

Peace Journalism and Framing in the Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar

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Abstract

The country of Myanmar started political reforms in 2010. Along with the process of becoming more democratic, peace and reconciliation have become very important due to the decades-long civil wars that continue to rage between ethnic minority groups and Myanmar Army. The Myanmar media have the potential to play a huge role in national reconciliation. One conflict between the Muslim and the Buddhist of Rakhine State of Myanmar has gained international attention.

Research shows that media play a destructive or constructive role in conflict resolution depending on which news frames they adopt in reporting. This uses the theoretic peace journalism perspective, in which media take a careful, consistent and conscientious approach to report stories that create opportunities for society at large and emphasizes non-violent responses to conflict (Lynch, 2008). Using mass media framing theory and existing peace journalism literature, this study investigates the prominence of war and peace journalism framing in the media coverage of an ongoing conflict in the Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar between a group of Muslims and Buddhists who inhabit the region. This study employed a comparative analysis to examine war and peace journalism frames from stories published in four newspapers; two from Myanmar, one from Bangladesh, and one from the U.S. The analysis was guided by Galtung's (1986) classifications of peace and war journalism and operational definitions derived by Lee and Maslog (2005).

Findings suggest that war journalism frames are dominant in the coverage of the Rakhine conflict regardless of media origin. Even though not statistically significant, the government-run newspaper from Myanmar was revealed to produce more peace journalism stories than the other

three newspapers. There was a slight difference in coverage of the conflict between English-language and Burmese-language newspapers in terms of peace/war journalism framing. English news stories were more likely to be framed as war journalism than peace journalism. In addition, news stories produced by U.S. journalists and foreign news wire services such as the *Associated Press* and *Reuters* were more war-dominant than stories produced by local/regional journalists of Myanmar and Bangladesh. This study calls for international and local journalists to reevaluate their current conflict reporting practices to promote their positive roles in peace processes.

Keywords: *peace journalism, framing theory, media frames, Myanmar, Rakhine, Bangladesh*

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Dedication

To peace on Earth.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

There are many ways to tell a story. In the practice of journalism, often two news articles from different organizations will report the same issue from different perspectives. Journalists tell the story in a way to which their respective audiences can relate and understand. To do so, journalists adopt 'frames' that can help to define social problems and to facilitate understanding by viewers, listeners, or readers about how those problems come to be and what to be done about them (Nelson et al., 1997 ; Cissel, 2008). This process is known as framing.

A useful theoretical background to understanding the influence of media in shaping events can be explained by framing theory. Gitlin (1980) provides the following definition of media frames: "Media frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (p 7). Framing is especially evident in conflict reporting. Bratic & Schirch (2007) suggest that the media shape what we see and hear about conflict and journalists have opinions and beliefs based on their experiences. Therefore, opinions and beliefs of journalists based on their experiences control the types of stories that get covered and the way stories are framed. On the other hand, in traditional journalism, "immediacy, drama, simplicity, ethnocentrism, and hostility towards adversaries" are important values in the news reporting process (Wolfsfeld, 2004, p 15). A traditional journalist may adopt frames such as violence, causalities, or policies as in a way of sensationalizing reporting to boost circulation and ratings (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Framing can dramatically change the tone of an article based on the journalist's interpretation. If he or she were to adopt frames focusing on advocacy, highlighting peace initiatives by focusing less on ethnic and religious differences to promote peace processes, it may be considered peace

journalism (Galtung, 1986; 1998). Opinions and beliefs of journalists regarding what is newsworthy can dramatically influence news framing.

Media play an important role in conflict resolution. Wolfsfeld (2001) argues that media can play a destructive or constructive role in peace processes according to news frame that they adopt in conflict reporting. While media should ideally be objective and take a neutral stance, at the same time, they have an ethical obligation to encourage reconciliation among hostile populations. Peace journalists not only report on conflicts but go beyond traditional reporting looking for behind-the-scene facts which can play powerful roles to prevent further violence (Galtung & Lynch, 2005). In peace journalism, media play positive roles in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Like many other Southeast Asian countries, Myanmar consists of numerous and diverse ethnic and religious groups. Myanmar has been inundated with decades-long civil wars between ethnic minority groups and the government since the country gained independence from British colonial rule. In 2010, Myanmar began a political transition to democracy after five decades under one of the most repressive regimes in the world (Peace Direct, 2014). Since then, along with the process of becoming more democratic, peace and reconciliation are very important as Myanmar de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi has officially reaffirmed (Blake, 2016). Given these unique circumstances, Myanmar media have potential to play a huge role in national reconciliation. Myanmar media is an excellent case study to analyze peace and war journalism in conflict reporting.

Among many internal conflicts within the country, an ongoing conflict between two religious groups in the Northwest region of the country has recently garnered significant media attention around the world. The conflict centers on two groups, the Buddhist and the Muslim

communities in the Rakhine state. Outbreaks of intense violence between the Buddhists and the Muslims occurred in the Rakhine State in 2012. Clashes between the two groups led to death, destruction of property, and mass displacement. Media reports that more than 100 people were killed during the violence in 2012 resulting approximately 125,000 people living in temporary camps and thousands fled the country by boat to neighboring countries especially Bangladesh. Myanmar and Bangladesh media have been reporting on the issue extensively because the conflict is related to border and immigration issues between two countries. In addition, this conflict may have attracted media attention in the United States because it is a human rights situation as well as a refugee problem directly related to the U.S. The U.S. State Department reports that the number of refugees from Myanmar in the U.S., mainly from the Muslim community of the Rakhine State, has outpaced those from Syria in recent years (Mclaughlin, 2016). As Iyengar (1991) states international news organizations play an important role in providing information to policy elites and shaping public opinion. Therefore, how the Rakhine conflict is covered by the U.S. media may influence on opinion of American people as well as policy elites.

Understanding the media practices of three media and media framing in the news coverage of the Rakhine conflict from a peace journalism perspective will provide valuable practical information for peace journalism advocates, grassroots campaigns, and journalist training intervention.

The purpose of this study is to identify the prominent news frames used by local and international newspapers to report on the conflict. Using mass media framing theory and peace journalism literature, findings from this study will provide important insights into how media can play a more active role in the peace building process. It is also interesting to look at the roles of

news media particularly media from involving countries and a third party in the peace process of the conflict from an intercultural perspective. The study will examine news framing of three different countries: Myanmar, Bangladesh and the U.S. News reports and editorials from each country will be analyzed. News coverage of the conflict within one year after the 2015 election of Myanmar will be looked at. This study attempts to answer four research questions. First, what are the frames dominantly used by the three media outlets analyzed? Next, how do different media report on the conflict? Third, what are the sources of information that are used in the reports? Finally, what is the role of war/peace journalism in the framing of stories?

Background on the Communal Violence in Rakhine State

This study focuses on an ongoing conflict between two groups of people living in the Rakhine State, Myanmar also known as Arakan State. Rakhine State is located on the western coast of Myanmar bordering the Chittagong Hills region of Bangladesh. The conflict centers in Northern Rakhine consisting Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. It arose out of communal violence between the Buddhist community and the Muslim community of the Rakhine State in 2012. The Buddhists of the Rakhine State are an officially recognized ethnic group of Myanmar but the latter are not.

This is a deep-seated problem and strong resentment has been building on both sides for a long time resulting cycles of revenge attacks. In media, the issue is sometimes reported as an identity crisis. The Muslims of the State identify themselves as 'Rohingya' insisting that they are an indigenous race pointing out the long historical presence of Muslim residents in Rakhine (Tonkin, 2014). However, the Myanmar authorities and many Buddhists of the Rakhine State have argued that the Muslims are immigrants and descendants of the immigrants originally from Bangladesh. They have rejected the term "Rohingya" and use the term "Bengali". Both terms are considered to be controversial as Aung San Suu Kyi, the Myanmar foreign minister and minister of the President's Office, strongly warned against using those terms because they are incendiary and create greater divisions in the society (Gerin, 2016).

Though, 'Rohingya' is a term commonly used by international media and humanitarian aid groups by showing their support to the Muslim group to be recognized as an ethnic minority group of Myanmar. Supporters and advocates for the Muslim group claim that the Rohingyas are a stateless population and the human rights of Rohingyas are being violated by forcing them to

move to temporary camps and by restricting them from travelling within the country (Ponniah, 2017).

Sometimes, the conflict is reported as a border and immigration issue between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Leider (2014) posits that this issue has been left unsolved by both countries for many years. Myanmar government officials say them as Bengalis who illegal immigrants and who are descendants of illegal migrants that entered the country while Myanmar was under British colonial rule and Bangladesh is the homeland of Bengali Muslims. Bangladesh has always been denied the claim pointing out long history immigration influx from Myanmar to Bangladesh. Bangladeshi officials claim that they have been hosting thousands of refugees from Myanmar. The migration crisis adds to other serious border issues between two countries such as illegal drug trade and insurgent groups (Ganguly & Miliate, 2015).

Debates

The Myanmar government is heavily criticized among influential international communities for not recognizing the Muslims of Rakhine State as a national group, instead categorizing them as ‘non-national’ or “foreign residents”. Many Muslims in the region have become stateless under the Rakhine State Action Plan. The Muslims of the Rakhine State and related interest groups, and humanitarian organizations have pointed out a longstanding history of the Muslims in the Rakhine State. Human Rights Watch report published in 2000 states that the Muslim community was counted as a part of the Mrauk U Kingdom in Rakhine and Muslim officials often played a significant role in the court in 1700s. Many of them migrated to southern part of Chittagong located in Bangladesh in 1784 when Rakhine was conquered by a Burmese King. The report states that there has always been intermittent migration crossing the border because of political struggles within Myanmar. Particularly in 1977 when the Myanmar

government at that time set a new immigration and citizenship policy, many of the Muslims in the Rakhine State fell under category of illegal citizens resulting a major migration to Bangladesh (Lall, 2009). Therefore, the Muslims are originally from the Rakhine State and often mistaken as Bengalis because of similarities of language, culture, and religion to Bengali population of Bangladesh as Ganguly & Miliate (2015) argue.

Debates from adversaries and the Myanmar government emphasize on historically non-Myanmar origins of the Muslim group denying the claim of ethnicity. The former military government of Myanmar and many Buddhists of the Rakhine State consider these individuals to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh as a result of insecure border. Arguments of this side are centered on the Muslim group taking over the state as there is a tremendous growth of the population of the Muslims in the area and many of the Buddhist fear of becoming the minority in their own state (Leider, 2014; Crisis Group, 2014). In addition, a separatist attempt by an armed group of Muslims of the Rakhine State to integrate with Pakistan in 1948 (Human Rights Watch, 2000) is often pointed out.

The critics make the following arguments as to whether the Muslims are ethnic group or not. When Myanmar was a part of British India and there was no border in that region, people could easily come and go. The Muslim community in Myanmar grew tremendously as many people from Bengal came to settle in Rakhine (Leider, 2014). Derek Tonkin (2014), former British Ambassador to Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, indicates in his article on historical background of Rohingya that there was no reference to Rohingya or no such identity mentioned in historical records and official reports of the British Government during their conquest of Arakan in 1826 and Burmese Independence in 1948. The author identifies most migrants came from Chittagong Division and were called “Chittagonians”. He states that the huge flow of the

migration was resented by the locals and there were concerns that it would lead to communal troubles (Baxter, 1940; Tonkin, 2014).

Regarding the controversial term “Rohingya”, Tonkin (2014) notes that the Muslims who had been settled for so long in Arakan called themselves ‘Rooringa’ or native of Arakan. He remarks ‘Rooringa’ was used as a geographic locator rather than an ethnic designation. Dr. Jacques P. Leider, who has been conducting research on Arakan State for more than two decades, observes that “Rohingya is an old word has been claimed as a political label after independence of Myanmar” (p. 5). He notes that, since the early 1950s, one group of Muslims living in northern Rakhine state identify themselves as “Rohingya” and claim to be an ethnic group of Myanmar (Leider, 2014). They hold the belief that “Rohingyas” have existed in Rakhine for many generations. Both Leider and Tonkin note that “Rohingya” is a term that came into existence after the Second World War.

