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Zarate-Valderrama, Y.

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**REVAMPING JOURNALISM
IN THE MIDST OF A CONFLICT?
MAPPING THE WORLD OF LOCAL WAR
JOURNALISTS**

Y. ZÁRATE VALDERRAMA

**PhD
2016**

**REVAMPING JOURNALISM
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MAPPING THE WORLD OF LOCAL WAR
JOURNALISTS**

YENNUÉ ZÁRATE VALDERRAMA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
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Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI)
School of Media, Arts and Design (MAD)
University of Westminster

Director of Studies: Dr. Anthony McNicholas

ABSTRACT

Revamping journalism in the midst of a conflict is a research into the world of conflict local journalists' praxis and rationale reporting on 'their' war. By using Colombia as a case study—the oldest conflict in Latin America, interwoven with drug trafficking, guerrillas and paramilitary groups—this project examines six dimensions of journalism: historical context, censorship as a barrier to providing balanced news, war journalist education, professional ethos, the hierarchy of reporters, and the construction of a concept of 'responsible' journalism that answers their informational, societal and professional needs.

Academic discussions of journalism and war have centred on international correspondents—from the 'West'—and international wars; however, there is little ethnographic research on professional practices of local journalists covering war or conflict, particularly from the Global South. Therein lies one of the challenges of this study: to observe and closely examine these dynamics and to offer a new analysis of unseen reporters from the periphery, helping to decentralise journalism studies.

In a country with political unrest and a violent conflict, such as Colombia, reporting on the conflict is a difficult task, above all for local reporters and journalists. The importance of this case study is that it allows us to analyse a phenomenon with unique characteristics that questions traditional concepts of war reporting, thus allowing us to understand journalists' professionalism as they work to improve their practise, as agreed upon in their 'interpretative communities' and professional conflict-specialised guilds. This understanding sheds light onto the important role they play in society in the midst of war.

The research concludes with a broader discussion of the role of the journalist in conflicts, focusing on the Global South and countries with weak democratic states and particularly on journalists covering conflict in their own countries. By addressing the flaws, limitations and successful constructions of journalism in conflict, we can develop tools to be used in any context of intricate war and weak democracy.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIP	Asociación Iberoamericana de Prensa (Ibero-American Press Association).
AUC	Auto-defensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia).
CINEP	Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/Programa por la Paz Center of Research and Popular Education/Peace Programme)
Colprensa	Colombia Prensa (Colombia Press).
DAS	Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (Administrative Department of Security).
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army).
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army).
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias del Pueblo - Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army).
FLIP	Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (Freedom of the Press Foundation).
FNPI	Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (New Ibero-American Journalism Foundation).
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross.
IACHR	Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.
IFD	Internal Forced Displacement.
JPN	Journalists Protection Network.
MPP	Medios Para la Paz (Media for Peace).
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations.
OAS	Organization of American States.
PAN	Proyecto Antonio Nariño (Antonio Nariño Project).
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

RWB	Reporners Without Borders.
SIP	Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa (Inter-American Press Society).
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Yennué Zárate Valderrama, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis, and that the material contained in the thesis is my own work.

MAP OF COLOMBIA



Base 803337AI (R00820) 1-08

Colombia Political Map (University of Texas Library, 2008)

INTRODUCTION

WHY DOES RESEARCHING LOCAL WAR JOURNALISTS MATTER?

In current journalism studies, war reporting has become an important and controversial topic of discussion. It is increasingly recognised as a key issue among academia and professionals. War reporting has been studied by many researchers, addressing mainly international correspondents, but there is a gap in the field of study of local journalists reporting on war that needs to be analysed in depth.

To report on war requires strong commitment and courage; however, reporting on a war in your own country as a local reporter entails a different way of doing journalism. The major objective of this research is to shine new light on the debates of journalistic practices in a war-torn country such as the one in our case study: Colombia, a country that has lived in conflict for more than fifty years. Therefore, the dynamics of the profession have been debated according to their circumstances, as an organic dialogue parallel to Western arguments towards improved professionalism in the area, which in turn creates a better understanding of the conflict.

The central question of this dissertation asks how local journalists can revamp journalism in the midst of an armed conflict. By examining how conflict journalists reflect on their professional practices, along with their ethical questions, will shed light on professional experiences when reporting war in their own country. What has been found in this case study is that local Colombian journalism is a mixture of Western notions of journalism (objectivity, ethics, accuracy) and practical know-how of the profession, emerging from experience and decades of trial and error in the midst of a hostile and multidimensional conflict. It will also examine the Colombian strategies for reporting in a war and the professional and ethical impasses that journalists face when covering a violent environment.

The attacks on September 11 were the first time that a country in the West experienced a situation (albeit with a different focus) that was somewhat similar to local journalists' circumstances in the midst of hostilities. As a result, there began analysis about the topic and how the reporters coped with the trauma and emotional literacy while reporting (see Zelizer and Allan, 2002). At that point, journalism studies started to explore the changing nature of journalism immersed in catastrophic events, such as those attacks in 2001. However, it is the nature of journalism in a war-torn country that is the main focus of this dissertation. The findings are centred on regional and city journalists by in-depth analysis of their hierarchies, specialised education, multifaceted censorship, professionalism, roles and resilience.

Although there has been extensive attention to the dynamic of international journalists in war (Pedelty 1995; Carruthers 2000; Thussu 2003), until now the other side of war—the relationship between media and peace—has not received proper attention or analysis. I intend to investigate this gap in knowledge within the study of mass media communication and journalism. It will be argued that the Colombian case study provides important analytical evidence that journalism reconfigures itself according to its circumstances.

Colombia's professional journalists and NGO/media practitioners have developed reflections with certain basic journalism normative connections with Western international standpoints and 'peace journalism'/conflict-sensitive perspectives, called 'responsible journalism in the armed conflict'. In Colombia, some of the interviewees did not know of the existence of the simmering controversy over Western peace journalism to report war. Rather, their objective was to find better ways to report with higher quality on their own conflict based on their direct experience of living and reporting on internal conflict.

A relevant contribution to knowledge is the analysis of the reflections of journalists covering their *own* conflict. It is germane to understand and address the professionals' perspectives and experiences from inside a war. This is different to all the debates on war journalism and how to cover a foreign conflict (as war correspondents), where the journalists are generally foreigners from

Europe or the USA covering distant wars. There are a vast number of autobiographical accounts of covering foreign wars, but there are very few where going back home means going around the corner. This investigation offers a perspective on war coverage from within.

This research identifies and examines certain issues related to journalistic practices in war, by analysing the normative and practical requirements of contemporary war reporters. The evolving nature of the role of the war journalist has questioned the discipline itself; as the case study will expose, the future of war reporting will rely upon both external and internal forces—i.e., newsmaking practices, the political economy of the media, alongside the professionalization and ethical framework of journalists.

The methodological approach taken in this study is qualitative research, based on media ethnography (ethnography of journalism, Boyer 2006). The main purpose of this tool was focused on collecting data on the dynamics of the research subjects (local/regional journalists). Therefore, in-depth interviews were carried out with journalists, editors and NGO professionals (working on journalism and peace), and observations were made in newsrooms. The data was collected over six months in various Colombian regions.

The research presented here offers some important insights into the world of local war journalists. It also sheds light on journalists' self-reflection upon their professional practices. The investigation is based on a particular case study during a specific time-period. A full discussion of local journalists in war lies beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, it aims to show a different perspective of journalism in war. This research project was conceived after meeting both international and local war reporters and as I witnessed their difficulties and resilience in pursuing their job with high professional standards.

The overall structure of the study takes the form of eight chapters. Chapter I begins by reviewing the literature on journalism studies and war. The review covers literature on journalism studies particularly regarding war, approaching the key concepts that sustain the contemporary debate on the role of journalism and the agency of journalists in war; it will identify the gaps in current research.

Arguments on objectivity and the potential agency of a professional to construct news are intertwined with political economy of the media in war reporting. This chapter will lay the theoretical dimensions of the research.

Chapter II is an introduction to the case study. It aims to set the context of the state of the art Colombian journalism and the key sociopolitical context: the violence, the current conflict with different actors (i.e., guerrillas, drug cartels, paramilitary and the State) in the study case that have impacted in their journalistic practices and professional and academic debates.

The third chapter explains the methodology of this study: the ethnography of journalism. This was mainly qualitative methodology employing in-depth interviews with journalists from different parts of the country.

The fourth to eighth chapters present the findings and discussion of the research, which is divided in six thematic chapters. Chapter IV examines local journalism in war, particularly the geopolitical and social divide between capital and regional journalists and how it affects their quality of work, censorship and challenges, and new ways to approach journalism when reporting from the frontline or the journalist's home.

The fifth chapter examines the importance of specialised training for local journalists to attain higher quality standards of their news reporting. This is a relevant finding due to the investment that this country's journalistic, academic guild and national and international NGO sector have made in training their journalists incessantly towards 'better journalism' in the midst of an armed conflict.

Chapter VI addresses the freedom of expression and diverse forms of censorship. It sheds light on a triple menace: the decrease in journalistic quality, a citizen's right to information and the influence on journalists' professional behaviour. Both professionally outstanding and shameful practices become apparent during times of conflict.

Chapter VII explores the professional codes of conduct these research subjects follow and their resilience in reporting on war in their own country. The main objective is to analyse the journalists' perspectives of their work and their motivations to pursue it. This, of course, is connected with ethical dilemmas, beliefs, professionalism and their agency. This chapter is relevant due to the lack of research on the subject particularly in developing countries in war.

The eighth chapter focuses on the challenges of reporting on war and peace. This section evaluates the alternative option of journalism: to report in a 'responsible' fashion, that is, *à la Colombiana*. It shows the strategies undertaken by academia, NGOs, media and certain journalists to report war with higher quality standards. Finally, the conclusion gives a brief summary and critique of the findings and the overall research project alongside with the limitations of the study. Areas for further research are identified.

CHAPTER I

JOURNALISM STUDIES IN WAR: REPORTING FROM DANGER ZONES

Technological advances have drastically changed warfare reporting in the last decades, and journalism has kept pace. By reviewing current debates in journalism studies, specifically those dealing with journalists in conflict, a framework can be developed to systematically analyse the changing practices of reporting on conflict and war. Basic elements of this framework must include professionalism, objectivity, normativity and power structures. In addition, examining the perspectives of journalistic praxis presented in this chapter will offer the necessary theory to frame the subsequent research. Local reporters in conflict, mostly in the developing world, have been generally overlooked, and it is important that academic Anglo-Saxon debates include their praxis.

Covering war¹ has always been a central concern of journalism, and in recent times it has become more prominent due to the wars and conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Arab Spring, Syria, and the fight against terrorism. Reporting on conflict has never been easy. Arguments, both normative and practical, on how journalism ‘should handle’ and ‘actually handle’ a conflict are the centre of current debates in the field. A large amount of literature has been published on media and war over recent decades (Terzis, 2015; Tumber 1998, 2004, 2006; Tumber & Pentroulis, 2003; Tumber & Webster 2006; Hallin, 1986; Ignatieff 2000; 1998, Carruthers, 2000 [2011]; Knightley, 2002; Seib, 2005; Allan, 2001; Thussu & Freedman, 2003, 2011; Rodgers, 2012; Wolfsfeld, 2003; Hoskins & O’Loughlin, 2010; Allen & Seaton, 1999; Morrison & Tumber, 1988; Sparks & Dalhgren, 1994), showing the need to consider and evaluate conflict reporting.

¹ The concept of ‘war’ and ‘conflict’ in this research is based on an International Relations approach which states that conflict has diverse goals among the parties and therefore creates dichotomies. This research is based on four types of conflict (Galtung, 2010:4): when one military attacks another it is called ‘war’; whereas civilians attacking military is referred to as ‘insurrection’, ‘resistance’, or ‘small war’ (guerrilla). Civilians attacking civilians, depending on the magnitude of the conflict, i.e., from street gang clashes and riots to larger encounters such as ethnic conflicts, ‘internal war’. Military attacking civilians are ‘repression’, or ‘state terrorism’. Given that in this researcher’s case study, both the concept ‘small war’ (Colombian guerrilla) and ‘internal war’ (paramilitary groups) can be applied, the concept of ‘internal armed conflict’ or ‘armed conflict’ will be used throughout to encompass the multiple actors encountered.

These writings have opened diverse debates as they raise urgent questions of longstanding issues, such as censorship (Taylor, 2000), war propaganda (Cozma, 2015; Wilcox, 2005), newsgathering routines (Archetti, 2012; 2013), discussions of objectivity (Tuchman, 1998), patriotism, representation (narrative and pictographic) of violent environments, the public sphere, political economy, the concepts of war, armed conflict and—in a post 9/11 world—terrorism (see Thussu & Freedman, 2012; Tumber, 2010).

Other topics addressed are information management, access and diversity of sources versus one-source official (military) news, controversial ‘embedded reporters’, issues of journalistic praxis, the ethics of war reporting, the media in conflict resolution and humanitarianism (Galtung & Lynch, 2010), the so-called ‘CNN’ effect, Manichean narratives of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, the 24/7 rolling news frenzy (Allan & Zelizer, 2004), professionalism, and the differences among journalistic cultures (see Hanitzsch, 2010; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). But there is one outstanding question that needs to be asked: whether journalism studies are addressing the phenomena of local journalism in the midst of violent environments, conflict and war, particularly in developing countries. This research attempts to address the lack of material in this area.

The analysis of the phenomenon of war and media and its coverage has been a central element of media studies, journalism studies and more recently international relations (Galtung, 1996, 2000a, 2006, 2010, 2013). Therefore, to analyse how news in war is framed and represented, the internal and external elements regarding information and journalists are a key concern in both academic and professional circles (Thussu & Freedman, 2003, 2011; Sambrock, 2010; Reynolds 2010; Cozma & Kozman, 2014), given that journalists are frequently confronted with various factors that influence their reporting. Recently, diverse conflicts and wars have raised the question of objectivity and reliability in war coverage with greater interest and urgency than before. Also, the emergence of a ‘patriotic objectivity’ highlights an academic and professional demand to carefully reassess existing and past reporting practices of journalists in the midst of an armed conflict. This reassessment may contribute to revamping journalistic practices in the future.

Within the cultural narratives of war, particularly now with ‘the war on terror’, news media organizations have constructed new terminologies and concepts, namely a ‘global vocabulary of war’ coined by Halliday (2011) previously unknown by the public and journalists. ‘Embedding’, ‘shock and awe’, ‘green zone’, ‘waterboarding’, ‘snipers²’, ‘extraordinary rendition’ (Thussu and Freedman, 2010), as well as reporting civilian deaths as quantitative casualties are part of the news media vocabulary in reporting on the ‘war on terror’.

1.1 News from the Frontline: The rise of War Reporting

An evaluation of the relationship between war and journalism cannot disregard the changing nature of the phenomena throughout history. Originally, the primary information that emerged from the frontlines came from military dispatches and personal letters from soldiers. William Howard Russell, reporting on the Crimean War (1853–1856) for the *London Times*, was allegedly the first ‘modern’ war correspondent. Tumber (2010) argues that Russell’s reports informed the public about the war beyond the army dispatches; therefore, it also impacted the public sphere and forced the British government to change its treatment of soldiers. William Howard Russell himself assumed the role of a pioneer and the ‘miserable parent of a luckless tribe’ (McLaughlin, 2002:6) of war correspondents.

Russell’s infamous feature, *The charge of the Light Brigade*, set at the Battle of Balaclava (1854), described the British army’s war strategies. This report became a landmark of modern journalism (following normative journalism theory); it depicted the gruesome battle and casualties of war. As a result, the public disapproved of the war, finally leading to Lord Aberdeen’s resignation. In order to avoid repetition of this incident, Sir William Codrington, British military commander in chief, established a type of censorship for future wars, including the First World War (Knightley, 2003), by limiting the information war reporters

² The word ‘sniper’ was censored by Rupert Murdoch - owner of Fox News - in the fear that it might bring negative connotation to the public. An internal memo indicated: ‘Let’s refer to the US marines we see in the foreground as “sharpshooters” not snipers, which carries a negative connotation. (Greenwald, Outfoxed, 2004).

could publish. In this way, he created embedded³ reporting to transmit previously authorised propaganda. As Martin Bell wrote a century later, ‘It is hard to escape the conclusion that in the absence of the independent journalism that has been driven from the field, embedded reporting is by its nature deeply and dangerously misleading’ (2008:203). Bell stated that perhaps readers of *The London Times* during the Crimean war might have been better informed than today’s public about Iraq or Afghanistan.

Another war marked by the role of the print media was the Spanish–American war of 1898, sometimes called ‘The war of the press’. This war is a key example of the influence of W.R. Hearst in the American media and the rivalry with Pulitzer during President McKinley’s administration.

Since the Vietnam War, also known as the ‘uncensored war’ (Hallin, 1986), television coverage has differed from newspapers by offering a more profound visual depiction of war; this is consequently considered the first mediated war—that is, a war covered as a media event (Dayan & Katz, 1992) that impacted civil society. The television was an unwanted witness of the carnage of civilians and for the first time the audience saw the ghastly reality of war. The American public became outraged and the anti-war movement sprouted in the United States.

Subsequent wars in e.g., the Malvinas (Falklands), Granada, and Panama saw restrictions placed on the media (Katz & Liebes, 2007). During the first Gulf War, reporters were kept away from the combat zones, forcing them to use General Schwarzkopf’s briefings as their only source. However during the Second Gulf War, the strategy consisted of allowing journalists cover the war from the front-line by embedding reporters with the army in order to experience the ‘morale’ of being part of the crew. Consequently, issues of patriotism and objectivity emerged. This is, then, one of the causes of the dissatisfaction with news coverage of wars. Even though journalist agencies and media structures are

³ Embedded journalism refers to reporters who travel to warzone commonly with the American or British military. They stay in the ‘Green Zone’ where the army lives in war. There is a limitation of movement and censorship (Cockburn, 2010) therefore reporting a distorted view of war.

in constant dialectical interaction and negotiation, the debate analyses the responsibility of reporting and its potential role in the future.

Hanitzsch (2004b: 3) states that ‘journalism is experiencing an increase in occasions in which the mass media are forced to become introspective and critically self-reflective’. Within the on-going discussion of war reporting, some journalists and scholars have analysed methods of contemporary war reporting and, in consequence, certain scholars and professionals have become dissatisfied with journalistic practices and norms, and have reconsidered the effectiveness of the normative parameters of journalism to cover war and violence.

1.2 Journalists in War: Habitus, Fact-centred, Heroes, Whistle-blowers or Watchdogs?

Liberal and social responsibility theories of the press (Siebert et al., 1956) have defined the role of the journalist in a democracy as a watchdog of the government’s wrongdoing and servant of the citizens’ best interest. There are hound analogies to describe the professional role that journalists have towards the state: ‘watchdog’, ‘lapdog’, ‘scrapyard dog’, depending on whether they are connected to liberal or authoritarian theories. These analogies shed light on the agency or lack of thereof of journalists within the structures in a democracy, and in war express the agency towards state and legal and illegal actors, by inquisitive reporting or reports on official state-propaganda on conflict.

The normative notion of journalism is to scrutinize government in the best possible manner and to inform the public (Curran & Seaton, 2003). Accomplishing this normative function is a challenge even during peace time; when a country is going through a conflict it is a challenge to produce any accurate information since, in the words of former BBC correspondent Kate Adie, ‘the very nature of war confuses the role of the journalist’ (1998:44). Particularly in an internal conflict, the journalist can feel pressure to side with one faction or another—i.e., with the government (establishment) or with the insurgency (civilians attacking military).

Phillip Knightley (2003) examined the rise of the war journalist to a hero in society, as well as mythmaker and propagandist. This subject of study is seen both as a *real* journalist and as a *celebrity* with a certain status, both in the guild and society. Tumber (2010) argues that this ‘cult’ started during Second World War, given that certain journalists became famous due to their war dispatches.

The rise of so-called ‘celebrity journalism’, that which regards the reporter as a ‘hero’ in the midst of war, reveals a breaking point between the professional and cultural perceptions of war journalists. As McLaughlin (2002) pointed out, during the 1990s a crisis emerged regarding the role and function of journalists, mainly as the result of different factors: the ‘cult’ of celebrity journalism, changes in military and media technologies, and the army’s public relations strategies. Professionals are being questioned about their function in society and their ability to produce reliable information.

Discussions of war reporting (Allan & Zelizer, 2004: 4) maintain that ‘War journalists are thought to do what all journalists do, only in a more heightened, vibrantly important fashion. To cover the story will entail (...) encountering conditions of an entirely different order than anything ordinarily associated with newswork’. Furthermore, a ‘muckraker’ of truth is in constant danger by conveying stories to breaking news; indeed they encounter a higher degree of violence in the environment.

The cultural constructions of the war reporter as a crusader and risk-taker have been depicted by scholars, professionals and within the media culture, particularly in films⁴ (see Cozma & Hamilton, 2009), portrayed as watchdogs, heroes and witness (McNair, 2010)—as in *Live from Baghdad* (2001)⁵—and in literature (see Pérez-Reverte’s *Territorio Comanche*⁶ (1994)). However, some

⁴ It should be noted that the film *Full Metal Jacket* by Kubrick is an exception that depicts journalists rebelling against their media.

⁵ Some other films depicting war correspondents are: *Viva Villa!* (1934), *Clear all wires!* (1934), *Everything happens at night* (1939), *I cover the war* (1937), *Foreign correspondent* (1940), *Comrade X* (1940), *Salvador* (1986), *And starring Pancho Villa as himself* (2003), *Under fire* (1983).

⁶ An outlaw territory, war is a ‘Comanche territory’ for war reporters, a hazardous place. Spanish writer Pérez-Reverte explains that it is the place at which instinct says that they should stop the car and turn around, where you know that you are being watched even though visibility is limited.

others have portrayed them as subjects questioning their ethos or as a parody of themselves (see Marinocih & Silva *Bang Bang Club: Snapshots of a hidden war*, 2000; Waugh *Scoop*, 1938, Greene *The quiet American*, 1955); yet another portrayal is in literature (i.e., war memoirs). In these examples, the depictions suggest that war correspondents are special; consequently, their histories and lives are more remarkable than other journalists. However, Cozma & Hamilton (2009) state that film portrayals of war reporters change over time depending on the perceptions of their role in society.

Certain former war journalists or current war correspondents write books about their experiences in war as memoirs; biographies are also written about those dangerous times at the frontline (i.e., John Simpson *Dispatches from the frontlines*, 2003; and Di Giovanni *Ghosts by Daylight*, 2011, 2012). They are cloaked in a veil of celebrity, some of them appear on the covers of magazines, and they are interviewed about the perils in the war zone. It is clear that the profession has changed, as well as the depiction and understanding of its role. ‘Gone are the great days of a [William] Shirer or a [Negley] Farson, when European correspondents were cocks of the walk, face-to-face with Fascism, or watching bombs fall from the roof of the Savoy’ (Cockburn, 1974:1).

