has been a recurrent theme during the interviews that the journalists feel that they need to adapt their writings to their audience. Likewise, the filter of sourcing has been identified as the respondents to a large degree are using information gained from international news bureaus, rather than approaching sources on a more local level. The fifth filter of anti-terrorism is relevant due to the nature of the bombings, however in the material which has been analyzed it is not an obvious framing of an 'enemy'. There are some aspects, particularly in Lahore where it has been framed as an attack on Christians, which could be seen as relating back to a cultural conflict between west and the east. But there are also attempts to nuance the conflict, by for example analyzing how the U.S intervention in Afghanistan may have affected the situation in Kabul.

### 2.2.2 Foreign reporting

The cases selected for this study aren't only defined by being conflicts, but also by being distant from the journalists reporting in geography. This section will therefore highlight some previous results on the challenges of writing on foreign issues.

Berglez<sup>55</sup> suggests that there is a deficit of the type of news discourse which brings awareness to various global realities and their complex relations, problems and impacts on our lives. This would mean that global journalism ought to focus on to investigate how people and their actions, problems, life conditions etc. in different parts of the world are interrelated.

Global Journalism considers most main stream media outlets to not be globally oriented, but instead based on an outlook where the world consists of isolated units and events taking place in large separate from each other. A big part of the theory of Global Journalism is to question this rationale, which is referred to as "derelational" thinking. What such thinking leads to in practice is for example the tendency to "invent" relationships in order to attract the attention of readers. This is done by offering something the reader can relate to, such as a domestic angle. In seeking to bridge an assumed gap between us and them identification is used as the main tool, where the moralizing effect of the news story guide the process of identification.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Peter Berglez (2013) *Global Journalism: Theory and Practice*, New York: Peter Lang, pp.21

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, Pp.25

Based on interviews of more than 70 foreign correspondents, Hannerz<sup>57</sup> presents a multi layered analysis of the role of the foreign correspondent in reporting news which are distant to the reader. Hannerz draw parallels between the role of the foreign correspondent and that of the cultural anthropologist in that they both need to engage themselves in evaluation and processing of information in order to make sense of cultures which their reader may have no direct experience of. By doing so Hannerz raises some important institutional questions regarding international news, for instance how representative news coverage of the African continent may be considering that the majority comes from a dozen reporters located in Johannesburg.

The result that Hannerz present is partially bleak, as some of the respondents consider media to be a dying business and in order to be able to compete it is necessary to ‘tinker with the mix’ in order to attract an audience. The end of the cold war marked a change in attitude, as news agencies needed to find new ways to engage their audience rather than “who is ours and who is theirs?”. Note that there seem not to be an inherent interest from audiences to read about conflicts across the world, but rather it is up to media to frame it in a way which they can relate to in order to catch their attention.<sup>58</sup> The research of Hannerz has highlighted some aspects which are prevalent for this study as well. During the interviews, it has become clear that the journalists consider themselves to have a responsibility to make ‘sense of the situation’ for their readers. The institutional aspect is relevant, as most of the respondents have been reliant on few central sources such as AFP or Reuters. Finally, the audience has been said to play an important role as the journalists have admitted that they need to write base on the interest of their audience back home.

### 3. Methodology

The research design of this study is based on the literature review, which has shown on some of the issues in traditional media, as well as reasons for this. This has been very beneficial when it comes to creating interview questions, as they in many ways have related to previously documented problems within the field of journalism. This will be further described in the upcoming section.

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<sup>57</sup> Ulf Hannerz (2004) *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 26

<sup>58</sup> Ulf Hannerz (2004) *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 26

For this study a selection of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with journalists writing about bombings in Kabul, Afghanistan and Lahore, Pakistan has been conducted. The sample selection will be described in further detail, but in short, the cases have been chosen based on criteria of severity and exposure, as the two attacks were some of the biggest in 2016.

### 3.1 Interviews

I have chosen the semi-structural interview for its capacity to provide insights into how participant subjects view the world. The strength of the semi structural interview is that it allows the subjects freedom to have an influence over the answers without being pigeon holed into them by the interviewer.<sup>59</sup> When doing a semi-structural interview, the interviewer generally has a list of questions or topics to be covered with the help of an interview guide, but with enough room for the interviewee to choose how to reply. Questions that are not in the guide may occur as the interviewer picks up on the direction of the interview. A lot of emphasis is put on how the interviewee themselves understand issues and events, and what they find important in explaining certain patterns and behaviors.<sup>60</sup>

For a semi-structural interview to be successful, the interview guide is of utmost importance. It cannot be too specific as that would contradict the purpose of conducting a semi-interview, but it also cannot be too open, or the interview will not be able to produce any relevant answers which can be related back to the research problem and questions.

The group which have been chosen for the sampling of interviews are journalists reporting on terror in distant countries. The choice of distant countries is based on what has been shown in previous research that journalists tend to present a simplified view when reporting on issues which are distant in geographic or cultural nature. This relates back to the issues which Peace Journalism present, such as journalists not providing sufficient context to their readers to portray peaceful solutions as an option. Rather, the sensationalist strategy is often found where little to no room for progress is seen as realistic. The general suggestion of Lofland which is to keep in mind ‘what is puzzling to me?’<sup>61</sup> is something which have been helpful. In the case of journalists portraying conflicts as black and white one of the more prominent

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<sup>59</sup> Alan Bryman (2012) *Social Research Methods*. OUP: Oxford, pp.468

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, pp.468

<sup>61</sup> John Lofland & Lyn H. Lofland (1995). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont, CA, Wadsworth Publishing Company pp, 473

puzzling issues is whether this is done due to lack of information, or if they have the knowledge but for some reason have chosen not to include it in their reports.

Another big challenge when conducting semi-structural interviews is for the interviewer to have the knowledge necessary to ask the right follow up questions. For this reason a conflict analysis was conducted to complement the background information. This analysis provided a frame of reference for what issues, key actors and interests are relevant for hypothetical peaceful solutions to the conflict. These elements have helped to shape the interview questions, focusing on why or why not such aspects has been included or not. The conflict analysis could be seen as one of the main reasons for why this case study has restricted itself to two cases: More cases could have been relevant, but in the scope of this study it has been decided that time has been better spent on doing the proper research on the conflict setting in the two cases which have been chosen.

### **3.2 Interview Guide**

The following themes found in the theory of Peace Journalism formed the foundation of which questions I asked the respondents. The main objective for these themes which is presented is to establish a healthy strategy for journalists to approach conflicts around the world, which may contribute to finding peaceful options rather than escalation of conflict:

- Exploring background and context of conflict transformation, presenting causes and options of both sides
- Give voice to the views of all rival parties, from all levels
- Offer creative ideas for conflict resolution, development, peacemaking and peacekeeping
- Expose lies, cover-ups and culprits on all sides, reveal excesses committed by and suffering inflicted on peoples of all parties
- Pay attention to peace stories and post-war developments.

The interview questions for the different respondents share similar themes but are not identical. The reason for this is a natural consequence of the articles, which even when referring to the same case differ in content and execution. The interview questions have been constructed from perspectives presented by Peace Journalism on how to analyze journalists reporting on conflicts such as: background context, voicing of all involved actors and creative

ideas in favor of development and peacemaking. For example, a question based on the topic of background context is to what extent IS previously has been a force to be reckoned with in Afghanistan. Likewise, another question on the topic of different actors is to what extent the journalists have sought out the voice of grassroots actors. Generally speaking, the topics which have been included can be separated into the journalist's knowledge of the situation and personal background, sources used, reason for the bombings, and implications made in the article.