Questions flying around are who are Rohingyas? Are the Muslims currently living in the Rakhine state the descendants of the original Muslim residents of Arakan or of Chittagonians who have been living in the country for many generations? Or are they newcomers because of the insecure border? These questions have no clear answer. Tonkin (2014) suggests that even if the current residents had the documentation to trace their ancestry back several centuries; or even if ‘Chittagonian’ people have been in the country for many generations would still not qualify for citizenship under the heavily criticized Citizenship Act of 1982.

Post 2012

Recently, the debate has descended into confrontation when violence between Buddhists and Muslims in Rakhine State began in 2012 and 2013. The escalation began with internationally publicized allegations in a rape case, after which clashes between the two groups led to violence,

death, destruction of property, and mass displacement. During that time Rakhine was under a state of emergency rule. More than 100 people were killed and an estimated 140,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were forced to relocate due to the violence (South & Jolliffe, 2015). At the time of writing, there remain around 125,000 people living in temporary camps in Rakhine State. Many Muslims have attempted to flee to neighboring countries by boat. The government of Bangladesh refused to accept hundreds of people who fled the violence area according to a report from the Australian Broadcast Corporation (2012).

The Role of Media in the Conflict

There are several factors worsening the tensions between the two ethnic groups in Rakhine state. Rhetoric and propaganda of Buddhist extremist's groups has created xenophobia in the Buddhists and fueled violence (Leider, 2014). Historically, Buddhism and Buddhist monks played an important role in Myanmar politics in case of protests, elections (Houtman, 1999). The Buddhist extremist group, Ma Ba Tha, led by monks has been accused of fuelling violence in the region during 2012 incident (Lewis, 2016) and of being responsible for spreading anti-Muslim sentiments.

Many outside sources support the Muslims due to the growing number of Muslims killed in the conflict and the aggressively vocal anti-Muslim stance of many Rakhine people (Leider, 2014). In addition, anti-Buddhist propaganda campaigns that spread fake news targeting to incite violence in the region impact on the conflict. These internal and external rhetoric factors have forced the public in Myanmar to take a side: Buddhist or Muslim.

International media and foreign observers stand in solidarity with the Muslims. Reports commonly focus on topics such as members of Muslim group being categorically denied citizenship rights, subjected to violent repression at the hands of government forces, the tyranny

of Buddhist extremists as well as the region's majority ethnic group, the Arakan/ Rakhine people. In some ways, the communal violence issue has been simplified. Many foreign reports condense the conflict to terms of violation of human rights, Rakhine racism and xenophobia, Muslim victimization, and dysfunctional state leadership (Leider, 2014). Even though both sides are affected by the conflict, international news media focus on the Muslim victims. It may be because the number of the Muslim victims is greater than that of the Rakhine Buddhists, as well as the powerful rhetoric of Buddhist extremists. International media frame centrally on the humanitarian situation of refugees, human rights violations, and rights to citizenship of the Muslim group, portraying the Rakhine Buddhists as perpetrators. The origin of the violence is often described in international media as a result of Rakhine xenophobia. Discussions on the Rohingya identity and the historical background have been wholly deemphasized.

The 'black and white' representation of the communal issue hinders the wider discourse about the core issue of Rohingya identity and community formation and has only succeeded in increasing the level of intolerance (Leider, 2014). In addition, humanitarian caretakers and advocacy movements exclusively lend voice to the Muslims. To Rakhine Buddhists unrepresented in international media and unable to articulate their points of view, their discontent and their long-held grief might have grown. Biased news report can contribute to divisiveness in the society. With the ongoing conflicts and increasing tension, it is a rough road ahead for reconciliation between two communities. Combating extreme views and hate speech is an important part of peace process (Crisis Group, 2013). It is also important for international and local media to balance reporting fairly on both sides and attempt to create a political discourse around the issue. News frames that they adopt can lead to peace building or further more violence.

Political Background of Myanmar

After long decades of military rule, Myanmar transitioned to a democratic government in 2011. The new government, under former President Thein Sein, initiated a series of political and economic reforms. The country reached a milestone in transitioning to democracy after historic elections in November, 2015. Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), won a landslide victory and obtained majority seats in the Myanmar parliament.

The United States has been supporting Myanmar democratic reform process by employing “a calibrated strategy to recognize the positive steps undertaken to date and to incentivize to further reform,” (*U.S. Department of State, 2016*). The United States assists the country by providing humanitarian aid, lifting decades-long economic sanctions, and forming bilateral economic relations. While Myanmar has made significant progress in many sectors, the country is still facing civil war and many human rights issues which are major concerns to the U.S. government. Myanmar has a long history of violating human rights since the military period. According to a human rights report in 2015 by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor of the United States, human rights violation in ethnic minority areas affected by internal conflicts and restrictions on members of the Rohingya population were some of the major human rights problems in the country (*U.S. Department of State, 2016*).

This particular conflict of Myanmar has gained media attention in the United States because it is a human right situation as well as a refugee problem directly related to the U.S. *Reuters* reports that refugees from Myanmar, mainly from the Rohingya Muslim community, have outpaced those from Syria in recent years according to State Department. The report points out that 11,902 refugees from Myanmar arrived in the U.S between October 1, 2015 to

September 15, 2016. The number of Syrian refugees over the same period was 11,598. Among refugees from Myanmar, the number of the Muslim group has increased significantly in recent years (Mclaughlin, 2016).

Therefore, media of Myanmar, Bangladesh and the United States are expected to report on this conflict extensively. This coverage serves as a great opportunity to examine news frames of a conflict from different media in peace journalism perspective.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Framing Theory

When we see a glass half full, we either perceive it as half empty or half full. Our perception of the glass depends on the frame we attach to it. While the glass is half empty in a negative frame, it is half full in a positive frame. Like the glass, nearly everything we perceive in life is dependent on how we frame the world around us. People use frames to make sense out of what is going on around their world (Goffman, 1974). Mental frameworks help individuals interpret natural and societal data. Those implicit frames, as well as frames that are created in through explicit communication, greatly influence how data is interpreted, processed, and transmitted (Goffman, 1974). Past experiences of individuals also influence how things are framed and interpreted and then, in turn, change the way we respond to life. Therefore, as human beings, we all have the power to set the frame.

Framing is natural and essential. The world is full of complex phenomena. To interpret this complexity, we rely on personal frames. We use frames naturally even for something as simple as a glass of water. Issues and events are complicated and requires the processing of a lot of information from a variety of perspectives. Goffman is one of the earliest scholars to define frames. In his book, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Goffman (1974) explains how conceptual *frames* – ways to organize experience – structure one’s perception of society. Frames help individuals to “locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its limits” and they are “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman, 1974, p-21). Frames serve as a shortcut to interpret complex information around us. Frameworks help making meaningless event to something meaningful (Borah, 2011). “Frames provide meaning through selective simplification, by filtering people’s

perceptions and providing them with a field of vision for a problem,”(Kaufman, Elliott & Shmueli, 2013). Frames highlight certain features that are particularly important to people by focusing on the necessary and excluding all irrelevant information. Therefore, the world is easier to understand when we use frames as an interpretative device because they can help us make sense of things without absorbing all of the information.

Mass media create frames for us and influence the way we see certain events. This is more evident when people rely on media to learn and interpret things happening around the world. News media serve as valuable sources of information to learn current world events on daily basis (Cissel, 2008), especially regarding information not readily available such as a conflict in a third world country to the rest of the world. It is important to note that what we learn from the news media about a conflict may not always be the complete story. In some cases, the story could be reported using a frame that media choose. In such cases, mass media tell us what to think about and how to think about that issue. By doing so, the media has the power to shape an audience’s thoughts.

This pattern of communication is explained in by mass media theories. Media was described as a powerful tool to influence audiences directly in Hypodermic Needle theory. McCombs and Shaw’s (1972) study of the 1968 U.S. presidential election found that media can influence viewers by instructing them which stories to think about. This pattern is identified as agenda-setting. Framing is concerned both with what the news media tells people think and also *how* the media tells people to think about those issues. Not only can media tell audiences what to think by making certain aspects of an issue more salient but also can tell them how to think by framing the issue in a certain way and thereby influencing the choices people make. This pattern of mass communication is explained by framing theory.

Framing Theory Definitions

There are various definitions of framing in the mass communication field. One of the earliest framing scholars, Gitlin (1980) defines framing as ‘principles of selection, emphasis and presentation, composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, what matters’ (p. 6). Frames are referred to as ‘persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse’ (Gitlin, 1980 p. 7). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) define frames as ‘a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue’ (p - 3). They refer to frames as ‘interpretative packages’ that provide meaning to an event.

Oxford English dictionary defines framing as “to share, direct (one’s thoughts, actions, powers, etc.) to a certain purpose” (Framing, 1989, p. 142). Robert Entman modernized the definition of framing, arguing that framing “involves selecting and promoting some aspects of a perceived reality while suppressing other aspects and making it more salient and more noticeable in a communication text so that individuals can define a specific problem, to make interpretation, evaluation and recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 51). By doing so, framing leads to a specific classification of issues and affect audiences’ knowledge (Edelman, 1993). Nelson et al., (1990) state that frames are used to provide order and meaning to social problems. Frames tell stories about how problems come to be and what needs to be done to solve them.

Media Framing

Framing is part of the journalistic packaging of events in a broader social and historical context, helping individuals attempt to interpret news and how it relates to their own lives (Neuman et al., 1992). According to de Vreese (2005), framing is “the way a communication source defines and presents any piece of communicated information” (p. 50). de Vreese continues to explain, “A frame is an emphasis in salience of different aspects of a topic” (p. 51). It means putting some information related to a topic in the spotlight while keep other information in the dark.

Frames are part of human communication in political arguments, journalistic norms, and discourse in social movements (de Vreese, 2005). In news reporting, the information provider, namely the media source, has control in constructing and defining an issue. Journalists must employ framing on a daily basis to present ideas, events and topics they cover (de Vreese, 2005). Journalists use framing as a tool to make certain aspects of an issue more salient to help guide readers to understanding (Cissel, 2008). According to framing theory, media framing is the process of media defining and constructing an issue in order to make sense to audiences (de Vreese, 2005). Media emphasize certain elements of a topic more so than others, providing a way to better understand an event or issue (de Vreese, 2005). Journalists set the boundaries of an issue and decide which facts are most relevant to readers and de-emphasize other facts that might not aid interpretation (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Therefore, news framing as a process by which certain facets of social reality are emphasized by the news media, while others are pushed into the background.

Framing as a Process

Framing can be conceptualized from two broad aspects, sociological and psychologically. The sociological aspect focuses on, “the frames in communication” and the psychological aspect focuses on, “the effects of framing on the audience” (Borah, 2011, p. 253). de Vreese (2005) identifies a typology of media frames and outlines an integrated process of model of framing. The author identifies framing as a communication process “involves frame-building (how frames emerge) and frame-setting (the interplay between media frames and audience predispositions)” (p. 51). Frame-building refers to “the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). Research in this area studies external and internal factors that influence journalists to adopt certain frames but not others. In mass media scholarship, frames are viewed as dependent variables. This research focuses on the “words, images, phrases and presentation styles” that are used to construct news stories (Borah, 2011; Druckman, 2001, p 227), Researchers focus on how different frames are adopted by journalists. de Vreese (2005) categorizes several factors that influence how journalists frame stories in particular ways. Larger societal norms, organizational constraints such as editorial policies and news values, external pressure from interest groups and other policy makers and ideological and political orientations of journalists play important roles in building a news frame.

On the other hand, frame setting refers to the consequences of framing on public opinion, or “the interaction between media frames and individuals’ prior knowledge and dispositions,” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). This area of research stems from the psychological aspect of framing and demonstrates “how news framing influences information processing and the subsequent decision-making process” (Borah, 2011, p 248). Media frames are viewed as independent variables. Unlike in frame-building, this focuses on the opinion of public who are exposed to

news frame. Scholars are concerned with how frames in news affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events (de Vreese, 2005). In particular, the way a story is framed can affect what appears most important, who the victim appears to, or who is to blame (Gastil, 2008).