Given that media outlets have changed their contractual agreement with war correspondents, certain organizations cannot afford to hire full-time war correspondents. Consequently, freelance war correspondents—considered ‘second class journalists’ (Borri, 2013)—report from the frontline, with no benefits such as life insurance or security, sometimes not even a translator or stringer. Nowadays, anyone can report from a war as long as they have a telephone and pay for their flight, a phenomenon called ‘war tourism’. Casualties and risks of the profession make the job less appealing to journalists. Francesca Borri, a war correspondent, elaborates: ‘The truth is that we are failures. Two years on, our readers barely remember where Damascus is, and the world instinctively describes what’s happening in Syria as “that mayhem”. Because nobody understands about Syria—only blood, blood, blood (...)’ (2013:1). In this regard, Allan & Zelizer identify that there are ambivalent expectations that reporters ought to fulfil when reporting war, as they are intended

‘(...) to be present enough to respond to what is happening, yet absent enough to stay safe; to be sufficiently authoritative so as to provide reliable information, yet open to cracks and fissures of the complicated truth-claims that unfold; to remain passionate of the undermining of human dignity that accompanies war yet impartial and distanced enough (...)’ (2004:4–5)

By contrast, former BBC war correspondent Martin Bell (1998:109) argues that self-importance is the sin of journalists—mainly TV journalists—‘We like to see ourselves as bulwarks or beacons, standing in a principled way against censorship, manipulation, and a variety of political pressures to shade the truth’. Reporting war, as McLaughlin (2002) describes it is ‘to make sense of war’ in order to help people understand the conflict through its context, history and human cost.

In this regard, it could be argued that the characteristic that differentiates war correspondents from other members of the guild is to experience dangerous and violent events first-hand. That kind of ‘eyewitness’ allows them to report and interpret reality in war (frame the news) and help audiences to understand the conflict.

A contradiction arises when journalists have to meet the expectations of their professional practise on one hand while, on the other, they have to navigate the reality of their daily labour in war. During war and conflict, journalists face various ethical and professional questions: on subjectivity, the public’s right to know, reporting from the enemy’s side, embedding, censorship, political commitment, and patriotism, among others. In this regard, José Cuoso said of those reporting on the Iraq war, ‘Many journalists want to leave, but we have to stay here because the *Yankees* are going to devastate [the region] and we have to tell what is going to happen to Iraqi society’ (2006). He adds, ‘for a journalist destined to war, dying is a work-related risk’⁷. In other words, this journalist from the frontline evoked their role in war and the public’s right to know.

⁷ José Cuoso, Spanish cameraman killed in Iraq. Quotes taken from Javier Cuoso, José Cuoso’s brother’s conference in LSE Media Symposia, 2006.

The normative line of the Liberal Theory of Journalism (Siebert, Pieterse, Schramm, 1956) states that the main function of the press is to help discover the truth and to report government misconduct. In this regard, journalists ought to be watchdogs for wrongdoing, thus contributing to the strengthening of democracy. However, not all journalists follow this ideal. Latin American media politics scholar Waisbord (2000) researched cases in some South American countries (Peru, Colombia, Brazil) regarding investigative reporting and the reality of the 'watchdog' role. These influence, in a certain manner, the democratic life of the country's case studies.

News is not only straightforward objective reporting, it is also a way of storytelling, intertwined with a journalist's professional identity. Some scholars (Bird and Dardene, 1988) argue that journalists are professional storytellers constructing narratives for the public's understanding of reality. Similar to his proposition regarding journalism, Kapuściński states that the 'right' way for a journalist to do their job 'is to disappear, forget our existence' (2000:38). In this same vein, Barthes (1977) proposed that the author should fade into the text, because the text is the most important part of the production—not creation—process; and the text is the result and the main component. By regarding text as a discursive form, Foucault considers the author as a functional part of the discourse. 'The function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society' (Foucault in Burke, 1995:235).

Bourdieu's Field Theory shares with Foucault an understanding of language rooted in Saussure's notion that 'work does not exist by itself, that is, outside relationships of interdependence which unite it to other works' (Benson & Neveu, 2005:10). Yet Foucault does not recognise, according to Bourdieu, that there is something beyond those language 'games' that 'transfers into the "paradise of ideas" (...) the oppositions and antagonisms which are rooted in the [social] relations between the producers and the consumers of cultural works' (Bourdieu in Benson & Neveu, 2005:10). Yet, organizational and guild routines and the media sociology of the news productions in particular are central to the understanding of journalists and news.

1.3 Theories and Wartime News

The classic study, Theodore Peterson, Fred S. Siebert and Wilbur Schramm's *Four Theories⁸ of the Press* (1956), states that the press tends to acquire the colour and form of its political and social structures in which it operates. Thus, by studying particular journalistic praxis according to social, cultural and political realities, the analysis of journalism in different contexts can be understood only with an integral approach that includes their specific realities. This avoids examining journalistic practises with a normative universal standard based on Anglo-Saxon journalism norms; for instance, in this case study, Colombian journalism is analysed within its own context.

Therefore, it is pertinent—even crucial—to reflect on when this philosophy of state, society and truth that sustains journalism is applied to contemporary cases of conflict, particularly in this case study. The Four Theories—although criticised for their shortcomings—constructed a schema of the role of the press in three different types of political models and the key issue was the notion of how journalism should best serve its society. This prerogative contains professional questions in regards to the role of the journalists; therein is a significant contribution to the debate of the role of the journalism in society, and the realities of the practise in different cultural settings. For instance, two of the four theories that study journalism according to the Liberal and Social Responsible theories have been a vital part of democracy, leading to the existence of a certain kind of journalism ‘that exists within a functioning public sphere [and] has been a defining characteristic of democratic political and media cultures’ (McNair, 2012). This ideal aims to establish a real public sphere in search of truth, which entails economic and financial autonomy, a situation that for most democracies is the quintessence of journalism. Yet, given the cultural complexities of the news’ production process, this is an Anglo-Saxon model (Chalaby 1996).

Contemporary examples, such as conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Northern Ireland, to name a few, can help illustrate that during war, censorship can be

⁸ Not a theory but a type – namely typology – of journalism in different contexts.

exerted in a more frequent manner, given that political tactics include the use of information as a tool in war (Monrow & Thompson, 2002; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Di Giovanni, 2015). In this way, governments justify their actions through a ‘common good’, namely the legitimization of war, via a dominant discourse⁹ (cf. Foucault). Therefore, there is an Authoritarian theory once again operating in the core of war. Press Agenda (Agenda Setting, framing and priming) is sought to frame and subordinate to the interests of the political agenda by ignoring those of the public agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Iyengar, 1991). Therefore, informational discourse is required to follow authoritarian principles, as well as political subordination, in order not to affront or criticise political values or war strategies. Any deviation from the official government line could lead to public reprimand (of certain journalists or media by key government personnel) or, in some cases, legal punishment for acts deemed penal felonies.

By revisiting the Four Theories and thus the information ethos in a violent environment, an unnatural state of society, it is crucial to understand how authoritarian and Soviet theories can reappear even in societies where democratic values are progressive (i.e., the United States and the United Kingdom) and their journalism, in most cases, exemplary (BBC). Research has shown the discursive bias incurred by certain media, namely public service media, in many instances; for example, the BBC during the Northern Ireland conflict (Eldridge, 1993) from Glasgow University Media Group, television news on conflicts and its ‘neutrality’ (Kegan, 1980; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976 [2009]) the legitimisation of the Iraq war of 2003, as shown in Pilger’s (2010) documentary *The War You Don’t See*, and self-confessed bias from certain reporters.

In a society with a weak democratic structure, such as this research’s case study (see Tate, 2010), the same situation has happened in a more transverse manner; the official war discourse was disguised as a patriotic discourse which was adopted by editors and journalists via their newspapers and media outlets (television, radio). This aspect will be analysed in depth in the following chapters

⁹ Following Foucault’s concept of ‘discourse’ the dominant discourse in war on most occasions is linked with power. Thus, power structures in war (governments) and, perhaps in my case study, guerrillas, are both looking to transmit a dominant discourse to legitimate their actions.

on freedom of expression and censorship, but it is important to note its transcendence in this general overview. As BBC war correspondent Kate Adie has stated, the nature of conflict can confuse the role of the war journalist (1998)

The principles of reporting are put to a severe test when your nation goes to war. To whom are you true? To the principles of abstract truth, or those running the war machine; to a frightened or perhaps belligerent population (...) Or are you true to a wider principle of reasoning and questioning, asking why they must face this risk? Let me put the question with stark simplicity: when does a reporter sacrifice the principle of the whole truth to the need to win the war? Adie (cited in Allan & Zelizer, 2004:3).

During war, the Four Theories might be constantly intertwined: this typology is merely a starting point to understanding press behaviour in different contexts, yet it highlights the need to pursue a comparative study of war journalism, confronting Western standpoints throughout the developing world practices. It should question whether the same standards might or might not work in different violent environments, or why Western journalistic practices cannot be exported to local contexts. In this regard, analysing a developing world case study may answer questions on the validity of Western journalistic standards or the emergence of revamped journalistic practices to improve local journalism in war.

The Four Theories typology is based on American journalism and highlights its values regarding objectivity and a market-oriented economic model. The United States gave birth to many reporting techniques, such as the quoting system (see Shoemaker & Reese) to reinforce objectivity (textual quote) and the interview technique. Due to modernisation and the introduction of the telegraph, followed by the birth of news agencies and then the mass production of the press, it also modified the news routine production, giving preference to the inverted pyramid and factuality (Chalaby, 1996).

Scholars have fairly recently started to question the relevance of a normative model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), such as the one that emerged from the United States. They examined the parochialism and ethnocentrism of media theory (journalism studies), which globalization has made more evident. Curran & Park

(2000) state that the Four Theories follow the tradition of seeing the universe through Western eyes; although developing nations model themselves on the West, they have different cultural and political contexts in which journalism develops its own pathways.

Said's notion of Orientalism (1978), on the other hand, is also applied to Western social sciences, as an arena where a diversity of professional ideologies are in constant struggle and resistance against the dominant perspective on the social function of journalism and its practise (Hanitzsch, 2007). Other academics, argue that academic colonialism (imperialism) as a unidirectional theoretical colonization (Waisbord, 2013) as a challenge to Global South researchers.

1.4 Bourdieu's Field Theory and the Journalistic (Sub)field

Bourdieu's examination of journalism highlights the importance of Field Theory, in regards to the autonomy of the profession from economic and political spheres. By acknowledging that Bourdieu's model of media research is still a work in progress and therefore an on-going testing system to study the worlds of journalism, it is a standpoint that cannot be exported to Latin American case studies; however, it is important to explore for the notion of journalistic field and subfield. This study will attempt to shed light on the dynamics of the journalistic field as a part of a larger systemic environment as well as war journalism as a highly specialised sphere within the profession.

This approach allows structuring a notion of the field in an organised manner. This research understands 'field', according to Bourdieu's (in Benson & Neveu, 2005) configuration, as a network of objective relations among positions. Yet there are contradictions in this interplay; on the one hand, the field is regarded as a heteronomous arena (i.e., influenced by economy), and on the other it is seen as an autonomous phenomenon.

In this regard, Field Theory examines the institutional logic of the journalistic sphere; on one side there is the capital (social structures) and on the other the '*habitus*' (cultural forms) and there is a complex interplay between the two

structures. Therefore, this model is a framework to analyse the everyday praxis of journalism and the interactions with power structures (both Marx's infrastructures and superstructures) linked with the Media Sociology and the Political Economy of Media (McChesney, 2008) approaches. It is particularly within these microstructures that it will be possible to look in-depth at the universe of Colombian war journalists in their field, considering all the geographical and cultural differences.

On another level this approach will help to develop an examination of the 'journalist as an individual' in which Bourdieu's *'Habitus'* plays a key role. This position points out how different categories are constantly interacting: education, social background (class), competition for 'the scoop', professional distinctions, constructions of identity, and agency (the latter can be understood as within the field, society and the media). This categorisation can help to comprehensively understand the 'individual journalist' (microstructure) within their agency of the media (macrostructure) and the dynamics between the two; the institutionalised rules and the praxis might give some autonomy to the field and transform power relations (Bourdieu in Benson & Neveu, 2005).

Following Bourdieu's Field notion, Dominique Marchetti (2002) researched 'specialised journalism' as a journalistic subfield. By proposing a thematic specialization within the field, she created a dichotomy between the 'generalist' pole and the 'specialised' pole. In applying this concept to the journalistic field studied in this thesis, there is a specific dichotomy to analyse between Colombian journalists covering the conflict (namely Colombian war journalists) and their 'generalist' counterparts. Naturally the field and the subfield exist relationally; one does not obliterate the other. Rather, they coexist in an interlaced manner within the system of the professional field. Bourdieu suggests that we need to examine theories in our context (i.e., case study, Global South), to avoid the association of a theory with certain geography.

Zelizer proposes that journalists form a group of 'interpretative communities' which, in an organic way, develops joint interpretive strategies in order to make sense of the world (2010). Therefore, there is a sharing of interpretations by a

subgroup where ‘reporters use discourse and interpretation to discuss, consider, and at times challenge the reigning consensus surrounding journalistic practice...’ (2010:188). Amalgamated by their collective elucidations of their profession, newsmaking, experiences help them to build a guild with shared understandings of their practice.

In this regard, Oliver Boyd-Barrett (2004) categorised war reporting as a proper and unique category in journalism, given that this particular ‘genre’ requires increased competence from journalists when reporting: firstly, by keeping their independence and objectivity from the military, government and conflict parties. Secondly, ‘War provides a ritualistic challenge (...) that calls upon extraordinary resources and resourcefulness’ (p. 26); it demands a higher level of specialisation and competence of its journalists, given the dangerous environment in which they produce information. He states that this ‘genre’ has a propaganda agenda, as examined previously in the history of war reporting. This argument might be true given the origins of reporting during the Crimea War, yet lately war reporting as a ‘genre’ is transforming and these changes must be taken into account.

As stated before, French scholar Jean Chalaby (1996) argued that the profession of journalism, as an Anglo–American invention since its birth in the XIX Century, has evolved as an autonomous field of discursive production. According to this author, the formation of the journalistic field appeared in United States and Britain, parallel to the normative discursive practice of objectivity.

Alongside Bourdieu’s Field Theory, certain elements of Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese’s Hierarchy-of-Influences Approach (1996) are relevant, such as the level of ‘personal factors of the journalist’, which in this research focuses particularly on the sub-themes of ideology, work ethos, class, age, education (Beathe, 2010, Zelizer, 2010 in Hanitzsch) and professional values (see Schudson & Anderson, 2010). Secondly, the level of study is of the ‘journalistic routines’ of conflict journalists specifically, in order to analyse the practices and procedures that this subfield of study subjects might have as a professional guild. On this level several key factors must be analysed, such as work schedules, workload, perception of professional role (which is interwoven with insights into

their professional ethics), and sources (Berkowitz in Hanitzch, 2010). In regards to this final factor, it is important to note the frequency with which official sources—in this case army news releases, government and police statements—are utilised as a single source (routines). Thirdly, the level of ‘newsroom routines’ might help to understand the conditions under which information is produced. Therefore, Shoemaker & Reese’s Model helps to attain a better understanding of journalistic practices within the media sociology approach.

Journalism scholars have argued that the understanding of the role of journalists (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Weaver, 1998) is different according to the country and media outlet. For instance, comparative studies shed light on the perspective of their profession as a mere news disseminators adhering to objectivity and neutrality, but also as constant guardians of government wrongdoing, such as key components of agenda setting, open bias of political ideology, and advocate of social causes.

1.5 Journalistic Professionalism in War

One of the most explicit contemporary examples of the impact of journalism in a conflict is the Rwanda ethnic genocide in 1994; The *Hutu Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines* broadcasted ‘hate speech’, which not only justified ethnic hatred among Hutus and Tutsis, but mobilised sectors of Hutus to exterminate Tutsis, culminating in one of the most appalling incidents of ethnic cleansing in the last century. It could be argued that information within a conflict can play a negative or positive role and could, in fact, play either role or neither in conjunction with the sociopolitical, historical, economic context.

Certain scholars (Metzl, 1997; Galtung, 1996, 1969) claim that certain humanitarian disasters and conflicts have been exacerbated by particular journalistic reports. According to Metzl (1997:1) ‘radio spread Nazi propaganda, Somali warlords used it to propagate violence, radio and television fomented ethnic animosity and bloodshed in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia’ with reference to Milosevic’s control of certain radio and television stations—government controlled—to justify and promote ethnic fear. In other words, this is

what Mark Thompson, in his book 'Forging War' (1999), called the 'ethnic nationalist media'. He further stated that this type of media, namely journalism, in Former Republic of Yugoslavia had an important role in fashioning the war. This has happened in other civil conflicts; hostilities and disagreements originate in and are developed and promoted by political forces, and journalism plays a role in providing information or the lack of thereof in the midst of a conflict. Whereas it may be true to state that government-oriented media helped to maintain a particular discourse, it could be argued that it is not the main justification of a war. Therefore, this research acknowledges the crucial importance of information in society, particularly during hostilities, but recognises the limitations of their agency in society.

Journalistic reporting, some professionals argue, is crucial, whether it 'foments comprehension and understanding or [...] foments aggression against the other' (Kapuściński 2003:2). Thompson, in contrast to his previous book, *Forging War* (1999), decided to gather reflections on the potential of media in conflict. It follows that if, as he exposed in his book, the active participation of the media helped to forge the ethnic conflict in the Balkans, then the opposite might also happen, a proposition that is explored in his book *Forging Peace, Intervention, Human Rights and the Management of Media*¹⁰ (2002). After the outcome of the role of the media in the Balkans, and within a panorama of 'substantial likelihood' of more such conflicts in the future, they proposed that it is important to analyse, review and determine whether there are practical and academic reasons for this understanding of media and its intervention to construct peace.

Some scholars have continued this line of reasoning in their exploration of the notion that journalism could have an impact on conflict resolution. McQuail (2006: 118) says, 'there is no doubt that the media have become more involved in issues of war and peace, but they are not the main source of the problem and they do show potential to contribute to solutions'. However, in certain cases, news reporting can lead to decisions of whether a country goes to war; we are thus

¹⁰ Edited with Monroe E. Price, founder and co-director of the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy at Oxford University and the Stanhope Centre for Communication Policy.

affected by the power of media and journalists and how they construct and mediate our perceptions, as De Burg asserts (2005).

According to Jasper (cited in Lee & Maslog 2006:592), news could be a tool for societies to create new ways of thinking and understanding. Seaton (2005:296) points out:

News is about observation and imagination, not mechanics. It is, or should be, about recording our perception of the world, not fitting new events into a matrix of the familiar. Above all it should be a stimulus to new thinking, not an anaesthetizing escape from it.

News is thus as cultural construction with human agency. Journalistic constructions of reality play a critical role (Tehrani, 2002: 75), and news contributes to people's understanding of their own reality and the outside world. On a higher level, during conflict situations, information becomes a key element in understanding the situation and evolution of the conflict, from within and outside the country.

At this point, it is essential to make a distinction within the majority of investigations produced in the field; the discourse is generally focused on the 'media' within conflict, yet in various dimensions there is a tendency to confuse media with journalism. Thus, in some cases, the media is seen as journalism and vice versa; they are not distinguished as two separate entities. Hanitzsch states that 'the media are the carriers of public communication, and they transport various contents not only generated by journalism, but also by public relations, advertising and entertainment,' and continues, 'not every message distributed by the media has been produced by journalism' (2003:200). It is essential that such a distinction should be made at this point in the research in order to have a wider comprehension of the terms referred to and of the subject of study, which is journalism itself and the media only on a secondary level. These two concepts are sometimes employed without distinction by politicians and specialists in international relations and sociology.

1.6 Reporting War and Peace

Debates on reporting war and peace reside mainly in two academic areas: international relations and journalism studies. The first attempts to conceptualise—and perhaps redefine—the role of ‘media’ in war towards a positive peace (Galtung, 1969); some scholars and practitioners propose the role of journalists as peace-workers and journalists as mediators in conflict. On the other hand, Journalism Studies analyses the diverse factors that impact news and newsmaking routines, as well as internal and external forces in media that contribute to the final product: news in war. The main purpose is to regard the journalist as an instrument attached to the interests of their media outlet.

Studies of media and peace specifically are not common; it is still a field of analysis and praxis in its preliminary stages of research. However, there is academic research that contributes to a general understanding of media, journalism and its relation to peace.

One of the most relevant academic debates on the role of the media in peace was proposed by the media researcher Graham Spencer (2005) in his book *The Media and Peace: from Vietnam to the ‘War on Terror’* where he offered an analysis of the role of the media in peace reporting, particularly centred on television in some contemporary conflicts (Palestine and Israel, Northern Ireland, Rwanda). The author provides a critical examination of the tendency of international news to emphasise war, and also points out that currently there is no equivalent for peace. Spencer’s main concern is that news could try to prevent violent conflict rather to exacerbate it. This is linked with his previous book, *Disturbing the Peace* (2000), where he examined the media coverage in Northern Ireland’s peace process, stressing the importance of information coverage on conflict resolution and peace.

Gadi Woldsfeld, another communication and peace researcher, mainly centred on the analysis of the Israel–Palestine conflict. He asks:

Why is there so much research about the role of the news media in political conflict and war and so little concerning the media and peace? (...) There is not one major study, which has looked at the role of new media in an ongoing peace process (...) Even the most casual observer cannot fail to be impressed with the ability of the news media to serve an either constructive or destructive role in the promotion of peace (cited in Liebes & Curran, 1998:219).

In this regard, Samuel Peleg (2006:2) proposed the ‘media as a third party’ in a conflict, to reflect on the importance of guiding conflict coverage towards peaceful resolutions. It is argued that it is not so much the motivation, but the quality of journalism, which is important. In this regard, Ross Howard, director of Institute of Media Policy and Civil Society (former Institute for Media and Peacebuilding), a Canadian NGO, argues that ‘professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced’ (Howard, 2005:12).

1.7 Information Warfare

The concept of media intervention is based on the ‘conflict intervention’ theory (conflict resolution) in that it attempts to settle disputes through diplomatic negotiations. Classic interventions include humanitarian, military, political and educational approaches, yet authors such as Thompson (1999) argue that media is another form of intervention. The notion focuses particularly on diplomacy and conflict resolution and does not analyse the social and discursive dimension of journalism; therefore, it is a concept centred in solving conflict in a diplomatic manner and using information technologies.

This perspective asserts that many diplomats agree that in certain situations, in the midst of a conflict, media silence is often better than any media coverage (Lydiya, 2007). There is another perspective, from government, that claims that no coverage is good coverage (as in the case of Northern Ireland); therefore, in conflict there is always pressure to not cover certain news items or to not cover it at all. Media intervention is a perspective linked with diplomacy and peace research, establishing ‘media diplomacy’ as a tool for diplomacy and communication claiming to be a concept that might replace Martin Bell’s

‘Journalism of Attachment’ (see In Harm’s way, 1996a; Through gates of Fire, 2003).

