Peacekeeping: International Media Coverage of Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

One of the world's longest-running ethnic and political disputes is centered on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, the only divided nation in Europe. While the genuine number of deaths compared to other conflicts has been low, the percentage of loss-to-people ratio is one of the highest since the Second World War (Veli, 2013). The Cyprus conflict, a more than 60- year-old problem, has captured headlines of the media worldwide. This study examines how three international media organizations located in the United States and the United Kingdom framed the peacekeeping initiative within the last five years. The selected news media are the *New York Times*, the *Associated Press (AP)*, and the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*. Specifically, this study explores through the lens of a peace journalism framework how the international media in the last five-year wrote about peace initiatives in Cyprus. The study employed Robert Entman's framing theory to assess the coverage. Using a qualitative content analysis approach, researchers coded using five frames: peace journalism, conflict journalism, cultural identities, economics, and health & safety. A total of 552 news articles were analyzed. Research findings show that these international media are not playing a significant role in promoting peace in Cyprus. Additionally, researchers discovered that most often western foreign news agencies report violence and conflict more saliently than other news stories from developing and other countries. The primary conclusion, newspaper coverage in international media have the opportunity to focus more on framing to facilitate peace rather than conflict.

KEYWORDS: Peacebuilding, Conflict, International Media, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey

Introduction

One of the world's longest-running ethnic and political disputes is centered on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, the only divided nation in Europe. Cypriots and the rest of the world have watched the never-ending negotiations to solve the Cyprus conflict continue without resolution for over four decades (Ozgur, 2017). A snake-shaped brick wall stretches through the island through the border city of Nicosia. On a typical day residents and tourists leave the streets lined with restaurants, boutiques and specialty shops to walk across the border and into the northern Turkish half of the island. The green line, the area known as the buffer zone is guarded and protected with United Nations soldiers. This visual of residences and churches just along the buffer zone watched over by armed soldiers is a continual reminder that the nation is still conceptually and physically divided (Hall,2014). The Rutter's report noted that Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities saw an increase in hostility after the island gained its independence from Britain in 1960, eventually exploding into political conflicts and violence in 1963. In 1974, the tensions increased when Turkey intervened militarily in response to a coup attempt by the pro-Greek Cyprus National Guard. Along the line of the cease-fire, the island was split in half, and it remains that way.

However, in 2017 hopes for a resolution were heightened when prominent political leaders gathered in Switzerland. This incident triggered other kinds of protests, as longtime opponents from the two competing communities came together for the first time to fight for a shared cause: peace and unity (UNCT, 2017). Unite Cyprus Now (UCN), is a "multi-communal grassroots non-party movement of Cypriots encouraging actions in support of peace and the unity of the island through a peaceful resolution."

Again, the Cyprus conflict is a more than 60 year-old problem, which has attracted intense media coverage worldwide (Heraclides, 2011). Through agenda-setting, media can change minds and shape community values. For example, if the media highlights nonstop an issue negatively, people's minds change on the subject due to media impact and the conflict escalates. On contrary, conflict can be de-escalated by continuous positive news reports. This study explores how international media presents the Cyprus problem to the audiences, mainly focusing on how world-leading media, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), framed the last five-year peace initiatives as seen through the lens of a peace journalism framework. The key aim of the paper is to evaluate the use of Peace Journalism, in international media coverage by analyzing news stories published from July 21, 2017 to July 21, 2022. This article also observes how the media represents the Cyprus problem to increase conflict and/or promote peace initiatives. The paper addresses the below research questions:

1. To what extent does international media help in the peacebuilding process in Cyprus?

2. Which media frame was frequently used by the international print media in their coverage of the Cyprus conflict?

3. What are the significant differences among the international newspapers using Peace Journalism approaches in covering the Cyprus conflict?

4. To what extent did international newspapers use 'escalating' or 'de-escalating' oriented headlines in covering the Cyprus conflict?