Characteristics of a News Frame

At this point, one may wonder what frames actually are. It is important to note that frames are different from facts of the story. Neuman and colleagues (1992) in their content analysis divided news articles into sections containing ‘frames’ and sections containing ‘facts’. de Vreese (2005) clarifies that frames are specific textual and visual elements that are different from core news facts of a story. Frames can also be seen in the language of photos and graphic used. A useful operationalization of a news frames is the “introductory and concluding paragraphs to establish a unique journalistic frame” (Price et al. 1997, p. 488). Entman (1993) suggested that frames in the news can be examined and identified by “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (p. 52). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) identify five framing devices used by journalists in creating frames. Metaphors, exemplars (i.e historical examples from which lessons are drawn), catchphrases, depictions and visual images (e.g. icons) can be used as a ‘media package’ of an issue. Tankard (2001) suggests a list of focal points for identifying and measuring news frames. Such focal points include headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding statements and paragraphs.

This study looks at frames that have been used in news reports covering an ongoing conflict between two groups in northern Rakhine state of Myanmar.

News Framing in Peace Journalism

Role of Media in Conflict Reporting

Framing is evident in conflict reporting. Framing theory can help to understand the influence of media on shaping public opinion and on social construction of reality. Media play an important role in democratic society, as de Vreese (2015) observes, “The media is a cornerstone institution in our democracies,” (p. 51). They provide knowledge and information about events and create public discourse. In this process, they adopt particular interpretive frames to promote understanding of events. “Mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events” (Tuchman, 1978, p. ix). The way issues are framed in the news can have important implications for public understanding and evaluation of issues, institutions and political actors (Valkenburg, Semetko & de Vreese, 1999). As the public relies on media to learn about a conflict, media can influence public opinion and nature of the debate related to the conflict resulting in influencing peace building process.

In framing a conflict, a journalist may choose to emphasize violent aspects of the conflict while suppressing peace initiatives aspects. Wolfsfeld (2001) argues that media can play a destructive or constructive role in peace processes according to which news frame that they adopt in conflict reporting. Gadi Wolfsfeld explains the important role of media in peace processes.

“The media can emphasize the benefits that peace can bring, they can raise the legitimacy of groups or leaders working for peace, and they can help transform images of the enemy. However, the media can also serve as destructive agents in a peace process, and can choose to negatively report on the risks and dangers associated with compromise, raise

the legitimacy of those opposed to concessions, and reinforce negative stereotypes of the enemy” (Wolfsfeld, 2001, p. 8).

Therefore, media can emphasize messages that foster peace and promote a more tolerant society. In the meantime, they can be propaganda biased and emphasize on sensational messages which are detrimental to peace process worsening tension between groups. Peace-promoting frames may be more suitable in conflict reporting for future success.

However, media often fail to assist the peace building process. Lee & Maslog (2005) note that war journalism is a dominant way of framing wars and conflicts. Wolfsfeld (2004) describes why it is difficult for media to promote peace process. Peace processes and news reporting often contrast by nature. There is an inherent tension between the two processes. The news media traditionally value reporting on urgency, immediacy, threats, and violence. Promoting peace processes requires patience, nurturing and calmness which are not always considered newsworthy. Wolfsfeld identifies four factors influencing whether media is positive or negative in a conflict. “(1) The amount of consensus among political elites in support of the peace process, (2) the number and intensity of the crises affecting the peace process, (3) the extent of shared news media that can reach both sides of the conflict and (4) the level of sensationalism as a dominant news value” have an impact on the extent the news media foster peace process (Wolfsfeld, 2001, p. 8). Media actively taking a positive role in a conflict can be explained by peace journalism.

Peace Journalism

The concept of journalists consciously applying constructive news frames to promote peace processes is called peace journalism, a term coined by Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung. The Norwegian scholar first introduced the ground-breaking concept of peace journalism in

1986. Peace journalism advocates the idea of using peace-oriented reporting as a tool to dissolve conflicts, to end violence, and to prevent war. Galtung criticizes traditional war journalism for focusing on violence and failing to provide historical background of a conflict.

News framing is the process by which journalists organize information thematically and factually to create a story line (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Peace journalism is a normative theory that journalists should contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts (Irvan, 2006). Peace journalism maintains the same core principles of objective journalism, namely truth, accuracy, independence, fairness, impartiality, and humanity, in the same way traditional methods of war reporting embraces the fundamental values of truth and objectivity. The Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (2012) notes that peace journalism emphasizes finding new angles on a conflict and highlighting issues that the mainstream media does not. In Galtung's view, however, journalists should take an active and self-conscious role to prevent conflicts and promote peace (Galtung, 1986). The goal of peace journalism (PJ) is to provide an alternative to conventional conflict reporting, or 'war journalism'. Galtung (1986) promotes the idea of peace by providing a more balanced coverage in conflict reporting. He explains that PJ is an interpretative approach to emphasize peace initiatives, tone down ethnic and religious differences, and prevent further conflict while focusing on the structure of society. It attempts to promote conflict resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation (Lee & Maslog, 2008; Galtung, 1986; 1998).

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) expanded the definition of PJ as a 'broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories'. They further state that, 'peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report, and how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict' (Lynch

and McGoldrick, 2005, p. 5). In this aspect, peace journalists not only report on conflicts but go beyond traditional reporting looking for behind-the-scene facts which can play powerful roles in preventing violence (Galtung, 1998).

In Galtung's view, war and peace journalism are two competing frames in conflict reporting. Peace journalism advocates are very cynical about the failures of traditional conflict reporting, which they call 'War or Violence Journalism'. They criticize traditional reporting for focusing on a dichotomized framework; an 'us vs. them' narrative and the zero sum game focusing on violence, casualties, policy elites, etc. It is regarded as "sensational, or "sexy" reporting and "a device to boost circulations and ratings" (Lee & Maslog, 2005, p 311). According to this view, traditional reporting is "violence-victory oriented" "propaganda oriented", "elite-oriented," and "victory-oriented" (Galtung & Lynch, 2010).

On the other hand, peace journalism explores background information of the conflict, give voices to all parties not just opposing two sides, promotes empathy and understanding on all parties by covering on the sufferings of civilians, exposes lies and cover-ups from all parties (Lynch, 2008; 2013). Therefore, peace journalism is about "conflict-solution oriented", "truth-oriented" and "people-oriented" "the avoidance of demonizing language", a "nonpartisan approach", and a "multiparty orientation" are all important principles of peace journalism. Peace journalism can be compared to health journalism, according to Galtung. "A good health reporter describes a patient's battle against cancer and yet informs readers about the cancer's causes as well as the full range of cures and preventive measures," (1986, p.3).

Peace journalism is sometimes criticized by media practitioners because it is subjective and can compromise journalistic integrity and objectivity when a journalist takes a participant role in addition to being an observer (Hanitzsch, 2004). However, Thomas Hanitzsch (2007)

states that peace journalism draws attention back to a ‘classic’ debate on standard of journalism practice (p 7).

There are studies examining news coverage of conflict events by using Peace Journalism frames. Lee and Maslog (2005) were the first to offer an empirical approach to operationalize Galtung’s classification of war and peace journalism. The authors examine the extent to which four Asian regional conflicts involving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines are framed as war journalism or peace journalism based on Galtung’s classification. A content analysis of 1338 news stories from five Asian newspapers covering four regional conflicts indicated that peace journalism can foster peace and can help to end the conflict.

Another study developed explicit news frame from peace/war journalism perspective. Fahmy and Eakin (2014) examined the extent to which coverage of an incident relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident was framed based on Johan Galtung’s classification of peace/war journalism and Lee and Maslog’s operationalization of peace/war frames. Findings from a content analysis of the coverage of online stories in three international newspapers: *Haaretz*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times* suggest that overall differences exist among the war/ peace narratives published in the three newspapers. The online coverage in *Haaretz*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* differed significantly in eight of the 16 indicators for both war and peace journalism frames. *Haaretz* used significantly more war journalism indicators (visibility of effects of war, dichotomization, use of victimizing language, and emotive language) than both *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*. The findings seem contradictory and therefore the authors strongly advocate for the need to redefine indicators for peace journalism to reflect the concept as distinct from objective, and factual reporting.

Abdul-Nabi (2015) uses Galtung's orientations of Peace Journalism news frames in order to examine to what extent the *Al-Jazeera* Network used the peace journalism model in its coverage. The study examines online coverage of *Al-Jazeera* Network on two uprisings of the 'Arab Spring' movement in the Middle East in 2011. The first is Bahrain's uprising during the initial two weeks of the Saudi military intervention, and the other is the Syrian conflict in the week that followed the Al-Ghouta Chemical Weapons (CW) attack in Damascus. The findings suggest that the coverage on both events was dominated by the war journalism frames. The author concludes that the media coverage served as a significant catalyst for the series of uprisings.

Ersoy (2016) utilizes framing analysis to examine how Turkish newspapers covered two events where the Turkish and Syrian jet planes that were hit by Turkey's and Syria's armies. Using a peace journalism model, the findings suggest that the Turkish press is more prone to war journalism. The coverage leaned towards accusation, blame and the creation of suspicion of the 'other' side. The authors found that the Turkish press is strongly affected by ownership structure, political pressure, regulations, mainstream news values and market conditions.

Wolfsfeld (2001) used a different operationalization of peace journalism frames. In his book of "The News Media and Peace Processes", he examines two instances of peace processes: the Oslo peace process in the Middle East and the Good Friday Agreement in the Northern Ireland. The author interviewed 41 key actors in politics and media and analyzed editorials from five newspapers. Findings show that the Israeli news media played a negative role while the Northern Ireland news media played a positive role. During the Oslo peace talks, there was a low level of elite consensus in support of the government, a large number of serious and violent crises, a lack of shared media between Israelis and Palestinians, and the high level of

sensationalist media. In contrast, authorities in Northern Ireland demonstrated both a higher level of elite consensus and a smaller number of crises. High quality journalism of Northern Ireland media reported a more balanced and a constructive form of coverage. Wolfsfeld (2001) concludes that although peace journalism cannot solve the conflict, media can shape, promote and make an important impact on peace progress.

This study is based on Galtung's (1986, 1998) classification of war/peace journalism. Based on previous literature, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1: What is the difference of war/peace journalism framing across countries?

RQ2: What is the difference of war/peace journalism framing across newspapers?'

RQ3: What is the difference of salience of indicators of war/peace journalism in the coverage?

RQ4: Is there a difference in sources/voices usage among newspapers?

Previous studies on peace and war journalism frames in news coverage of conflict events found that war journalism frames are more dominant than peace journalism frames (Abdul-Nabi, 2015; Ersoy, 2016; Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Hence, first hypothesis is proposed as following:

H1: War journalism is more dominant than peace journalism in reporting the conflict.

Lee (2010) found that English language news stories covering a communal conflict are more likely to be framed as war journalism than peace journalism when compared to vernacular newspapers. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posed:

H2: Burmese-language newspapers are more likely to frame the conflict from a peace journalism perspective.

Lee and Maslog (2005) and Lee, Maslog, and Kim (2006) found that locally produced stories contained more peace journalism frames than foreign-produced stories from wire services. Thus, another hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Peace journalism framing in locally produced Myanmar news stories is more prominent than foreign-produced stories.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

To answer research questions and test hypotheses, this study employed a content analysis of news frames in print media. This study collected artifacts from four newspapers from three countries: U.S., Myanmar, and Bangladesh. Two newspapers from Myanmar were selected because of their ownership and largest audience. *Seven Day Daily (7Day Daily)* is an independent, privately run newspaper which is considered to be the most influential newspaper in Myanmar. It is published in the Myanmar language and it has the largest circulation in the country. *The Mirror* is another Myanmar newspaper from which articles were collected for this study. The rationale behind choosing this particular newspaper was that it is run by the Myanmar government and provided an opportunity to compare the news coverage of a government-run Myanmar newspaper with private Myanmar news media as well as international media. Both newspapers are available online. News stories from the Bangladesh newspaper *The Daily Star* were also collected. The *Daily Star* is the highest circulating newspaper among English dailies in Bangladesh (*Daily Sun*, 2015). *The New York Times* from the United States was selected because it covers world affairs extensively and has reported several national events in Myanmar affairs. In addition, it has a very high readership rate and is of great influence (Doctor, 2015).