In *Forging Peace* (2002), Monroe & Thompson gather academic discussions of the possible role of information technologies in wars, but mainly focus on media management in conflict and post-conflict situations. This is thus centred on situations where Western democracies (UN, OSCE, NATO) have attempted to transform mass media in ‘third party states’; these are analysed in their legal and political context, during and after conflict (Monroe & Thompson, 2002:3). An important contribution of this work in the field is that its purpose was an analysis rooted within the panorama and recent experiences of conflict around the world. ‘In a light of substantive likelihood of more conflicts in the future, it is opportune to review, reflect, and determine whether they are practical and academic lessons to be learned’ (Monroe, 2002:2).

Thompson states that one important issue is the discussion of the possible role of the media as ‘information intervention’ within a conflict. Carmichael (2002) proposed that information intervention is linked with media development and the Internet. He develops a significant argument about the vulnerability of electronic networks in different parts of the world, and most importantly in conflict zones. The author was involved with the Survivors Fund (SURF), a UK NGO that supports projects in Rwanda, and he affirms that there has been considerable academic analysis of the role of traditional media and *Radio Television des Mille de Collines* (RTL) in fomenting and co-ordinating the Rwandan genocide in 1994. However, he asserts, ‘less attention has been paid to the subsequent patterns of media development, especially the internet, and its implications for information intervention’ (Carmichael, 2002:365).

This concept is linked with Castells’ Information Age concepts of the social spread of information of groups with limited resources, such as the case of Zapatistas movement in Mexico (2000); this concept is known as information warfare, netwar or information interventions. Analysis of the role of information technology (IT) in war, peacekeeping and peacebuilding has become, according to Carmichael, more sophisticated. There are various taxonomies of information

warfare; Godman (cited in Carmichael 2002:367) states that, ‘some conflict has been notable for the way the technologically weaker combatants have used their opponents, or the worldwide, IT infrastructure to their advantage’. Arquilla and Ronfeldt (in Castells) develop another proposition by distinguishing between ‘cyberwar’ and ‘netwar’. ‘Cyberwar’ refers to the high intensity of medium range conflict and involves formal military forces, whereas the concept of ‘netwar’ involves non-state, paramilitary and other irregular forces in ‘low-intensity’ conflict, and has patterns of interaction and organization.

Therefore, the Zapatista case is analysed by Castells (2000) as an example of ‘social netwar’ that was spread over international networks in order to transmit their message outside of the monopolised media and government censorship. In this regard, there is a link with Information Intervention¹¹. Internet legislation forbidding the internet to be used as a tool to promote or organise genocide or intimidation is still a proposal in international law; however, this section within the chapter establishes a framework that permits an integration of this concept into the general panorama of research, and also an understanding of the role of journalism and new media. This perspective is important for the review of literature for the case study of Colombian journalism in conflict and the censorship of guerrilla internet sites, namely FARC’s official webpage ANCOL.

1.8 Journalists as Activists: Can Non-Governmental Organizations do Journalism?

Within academic and practitioner studies of how the media can have a positive impact in conflict situations, certain non-governmental organisations (such as IMPACS) and academic organizations (such as the United States Institute of Peace and the Oxford Programme of Comparative Media Law Policy or PCMLP) have brought forward diverse approaches and strategies for the potential role of media in conflicts. In this regard, an important contributor to the debate is the

¹¹ There are three categories of information intervention: *negative* (jamming and destroying transmitters), *positive* (supporting local alternative media), *preventative* (using political, economic and legal processes), (Carmichael, 2002:368).

PCMLP, which has proposed a strategy called ‘virtual diplomacy’. This concept explores the role of information communication technologies (ICT) in the handling of foreign affairs and particularly their effect on international conflict management and resolution.

It believes that information is related to social action; therefore, ‘innovations in technology have long been recognized as drivers of social change, and the dynamics of communication and conflict are central to processes of change’ states Solomon (1997:2). IMPACS worked for several years on the role of the media in supporting the transition to democracy. One of its most important propositions is that the media can sustain the transition to democracy and act as a watchdog for peace agreements. Before its closure in 2007, this organisation was a leader of a wider network of non-governmental organisations working on peacebuilding (Zárate, 2006), media and conflict that advised other institutions on ‘practical guidelines’ to consider when dealing with the media in conflict situations.

This NGO produced several manuals and reports on the topic, mainly written by Howard, the former coordinator of IMPACS media and peacebuilding, such as *Conflict-sensitive journalism* (2004), *Media’s role in war and peace-building* (2003), *Operational Framework for Media and Peacebuilding* (2002) and *Media and war-affected children* (2000). These documents are directed at agencies, the NGO sector, media practitioners, governments, conflict managers and peacekeepers, among others. In this regard, Howard (2002:6) declares:

The media is a double-edged sword. It can be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or disinformation (...) But there is another aspect to the media. It can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and respects diverse views.

They acknowledge three types of media: firstly, a style of reporting which identifies conflict resolution as an important consideration for journalists; secondly, proactive media intervention designed for specific audiences; and thirdly, they focused on the audience’s response to the programme.

1.9 Accuracy: Telling the Truth about War

‘The truth is our currency. It is all that we deal in—truth and trust. And if we lose one, we surely forfeit the other’ (Bell, 1998: 109). Liberal journalism notion combines praxis and the search for truth as the fundamental obligation of the journalist to its society. Fergal Keane, former BBC reporter, states: ‘The art of the reporter should more than anything else be a celebration of the truth (...) Trust is our byword. That is the unalterable principle. It is our heritage and our mission (...) The fundamental obligation of a reporter is to the truth (...)’¹² (cited in Allan, 1999:46). If truth is really a faithful reflection of reality, it will certainly link us to the debate of fairness in the news via journalists, editors and media outlets.

According to the famous saying, ‘the first casualty in war is truth’. Galtung states that this is incorrect; that the first victim in a war is not truth. That, according to this scholar, is the second victim. ‘The first victim is, of course, peace. And that famous slogan has a ring of the naïve, as if reporting before war broke out was always truthful’ (2010:3). In the past, notions of information were focused on the search for truth¹³ and informing the public. Truth, power and the truth-teller’s role is an issue that has been discussed in Socratic philosophy, questioned ‘Who is able to tell the truth? What are the moral, ethical conditions...? What consequences? What is the relation of the truth telling activity and power?’ (Foucault, 2001:11). The journalist’s existence is always linked to the media as a means to transmit their vision of truth, which leads us to another large debate in journalism: whose truth it is, and what different visions of it are.

For the British Broadcasting Corporation, pursuit of the truth is its essential objective; thus its Editorial Guidelines for news reporting states that, ‘We strive the accurate and establish the truth what has happened (...) All relevant facts and information should be weighted to get the truth. Our output will be well sourced

¹² BBC correspondent Fergal Keane stated this in 1997 Huw Weldon Memorial Lecture, which was broadcasted on October 20th, 1997.

¹³ The questions about journalism and truth might have three different levels: ontological (to what reality the media has to face); ethical (could journalists say the truth?); professional (the journalistic objectivity is a professional imperative or a simple myth), according to Watine (2004).

and thoroughly tested'¹⁴ (BBC, 2006). This is an important statement regarding the standards of journalism; they are the normative basis of good practices in the profession. This issue becomes greater during war and conflict situations. Journalism faces various ethical questions: on subjectivity, the public's right to know, reporting from the enemy's side, embedded journalism, censorship, political commitment and patriotism, among others. In this regard, Williams (cited in Belsey, 1992:162) asserts that there are many obstacles to telling the truth in wartime that arise from the routines and practices of journalism. News reporting is a construction with several interests, particularly in war, we can confuse propaganda and patriotism with objective information, John Simpson declares that, 'It is depressing, at a time when there is no equivalent state of national emergency, to hear demands that British journalism should subserve the end of propaganda rather than civilised principles of openness and honesty' (cited in Belsey 1992:168).

Williams defines truthfulness as 'a readiness against being fooled and eagerness to see through appearances to the real structure and motives that lie behind them' (cited in Loyn, 2007:4). As Baggini states, it is necessary to be 'sophisticated about how we understand truth and objectivity, without being dismissive of either' (2003:1) because there are many debates that have discharge truth as a discussion of many perspectives of truth—for instance Lynch states that, 'those who inspect the news from the outside; however, see things rather differently. They frequently complain that this clarion call for 'truth' begs the most important questions. There are many truths they will say, and many stones [to be unturned] (cited in Baggini, 2003:1).

The BBC Editorial Guidelines (2005:106) regarding 'war, terror and journalism' states, 'We must ensure they [audiences] can be confident we are telling the truth. They also expect us to help them make sense of events by providing context and analysis and by offering a wide range of views and opinions'. The BBC (2006) states that it needs to be 'sensitive to the emotions and fears of their audiences when reporting matters involving risk to and loss of life, as well as human

¹⁴ BBC Editorial Guidelines, Truth and Accuracy (2006).

suffering and distress’.

In this regard, the BBC acknowledges the basic principles of journalism when covering conflict, such as sources of information, censorship, and the tone of reporting. In addition, regarding the broadcasting of violence, it states, ‘we should respect human dignity without sanitising the realities of war. There must be clear editorial justification for the use of very graphic pictures of war or atrocity’ (BBC, 2005:106).

Governments understand the importance to sell national policies in order to obtain the public’s acceptance and support to go to war. It should be sold as an idea to get social approval. Wartime propaganda is a longstanding praxis, one of the pioneers of war and public relations was the American Edward L. Bernays, who skilfully sold the Vietnam war to citizens (Pilger, 2010).

1.10 Objectivity, Ethics and News Values during Wartime

The idea of objectivity has been the cornerstone of journalism since its origins. The debate on the practical and philosophical meaning of objectivity has been the subject of much reflection, associated with the normative ‘ideal’ of fact-based reporting as an unattainable goal. It aims to achieve an impartial reporting of the facts extracted from reality; both impartiality and objectivity are indispensable as structures that support the professional practice (Seaton, 2005). For several decades, the objectivity debate in journalism has focused on attempts to understand and state the journalistic basis for the profession. Scholars and professionals have discussed contemporary applications of objectivity, or as Joseph Pulitzer stated, ‘In America, we want facts. Who cares about the philosophical speculations of our correspondents?’ (cited in Chalaby, 1996: 311). Some scholars state that objectivity must remain a central parameter of journalism (Schudson, 1968, 2005; Schudson & Anderson 2008; Tuchman, 1972, 1998; Allan, 1999; Gjelten 1998), as a compass in the configuration of professionalism of journalists. Objectivity is a strategic ritual (Tuchman, 1972 [1998]) that sustains reports with facts. Schudson (2001) gives a clear notion of objectivity that guides this research; he states that objectivity is a norm, a tool

that helps journalists to separate facts from professional values, and report only the facts by all means possible. Therein the real value of objective reporting confronts partisan journalism, particularly during war when the same concept of objectivity comes again under scrutiny; ‘in times of war objectivity is a prized status where the principles of detachment are a key element in the social construction’¹⁵ (Tumber 2004).

As Kovach & Rosenstiel explain, ‘Objectivity called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information—a transparent approach to evidence—precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work’ (2001: 72). As a part of the debate, some journalists proposed what they called ‘realism’ instead of objectivity, defining this as presenting the facts with *neutrality*, suggesting that the truth would reveal itself naturally. According to Allan, after the Second World War, an appeal to ‘objective’ and ‘non-biased’ reporting was gradually institutionalised in the professional culture, mainly in Britain and United States. Studies (see Köcher, 1986) demonstrated different perceptions among German and British journalists of their role and objectivity, namely, the ‘bloodhounds and the missionaries’. The British saw themselves as neutral reporters of facts whereas the Germans based their work more on intellectual opinions than news. In the United States’ newspapers, in the fifties, objectivity emerged as a rule in journalism; however, missile crises and the Vietnam War brought a different approach to objectivity, by showing a different side of war. Moreover, Tom Wolfe’s creation of ‘New Journalism’ was an answer to the state of reporting, that is, the reporters’ job is to convey the facts, without adding his/her opinion.

Can the role of the journalist be reassessed and reconfigured, since the first of journalism’s tasks is to report news, not to become actors or facilitators? As Cunningham (2003:1) puts it, ‘Objectivity has persisted for some valid reason, the most important being that nothing better has replaced it. And plenty of good journalists believe in it, at least as a necessary goal’. Objectivity is linked with the ethics of the profession as the standard because one of the basic principles of

¹⁵ Tumber analyzed issues of news values and professionalism among journalists in times of war during the Malvinas (Falklands) conflict.

journalistic ethics is to not generate or revitalize violence through its reports, the news should be analytic pieces not emotional. On the other hand, it should be also accepted and debated that,

[j]ournalists and journalism must acknowledge, humbly and publicly, that what we do is far more subjective and far less detached than the aura of objectivity implies and the public wants to believe. If we stop claiming to be mere objective observers, it will not end the charges of bias but will allow us to defend what we do from a more realistic, less hypocrite position (Cunningham, 2003).

In this regard, debating journalism's neutrality, Seaton (2005:290) states that, 'News is necessary (...) news journalism can be lofty or base, libertarian or tyrannical, idealistic or cynical. News pretends to be neutral, but never is'. According to Seaton, neutrality is a myth in journalism, an ambition that does not exist in praxis, given that journalists are—consciously or not—slightly biased in certain situations.

For Kovach & Rosenstiel (2003) journalism's first obligation is the truth, loyalty to citizens, verification and independence, among others. In their book *The Elements of Journalism* they pursue an extensive analysis of US journalists in the profession. During two years the Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ) and the Project for Excellence in Journalism participated as a part of the task examining the current state of journalism, its values and myths. They acknowledged that journalism faces a crisis of conscience, trust and objectives. The grounding notion for objectivity obeys certain rules: in order to evaluate a report as 'objective', we must separate fact from opinion, have a balanced view of both sides of the debate and validate the information provided through referencing professional sources and grounding in facts. Journalists' reporting aspires to be a normative construction, a reliable account of reality. By witnessing this reality, their objective reports place them as 'authorised *truth* tellers', and a strong ethical code might help to legitimise the journalist as truth-worthy. The notion of objectivity is the oldest and still the key validating professional value of liberal journalism; it is considered a guarantee of quality control in journalism in order to establish good standards, credibility and trustworthiness in the eyes of their public.

Objectivity was introduced in the twentieth century as a new stage in the evolution of journalism. According to McNair (1998) it was the product of three main trends: philosophical, technological and economic. Together with the main ideas of the epoch, positivism influenced journalism by attempting to detach the ‘observer’ from his or her subject of study. Consequently, this approach could give journalists a status of credibility based on scientific methods.

Technological advances in the nineteenth century, such as photography, crucially impacted the discussion of truth and the objectivity of news reporting. Yet it must be noted that certain debates centred on the artistic creativity and subjectivity of the photographer charged with recording reality. At that time, during the technological revolution, images reinforced journalism’s bond with objectivity.

Economy is another factor that has influenced the objectivity debate, given that news started to be perceived as a highly profitable product in the international market. The cultural industries of information bought the alliances of media outlets, and corporations took the lead in shaping news as a product. Therefore, journalists had to adapt to modern dynamics of news production in order to compete in the news market, working with higher speed and more precise theme selection to deliver fresh breaking news to society. Media routines have had to adapt to modern dynamics to cover war—i.e., infotainment. A question that needs to be asked is whether deontological ethics are disappearing in current war reporting in order to fit into the current profile of news production and infotainment? This brings us back to the fundamental roots of journalism in terms of ethics and the social role of the reporter.

Ethical dilemmas always accompany journalists, particularly when reporting on wars; this is an everyday challenge. A regular ethical examination is crucial, not only for journalists, but for all media workers, editors and managers. Keeble (2001) asserts that self-criticism encourages journalists and editors to examine and analyse their basic moral and political principles as well as their responsibilities and rights in their profession and job, together with their relationship with their employer, audience and society as a whole.

1.11 The Evolution of Journalism and the Return to its Origins

There has been a continuing debate on the role of the journalist in society and of contemporary understandings of her or his function. Various perspectives have been offered such as ‘civic journalism’ and ‘journalism of attachment’ in order to revamp the profession.

One of the first approaches that reflected a concern with objectivity and social responsibility was the idea of ‘New Journalism’, created by various American journalists and led by Wolfe, who used an ‘anti-objective’ style. This style attempted to ignore the notion of objectivity, given that objective accounts of reality, according to these journalists, are extremely subjective. So they became involved with the story to greater depths. Human agency was embraced rather than denied (McNair, 1998). In this spirit of critiquing the ethics of objectivity, the US journalist Hunter S. Thompson introduced another style of reporting called ‘Gonzo journalism’, a method of mixing journalism with novelistic narrative, best seen in his book *Hell’s Angels* (1970). He took the notion of objectivity to the opposite extreme by linking it with fiction, claiming that the best fiction is *far more true* than any kind of journalism. This was based on the idea of William Faulkner that ‘fiction’ and ‘journalism’ are artificial categories. Likewise, prominent Polish war journalist Ryszard Kapuściński used this style for some of his books on political dictatorships: *The Emperor* (1984), *Shah of Shahs* (1986) and *Another day of life* (1987).

In the eighties ‘Civic Journalism’ emerged, expressing a profound concern about contemporary journalism. Civic Journalism, also known as ‘Public’ or ‘Community Journalism’, came forward as an answer to a crisis of credibility between civil society on the one hand and government and news media on the other. It was proposed that journalism should move closer to its audiences; ‘Our role as a detached observers has gotten us into a kind of problem, reflected in distrust by the public’ (Clark in Steele, 2002: 543). This author goes further and states that Public Journalism should ask journalists to step across the traditional line that takes them from being observers to convenors and builders. This perspective is tied up with debates about what journalism is or should be and how

journalists perceive their role, in a similar fashion to debates around the journalism of attachment. Proponents claim that a newspaper that practices public journalism should be able to give help or advice related to the problems of public education, health care delivery and criminal justice.

In order to revamp journalism, the first tendency rejects 'objectivity' and embraces subjectivity, whereas the second blurs the line between fiction and factuality. The final approach asks reporters to have more agency in lieu of detachment. These propositions are different reactions that mirror the dissatisfactions of journalism.

1.12 Dissatisfaction of Journalism in Conflict: Journalism of Attachment

In this decade the notion of detachment as a professional journalism standard, especially in conflicts, has yet again become a topic of debate. Martin Bell, a well-known former BBC correspondent, put forward his 'Journalism of Attachment', coined during the conflict in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Bell proposed that since reporters are participants in the conflicts they report they should take part in the public debate about the conflict. This formed the basis of a reflection on the journalist's ethical and moral dilemmas within a war.

Attachment as a concept in journalism started as a reaction to the BBC's precepts of 'distance and detachment', and Bell argued that 'reporters cannot remain detached or neutral in the face of modern evils like the genocide in Bosnia or Rwanda, but must side with the victims and demand that something must be done' (cited in Hume, 1997:4). He also develops this theme further in the book *Through Gates of Fire* (2003) where, in the section 'Bystanders No More', he debates the arguments of John Simpson, a detractor of Journalism of Attachment. Accordingly, Bell was one of the few reporters to testify before the war crimes tribunal at The Hague (cf. Vulliamy, 2003).

In this regard, Bell (2000:22) asserts:

Reporting is what I do for a living: it is a job not a jihad. But this was clearly more than just another news story—or for that matter another

war—and I knew I had a responsibility to those people beyond the mere professional business of describing what had become of them.

This perspective attracted considerable criticism because it ‘turns back on basic indispensable principles of professional news reporting such as objectivity, neutrality and impartiality’ (Hume 1997: 5). According to Tumber (2000:447) the condition of detachment has a double edge. On one hand, it is related to criticisms that ‘ordinary people’ are disregarded due to their ‘lack of newsworthiness’. On the other hand, as reporters remain disconnected from the aspirations and anxieties of ordinary people, detachment becomes a facilitator of objectivity. In addition, John Simpson (BBC World Affairs Editor) dismissed the whole concept as a nonsensical approach, an action that opened a debate between objectivity and intervention. The journalism of attachment, which is somewhat similar to peace reporting, has been criticised for being ‘self-righteous’ and moralising (Simpson in Ward, 1997: 121).

Although this perspective has been highly criticised, it has also found support amongst some journalists such as Fergal Keane (BBC Journalist) and Maggie O’Kane (The Guardian), both of whom have produced work that is focused on victims of war. As Keane (cited in Seib, 2002:72) affirms, ‘to witness genocide is to feel not only the chill of your own mortality, but the degradation of all humanity (...) It is the fruit of witness. Our trade may be full of imperfections and ambiguities, but if we ignore the evil we become authors of a guilty silence’. According to Tumber and Pretroulis (2003:228) the events of September 11, 2001 ‘have accelerated a trend in which attachment and emotion eventually become fully embraced into the culture of journalism’. Therefore, journalism of attachment might require a reassessment of the original proposition, which was based upon the Bosnia conflict.

Another debate within journalism of attachment is its relation to patriotism, particularly within the context of war; certain journalists take the position of patriotism as a civic duty beyond the impartiality that their profession requires. Another trend is to associate journalism to ‘advocate causes’ (advocacy journalism, see Waisbord 2009); this has its origins in the Indonesian media

system. At the beginning of the Second World War, the Indonesian press supported and advocated nationalism and resistance to Dutch colonial rule, and this style of journalism was practiced all over the country. Similarly the 'Islamic journalism' proposed by Romli (cited in Hanitzsch, 2003:189) is a type of 'crusade journalism' that shows the struggle of Islamic values and interests, which is claimed to be a duty for every professional Muslim journalist. This concept echoes the previous arguments, journalism as fixed to a particular cause or ideology. In this regard, it is necessary to consider whether it is appropriate for that American or Muslim's identity to come in first place and journalist duty second.

Concepts of patriotism, ideology and religious advocacy linked with journalism are all issues that lead Hanitzsch (2003) to question whether journalism of attachment should be considered journalism as such or public communication, 'since journalism is different from the other communication areas such as public relations, advertising, entertainment'. He proposes three dimensions as the main objectives of journalism; firstly, to provide information, secondly the effects and thirdly the communication goals of the messages. In this regard, Hanitzsch claims that 'journalism of attachment actually belongs to the broad area of political public relations as it clearly has the intention to alter attitudes and behaviours of audiences' (2003:193). He goes on to point out that these communication goals have not arisen from journalism itself but from the subjective views of journalists.

1.13 War and Peace Journalism

Within the academic discipline of International Relations, Peace Research and Conflict Studies were created after the Cold War in order to develop concepts and strategies that would help to prevent and solve international conflicts. It was argued that the ratification of peace agreements (Kempf, 1999) does not solve the problem of how to repair societies affected by conflict in material, social and human aspects. The Peace Research perspective comes from a longstanding history of Western peace movements, spread principally in Scandinavia in order to oppose the spirit of militarism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Peace

research is considered a normative perspective that understands 'peace' as a natural condition of society (Galtung, 1998).