The reason for asking about the journalist's previous knowledge of what they are writing about is that Peace Journalism consider inexperience one possible explanation for journalists' reporting on conflicts in a simplistic manner, and thus fall in the category of war journalism. Furthermore, if they have little or none knowledge about the situation, what are their methods to gain relevant information? Is this something they are interested in? Is this something they have time for? Questions such as this fall within this topic. Their personal background is based on Bryman's recommendation, as it is considered useful in order to contextualize the respondent's answers.<sup>62</sup>

Part of my hypothesis is that due to time pressure, journalists take much of their information from external sources such as the bigger news bureaus TT and Reuters. The reliability of these are undeniable, however there is always a risk in using secondary sources, and sometimes perhaps even tertiary sources in that they be distorted in one way or another. Also, despite being reliable, not even the most qualitative news bureaus are flawless when it comes to presenting information which is 100 percent accurate. One of the major risks I have hypothesized, based on Hannerz work on foreign reporting, is that if too many newspapers are dependent on a little selection of news material, there is a risk that faulty information gets a wider spread than if all were to do their research independently. Another aspect on the theme of sources is the choice of experts which is common when it comes to reporting on terrorism. Are these experts chosen arbitrary, or are they chosen for a particular reason? Does the journalist have the proper knowledge to interpret their answer and present it to their reader in a cohesive manner? (This relates back to the first topic)

One of the main parts of an article about bombings is of course the reason behind it. This can actually be separated into two categories, direct motive and underlying causes and generally speaking direct motive would by Peace Journalism be considered a bit narrow, which seek to

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<sup>62</sup> Bryman, Social Research Methods, pp.473



promote a more active attempt to reach more knowledge about the underlying causes. When it comes to direct reasons statements from terror groups is evidently the most direct source of information there is. One of the questions I have on this is if it is justified to consider such a statement as fact, or if there is need for further investigation.

All the articles I have analyzed do include some extra information about the conflict, or the situation in the country. The last section of question therefore dwells into this, and this is where my own conflict analysis primarily serves its purpose as I share my understanding of the conflict and ask about aspects which I find relevant and if they agree that it would have been contributing to include in the article.

As it is semi-structural this is just the general guideline. Many questions arose during the interviews, and some questions didn't quite work out. Due to this the general outline evolved from interview to interview as questions were added and redacted.

### **3. 3 Sample selection**

The two cases have been selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a form of sampling, which chooses objects of study based on the research problem.<sup>63</sup> The selection therefore started with a review of terror attacks in 2016, as well as in which countries terrorism was most severe. The top five countries in 2016 were Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria. When selecting the final cases there were different aspects which were taken into consideration, presented below.

The severity criterion was primarily included to reach a width in selection of material, to see what similarities and differences could be found in the context of the same event. As such this study is based on two cases with seven interviews (four for Lahore and three for Kabul).

In the case of Lahore, one aspect which spoke in favor of the case in relation to the research problem was the fact that the targeting of Christians seemed to attract more attention than had it been any other ethnic or religious minority. This led to material which was more engaging than the majority of most other terror attacks in any of the top five countries, where the vast majority of articles are restricted to casualties, place, and perpetrator.

The case in Kabul was interesting for two primary reasons. First, there is a relation between Sweden and Afghanistan in the many Afghans seeking asylum in Sweden. Most recently

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<sup>63</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, pp.418

there has been controversy surrounding the decision to deport asylum seekers back to Afghanistan, despite the security situation being considered highly unstable.<sup>64</sup> This means that the way, which the conflict in Afghanistan is described, has implications on domestic Swedish policy, something which may or may not affect the way media report, due to factors described in Chomsky's propaganda model regarding the way media reports based on the interest and proximity of their audience to the events which take place. The second reason for choosing Kabul is that it became clear during the review that there were many aspects which initially was reported which later turned out not to be correct. This mean that there were many natural questions to ask, such as the validity of the journalist's sources, and whether the misinformation is something which could have been avoided with another method.

The sample strategy has resulted in two cases which relate to the research problem as it provides relevant questions to what benefits the theory of Peace Journalism may have in practice, or what needs there are for such a journalistic strategy. However, due to the nature of purposive sampling, only careful generalizations can be drawn from the result of this study. What it can do however, is question some of the assumptions made by Peace Journalism and demonstrate how this relate to practical issues and circumstances which journalists face.

### **3.4 Selection of Interviewees**

The interviewees and cases were partially depending on each other. The cases needed to be relevant for the research problem in that they involved conflicts, which the journalist needed make choices in how to describe. When cases had been selected, respondents were contacted of which most agreed to an interview (except one journalist at Nyheter Idag, who didn't respond at all).

The journalists I interviewed had written articles, which in one way or another brought up aspects of the bombing, which could be questioned. Articles which were short and only reported on time, place and alleged perpetrator were excluded as these didn't provide sufficient context for relevant questions to be asked. It should be noted however that there is a branch of journalism which consider this to be the role of a journalist: To only report on objective facts. In context of Peace Journalism however, the selected articles in one way or

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<sup>64</sup> Migrationsverket (2017) *Ny Analys av Läget i Afghanistan*: <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Nyhetsarkiv/Nyhetsarkiv-2017/2017-06-16-Ny-analys-av-laget-i-Afghanistan.html>

another could be seen to varying degrees ascribe to the notion that journalism should also provide context.

In selecting the interviewees, I also sought to include as many different news outlets as possible in order to get a representative sample size of journalists in Sweden. For this study, most major Swedish news outlets were included (Sveriges Radio, Expressen, Dagens Nyheter, Göteborgsposten, Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå, Svenska Dagbladet) with the notable exception of Aftonbladet, as the articles found here were as previously described very descriptive and limited in nature.

### **3.5 The respondents**

Naila Saleem was temporary correspondent for Sveriges Radio (SR) with extra responsibility for South Asia/South East Asia. She did this as a replacement for Margita Boström during her vacation. She was interviewed by Sveriges Radio (on the 23rd of July), when two bombs exploded in Kabul. She is also listed as author of the article, but it turns out she has nothing to do with the article itself as it is something which has been made by SR as a summary of her statements during the live broadcast. Naila will be referred to as ‘respondent A’

Adam Svensson works for Dagens Nyheter (DN) and wrote the article ‘Many killed in two explosions in Kabul’, published on the 23rd of July which was attributed to him together with Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå (TT). When I ask him about the division of labor between him and TT it turns out that TT was the main author of most of the information provided. Adam initially had troubles with pointing out what he contributed with, but he mentions that the byline at the bottom of the article is an indicator that he had a finger in it and is something he rarely puts in if he has taken articles entirely from external sources. Fact remains that he is listed as author of the article, and he agrees that he have a responsibility for what is put in it. Adam will be referred to as ‘respondent B’

Krister Zeidler is a freelance journalist who has worked at Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå (TT) for 16 years. His article about the bombing in Kabul ‘IS attacks public protest in Kabul’ was published in Göteborgs-posten (GP), but he wrote it for TT which means that what he wrote also was published in DN with additions by Adam Svensson whom I also interviewed. Krister have a large interest for foreign policy, and long experience of foreign news, but no direct experience or knowledge about Afghanistan. Krister will be referred to as ‘respondent C’

Margita Boström is foreign correspondent for Sveriges Radio (SR), with responsibility for South Asia/South East Asia and she is based in Bangkok Thailand. She was interviewed by Sveriges Radio on the bombing in Lahore on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. She hasn't visited Pakistan during her time as correspondent, but visited the country in 2010 to make a story on floodings which were occurring at the time. As she was not present in Lahore during the bombing she had to use sources such as Reuters and AFP in order to gain information on the bombing, but also local media. One example of such local media is the Dawn which she says is an influential newspaper in the country. Margita will be referred to as 'respondent D'