Literature Review

The history of Cyprus can be divided into four distinct periods: the British Colony's dominance (1878–1959); the unification of the Turkish Cypriot (TC) and Greek Cypriot (GC) populations under the Republic of Cyprus (1960–1963); the beginning of hostilities between the two-communities (1963–1974); and the failed integration efforts under a federal government effort (1974–present); (Yontucu et al., 2022). This paper analyzes a more recent five-year period during the integration period. According to a few scholars, the causes of the Cyprus conflict are described differently by the two communities of Greek Cypriots (GC) and Turkish Cypriots (TC). Greek Cypriots state that the Cyprus issue is a global one caused by Turkey's invasion of an independent state in 1974. However, according to Turkish Cypriots, the dispute is between the two communities, and they accuse Greek Cypriots of starting the racial tensions in the 1960s. (Calotychos, 2021; Lacher & Kaymak, 2005; Papadakis, 1998). Also, Neil Hall (2014) explained in his reports that in1974 things escalated when Turkey intervened militarily in response to a revolution attempt by the pro-Greek Cyprus National Guard.

The Republic of Cyprus (ROC) is still run by Greek Cypriots in the south of the island, while Turkish Cypriots created their nation, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), in the island's north in 1983. The Turkish Republic has recognition from the global community, and faces financial sanctions, except for Turkey. As a result, North Cyprus is now more economically and militarily dependent on Turkey (Şahin, 2014). Although peace and the conflict have not officially ended, there is no longer any open hostility between the two communities, except for brief arguments between political figures. The leaders have discussed several historic agreements with the intercommunal dialogue regarding a bicommunal constitution and bi-zonal area from 1968 to the present. However, a resolution has not been found, and the negotiation talks have not started again since 2017(Yontucu et al., 2022).

Framing the news

A frame is a procedure of telling and understanding an incident. According to Robert Entman, "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem dentition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). However, the chosen conflict framing may operate differently depending on the circumstances. De Vreese et al., (2001) further explain that the readership may accept the news event or element positively, negatively, or neutrally.

Nonetheless, applying the ideas of peace journalism is often difficult for journalists. One of the concerns is defining news. Different events will have different news values that decide whether they are newsworthy. Because these kinds of news frames are at the forefront of news ideals, journalists choose negative, sensational, and exaggerated news frames, mainly when covering news regarding ethnic conflicts (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004). Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov highlights that news frames that can encourage assistance and resolution should be chosen over negative frames.

Reporting the peace

The frames of conventional journalism and peace journalism are in contradiction regarding how the media covers war and conflict. Peace conflict, truth, people, and solutions are the four primary practices and linguistic aspects of the concept of peace journalism. On the other hand, war journalism emphasizes the violence, deception, elites, and success of the conflict. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist, developed the idea of peace journalism in 1965, moving away from conventional methodological ideas to the intersection of war and media. (Hussain & Siraj, 2019).

Reporters must first admit the existence of conflict before examining conflict structures by characterizing the parties, goals, and issues involved. Galtung's categorization of peace journalism describes it as both peace and conflict-oriented. Because they provide a voice to all parties involved, peace journalists promote sympathy and empathy by being aware of the conflict's historical and cultural roots. A peace reporter uses ethical, rigorous, and active peace journalism practices to promote an environment for learning and pursuing practical conflict resolution strategies. (Galtung 1986, 1998),

Following that, Lynch and McGoldrick (2007) added a variety of peace journalism styles to Galtung's paradigm to cover every potential conflict. They described peace journalism as an approach to reporting on an event that is more sympathetic, thorough, rational, acceptable, and conclusive, all while also shedding light on the reality of dealing with conflict and change (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2007). Furthermore, by broadcasting with greater fairness about all parties concerned, media coverage promotes the possibility of stability (Lynch, 2015).

Over the years, several inquiries about the beliefs and methodology of peace journalists have been answered. Jake Lynch (2014), a peace journalism expert, responds to the accusation by stating that media coverage is more proficient and effective than outright campaigning for peace. Furthermore, a peace journalist is supposed to examine every aspect of the conflict rather than relying only on the elites. The desire of the journalist to help those impacted by conflict is another prerequisite for peace journalism. "In other words, peace journalism is when editors and reporters make decisions about what to publish and how to present it, giving society the chance to think about and value non-violent conflict resolution (Lynch, & McGoldrick, 2007. p.256).

