

Ben Morgan
Project report
STS390, “Media, war and peace”
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University of Wollongong

Brief presented to organisation: Charles Burt University

Theory explored: Peace Journalism

Case Study: Cronulla Riots 2005

AusPeace
the australian peace institute

towards a new set of values

A handbook for Charles Burt University for curriculum
redevelopment towards a Peace Journalism
approach to 'conflict news'



AusPeace
the australian peace institute

STS390 UOW
Thursday 1:30
Student Number 2791717

Why we need a Peace Journalism Approach

To understand what Peace Journalism is it's more useful to understand what it is not. Its opposite is War Journalism. Peace researchers Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick state the term 'Peace Journalism' is provocative, in that it "proposes that most journalism, thinking itself neutral and 'objective', is actually War Journalism, biased in favour of war."²

- 2 Lynch, J. McGoldrick, A.,
Peace Journalism,
Gloucestershire, UK,
2005, p xvii

War Journalism is not the same as War Reporting. It refers to the suggestion that most conflict reportage is indeed biased in favour of war; that it does not aim to show up nonviolent solutions, instead it thrives on the drama of conflict within the time and space of conflict.

- 3 Lynch, J. McGoldrick, A.,
Peace Journalism,
Gloucestershire, UK,
2005, p xvii

Lynch and McGoldrick suggest that War Journalism is a result of Journalism being based on "a set of conventions, or theoretical constructs"³ that limit the scope of reportage. In this brief introduction we will explore how War Journalism comes about, and how to adjust a university curriculum to a Peace Journalism approach.

Peace Journalism
is about fostering
peace and peace
transformation.
Journalists should be
taking an active role
in Peace Making, not
just War Reporting.

Galtung's Table

4 Johan Galtung's theory of Peace Journalism is far more complex than this short introduction could possibly do it justice to.

This theory relates directly to his own peace research, looking at peace transformation, structural violence (essentially, violence that is build into social structures) and his own criticisms of mainstream news values and newsworthiness.

Apart from the other publications used in this handbook, any considered approach to Peace Journalism should include examination of Galtung's extensive research. Many can be found in University Libraries as well as online at www.transcend.org

Lynch and McGoldrick introduce peace researcher Johan Galtung's initial theory of Peace Journalism.⁴ In the form of a table it is a brief introduction to Peace Journalism in relation to 'what it is not' - War Journalism.

War Journalism War/Violence Orientated	Peace Journalism Peace/Conflict Orientated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It focuses on the war or violence in the arena of conflict. He says that it involves only two parties with the same goal to win. There must be a winner and a loser. - It places the causes and solutions within the time and space of the conflict and is based upon deciding 'who threw the first stone' - It creates an 'us and them' style of journalism, propaganda, adopts the 'us' voice - The enemy is the problem and violence the solution - Dehumanises 'them' - It is reactive: waiting for violence before reporting - Focuses on visual effect of violence (casualties and material damage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explores conflict formation that appreciates many parties with varied vested interests - It places causes and solutions, or 'exits' as Galtung calls them, anywhere in time, history and culture - Gives a voice to all parties to foster empathy and understanding - War and conflict are seen as the problem, focus on 'conflict creativity' - Humanisation of all sides - It is proactive: prevention before any violence or war occurs - Focuses on invisible effects of violence (trauma and damage to culture)

5 Available in full in Lynch, J. McGoldrick, A., Peace Journalism, Gloucestershire, UK, 2005, p. 6

6 Conflict news here refers to all news and media reporting that surrounds conflict of any kind.

Figure 1 – Based on the first part of Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Model.⁵

This table draws basic comparisons between Peace and War Journalism. A useful exercise for University Journalism classes to complete would be a content analysis of 'conflict news' articles using Galtung's table. Identifying those which fit with either War or Peace Journalism, then discussing what this shows about Australian 'conflict news'.⁶

7 Kennedy, L, Murphy, D, 'Racist furore as 'Aussie' mob riots on beach', The Age, 12 December, 2005, p1 and 6

During our own research we focused on the conflict surrounding the 2005 Cronulla Riots in Southern Sydney, Australia. The following is a simple analysis of an article⁷ using Galtung's table.