Mats Larsson's article "A monster who also eats its children" which was published in 'Expressen' assume a very distinctive position in relation to the bombing in Lahore, which is that the bombing is an expression of a very firm global radical movement of Islamism. Not only are Christians' potential victims of these radicals, but anyone who does not agree to their vision of the ideal society including Muslims who they do not consider 'true' Muslims. As a chronicle, it is more personal than most other articles which I have analyzed and should be kept in mind when reading the result of the interview. What's interesting about Larsson's article is that he assumes a very clear position toward the bombing and consider it the expression of a global radical Islamic movement, and not only Christians but all groups who do not share their vision of an ideal society are potential victims. Mats will be referred to as 'respondent E'

Emmylou Tuvhag made not only one, but three separate articles, which were published in Svenska Dagbladet (SvD): 'Nightmare scenes during bombing aimed towards children in Pakistan', 'Radicals control the public spaces of Pakistan and 'Islamistic terror isn't increasing, but it is getting closer''. Normally she writes about economy and business, but due to lack of staff she found herself writing about the Easter bombing in Lahore. She says it is common during weekends and holidays to branch out of your normal area and be prepared to write about anything. Had the bombing occurred during a normal work day one of the regular foreign reporters would have taken it, but they were off duty at the time. Emmylou will be referred to as 'respondent F'

Anders Bolling who wrote the article 'Almost half of the victims in Lahore were children' works at the live editorial at Dagens Nyheter (DN), and as the bombing occurred during vacation he had to take responsibility for writing about it with short notice. He has no previous experience of Pakistan. Anders will be referred to as 'respondent G'

### 3.6 Ethics

Ethically speaking, I try to follow Kvaales tips and skills to be a successful interviewer, in particular the points of *knowledge, sensitivity, steering*, and Bryman's addition *ethically sensitive*. In some cases, asking questions about flaws in their reports might be sensitive, and I intend to try to establish some kind of relaxed relation before moving onto topics such as that.<sup>65</sup> An anticipated challenge before engaging in the interviews was if I could make the respondent feel comfortable enough to open up in their answers. In order to create a good atmosphere, I described what my study was about, and one thing in particular which I was clear with was that some of the questions should not be interpreted as criticism, but rather openings for discussions. In most cases this have been received well, many were even glad that I pointed out errors in their articles as they said they would consider it a lesson learned for future articles. The interviews started with simple questions, and common courtesies before moving on to more complicated ones, relating to the context of the conflict and such. It wasn't long before I realized that some of the more analytical questions was not received well as many of the responses were unable to contribute with much substance on an analytical level. The primary reason for this was that many of the journalists had little previous experience or knowledge of the conflicts.

Most of the interviews were made over the phone, on the request of the respondents, as they did not have time for meetings in person. One of the respondents did not feel comfortable in remembering what had been written and therefore requested a written questionnaire which could be responded by mail, since this enabled the respondent to think while writing. I of course agreed to this, as I did not find it productive to force anyone into something they are uncomfortable with. There may be methodological issues with conducting an interview via mail, primarily a narrower window for follow up questions which is the reason I chose semi-structural interview, but I am content with the responses which were provided and I think it was the best choice to be made considering the circumstances. The respondent was very open and helpful with a few mails back and forth for further clarifications, which means that it wasn't a completely static interview despite not being made in person. After the interview was finished, each respondent was asked if they wanted to be anonymous or not. All the respondents agreed that their names could be used in the study.

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<sup>65</sup> Steinar Kvale & Svend Brinkmann (2014) *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervjuen*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 99

In the case of the participants in this study, I do not consider there to be any significant uneven power relation between the interviewer and the respondent. The respondents can be seen to assume the role of experts. However, as previously mentioned many of the journalists had little expertise in the field of terrorism or in the conflicts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This mean that the respondent provided insight into the reasons for why they used the facts and sources which they had used, while I could provide extra context. This turned out to be a good recipe for fruitful discussions on how journalistic methodology can be improved upon in practice.

Bryman advices against indicating agreement with the interviewer.<sup>66</sup> I found it necessary however while I were questioning some of the details in their articles to point out that there were aspects in the article which I found well thought out. This was to maintain a healthy atmosphere during the interview, as I did not want them to feel as it was an interrogation I was conducting but rather an open discussion about methodological aspects of reporting on conflict.

### **3.7 Method of Analysis**

The framework of Peace Journalism will be used as a guiding tool both during the collection of data as well as the analysis. Due to its critical stance towards traditional journalist it provides a relevant framework for asking questions on how to improve the work of journalists' writing on events in a geographical distance from themselves. The geographical distance is an issue which have been highlighted in previous research, as well as the dependence of journalists on the interest of their audience. Some of these main points will be further described in the interview guide section, but can be summarized as focusing on the points of war journalism vs peace journalism, external factors such as time pressure, dependency on second or third-party sources, and the previous knowledge of the context of the situation they are writing on.

For the analysis the questions were based on aspects taken from Peace Journalism, as well as previous research. This was helpful to identify four major themes which I could structure the analysis upon. These were the following: Role of the Journalist, Strategy, Challenges and Context. These themes can also be found to be reflected in the three research questions. Three

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<sup>66</sup> Bryman, pp.473

of the themes being explicitly referred to in each subsequent question, with the fourth theme of context being relevant in question one and three.

When conducting interviews, it is common to find yourself with a large amount of data, this case is no exception. To make sense of the answers which have been provided a method of narrowing down the material is therefore necessary to code the material. Coding is according to Bryman the starting point for most forms of qualitative analysis, and some of the main principles are to find general categories for the material, what they represent, and what answers can be found in the material. It is recommended to code as soon as possible, which is why I for this study kept notes and made initial coding as the interview was going on. This has later been complemented by reading through the material in case something may have been missed during the initial process.<sup>67</sup> The coding categories consists of codes made available through the literature review and use of theory, but also by going through the material and reading the answers to find connecting themes. In the case of the study, coding is based on categorization of themes found within Peace Journalism, such as different actors, context, background, options, misguided information, etc.

Some of the dangers with coding is that a definition may be too concrete (only fitting a few examples) or it can be too abstract (which lead to characteristics not being specified and concrete cases not able to be identified).<sup>68</sup> This is a difficult task to achieve but it can be balanced by being generous in early categorization in order not to miss any relevant aspects, then later narrowing it down into more stream lined categories.

Coding is the first step of analysis, which is to break down the data into something more accessible. The data still needs to be analyzed. Once relevant themes and categories have been made the final step is to compare these to the research questions and see how they relate to the theory of Peace journalism. This has been done by using thematic analysis, a method of analysis, which take the coded categories and themes, divide them into subcategories and insert them into cells.<sup>69</sup>

The coding for this thesis was made in different steps, in line with the recommendations of Bryman and Gorden. First step was reading through the interviews, writing down potential themes and arranging them in a way which made sense to one another. This led to five main

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<sup>67</sup> Bryman, pp. 575

<sup>68</sup> Raymond Gorden (1992) *Basic Interviewing Skills*. Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc, pp. 180

<sup>69</sup> Bryman, pp.580

themes: Role of the Journalist, Strategy, Context, Challenges and Solutions. Relevant key words were identified, such as ‘regional differences’ or objectivity’ which were arranged into the corresponding themes. After doing so the transcript was read through once again, with the themes and keywords in mind. Quotes were selected and put in a grid based on the themes. This can be found in appendix 2.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

A common problem within the field of social research is that characteristics which we want to analyze seldom let themselves be observed directly, such as for instance opinions, behaviors and attitudes of different actors.<sup>70</sup> Abstract aspects such as these are made understandable through social research method, in other words operationalized. One example of such operationalization could be the phrasing of interview questions related to research problem. There is a risk when writing such questions that they may be formulated in a way which leans towards one way or another. One way to reach a higher degree of validity is therefore to make the questions of a more concrete nature, even when relating to abstract problems. This aspect has been kept in mind when creating the questionnaires for the interviews.