News articles analyzed were published between February 1, 2016 and February 1, 2017. Starting from the first session when Myanmar's elected parliament opened to one year later were selected. Artifact searches were initiated using the keywords: "Rakhine" "Rohingya" "Myanmar" "Conflict" "Human Rights" "Muslims in Myanmar". Only articles directly relevant to the conflict were selected. Articles that only partially covered or briefly mentioned the conflict were excluded. The unit of analysis for this study was the individual story. *The New York Times*

articles were obtained from the LexisNexis. The Bangladeshi news articles were obtained from online news web portals. Myanmar articles are obtained from archives.

Overall, 60 articles were published in *The New York Times*. As the conflict takes place on the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh, it was to be expected that Bangladesh and Myanmar media covered the conflict as local news more than the U.S. To improve reliability only 60 articles were selected from each of the local newspapers. Each of the 60 articles from the *7Day Daily*, *The Mirror* and *The Daily Star* were selected randomly. A total of 234 articles — news, editorials and opinion pieces were analyzed.

Many scholars have expressed concern that framing studies use their own unique interpretation of news frames rather than consistent and general operational definitions of frames which can have larger implications (de Vreese, 2005; Borah, 2011). de Vreese (2005) clarifies that it is important to differentiate frames from facts. Frames are specific textual and visual elements that are different from core news facts of a story. Thus, the current study will use Tankard (2001)'s framing mechanisms for identifying and measuring news frames. A list of focal points including headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding statements and paragraphs (Tankard, 2001, p.101) were examined.

The coding categories were derived from Galtung's (1986, 1998) classification of war/peace journalism and adapted from categories created by Lee and Maslog (2005), Lee (2010) and Fahmy and Eakin (2013). Twelve indicators of war journalism and twelve indicators of peace journalism were based on two main themes, (1) approach and (2) language, which were reformulated for this particular conflict. Coding instructions which are listed in **Appendix A**.

The approach-based categorization for war journalism included the following indicators: (1) visible effects of war (2) elite orientation (3) primary focus on here and now (4) dichotomizing of good guys versus bad guy (5) partisan (6) difference -oriented (7) reactivity (8) victory-oriented and (9) two-party orientation. The language-based categorization for war journalism included the following indicators: (1) the use of victimizing language (2) the use of demonizing language and (3) the use of emotive words.

The approach-based categorization for peace journalism included the following indicators: (1) invisible effects of war (2) people oriented (3) reports on deeper causes and consequences of the conflict (4) avoidance dichotomization of good guys versus bad guys (5) nonpartisan (6) agreement-oriented (7) proactive (8) solution- oriented and (9) multiparty orientation. The language-based categorization for peace journalism included the following indicators: (1) avoidance of the use of victimizing language and report on how people are coping (2) avoidance of the use of demonizing language by using more precise term (3) avoidance of the use of emotive words and not exaggerating the gravity of situations.

In every instance where one indicator is present, a score of 1 was assigned. If the total count of peace journalism indicators in an article exceeded the total count of war journalism indicators, the story was classified as a peace journalism frame. When the scores were equal, it was categorized as neutral.

As source selection and quote selection were focal points to identify frames (Tankard, 2001), this study also examined sources and voices included in the coverage of the conflict. Boudana (2009) defined referents which are sources and voices of a news story as follows.

The sources, which supply the journalist with information (primary function) but also, fulfill a role of legitimization and transfer of authority (secondary function). The

authority of the source, legitimated by his function, or his participation in—or in connection to—the events, is transmitted to the journalist who refers to the source. The voices, which express themselves in, and participate in the construction of, the journalistic account. The voices animate the story without being devoted to the transmission of pre-existing information that is present outside of them. They would rather express their feelings, political or ideological positions, etc., in reaction to a given event reported by the journalist. (p. 285)

Sources and voices used in the coverage of the conflict were split into five categories: Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Muslim community in the Rakhine State and their advocates, Buddhists of the Rakhine State and third-party to analyze the pattern of source/voice usage among newspapers.

Furthermore, articles were coded into three additional categories based on production source: (1) locally/regionally produced Myanmar and Bangladesh news stories written by newspapers' own reporters and local contributing writers, (2) foreign wire stories produced by news wire agencies (i.e. the *Associated Press* and *Reuters*), and (3) foreign-produced news stories written by reporters and contributing writers from outside of Myanmar and Bangladesh, specifically from the U.S.

Since two of four newspapers to be analyzed were in Burmese-language and the other in English-language, three independent bilingual coders including the author coded 20 artifacts (9 percent of total) for a pretest. The code sheet used is listed in **Appendix B**. Intercoder reliability Fleiss' Kappa test for overall framing was found to be 0.8313.

Chapter 4 - Results

Data Analysis

All 234 articles were identified and viewed online. The coding was conducted by hand for each article, entered into Microsoft Excel, and then analyzed using two statistical software programs. IBM SPSS (V 24) and STAT[®] Software (V 9.4) was used to run frequency counts, cross tabulations, and Chi-square tests. To note, when the expected counts for cells are less than 5, Pearson's Chi-Square test may not be valid due to asymptotic properties not holding. For those circumstances, this study run an additional exact test for accurate statistics. Furthermore, Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel tests were used to measure ordinal variables (McDonald, 2014). Cramer's V test was also used to measure the strength of the association between two variables.

Analysis Results

The first research question (RQ₁) asked about the distinctness of war/peace journalism frame across the countries analyzed. In terms of country, each sampled newspaper from Myanmar, Bangladesh and the U.S produced more war journalism stories than peace journalism stories. However, there was no statistically significant difference of overall journalism framing across countries, $\chi^2_{MH}(1, N = 234) = .0479$, $p = .8261$, Cramer's V = .1054 (see **Table 4-1**).

Table 4-1 Distribution of War/Peace Journalism Framing Across Countries

Country	Framing			N (%)
	Peace Journalism(%)	Neutral(%)	War Journalism(%)	
United States	16 (30.8)	3 (5.8)	33 (63.5)	52 (100)
Myanmar	56 (45.9)	7 (5.7)	59 (48.4)	122 (100)
Bangladesh	21 (35)	2 (3.3)	37 (61.7)	60 (100)
Total	93(39.7)	12 (5.1)	129 (55.1)	234 (100)

N=234, , $\chi^2_{MH} = .0479$, $df=1$, $p = .8267$, Cramer's V = .1054

Table 4-1 indicates that of the 122 sampled articles published by newspapers from Myanmar, 48.4 % were framed as war journalism stories, 45.9% were peace journalism, and 5.7% were neutral. Of the 52 sampled articles published by the sampled U.S newspaper, 63.5% were war journalism stories, 30.8% were peace journalism, and 5.8% were neutral. Of the 60 sampled articles published by the sampled Bangladesh newspaper, 61.7% were war journalism stories, 35.0 % were peace journalism, and 3.3% were neutral.

The second research question (RQ₂) asked what distinctions among different newspapers emerged in coverage of the conflict. Overall, the four newspapers sampled did not differ significantly in their war/peace/neutral framing of stories, $\chi^2_{MH} (1, N=234) = 1.4225, p = .2435$, Cramer's V = .1404.

Table 4-2 Distribution of War/Peace Journalism Framing Across Newspapers

Newspaper	Framing			N (%)
	Peace Journalism(%)	Neutral (%)	War Journalism(%)	
<i>7Day Daily</i>	23 (37.7)	3 (4.9)	35 (57.4)	61 (100)
<i>The Mirror</i>	33 (54.1)	4 (6.6)	24 (39.3)	61 (100)
<i>The New York Times</i>	16 (30.8)	3 (5.8)	33 (63.5)	52 (100)
<i>The Daily Star</i>	21 (35)	2 (3.3)	37 (61.7)	60 (100)
Total	93(39.7)	12 (5.1)	129 (55.1)	234 (100)

N=234, , $\chi^2_{MH} = 1.4225, df=1, p = .2435$, Cramer's V = .1404

However, as shown in **Table 4-2**, it is worth noting that the strongest war journalism framing was observed in the coverage by *The New York Times* followed by *The Daily Star*, the *7Day Daily* and *The Mirror*. Conversely, the strongest peace journalism framing was observed in *The Mirror*, followed by the *7Day Daily*, *The Daily Star* and *The New York Times*. In the coverage by *The Mirror*, a total of 33 stories or 54.1 % of articles sampled were framed as

overall peace journalism compared to 24 (33.6%) stories framed as war and 4 (6.6%) neutral stories.

The third research (RQ₃) question asked what distinctions emerged in indicators of war/peace journalism framing could be observed across the newspapers analyzed.

Table 4-1 Frequency and Percentages of War Frames across Newspapers

Indicators	Newspaper				Total (%)	Chi-square
	<i>7Day Daily</i> (%)	<i>The Mirror</i> (%)	<i>The New York Times</i> (%)	<i>The Daily Star</i> (%)		
Visible effects	10 (11.9)	14(16.7)	31 (36.9)	29 (34.5)	84 (100)	31.272 ^a
Elite orientation	49 (25.5)	49 (25.5)	42 (21.9)	52 (27.1)	192 (100)	1.172
Here and now	44 (29.5)	32 (21.5)	35 (23.5)	38 (25.5)	149 (100)	5.503
Dichotomizing	36 (23.8)	28 (18.5)	40 (26.5)	47 (31.1)	151 (100)	18.542 ^a
Partisan	23 (23.7)	32 (33.0)	17 (17.5)	25 (25.8)	97 (100)	5.043
Differences	27 (28.1)	12 (12.5)	30 (31.3)	27 (28.1)	96 (100)	18.122 ^a
Reactivity	28 (24.8)	22 (19.5)	24 (21.2)	39 (34.5)	113 (100)	10.594 ^b
Victory	13 (43.3)	7 (23.3)	3 (10)	7 (23.3)	30 (100)	6.418
Two party	18 (45)	6 (15)	5 (12.5)	11 (27.5)	40 (100)	11.018 ^b
Victimizing	8 (9)	5 (5.6)	37 (41.6)	39 (43.8)	89 (100)	81.829 ^a
Demonizing	45 (38.5)	23 (19.7)	28 (23.9)	21 (17.9)	117 (100)	23.183 ^a
Emotive	37 (24.5)	38 (25.2)	35 (23.2)	41 (27.2)	151 (100)	1.088

N = 234, *df* = 3, ^a*p* < .0001, ^b*p* < .05

For all four newspapers, the dominant salient indicators of war journalism were elite oriented sourcing (192 indicators), use of dichotomizing coverage (151 indicators), use of emotive language (151 indicators) and here-and-now focus (149 indicators).

As shown in **Table 4-3**, all four newspapers used elite oriented sourcing (192 indicators), use of emotive language (151 indicators) and here-and-now focus (149 indicators) significantly. The newspapers had significantly higher percentages of reporting an over reliance on elite sources. More than 80 percent of the news stories from each country used elite sources as actors

and sources of information revealing no significant difference in usage of this frame among the sampled countries.

Furthermore, data analysis showed a significant difference in usage of dichotomization, one of the dominant salient indicators of war journalism across newspapers, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 18.542, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V=0.281$. *The Daily Star* had the highest percentage of the use of a focus on villain versus victims (31.3 %) followed by *The New York Times* with the second highest percentage (26.5%) compared to the *7Day Daily* (23.8%) and *The Mirror* (18.5%). Similarly, the *7Day Daily* had the highest use of demonizing language (38.5%) resulting in a significant difference in use of this frame across the four newspapers, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 23.183, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = 0.315$.