Methods and Results

The three news media organizations with wide readership and standard influence in their respective countries were purposively selected. Due to language and resource constraints, this study focused primarily on three international English-language media. Again, researchers reviewed the last five years news coverage of the Cyprus conflict was chosen to analyze the latest peace initiatives. Samples were collected from July 21, 2017, to July 21, 2022. One selected United States media organization is *The New York Times*, the national paper of record and has a worldwide readership. Another, the Associated Press (AP), a nonprofit 24-hour news organization, is the oldest and most prominent in the United States and has long been the biggest and most prestigious news organization in the entire globe. Regarding listener size, language variety, and reception area, the BBC World Service is the most significant external broadcaster globally. In more than 40 languages, it transmits radio news, speeches, and discussions to various world regions.

Sample collection and selection

New stories from the media were retrieved using LexisNexis. We used the *"Cyprus in peace"* search to get the news about the Cyprus conflict and peace initiatives. Therefore, we only collected the report's headline and the first five paragraphs of the news for the qualitative content analysis. Primarily all the headlines and five-paragraph news articles were copied into a Microsoft Excel file with a serial number. The number of final selected stories for analysis stood at 268 with The New York Times at 29, AP at 69, and BBC at 170. We then expanded our search to key words "Cypriot AND Conflict AND Cyprus," and retrieved a total of 284 news articles. In total, we retrieved 552 news reports with 169 of those directly relevant to the research topic, and other news articles were related to peace and conflict but in other regions. (see, Table 1).

Table 1: Country, Newspaper and frequency:

Country	Newspaper	Search term	
		Cyprus in peace	Cypriot AND Conflict AND Cyprus
United States	The New York Times	29	34
	The Associated Press	69	70
United Kingdom	BBC	170	180
	Total	268	284
	Grand total	**552**	

Data presentation, Analysis, and Discussion

Again, a codebook was developed based on a qualitative analysis of 552 news reports. Initially, basic information about the articles, such as the newspapers' country, newspapers' names, and length of the articles, was coded. The study identified five mainframes based on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) categorization of crisis frame: Peace journalism frame, conflict journalism frame, cultural identities frame, economic frame, health and safety frame, and other region frames (see Table 2). The Unit of analysis is the headline and first five-paragraph of the news; after analysis, the cultural identities frame and health & safety frame were removed as news organizations have not used them. Also, another region frame not directly relevant to this research topic was removed.

Table2: Dominant frames in each newspaper:

Type of Frame	Newspapers						Grand Total
	The New York Times		The Associated Press		BBC: International		
	Story	%	Story	%	Story	%	
PJ Frame	4	26.66	20	42.44	43	40.10	67(40%)
CJ Frame	7	46.67	22	46.80	52	48.59	**81(48%)**
Economic Frame	4	26.66	5	10.63	12	11.21	21 (12%)
N (%)	15 (100)		47 (100)		107(100)		169 (100)

Disseminating Conflict

Framing is evident in conflict journalism. As the public trusts on media to learn about a conflict, media can influence public view and the nature of the argument related to the conflict, subsequently influencing the peace-building process (Myint, 2017). In conflict reporting, a journalist may highlight violent aspects of the conflict while overpowering peacebuilding aspects. Wolfsfeld (2004) also states that media can play a negative or positive role in peace processes according to which news frame they adopt in conflict reporting.

In our study, the media predominantly uses the conflict frame when the issue involves disagreements between various nations. Reports on the visible effects of war/conflict casualties, damage to property, and death tolls. Elite orientation over-reliance upon elite military, government officials, and interest groups as actors and sources of information. However, the primary focus here is on covering only the conflict's critical, breaking news aspects with very little background information or historical context. Showing bias toward one side by creating distinctive sharp divides among groups. The story includes debates from both sides and voices from both sides. But the reports offer very little insight of those positioned in the middle of the conflict.

The analysis of three media organizations' coverage of the Cyprus conflict reveals that it has framed the conflict by employing general conflict frames. Out of 169 (100%) of the stories, 81 (48%) used the conflict frame. In the media analysis, it has been shown that, though no statistically significant differences, media from the USA use conflict frames less (46%) than media from the UK (48%). This supports previous findings that 43 Western or foreign media tend to attention on violence and conflict when reporting stories in developing countries (Lee, 2010). However, the media often fail to contribute to the peace-building process. Lee & Maslog (2005) states that war journalism is a primary way of framing conflicts. Wolfsfeld (2004) explained why it is hard for the media to promote peace development. Peace building and news reporting often contrast by nature. There is a profound tension between the two processes. The news media traditionally value reporting on urgency, immediacy, threats, and violence. Promoting peace procedures necessitates patience, nurturing, and calmness which are not always considered.