A common criticism towards case studies is that the research design often is biased due to the personal nature of the researcher. This has a tendency to lead to a small degree of data which is collected on subjective causes. This criticism is related to construct validity, which according to Yin relates primarily to the accuracy of collection of data.<sup>71</sup> To decrease the influence of the researcher’s personal nature it is therefore suggested to 1. Be clear with what type of characteristics is being studied and 2. Show how and why these are connected to the result.

Another type of validity is that of external validity, and usually refers to the problem of generalizing the problem to other cases. The most common trap for researchers’ due to this problem is that cases are shown for specific traits, which will be ‘representative’, which causes bias in the study. This is a common problem for every case study and is difficult to escape entirely. However, in order to increase the external validity of even a qualitative case study it is possible to aspire towards theoretical generalizations to be made. This does not mean that it is certain that the case is representative for other cases, but it does make it

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<sup>70</sup> Jan Teorell & Torsten Svensson (2007) *Att fråga och att svara*. Malmö: Liber, pp.55

<sup>71</sup> Robert K. Yin (2006) *Fallstudier: Design och Genomförande*. Malmö: Liber, pp.58



probable that it can be applied to other cases of similar nature as long as there is a strong theoretical connection. This probability can later be verified through replications.<sup>72</sup>

Reliability is the degree to which the study can be made by another researcher and end up with the same result. A necessary precaution for being able to do so is for the researcher to document every step of the research design and conduction of the study as detailed as possible. Without such documentation, it is impossible to replicate the study yourself, which also is a way in which reliability can be tested.<sup>73</sup>

Drafts were also sent to the respondents, to see if they felt that the transcription was fair to their understanding of the topic. Of the respondents who responded, some wanted to make a few adjustments before being published which I of course agreed to as they were minor and served to clarify what they meant with different statements.

## 4. Result

### 4.1 Themes

The main result of the interviews conducted will be presented according to the key themes which have been identified: Role of the Journalist, Strategy, Context and Challenges. These themes also correspond to the three research questions which relates to the Role of the Journalist, Strategy and Challenges. Three of the themes (Role of the Journalist, Strategy, Challenges) have their respective corresponding research question, while the fourth theme of Context can be considered relevant for the first and the third question.

#### 4.1.1 Role of the Journalist

Questions such as motives are for some of the respondents not considered to be included in the scope of initial reports. As Respondent A says in the interview: “This is just one case of many, and you can’t expect a deep analysis of every detail of every case.” Swedish Radio does have an ambition to contribute to more deep knowledge on a broader context however, and she says that “Swedish Radio presents continuous follow ups on different events which we report on. It is about collecting several cases which have a connection to each other and based on that present a broader picture. We can’t follow everything”. Respondent B is

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<sup>72</sup> Robert K. Yin (2006) *Fallstudier: Design och Genomförande.*, pp. 58

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, pp.59

expressing a similar stance regarding his article, as he says it isn't in the ambition of the live editorial at DN to provide much further context as their profile is live coverage and as such it need to be quick and concise.

The similar situation can be seen in the case of Lahore, where the general situation for Christians in Pakistan is an aspect which I found to have been overlooked in the news coverage. As for the question of why this was not paid more attention to during the live broadcast one of the respondents explains that during the initial report there is little time for deeper analysis. Initial report is restricted to being descriptive in its nature, how many were killed, where did it occur, was it one or several bombers etc. What you cannot do is draw conclusions on why the bombing was conducted. However, it is mentioned that in a later stage, if there is relevance, follow up reports can be made.

Respondent B says that 'every event can be described in everything from a single sentence to a novel, and it is constant challenge as a journalist to balance these two against each other'. One of the key aspects according to him is to adapt to the target audience, and write in a way which relates to them. Context is most necessary if the audience have a big interest, but little knowledge. In the case of Kabul, he says it is an area which Swedes have very little knowledge about, but they also have little interest. This reduce the need for context. "It is a bit sad, but this is the reality which I have to relate to as a journalist".

As for her role of a journalist, respondent F strives towards being objective, and see no conflict between going into detail and providing the 'bigger picture'. Often both can be done simultaneously. When respondent C is asked about unconfirmed statements he answers that 'as a journalist I can't wait three months to make sure what I write is confirmed by a third party'. At the same time, he is self-critical, and does admit that a journalist also need to be cool headed and never publish information without reasonable cause. One of the key indicators of reliable information is when it is published by several independent sources. I ask him about the role of news bureaus, and if there is a risk that information from them start getting spread and as such make it seem as it is coming from several sources when they all stem from the same root, TT for example. 'There is no risk'. He answers. According to the respondent it is obvious when something is taken from TT, AFP or Reuters, and it should be obvious when reading, if they were to appear in different outlets, that this is coming from the same source.

It is clear that journalists face several limitations on what they can achieve, especially on short notice after severe incidents such as bombings have occurred. The nature of the event is one limitation for a journalist, time and space is another. Regarding the relevance of context, this has in many ways a lot to do with the role of the journalist, as he or she is the one who need to make a decision regarding how much context is needed for the article to be relevant to an audience. This is relevant for the framework for Peace Journalism as one of the key things which Peace Journalism promotes is the idea that journalists should be aware and make choices which empowers society at large to value nonviolent responses in conflict. The issue which the interviews highlights is that due to several restrictions, making a choice may not be as easy as it seems.

One strategy which most journalists seems to agree upon is that of follow up reports. In the larger picture, the respondents have mentioned that there are a lot of resources to provide the reader with further context if this would be deemed necessary. This is a stage where there might be more opportunity to make conscious choices on how to steer the coverage in a peace friendly manner.

One of the bigger challenges when it comes to the bigger picture, is what the bigger picture entails. On this aspect Peace Journalism would agree, but this is where it argues that journalists have a responsibility to assume a position towards the event, according to the guidelines of paying attention to the complexity of the situation, less focus on blame and more focus on how seemingly incompatible goals may be aligned. The attitude from most of the respondents, has been to help the reader to understand the event as much as possible. This shows a will to ‘venture beyond mere articulate positions’ (one of the main arguments of Peace Journalism<sup>74</sup>) with the remaining issue that the journalist is restricted by the interest of their reader, something which has been pointed out as ‘unfortunate’.

To conclude this section, the role of the journalist described in the interviews has been shown to correspond with the recommendations of Peace Journalism when it comes to aspire to provide context relevant for a peaceful solution for the conflict. The main issues are limitations in space, time and relevance for their reader. The solution to the problem of not being able to include all relevant aspects in one article is to return to the event in follow ups.

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<sup>74</sup> Jake Lynch (2015) *Peace Journalism: Theoretical and Methodological Developments*, Global Media and Communication, vol.11 (3) 193-199, pp.198

#### 4.1.2 Strategy

Based on the interviews there are two leading questions in writing an article, 1) What do I include and 2) How do I find the information? Most respondents consider it necessary to contribute context to the reader, the question is as always of how much time and opportunity the journalist have to do so. Respondent C explains that he generally makes a background check of what TT has written before to get an overview of the situation. He agrees that in this case there are many aspects which could be relevant to write about, such as the Hazara's role in the Afghan society. But in this case, he did not consider himself to be as well read on the situation as he needed to be if he were to write an analytical text. He also mentions that the lack of communication in preparations for the demonstration is something he would have included if he had known about.

In some cases, the articles include IS in the headline, which seem to imply some certainty to their responsibility. When I ask about this respondent C say that he has not settled with their statement as confirmation. He has also contacted Anders Fänge at the Swedish Afghanistan Committee, and asked him about the role of IS in Afghanistan and this seemed to make their responsibility more probable. According to the respondent, Anders said that the Taliban have no interest of causing fraction between Hazara and the rest of the society. During our interview, I tell him that another representative at SAK seem to have a slightly different interpretation of the situation as he claims that if this attack were to have been attempted by IS, they would have drastically stepped forward from before as they haven't been active in the Kabul area. When I mention this to respondent C he says that he has not heard about this before.