Racist furore as 'Aussie' mob riots on beach



fig. 2 Newspaper Article from the Age newspaper

by Les Kennedy and Damien Murphy with Malcolm Brown and Tim Colquhoun

ALCOHOL, the Australian flag and raw racism fuelled a violent rampage by thousands of young residents in Sydney yesterday, drawing widespread revulsion as bloodshed and bigotry turned a seaside suburb into a battleground.

Political, community and religious leaders joined stunned locals to condemn an afternoon of violence by a crowd in Cronulla that turned on people of Middle Eastern appearance and those trying to protect them, with police and ambulance officers also coming under attack.

At least 10 people were injured and 13 people had been arrested by last night, amid concern that the shocking images of racist chants and mob attacks would encourage further clashes.

NSW Premier Morris Iemma led a chorus of condemnation.

"These hooligans have brought shame upon themselves," he said. "Some today tried to hide behind the Australian flag. The Australia that I know, and intend to preserve as Premier, does not support the sort of behaviour that we saw."

Police Commissioner Ken Moroney said the rioters, many of them carrying the national flag and singing the anthem,

were "clearly un-Australian".

"I'm ashamed as a man and as the Commissioner of Police," he said. "Never have I seen a mob turn like they have today, particularly on . . . women and . . . the NSW Ambulance Service."

Assistant Commissioner Mark Goodwin, who coordinated the riot response, said he would establish a taskforce to review video footage of the riot.

The violence followed a week of simmering tension following an attack the previous Sunday on two lifesavers.

Appeals by text message for "Aussies" to descend on the beach to reclaim it drew a crowd estimated at 5000 people, but a carnival atmosphere in the

morning gave way to an ugly mood as the day wore on.

The trouble began with scuffles about midday. As the crowd moved along the beach and foreshore area, a man on the back of a utility began to shout "No more Lebs", a chant picked up by the group around him.

Members of the mob set upon their prey with fists, feet, flags and beer bottles.

Two paramedics were injured as they tried to get victims out of the North Cronulla Surf Lifesaving Club, where they had fled to escape the rioters.

The crowd broke the windows of the ambulance

continued page 6

8 This article has been reproduced from a black and white microfilm copy from the State Library of NSW.

Image online from-
www.abc.net.au

Reproduction⁸

The article in full⁹

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Lifesaving Club, where they had fled to escape the rioters.

The crowd broke the windows of the ambulance and kicked its doors as the officers attempted to get the group out. Police, who used capsicum spray and batons in their battle to quell the rioters, were also pelted with beer bottles, and in some cases their cars were swamped and stomped on as they tried to move from one violent flare-up to the next. They sometimes appeared powerless to keep up with the moving mob.

The mob wore varied uniforms. A few sported black swastika sweatshirts, but most the emblem of the Australian flag, the Eureka Stockade flag, or with hand-written graffiti on their bodies such as "save nulla, f--- Allah".

"F--- off, get the f--- back to Lebanon," one man shouted at an 18-year-old man who had ventured to the beach for a dip.

He was the first to be targeted just before 11am, chased by 200 people to the Northies Hotel sports bar, where 20 bouncers joined police in holding back a crowd that swelled to several thousand. Many of them were drinking, some of them clearly underage.

Police also set up a safe house in the North Cronulla clubhouse.

About 40 police formed a human wall while hundreds of onlookers chanted obscenities and racist remarks. When there was a lull in the activity, police ferried some of the victims away.

One of the worst incidents came just before 4pm, when a man was cornered and had several bottles smashed over his head while he was punched and kicked by dozens of others.