By contrast, victory-oriented reported was the least significant frame of war journalism used by the sampled newspapers. Among the 30 indicators that appeared in coding, the *7Day Daily* had the highest percentage of the use of the frame (43.3%) followed by *The Mirror* (23.3%) and *The Daily Star* (23.3%) and finally *The New York Times* (10.0%). Another significantly less dominant frame in the coverage was the two-party orientation frame (40 indicators). Interestingly, there was a significant difference among newspapers usage of the two-party orientation frame, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 11.018, p = .012, \text{Cramer's } V = .217$. *The New York Times* displayed the lowest use of this frame (12.5%) followed by *The Mirror* (15.0%) and *The Daily Star* (27.5%) while the *7Day Daily* had the highest percentage (45.0%).

As shown in **Table 4-3**, Pearson's Chi-square test revealed seven indicators for war frames focusing on visible effects, dichotomizing coverage, difference oriented, reactivity, two-party orientation, the use of victimizing language, and the use of demonizing language which differed among the articles sampled from the four newspapers. One significant difference that

emerged was the use of victimizing language, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 81.829, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .315$. In a total of 89 observed indicators, *The New York Times* and *The Daily Star* scored significantly higher with 41.6% and 43.8% respectively when compared to the *7Day Daily* (9.0%) and *The Mirror* (5.6%).

The dominant salient indicators for peace journalism among the four sampled newspapers were multiparty orientation (130 indicators), proactive reporting (121 indicators), solution oriented (119 indicators), and avoidance of demonizing language (116 indicators) as **Table 4-4** indicates.

Table 4-2 Frequency and Percentages of Peace Journalism Frames across Newspapers

Indicators	Newspaper				Total (%)	Chi-square
	<i>7Day Daily</i> (%)	<i>The Mirror</i> (%)	<i>The New York Times</i> (%)	<i>The Daily Star</i> (%)		
Invisible effects	18 (22)	27 (32.9)	10 (12.2)	27 (32.9)	82(100)	11.424
People	18 (30)	16 (26.7)	17 (28.3)	9 (15)	60 (100)	5.409 ^b
Deeper causes	24 (27.9)	21 (24.4)	18 (20.9)	23 (26.7)	86 (100)	.485 ^a
No dichotomizing	23 (29.1)	32 (40.5)	12 (15.2)	12 (15.2)	79 (100)	17.696
Nonpartisan	29 (30.5)	14 (14.7)	25 (26.3)	27 (28.4)	95 (100)	10.785
Agreement	16 (37.2)	16 (37.2)	3 (7)	8 (18.6)	43 (100)	11.544
Proactive	33 (27.3)	39 (32.2)	28 (23.1)	21 (17.4)	121 (100)	10.594
Solution	29 (24.4)	31 (26.1)	22 (18.5)	37 (31.1)	119 (100)	4.594 ^b
Multiparty	30 (23.1)	20 (15.4)	40 (30.8)	40 (30.8)	130 (100)	26.427
Avoids victimizing	3 (9.1)	10 (30.3)	3 (9.1)	17 (51.5)	33 (100)	17.524
Avoids demonizing	16 (13.8)	38 (32.8)	23 (19.8)	39 (33.6)	116 (100)	23.552
Avoids emotive words	24 (29.6)	23 (28.4)	15 (18.5)	19 (23.5)	81 (100)	1.855 ^a

$N = 234, df = 3, ^a p > .5, ^b p > .1$

Comparing the use of the most dominant peace journalism frames across the sampled newspapers displayed that the U.S newspaper and the Bangladeshi newspaper included voices of

parties other than the two main adversaries, thereby providing alternative viewpoints. However, results suggest that the two Myanmar newspapers were less focused on the multiparty orientation frame. Chi-square analysis indicates a significant difference among newspapers regarding to the usage of multiparty orientation frame, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 26.427, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V=0.336$.

In total, agreement oriented reporting (43 indicators) and avoidance of the use of victimizing language (33 indicators) were the two least salient indicators of peace journalism observed among the four newspapers. *The New York Times* had the lowest percentage of both indicators. Moreover, *The New York Times* had the lowest percentage usage of agreement oriented frames (7%) followed by *The Daily Star* (18.6%) while the two Myanmar newspapers tended to use the frame more (37.2%). On the other hand, the *7Day Daily* and *The New York Times* had the lowest percentage of the avoidance of the use of victimizing language (9.1%) compared to *The Mirror* with (30.3%) and *The Daily Star* (51.5%).

Except the solution-oriented indicator, a closer look at the usage of dominant peace indicators differed significantly in all newspapers as displayed in **Table 4-4**. For example, one significant difference that emerged was the avoidance of the use of victimizing language, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 23.552, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .317$. *The Daily Star* had the highest percentage avoidance of the use of demonizing language (33.6%) followed by *The Mirror*(32.8%) when compared to *The New York Times* (19.8%) and the *7Day Daily* (13.8%). In contrast, all four newspapers differed significantly in usage of the solution oriented frame, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 4.594, p = .204, \text{Cramer's } V=0.140$.

The fourth research question (RQ₄) sought to reveal differences in source/voice usage from each newspaper. In general, all four newspapers heavily relied upon elite sources such as military personnel, government officials, and interest groups as actors and sources of information

(210 indicators). This stands in sharp contrast when compared to coverage focusing on civilians and common people (70 indicators). In addition, there was a small percentage of usage of other sources such as academic scholars (14 indicators) as can be seen in **Table 4-5**.

Table 4-3 Distribution of Sources/Voices Included in Stories across Newspapers

Source/Voice	Newspaper				Total	Chi-square
	<i>7Day Daily</i>	<i>The Mirror</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Daily Star</i>		
Elite	55	52	45	58	210	5.057
People	19	19	22	10	70	8.92
Other	3	1	5	5	14	3.978
Myanmar	51	56	34	30	171	32.115 ^a
Bangladesh	3	3	4	38	48	90.912 ^a
The Muslims	8	12	30	19	69	30.723 ^a
The Buddhists	28	13	4	0	45	46.497 ^a
Third party	17	16	41	38	112	45.010 ^a

$N=234$, $df=3$, $^ap < .0001$

There was no significant difference in source/voice usage among the newspaper in terms of elite/people orientation. The difference in usage of elite-orientated frames among the newspapers was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 5.507$, $p = .168$, Cramer's $V = 0.147$. Similarly, the difference in usage of people-oriented frames among the newspapers was not significant, $\chi^2(3, N=234) = 8.921$, $p = .03$, Cramer's $V = 0.195$.

Based on their representative groups, news sources and voices included in the coverage of the conflict were split into five categories: Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Muslim community in Rakhine State and their advocates, Buddhists of the Rakhine State and third-party. Based on a frequency count, Myanmar government officials scored the highest with 171 indicators, followed by the third-party representatives, which included spokespersons of countries other than the two involved in the conflict and of non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations, with

112 indicators. Muslims from the Rakhine State and related advocacy groups scored the third highest with 69 indicators, followed by 48 indicators of Bangladeshi officials. Tellingly, the use of Buddhists of the Rakhine State as voices and sources of information had the lowest count with only 45 indicators across the four newspapers.

Table 4-5 indicated a significant difference in source usage among the sampled newspapers regardless of the type of sources. Myanmar newspapers were more likely to include quotes from Myanmar government officials and the Buddhist Rakhine people as voices and source of information compared to *The Daily Star* and the *New York Times*. A total of 83.6% of the *7Day Daily* stories and 91.8% of *The Mirror* stories included quotes of the Myanmar government compared to 65.4% of stories published in *The New York Times* and 50.0% in *The Daily Star*. Similarly, 45.9% of the *7Day Daily* stories and 21.3% of *The Mirror* stories included quotes of Buddhists of Rakhine State as sources while only 7.8% of *The New York Times* and 0% of the *Daily Star's* included.

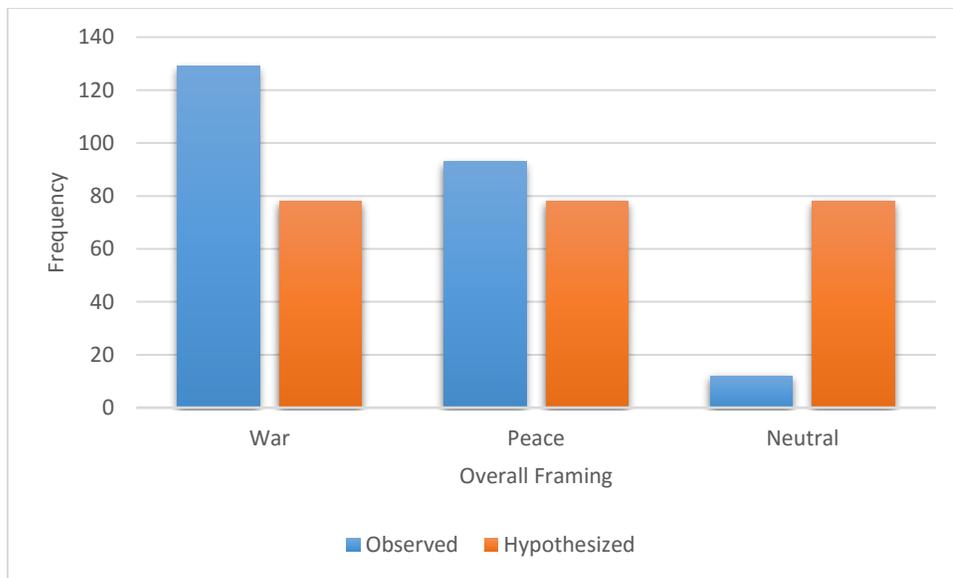
The coverage by the *7Day Daily* and *The Mirror* included a very low percentage of sources/voices from Bangladesh as well as the Muslims compared to other newspapers. Meanwhile, *The Daily Star* included the highest percentage of quotes from Bangladeshi officials and the third parties which were found in 63.3 % of *The Daily Star* articles. Interestingly, it had zero representation of the Rakhine people in its coverage.

The New York Times commonly used third-party representatives and the Myanmar government as main sources of information. Notably, the coverage of *The New York Times* had the highest representation of the Muslims and related advocacy groups and the third lowest representation of the Rakhine people among the sampled newspapers. A total of 57.7% of the

articles sampled from *The New York Times* had representation of the Muslim group and 78.8% had of third parties such as spokespersons of the United Nations.

Based on previous literature, the first hypothesis (H₁) proposed that war journalism framing would be more dominant than peace journalism in the coverage of the Rakhine conflict. Out of 234 articles, 129 (55.1%) were classified as war journalism and 93 (39.7%) were classified as peace journalism while only 12 (5.1%) were classified as neutral. Overall, war journalism frames were significantly more dominant than peace journalism or neutral frames, $\chi^2(2, N=234) = 92.077, p < .001$ (see **Figure 4-1**). Concurrent with previous research, results supported H₁.

Figure 4-1 Distribution of Overall Framing



$N=234, \text{Chi-square} = 92.077, p < .001$

The second hypothesis (H₂) proposed that there would be a significant difference between English-language and Burmese-language newspapers in peace/war journalism framing.

Statistical testing revealed a statistically significant difference in framing between English and Burmese language newspapers, $\chi^2_{MH}(1, N = 234) = 4.5839, p = 0.03, \text{Cramer's } V = 0.1422$.

Compared to Burmese-language news stories, the English-language news stories were more likely to be framed as war journalism than peace journalism. As shown in **Table 4-6**, a total of 70 (62.5%) of the English-language news stories were framed as war journalism, 37 stories (33.0%) were framed as peace journalism, followed by 5 stories (4.5%) framed as neutral. In comparison while 59 (48.4%) Burmese-language news stories were framed as war journalism, 56 (48.5%) were peace journalism, and 7 stories (5.7%) were framed as neutral. Therefore, H₂ was supported.