Research findings explore that many articles written under the conflict frame, which appeared as international news, were headlined. For instance, the headline from the New York Times is "Rising Tensions Between Turkey and Greece Divide E.U." and "Turkey and Greece, trash-talking their way to conflict?" Other headlines in The Associated Press can escalate the conflict between two communities. For example, "Turkey says the 2-state solution is the only option for divided Cyprus" and "Greece to buy new planes, frigates amid Turkey tensions." A headline from BBC is "Turkish Cypriot leader blames Greek Cypriots for embargoes" in this news (July 20, 2917) The president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Mustafa Akinci, said, "It is not fair that Turkish Cypriot people live under embargoes due to the Greek Cypriot side's unwillingness." He said a Greek Cypriot demand for "zero troops and zero guarantees" could not be accepted. A piece of news from The New York Times quotes Foreign Minister Heiko Maas of Germany, "Fire is being played with, and any small spark could lead to catastrophe." This kind of news could help to increase conflict. Among the three media

organizations, BBC used the highest 48 percent conflict frame, while The New York Times and The Associated Press used a conflict frame in 46 percent of news.

Promoting Peace

Peace Journalism keeps the same core principles of objective journalism, namely reality, accuracy, independence, fairness, impartiality, and humanity; in the same way, traditional methods of war reporting embrace the fundamental values of truth and objectivity (Myint, 2017). In Galtung's view, however, journalists should take an active and self-conscious role in preventing conflicts and promoting peace (Galtung, 1986). Moreover, the Peace Journalism frame is used by the media mostly when the issue involves people-oriented focusing on civilians and ordinary people as primary actors and sources of information. Reports on deeper causes and consequences of the conflict by providing historical background and context. This frame shows that journalists are not biased toward one side in the conflict when they talk about the debates from both sides they also give voices to both communities. Additionally, our review indicates that journalists do not identify good or bad guys and are solution-oriented.

The news analysis of the three media organizations shows that the Peace Journalism frame was used less frequently than the conflict frame. As the Cyprus problem is   long-term ethnic conflict, this research aims to see the international media's role in peacebuilding in Cyprus. But data analysis shows that global media not playing a significant role. Among the 169 (100%) of the stories, 67 (40%) of them used the Peace Journalism (PJ) frame. Even out of the 169 news articles from five years, no special news was found that made for peacebuilding. For example, among the 15, only 4 reports of The New York time used the PJ frame, The Associate Press 20 out of 47, and BBC 47 news out of 107 used the PJ frame. Most of the news conveys daily/event activities.
However, many articles written under the PJ frame were headlined. For example, "Pope Travels to Cyprus In Quest to Aid Migrants," and "Jordan, Cyprus, Greece leaders probe means to boost ties," and "Erdogan's Visit to Northern Cyprus Stokes Decades-Long Dispute."
According to a news of The Associate Press (April 28, 2021), "Cyprus" rival leaders remained opposites to what is needed for a peace deal on reunifying the ethnically divided island nation as U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres continued trying to get dormant negotiations restarted."

Talking Economics

The media mainly use the economic frame when the issue involves the costs, benefits, or monetary/financial implications of the subject to an individual, family, community, or the economy. The analysis shows that fewer stories were told using an economic frame. Out of 169 (100%) of the stories, only 21 (12%) used the economic frame. Out of the 21 news articles, only four news stories were published in The New York Time, The Associated Press published five, and BBC published 12 news stories.

Most of the news of 12 percent that used the economic frame mainly focused on energy. According to a news in The New York Times (July 15, 2019), "Turkey's relationship with the West suffered fresh blow when the European Union decided to suspend contacts between high-level officials, as well as to pull financial aid, in response to Turkey's gas exploration in Cypriot

national waters." Some news also focused on the economy and financial issues. For example, A report by BBC (January 15, 2019) describes, *"We Cannot Continue to Live in This Way,"* laments the failure of the Turkish Cypriot community to solve their economic and social problems in 2018 and notes that the financial crisis and the delay in the transfer of funds from Turkey made the Turkish Cypriots suffer. It urges the administration and the people to work hard to increase production and solve the economic and financial problems in 2019 and notes: We must avoid hurting each other in useless disputes. We must work in unity to quickly draw up plans for economic development."