The man had been walking with two other men when he was hit by a young man draped in the Australian flag. A bystander tried to stop the assault, saying "he's not a Leb, he's not a Leb".

A policeman came to his aid, spraying a canister of capsicum in an effort to disperse the crowd before extra police arrived.

Sisters Sarah Id, 17, and Amy, 15, of Sutherland, who were both born in the area and whose parents are Lebanese, found themselves under police protection as they waited for their train while 1000 people stood opposite. The pair had gone to Cronulla, as they do most weekends "just to get a tan".

9 Full text article Kennedy, L, Murphy, D, 'Racist furore as 'Aussie' mob riots on beach', The Age, 12 December, 2005 accessed 17/10/2007 Factiva database.

What sort is it?

fig. 3 Analysis of the Age article

War Journalism	<i>The Age</i> article
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It focuses on the war or violence in the arena of conflict. It involves only two parties with the same goal to win. There must be a winner and a loser. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The article focuses on the violence and violent acts of the day and polarises the two sides: "a crowd in Cronulla that turned on people of Middle Eastern appearance and those trying to protect them"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It places the causes and solutions within the time and space of the conflict and is based upon deciding 'who threw the first stone' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This article makes no attempts to point towards solutions in the space of the conflict or otherwise. Perhaps there is a sense that the police could return order: "Police also set up a safe house in the North Cronulla clubhouse."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It creates an 'us and them' style of journalism, propaganda, adopts the 'us' voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The us vs. them within this article is 'us' the sane non-racist Australians vs. the 'them' of the violent racist protestors: "Political, community and religious leaders joined stunned locals to condemn an afternoon of violence"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The enemy is the problem and violence the solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once again, this article does not present any solution but blatantly says the problem is the violent protestors or their retaliation of the violence against the lifeguards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dehumanises 'them' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a dehumanisation of the rioters simply by referring to them as a crowd, and in contrast humanising those who were attacked with individual stories. The rioters are not a group of individuals but a "a crowd that swelled to several thousand"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is reactive: waiting for violence before reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obviously reactive by reporting on the conflict after it has happened
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focuses on visual effect of violence (casualties and material damage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undeniably focuses on the visual effects of the violence: "At least 10 people were injured"; "The crowd broke the windows of the ambulance and kicked its doors"

While we would argue that all the values could be detrimental to the Peace Journalism approach, it is conflict that we should focus on here.

Figure 3 shows the elements of War Journalism within the article, however there are also points within it where the journalists test out a Peace Journalism approach. By speaking of, even focusing upon, the invisible effects of the violence upon the community and the Australian culture, they begin to open up causes and exists outside the conflict itself, suggesting that the issue goes beyond and deeper than the conflict.

A simple content analysis of 100 article headlines over the two days following the 'riots' shows that 38 attempted to personify 'riots' rather than speaking of rioters, hence dehumanising the 'enemy', while 54 focused on the violence or visual effects of the conflict. Only 15 of the 100 discussed the "trauma" or other invisible effects of the violence. This analysis was by no means comprehensive, but even a basic analysis of headlines reveals a worrying trend towards the drama of the conflict.

News Values

This in mind, what is it about the way we teach journalism in Australia that contributes to the War Journalism approach?

Newsworthiness is a word that almost sums it up. Obviously we cannot report all the facts, from all the conflicts, from every side at every moment. There must be a process of decision-making that selects what is most important.

A text used throughout the country in training new journalists- Conley and Lamble's 'The Daily Miracle' defines 8 standard news values for determining newsworthiness¹⁰ :

[Not necessarily in this order]

1. impact
2. conflict
3. timeliness
4. proximity
5. prominence
6. currency
7. human interest
8. the unusual

While we would argue that all the values could be detrimental to the Peace Journalism approach, it is conflict that we should focus on here.