Table 4-4 Language and War/Peace Journalism Framing

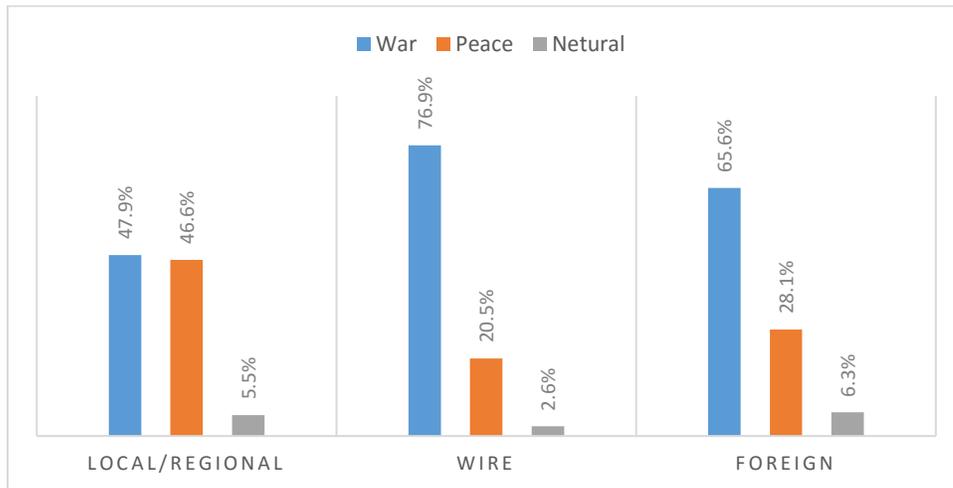
Language	Framing			Total
	Peace Journalism(%)	War Journalism(%)	Neutral (%)	
Burmese	56 (45.9)	59 (48.4)	7 (5.7)	122 (100)
English	37(33.0)	70(62.5)	5 (4.5)	112 (100)
Total	93(39.7)	129(55.1)	12(5.1)	234(100)

$N=234$, $\chi^2_{MH} = 4.5839$, $df=1$, $p = .0352$, Cramer's $V = .1422$

The third hypothesis stated that there would be significantly more peace journalism framing in regionally produced Myanmar and Bangladesh news stories than foreign-produced stories. There were 163 stories coded as locally/regionally produced stories, 39 stories as foreign wire stories, and 32 as foreign produced stories. There was a significant difference in peace/war journalism among three types of production sources, $\chi^2_{MH} (1, N=234) = 8.0446$, $p = .0046$, Cramer's $V = 0.166$. As indicated in **Figure 4-2**, all three production sources tended to use more war journalism frames. However, foreign wire stories and foreign produced stories contained more war journalism frames and fewer peace journalism frames overall than stories produced by local sources. A total of 76.9% of stories from foreign wire services such as *AP* and *Reuters* published were framed as war journalism, while 65.6 % of foreign produced stories by *The New York Times'* foreign correspondents and contributing writers were framed as war journalism.

Only 47.9% of stories produced by local journalists and local writers were framed as war. Results indicated the local news stories contained more overall peace journalism frames. Therefore, H₃ was supported.

Figure 4-2 Production Source and War/Peace Journalism Framing



$N = 234, \chi^2_{MH}(1, N=234) = 8.0446, p = .0046, \text{Cramer's } V = 0.166.$

Chapter 5 - Discussion

Guided by Galtung's (1986,1998) classifications of peace and war journalism, the purpose of this study was to assess differences in the use of war and peace journalism frames among different news outlets. This study employed a comparative analysis (Lee, 2010) on media coverage of an ongoing conflict between the Muslim and the Buddhist communities of Rakhine State located in Northwestern region of Myanmar. Explicitly, this study examined war and peace journalism frames from stories published in national newspapers from Myanmar, Bangladesh and the United States.

Forthwith, this discussion section will proceed by discussing important findings in detail. Firstly, dominant journalism framing in the coverage of Rakhine conflict is discussed. Secondly, individual salient war frame and factors influencing its salience in the coverage are explored and thirdly, dominance of peace frames in the media is interpreted. Fourthly, differences in inclusion of sources/voices in articles among the newspapers are examined thoroughly. Lastly, hypotheses that are found to be consistent with previous research are discussed. The section ends with limitations of the study, theoretical and practical implications of findings and future research area suggestions.

War and Peace Journalism Framing Across Countries and Newspapers

Results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between war versus peace journalism framing among all three countries. In other words, media outlets from each country produced more war journalism stories than peace journalism stories. Though not statistically significant, it is worth noting that a majority, or roughly 60 percent, of stories published in the U.S. were classified as war journalism. This supports previous findings that

Western or foreign media tend to focus on violence and conflict when reporting stories in developing countries (Lee, 2010).

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in the distribution of overall war/peace journalism framing in terms of newspaper. As reported in **Table 4-2**, results suggest that the coverage of the conflict by *The New York Times* was dominated by war journalism more so than other newspapers. On the other hand, *The Mirror* produced more peace journalism stories than war journalism stories.

Somewhat surprising was the previous finding that international observers and media publicly criticize the Myanmar government for brutal treatment of the Muslim group and for denying them citizenship and basic human rights (Chandran, 2016). Therefore, one might assume that *The Mirror*, the government run newspaper of Myanmar, would serve as a propaganda tool to promote the government's aggressive agenda towards the group and produce more war journalism stories. Interestingly, this was not the case. *The Mirror* published more peace journalism stories than the other three papers. Although it would be beyond the scope of this study to infer why *The Mirror's* narrative contained more peace journalism frames, there are two political factors worth considering. First, peace and national reconciliation is officially part of Myanmar's government reform agenda (Blake, 2016). Myanmar's political figurehead and democratic leader, Aung San Suu Kyi officially stated her government will focus on peace and national reconciliation within the country. Second, Aung San Suu Kyi established the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by the former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan cooperated with the Myanmar government to resolve the issues in the Rakhine State (Westcott & Wright, 2016). Given these recent policy positions of the Myanmar government, it is reasonable to posit that the narrative of *The Mirror* would align with the new democratic government of the

country. On the other hand, it could also be a result of media taking a side and assisted in covering up the brutality of the Myanmar military.

Dominant War Frames in the Coverage

A closer examination of the pattern of war journalism indicators revealed interesting facts as following. In order of prevalence, the four most common frames were: (1) elite oriented sourcing; (2) use of dichotomizing coverage; (3) use of emotive language; and (4) here-and-now focus. These findings are consistent with previous research that used Galtung's (1986,1998) classifications of war/peace journalism (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010; Lee & Maslog, 2005). Previous studies reported that elite-oriented sourcing, dichotomization of the parties involved, and a focus on here-and-now were among the most salient indicators of war journalism framing. Building on previous research, this study found that the use of emotive language appeared frequently as another salient war journalism indicator.

All four newspapers sampled for this study used elite-oriented sourcing, the use of emotive language and here-and-now focus significantly. There was no significant difference in usage of those war frames among individual newspapers. There was, however, a significant difference in the focus on a 'good versus bad' dichotomy. Heavily dichotomized coverage framing was found most in *The Daily Star*, followed by *The New York Times*, the *7Day Daily* and the least in *The Mirror*.

Elite-Orientation

As defined above, the elite-orientation frame refers to primary news sources included in coverage who are members of elite segments of society. Elite sources in this case were government officials and military personnel either from Myanmar or Bangladesh, advocates from interest groups, spokespersons from human rights organizations, and political leaders and

diplomats from foreign countries. Over-reliance on official sources is a primary concern for media reporting misleading information and provides an opportunity for elites to choose frames to influence and manipulate citizen's opinions (Druckman,2001; Powers& Andsager, 1999). Nonetheless, the perspectives of civilians and non-elite individuals were largely ignored in the coverage analyzed.

Limited access to the conflict area may have partly contributed to the dominance of this frame in the coverage. After insurgents attacked border posts in October 2016, the Myanmar government barred journalists from entering the conflict area (Cumming, 2016). This may have prevented journalists from conducting interviews with local civilians, limiting their ability to report what was happening on the ground. Analysis of the sampled articles showed that many included official statements from Myanmar government, from United Nations officials, and from human rights groups. These data showed that Myanmar government official sources scored the highest followed by the third-party sources which included spokespersons of countries other than the two involved in the conflict and of non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations.

Dichotomization

The second most dominant war journalism frame was the dichotomization of the parties involved. Results indicate that media tended to frame the conflict in terms of dichotomized coverage, such as good guys versus bad guys or victims versus villains. Results indicted *The Daily Star's* and *The New York Times'* narratives were significantly more dichotomized than the other two newspapers.

Upon closer inspection, portrayal of bad guys in the conflict varied by the media. When *The Daily Star* and *The New York Times* covered the conflict, the 'bad guy' were generally

Myanmar representatives, and the ‘good guys’ were the Muslim community of the Rakhine state. Specifically, the military, government officials of Myanmar, and even Aung San Suu Kyi were collectively characterized as ‘military’. The government of Myanmar was frequently portrayed as the ‘bad guys’. For example, much of their coverage asserted that the Myanmar military designed “a brutal counterinsurgency campaign” to “drive out the Rohingya” and referenced “atrocities against the Rohingya” (Perlez & Moe, 2016; Barry, 2017). In doing so, they also appeared to support the Muslim group using phrases such as “an apocalyptic disaster for the Rohingya” and calling them “persecuted by the state” consistently affirming the Muslim group as the main or only victims (Chandran, 2016; Diplomatic Correspondent, 2016).

Even though results indicate the dichotomization frame was not as prevalent as in the *7Day Daily* and *The Mirror*, they still labeled good and bad guys but in a different way from the other two. In the coverage of the October outbreak of violence, *The Mirror* vividly described violent attackers who had terrorist training, members of the Muslim community who were involved in attacks, and international media that accused of Myanmar government for wrongdoing as being on the ‘bad guys’ side while the policemen who were killed in the attack, local residents, and the military who took action in accordance with the law were on the ‘good guys’ side (*The Mirror*, 2016; ThaPyay, 2016). Additionally, some of the stories in the *7Day Daily* cast the Myanmar government and local ethnic community members as ‘the good guys’ and terrorists and ‘Bengalis’ involved in attacks as ‘the bad guys’ (Khaing & Kan, 2016; Kan, 2016).

Undoubtedly, reporting moral judgments about the parties involved do not contribute to restoring peace but create tensions of misconception. Eakin and Fahmy (2013) note that dichotomized media coverage in conflicts can create difficulty in finding common ground

because “legitimate perspectives and grievances of parties involved could be discredited” (p. 101).

Here-and-Now

Another indicator for war journalism highly present in the analyzed coverage was a primary focus on the here-and-now. This was supported by previous findings about the dominance of war/peace journalism frames. Reporting only on the here-and-now is a common practice by newspapers (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Findings reported here indicate that all four newspapers focused primarily on the acute, breaking news aspects of the conflict with very little background information or historical context. Many of the stories involved confined, closed spaces and narrow windows of time, focusing only on cause-and-effect. For example, here-and-now framed coverage was used in the latest October outbreak of violence as to the casualties and who threw the first stone.

In reporting on minority communities, it is important that news stories refrain from sensational, stereotypical or shallow storylines and must instead include additional historical background information guiding audiences to understand the root causes to the conflict (Romano, 2013). In this instance, the roots of conflict in the Rakhine state stem from the complicated origins and citizenship statuses of the Muslim community. It is not simply a conflict that arose out of communal violence in 2012. Deeper, long-standing issues that contribute to this conflict can be traced as far as back British colonial times in Myanmar. Numerous unique cultural, social, economic, and political conditions in Myanmar, from past decades to present day, have contributed to the current crisis in Rakhine State. Failure to provide backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation may hinder conflict transformation through constructive discourse (Galtung, 2002).

In addition, journalists should recognize the importance of rhetoric and propaganda campaigns of interest groups in this conflict. Nationalist rhetoric against the Muslim community of Rakhine state has becoming more and more widespread within Myanmar (McPherson, 2016). As investigated by Adhikary and Habib (2016), there have been online propaganda campaigns spreading false information created ‘by a group of Rohingya’ aimed at inciting communal tensions and to draw sympathy of the global community. Therefore, to prevent further violence that could result from reporting heavily on breaking news aspect of the conflict, journalists must elucidate hidden agendas of parties involved who are trying to manipulate public opinion and to overshadow the roots of the crisis as Powers & Andsager (1999) points out.

Language Based War Journalism Frames

Thus far, analysis of the results indicates that examined media of Myanmar, Bangladesh and the U.S. covered the conflict from different perspectives by using distinctive news sources and dichotomized framework, while war journalism dominated the overall coverage. A definition of framing theory proposed by de Vreese (2005) helps explain this pattern. According to de Vreese, news framing is the process of media selecting and promoting certain elements of a topic to make it more salient than others, providing a way to better understand an event or issue. To do so, journalists employ certain news frames in constructing and defining issues of the conflict. Moreover, the individual media outlet has its own narrative and uses certain language to describe the conflict.