Peace studies have analysed the need to change attitudes and dynamics in the media towards peace, especially within conflicts (Kempf, 2007:2). *The Structure of Foreign News* by Galtung and Ruge (1965) was the first approach that emerged from Peace Studies to analyse media and journalism within conflicts. This study is fundamental because it identified key issues of newsworthiness that formed the beginnings of propositions of peace journalism. 'When covering conflicts, we can tread down to find ground beneath our feet, by studying and applying what is known and has been observed about conflict, drawing on the overlapping fields of Conflict Analysis and Peace Research' (Lynch, 2007:7).

1.14 The Peace Journalism Paradigm

Professor Johan Galtung, a leading scholar of Peace and Conflict research, used his work on media and war and their repercussions in society in the 1970s to create the concepts of 'peace or conflict journalism' and 'war or violence journalism' as two opposing tendencies in conflict coverage. Galtung's classification 'is mainly based on four practice and linguistic operations: peace/conflict, truth, people and solutions. In contrast, he argued war journalism is oriented to war/violence, propaganda, elites, victory' (Lee et al., 2006:503). The concept of 'war or violence' journalism shows a tendency to emphasize violence; therefore conflict/war is seen in a Manichean vision of two enemies/parties. It also evidences that this news predisposition attempts establish the winner, mainly driven by propaganda and elite concerns.

Since the mid-1990s, peace journalism was created as a novel, transdisciplinary field of interest to professional journalists, in both developed and developing countries, civil society activists and academics. In Lynch's conceptualization (2008:xi), peace journalism

Offers both a set of practical plans and opinions for editors and reporters, and a basis for developing evaluative criteria for the critical analysis of war reporting all derived from, or at least attentive to, propositions about

conflict, violence and peace from Peace and Conflict Studies.

By using Galtung's basis of peace journalism, Jake Lynch & Annabel McGoldrick, two English journalists, developed their own peace journalism concept, published in 2005 as a handbook for journalists reporting on conflict. They focus on solutions to conflict based on positive peace,¹⁶ reporting long-term effects, guiding the news towards people and grassroots society, reporting on all sides and using precise language (Lee et al. 2006). Peace journalism is grounded in peace studies theories and principles, the goal being to debate and propose strategies to redefine and reconstruct the role of journalists covering conflicts (Peleg, 2006:1). This is a perspective that advocates an emphasis on reporting peace processes, conflict resolution and prevention. Galtung argues that news tends to de-contextualise violence, portrays the violence as inevitable and omits alternatives for solving the conflict.

Additional contributions to the basic structure of peace journalism came from Robert Manoff (1997) who examined ways in which the media could actually prevent conflicts. Also, Majid Tehranian (2002:58) states that ethically responsible journalism is the 'sine qua non of peace journalism'. He proposes a pluralism of media structures at local, regional and global levels in order to provide a diverse vision of the world. The author debates the need to create global media ethics that would encompass the vast majority of media. In addition, Shinar (2007:2) proposes peace journalism as a means to strengthen media ethics. The peace journalism approach shares its theoretical and moral basis with the journalism of attachment perspective; however, it has been conceptualised as a separate approach.

The MacBride Report¹⁷ from UNESCO (1980:18) was one of the first attempts to establish a relationship between the media and peace, recognizing inequalities in information, and putting special emphasis on the transmission of peace initiatives. The MacBride Report provided an analysis on media and peace and

¹⁶ Positive Peace (Galtung, 2000b) is a concept from Peace & Conflict studies, in which peace is more than the absence of conflict or violence. Peace includes the presence of social justice through equal opportunity, fair distribution of power and resources, among others.

¹⁷ MacBride Report Many Voices One World: New Information & Communication Order (1980).

also proposed recommendations regarding the social consequences of communication. The report called for the integration of communication and development as well as a strengthening of the professional integrity of journalists and the democratisation of communication. In recent years, peace journalism has experienced a divide in its conceptualisation and trends. On one side there are academics and professionals who are linked with the interventionist or advocacy role of journalism, which is correlated with active participation in creating peace. On the other hand there is the idea of 'enhanced' practices of journalism that traverses the simplistic categories of good versus evil.

Supporters and academics of peace journalism have expanded the approach developed by Galtung, Lynch and McGoldrick; further academic contributions to the perspective have been made by Wilhelm Kempf (2007), Lea Mandelzis (2007), Nohrstedt (2001), Ottosen (2001), Samuel Peleg (2007a), Susan Ross (2007) and Shinar (2007). Evaluations of current conflict coverage have been diverse; however, the most important are summarised in Shinar (2007:2). To begin with, there is a survey of the reporting of violence: sensationalism, personalization, patriotism and exclusion biases towards certain countries, groups and people (Lynch 2007, Shinar & Kempf, 2007). Also, researchers have called for simple descriptions rather than analysis of complex origins, causes and contexts of conflict (Lynch 2007, Peleg; 2005). According to Shinar, peace journalism has four premises that are the foundations of this approach. These are: firstly, the possibility of improving professional performance; secondly, the strengthening of human, moral and ethical values in the media; thirdly, widening scholarly and professional media horizons; and finally, the provision of better public service by the media (2007:1). Peace journalism is not a theory in itself; it is a proposition for improving reporting on war. However, it contains implicit theoretical propositions of peace and conflict research.

1.15 Peace Journalism Controversy: Critiques and Beyond

As expected, this contemporary approach to journalism and conflict has attracted a variety of criticism. On the whole it is seen as a controversial approach. The main critique is that this practice could compromise journalistic integrity because

‘the idea that journalists have an active and conscious role *in promoting peace* is controversial nonetheless’ [my italics] (Lee et al. 2006: 4).

David Loyn (2003; 2006), BBC foreign correspondent, has debated the applicability of peace journalism’s rationale from a professional perspective. He argues that ‘in seeking to report from a peace journalism-oriented approach, a journalist compromises not only his integrity, but his duty to uphold traditional values of fairness, objectivity and impartiality’ (2006:1). It is clear that he disagrees with the active participation of the journalist in peace making, and believes that this kind of participation is not the role of a reporter, whose duty is to bear witness to the truth. Loyn (2006:2) argues that ‘conflict resolution is something we report on, not something we engage in’. He proposes that the news is ‘what is happening’ and that there is no need to play the role of peacemaker, as the mission of journalism is to accurately report on what is happening with objectivity, fairness and balance. According to Loyn, reporting on any other aspect is ideological and damaging as ‘news is what is happening and we don’t need to load other demands on it’ (2003:1).

In contrast, Hanitzsch (2003, 2004) criticised it from an academic perspective. He argues that it is not the task of journalism to engage in the peaceful solution of conflicts because that is the role of diplomacy, politicians and international organisations, and ‘journalism is a highly autonomous though not autarkic system (...) [a peace journalism approach] diverts political responsibilities from politicians and policy makers to journalists’ (2004:483). This is the main counter-argument to peace journalism, and recalls the limitations of role of journalism. Although this author recognises that there is no doubt that journalism can contribute to the peaceful settlement of war, he sees its potential influence as limited.

Hence, peace journalism’s normative proposals ‘give the misleading impression that the implementation of peace would primarily be the task of the media—and not the duty of politicians, and the practicability of Galtung’s idealised conception of making news for peace is questioned’ (Grundmann cited in Hanitzsch 2004: 485). The concept of ‘peace’ reporting is based essentially on

the same principles of journalism, and should not be singled out as a 'special category', because the opposition of peace journalism versus war journalism is, for some practitioners, absurd. In his view, 'there are several fallacies and oversimplifications often committed in the pro-peace-journalism argument, one of which is the fact that many proponents share a naïve epistemological perspective' (2003:197).

Another critique is that peace journalism's advocates do not take into account the nuances and structural constraints of journalism because it is argued that diverse factors shape the journalistic product, such as media organisation, limited personnel, time and material resources, editorial guidelines, hierarchies, availability of sources and access to the scene and information in general. The general critics of peace journalism state that it is a normative model rooted in the discipline of peace research that 'does not consider the implicit and explicit restrictions of the mass media and the dynamics of news production' (Hackett, 2006:2). The most usual critique is that which is focused on the proposition that peace journalism is an unacceptable move away from journalistic objectivity towards a journalism of attachment. Moreover, as in the case of the Northern Ireland conflict, the intent of two newspapers (one unionist and one nationalist) to use 'peace journalism' to report news failed given the editor's frame of selecting 'bad news' (see 'No more bad news' (Philo & Berry, 2011); Glasgow University Media Group, 2009).

The notion of peace journalism, proposed as an antithesis to 'war journalism', is understood as an approach towards journalistic practice with a social responsibility that attempts to contribute to a better understanding of conflict and a peaceful resolution of conflicts. The distinction made between the notions on one hand 'war' and on the other 'peace' journalism created a schism because journalism's basis eschews partial reporting; therefore the concept of 'war' journalism in a strict normative sense would be inapplicable. However, what should be considered the correct conduct of a journalist? What constitutes ethically right or wrong conduct? For Woldsfeld (2004:5), journalists have the 'ethical obligation to encourage reconciliation between hostile populations'; however, they should remain critical and not accept every peace proposal, nor

should they serve as propaganda organs. Then ‘the goals of journalism working in conflict-ridden areas should be to provide as much information as possible about the roots of the problem and encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending it. At the very least journalist should do no harm’ (Woldsfeld, 2004: 5).

There are many issues to be resolved in journalism nowadays, such as an agreement on objectivity, ethics, and conflict reporting. However, Loyn (echoing Howard Tumber, who tends to prefer the term ‘conflict-sensitive journalism’ over peace journalism) maintains that ‘the solution surely is a better application of known methods (...) we need a fuller context in the reporting of events, using objectivity and impartiality to discover the truth’ (2006:2). Therefore, beyond peace journalism, some journalists argue for so-called ‘good journalism’ that, according to more than 50 professional journalists’ associations globally with similar codes of conduct, shares the following key standards: accuracy, impartiality and responsibility for ‘good’ journalistic practices.

Therefore, ‘peace journalism’s ethical checklist would fence us in to the detriment of understanding’ (Loyn, 2006:2). Journalism’s self-examination is a debate that has constantly been present in the twentieth century, part of the development of a sense of professionalism and the expectation of social responsibility for journalists. This debate might lead to a glimpse of the new socioideological and philosophical construction of journalism or, on the other hand, a starting point towards a new perspective or evolution of the discipline. As Dente (2007) asserts that this debate has become explosive and emotional between peace journalism’s supporters and its critics that might neglect the points of cohesion between the two sides. ‘If transformed from battlefield, their shared assumptions about and critiques of much of mainstream journalism’s conventions and practices may uncover fertile common ground for a deeper and more practical reconceptualization of constructive media in contemporary global society’ (Dente 2007:77).

On one side, Loyn (2007a) deplores the rejection of vital journalistic conventions of objectivity and distance. From a position intentionally *outside* the field of

peace journalism, Loyn declares, the opposite of peace journalism is, 'good journalism'. Kempf (cited in Dente 2007:77) replies that peace journalism 'is not an antipode of good journalism but its necessary prerequisite'. Along these same lines, Lynch argues that peace journalism is an intentionally self-reflexive practice driven by the profound understanding that 'when we (journalists) observe and represent the outside world, the patterns we discern are structured by the conventions we apply' (2008:4).

This approach lends itself naturally to debate; as Kempf asserts, the term *peace journalism* mixes two elements that are difficult to harmonise: *peace* and *journalism*. For decades these two concepts have been a point of debate within their respective disciplines (journalism and peace studies). As part of this on-going debate on peace journalism, Lynch (2007) responded to criticisms made by Loyn, Hanitzsch and detractors of the agency of peace journalism within the constraints of media. His response was published in 'Debates on Peace Journalism' (2008) aiming to encompass three main areas: Philosophical, Pedagogical, and Professional discourses. It also includes arguments and discussions held in the Conflict and Communication Online Journal (edited by Kempf, 2008).

Referring to critiques of the reality of peace journalism in media outlets, Lynch argues that peace journalism 'is often criticised for being an overly individualistic model of journalistic endeavour attaching too little weight to the importance of the structural constraints of the work of editors and reporters'. He argues, 'Peace journalism bases its claims and observations about conflict, peace and violence, by researchers on Peace and Conflict Studies, preferable as a basis for representing conflict to the often un-examined conventions of the news-industry' (Lynch, 2007: 1).

Kempf (2007) claims that there are opportunities to implement the peace journalism program and that it can contribute to the quality of conflict and crisis journalism, although he acknowledges that in the foreseeable future peace journalism will remain a minority position. However, even from such a place peace journalism can still contribute to structuring media discourse on conflicts in

a more balanced way and may protect the coverage of conflict from the propaganda ‘deception’ into which traditional reporting seems to fall. In this instance, Peleg (2007a) asserts that what is needed is an intensification of peace journalism research, and the critical examination of many myths of journalism, such as setting the premise of objectivity.

Press agency should not be characterised as a ‘benevolent’ social agent, asserts Bastenier (2009). Latin American journalists are often seen as defenders of lost causes, educators, and social activists; however, they can work on the strengthening of democracy by ‘simply doing a good job’ (2009:61). Should journalists disregard the peace agenda, and merely undertake good-quality work, as defined by BBC guidelines or the editorial standards of their newspapers?

Overall, the different debates presented in this chapter converge on the idea of the role of the journalism in conflicts as being intertwined with different spheres. Despite their differences, they all coincide on the initiative of revamping journalism, and the discussion of an evolution of the discipline toward enhanced reporting during wartime. The applicability of theory to praxis is what the following chapters will attempt to determine.

This proposition of a professional practice with a strong normative and ethical content that attempts to counteract the notion of ‘war/violence journalism’ is a concept developed by Galtung, which will be fully explained in the following section. It is not possible to base his approach only on normative directions and opposition to the concept of Galtung’s ‘war journalism’; it is necessary to construct a theoretical framework that permits an analysis of the process of communication in order to critically analyse its ethical proposition and its validity as a journalistic alternative to approaching news. Peace journalism has certain analytical bases (Galtung & Lynch, 2010; Hackett, 2006), and could have the potential to become an approach such as ‘civic journalism’ or ‘public journalism’. However, it is important to evaluate its effectiveness in the field and in discursive analysis, as well as the strength of its theoretical framework.

1.16 Studying Local Journalists: De-Westernizing Journalism Studies

In this section the challenges of Western media theory will be discussed, especially journalism studies from a de-Westernizing perspective. Hallin & Mancini's important work on *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) in the field of media studies allows us to comprehend journalism and political systems. The three models of media systems; Polarized Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist and Liberal Model are examined under four analytical dimensions; state role, political parallelism, professionalism and media markets. These models propose a framework for understanding the dynamics of politics, culture, society and news in any context by examining 18 media systems in Europe and North America. In their pivotal contribution, the authors recognized the limitation that media 'models developed here will not apply without *considerable adaptation* to most other areas of the world' (2004: 6) [My italics]. Hallin & Mancini subsequently examined media systems outside the West in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* (2012).

The Liberal model of journalism establishes that the main functions of journalism are to be a watchdog, to create a public sphere, and the search for truth. These functions exist under the social conditions of freedom of expression and financial autonomy; journalism should be accurate, objective and impartial. Hallin & Mancini (in Thussu 2010) argue that this 'Liberal model' ethos originated in United States and is exemplified by the US commercial media system, and has become the role model for journalism globally, namely the 'Americanisation' or homogenization of a 'global culture of journalism'.

The key study of the Four Theories of the Press (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956) proposed that the press takes on the colour and form of the social and political structures of a society in which it operates to reflect the social control system (1956:4). Therefore, it claimed to comprehend media systems in any part of the world, although it has been criticized (Thussu 2009; 17) given that journalism 'should' imitate the West in order to remain professional (cf. Kovach & Rosenstiel).

Journalism education has permeated several parts of the world. Splichal & Sparks (1994) found similarities in journalism education among 22 countries, including universalization of journalistic ethics and professional standards. Weaver (1998) studied and identified the similarities and differences between journalists in several countries, finding substantially different national journalistic cultures. Therefore, these studies identify a global journalism profile that is adopting the normative values of objectivity, accuracy and the liberal American ‘watchdog’ journalism yet marked by cultural differences. Deuze (2005: 446) calls it ‘shared occupational ideology’ among newswriters.

There is a burgeoning discussion of the parochialism and homogenization of Western media theory, as journalism scholars Curran & Park (2000: 15) propose:

They are agents of representation within a democratic public sphere that is made up of organized groups, and draw upon literary and politicized tradition of journalism different from that of the United States. In brief, interpretative paradigms need to be tailored to local situations rather than imported uncritically and misapplied.

This critique emerges in order to understand different cultures in media studies. Said (1978) stated that other cultures become the imitation of the ‘original’ imperialist; this superiority of thought and experience is a discourse that exists in an unequal exchange of power. The subordinate ‘other’ is constructed as an ideological discourse, which privileges and consents to Western epistemology. In this manner, the Orientalism discourse also subtly permeates into social sciences academia when the West examines other cultures. Balagangadhara states (1998:115), ‘Looked at in isolation from Orientalism, social sciences are *how* the West experiences itself. That is, social sciences teach us about the Western culture’. This challenge to undertake ideas from peripheral countries can help to break the colonial inherited thinking and open a discussion, as Thussu asserts, regarding Western theories that are examined in non-Western places and therefore are found inadequate: ‘a new kind of thinking is required which values ideas and perspectives emanating from non-metropolitan hubs of global knowledge centres (...) free from the constraints of Western discourses and thus decolonizing the research imagination’ (2009:25). This is thus a challenge for the

academia of the Global North and Global South to develop ground-breaking research beyond the Western normative paradigms in media studies.

Scholars Conti & O'Neil (2007) have pointed out that the one of the challenges of journalism studies is to focus beyond elite nations and certain recurrent themes. It is argued that journalistic research has centred attention on organisational structures, content analysis and 'elite individuals' by focusing on international media organisations in wealthy nations. The challenge, then, is 'to broaden the scope of research beyond mainstream journalism and that of prosperous nations, leading news organisations and prominent journalists (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2010:12).

Fox & Waisbord (2002: xxii) state that in Latin America we must consider both global and local specificities regarding their media, connecting with Lugo-Ocando's argument that, despite the process of globalization, 'national contexts still provide by far the most crucial explanatory frameworks for national media systems throughout Latin America' (2008: 2). We must consider the culture to understand the journalism that can be produced. Hall (1959) calls it 'the way of life of people'. Consequently, a group of traditions, practices in journalism is identified as a 'journalistic culture' defined by Hugo de Burgh (2003) as a set of traditions, social psychology and habits that condition the journalistic profession and differentiates them from others. Yet Harrison (2000) regards it as a group of praxis, normative values and journalistic 'mythology' that is culturally inherited from generation to generation of journalists. Zelizer (2010) call it 'interpretative communities' of professionals to debate and make sense of their profession in a particular culture.

Brazilian journalism scholar De Alburquerque (2005) defines culture as a collective expression of an occupational consensus, where culture is ultimately a matter of 'creative adaptation'. This argument explains the possible cultural adaptations that emerge from a dialogue among local and global standards. Therefore, this notion of dialogue and resistance to Western values is highly relevant. In this regard, Hanitzsch (2007) proposes that this journalistic culture is an *arena* in which the diverse ideologies are in constant struggle and constitutes

resistance against dominant—and normative—interpretations of American and European dominant discourses on the identity of journalism and its social function.

De Albuquerque states that the ‘American model of journalism is also the product of a specific culture, thus cannot be taken as a universal standard for other countries’ journalisms (2005:500). Therefore, beyond the American journalism values of objectivity and professionalism, there is an adaptation and dialogue from the countries that adopt them in order to fit their cultural professional context, such as the case of Colombian journalism presented in this thesis. There are studies from the Global South challenging Western media culture, such as Tomaselli (2003, 2004) studying South African journalists, Pan & Man-Chan (2003) looking at Chinese reporters and Ramaprasad (2003) from Asia, to name a few. Albuquerque, analysing Brazilian journalists, maintains that ‘the relationship that other countries’ journalisms establish with American journalism must be understood as an *adaptation*, rather than a simple adoption (whether it is successful or not), in order to fit the cultural demands of the societies that “import” it (2005: 500).

As a research subject mentioned, the discussion in the Global North is very important and has key elements; however, the ‘discussion in Colombia is different, what is discussed there is inapplicable to what is discussed here regarding war journalists (...)’. These two kinds of discussions of media and conflict have many points of contact but they also have very important differences. ‘One of the main principles that we have been working on and discussing is that a central element of journalists’ protection is to produce high quality reports; therein lays their security as a journalist’ (Álvaro Sierra, city editor).

However, the interconnectivity among international journalists is valid if it is integrated into the local cultural dialogue on understanding professionalism. Some of the journalists interviewed acknowledged the global discussions of journalism and war mainly from the West, particularly regarding the intersections. However, as a main point of departure they put forward their own

cultural reappropriations of normative journalism standards and praxis, especially on war reporting. These discussions that the interviewee (Sierra) refers to are debates among academia, media directives and journalists, held since the early nineties.

Colombian cultural journalistic (basic) standards on conflict (namely Responsible Journalism in the Armed Conflict) are connected with basic (global) journalism principles, especially quality and security. However, to produce ‘good quality’ information on the armed conflict, journalists must face the Colombian culture of journalism in which ‘*officialism*’ (relying on official sources) is embedded and accepted. The discussion focus of responsible journalism is thus on rather basic standards: security and quality. This is done in order to try to keep the most independence and balance possible among armed actors as sources (army, official sources and armed groups).

1.17 Discussion

Researchers have analysed journalism and war phenomena by examining the different manifestations and stages within a conflict. There is a niche for this research’s contribution to the field, in which it may function as a link between academia and practitioners, between theory and praxis, through the study of an under-researched case (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2010), such as Colombia.

Galtung, Lynch and McGoldrick’s new approach to reporting on war revives the debate on journalism and conflict, and the professional standards of the job. Their contribution to the debate was to spot and show, once again, the weaknesses of journalism today, as well as to reopen this old debate on the role of journalism in war. However, by offering an alternative for a better praxis, the authors attempted to revamp future journalistic reporting.

This debate, which includes both war correspondents and scholars, questions the validity of adding ‘peace’ to the objectivity of journalism. However, beyond the ‘peace’ suggestions of the perspective that this kind of journalism suggests, it revisits the origins of the practice as ruled by notions of enhancement of the

professional exercise. This concept of journalism requires balance, context, multiple sources, investigative reporting (muckrakers), all based on quality reporting. We can find theoretical roots implicit in several media editorial guidelines (i.e., the BBC, The Guardian, The Independent, *El Espectador*, *El Tiempo*, *La Jornada*). However important these concepts are in the framework of journalistic practise, they are sometimes forgotten during times of war, especially when their country is a main actor in the conflict, such as Colombia. The following case study and its analysis illustrate this situation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW CASE STUDY: MAPPING COLOMBIA AND ITS INTERNAL CONFLICT

2.1 Understanding the Violence and Conflict in Colombia

This section explores the violent sociopolitical milieu in which Colombian journalism was constructed during the last century. It particularly focuses on the internal conflict (beginning circa 1964) that set the stage for Colombian modern journalism to originate and develop. This conflict is the phenomenon that triggered a gradual revamping of the journalistic rationale and praxis intersected by authoritarianism and, more recently, alternative journalism models (towards social responsibility).