Looking at some definitions of the news value of conflict it becomes clear that it is not 'exits' that are most interesting-

"Conflict generates interest because people are interested in drama. When the news media covers issues that lead to differing emotions and debate, people are interested — and they want to choose sides"¹¹

10 Conley, D, Lamble, S, 2006, The Daily Miracle, Oxford University Press, Melbourne., pp 77-100

11 'News Values: Conflict', Weblog post, Power PR, May 16 2006, accessed 17/10/2007, <http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:ZKXujnwNKbwJ:news.powerpr.com/public/item/news+values+conflict&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=3&gl=au>

Drama becomes a word synonymous with conflict, and it seems that readers (and human nature in general) demands more and more of it-

"Conflict: information has conflict if it involves some kind of disagreement between two or more people.

- Remember how, when you were a kid, everyone would run to watch a fight if one erupted on the playground?
- Fights have drama -- who will win? -- and invite those watching to choose sides and root for one or more of the combatants."¹²

Conley and Lamble also describe conflict as appealing to the public due to its dramatic nature. We would suggest that conflict should not be about the drama. It should not be about the socially and culturally sanctioned narrative of good vs. bad or one on one¹³ of Hollywood blockbusters: Darth Vader vs. Luke Skywalker; Harry Potter vs. Voldemort; Peter Pan vs. Captain Hook.

Conflict in Conley and Lamble's terms is about attracting attention of the reader, which we agree with, however it should be analysis of that conflict and presentation of peaceful alternatives to it that maintain reader attention.

A New Set of Values

If students are to learn the Peace Journalism method they must learn to understand conflict in different terms. Allowing students to develop their own ideas on peace and war is essential- providing them with a theoretical framework is equally so. The following could be used as a subset of the 'conflict' news value to help students develop a better understanding of their role in reporting it.

Complexity- Stories that appreciate the many parties in a conflict with varied interests. Stories that deal with the complexity of a conflict create sustained interest among readers. In an age of digital and online news services we have a unique opportunity to deliver complex stories as a series of news features, giving a full picture of all parties involved in a conflict.

This value gives voice to the voiceless as you must tell their stories in order to fully explain the complex issues of the conflict.

Context- Does the story have a context within time, history or culture? A context helps to develop a greater understanding of the conflict. It will, as with complexity, develop sustained interest in news stories. Rather than simply touching on the violence of the conflict it treats the reader with respect, allowing them a fuller picture and creating in them a desire for more knowledge. It shows up solutions or "exits"¹⁴ to conflict that exist outside the conflict itself. It is essential that this news value be constantly in the journalist's mind, even before a conflict arises.

Middle Tennessee State University (no date), Understanding the news values, accessed 17/10/2007, <http://mtsu32.mtsu.edu:11178/171/newsvals.htm>

The notion of cultural narratives has been explored by many theorists. Professor Iain McCalman from the Australian National University posited:

"Our world is suffused with stories. Consciously or not we use them continually to make sense of the mass of incoherent facts and sensations that immerse us."

It seems that the tools our journalists are taught to use are likely to play into the hands of these 'stories' or narratives. While these narratives are often helpful to society to feel more comfortable with, or relate better to a story, they also have the potential to simplify complex situations.

Lynch, J. McGoldrick, A., Peace Journalism, Gloucestershire, UK, 2005, p.13

Peace- An abstract value to some perhaps, but one that makes much more sense than the value of 'conflict/violence'. If readers are presented with conflict alone, they are likely to become frustrated- hearing only of violence and ongoing tension leaves the human mind struggling to find answers to a conflict it cannot understand. By highlighting the opportunities for peace the readers will feel that there may be an end to the violence, that peaceful and nonviolent solutions exist.

Humanity- A story which has human interest is more than just one that we can relate to. This value refers to treating the subjects of stories humanely, by giving voice to the voiceless (the frail, the departed, the children and so on), and by simply telling all the human stories of conflict regardless of 'who's side they're on'. This is an opportunity to explore the effects of the conflict on culture and psyche.