In the case of Lahore, there is less doubt over the Taliban being responsible. On the other hand, there is some doubt regarding their motivation for attacking Christians. Respondent E does not think that statements from terror groups should be taken for granted. In the case of the Taliban you can see that they have a history of attacking Christian churches, funerals etc. As such he considers it to be very likely that they are responsible for this attack as well. I ask respondent E if it can't be so that attacking Christians is more of a mean towards an end, with the end being destabilization of the state of Pakistan. To this he answers 'definitely, but that is very little comfort for the victims'

All of the respondents have used at least one of the more prominent news bureaus, Reuters, AFP or TT. The trust in TT and other news bureaus is very clear during most of the interviews. This is not without reason as they have the main responsibility for being at the site

of action. At the same time one might question the strategy to simply reproduce information with little effort to ensure their validity. What is positive is that when it comes to other sources than the prominent news bureaus, there does seem to be a will to measure their interests in the situation to determine how reliable the information may be. However, there is an undeniable lack of grassroots sources being used by the respondents, the closest to such a source being local Pakistani media 'Dawn', and the two employees at SAK in Kabul.

The reason why I want to highlight the use of the two SAK employees, Anders Fänge and Björn Lindh, is that this can be seen to represent a usage of 'grassroots' which Peace Journalism promotes. However, it also highlights somewhat of a dilemma since despite working at the same organization these two seem to have assumed different opinions on the situation regarding IS in Afghanistan. One thinks it is remarkable that they have moved forward to Kabul while the other claims it has only been a matter of time before they would do so. This lead to a lot of responsibility on the personal competence of the journalist to be able to identify which local actors that are relevant, and why. As the general knowledge have been identified to be low, this may be a possible explanation for why the use of grassroots is relatively low.

The issue of knowledge has been highlighted, as most of the respondents have shown little to none previous experience or knowledge of the situation in Lahore or Kabul. In one case, it has been confirmed that lack of knowledge has led to relevant aspects of the situation being excluded from the produced article. This issue highlights that despite an ambition to produce articles which can be seen to correspond with many of the guidelines of Peace Journalism, such as complexity, cultural factors and conflict resolution, the lack of knowledge is an obstacle which restricts the journalists in their choice of which factors to emphasize in their articles.

Where there has been knowledge, the issue of space has shown to affect the articles written, particularly in the case of respondent E who in the interview shown a good understanding of most aspects of the conflict in Pakistan regarding the perceived discrimination of Christians. In this case, he made a conscious choice to narrow himself down to the ideology of terrorism, which he argues is global.

In conclusion, general issues from a Peace Journalistic view point are a lack of knowledge and usage of grassroots actors. Lack of knowledge can be seen as a possible explanation for

lack of grassroots, as the knowledge is not there for most of the respondents to determine relevance and reliability of such actors.

#### 4.1.3 Challenges

##### *Limitations*

Respondent A is very clear that you cannot have high expectations on the first report from an incident, and there are many uncertain factors that you have to relate to as a journalist. On our discussion about wrong information it should always be remembered that it is not necessarily due to the journalist doing a bad job, there can be a lot of distorted information due to the chaotic situation that appears, and eye witnesses can have perceived certain aspects in a way which did not happen. Another aspect which is lacking from the narrative of selected articles is how the fragile relationship between the Hazara and the government increased difficulties during preventive work.

##### *Interpretation*

There is some dispute regarding IS responsibility for the Kabul bombing, considering their lack of previous actions in the area. When I ask respondent B how he sees the situation with IS in Kabul he says that IS is becoming such an influential actor on the global arena that their statement can be taken as any statement from other political actors. He means that no matter the truthfulness of their statement, there is a relevance as they are an actor with influence. With this he is saying that he is not in any way trying to present it as a truth that IS is responsible, but it is an undeniable truth that they have made the statement, and that in itself is news worthy according to him. At this point I ask him if it is not a fine line between presenting a statement such as this, and the implications of it. Meaning that the reader may read the article and assume that IS is responsible despite it not being completely verified.

When I bring up the three perpetrators which turned out to be two, and ice cream truck which did not have an explosion he shows an interest in how and why the information might have been wrong in the initial report. When asked on how common it is with unreliable information he says that it happens for sure, but has no way of saying how common it may be. He mentions that writing articles on distant countries without being present is more challenging than reporting live. “The further away from a situation in time and space, the higher the degree of uncertainty”, he says. Not being present makes the journalist dependent on external sources, in the case of DN respondent B says it is common with human rights observatories, as well as sources from USA and Russia. One of the bigger problems with using sources such as these are that they are not always unbiased, and it can be problematic to determine how this

will affect the information provided. As a journalist, it is common to use TT, Reuters and AFP. When I ask if he double check these sources to ensure their validity, he says that he does not find this necessary as he has a high degree of trust in these institutions.

In respondent E's article on Lahore, the author spoke about the terror attack in Lahore being connected to the attacks in Brussels or Paris. In respondent F's article, Sten Widmalm is quoted to saying the opposite, that there are no signs of connection between the groups. I ask respondent F if she can elaborate on what she think Widmalm meant when she talked to him, and she says that her interpretation is that Widmalm was referring to the direct cause of the attack, with the difference being that Lahore was not bombed due to anything to do with Europe but is connected to the execution of Qadri (Islamic fundamentalist who assassinated an opponent of the blasphemy law). When I ask respondent F if there might be confusion for the readers regarding certain definitions which may be taken for granted she says 'What is clear to me isn't always clear to the reader. But my goal is that the reader shouldn't be left with more questions, without anyone to hold their hand. The challenge is that different readers have different experience and make different assumptions. So as a journalist, I try to deal with the questions which I find relevant'.

#### *Interest*

During the live broadcast on Lahore parallels to Brussels were made, as they occurred briefly before the bombing in Lahore. Respondent D says during our interview that certain topics are very dominant in Swedish media at the moment, such as Trump, Brexit and refugees. If there are bombings in Pakistan it has some relevance, but there are many other events in Pakistan which there is no interest to report on, and it is hard to find an audience to write for about such things. Some of the examples respondent D brings up in the case of Pakistan is deteriorating democracy, and increased cooperation with China as part of their one belt one road policy. There are also positive aspects, such as preventive work against dengue-fever.

#### *Balance*

One question of interest in the case of Lahore is the role of Christians in Pakistan, especially in relation to the blasphemy law. Systematic discrimination against Christians is in some of the articles described as a problem, and it has been mentioned how Christians are persecuted for ripping pages out of the Qur'an. At the same time there is a majority in favor of democracy in Pakistan, and that it is a minority of violent radicals who persecute Christians. I ask respondent F of how to balance these two images of Pakistan, that of democracy and that of persecution. She answers "The majority is in favor of democracy, but the problem in

Pakistan is that a minority of radicals has become more radicalized. So, while they don't reflect the views of the majority, their actions have become more severe. When it comes to democracy it is up for interpretation. "It is probable that a Swedish interpretation of democracy includes protecting minorities' rights, while in Pakistan this may not be the case to the same extent."

In the article of respondent G, it is mentioned that Lahore is one of the safe cities in Pakistan and has been struck by relatively few terror incidents. I ask the respondent why he considers it important to include this aspect in the article. He says he considers it important because he thinks that it has to do with providing an honest picture of what kind of country Pakistan is. He draws parallels to Sweden. 'If we look at Sweden for example, it would be more sensational if there were shootings in Luleå compared with Malmö where it is much more common'.