The rationale behind the choice of Colombia as a case study is due to the different journalistic practices occurring there, as well as their constant professional debates (between both academia and practitioners) and the need for further research in the field. Colombian journalism has been researched and analysed mainly by Colombian scholars; there is a lack of overseas academic research focused on this thought-provoking yet concealed case study. This inquiry intends to add to the Anglo-Saxon academic debates in order to de-Westernise journalism studies. It will also examine how a developing country, immersed in a violent war, responded to the longstanding journalistic dilemma of how to improve local war reporting. It is hoped that an external perspective may shed light on understanding—from an external point of view—the characteristics and qualities of this phenomena of the alternative journalistic practices in conflict.

The Colombia case study encompasses the essential characteristics of a challenging environment for the press—an ongoing conflict in a state with weak democratic institutions, censorship of the press, and multi-layered violence throughout society. Such a scenario enables a thorough analysis of debates over alternative journalism in conflict. This country is also a particularly useful case

study because the situation has allowed the journalistic field to create its own rules and dynamics for addressing the country's internal conflict.

Academic and professional debates on the liberal notion of journalism as the Fourth State in Colombia's professional field have taken place over the last decades. This concept of liberal journalism is understood here to mean an arena of representation, which entails political impartiality, to pursue public interest and as a conveyor of truthful information in the public sphere. It is apparent that the function of liberal and socially responsible journalism has taken place in some professional Colombian spheres, and this will be explored in the following chapters; however, a by-product of this type of exercise is the presence of professional mistakes and inaccuracies; namely the lack of verifying information and the failure to use two or more sources (cf. Proyecto Antonio Nariño, 2004). Some scholars (Bonilla, 2002) call this the 'useful fool' excuse, where elementary errors are blamed on rudimentary training, journalistic routines (namely journalistic culture) and a lack of education and experience, particularly among the youngest reporters.

These critiques show that even in the midst of conflict the public sphere has taken upon itself the examination of journalistic professional models and their normativity. Professionalism is not only a way to achieve rigour, impartiality and veracity, but it permits the exposure of those hidden structures of power (Bonilla, 2002, 2007, 2012) that do not agree with a liberal watchdog journalism that produces critical, assertive and independent reporting in the public's interest. This research attested that those journalists with progressive notions and a commitment to social responsibility are those who receive more threats, more often end up in exile, and are, particularly in the provinces, in the spotlight.

As a starting point, this section will provide the context of Colombia, focusing on its long history of political violence. It is important to provide a frame of reference of Colombian conflict and political violence so as to help provide an understanding of the journalistic situation in this country, as well as the dynamics and organisation at play. In the second section violence will be analysed from multiple perspectives. These include the importance of understanding violence as

a social phenomenon from both anthropological and sociological standpoints (in order to appreciate how it is understood implicitly in this society) and, subsequently, from a journalistic perspective.

With the above in mind, the following section will provide a broad outline that identifies the longstanding violence in Colombia: political, social and economic aspects and their consequences throughout recent history. Specifically, it will examine how Colombian society has restructured its scale of values and understanding of the world. It will also examine how the country has reconfigured its norms and parameters of violence, and from such a perspective explore how the nation understands itself in the midst of an ongoing conflict.

2.2 Why is Colombia Important? Understanding the Violence and Conflict

To understand a culture, Hall (1997) states that one must identify shared conceptual maps. He explains that cultures ‘consists of the maps of meaning, the frameworks of intelligibility, the things which allow us to make sense of a world which exists but is ambiguous as to its meaning until we’ve made sense of it’ (1997:9). Based on this premise, a first approach to understanding Colombia and its journalism is to move from the general to the particular; thus, there will be a brief historical background, an examination of the culture and a focus on its embedded violence.

Throughout history, Colombian presidents have owned certain media corporations, and this political economy of Colombian media is apparent to the public opinion. Colombian journalism has been studied from certain perspectives; for example, on ethics of the profession by the ethics expert Javier Darío Restrepo (Herrán & Restrepo, 1991 [2005], Restrepo 2004) and on professionalism and identity (Barrios & Arroyave, 2012, 2007; Arroyave & Blanco, 2004, 2007). Colombia has a history marked by violence that has intensified within the past decades. For more than fifty years the country has been going through an armed political conflict of varying intensity and including disparate participants simultaneously: the government, its military forces, socialist guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups (united self-defence groups) and

the world's strongest, for at least one part of this time, drug trafficking cartels. All of these key actors have been fighting for power, in regards to geopolitical positions and control of the country in order to create a transformation of the state. According to political analysts (Pecault, 2001)¹⁸ Colombia's recent history is characterised by the succession and confluence of different acts of violence that are the result of the search for and construction of projects of state, nation and society. In this regard, 'Colombia suffers an armed political confrontation that articulates and encompasses diverse political conflicts' (Barón, 2002:13). Throughout history, this nation has moved from one confrontation to another, a situation that has been particularly acute over the past five decades. The country has oscillated between insurgency, drug cartel wars and attacks on the civil population, clashes between the state and drug cartels, as well as cartel conflicts with street gangs. Such clashes are the expression of the difficulty that this society has experienced in its attempts to build up a democratic state, with room for all political and social sectors (Medios Para la Paz Report, 2008).

Violence in Colombia has roots going back to conflicts between the liberal and conservative parties during the early 1900s. Since then, clashes between political groups have been a continuous feature of Colombian history. As Coryat (2008:3) asserts, 'since the assassination of liberal-left presidential candidate Gaitán in 1948, violence [...] has been a staple of political and *social* life'. This led to a period of national slaughter in 1950s called *La Violencia* ('the violence'). The nation has experienced periodic waves of political violence throughout its history, initiated by government, political parties and movements, 'in which murder and torture were used to ensure electoral outcomes, guarantee property rights, and solidify economic power (Tate, 2007:31). This violence has been used systematically as an accepted political weapon in the struggle for power, from the liberal and conservative confrontations of many decades ago to the on-going conflict of the present day.

One way to understand the political violence within the history of the country over the past hundred years is to categorise it in three levels, according to Tate

¹⁸ Fernán González, Gonzalo Sánchez and Teófilo Vázquez.

(2007): partisan, insurgent and counterinsurgent. These levels also overlap with both criminal and geopolitical violence.

The partisan violence during the first century after Colombian independence from Spain was characterised by three main tumultuous episodes and some analysts (Pécaut, 2006, 2011, 2014; Tate, 2007, 2011, 2015) argue that these events form the roots of aggression in the country today. These episodes were: the early coups and conflicts, the war of a thousand days in the early 1900s, and *La Violencia* during the 1950s (Tate, 2002).

La Violencia had a larger influence in Colombia's history. It was predominantly classified as a partisan clash between liberal and conservative parties. There were two events that led to this period of turmoil; the first took place in 1948 with the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, the liberal populist. At the time, he was running for the presidential elections and had formed the 'National Revolutionary Leftist Union' (*Unión Nacional de Izquierda Revolucionaria*) party. The second event is known as *El Bogotazo*, a three-day riot that destroyed downtown Bogotá. The third event, *La Violencia*, a time of political turbulence, consequently exploded and finally came to an end in 1958 with the signing of the *Frente Nacional* agreement.

Another element of political violence was the genesis of the guerrilla (mainly FARC and ELN) uprising in the 1960s, after the political unrest of *La Violencia* which originated the insurgent violence. A third constituent emerged as the counter-insurgency offensive of the 1980s and 1990s. However a new type of player emerged during the 1980s: the drug cartel war against the state and the public, which produced terror in Colombian society. For instance, during the nineties annual deaths due to violence fluctuated between 25,000 and 30,000, of which 13%—between 3,000 and 4,000—were considered to be the result of political violence (Medios Para la Paz Report, 2007), including massacres, homicide, and disappearances perpetrated by state agents or members of armed groups targeting mainly civilian society.

In conclusion, violence has been present in different levels of intensity throughout the decades, but in general there is a continuous trend of aggression both in cities and the countryside over fifty years. Based on this historical framework, the following section will explain the origins and context of the contemporary conflict.

2.3 Untangling the Current Colombian Conflict: Four Interwoven Actors

The present day confrontation is constructed by the entangled participation of four agents: the guerrillas (FARC, ELN), the paramilitary (consisting of many sub-groups), the drug-trafficking cartels (former Medellín, Cali, Cauca Valley and Caribbean Coast cartels), and the military and the State it serves. In 2012, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos (2010–2018), together with FARC guerrillas, started peace negotiations held in Cuba (with Cuban President Raúl Castro as intermediary) and subsequently agreed on a bilateral ceasefire. At the time of this thesis going to print, there were reports of government and FARC being keen to sign the peace treaty.¹⁹

The guerrillas appeared in the sixties with diverse political ideologies. It was, perhaps, this complex mixture of agents with diverse interests and agendas that increased the magnitude of the conflict. While a conflict with two sides in confrontation is violent, the Colombian case has four parties that aggravate the situation further, thus complicating the path to a solution. The interactions between the guerrillas, paramilitary forces and drug cartels have varied over the decades. The role that these actors play in the Colombian political and economic state is crucial, because all of them are part of a political struggle to control cocaine production and distribution.

Classified as the oldest on-going conflict in Latin America, this war has caused thousands of victims and millions of displaced people and has immersed the country in a spiral of continuous violence. According to UNHCR, Colombia has the highest percentage of displaced people in the world (around 3,000,000

¹⁹*El Espectador*: 'Government and FARC are ready to seal peace briefly after appointment with Raúl Castro' (*Gobierno y FARC dispuestos a sellar paz en breve tras cita con Raúl Castro*). (2016).

people²⁰) and these numbers are still increasing. The figures for internally displaced people have been rising over the last decade due to all kinds of violence, such that the high number of displaced people makes Colombia second only to Sudan. According to UNICEF²¹ (2002), six thousand children are currently linked with the armed conflict in Colombia.

Any exercise in deconstructing an ‘understanding’ of Colombia’s situation has to take into account the various meanings and contradictions contained within the words employed by the press and government when defining the conflict. For some sectors of society (such as the guerrilla groups) it is a ‘conflict’, whilst on the other hand, the government refuse to use this term, preferring to argue that the country is living with a dispute of a lower status. Certain people regard the situation as ‘low-intensity warfare’ or ‘low-intensity civil war’ in some parts of the country (Rangel, 2005). The government has adopted the United States’ definition of ‘war against terror’ to address the conflict. Therefore there is also another battle being waged, a symbolic one whose purpose is to diminish or ignore the ‘adversary’ through denial.

It is clear that there can be no simple exposition of the modern Colombian state of affairs; there are too many components. In order to begin to unravel the participants in this conflict, it is necessary to examine each one individually. Only then can there be a balanced and informed analysis of the situation.

2.3.1 The Guerrillas

The emergence of the sociopolitical uprising was the consequence of profound social inequalities; armed guerrillas were the result of some of these social conditions. The roots of the contemporary guerrilla groups can be traced to the aftermath of the violent civil war called *La Violencia*. As Offstein (2003:18) points out, ‘The effect of partisan violence, the political urgency of

²⁰ The Colombian Government estimates between 2.5 to 3 million internally displaced people, based on 1,796,508 registries in the Government’s *Sistema Único de Registro SUR* (Register System) up to April 2006. However, data from CODHES *Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* (Human Rights and Displacement Consultancy) states that 3,662,842 people had been displaced up to October 2005. (UNHCR, Colombia Report, 2002-2007). Of those numbers it is estimated that half of the displaced population are children.

²¹ People’s Defenders Report and UNICEF, 2002.

socioeconomic change, and the reservoir of armed recruits created the circumstances in which sparked the formation of guerrilla groups that attracted the attention of Cuba, former Soviet Union and China'. In the 1960s and 1970s, numerous guerrilla groups appeared in different geographical areas of the country, following a variety of different approaches to Marxist doctrine.

These groups included FARC-EP (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo*, 'Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army'), ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, 'National Liberation Army'), EPL (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*, 'Popular Liberation Army'), M-19²² (April 19th Movement), ADO ('Worker's Self-defence), and *Ricardo Franco* and *Quintín Lame* (indigenous guerrilla group). However, this section will focus on the two main guerrilla groups remaining in the Colombian conflict today, FARC and ELN.

FARC is a liberal guerrilla group whose origins can be traced back to the 1930s and 1940s in peasant defence forces looking for a political space to represent the marginalised rural poor. Later it became a communist (Marxist–Leninist) grouping and linked itself with the Cuban Revolution—the objective being to achieve socialism and its agrarian and political reforms.

After the international collapse of the Cold War and its main economic backer, FARC did not negotiate with government. Due to its peasant base, FARC was in charge of taxing coca leaf drug production by small farmers. Later, the guerrillas set up laboratories for drug production in many areas and then went on to become an active actor within the Colombian drug trade. This activity provided financial strength that allowed FARC to continue its military activities.

Since the 1990s, FARC has had an economic infrastructure based on wider criminality; firstly the drug trade and secondly its infamous kidnapping and extortion industry from which it also obtains important revenue. For example, 'of the more than 3,700 people reported kidnapped in 2002, approximately 70% are

²² Urban movement, demobilised in 1990 to form the *Alianza Democrática* political party.

attributed to guerrillas and two thirds of those motivated by extortion’ (Tate, 2001:44). According to experts (Tate, 2001; Offstein, 2003), FARC’s political strength and sociopolitical basis were fading out and being replaced by these illegal activities. Over the decades FARC spread its influence over many regions, divided into blocks. In 2002²³ the number of insurgents was estimated at approximately 18,000 to 20,000 fighters.

President Belisario Betancour (1984–1986) conducted peace dialogues with FARC. Held in a military-free area, also called the ‘*Florida y Pradera*’ détente zone, the peace talks were intended to lead to a ceasefire and subsequent disarmament in order to integrate the guerrilla forces into political life. In 1984, both factions signed the ‘*La Uribe*’ agreement on ceasefire and to open political participation for guerrillas; the ‘UP’ or *Unión Patriótica* (‘Patriotic Union’) was formed. In 1986, Colombia had the first elections with a guerrilla as a legal political participant. State agents and paramilitary forces exterminated UP members; several experts called this genocide (see Gómez-Suárez, 2007). These assassinations included two presidential candidates, eight congressman, 70 city councillors, 11 mayors, and numerous leaders in the country.

In 2000 the *Plan Colombia* (Emergency Supplement in Support of Plan Colombia) was created by bilateral agreement between Colombia and United States, between President Andrés Pastrana and Bill Clinton, providing nearly \$10 billion economic aid (Tate, 2016). The main focus was to end the armed conflict and its main actors; to exterminate the leftist guerrillas, and a counter narcotics strategy—targeting coca fields—and to strengthen military forces in order to build democracy. The US government established seven military bases in Colombia, with eighty percent of the aid was destined to military (Tate, 2016), as they relied heavily on the paramilitary forces united as AUC group.

Nowadays, guerrillas have lost their social support; with the vast majority of civil society despising their practices of kidnapping, drug trading and violence. This discontent on the part of the general population has been going on for years; on

²³ Semana Magazine Multimedia, *¿Qué les queda a las FARC?* (2008).

February 4, 2008, a national protest was held against FARC during which hundreds of thousands of civilians took to the streets. Months later, in June 2008, a military operation took place that outwitted a guerrilla group and rescued hostages, among them Ingrid Betancourt, the internationally infamous political candidate held for several years. In addition, the guerrillas lost several of their leaders and ideologists (i.e., Pedro A. Marín alias '*Manuel Marulanda*', Víctor Suárez alias '*Mono Jojoy*' and Guillermo Sáenz alias '*Alfonso Cano*').

The historical 2016 Peace Accord between FARC and Santo's government was rejected by the majority vote against the agreement. The future of the peace depends on the agreement of government, FARC delegations and the majority vote representatives led by former president Álvaro Uribe. This will be discussed further in the following section on Peace Negotiations.

The second most important guerrilla army in the conflict is ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*), who emerged after *La Violencia* as a second-generation guerrilla grouping. It was formed by students and radical Catholic sectors who favoured Cuban-style revolution in Colombia. The ELN, under the leadership of the popular Jesuit priest Camilo Torres, attempted to put into practice a Liberation Theology movement within the Colombian Catholic Church and the national political scene. Cuba provided ideological training and financial support that helped to form the guerrilla (Offstein, 2003). In contrast to FARC's drug trade activities, the ELN obtained financial support through the petroleum industry. Today the ELN might be considered a low profile guerrilla organisation, but it is nevertheless still an armed actor in the conflict.

2.3.2 Paramilitaries

The paramilitaries are illegal corps, of which the best-known is the AUC (*Auto-Defensas Unidas de Colombia*, 'United Vigilante Forces of Colombia'), which emerged as a protection group for certain farmers in the Antioquia region against local guerrillas (FARC and ELN). Due to its nature it eventually became involved with the drug trade. It is a multifaceted group characterised by particularly violent massacres. In addition, they have strong associations with certain politicians and

government. Recently, the so-called *para-política* scandal came to light, a fusion between the words ‘paramilitary’ and ‘politics’, referred to in the international press as ‘*Paragate*’ (in reference to Watergate). *Semana*, a Colombian newsweekly magazine, exposed this connection in 2005, highlighting an AUC pact with politicians to rig local elections, involving senators and other important politicians.

Paramilitaries, formerly vigilante groups, encompass a variety of factions that have been fighting over the past decades. Similar to paramilitary forces in Latin America and in the wider world, they worked clandestinely with military in order to attack guerrillas and any counterinsurgency operation. These manoeuvres were carried out by ‘death squads’, which targeted guerrillas, activists and opposition political parties²⁴. They also attacked Colombian authorities that attempted to investigate drug trafficking.

It is not surprising, then, that Colombian paramilitary groups have become crucial actors in the conflict since the early 1980s. The evolution of these militias can be categorised roughly into three main periods: firstly, the ‘death squad’ operations in the 1970s and early 1980s, secondly, private armies founded by the drug traffic in late 1980s and early 1990s and thirdly, the consolidation of paramilitary groups into one single body represented by a national spokesman, claiming to have a political platform (Tate, 2001, 2011). In order to provide a structured perspective of this actor, the following provides a chronological overview of its development divided into origins, expansion, consolidation and demobilisation or restructuring.

The paramilitary origins emerge from groups that were formed with diverse objectives; some were created to provide protection against guerrillas (Magdalena Medio, Western Valleys), whereas in other areas drug trade organisations refused to pay fees to guerrilla groups and instead created their own defence squads. However, the common characteristic between them all resides in the legal

²⁴ FARC’s political party in 1980s, ‘*Unión Patriótica*’, members were allegedly disappeared by paramilitary groups.

(Article 48)²⁵ or illegal support of the state.

Tate (2007) argues that, unlike paramilitary squads in other Latin American countries experiencing political unrest, Colombian paramilitary squadrons could survive and continue their operations because of their income from drug trafficking. This money allowed them to increase their offensive military capabilities with more troops. As a result, ‘the mixture of counterinsurgency ideology and illegal narcotics revenue produced one of the most lethal fighting forces in Latin America’ (2001:51).

The expansion of the paramilitary began in 1995, when they were legalised through specific legislative structures. They were renamed ‘*Convivir*’ (legal rural defence forces) and classified as security cooperatives, although they were really just paramilitary groups with state recognition and surveillance; private armies with government monitoring. *Convivir* was proposed and promoted by former president Álvaro Uribe when he was governor of Antioquia (1995–1998); therefore, it was only accepted in this state. This legal framework can explain why paramilitary agency is recognised—in certain social sectors or regions—as a ‘necessary evil’ against guerrillas and the drug trade, even if this means disregarding their violent massacres in Colombia.

The period of paramilitary consolidation was characterised by the creation of a paramilitary ‘guild’ that coordinated all the groups throughout the country, known as the AUC (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia). The leaders employed a public relations campaign²⁶ to attain state recognition and in the political arena The AUC expanded and obtained control over diverse zones, mainly through intimidation, selective assassinations, massacres and forced disappearances. In 2003 the AUC were present ‘in 223 municipalities’²⁷. The consolidation of AUC marked an important moment in paramilitary evolution

²⁵ Article 48 was approved in 1968. It allows government to ‘mobilise population in activities and tasks to restore public order’ (Tate, 2001:51).

²⁶ Different chiefs commanded separate paramilitary factions (mainly regional). The most important were: Carlos Castaño (leader of AUC), Salvatore Mancuso, Diego Murillo Bejarano (‘*Don Berna*’), José Vicente Castaño, among others.

²⁷ *Semana* Magazine, Multimedia: ‘Para-politics, achievements and challenges’ (‘*Parapolítica logros y desafíos*’), (2008).

because they evolved from illegal, disparate and violent countryside squads into political actors.

The demobilisation and regrouping process started with the controversial 'Justice and Peace Law' (*Ley de Justicia y Paz*) that Colombia's constitutional court approved in 2003. This law intended to gradually demobilise twenty-five thousand paramilitary, procuring the complete disappearance of this armed groups in 2006. Negotiations included conflict resolution techniques such as collective disarming, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants. The maximum penalty was from three to six years in prison, depending on the level of atrocity committed. The Justice and Peace Law also required that many high level officers had to face hearings when demobilised and there confess political alliances and crimes. Victims and their families could witness the trials (known as *Versiones Libres*, 'free versions') similar to the South African experience.

The objective of such a process was to obtain more information about the massacres and the location of clandestine graves in order to give the bodies to the victims' relatives²⁸. Almost fifty thousand people have been declared victims of paramilitaries,²⁹ the vast majority coming from Antioquia, the Atlantic Coast and Putumayo. According to many analysts, journalistic reports and international institutions, after this process, more than 3,000 'new paramilitaries' have fought for the territory that AUC left after the demobilisation. These are no simple armed gangs; they are a real threat to the nation (Semana, 2006).

These groups, active in twenty-five states of the country, consist of 3,000 to 6,000 people and arise from three basic types of origin: dissidents of the government's negotiations, demobilised paramilitary who organised and rearm themselves; or emergent groups. The Organisation of American States' Secretary Insulza, denounced the resurgence of 'vigilante groups' and paramilitary groups that were already demobilised'.³⁰

²⁸ A 'National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation' (*Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación*) was created to follow these hearings and help the victims.

²⁹ El Tiempo (April 2007) in Media for Peace: 'Data on the armed conflict' (*Cifras y Datos del conflicto armado*).

³⁰ Juanita León, *Semana Magazine* (March 1, 2006).

2.3.3 Drug Traffic

Colombian illegal drug production and drug trading has produced many kinds of violence. Such activity has involved all the actors in the conflict and increased its intensity. Drug trade revenues supported the expansion of both paramilitary and guerrilla groups. At the same time, the United States' government, under counternarcotics operations in Colombia, has financed the military. In this regard, 'Political violence in Colombia has been followed by drug-trafficking (...) and common delinquency and the three are protected by impunity' (Castaño, 2004:1).