The Peace Journalism Approach does not require you to rewrite your text books, or rebuild your curriculum entirely, this would likely cause conflict. It requires the University to reconceptualise some aspects of the way 'newsworthiness' is explained to students.

It also requires the University to encourage Peace as a motivation within its students. Within every human being should be the desire for peace. Peace Journalism sees the role of the journalist become a proactive one, not reactive. We need to train a new wave of peace-keepers- not those with tanks and weapons, but those with an ability to tell the stories that need to be told and help make peace.

Peace is no longer in the realm of hippies and activists. It is time for it to move, through Universities, into a motive for all our news and journalism.

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Appendix

Dialogue between the head of AusPeace, the head of Journalism at Charles Burt University and David and Kim on Channel Ten's 9am program. If you are not familiar with the program it basically consists of Ken and Barbie [maybe a little harsh] talking interviewing people on the couch until 11am.

David: War, famine, hatred and violence. The world seems full of it today, or is this just the media? We are joined today by the founder of the Australian Peace Institute AusPeace Professor Mark Julian and Head of Journalism at Charles Burt University, Malcolm Gosh to discuss the changing nature of conflict reporting. Welcome both of you.

Mark and Malcolm: Thank you.

David: Now, first, Mark, tell me how your approach differs from that currently offered in most Australian Journalism programs.

Mark: Peace Journalism is not as airy fairy as it sounds. The research of Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick finds there is a strong argument that most journalism today is, in fact, War Journalism, and that there is real potential for the world's journalists to foster peace through their writing, and help to present nonviolent alternatives to conflict.

If we succeed in redeveloping University curricula, we could very easily see a revolution in journalism in Australia and around the world. All we need is to take notice of certain shifts in the way news is reported to see that it is already happening.

Kim: So are you saying that journalists should only be reporting the good news?

Mark: It is not simply about telling 'good news'. It is about breaking free of the narrow narrative frames with which most conflict is discussed- the fairytale narrative of good vs. evil, victim vs. perpetrator- that is so engrained in news conflict 'stories'.

When you look at the way the Iraq Conflict has been portrayed, generally – by the media as a whole – you can see the way, as McGoldrick and Lynch point out, throughout the war news organisations around the world began framing it as Bush vs. Saddam. They say that this sort of narrative “presents us with a dualistic model of conflict- two parties in a tug of war.”

David: So how has this program been developed for training journalists, Malcolm?

Malcolm: Well David, it hasn't been at all easy. The handbook we've put together only just touches on the complexities of Joseph Galtung's theory of Peace Journalism.

It is such a broad theory, with so many aspects that it would be impossible to

The research of Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick finds there is a strong argument that most journalism today is, in fact, War Journalism

fully integrate it into a University curriculum without it taking another 2 years to complete the course. Galtung's focus is on conflict and violence, but our aim in this program is to promote more critical thinking and critical writing from journalists when reporting conflict.

One of the biggest problems with Peace Journalism theory is the name – Immediately images of hippies and activists are conjured up. Perhaps this hinders the chance for the theory to have an impact on the way Journalism students respond to it – we journalists can be very cynical creatures at times.

The theory does, however, attempt to reinstate the role of the Journalist to that 'fourth estate' position. Rather than just being mouthpieces for officials or entertainment for the masses, it shows that journalists have the potential to play an active role in society for the better.

Kim: If journalists are taking an 'active role' as you say, isn't there a real potential for them to take sides? Won't this program teach journalism students to filter out violent stories?

Mark: Peace should be as fundamental a human motivation as conflict is an inevitable occurrence.

We can't ever hope to remove conflict from our lives, it is a part of human nature. But it is my belief personally and the belief of everyone at AusPeace that peace and nonviolence should be a desire and motivation for all journalists. Bias in favour of peace would not lead to violence, nor would it detriment anyone.

As for filtering out violence- the students are taught, not to filter stories out, but to 'let in' *all* the stories- to create a fuller picture in their own minds and for the public.