The example of Luleå compared with Malmö in Sweden is quite telling, as it shows that there are differences within countries regarding social context and general security. This becomes harder for a reader to determine the further away you go, and as such the need for a journalist to show this in their article becomes bigger. For the general Swede, a bombing in Lahore may seem like one of many, but when you consider the relative safety and calm in Lahore before the incident it becomes slightly more sensational. This dilemma of how to frame a sensational event does show a need for Peace Journalism as it provides the tools necessary to describe horrible attacks in a balanced manner. Most of the respondents have shown a clear ambition to provide context to their reader. There are however some aspects which are lacking from the commentary on the bombings. In the case of Kabul, none of the articles has asked the question of why the Taliban renounce the deed considering their history of persecution of the Hazara population. Further questions on the relationship between the Hazara and the Afghan government are also lacking from the articles.

Respondent F describes her role as she says she is aspiring to be objective, but at the same time wants to contribute to the debate. This ambition is a clear example of how elements of Peace Journalism can be found in the journalist's view on their role, as one main aspect of Peace Journalism is to 'enable debate'. The respondent does not consider objectivity and activism to contradict each other but I would like to raise some question marks if there are at least some challenges in balancing the two. The goal of leaving the reader without questions might be a bit unachievable, and maybe not even something a journalist should aspire towards. On the contrary, an article which sparks questions in the reader might be a very well



written article as it is intriguing and presents the context of the case, and its different aspects. Again, this is an issue which is brought up by Peace Journalism as it considers the goal to be to 'enable' debate, rather than 'leading' it. The goal isn't necessarily as described in the interview to 'hold the readers hand', but rather to provide the tools necessary to understand the situation.

Contextual aspects, such as democracy related questions, are brought up during one of the interviews to have been reported on. These are questions which relate to the recommendations of Peace Journalism, as it provides context to the conflict. One aspect which the interviews have shown is that the journalists have shown an interest in these aspects, but due to a perceived lack of interest from their audience they have not been able to justify the inclusion for such events. This shows to be a key challenge for Peace Journalism to be successful, as the framework exists, but as the media industry is shaped today it needs to cater to an audience to be implemented.

To conclude, issues which have been identified during the interviews correspond with the criticism of traditional media by Peace Journalism. Most of the respondents have for example attempted to avoid 'sensational' reporting of the bombings in both Lahore and Kabul, and provide some extra context for the reader in the shape of background about the U.S war for example. Another question brought up by Peace Journalism is that of the larger debate in the society, and this is another aspect which has been identified during the interviews. The difference between 'enabling' and 'leading' debate has been identified, an aspect which potentially could be explored further. Finally, the respondents have all shown a tendency to be highly influenced by finding an audience for what they write. This remains a major challenge for Peace Journalism to adhere in order to be further implemented within traditional media.

#### 4.1.4 Context

After describing the background surrounding the power line which is the cause of demonstration, one of the first things which respondent A reports on during the broadcast is that there is uncertainty regarding to what extent the Afghan government has provided sufficient security surrounding the demonstration. Furthermore, she says that containers which have been provided as part of the security preparations has not been moved and was seen as an obstacle for emergency staff. This statement is something I brought up in my interview, as a follow up report on the incident released by the UN has stated that there had been long discussions between the government and Hazara on how to ensure the safety of the

protesters, as well as concluding that the emergency response was appropriate and that The Afghan Security Forces immediately opened up the road blocks to ensure access to the site. There seem to be an inconsistency with what was initially reported, and what was later established to have happened.

Another question brought up during the live broadcast on Kabul is the fact that IS has little previous presence in Kabul. IS responsibility is not something which is portrayed as a certainty, and the uncertainties of information is acknowledged. It is said however that there is a conflict between the IS and the Taliban, but not explicitly stated how this ties into whether IS is responsible or not. One major aspect which is said to speak against the Taliban, is that they have condemned the deed. When I ask respondent A about why they would condemn an attack on the Hazara, when they themselves previously has been responsible for many attacks on the minority group, she has no answer. One possible explanation when looking at the previous history of the Taliban could be that the Taliban generally has a history of smaller, more targeted attacks rather than the large scale of this bombing in question, which also targeted a high number of civilian compared to what the Taliban usually have done.

In Lahore, there have been some uncertainties regarding to how it can be assumed that the attack was aimed towards Christians, primarily considering the many Muslim casualties. Respondent D says that there are many indicators toward it being so. Not only did the attack occur during Easter, but it also was targeted towards a park which is common for Christians to bring their children to play with. The area is an area where Christians are overrepresented. With that being said, it can never be taken for certain the motives of terror groups such as the Taliban, which do have a history of attacking Muslims. When asked if there might be some political gain in attacking Lahore, a perceived safer city, for the Taliban respondent D answers that this could be the case for sure. Her answer highlights the fact that it is rare in case of terrorist attacks to have clear answers, rather it seems to be up to journalists to choose one angle to write about.

One of the more clearly focused articles was respondent E's chronicle on the bombing in Lahore. One of the more controversial phrasings of the article is where he refers to bombings such as the one in Lahore as "Cancer of Violence". When I ask if he can elaborate on the term, the respondent answers that he has a long experience of the region and based on this experience he considers this to be a very accurate description of bombings such as this. Suicide bombing is horrible he says, and it is a phenomenon which is not contained but has spread across the region, and even to Europe. The respondent claims in his article that there is

a connection between Brussels/Paris and Lahore, something which Pakistan expert Sten Widmalm does not agree with. Respondent E explains that there is no direct connection between the two groups, as they are separate from each other in agency, but he means that their ideology is similar and that is the ideology of radical violent Islamism. As he previously talked about Islamism spreading rapidly, I ask if he has any answers to what the root of the 'disease' may be. He says that it is difficult to find a single point where it began, and it depends entirely on how far back you want to go. The invasion of Iraq is of course relevant, as well as the Arab spring. You can go even further back and look at the initial US intervention in Iraq/Kuwait. All these events, and many more contribute to radicalism according to Respondent E.

Another choice of word which struck my mind when reading the article was of respondent E use of infidel, where he writes that 'the bomber only saw infidels'. I wonder how the respondent can know what the perpetrator was thinking when detonating the bomb. He says that this is his conclusion from his experience of the region, that many bombers are driven by an ideology which justifies their actions. He says that of course any case can be unique in nature, and he can't know for certain what was going on in the head of the bomber, but 'for me it is the only way to make sense of the inhumanity in attacking small children in this way'.

In the case of Kabul, the misrepresented information doesn't seem to be at the fault of the journalists, as they have used reliable sources and triangulated to ensure the validity of their information. This shows of a practical issue for Peace Journalism, who argues that one of the main responsibilities of the journalist is to determine the process leading up to the event, in this case the bombing. The road blocks are one aspect which makes great difference, as the Afghan government can be perceived as indifferent to the Hazara population. The lack of voice from the group of protesters is very clear, and would from a Peace Journalism perspective be something which contributed to giving voice to all rival parties. Peace Journalism should also say that in the example of road blocks being reported to restrict rescue personnel from accessing the site of emergency, this is not the most relevant aspect as it could be more seen as a symptom of a larger issue, which is the discrimination of the Hazara. Some possible questions in this case which Peace Journalism would be more focused on are: Does the government have any reason to restrict the access to security for the Hazara population? Why would they do so?

Previous articles have been mentioned to bring up the case of the power line. This can be seen to correspond with the Peace Journalism recommendation of 'exploring background', the

problem is that there is nothing which links the reports on Kabul with this previous article. The issue remains for the reader to conveniently access relevant information on the background.

The theme of context corresponds a lot with the theme of knowledge in that the journalist is reliant on previous knowledge to provide proper context. As mentioned in the previous section of Knowledge, respondent E's article is one of the more consciously value based articles. Islamistic violence is described as both cancer and a monster, which at a first read seems to stand in stark contrast to Peace Journalism which aims towards a more nuanced description of conflict. However, it can also be said that this article corresponds with Peace Journalisms ambition to engage in conflict, and highlight issues rather than only stating objective facts. This article shows how the issue of time and space results in an article which frames the conflict in black and white, despite that the author in the interview has proven to have knowledge of other aspects of the conflict, and in no way, seems to think that it is a matter of Christians vs Muslims. This seems to show that knowledge about the conflict is not sufficient, as the journalist still is restricted by institutional aspects when it comes to writing the article.