The strengthening of Colombian drug cartels during the 1980s turned the country into the core of the global drug trade. The Medellín Cartel (Antioquia region) led by the infamous Pablo Escobar, and the Cali Cartel (Valle del Cauca region) led by the Rodríguez Orejuela brothers and José Santacruz were at the centre of this development. In 1982, Escobar was elected as a deputy in Congress, representing the Colombian Liberal Party. At this time Fidel Cano (editor of the newspaper *El Espectador*) had yet to uncover its illicit operations and connections to the drug trade. This situation highlights the high ranking position that the drug lords had, and the way in which they gained influence in Colombian politics: using political 'donations' or bribery in order to obtain 'political favours'.

The United States implemented extradition treaties to ensure that drug lords were to be judged on US territory. The drug lords' reactions were violent and resulted in war being declared against the Colombian government; a war that was also known as '*narco-terrorismo*' (drug-trade terrorism).

In light of the above, it is not surprising that the 1980s is considered a period marked by furious violence against institutions, public forces and the civilian population. Such violence created institutional chaos adding a new level of terror and violence across the country. The cartels bombed public buildings, hitmen (*sicarios*) murdered important officials. Then, to evade judicial investigations, they also killed hundreds of public figures: judges, police researchers and journalists, among others (Tate, 2001, 2015). Then during the 1990s, when drug trade operations and paramilitary structures were stronger, the various actors

began to intersect, resulting in many high-level traffickers becoming paramilitary chiefs.

Nowadays Colombia's drug cartels have decreased the degree to which they are openly engaged in a fight against state power, becoming hidden organisations that are more difficult to trace, but still powerful; however, the influence of Mexican cartels is gradually becoming powerful (Cantor, 2014) in the region and globally (e.g., *Cártel de Sinaloa*, *Cártel del Pacífico* among others).

2.3.4 Government and Peace Negotiations

There have been peace and conciliation efforts made by the Government; however, these have not been successful. In 1982 the conservative president, Belisario Betancourt, created an amnesty law and opened peace dialogues with guerrilla groups, but this process ended without an appropriate agreement in 1986. As a result, in 1985 the Communist Party, FARC and other guerrilla groups funded the leftist *Unión Patriótica* (UP), a political party with Communist–Marxist tendencies. This political wing represented an opportunity for future demobilisation, by introducing an opportunity to achieve demands through political channels. However, around seven hundred politically active members of the *Union Patriótica*—leaders, presidential candidates, congressmen, deputies and peasants, among others—were assassinated by paramilitaries and drug lords (Pécaut, 2001:23). This was one of the most serious extermination campaigns in Colombia. As a result, FARC and the other guerrilla groups remained committed to their armed struggle having witnessed what little real benefit there was in seeking political representation.

The ELN guerrilla also attempted to have a peace talks in 1992 at the 'Tlaxcala dialogues' in Mexico, together with FARC and EPL guerrillas. The second attempt was in 1998 (from January to October) through the National Conciliation Commission (led by civil society), and former president Ernesto Samper. The negotiations were held in Germany to ensure neutrality but did not progress; later they were moved to Spain, and finally to Antioquia; however, the process was terminated when a guerrilla attack killed eighty civilians (known as the *Machuca*

massacre on October 18, 1998).

In 1999, peace dialogues between guerrilla FARC and the government began under the regime of the newly elected president Andrés Pastrana. The place was San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá, hence the name of the peace negotiations, '*El Caguán*'. However, in 2002 the peace negotiations ended without any agreements after a strong counter attack from the guerrillas. Since 2012 to 2016, there have been peace negotiations (see Brodzinsky, 2015) between a special delegation of the Colombian government and FARC leaders (i.e., chief leader Rodrigo Lodoño known as '*Timochenko*'). They are held in Havana, Cuba with the strategic help of Norway and aid from Venezuela (late President Hugo Chávez) and Chile (President Michelle Bachelet).

The Government, led by President Juan Manuel Santos³¹ (former *El Tiempo* newspaper editor), have continued the peace negotiations in Havana during 2013 and 2014. On November 6, 2013 both sides announced a draft of the first agreement reached, which proposes how the guerrillas can become, again, a political party. This will be implemented by creating special seats in the Congress in order to grant them representation in Colombian politics. By June 20, 2014 negotiators reached three of the six-point agenda with FARC. Besides the first point, mentioned above, the second important agreement is that government will provide land to farmers in extreme poverty; a third will create public policies to prevent drug trafficking (Martin & Medina, 2014).

Colombian government and FARC endorsed this historic peace agreement firstly in Cuba (August, 2016) and officially on September 26, 2016 in Cartagena with several Latin American presidents and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. The peace was signed in Colombia with a '*balígrafo*' (a pen made of a bullet casing) representing the transition elements that in the past served the war, and now will sign off on peace. The guerrillas' current commander in chief, Rodrigo Londoño (aka '*Timoleón Jimenez*' or '*Timochenko*') asked for forgiveness in the name of FARC of all the victims of the conflict and for all the 'pain they may have caused

³¹ From 2010-2014 and reelected: 2014-2018.

in the war' (in Molano, 2016:1). President Santos, in his speech, quoted the Colombian anthem: “‘the horrible night’ of violence that has covered us with his shadow for more than half a century ‘has ceased’”.

The peace accord included land reform, convert into a political party, ceasefire and end of bilateral hostilities, peaceful demobilisation; reinstallation of guerrillas to civilian life, and a solution to the issue of illicit drugs (as it was agreed to sever all ties with the drug trade).³² They have agreed to build a special peace tribunal called ‘Truth, Justice, Reparation and Prevention’ to pursue and judge human rights violations during the conflict under the International Humanitarian Law.³³ The peace accord was rejected in a referendum on October 2, 2016, with strong opposition led by former president Álvaro Uribe. At the time of this thesis going to print, there was still uncertainty about the negotiations and the future of the peace agreement. Although this agreement is historical, it brings new challenges to government and FARC regarding criminal actors eager to fill the geopolitical and economic void, given that the guerrillas are disappearing.³⁴

In 2002, the paramilitary agreed to a ceasefire with Uribe’s government and immediately started a peace process with paramilitary demobilisation to begin in 2003. Meanwhile the government created the ‘Patriot Plan’, the strongest military operation against insurgency in Colombian history. For that reason various analysts consider the Colombian conflict an unbalanced puzzle; on one hand it is going through a conflict resolution process while on the other hand the conflict still continues with other actors. In 2012, peace negotiations between FARC guerrillas and the government started, with the help of Norway and Cuba. This new negotiation indicates that the longest conflict in the region might come to an end soon, and there is a possibility of a political outcome and reincorporation of

³² The Peace Accord proposes the creation of 23 zones and eight camps that will concentrate demobilised guerrilla fighters.

³³ According to *El Espectador* (26/09/2016) Peace Section that has covered the negotiations and peace accord, more than 7,000 guerrilla fighters will demobilize.
<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/ahora-cumplir-palabra-firmada-articulo-657122>

³⁴ Insight Crime Foundation that research organized crime in Latin America, researcher McDermott (2016:1) maintains that FARC controls 70 percent of the coca crops in Colombia, therein 40 percent of the world supply of cocaine. At least seven FARC units export cocaine globally. A new generation Colombian organized crime known as BACRIM (criminal bands) was born after the paramilitary demobilization in 2006 might absorb FARC’s territory and dissident members or the ELN guerrilla might recruit them.

the guerrilla combatants into society.

2.4 Mapping Colombian Violence

2.4.1 Violence as a Cultural and Historical Phenomenon

The definition of violence has been an issue of debate for a number of political philosophers, peace researchers, anthropologists, media, political and international scientists (Mahatma Gandhi, Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon, Johan Galtung, Jean-Paul Sartre, Keane and Walter Benjamin). Approaching the notion of violence from different perspectives will help to understand the case study, for example understanding violence, as a part of society (Fanon, 1963); critics of violence as a negative phenomenon of social interactions (Galtung, 2000b; Arendt, 1960; Sontag, 2003) consider the monopoly of the legitimisation of violence an essential characteristic of modern states.

A weak democratic state fails to protect citizens from any form of violence, particularly during conflict. Violence in Latin America has been a longstanding companion throughout history, taking the form of internal conflicts (1980's), dictatorships, coups d'état, revolutions, insurgencies and, more recently, the war on drugs in Colombia and now in Mexico which have increased the levels of violence in these countries (Zárata, 2011). The Colombia—and later Mexico—did not accomplish civilian protection and rather allowed violence against the general population reflects the limitations of the states on institutionalising the rule of law. During the 1980s and 1990s, democracy replaced authoritarianism, yet states fall short of guaranteeing the protection of citizen rights (Waisbord, 2002). In this environment violence against journalists is regarded as commonplace, for they are immersed in this environment of impunity, that yet again, the state foments.

Violence in Colombia is imbricated. Defining violence itself is a highly intricate process, and social researchers have worked for decades to do so. This research understands violence using Gerbner's definition; 'the overt expression of physical force, with or without weapon, against self or others' (1976:179). In Colombia

violence is understood differently according to the context: cities and countryside, North and South, and in places directly affected by conflict (see Appendix A showing the violent zones in Colombia and its different degrees, described by a NGO). It has become apparent that there is a disparate notion of violence within the country. A newspaper editor interviewed during this research, Sierra (2008), pointed out that ‘Colombia is like R.L. Stevenson’s story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde; both the angelic and the monstrous, the modern and the primal, development and the barbaric coexist here, and one face of society is determined to deny that the other one exists’³⁵.

Violence is not only situated as a central element, it is interwoven into all political and social spheres. Therefore, ‘the kind of violent acts committed in Colombia—political, domestic, common and organised crime—coexist and commingle, making the classification of violence and the production of accountability a highly contested public process’ (Tate, 2007:31–32). Government and NGOs continue to debate the accuracy of statistics of violence in Colombia. In the nineties, annual deaths fluctuated between twenty thousand and thirty thousand people, a figure which represents around eighty in every hundred thousand inhabitants, one of the highest death rates in the world. Approximately thirteen percent of those (3,000 to 4,000) are considered to be political violence; that is to say, massacres, homicides or disappearances perpetrated by State agents or members of armed groups in conflict, generally against the civilian population (Meertens, 2000: 89).

The characteristics that intersect in the overall situation of Colombian violence can be summarised as comprising four types: structural, institutional, cultural and interpersonal. Violence and survival are another two elements to analyse, as citizens have created mechanisms to coexist with violence by adapting to the rules of the paramilitary, guerrillas and drug cartels alongside official norms. Thus, the various powers in the country condition the behaviour of the population living in the middle of the war. In societies where the structure of violence is institutionalised and violent culture is internalised, ‘direct violence also tends to

³⁵ Research interview, 2008.

become institutionalised, repetitive and ritualistic, like a vendetta' (Galtung, 1990:302).

Colombia passed from the political violence of *La Violencia* to terror. In the 1980s the country was again subject to violence of great intensity. According to Pécaut (2001:186), statistics show that the national homicide rate regularly exceeded 70 per 100,000 inhabitants. In some regions and cities, the average reached 400 per 100,000. Between 1980 and 1995, the overall death rate exceeded 300,000.

On a larger scale, there have been many massacres of five or more people: 'Between 1993 to 1998 more than 900 massacres were counted, these claimed more than 5,000 victims' (Uribe & Vásquez in Pécaut, 2001:187). Furthermore, politically active members such as union members (*sindicalistas*) were also murdered; the official yearly kidnapping rate in 1990 varied between 1,000 and 1,717; more than 500,000 people had to abandon their regions of origin; extortion and blackmail became routine in most of the country. Violence is now pervasive in all aspects of daily life, not only within the direct context of the conflict. Annually this country experiences some 2,500 acts of hostility from the different factions, which employ more than 3,000 combatants³⁶.

Considering such numbers, it is impossible not to ponder the reasons why Colombia did not react to national and international public opinion, as was the case with the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala. Pécaut (2001) argues, in an extraordinary study of Colombia's violence, that many factors can explain this silence. One of them is the 'banalization' of violence; these events have become so common that they now have only a fleeting impact and are therefore forgotten or ignored.

³⁶ Media for Peace Report (2008:1).

2.4.2 Consequences of the Pervasiveness of Violence in Everyday Life

Violence in Colombia is a phenomenon that has permeated all levels of society as a result of decades of armed conflict and drug cartel wars. Pécaut (2001) suggest that certain Colombians perceive violence as a part of everyday life. There is a significant body of research that look at the implications of this continual violence in society (Jimeno 2001, Galtung 1990). Galtung's (1990) cultural–structural violence theories become self-evident when observing the cultural–structural violence in this country, whether popular culture or politics. By depicting the reality of Colombian society, television, soap operas, cinema, journalism, news and literature all illustrate violence as a part of life. In Colombia people regard themselves as being in a state of chaos and experiencing diverse confrontations. In 1997 the World Bank identified violence as being the country's key developmental constraint (Moser, 2000).

In this regard, violence is considered an endemic characteristic of Colombian history. Meertens (2000) asserts that during the past two decades the levels of violence have grown across all of society. Such violence can be direct or indirect, organised or disorganised, actual or potential (Derrennic, 1972). The visible signs are the most evident consequences of violence, and the invisible are the ones underneath the surface that comprise the structural conditions that create and preserve violence and the culture that sustains it.

Colombia's violence is a factor that interests anthropologists, sociologists, peace researchers and activists because of the complexity of levels and causes that are intertwined within it. Tate (2007:31) asserts 'what makes Colombia's case illuminating is (...) that multiple forms of violence exist in the context of a relatively wealthy, established democracy'. In this regard, the non-governmental organisation Global Peace Index in its 2008 Report declared that Colombia is placed among the ten most violent countries in the world, after Lebanon, Iraq, and Chad.

2.4.3 The Colombian *Violentología*

Even though violence is considered a prevalent condition arising out of the country's armed conflict, during the past three decades its growth has skyrocketed; it has intensified at all levels and expanded throughout all sectors of society. In Latin American political science, the violence in Colombia is in itself a subject of study and it is often referred to as part of the categorisation of recent circumstances within this country (Meetens, 2000).

Violence has been an important issue in Colombia throughout its history. Although it has been continuous and has evolved in different ways, academic analyses only started to come to light in the 1960s and then grew during the 1980s. There have been several reflections and incessant studies of violence in an effort to understand its reality. In order to make sense of its logic and trends, this subject has been addressed in many ways over the past few decades, ranging from academia (sociologists, anthropologists and historians), to governmental special commissions and civil society investigations. There have also been significant analyses of the roots of violence: its development, consequences and ways that it might be addressed in modern Colombian society. Of course, such debates can be considered strange in a country that is living an on-going conflict and where to discuss 'violence' as an abstract concept may not always be able to avoid the reality of day-to-day violence.

Such circumstances have conspired to set the scene for the development of a novel 'science', known as 'violentology' (*violentología*), which is particularly Colombian and based on the phenomenon of violence. From 1986 to 1987 the government created an official commission to study and analyse the causes of Colombian violence. Members of the government's official commission, who became connoisseurs of violence, were named '*violentólogos*', creating a new Spanish word for 'violentologists'; an expression that later became the term for people with an expertise in the subject. Thus violence in recent Colombian history became a matter of public interest across all sectors. The subsequent publication of the government's study in 1987, named 'Colombia, Violence and Democracy' and based on the study of the armed conflict in Colombia, was the

genesis of *violentología*³⁷. The main research focused on exploring the causes and development of the conflict, analysing the actors, the quantitative presence of the armed actors, the various violent acts and impacts upon victims, as well as the regional dynamics of the violence (Meertens, 2000).

The commission's information was important for contemporary studies of violence because it acknowledged that guerrillas had passed from a dispersed presence to high levels of cohesiveness. The information emphasised the notion of a multiplicity within conflict, called 'the violences'; these included actors, dynamics, motives, geographic scenarios and social spaces (Meertens, 2000:90). The main objective of this research is to establish points of departure for further analysis and comprehension; first of all regarding the plurality of violence and, secondly, the multi-causality of violence.

Jean Seaton (2005:186) states that 'the way in which different countries tackle violence in their own history reveals much about their relationship to contemporary reality'. This postulate can easily be discerned in Colombia's attempts to understand its cycle of violence from many positions. Among these is violentology; other analysts consider a psychosocial approach, an implicit mechanism of resistance to oversee and overcome their contemporary reality. From this perspective, the sequence of dramatic events during the past decades in Colombia 'acts as a kind of avalanche within which, in individual consciousness, people can only cope with this living risk by reinforcing the shell of supposed indifference, which they have built around themselves as a means of exorcising the spectrum of violence' (Jimeno, 2001:238).

Thus, citizens can either adapt to their environment, resist or reject it. Jimeno (2001), a psychologist of conflict, asserts that Colombia has suffered social disintegration, as 'the types of violence which have increased during the past few years have affected social *consciousness*, mainly by producing a sense of social division'. There is also a perception of living in a society containing a variety of

³⁷ French sociologist Daniel Pécaut, an academic expert in Colombian sociology and politics, published a classic book 'Order and Violence' (1987) which differed from the violentologists' vision of 'violences' suggesting that violence should be seen as a whole, as one, because the social is inevitably unified with the political.

criminal forces and types, and in which people feel relatively helpless to do anything about the situation. Jimeno also argues that ‘a well-established line of thought in Colombia sees violence as a non-specific, all-pervasive historical phenomenon—the very essence of evil in Colombia society’ (2001:234).

Yet another view perceives violence as an epidemic and endemic disease of Colombia’s social structure. By only focusing on violence as a result of social inequalities, both these visions disregard the different types of hostilities in their history. In this sense, these perceptions can be frail if conflict is not considered in its historical dimension, including the different degrees of intensity, as Margold (1999) stated in a thesis on the ‘cultures of fear and cultures of terror’. Power is based on the intimidation of civilians; therefore, they adapt to the conditions of violence, fear and terror as a characteristic of their society. For instance, violence has become ‘deeply engrained in the collective psyche and has become something which helps to define being Colombian’ (Oslender, 2008: 78).

Fear and intimidation have become an intrinsic condition in Colombian culture, and are linked with indifference as a form of resistance. For instance, the media has played an important role in the propagation of fear through the acts of violence it reports. Violence is portrayed through the use of two contradictory types of discourse: on the one hand a detailed registry of, and commentary on, acts of violence in the media and in daily conversations; on the other hand, the repeated attribution of an evil and cruel nature to Colombians, according to which some would be prone to violence and others would be ‘indifferent’ to it (Jimeno: 2001:237).

Meertens (2000) classifies the studies of Colombian violence as including the following: ‘literary-anthropological’ (urban scenarios focused on gangs), also studies centred on ‘psychological and individual effects of violence’ (kidnapping), analysis of ‘perceptions of violence’, from everyday life and the internally displaced people’.

Violence and sacrifice are two concepts constantly seen in the Colombian social mindset (imaginary)³⁸. Guerrillas, the paramilitary and political parties constantly suggest that sacrifice is necessary in order to achieve social goals. In this way the sacrifice of martyrs and killing of innocent civilians is justified by either side through the use of demagogic discourse. The notion of ‘sacrifice’ has also been adopted by certain journalists interviewed during this research (who were threatened and have been in exile) who exercise the notion of ‘sacrifice’ for their profession and country and that impacts directly upon them as a result of their work.

This social, cultural and historic scenario on violence sets the basis for the next section, helping to contextualise the multiple causes of violence in conflict situations, specifically focusing on Colombia. In order to understand the journalistic coverage and the development of peace initiatives in this country it is important that this research carefully analyse violence in detail. This is especially true because of its complexity, diversity of variables and range of causes involved, including social, economic, political and psychological. It is through such analysis that it will be possible to better comprehend this society and the impact violence can have upon its journalism.

2.5 Violence, Journalism and Conflict in Colombia

This section will analyse the relationship between the conflict, journalism and violence; it will examine the specific Colombian context and explore the correlation between these three factors.

Information in Colombia has been threatened from various sides during recent decades. During the nineties, in the infamous drug war backed by the United States government, drug lords understood the power of information. Consequently, they targeted media editors (mainly newspaper and television) and journalists to silence and punish watchdogs uncovering drug-trafficking news—for instance, the well-known murders of Fidel Cano (editor-in-chief, *El*

³⁸ Social Imaginary (*imaginario colectivo*)

Espectador), and Jorge Enrique Pulido Sierra³⁹ (TV news director, *Noticiero Mundo Visión*). Drug lords (mainly Pablo Escobar of the Medellín drug cartel) also bombed various newspaper headquarters in 1989 (*El Espectador*, *Vanguardia Liberal*), and kidnapped news editors such as Francisco Santos Calderón⁴⁰ (*El Tiempo*), Maruja Pachón (journalist/Focine director), Diana Turbay (Magazine Editor *Hoy por Hoy*) and Marina Montoya; the latter two were murdered while abducted. Politicians (e.g., the presidential candidate Andrés Pastrana) were also kidnapped. Escobar led a series of kidnappings and assassinations—politicians, journalists—to pressure government into reverting the law that allowed for extradition of drug lords to the United States where they would undergo hearings and prison; these drug lords were called the ‘*Extraditables*’.

Similar to the European and North American news media, Colombian media contains a diverse range of outlets to report on sociopolitical news. These include radio (*RCN radio*, *Caracol Radio*), TV (*Caracol*, *RCN*, *Noticias Uno*), national and regional newspapers (*El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*, *El Colombiano* in Medellín, *El País* in Cali, *El Heraldo* in Barranquilla, *El Universal* in Cartagena and many

³⁹ Jorge Enrique Pulido Sierra, business owner of ‘Jorge Enrique Pulido T.V.’ from *Cadena Dos Invisión* (government studios) in Bogotá. Pulido was declared an enemy of drug-trafficking when he was the editor of Radio Todelar at the beginning of his journalistic career. A journalist who climbed his way up from the bottom, he began as reporter, then became a political journalist for RCN and later on was columnist in several newspapers: *El Siglo*, *La República*, *El Espacio*, *El Colombiano*, *El Tiempo*, and *Cromos* Magazine. He subsequently became a business owner in media (1979). It is claimed that he was one of the first journalists to cover drug-trafficking (Cardona, 2009; Jorge Enrique Pulido web 2014). His programs covered social justice issues, such as drug-trafficking and corruption in programs such as *Campesino*, *Las Investigadoras*, *Canal Abierto* among others. Later he led an opinion program, *Canal Abierto*, which was bombed on May, 1989, 24 hours after a show attacking drug-trafficking. On October 19th he aired a program on the late Luis Carlos Galán (a journalist and politician murdered two months earlier by a Medellín cartel hitman) called: ‘Galán Vive’. During this program he stated ‘The terrorists are a bunch of men that, as the president says, are not from this homeland’. Ten days later, after his TV newscast, he was shot by a hitman from the Medellín drug cartel led by Pablo Escobar. He died ten days later, on November 8th 1989, when he was 42 years old.