The way stories were framed and depicted were, to a certain extent, different from one newspaper to another. In terms of language-based war journalism frames, results revealed that the prevalence of victimizing and demonizing language varied notably by news outlet. *The New York Times* and *The Daily Star* used significantly more victimizing language than the other two

newspapers sampled. The *7Day Daily* and *The New York Times* used significantly more demonizing language than *The Mirror* and *The Daily Star*. The use of the emotive language frame appeared throughout coverage regardless of newspaper or country. More than 60 percent of total stories analyzed included emotive language.

Highlighting the prevalence of language-based war journalism frames, the stories from sampled outlets greatly differed in aspects of language and wording. For example, victimizing language, which refers to words that describe what had been to people with a focus on their violence and our suffering, was observed in coverage by *The New York Times* and *The Daily Star*. Stories from these outlets commonly used language such as ‘long-persecuted’, ‘most persecuted’, ‘stateless’, ‘executed’, ‘discriminated’, and ‘unarmed’ when describing the suffering of the Muslim community of Rakhine state (referred to as Rohingya in the original articles). On the other hand, among reports from the *7Day Daily* and *The Mirror*, victimizing language was used only to describe suffering of residents whose identities were not specified and deaths of soldiers and police officers in covering events such as the October incident. Burmese words that roughly translate to ‘ambushed’, ‘sacrificed’, ‘innocent civilians’, ‘displaced’, ‘tortured’ and ‘fallen’ were used frequently.

Use of demonizing words was also present in the coverage by *The New York Times* and *The Daily Star*. In portraying the Burmese army and the Buddhist monks these outlets used words such as ‘brutal’, ‘Buddhist extremist’, ‘nationalist’, and ‘tyrant’. The two Burmese newspapers sampled used more emotive language than the other two. Words like ‘violent attacker’, ‘terrorist’, ‘militant’, ‘extremist’, ‘jihadist’, ‘evil aggressor’ and ‘traitor’ were found in some reports of the October incident. In these cases, the narrative portrayed government troops and border posts as being ambushed and attacked by a group of men who had terrorist training

(*State Counsellor Office Information Committee*, 2016). There was a clear difference in the use of demonizing language between two Burmese newspapers and the other newspapers. Calling the Muslims community in Rakhine state ‘Bengalis’ can be considered demonizing language because it promotes an idea of them being threatening evil aggressor (Rowell, 2011). In a recent statement, Aung San Suu Kyi, the Myanmar foreign minister and minister of the President’s Office, strongly warned against using controversial terms such as ‘Rohingya’ and ‘Bengali’ “that are incendiary and create greater divisions between those who live in Rakhine and elsewhere,” (Gerin, 2016). There were very few reports that included those terms in the government-run newspaper, *The Mirror*. However, the privately-owned *7Day Daily* frequently used the term, ‘Bengali’ to identify the Muslim community of Rakhine.

Finally, evidence from the present analysis suggested certain factors be considered regarding to the use of emotive language, one of the most salient war journalism frames used in all four newspapers sampled. A closer look at the details of the wording revealed that emotive words used in the coverage were completely different. Some of the emotive words that appeared in *The New York Times* and *The Daily Star* coverage were ‘apartheid’, ‘crime against humanity’, ‘ethnic cleansing’, ‘genocide’, ‘raping’, ‘burn down’, ‘systematic and institutionalized discrimination’, ‘holocaust’, and ‘extrajudicial killings’. Interestingly, those strong words often appeared in direct quotes from elite sources, specifically third party representatives. For instance, U.N. officials publicly used phrases such as ‘systematic and institutionalized discrimination against the Rohingya population’ and ‘crimes against humanity’ (*The Associated Press*, 2017: Osborne, 2016). Other elites such as Najib Razak, Malaysia’s prime minister, members of the International State Crime Initiative, and members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation used the highly controversial term ‘genocide’ in reports and official statements (Chandran,

2016). By contrast, emotive words such as ‘attempts to seize or capture’, ‘terrorist attack’, ‘violent attack’, ‘disturbance of stability’, ‘religious extremism’, ‘separatist movement’, and ‘breach of sovereignty’ were found in the coverage of the *7Day Daily* and *The Mirror*. Those words were considered to provoke intense feelings in people of Myanmar that could lead to xenophobia, irrational patriotism, and nationalism. It appeared that many instances of these emotive words came from quotes from Myanmar government officials (Nanda, 2016; *The Mirror*, 2017).

Dominant Peace Journalism Frames in the Coverage

While the foregoing discussion focuses on several aspects of war journalism frames, it does not detract from the prevalence and importance of peace journalism frames found in the coverage analyzed. Among the twelve indicators of peace journalism frames, the four most dominant salient indicators of peace journalism were: (1) multiparty orientation; (2) proactive reporting; (3) solution orientation; and (4) avoidance of demonizing language. Multiparty orientation and avoidance of demonizing language were among the most salient indicators, concurrent with findings from previous research (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010; Lee & Maslog, 2005).

In the first empirical study to operationalize Johan Galtung’s classification of war and peace journalism, Lee and Maslog (2005) explain that some peace indicators are not the strongest indicators for peace journalism framing even though they are important for the overall classification scheme. They conclude that these frames are “mere extensions of the objectivity credo: reporting the facts as they are,” (p. 324). Because these indicators are less interventionist by nature, their prevalence does not truly reflect the role of journalists actively seeking and employing constructive news frames for peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Other peace journalism studies report similar findings suggesting a structural limitation inherent in the peace journalism framework (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010). Consequently, previous research highlights a need to redefine the criteria of peace journalism because, “the pattern of salient indicators supporting the peace journalism frame falls short of Galtung’s conceptualization of peace journalism as an advocacy and interpretative approach oriented in peace-conflict, people, truth and solution” (Lee, 2010, p. 379).

In this study, analysis of peace journalism indicators yielded findings similar to previous studies. The multiparty orientation and the avoidance of demonizing language among the most salient peace journalism indicators found in this study do not necessarily represent peace journalism but objective and factual reporting. In some cases, Burmese journalists indicated their understanding of the conflict by avoiding the use of one demonizing term. It seemed that *The Mirror* avoided using specific terms that are considered controversial and demonizing to involved parties, such as ‘Rohingya’ and ‘Bengali’, while the *7Day Daily* used these words significantly. As noted earlier, term is very controversial because the debate of the identity of the Muslim community in Rakhine state is still ongoing and intense. The *Mirror* seemed to be more careful with using precise terms to describe the involved parties in its coverage while the *7Day Daily* used the demonizing terms greatly. In this case, it is reasonable to assume that avoiding of the demonizing language was a conscious and deliberate act by journalists and a significant indicator of peace journalism framing.

Proactive reporting was among the most salient peace journalism indicators in the analyzed coverage. It is obvious that this indicator is somewhat strong indicators for peace journalism framing. Excluding *The Daily Star*, more than half of the coverage of the *7Day Daily*, *The Mirror* and *The New York Times* included a proactive approach in the construction of their

stories. Rather than writing in response to a situation, stories reflected a proactive role by journalists actively covering the conflict before the October incident broke out and continue to stay on and report the aftermath with a focus on reconstruction or rehabilitation.

Regarding the solution-oriented frame indicator, there was no clear demonstration of journalists' actively taking a solution-seeking approach. They simply focused on newsworthy stories that happened to include peace initiatives by power elites. For instance, some stories focused on Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel peace prize winner as well as the de-facto leader of Myanmar, initiated and established an advisory commission led by Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General, aiming to find lasting solution to the complex and delicate issues in the Rakhine State (Westcott & Wright, 2016).

Usage of Sources and Voices

Another aim of this study was to investigate whether usage of news sources/voices varied by newspaper. Direct quotes included in the articles were counted and coded into different five categories: (1) Myanmar; (2) Bangladesh; (3) the Muslim community in Rakhine State; (4) the Buddhist of the Rakhine State ; and (5) third parties. Results indicated that the use of news sources/voices among newspapers varied regardless of the type of sources/voices. For example, the *7Day Daily* was more likely to include quotes from Myanmar government officials and the Buddhist/Rakhine people than from Bangladesh and the Muslim group. Quotes used by *The Mirror* mostly came from the Myanmar government, and partially from the Muslim group, from the Buddhist/ Rakhine, and the third parties. *The New York Times* frequently used quotes from third-party representatives, the Myanmar government and the Muslim group while rarely from the Buddhist/Rakhine and the Bangladesh. On the other hand, *The Daily Star* was more likely to

include opinions and statements from Bangladeshi officials and the third parties. Yet, it had no representation of the Buddhist/Rakhine representatives in its coverage.

Analysis of commonly used sources by each newspaper indicated that Myanmar newspapers and the Bangladeshi newspaper used their own official sources in what could be interpreted as an attempt to advance their official governmental position about the conflict while *The New York Times* used the perspectives of rights and aid groups. Favoring certain types of sources in the coverage became evident in report of the above mentioned incident that occurred in Maungtaw located in Rakhine State in October 2016. Myanmar newspapers placed great emphasis on statements from Myanmar authorities and portraying the incident as an insurgent/terrorist attack that targeted security forces attempting to damage the sovereignty of the country (*The Mirror*, 2016).

By contrast, *The New York Times* reported the incident as a brutal military crackdown against a small group of poorly armed combatants and focused on allegations of rape and mass killing lodged by human rights groups (Perlez & Moe, 2016). Instead of focusing on the incident itself, reports from *The Daily Star* focused on how neighboring Bangladesh trying to resolve influx of the Muslim refugees who have tried to flee the violence in Rakhine State (Star Online Report, 2016).

As discussed, the nature of these conflicts is complex and involves many adversaries who have different opinions and seek different outcomes. Journalists have the responsibility to show a complete picture of an issue by including voices from all parties involved “to decipher motivating factors behind sources and round out coverage by consistent presentation of all sides” (Powers& Andsager, 1999, p 561). Even though the reports did not focus only on just two

parties, certain perspectives pertinent to the conflict that could broaden the discourse were largely absent.

The analysis revealed that the Rakhine Buddhist community of the Rakhine State is underrepresented in international media, while the Muslim community is underrepresented in Myanmar media. As a result, both communities may feel their voices are being ignored, which can intensify growing discontent, suspicions, and tensions. As Leider (2014) pointed out, biased news report can contribute to divisiveness in the society and interfere with peacebuilding processes.

Hypotheses

Based on previous studies, current study tested three hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that war journalism would be more dominant than peace journalism in reporting the conflict. Data analysis supported this hypothesis. The major body of literature in this area posits that war journalism is more dominant than peace journalism in mainstream news reporting (Abdul-Nabi, 2015; Ersoy, 2016; Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

As Wolfsfeld (2001) explains, media can play an influential role in conflict resolution and they can be either destructive or constructive. Peace journalism is a normative theory that journalists should contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts by constructive reporting (Irvan, 2006). In contrast, war journalism is often sensational and biased towards violence resulting more harm than good (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Results from study supports the latter; that the media can be more destructive than constructive to peacebuilding processes in the Rakhine conflict.

The second hypothesis of the study was to examine how dominant news frames varied by language. Results add to existing war/peace journalism literature by adding an analysis of news

media vernacular which has been largely ignored area of research due to language barriers (Lee, 2010). Findings showed a slight difference in the coverage of the conflict between English-language and Burmese-language newspapers in terms of peace/war journalism framing. The findings suggest that both peace/war journalism frames can be found in the reports from the Burmese-language newspapers while mainly war journalism frames dominate the reports from the English-language newspapers. In previous research, Lee (2010) found that English language news stories are more likely to be framed as war journalism than peace journalism. Results from this study support the conclusion that the vernacular of media published in the local language are less likely to frame stories as war journalism compared to English-language press.