In conclusion, difficulties have been shown to arise when it comes to validate information in initial stages of the event. Peace Journalism's solution to this problem would probably be to not focus so much on the details, such as if the road blocks were removed or not, but more structural issues such as the history between the government and the Hazara. Lack of knowledge from the journalist itself could possibly be alleviated by a strong connection to previous articles. This is not something which have been shown in the two case studies. Finally, respondent E's article can both be problematic from a Peace Journalism perspective, but also to some degree follow the recommendations. This article shows how the institutional aspects of time and space restricts the author in his ability to include all relevant aspects, as the author in the interview showed an awareness of a lot of aspects of the conflict which he didn't have space to include in the article.

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to compare journalistic methodology in practice to the theoretical framework of Peace Journalism. To achieve the aim of the study, the following research question was set out to be answered: *In what ways, if any, are the ideas behind “Peace Journalism” reflected in Swedish journalists’ reports about the bombings in Kabul and Lahore in 2016?* It was delimited by the following three sub-research questions:

1. How do journalists perceive their role and responsibility in terms of providing context to their reader?
2. What strategies do Swedish journalists use when they write about one of the two cases selected for this study, Kabul and Lahore?
3. What are some of the primary challenges which journalists deal with in their coverage of the bombings which took place in these cities?

The questions provided the following answers:

- That most respondents describe part of their role as a journalist to provide deeper analysis but are unable to do so due to external factors such as time, space and the interest of their audience.
- That reliability in established sources, news bureaus primarily, is heavily emphasized while local grassroots by most respondents but one has been neglected. This is a part of the journalists’ strategy
- That the respondents claim to be limited due to primarily two factors: time and space
- That some of the respondents write about subjects which they have little to none direct experience or knowledge of
- That the respondents acknowledge the need to write for an audience

Thus, the answer to the main question “In what ways, if any, are the ideas behind “Peace Journalism” reflected in Swedish journalists’ reports about the bombings in Kabul and Lahore in 2016?” can be answered with: Traces of Peace Journalism has been identified in the work of the journalists due to their perceived ambition to provide a deeper analysis of conflict. Some of the challenges which have been identified can also be seen as relevant for Peace Journalism, as these are factors which are not explicitly accounted for in its recommendations to journalists.

Established research describes mass media as a biased entity which seeks sensational stories to attract the interest of their reader. Hannerz for example conclude that a large proportion of the journalists interviewed consider it necessary to publish material which are of interest for their readers back home.<sup>75</sup> To some extent this tendency has been highlighted in the result of this study, since there are aspects other than the number of casualties and perpetrator which have been overlooked. However, it is difficult to say that the answer is simple as all the respondents have shown an ambition to provide a deeper analysis for their reader, and some even guilt that not more is being written on the subject. This does seem to indicate that the problem might be institutional rather than on an individual level. Again, this is a challenge which Peace Journalism does not fully address as the guidelines are more aimed towards the individual journalist. This aspect can also be seen in the previous research, as there often is a choice within journalistic research to either focus on the individual journalist (such as in the case of Global Journalism) or the institutional aspects (such as in the case of the Propaganda Model).

Due to limited time for any significant research, the journalists have shown to be reliant on established previous material, or external actors such as the international news bureaus Reuters, AFP, TT, etc. When it comes to these external actors, they have been said to have a lot of influence and are due to time pressure rarely questioned. This trend from the respondents seem to mirror the statement from the previous research of Chomsky and Herman that journalists have a tendency to repeat the information provided to them by established sources.<sup>76</sup> Simultaneously, while the journalists who participated in this study generally has been shown to favor more established sources, few have implemented local grassroots in their research. One of the main recommendations of Peace Journalism is to provide an even portrayal of all sides of a conflict and due to this, local grassroots has been highlighted as a type of actor which often is overlooked when media reports on conflicts.<sup>77</sup> This recommendation has been shown to be relevant, as the consensus of those interviewed has shown a profound reliance on established media to provide information on the conflict.

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<sup>75</sup> Ulf Hannerz (2004) *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 26

<sup>76</sup> Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky (2008) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, pp.29

<sup>77</sup> Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, Jake Lynch, Robert A. Hackett, eds. (2011) *Expanding Peace Journalism: Comparative and Critical Approaches*, pp.43

Based on the interviews, the result and analysis section has shown that journalists are very restricted in what they can do in terms of writing articles or other sorts of reporting. There are several reasons for this. Primarily, it is evident that journalists have very little time to produce and publish an article. Another restriction for the journalist have been shown to come in the form of the space which they have to write the article. When combined with the time pressure, there is little room for the journalist to include a deeper analysis. Instead their primarily focus lies in describing the event and finding an angle which can attract an audience. This is particularly important in cases such as the bombings in Lahore or Kabul, as the interest in a Swedish context is relatively low leaving even less room for a deeper analysis to be made. This is an institutional challenge for the implementation of Peace Journalism. It is an aspect which also has been brought up by critics as an obstacle for Peace Journalism to truly be implemented. One question for future research could therefore be how and if journalism can produce material which to a lesser degree is dependent on the interest of an audience.

Due to many challenges which restricts the journalist in an initial stage, the need for follow up analysis has been highlighted. The idea for such stories are to take more time on angles which can be considered relevant and underreported, in order to bring more context to the reader. One of the most prevalent question marks that remains and has not been addressed in any of the articles which have been reviewed is that of the relationship between the government and the minorities, Christians in the case of Pakistan and Hazara in the case of Afghanistan. These are questions which can be found within the Peace Journalism framework, and a remaining question is to what degree such questions can be found in a more quantitative analysis of media, as one of the main arguments of the critics of Peace Journalism is that journalism already do pay attention to details other than the sensational aspects. Another fundamental question is how much Peace Journalism can contribute with on a theoretical level, as the result of this study has shown that most of the respondents to a certain degree already has a methodology which includes some of the guidelines provided by Peace Journalism, such as providing extra context. If the theoretical ideas of Peace Journalism already are present, but are restricted due to other factors, it might be more beneficial for global peace making to focus on the institutional obstacles rather than implementing a theoretical Peace Journalism outlook.

While this study has been explorative in the sense that it has provided reflections from journalists on how they approach conflicts in distant countries, larger questions which remains are if Swedish journalists should aim to get deeper involved, and if it would contribute to

solving such conflicts. These larger questions can be seen in relation to the criticism of Peace Journalism, who dismisses the notion that a journalist should attempt to assume a partial stance towards conflicts which are being reported on. With these problematic aspects in mind, one suggestion for a possible research question would be: *Are there any problematic aspects within traditional media which prevents Peace Journalism from being implemented to a higher degree than it already is?*



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## Appendix

## **Appendix 1: Interview Guides**

### **Naila Saleem**

- 1. How familiar are you with the situation in Afghanistan and how come you got to make a report?**
- 2. Does anything speak against the fact that IS were responsible for the attack?**
- 3. Why does the Taliban condemn the attack when they have a previous history of targeting the Hazara?**
- 4. Does the government have any responsibility in this situation?**
- 5. You don't seem convinced that authorities made adequate preparations for the safety of the demonstration?**

*Do you (SR) have any ambition to provide a deeper analysis?*

- 6. The government faced some restrictions in upholding security due to lack of communication with the Hazara. Why is this not mentioned?**
- 7. You claim that there were difficulties for emergency to get through the blockades, but according to the UN the blockades were immediately removed and emergency response adequate. What do you think is the reason for these two opposing statements?**

### **Krister Zeidler**

- 1. How familiar are you with the situation in Afghanistan and how come you got to make a report?**
- 2. When initially speculating on responsibility of certain groups, in particular based on claims from such groups, how reliable does the information need to be for you to present it as a fact?**