⁴⁰ Escobar kidnapped him together with other important journalists and held them for eight months in order to pressure Colombian government, led by president César Gaviria Trujillo, to suspend drug lord extradition to the United States. This group was called ‘*Los Extraditables*’ (the extraditable). Santos Calderón’s kidnapping (in 1990) was later portrayed in Gabriel García Márquez’s book *News of a Kidnapping* (*Noticias de un Secuestro*). Santos was released when Gaviria’s government agreed to Escobar petition. Escobar released the hostages and turned himself in to the authorities.

Santos Calderón, a Newspaper Editor that later became Vice-President with Álvaro Uribe’s administration in 2002-2010. Santos Calderón is cousin of Juan Manuel Santos, Colombia’s current president. Director of *RCN Noticias de la Mañana* (from 2010-2012), a national newscast in which he became a strong critic of current president Santos administration. He belongs to one of the most powerful families in the country (La Silla Vacía, 2011).

others)⁴¹ and political magazines (*Semana* and political/entertainment magazine *Cromos*). As with many Latin American media companies, ownership is linked to power and influential family groups, such as *Grupo Santodomingo* (a well-known Bavaria beer company), which owns *Caracol* (TV and radio) and *El Espectador* (national newspaper). Martín-Barbero agrees that ‘the ideological structure of Colombian press was clearly partisan and linked to an ownership model and family management’ (2006). Today, media is facing the transition to multimedia alongside convergence, which in a practical sense leads to the merging of various media formats.

Outside the commercial media mainstream, Colombia has one of the oldest traditions of community media in Latin America. It also has ‘perhaps the most advanced (though contradictory and partial) legal framework for non-commercial media in Latin America’ (Coryat, 2007:5). This means that there are many licensed and unlicensed community and collective radio and TV stations that encourage social participation. In order to understand present day media structures and discourses, it is necessary to look at the history of media and its links to violence in Colombia. The following section presents various perspectives on Colombian media from both the outside and the inside.

2.5.1 Perspectives from the Outside: Colombia as a Distant Country in the Global News Agenda

Over the past few years international news organisations have tended to report on Colombia as being the place of a ‘forgotten conflict’. Prior to 2008 the country was barely visible on the news agenda, not only at an international level but also within a regional context. Then, abruptly, the conflict came into the spotlight as a result of important political events. In January of 2008 the news of FARC’s release of two politicians held hostage for many years, Clara Rojas and Consuelo González, was the first story highlighted in a sociopolitical storm of news events

⁴¹ Other relevant regional newspapers include: *El Nuevo Siglo*, *El Espacio*, *El Periódico*, *Bogotá Daily* (all out of Bogotá), *Vanguardia Liberal* (Bucaramanga), *El Diario del Huila* (Neiva), *Diario de Occidente* (Cali), *El Meridiano de Córdoba* (Montería), *El Meridiano de Sucre* (Sincelejo) among others.

(BBC, CNN, Reuters, AP). Prior to 2008, news of Colombia appeared only when something rather extraordinary happened. This incident was followed by the many international news media outlets, and their coverage followed as events continued to develop: the massive protest against FARC (February 2008), the bombing of an important FARC camp by the military (March 2008), causing Raul Reyes' death (FARC's second-in-command), which resulted in the crisis with Ecuador (a potential conflict because the latter claimed Colombia had trespassed on their territory) and thereafter with Venezuela as well. In the meantime, the death of the guerrillas' number one leader, Manuel Marulanda '*Tirolfijo*' (Sure-shot), in March 2008 left FARC under heavy public scrutiny. The final and most important news event reported internationally was Ingrid Betancourt's dramatic liberation, which appeared on several media platforms around the world. Somehow, during 2008, Colombia was once again highly visible on the international news agenda. However it was generally portrayed as a complicated Latin American country and home to incomprehensible and chaotic conflict.

Colombia is seen as a remote country with a conflict that is hard to understand. For instance, 'when ask about the vision on Colombia beyond their borders, the first sensation is distance But it is not simply a physical distance, but a distance of a country that is associated with chaos, disorder and a place without rules' (Rey, 2001:125). This is partly due to the fact that 'the distance and low prominence that Colombia has on the international agenda are factors united with the absence of explicative account' (Rey, 2001:126 [Translated by the author]).

Bell (2001) writes that images of Colombia are seen as a 'Macondo of hundred years of solitude, where an epic is told to the world about a village that could be any nation, at any moment of their history, where there are still traces of pre-modernity and where the ways of modernity have not been well established'. He continues, 'for other people we are a species of social laboratory where a many of the evils that humanity suffers from—violence, corruption, drug cartels, injustice—are seen as colossal, grave, and threatening the viability of our project of nation' [Translated by the author]. Colombia is a nation that operates within an unfinished democracy. Over the decades the country has experienced the

coexistence of violence and democracy, but this complex situation is weakly portrayed in the international media.

Of the images of Colombia seen from afar, there are few that stand out and attract international media the way that the issue of drug trafficking does. The only other high-profile image is perhaps that of internal conflict and of common delinquency. As Posada Carbo (in Rey, 2001) states, '[Colombia is seen] as a malformed nation, immersed in a bicentenary and endless war, caused by an oppressive and unjust system (...) An unprotected society, harassed by crime. All substantially different and contradictory, what these three images do have in common is that they depreciate and devalue the nature and role of the Colombian State in the conflict'.

Even in the neighbouring countries of Latin America, the most widely available images of Colombia are of a country confused by anarchy and crime. Some Latin American countries regard Colombia as the 'uncomfortable neighbour' (Rey, 2001). The image that is projected is so confused that it fails to promote any serious reflections on Colombian issues or the compromises that occur within the country.

2.5.2 Conceptualising Press in Violence

Reflections on the journalism and violence have taken place within many disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and politics. In media studies, the subject of violence was, in its beginnings, addressed mostly as a way of studying the possible effects of the media on society (see Gerbner, 1976). In Latin America, the study of violence and journalism has been limited; however, the continuous wave of plural *violences* on the continent has turned attention to a more detailed analysis of the issue, which has echoes of the war against terror, conflicts, and of ethnic massacres (Bonilla, 2007, Díaz et al., 2013). The Latin American panorama is intersected by diverse categories of violence; from the political repression of civilians (Chile, Argentina, Mexico) to guerrillas that turned to violence in many countries, such as Guatemala and El Salvador, which are currently living in a post-conflict situation.

Coverage of violent news, at different levels and resulting from a multitude of causes, is no longer shocking. Instead, violence is seen and portrayed only quantitatively, in numbers and figures, such as the number of deaths caused or the level of violence involved. Galtung & Ruge's (see Harcup & O'Neil, 2010) news value of violent news is exemplified in this news coverage, where numbers of wounded and the several deaths are newsworthy. A single death is no longer considered newsworthy on its own, there have to be a certain number of deaths in order to become breaking news. As Seaton asserts, 'there is news of violence and there is the news as violence' (2005: 287), in other words, news can be an aggression in itself because violence is not only manifested in the use of physical force but also at a more subtle level through the information (framing) portrayed in the news report.

Discourse can filter violence by portraying it as pathological, thus convincing and habituating citizens into seeing violence as an ordinary element of society. In this regard, Seaton (2005: 33–34) states:

(...) We need to ask not only whether news stories about violence reflect reality, but also what social and political forces their interpretations of reality support. To say simply that violence sells—'pandering to the lowest common denominator in audience taste'—is incomplete. It ignores the more important question of *what role violent news performs* (...) and *why* the representation of news about violent events is contained within such ritualised conventions. [Emphasis by the author]

Cultural violence works in news as well, 'by changing the moral colour of an act from red/wrong to green/right or at least yellow/acceptable' (Galtung, 1990:292). The Colombian news agenda during the eighties and the nineties was focused on reporting about the drug trade and the drug cartels' war, while at the same time, the guerrillas and paramilitary groups were becoming stronger and spreading all over the country. In 2002 Reporters Without Borders added Colombia to the list of the most dangerous countries in the world in which to practice journalism. Hector Abad Faciolince (2000:1), a Colombian writer, asserts that:

To show corpses of adults and kids decapitated after a guerrilla or paramilitary incursion is horrifying, but without a doubt that news has assured the newspaper's first page. However, in this country there is such an abundance of atrocities that readers end up anaesthetised and insensible because of the excess of it. Trying to move Colombian opinion has

become harder every time (...) Journalism cannot portray quotidian horror. [Translated by the author].

Consequently, a group of academics, journalists and media professionals decided to create the Discretion Agreement in November of 1999 (see Chapter IV and Appendix B). Thirty-seven press managers and co-directors of newspaper, radio and TV outlets signed the agreement. Its aim was to set up guidelines as to how violence should be depicted in media. Commenting about the agreement Márquez (2001:1) states:

Even though it produced little noticeable effect on the daily conduct of the media in general, it should nevertheless be kept in mind permanently as an ethical guideline in covering a conflict as complex as ours. Besides being an irrefutable argument—which could be used, if necessary, by those who are employed by the signatories -, it also serves as a guideline for a lot of reporters, directors, editors and editors-in-chief, who are aware of their responsibility to the community. Most of them are members of the recently created unities for peace and of interdisciplinary groups, which conscientiously assess the effects of the way; information is presented to the public on the subject of war and peace.

Similarly, a group of journalists from the cities of Bucaramanga and Barrancabermeja (in the North-East) put together a new ‘alternative’ discretion agreement (see Appendix C), which was adapted for conflict solutions and considered current journalistic dynamics. Eleven points emerged in order to persuade media owners to change their reporting of violent news, calling upon balanced news, contextualised, contrasting perspectives, which reminds us the normative basis of journalism and also suggested to strengthen journalists guild.

Cultural studies scholar Jesús Martín-Barbero offers an important insight into the media and Colombia. He suggests a paradox that conflict produces in the relationship between *remembering* and *forgetting*. Basing his theory on Paul Ricoeur’s ‘action semiotics’ work, he describes this connection between media, memory and forgiveness as an exercise in ‘semantic invention’. He applies this concept to explain Colombian amnesty and amnesia, asserting that Colombia has a special relation between violence and politics in its historical memoirs. In this regard, ‘Colombia is confronted by its incapacity to differentiate the truth between amnesty and forgiveness that reconciliates society and the amnesia that suppresses the possibility of justice’ (Martín-Barbero, 1998).

Amnesia and forgetfulness can also be considered another factor of invisible violence. These concepts are directly related to journalism although, as Martín-Barbero (1998) says, Colombia is more than amnesia and violence. He argues that the Colombian news media is currently unable to remember and research memory and thus becomes a tool to forget. Here is where journalism can change and begin to play an important role in recovering history.

2.6 Mapping the History of Colombian Journalism and Politics

Since its early days, Colombian journalism has been intertwined with political parties in an unbreakable bond. Additionally, it has a longstanding history as a privately owned sector, owned as family businesses and with visible political affiliations (Rey, 1998, Santos Calderón 1989) to Liberal and Conservative parties. Nowadays, Colombian journalism has moved from family-bound business to twenty-first century media companies. Journalism scholar Rey (1997) emphasizes that twentieth century press was partisan to political ideologies and, thereby, government. The press' economic *modus operandi*, since its beginnings in 1791 with Bogotá's first newspaper (*Papel Periódico de la Ciudad de Santa Fe de Bogotá*), has been based on private capital. In some cases—national and regional—it is a 'family' business (see for instance *El Tiempo* newspaper). As Santos-Calderón (cf.1989: 123) puts it, 'every Colombian newspaper between 1886–1986 has a political-party connection'. A survey of a hundred years of reporting shows a clear trend of submitting to political inclinations, a particular characteristic of Colombian journalism. Therefore it is not surprising that journalism is identified as a political actor; one has only to consider the numerous Colombian presidents that have been previously linked to journalism⁴².

This is not only a contemporary occurrence, given that since the beginnings of the republic most presidents worked in journalism. In the mid-nineteenth century, the most important statesmen were also journalists: Manuel Murillo Toro,

⁴² Jorge Tadeo Lozano was the first newspaper editor in 1810, elected president in 1811, but struck down by Antonio Nariño, who took over the presidency. Nariño was editor of *La Bagatela*, founded in 1811, an opposition political newspaper. This newspaper defended centralism against the federalist line. His infamous newscast '*Noticias gordas*' (Fat News) created a crisis in the government and overthrew the government of Tadeo Lozano. Nariño used his newspapers as a tribunal to overthrow presidents.

president 1816–1880 and editor of the *Gaceta Mercantil de Santa Bárbara*; Santiago Pérez Manosalva, president 1874–1876 and editor of *El Relator* newspaper; Miguel Antonio Caro, editor of *El Tradicionalista* newspaper and president 1898–1898; and Rafael Núñez, founder of *La Democracia* newspaper and president February 8 to August 7, 1888. During the twentieth century, many other politicians have had important links with journalism, such as Eduardo Santos Montejó, president 1938–1942, former director of newspaper *El Tiempo*; Carlos Lleras Restrepo, president 1966–1970 and founder of political magazine *Nueva Frontera*; Alfonso López Michelsen president 1974–1978 and former columnist at *El Tiempo*; Belisario Betancur, president 1982–1986 and former director of *El Nuevo Siglo* newspaper; Andrés Pastrana president 1998–2002 and founder, director and news anchor of *TV Hoy* newscast. More recently, the current president Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, president 2010–2014 and re-elected for another four years, was also deputy director of *El Tiempo* newspaper.

Since its origins, Colombian journalism has been connected to politics, and has overcome political confrontations and instability between Liberals and Conservatives. The press accompanies these struggles, and becomes a biased political voice and court and an arena of debate for the two-party system. In contrast to American journalism (Chalaby, 1998), a liberal and objective watchdog of state's wrongdoing, Colombian journalism has been acquiescently biased from birth. In this regard,

Journalism in Latin America is not strongly developed as an autonomous institution differentiated from other institutions—the family business, the political clique, the party—with a distinctive set of professionalism values and practices (...) it is manifested in the overlapping of journalistic culture with that of party politics (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002: 183).

Given that journalism in Colombia has been an appendix of the economic and political elite, journalistic business with a competition of interests and discourses are influenced on the political economy of media. These privileged media enterprises provide the idea of pluralism of ideas, public debate, and a space in which participation rights are granted (Ayala in Vasco, (no date)). Although the framework of journalism, namely 'journalistic professionalism', aims to serve the public interest by creating a public sphere in a democracy, this is withheld by the

political and economic interests of the power groups. If socially responsible journalism in countries with a longstanding tradition of democracy (i.e., United States) is challenging in certain times, such as war. It is not surprising that in developing countries, such as Colombia, where democracy is still being consolidated, with frail democratic institutions, besides the ‘political clientelism’ (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002) which is historically strong, this type of journalism is that much more difficult. The normative role of journalism, to serve public interests, finds a minefield intertwined with power groups and weak media institutions. These issues contribute to developing a culture of journalistic professionalism. In this case, the partisan–political professionalism found in this study—to be discussed in the following chapters—is an autonomous profession, with creativity, divergent to Hallin & Papathanassopoulos’ (2002) claim.

However, the understanding of theory and practise of journalism is a pending process in Colombia. Journalist and ethicist Restrepo (in Ferreira 2006) states that both journalistic theory and practise should change gradually every day; it is an organic process, and this journalistic process is crucial if it is to alleviate the life of those in crisis, of those people living in war.

As a developing region, this South American country faces many economic and social challenges. As a direct consequence of this disparity, the Latin American⁴³ media divide is wide in regards to access to information. Media scholar Martín-Barbero (1988) asserted that the region is halfway between an accelerated development delay and compulsive modernisation. Colombia’s media panorama fits this description almost perfectly, since the wide gap between newspapers’ readership and television’s audience is clear.

The Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics (*Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística*, DANE) pursued research on cultural consumption⁴⁴ (2008), in which it found that newspaper readership was 54.67%. The highest regional readership was in the Atlantic region 22.09%, Bogotá

⁴³ Except Uruguay, currently the leading country that has almost broken down the media divide.

⁴⁴ This research included television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. It was carried out in the main Colombian districts. It was administered to 12,031 homes in 68 municipalities and 26 districts. Reference timeframe: September 2007 to September 2008.

20.32%, and the South Andes 21.01%, while the North Andes had 16.61%, and the Pacific region 15.26%. Paradoxically, the same study revealed that television had a 100% audience. Therefore it is evident that the majority of Colombian citizens learn everyday news through television, and only one half of the population reads the printed press.

To put this in context, consider other South American national newspapers and the country's population. Perú has twenty-eight million inhabitants and more than fifteen national newspapers. In Chile there are 16 million inhabitants and ten national newspapers. In Argentina, 39 million citizens have 13 national newspapers to choose from. Nicaragua, a smaller country with five million citizens, has five national newspapers. However, by comparison, Colombia, with no fewer than 44 million inhabitants, has just two daily national newspapers (*El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*). In fact, it is only since May 2008 that the country has had a choice of two national newspapers; between 2001 and May 2008, there was only one daily national newspaper (*El Tiempo*). Historically, in the nineteenth century, Colombian newspapers lasted no longer than thirteen years. Meanwhile Argentina had *La Prensa* and *La Nación* newspapers, examples of news tradition (Santos Molano, 2003), while Chile had *El Mercurio* and Perú *El Comercio*. Meanwhile Colombia had a void in this arena.

The most important national newspapers are: *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*, both from the capital, and both family businesses, and *El Colombiano*, from Medellín (capital of the Antioquia region, and second most important city); this third is also an important example of a regional newspaper covering the conflict. Five billionaires on the Colombian Forbes list (2014) own the biggest media outlets.

2.6.1 *El Espectador*

Legendary journalist and director Fidel Cano Gutiérrez, as editor-in-chief (from 1887–1919), founded the liberal and social responsibility-oriented newspaper *El Espectador* ('The Spectator') in Medellín on March 22, 1887; it now has daily readership of 240,000. His family ran the newspaper until 1997 when, in

bankruptcy, the Santo Domingo Group⁴⁵ bought it; CEO Julio Santo Domingo died in 2011 and his brother Alejandro Santo Domingo⁴⁶ became the new director. In 2000, due to economic difficulties, *El Espectador* became a weekly newspaper instead of a daily, published every Sunday. In May 2008, the paper once again became a daily. However, in 1997 the transition of *El Espectador* to a weekly newspaper was a big step backwards for journalism; one of the wealthiest companies of the country and the owner of *El Espectador* could not support the country's most legendary newspaper. Throughout its history, this newspaper had to survive censorship, fire in its headquarters, bombs, closure, murders, and threats at various stages during its history. 'Over more than a century, *El Espectador* has not been silenced by military dictatorships, authoritarian presidents, Episcopal excommunication⁴⁷, criminal or economic blockage, or the hired assassins of drug-trafficking' (Restrepo, 2001:1). The current editor-in-chief is Fidel Cano, nephew of Guillermo Cano.

This newspaper is an emblem of independent and critical journalism. *El Espectador* was created in 1887 against the liberal media ban of Colombian constitution of 1886 (*Regeneración Conservadora*⁴⁸), and as a result, the government persecuted Fidel Cano (founder and editor-in-chief) particularly because of the newspaper's criticism of censorship. Fidel Cano was, in fact, imprisoned many times and had to open and close the newspaper on several occasions. Throughout its history the newspaper was an emblem of freedom (Gómez, 2008); it was always a think-tank of the most liberal ideas within Colombia. It was clearly different from the *El Tiempo* newspaper founded in 1911; it gathered a more benign and more accommodating political culture when compared to that found its place in *El Tiempo*⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ In 1997 Cano family sold the majority of their shares to 'Comunican S.A.' an enterprise owned by one of Colombia's most important businessmen: Julio Santo Domingo (died in 2011).

⁴⁶ Alejandro Santo Domingo Junior now managing director of *Santo Domingo Group*, USD \$13 billion (Forbes, 2014).

⁴⁷ The ecclesiastical power censored the newspaper, after an article on the contrast of poverty and the pomp of golden weddings of Pope Leon XIII, Medellín's bishop forbid to read, communicate, even to transmit or to keep the newspaper *El Espectador*' (Restrepo, 2001).

⁴⁸ *Regeneración Conservadora* was a Nationalist Party founded by Núñez in 1886, approved the constitution of 1886 in order to oppress and exclude their opposition (longstanding conservatives and liberals). Consequently, several media were closed down and targeted liberals and longstanding conservatives united in the *Unión Republicana* political party fighting against this constitution that was amended in 1910.

⁴⁹ Ignacio Gómez, Research Interview (2008)

A few decades later *El Espectador*, led by Guillermo Cano Isaza (editor-in-chief 1957–1986). His co-workers were important intellectual and political figures, such as Luis Carlos Galán and Carlos Lleras, both murdered by drug lords, as well as Gabriel García Márquez, Luis Eduardo Nieto, Alberto Lleras, José Salgar, all leaders of opinion in culture and politics. They considered the drug cartels a serious threat to the country's politics, but even more dangerous was the relationship between politicians and drug trafficking. In 1983 Guillermo Cano Isaza pursued in-depth research and wrote an exposé on drug lord Pablo Escobar⁵⁰, alerting readers to his presence in the Colombian Congress (as a Senator). As a consequence of this coverage and the articles Escobar resigned from the government.

This was the beginning of the confrontation between Escobar and Guillermo Cano during the drug war's epoch of terror. Escobar set fire to the trailers that transported printed copies of *El Espectador* to Medellín. In 1986, Guillermo Cano was killed at point-blank range by Escobar's hitman; the drug lord was also responsible for the homicide of many other journalists. An important moment in the assault on this newspaper was a car bomb outside the newspaper headquarters on September 2, 1989. This event and Cano's assassination were two important factors that heightened the fearful atmosphere within the journalists' guild and especially among *El Espectador*'s workers.

As journalist Ignacio Gómez asserts, 'Guillermo Cano's death was a direct hit to Colombia's journalism, which saw him as a leader, and as the most brilliant person within the guild... I remember all the protests, and also the day of silence held by all the media (...) I believe it was a hit against the national conscience' (Gómez, interview 2008⁵¹) [translated by the author]. Enrique Santos co-owner and columnist at the rival *El Tiempo* newspaper at that time, states: 'The country was living under a dictatorship of fear (...) Cano's killing was also a turning point—we knew that we had to do something' (Santos in Rathbone, 2013:1); consequently some of the most important journalists created the 'Kremlin', a

⁵⁰ Pablo Escobar Gaviria, was Colombia's most important drug lord, chief of Medellín cartel during the eighties until 1993. Elected deputy/alternate of Congress's Chamber of Representatives, in order to achieve prestige and improve its public image.

⁵¹ Fieldwork interview (2008).

secret group coordinated by María Jimena Duzán, that shared their investigative reporting and published anonymous news at the same time in several Colombian newspapers.

El Espectador is a prestigious Colombian newspaper that has survived censorship, incarceration of its editors, ecclesiastic prosecution, bombs and bullets from drug lords. However, when the newspaper encountered a serious economic recession it was forced to transform itself into a weekly newspaper. The possible reasons behind this downturn can be traced back to the eighties when the newspaper first uncovered information about corruption within the *Gran Colombiano* group, whose leaders subsequently convinced many enterprises to withdraw their advertisements from the paper. The newspaper, already weakened by the boycott, started reporting on Pablo Escobar and his relationship with politics and drug traffic. It was this information that made Escobar escape and go into hiding. These two events, and their consequences, both impacted on the financial viability of *El Espectador*.

