

## La Cobertura de la Reconstrucción de Irak Bajo el Enfoque del Peace Journalism

### The Coverage of Iraq's Reconstruction under the Peace-Journalism Approach

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La reconstrucción de Irak ha tenido una fuerte repercusión en los medios de comunicación internacionales desde la caída de Saddam Hussein en 2003. Desde el enfoque académico numerosas investigaciones afirman que el periodismo de guerra es más atractivo mediáticamente que el periodismo de paz. Históricamente, las investigaciones que abordan la cobertura mediática de los conflictos armados se han enfocado desde los estudios de seguridad y conflictos, más que desde los estudios de paz. En el presente texto se analiza la cobertura sobre la reconstrucción de la República de Irak bajo el enfoque del *peace journalism* en España. Se estudia dicha cobertura informativa realizada por los medios *El País* y *ABC* durante el año 2018. A través del análisis de contenido, el presente trabajo aporta datos significativos sobre modelo de *peace journalism* en los medios de comunicación españoles en un conflicto que polarizó a los partidos políticos y la opinión pública española durante la guerra de Irak en 2003.

**Descriptor:** Periodismo; Paz; Conflicto internacional; Reconstrucción; Irak.

The reconstruction of Iraq has had a strong repercussion in the international media since the fallen of Saddam Hussein in 2003. From the academic world, many researches affirm that war journalism is more attractive, in the media perspective, than peace journalism. Through history, researches that take on the media coverage of armed conflicts have focused more on security and war studies, than in those of peace. This paper tries to analyze the coverage about the reconstruction of the Republic of Iraq under the perspective of peace journalism in Spain. This media coverage will be analyzed through two of the main newspapers in Spain: *ABC* and *El País*, during the year 2018. Through an analysis of content methodology, the present work brings up relevant data about the model of peace journalism in the spanish newspapers, in a conflict that polarized the political parties and the spanish public opinion during the Iraq war in 2003.

**Keywords:** Journalism; Peace; International conflict; Reconstruction; Iraq.

## Introduction

Peace journalism represents a competitive approach towards war journalism, due to its style as much as to its use of generic news frames, in the case of peace journalism, and episodic, in the case of war journalism. The emblematic sociologist, Johan Galtung, establish that even when media outlets may well not believe in violence, they are expansive elements of such violence, since they focus in the conflictive narratives more than they do in the ones that promote pacific solutions. (Galtung, 2005). In the case of Iraq, the majority of political communication studies have addressed the conflict from the perspective of security and international relations, finding examples of this in the works of García - Martín (2007) and Kull, Ramsay and Lewis (2003). The study that will be presented in the next paragraphs has the following structure: in the first place, a small but exhaustive literature review will be made, focusing on the peace journalism

perspective. Next, the objectives will be presented as well as the methodology chosen for this work. In the last place, the obtained results will be exposed. A final section is introduced in order to extract conclusions from the results found.

## Literature review

According to Galtung (1986), war journalism and peace journalism are two frames generally competitiveness between themselves. While in the case of war journalism, the conflict acts as the main new frame, enhancing sensationalism based in violence and civil casualties, peace journalism focus its coverage in the war responsibilities, as well as in the agreement points and possible solutions. Therefore, war journalism tends to use episodic frames based in the here and the now, and draws a difference between losers and winners, while peace journalism tries to look for the historic roots of the conflict, mainly using generic frames (Galtung and Fisher, 2013: 96). The approximation to the war coverage studies has left an extensive literature over its aportations to the peace processes. This could be explained through the believe that conflicts are the cornerstones of the journalism industry, or through other view, such as the one that believes that researches find more attractive to study the different vicissitudes of conflicts, such as the drama that terrorism implies that peace (Wolfsled, 2004: 9). From the approaches and characteristic proposed by Nicolás Gavilán (2018: 97-98), an adequate methodology to identify editorials and news that work from the approach of peace journalism can be established from a theoretic fundamentation.

### *Objectives*

The main objective is to extract spanish press frames concerning to the reconstruction of Iraq under the focus of peace-journalism. Regarding the specific objectives, we have: the using of framing theories in order to extract the frames, the application of a quantitative methodology, complete and flexible, and establishing conclusive postulates about the presence of peace-journalism in the spanish press regarding the case of Iraq.

## Method

The chosen methodology is based in the technique of content analysis, under the postulates of Krippendorff (1980), due to his flexible character and adaptability. Such methodology has been widely used in order to extract journalistic frames in written press, as we can observe in the work of García-Marín (2007) or Nicolás Gavilán (2018). The selected newspapers' news, found in *El País y El Mundo*, during the year 2018, have been extracted from the database MyNews. The themes analyzed are: the conflict backgrounds, the solutions suggested, the emotive language and the emotional language. The newspapers have been chosen for their good numbers in selling between the spanish public and for their divergent editorial ideology.

## Analysis

The coverage of spanish press about the situation in Iraq has been increasing since the fallen of Saddam Hussein in the year 2003. However, from the mediatic point of view, the political disputes, terrorism related news or the participation of the Armed Forces in the conflict have occupied the main editorial pieces. This phenomenon implies that the coverage about possible solutions towards the reconstruction of Iraq, in all levels, has been rare, if not scarce, in the spanish press.

Table 1. Themes analyzed by newspaper

NEWSPAPER	BACKGROUND		SOLUTIONS		L. EMOTIVE		L. RATIONAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
El País	51	35,41	31	21,52	53	36,80	10	6,94
El Mundo	63	43,75	35	24,30	55	38,19	19	13,19

Source: Own elaboration

## Conclusions

As the extracted data shows, the peace journalism approach in Spain continues to be very limited in comparison with the war approach one. Nonetheless, the contextualization of the Iraq war keeps being an important piece for the elaboration of news frames. The percentages regarding the emotive language can be seen as a specific detachment from the humanitarian frame (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000), present through all the conflict. On the other side, we can highlight that these low results may be due to the fact that the Iraq war politically polarized the spanish society, being a commun used argument by the traditional political parties nowadays, sixteen years after the invasion of the arab country. Furthermore, most events regarding foreign policy tend to be framed through the definition of the problem and not through its possible solutions.

Finally, we would like to highlight that the peace journalism approach, at least in the case of the Iraq war, is far from settled in the spanish media. The answer could be found in what different academics have pointed out previously, that war and its consequences are mediatically more attractive than peace processes.

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