3. **How did you get in contact with Robert Brooks and Anders Fänge?**
  
4. **There were some things in your article which seem to not be later confirmed, such as the ammount of perpetrators and a third explosion in an ice cream truck. How problematic is it for you as a journalist to select reliable information?**
  
5. **How relevant do you as a journalist consider it to write on the general situation in Afghanistan, for example the relation between the Hazara and the Government?**

Adam Svensson

1. **How familiar are you with the situation in Afghanistan and how come you got to make a report?**
  
2. **When initially speculating on responsibility of certain groups, in particular based on claims from such groups, how reliable does the information need to be for you to present it as a fact?**

*How do you as a journalist prevent misinterpretations from the reader?*

*Lack of time seem to be a common challenge for journalists, have you noticed this during your time as a journalist?*

3. **There were some things in your article which seem to not be later confirmed, such as the ammount of perpetrators and a third explosion in an ice cream truck. How problematic is it for you as a journalist to select reliable information?**

*Does it happen that DN refrain from publishing articles due to lack of reliable material?*

4. **How relevant do you as a journalist consider it to write on the general situation in Afghanistan, for example the relation between the Hazara and the Government?**

## Mats Larsson

1. **Can you elaborate on the phrase” Cancer of violence”?**
2. **Pakistan expert Sten Widmalm considers there to be no connection between Pakistan and Brussels/Paris. You seem to disagree, can you elaborate?**
3. **Do you think that based on a statement from the terror group wanting to target Christians it can be considered a certainty?**
4. **You write that the bomber only saw infidels. What do you base this assumption on?**
5. **What is the biggest problem for Christians in Pakistan?**

## Emmylou Tuvhag

1. **How come you wrote three separate articles on Lahore, and why do you think it is usual that it happens?**
2. **How come you wrote about it, considering you almost exclusively write about finance and economy?**
3. **What are your sources?**
4. **What responsibility does a journalist have to include sources in their articles?**
5. **Were there any aspects of the bombing that you cut out of your articles?**
6. **How do you choose your experts to ask questions, and how do you ensure their reliability?**

*Widmalm doesn't see any connection between Bussels and Pakistan, but others do. It seems like they differ in their interpretation of the word 'connection' and there are different conclusions based on how it is interpreted. Do you recognize this problem of interpretation and is it something you need to think about when you write articles?*

*Widmalm mentions a possibility of riots against Christians, but reminds that a majority in Pakistan is for Democracy. Ranked as the sixth most exposed country for Christians there are certainly challenges in the country, at the same time there are Christians who are free to*

*exercise their religion. How do you as a journalist try to balance these conflicting images of Pakistan?*

## Anders Bolling

- 1. Why do you think more Christians died if the target was Christians?**
- 2. Do you think that based on a statement from the terror group wanting to target Christians it can be considered a certainty?**

*How come that use of sources vary to such a degree between journalists?*

*Do you think journalist get 'scared' due to lack of time and problems with reliability of sources?*

- 3. What is your comment on the statement that Taliban groups want to destabilize the state of Pakistan by targeting Christians?**

*If you have lack of time or space, do you think it is better to focus on the wider picture or particular details?*

- 4. Why do you consider it important to point out the relative stability of Lahore compared to other parts of Pakistan?**

*Should a journalist be analytical or descriptive?*

- 5. Would you say that you portray Christians as a vulnerable group, if yes what do you base this on?**
- 6. Can you elaborate on the connection to the US led invasion of Afghanistan?**

## **Margita Boström**

- 1. How familiar are you with the situation in Afghanistan and how come you got to make a report?**
- 2. Do you think it is important to highlight the regional differences in Pakistan, such as Lahore being perceived as safer than Karachi for example?**

*How do you perceive the security level in Lahore in and after 2016?*

- 3. Do you agree with the statement that there are others areas the terrorists could have targeted if they wanted to maximize the Christian casualties?**
- 4. Can you call it an attack on Christians when the majority of the casualties were Muslim?**

*Was it obvious that it was an attack on Christians?*

*Can it be a show of strength to attack Lahore? Kan det vara ett styrkebesked att attackera Lahore?*

*How do you find the relevance of looking at the general situation of Christians in Pakistan?*

**5. How do you find the interest in a Swedish context?**

*How do you find the comparison of terror in the west with countries such as Pakistan?*

**Appendix 2: Coding grid**

	Background	Strategy	Role of the Journalist	Challenges	Solutions	
Naila	Temporary replacement  Worked in Afghanistan 2001-2003	We strive towards providing a bigger picture, in the form of follow up coverage	In this case, there need to be a quick report and there is no room for deeper analysis	You can't answer questions with information you don't have Not being there in person mean that you are dependent on external sources.		
Adam	Live-editorial (DN)	Follow ups are great, if there is an interest and relevance of it. It is also important to be clear with what you write, and how you write, to reduce the risk of misunderstandings	"Every event can be described in everything from a single sentence to a novel".	"The further away from a situation in time and space, the higher the degree of uncertainty"	Outsourcing (Human rights observers, USA, Russia)	
Krister	16 years in TT  Krister was at the time of the incident the one active  I have a general interest for	"When I hear that IS has taken responsibility for the action, I don't take it for certain. In this case I contacted Anders Fänge at the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, and he told me that	"A journalist can't wait three months to make sure that all the information is correct. At the same time, it is important to	"We're damned if you do, damned if we don't"  "I was not aware of any previous attacks on	Reliability on external sources	"Yes, I think it would be very good to have hyperlinks to other articles on the topic. This is something done



	foreign policy, but have never written about Afghanistan before.	Taliban have no interest in causing fraction between Hazara and the rest of the society.”.	keep a cool head and as far as possible make sure that the claims you make are trustworthy ”	Hazara by the Taliban”.		already, but there is also some technical issues with the database of DN etc.”
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	Background	Strategy	Role of the Journalist	Context	Challenges	Solutions
Margita	Regional responsibility for south east asia/south asia  Been to Pakistan, but not as correspondent	I sat down and read through the major news bureaus such as Reuters, AFP etc. I also look at local media, for example Dawn is a newspaper in Pakistan which is influential”		Lahore is safer than for example Karachi. I drew parallels to the attack on a school in Karachi which is one of the more controversial attacks in recent history.	It is hard to find a target audience for many of the more positive aspects in countries such as Pakistan.	
Anders	No previous experience or knowledge. Was at the live-editorial at the time of event and had to jump into it.	Several sources are of course always good, in the case of AFP I consider them sufficiently reliable to use their information.		More Muslims died since Christians is a very small minority in Pakistan. While the area is Christian Muslims are present in the area too. It is difficult to exclude Muslim casualties.	Journalism share similar traits to scientific research, but do not have the same demands for formality. This means that the journalist have a very individual responsibility.”	Yes, journalist can be scared. But this can be positive, as you refrain from producing unreliable information.
Mats	Been working in	Not only did the group	It may very well	It shares characteristic		

	the region for about a decade	claim responsibility, but they also have a history of attacking Christian churches, funerals etc.	be so that the Christians is the mean to an end, rather than the end itself. But that is little comfort for the victims.	s of cancer such as not only being extremely severe, but it is also spreading rapidly across the region.		
Emmylou	There are many terror attacks every year around the world, and there isn't as much interest outside of USA or Europe. I know we are bad at covering this part of the world."	I sought the expertise of three professors, Sten Widmalmd, Magnus Norell and Lennart Weibull.	I have a bit of a guilty conscience since I know we are bad at covering this part of the world.	Opression of Christians is committed by a minority. It is a very radical minority however, and while this minority is less than 10 % they have become quite a big problem when it comes to Christians in Pakistan.	I am sure I had to cut out aspects, sadly I can't remember at the moment.  "What is obvious to the writer isn't always obvious to the reader	