David: Tell me, in your handbook, you focus on a case study of the Cronulla Riots. Why did you choose this to study?

Mark: The Cronulla Riots were undoubtedly violent and widely reported. It was a conflict that struck at the core of the Australian psyche. I could have looked at the most prominent conflicts of our time, such as the War in Iraq or the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, but this was one that Australian Journalism students could relate to, better understanding the impact of Peace Journalism.

Malcolm: It was also a different sort of conflict than would spring to mind for most of our students. Conflict as a news value is anything where there are two opposing sides, but the Cronulla Riots were, and remain, such a sore point for Australians it is good for our students to understand and analyse the violence of the conflict situation so a dialogue will continue into the future.

Kim: How did you gather information for the handbook, are these theories available to all of us?

Malcolm: Peace Research is such a huge field that there is so much written. It would be best to try a University or TAFE Library for the printed texts, but the internet is a wealth of knowledge for this relatively new movement.

the Cronulla Riots were, and remain, such a sore point for Australians it is good for our students to understand and analyse the violence of the conflict situation so a dialogue will continue into the future.

Johan Galtung founded a 'peace network' called TRANSCEND which can be found using a simple google search, but which has a mountain of info on the different elements we discuss.

David: So how did you get roped into this Malcolm?

Malcolm: Charles Burt University is renowned for its journalism program. When Mark and AusPeace approached us with an offer to review our curriculum, at first, we were very reluctant. But being the best at training journalists we know how important it is to keep up with the changing theoretical framework of the industry.

Peace Journalism is by no means a comprehensive journalist training program, but by integrating it into our curriculum we have the potential to create much more critical and, pretty much, better journalists.

Kim: Social change? That's a very profound statement.

Mark: I think now is a time for profound statements. Most of the world, most individuals are nonviolent, and they want their world to be. If this isn't a basis for a re-evaluation of the way we report conflict I don't know what is.

Focusing on a University specialising in Journalism training is a 'ground up' approach. There's no point trying to change the media industry, it is set in its ways. It is about educating our new journalists in Peace Studies and giving them the tools to contribute to peace and nonviolence.

It has been very hard to limit Galtung's theories to just a small part of Peace Journalism. But to do any more would be a Peace Research degree.

David: You said before it hasn't been an easy task, surely the real challenge will be to get other universities to sign up won't it?

Mark: The handbook is just the beginning for the AusPeace journalism initiative. We aim to train our own journalists to form a new online international journalism network. Recognising the internet as a powerful journalism tool, we can use it to make the Peace Journalism approach widely known, to educate not just journalists, but the general public on how to tell a War Journalism story from a Peace Journalism approach.

It isn't just universities that can benefit from Peace Journalism. Peace Education will be about informing every citizen about the opportunities for nonviolent resolutions to conflict.

Kim: If you say conflict is inevitable then how can there be any solution to it.

Mark: It is not conflict that is the problem here. It is about how we report violence in conflicts. That violence is the only solution and only cause of the conflict. Conflict and violence should not have to go hand in hand. Conflict transformation, for example, is about transforming or restructuring the relationships that have led to violent conflict- a sort of rearranging of conflict so violence does not occur.

David: So where to now for the program?

Malcolm: I think it is important that we continue to see Journalism training and all education as evolving, and I agree with Mark that Peace and nonviolence should migrate from the realm of hippies and activists to become at home within the motivation of all individuals. At the same time there must be an acknowledgement that news is a business, and people still need to make money. The challenge for universities will be to continue to produce increasingly critical thinkers from our journalism departments. Complacency is the biggest threat to peace.

Kim: Thank you both for joining us. Obviously a very exciting time to be a journalism student at Charles Burt.

I think it is important that we continue to see Journalism training and all education as evolving

STS390 2007 Final Assessment

Thursday 1:30

Student Number: 2791717

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