Lastly, this study also proposed another hypothesis that there would be a relationship between the location of news production and war/peace journalism framing. Results evinced a significant distribution of war/peace journalism framing among three types of production sources classified in the study. News stories produced by the U.S journalists and foreign news wire services such as the *Associated Press* and *Reuters* were more war dominant than stories produced by local/regional journalists of Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Findings highlight the differences of Western journalism and Asian journalism. Asian journalism is commonly known as development journalism can be interpreted by journalists playing an important role in nation-building (Romano, 2009). According to this perspective, rather than writing sensational and negative reports, local Asian news media emphasize positive stories that can contribute to improving socioeconomic and political conditions of their nations. Stories should be focused on identifying solutions to resolve crises and social problems to foster a more positive, cohesive, and stable society. Those core values of Asian journalism are inherent to peace journalism as well. Therefore, news values and newswriting standards of Asian

reporters and editors from Myanmar and Bangladeshi may be more normative to peace journalism framing than that of from Western countries like the United States.

Limitations

This study, while grounded in theory and previous research, had four main limitations. First, sample size could limit on results. Second, the kinds of articles selected for this study presented minor methodological issues. An analysis of story length based on word count or article length was not possible due to the inclusion of articles in two languages. In addition, many stories were obtained from online archives or the newspaper's website. Some online archive files only contained the written text, while others contained the text along with original photographs included in the story. The number of stories that included visual images were disproportionate. It was not possible perform comparative analysis of the pictures associated with the articles.

The third limiting factor involved collecting stories in more than one language. Issues involving direct translation of some Burmese words into English had the potential to skew results, especially when coding for language-based frames. The coder exercised great care and caution to maintain objectivity and minimize bias and coded certain qualitative variables which called involved individual interpretation and decision-making. Even so, it impossible to completely control for subconscious bias may have impacted the data collection.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the four newspapers examined here do not represent the views of all news media in their respective countries. The four newspapers were chosen specifically for their wide circulation and readership, but even so they could not provide a wholly sufficient basis for determining whether peace/war frames are common in the coverage of this conflict in each country.

An additional conceptual limitation arose in discussing the findings reported above. The coding methodology employed by this study, informed by previous research (i.e. Galtung 1986; 1998; Lee & Maslog, 2005; Lee, 2010), created a binary classification system for war and peace journalism. For example, if in a given article there were six war journalism indicators present and seven peace journalism indicators, the article was coded as peace journalism. The coding framework as adapted did not account for articles that had a mixture of war and peace journalism. In this study, most articles coded were not war dominated or peace dominated. Most had a mix of both indicators; however the presence of the opposite indicator, meaning war indicators in a peace-coded article, was ignored by the coding scheme.

Theoretical implications

Despite these limitations, this study makes an important contribution to the developing body of peace journalism literature. This study adds to the existing literature by providing a first analysis on the new and developing Myanmar media from peace journalism perspective. As noted earlier sections, certain constructs relating to peace journalism are still in need of refinement. The original concepts proposed by Galtung (1986, 1998) have been operationalized to criteria include definitions of, for example, peace-conflicts, people, truth, solution orientation (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010; Lee & Maslog, 2005). Taking into account recent scholarly developments, coding categories of this study were modified to include more accurate operational definitions of peace journalism criteria. Even so, results raised new challenges to further improve peace indicators to reflect distinctions between true peace journalism and objective and factual reporting.

Results from this study indicate that war journalism is dominant in the coverage of the Rakhine conflict regardless of media origin. Results of this study reflect previous findings (i.e. Leveson, 2012) that the common journalism practices when reporting conflicts among minority groups is, to a certain extent, superficial, sensational, and divisive. This finding underscores the importance and necessity for international and local journalists to recognize the impact of their story narratives. Dominance of war frames in foreign produced news stories suggests that norms and standards of western journalists may not be helpful in the transformation of ongoing Asian conflicts. This is evident when one considers how conflict reporting shapes the opinions of the public as well as policy elites in regard to the country and conflict.

Practical Implications

The purpose peace journalism research is neither to judge which parties are wrong or right in this conflict nor to take a side. This research project aimed to make a contribution to the process of ending this ongoing conflict as well as help prevent suffering and loss of human life. The study advocates for media to err toward peace and reminds media practitioners of the critical journalistic ethical obligation, to 'do no harm'. From a peace journalism perspective, the roles of journalists are more than just that of bystander reporting facts. Conflict reporters should constantly be aware of their obligation to do no harm because sometimes simply reporting the facts could contribute to worsening conflicts and violence. Journalists should be considerate of the possible consequences of their reports. While maintaining their integrity and objectivity, journalists should take a proactive, advocative, and interventionist approach journalism. To critics of peace journalism, this may sound absurd and impossible yet it can be achieved through creative and innovative writing that weaves peacemaking into the story.

Findings from this study have specific implications for journalists in Myanmar and Bangladesh. Since Myanmar began its political transition to democracy in 2010, now more than ever there is an urgent need for peace journalism to aid the process of becoming more democratic by promoting peace and reconciliation within its own borders and amongst its neighbors. Developing Asian media should consciously and deliberately adopt a multidimensional strategic approach to play a more positive role to end ongoing conflicts and to prevent further violence aiming for regional peace and stability. This study helps lay foundation for furthering the development of peace journalism education and training for Asian journalists.

Realistically, it would be impossible to completely eliminate sensationalist war journalism in the news media industry. As present and previous findings indicate, there always has been and will always be a market for it. However, media scholars must continue to press the question, “Can the media meet the imperatives of market forces such as sensationalism and commercialization, and at the same time create a forum for serious and responsible public debate?” (Pineda de Forsberg, 2007, p4). How can journalists commercialize peace journalism? One of reasons that war journalism is dominant is that it sensationalism sells but that alone should not be the only thing readers take away from a story.

One feasible strategy is using both war and peace frames in a story. In one of the stories sampled for analysis, the *7Day Daily* reported about a doctor who takes care of everyone indiscriminately in the conflict area. Due to her kindness and passion to save lives of others, Dr. Khin Thu Zar is loved by both the Muslim and the Buddhist communities in Rakhine State. The doctor, being a Buddhist/Rakhine, did not allow her religion or beliefs prevent her from helping Muslim patients. The news story carried a meaningful message encouraging people to reach across the aisle and give hopes for a better future and a more harmonious society. Analysis of the

story indicated that peace journalism frames were stronger but the article was not completely free of war/sensational journalism frames. Journalists should consider using certain war journalism frames to draw the attention of audiences and then introduce peace journalism concepts once readers start reading. Balancing the two philosophies might work better for both journalists and audiences in the end.

Future Research

Studying journalism in Myanmar, and South East Asia in general, is a very nascent area of research. Because of this, much remains to be done. Findings from the study will be beneficial to guide similar studies of ongoing internal conflicts in Myanmar and throughout South East Asia. Perhaps the most immediate direction for future studies is to investigate the underlying roots of war journalism frames in Burmese news media. Future studies should also consider war/peace journalism framing in other legacy media, such as broadcast television and radio. Similar work can be done to compare local and foreign coverage of this specific conflict across newspapers, television, and radio.

In addition, future studies should examine framing concepts in the emerging sector of new media in Myanmar. New media (i.e. social media, micro blogging, backpack journalism) is growing rapidly among the country's younger population. It would be interesting to examine war/peace journalism framing patterns occurring on social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter.

A third direction for future studies would be to expand the scope of analysis. The current study examined coverage of the conflict in Rakhine state using national newspapers from Myanmar, Bangladesh and the U.S. However, those three countries are not the only ones with vested interest. Future studies should apply this methodology to coverage by other international

media that promote democracy, such as the European Union, U.K., and Australia as well as Asian countries more closely linked to the conflict such as Thailand, Malaysia, and India.

As mentioned above in the limitations section, the paradigm of peace journalism should shift away from a binary perspective to consider a spectrum of conflict reporting. Future studies that attempt to code conflict reporting should pay attention to articles that contain both war frame and peace frame indicators. Through this lens, patterns could emerge that expand the understanding of war and peace as absolute and mutually exclusive.

Finally, future studies should focus on refining framing theory by devoting more attention frame production processes which remains a relatively unexplored area of framing literature (Borah, 2011). Understanding the process through which media frames are created and become dominant in conflict reporting will lead to developing a better framework for peace journalism advocates to promote conflict resolution.

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Appendix A - Coding Instruction Sheet

Approach-based war journalism indicators

1. Reports primarily on the visible effects of war (Casualties, damage to the property, death tolls).
2. Elite orientation (over reliance upon elite military, government officials, interest groups as actors and sources of information).
3. Primary focus on here and now (covering only the acute, breaking news aspects of the conflict with very little background information or historical context).
4. Dichotomizing of good guys versus bad guy (Do they blame one side?).
5. Partisan (showing bias toward one side by creating distinctive sharp divides between among groups) (Does the story include debates from both sides? Does it include voices from both sides?).
6. Difference -oriented (focus on differences between two groups).
7. Reactivity (Is the news story a response to an attack or an incident?).
8. Victory-oriented (Zero sum game).
9. Two party orientation (talks about Buddhist versus Muslims, government versus refugees).

Language-based categorization war journalism indicators

10. The use of victimizing language (i.e. stateless, defenseless, pathetic, racism etc. with a focus on their violence and our suffering/ focused mostly on what has been done to the people).
11. The use of demonizing language (i.e. terrorist, extremist, fundamentalist, brutal, whether describing Myanmar military or the refugees, Muslim rebels, nationalists).
12. The use of emotive words (i.e. massacre, lynching, ethnic cleansing, killing, murdering, terrorist attack, etc. whether used to describe the Rakhine or the Muslims)

Approach-based peace journalism indicators

1. Invisible effects of war (emotional trauma, damage to society and culture, how the conflict affects the country's development and democratization process, shared experience of suffering, how it affects long-standing diversity of the country).
2. People oriented (a focus on civilians and common people as primary actors and sources of information).
3. Reports on deeper causes and consequences of the conflict (providing historical background and context).
4. Avoids dichotomization of good guys versus bad guys.
5. Non partisan (Not biased toward one side in the conflict, Do they talk about the debates from both sides? Do they give voices to both groups? Do they not identify good guys or bad guys?).
6. Agreement-oriented (Focus on common ground and promote mutual understanding).
7. Proactive (Not a response to an event).
8. Solution- oriented (Peace initiatives).
9. Multiparty orientation (Rakhine, Myanmar, Government, the Muslims, Third party, negotiators- Alternative viewpoints).

Language-based peace journalism indicators

10. Avoids the use of victimizing language and report on how people are coping.
11. Avoids the use of demonizing language by using more precise term.
12. Avoids the use of emotive words and not exaggerating the gravity of situations.

Appendix B - Code Sheet

Story ID: _____

VD. Date (MM/DD/YYYY) _____

V0. Newspaper *7Day Daily* =1, *The Mirror*=2, *The New York Times* =3, *The Daily Star*=4 _____

V1. Language Burmese =1, English =2 _____

V2. Production source Local=0, Wire services=1, Foreign reporter/contributor=2 _____

V31. Elite Source Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V32. People Source Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V33. Other Source Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V41. Myanmar Voices Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V42. Bangladesh Voices Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V43. Muslims Voices Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V44. Rakhine Voices Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

V5. 3rd Party voices Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W1. Visible effects of war Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W2. Elite orientation Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W3. Primary focus on here and now Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W4. Dichotomizing of good guys versus bad guy Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W5. Partisan Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W6. Difference -oriented Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W7. Reactivity Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W8. Victory-oriented Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

W9. Two party orientation Present =1, Not Present =0 _____

- W10. The use of victimizing language Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- W11. The use of demonizing language Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- W12. The use of emotive words Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P1. Invisible effects of war Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P2. People oriented Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P3. Deeper causes and consequences of the conflict Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P4. Avoids dichotomization of good guys versus bad guys Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P5. Nonpartisan Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P6. Agreement-oriented Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P7. Proactive Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P8. Solution- oriented Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P9. Multiparty orientation Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P10. Avoiding the use of victimizing language Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P11. Avoiding the use of demonizing language Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- P12. Avoiding the use of emotive words Present =1, Not Present =0 _____
- V6. Overall Framing War = 1, Peace = 2, Neutral = 3 _____