Discussion

According to Robert Entman's framing theory, selective newspapers from two countries make the Cyprus conflict a relevant issue. Three newspapers from two countries covered this international issue with emphasis. Results showed no statistically significant difference between war versus peace journalism framing among all two countries. In other words, media outlets from each country produced more war journalism stories than peace journalism stories. The majority, or roughly 48 percent, of news published in the UK, was classified as conflict journalism. There was no large difference in the distribution of overall conflict/peace journalism framing in newspapers. As reported in Table 2, results suggest that the coverage of the conflict by BBC was dominated by conflict journalism more so than other newspapers. In news coverage, BBC emphasized the Cyprus issue rather than the New York Times and the Associated Press. Table 1 suggested that among the direct coverage of Cyprus problem news, 169 BBC covered 81, and it was 350 for overall conflict coverage by using our two different search terms. All the little focus is on the economic issue, but no interest is shown in cultural, health, and safety issues.

This study found a positive correlation between conflict journalism framing and the length of a conflict. According to Lee (2010), longer conflicts tend to be framed as conflict journalism than peace journalism. Furthermore, more intense conflicts are associated with higher use of conflict journalism frames, and less intense battles are associated with higher use of peace journalism frames. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the most vigorous conflict journalism framing in the coverage of the Cyprus problem, as this conflict has been embroiled for more than six decades (Lee, 2010). It is of no surprise that war/peace journalism framing closely mirrors developments in peace negotiations. Journalists depend heavily on official sources that they perceive to be authoritative, knowledgeable, and influential (e.g., McLeod & Hertog, 1998; Paletz & Entman, 1981; Sigal, 1973; Tuchman, 1978). Including ordinary people is a significant step forward under the peace journalism approach, but it still does not take the story significantly beyond "reporting the facts." This particular finding fits into the first step, "de-escalation-oriented war coverage," of Kempf's (2003) two-step model of peace journalism, in that peace journalism's focus at this initial stage is to maintain neutrality in reporting and a distance from the parties involved, rather than to seek solutions to end the conflict actively. Thus, objectivity is a precondition to peace journalism. It is disappointing that the pattern of salient indicators supporting the peace journalism frame falls short of Galtung's conceptualization of peace journalism as an advocacy and interpretive approach oriented toward peace-conflict, people, truth, and solution. But journalism is changing rapidly, as seen in the decline of newspapers.

Conclusion

After analyzing the content of three international newspapers by applying Robert Entman's framing theory, it shows that often times western media emphasizes and focuses on conflict rather than peace journalism. Country and newspaper-based interests are different. For example, the *New York Times* and the Associate press used the same percentage (46%), but BBC used more than 48 percent. On the other hand, the associate media used peace journalism frame 42 percent. All the papers focused on the economic frame very little. The findings of this research clearly outline the challenges traditional news writing norms pose to peace journalism. One logical implication is that journalists need to rethink the notions of complex news values and the inverted pyramid formula for reporting war and conflict. Western foreign news agencies report violence and conflict more saliently than other news stories from developing countries. So, the study suggested that newspaper coverage still needs to focus on peace journalism rather than conflict.

This study makes an essential contribution to the developing body of peace journalism literature by providing an analysis of Cyprus's new and developing peace journalism perspective. The original concepts proposed by Galtung (1986, 1998) have been operationalized to criteria that include definitions of, for example, peace conflicts, people, truth, and solution orientation (Fahmy & Eakin, 2013; Lee, 2010; Lee & Maslog, 2005). Research results raised new challenges to improve peace journalism and objective and factual reporting. Realistically, it would be impossible to completely eliminate sensationalist war journalism in the news media industry. As previous findings indicate, there always has been and will always be a market for it (Myint, 2017). However, the study's conclusions will be beneficial to guide similar studies of the ongoing conflicts in Cyprus. But to enlighten journalists and new media organizations on the pitfalls of covering such conflicts. Perhaps the most immediate direction for future studies is investigating the underlying roots of war journalism frames in Cyprus. Are regional and local media using different frames when compared with international western media organizations? 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.

Finally, the limitation of this study is that the three newspapers examined here do not represent the views of all news media in the respective countries. The three newspapers were explicitly chosen for their wide circulation and readership, but even so, they could not provide a sufficient basis for determining whether conflict/peace frames are standard in each country's coverage of this conflict.

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