2.6.2 *El Tiempo*

El Tiempo ('The Times') is a daily newspaper owned by the Santos family since 1913, one of the most powerful families in Colombia, and has been part of the political and journalistic elites of the country since the nineteen thirties. From its very beginnings this newspaper was a conservative newspaper, its objective being delineated as supporting the national status quo, in comparison with *El Espectador*, which was liberal and separate from the government. *El Tiempo* became the only daily national newspaper when *El Espectador* became a weekly newspaper from 2001 to 2008; this time was called the "single newspaper generation".

This newspaper, founded in 1911 by Alfonso Villegas Restrepo sold in 1913 to Eduardo Santos Montejó, has often been linked to the governmental elite, historically owned by members of the prominent 'Santos' family; recently, in 2007, it was partly owned by Spanish publishing house Grupo Planeta de Agostini (55% share), the Santos family (15%) and the rest old minority

shareholders. In 1938, the newspaper owner and editor of *El Tiempo*, Eduardo Santos Montejó, one of the most influential men in the country, became the president of Colombia until 1942. In addition, Francisco Santos Calderón, *El Tiempo*'s journalist, became the vice-president of Colombia from 2002–2010 and Juan Manuel Santos Calderón—as mentioned before editor and owner of *El Tiempo*—became the Minister of Commerce and subsequently National Minister of Defence (2006–2009) during Álvaro Uribe's mandate. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón has since 2010 been the president of Colombia. The president's nephew Alejandro Santos Rubino is the former director of *Semana*⁵² (Web platform: *Semana.com*), the most controversial and important political national news magazine.

El Tiempo is now part of a media conglomerate called *Casa Editorial El Tiempo S.A.* (*El Tiempo* Media Company) that consists of the *El Tiempo* newspaper (and five newspapers), a TV station (Channel City TV and since 2011 *El Tiempo* TV Channel), along with a magazine company (with a variety of publications: *Cromos* (entertainment, politics), *Portafolio* (finances), among others⁵³), and internet recruitment websites. The company also has cable TV, printing house. In 2007 the Spanish publisher, *Grupo Planeta* became the main shareholder, acquiring 55% of *El Tiempo* Media Company and 40% of City TV. On April 2012, Colombian billionaire banker Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo⁵⁴ bought *El Tiempo* to *Grupo Planeta* after financial problems with the latter. He has a USD \$16.5 billion fortune, and according to Forbes he is number 53 on the world billionaires list (Forbes, 2014).

⁵² Felipe López Caballero is *Semana* Magazine's founder (in 1982) and owner. He is politically connected López is son of president Alfonso López Milchensen and grandson of president Alfonso López Pumarejo. *Semana* belongs to *Grupo Semana* publisher with various magazines (*Soho*, *Dinero*, *Fucsia*, *Jet Set Plan B*, among others).

⁵³ Also *Motor* magazine (automobile), *Elenco* and *Carrusel* (both entertainment magazines), *ENTER.CO* (technology), *Lecturas Dominicales* (Sunday readings, culture), *Domingo a Domingo* (Sunday to Sunday, news analysis), *Cundinamarca 7 días*, *Boyacá 7 días*, *Tolima 7 días* and *Llano 5 días* (weeklies that are inserted in *El Tiempo* in their regions), *Bocas* (Sunday entertainment), *UN Periódico* (A Newspaper, from the National University of Colombia, *El Tiempo Zona* (community news), *Aló* ('magazine for women'), *Credencial* (cultural), *ADN* (local free newspaper Medellín, Barranquilla), *Diario Mío* (local newspaper).

⁵⁴ Forbes (2014) profile also states that Sarmiento amassed its fortune in the construction industry, later invested it in bank. Its financial conglomerate *Grupo Aval* (Aval Group) controls one third of Colombia's banking, according to Bloomberg (2014) he now controls more than a quarter of Colombia's financial industry. His investment bank *Corficolombiana* owns stakes in infrastructure, energy, pensions, tourism and agribusiness (Bloomberg, 2014). The banker also has *Construcciones Planificadas* a building and real state company.

Luis Carlos Sarmiento Jr. claimed ‘Someone has to own *El Tiempo* but who has to own it without having conflicts of interest and also lots (sic) of money? Such entities don’t exist’ (Rathbone, 2013:1).

As national newspapers, *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* became the source through which many Colombians read their reality. As Castells argues (1998:382), ‘Cultural battles are the power battles in the information era’. With these power struggles held mainly in journalism and media conglomerates, the leading power can impose culture and frame information. As Marx and Engels said, the ideas of the ruling class, now connected with media owners, are in every epoch the ruling ideas.

2.6.3 *El Colombiano*

Since 1912, encompassing over a century of journalistic tradition, *El Colombiano* newspaper has established itself as the most important publication in the Antioquia (North-West region) and throughout the country. Based in Medellín, the second most important economic and political Colombian city, this newspaper continued to report on the drug-trafficking situation even during the most critical period (when Pablo Escobar’s power over the Medellín cartel was at its height). The shantytowns of Antioquia region were also an important base for paramilitary groups and guerrillas, and, as a result, this newspaper also reported regularly on the peace efforts and wider political situation. It opened its pages to debate about conflict resolution, inviting input from all of the various actors involved. “[*El Colombiano*] gives priority to information that contributes to peace and its strengthening. Also, [it] will inform about acts of violence, but rejecting it in all its expressions”⁵⁵

Nowadays *El Colombiano* is the leading newspaper in the region. The weekday print run is 72,000 and on weekends this rises to 130,000, a considerable number for a regional newspaper in Colombia. Whilst these numbers show the penetration of the newspaper, they also draw attention to the illiteracy figures in

⁵⁵ *El Colombiano*, Philosophy, in Media for Peace, 2007-02-27

the region. According to the Colombian Minister of Education, Antioquia has 300,000 illiterate people and Bogotá 230,000, in a country of 44 million⁵⁶.

2.6.4 Information and Journalism: Reporting on their Conflict

The challenges journalists face when reporting on conflict at home and whilst living in the midst of such unrest are extremely complex. In particular, this is because not only do they need constant access to information and debate, but also because they find themselves subject to continuous scrutiny from all sides in the conflict. Colombian media studies are typically centred on three aspects of the conflict when trying to examine informative coverage of violence and war.

These include the journalistic narratives, which are assembled from news of the conflict, the study of the journalist's own situation when exposed to political violence and, finally, the examination of interactions between journalists, politicians and guerrillas. In this sense (Moreno in Márquez et al., 2001), modern wars contain multiple traps that risk informers and journalist's lives. Colombian academics have analysed the sociology of journalists (Arroyave & Blanco, 2004; Arroyave & Barrios, 2007, 2012; García Pino, 2015; Gutiérrez et al., 2010), journalistic discourses (Arroyave & Obregón, 2012).

During the past three decades, Colombia has been one of the most dangerous places in the world to practice journalism. The national press coverage of its conflict has been extremely complicated and hazardous. Colombian journalism, since the beginning of the conflict, has had to face a conflict without previous preparation and therefore professionalism shifts between inexperience, heroism, fear and patriotism—as will be examined in this research.

Statistics from Colombian NGOs and international organisations are slightly different. However, they do show the alarmingly high rates of assassinations of Colombian journalists over the past few decades. The 'Freedom of Expression Foundation' in Colombia (FLIP) states that between 1978 and February 2008,

⁵⁶ Data from '*Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística*' (DANE, *National Administrative and Statistics Council*), Colombia, 2005.

more than a hundred and seventy deaths occurred. According to the organisation Reporters Without Borders, one hundred and forty journalists were killed between 1989 and 2007. As Gómez (2008⁵⁷) states, ‘It is hard for a country, still intellectually fertile, to produce a further one hundred and seventy intellects to replace those who have been assassinated. These deaths have had a detrimental impact on journalism, not just because of the losses themselves, but also because of the fearful atmosphere that such killings have generated amongst colleagues, the media and the guild’ [Translated by the author]. In addition to the above statistics, many more journalists have been threatened, kidnapped or exiled⁵⁸.

The above factors have helped to generate a repressive environment. Threats, kidnappings, disappearances and the selective assassination of not only journalists but also other high-profile citizens, such as trade union leaders, human rights activists and even ordinary people have been both an explicit and an implicit warning to society. Hence, ‘people are cautious about what they say in public for fear of reprisal from armed actors’ (Coryat, 2008:4) or illegal actors, to the point at which journalists do not acknowledge their political inclinations for fear of being categorised as leftist (guerrilla supporter) or right wing (government-paramilitary supporter). In this regard, ‘this environment has serious implications for anyone involved in media, whether state-run, commercial, public or community based’ (Coryat, 2008: 4). As FLIP (2007) enunciates, ‘the gravity of the threat emerges, not only as an affliction which affects journalists and their families, but also because of its multiplying effect, namely the resultant intimidation of colleagues and the eventual forced displacement of the affected one’.

2.7 Genesis and Development of Colombian ‘Responsible Journalism’

2.7.1 Early Debates and Reflections

This section will study the early development of a new fashion in war reporting. ‘Over the past few years, being (...) a journalist covering Colombia’s armed

⁵⁷ Research interview (2008)

⁵⁸ Reporters Without Borders, Report (2007).

conflict—it has ceased to be that vital and exciting job as depicted so romantically in the work of writer Ernest Hemingway’ (Márquez et al., 2001:1). The debate concerning the ways in which journalism can influence the conflict is an on-going topic of discussion within the field of communication and journalism studies in Colombia. For example:

To inform in Colombia is a challenge that comes in different forms and that has enormous contrasts. In certain cities, we have a vibrant and critical journalism that confronts all the typical problems of the profession, whereas in other cities and municipalities, the armed groups and corruption corner journalism. In these conditions, the priority of the media and journalists is to survive (Freedom of the Press Foundation (FLIP), 2007:2).

Therefore, in many regions, journalism has issues of professionalism and autonomy. In the nineties there was a gradual process in Colombian journalism of change towards more independence from political partisanship. Academia, journalists, editors and civil society discussed professionalism in journalism with respect to reporting on the internal conflict. The connection between academia and news media was crucial when discussing the need for higher journalistic quality because data was required to support the argument on journalistic performance. Although some research was pursued, professional journalists and media organizations did not accept the findings of the research; this shift was because of the perceived weaknesses of the methodology of discourse analysis and its possible subjectivity (Sierra, 2008).

The sector was also impacted by reacting to a controversy of academic examination of journalists. However, media scholar German Rey was the pioneer of an important body of research using quantitative methodology to measure how conflict was covered. The first piece of research examined *El Tiempo* newspaper: ‘The armed conflict in *El Tiempo*’s pages’ (*El conflicto armado en las páginas de El Tiempo*, 2003) by analysing the quantity of sources and the kinds of sources (i.e., government, official, civil society), among several other factors.

This methodology was then improved as a result of the research ‘Information quality on coverage of the conflict’ (*Calidad informativa y cubrimiento del conflicto*, 2004) supported by the PAN Antonio Narino Project which examined

twelve newspapers and one weekly journal from different regions of Colombia in the second half of 2003. It analysed the criteria of journalistic quality associated with plurality, accuracy, diversity of sources and subjects (international journalistic standards) and how these standards appear in newspapers' reporting on the armed conflict.

In his research Rey (2004) asserts that the quality of journalism is the greatest tool that newspapers have in order to cover the armed conflict. 'Those who are close to achieving the parameters of quality have greater possibilities of being successful (in adequately serving society) in these hard times' (2004:76) [Translated by the author]. The research data illustrated the 'poor' quality of the information of the newspapers analysed; for instance the main sources of the information were official (i.e., military).

This coming together of academia, NGOs and journalists was important in developing a more critical reflection on their praxis and produced a framework for developing educative initiatives, debates and further research in the following decades. 'For many years, journalists have been meeting in workshops and seminars to debate, not only the risks incurred by the press, but also the risks that society faces if we do not inform properly' (Freedom of the Press Foundation, 2007:1).

Initiatives that promote better journalism through information have found common ground through which to inform civil society and to encourage a better understanding of the conflict. In a country with a simmering civil conflict, which has led to the death of many journalists, Abad (2000) asserts:

The only fact that can comfort us after witnessing the fall of several murdered journalists, or to see the exile of so many colleagues who wish to continue living here, is to prove the importance of words. Just chronicling what is happening in Colombia, even before opinion and analysis, makes our job very dangerous. [Translation by the author].

Journalists need the information gathering tools that will help civil society create a public sphere. Thus, journalists in Colombia began to reflect on the quality of

their own output and to debate approaches to reporting, their ethics, their professional standards and their notion of social responsibility towards all sectors of the society. The dangerous atmosphere, with violence intersecting at all levels, and the constant duty to report on horror and carnage, became a melting pot in which to revisit normative standards on professionalism. It also opened the way for discussion of the ethos of the profession that will be examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Research Design: The Qualitative Approach to Journalism

This chapter will explain the methodological tools employed to gather the empirical information used to illustrate the case study in this thesis. The qualitative research is based on ethnography, namely the ‘ethnography of journalism’ (Boyer & Hannerz, 2006). The key purpose guiding the approach was focused on attaining knowledge of the dynamics of study subjects, namely local and regional journalists in conflict.

The research subjects have Colombian origin, mainly journalists who are linked to conflict reporting areas. These individuals are part of a small group of journalists that report conflict, and are an interpretative and knowledge-production community. This group is characterised by its unity, solidarity, and its members’ specialised knowledge in covering conflict.

News and journalism has been addressed through sociological analysis (Tunstall 1971; Powdermaker 1969), anthropological enquiry, cultural studies, political economy, history and discourse analysis approaches, among others. Using this evidently multidisciplinary approach, each field has focused on different issues. This research is an ethnography of journalists and so uses anthropological enquiry into media (Pedelty, 1995; Hannerz, 2004), media anthropology (Askew and Wilk, 2002), sociological analysis (Tuchman, 1978, Gitlin, 2002, 2003; Gans, 2003; Schudson, 2002) and cultural analysis (Hall, 1973). These authors have conveyed the sociological, anthropological, political, economic and cultural borders of the disciplines to gain a more integrated analysis of journalism. The anthropological and cultural enquiry into journalism regards news as embedded in everyday practices (Bird, 2010): one of the directions of anthropological enquiry analysis is the way journalists, as real people, are able to turn events into stories. This is the core of this dissertation.

The study of journalists has also been analysed through cultural studies: Zelizer (2004) argues that although there are an important number of studies of journalism from a cultural perspective, cultural studies has tended to marginalise the study of news as a cultural phenomenon. The most established tradition—and the one that this research is based on—is a new field of work known as the ‘anthropology of news and journalism’ (Bird 2010), which entails the ethnography of journalists.

The primary objective in this research is to focus on people rather than news. Sociology tries to understand how journalists work, via their work routines, relationships and diverse factors surrounding journalists and their reports; sociological analysis uses the ethnography of news and newsroom studies to gather information. With the objective of gaining knowledge on the development of conflict reporting, this research will therefore take ethnography as the main method of exploring in depth the dynamics of human rights journalists involved in reporting war.

Sociological studies of journalism have traditionally focused more on collective than the individual, whereas this research takes the opposite approach, that of anthropological enquiry: focusing more on the individual and analysing the collective at a secondary level. The perspective in this research is also nourished by the ‘cultural analysis’ enquiry in journalism, aiming to explore journalists’ reflexion, accounts, and investigate the cultural references by which reporters make sense of their profession (Zelizer, 2009). This category is particularly important in this work in order to understand journalists as individuals with worldviews, values and ethical codes that configure their epistemological and ethical sense of the profession.

Besides the core examinations of foreign correspondents by Pedelty (1995) and Hannerz (2004), studies of local journalism in critical periods (e.g., post-conflict, war, transitional democracies), Green (2000) analyses changes in journalistic practices in post-Apartheid South Africa, and Wolfe (1997; 2005) studied journalism in Russia during communism’s shift.

However, besides Pedelty's study there is a lack of scholarly enquiry on local journalists in war, particularly in Latin America. This thesis thus attempts to address this issue and to contribute in a small way to knowledge of news and journalism in the Global South, since there is not much literature on war journalists' views, relationships, and worldviews. However, as it is understood, as Zelizer clearly stated, that cultural enquiry 'assumes that journalists employ collective, often tacit knowledge to become members of the group and maintain their membership over time (...) yet it presumes that what is explicit and articulated as that knowledge may not reflect the whole picture of what journalism is and tries to be (...) ' (2004: 176).

In the last two decades, anthropological and sociological scholarship has gained meaningful results on the social practices of reporting and news production through ethnography (Boyer, 2001). This has shown the importance of in-depth knowledge of the universe of journalism when it comes to revealing the other side of news production—i.e., the microsociology of newsrooms and editorial practices (Marchetti and Ruellan, 2001; McNair, 1998, Tuchman 1978). It has also revealed a broader social scientific engagement in journalism (Boyer and Hannerz, 2006). This research focuses on the professional, institutional, and personal dynamics of delivering news in a local conflict. The study subjects in general showed a sense of constraint, agency, fear, valour, and hopes.

Through discursive styles, techniques, newsworthiness and perspectives, conflict journalists construct the social imaginary of the conflict. Colombian journalists know the work field, the territory where they are working and how to approach both military and guerrilla groups; they negotiate their way into the conflict, listen to victims and sometimes help them. They are in the middle of the war. They know first aid and how to recognise bullets and military helicopters. Their final products (reports, features) reflect all these categories because news is a cultural product (Bishara, 2006).

3.2 Selecting the Study Subjects and Context: Discovering the World of Local Conflict Journalists

There are a few anthropological studies of war correspondents, such as Tumber (1985) and Pedelty (1995); the latter analysed the culture of foreign correspondents reporting in El Salvador. Hannerz (2004) analysed the foreign correspondent's activity and the room for agency. Seo (2016) examined the crucial role of local journalists (stringers) in the Associated Press' foreign coverage. But, beside war journalists' accounts and countless autobiographical books, academic literature on war reporters is scarce:

[t]here is no absence of material of war correspondents, but studies are rare. Most of the literature that exists consists in the trade, in the beloved tradition of journalism, writing about itself, usually in the most colourful detail and most often by individuals who consider their journalistic careers and associated personal lives to be marked by special interest... (Morrison & Tumber, 1985: 445).

In this regard, this project aimed to shed light to the other side of the spectrum, with a study of Global South war journalists, examining the relatively anonymous lives of local conflict journalists reporting on their conflict without the time or resources to write autobiographical books (as international war correspondents write) on their tormented and fearless lives in the frontline. At a local level, concerning regional journalists, academic researcher, Bishara (2006), considered Palestinian journalists as news conveyors and producers working for international news corporations as cultural translators and geographical guides to foreign reporters without having control over the editorial process. Research carried out by non-governmental organisations (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2007) focuses on the increased vulnerability of local journalists in conflict zones.

This is a study of the production side more than the reception/consumption part of the news. The main interest of the ethnography was to make sense of the way of thinking, conditions and production of news. This research aims to show another way of life: the internal vision and situation of conflict journalists in a country in turmoil.

3.3 Qualitative Research: Ethnography of Local Journalists

The research question guiding this investigation is to determine what local practices and rationales conflict journalists apply in the midst of an armed conflict. By studying the world of local conflict journalists in Colombia, this thesis will examine how conflict journalists reflect on and comprehend their professional performance and their ethos, and how this might shed light on their professional experiences when reporting on war in their own country. In answer to this question, the hypothesis posited is that Colombian local conflict journalists may have a critical reflection on their praxis and professional logic to cover war in its particular violent context of a fifty-year old multifaceted war. In turn, this could illuminate journalistic praxis and ethos when covering other contemporaneous wars. Therefore, it could contribute to advance the research on ‘de-Westernizing’ international journalism studies.

The research tools used were in-depth, face-to-face interviews with local journalists from diverse parts of Colombia who are covering conflict. Additionally, there was observation of a newspaper newsroom (*El Tiempo*) and a local conflict ‘Journalists’ Education Workshop’ held by the NGOs Media for Peace, CINEP (*Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular*) and Javeriana University, in the coast city of Barranquilla, Colombia.

The length of the fieldwork was a six-month period from January to June 2008. During this time, the news was extremely interesting and coincided with six months of continuous news on the FARC guerrilla group and the consequent liberation of hostages. These news events offer an important period in which to study reporting during conflict and crisis.

This thesis is based on *Media Ethnography* approach, given that anthropology recently included the study of media, as a part of their research subjects. Media anthropology has three important contributions to media studies; ethnographic, geographical (decentred West), alternative theoretical frameworks (Peterson 2003:3).

This research acknowledges that are limitations of the qualitative methodology. The main limitation to researching human agency is the partial results that can be generated. Interviewing journalists might present the challenge of obtaining objective data beyond the normative values of the profession, the theory versus the praxis.

3.4 Characteristics of the Sample

Journalists and professionals participating in this research belong or are close to the peace/conflict reporting area in their media outlet. Respondents had been covering this theme for several years. To keep the scope of this research as broad as possible, journalists from both the regions and main cities were interviewed. The study therefore included mainly local conflict journalists from the regions (64), as well as conflict journalists from Bogotá (26); newspaper editors (nine); professionals from national and international NGOs connected to journalism and conflict, and UN press personnel in Colombia (eight); and academics (two). I chose to interview mainly in Bogotá, Cundinamarca, the Caribbean region (Barranquilla, Cartagena, Bolívar, Sincelejo) and the Pacific region (Antioquia, Santander, (Barrancabermeja)). The rationale for choosing these regions is that the selected zones have important journalistic activity and have been directly affected by the conflict, either paramilitary and/or guerrilla. In addition, this research acknowledges the time and resource constraints on pursuing broader research in all the regions; that said however, the zones studied aim to represent a fair sample of the phenomena analysed.

The range of education, gender, and age of interviewees is shown the table below. The characteristics are divided into city and regional journalists. The education range is varied and divided in four sub-categories; university degree, postgraduate studies (masters), specialised training in the armed conflict and non-university degree. The education level in this sample was elevated, given that the majority hold a bachelor degree predominantly in media studies or journalism. Fewer research subjects had postgraduate studies: nine in cities, four in the regions. However, specialised training on armed conflict (namely Media for Peace Diploma course, and/or Red Cross' International Humanitarian Law

course) had a fair number both cities and regions. Two journalists did not have academic preparation. Regarding gender, it is evident that there are more men than women in the profession; particularly in the city, there were twice as many males as females interviewed. The age was diverse; the table reveals that the age range in the region is slightly lower than the city journalists, but the median is 41 years.

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample of journalists.

Range	Education				Gender		Years practising journalism	Age (fieldwork year 2008)		
	University Degree Undergraduate Journalism or Media Studies	Postgraduate Studies (MA)	Specialised Training (Conflict, Red Cross, Media for Peace)	Non University Degree	Female	Male		Minimum	Maximum	Median
Region	33	4	25	2	37	27	13.5	24	56	38
City	4	9	13	0	9	17	15	32	79	43
Total	37	13	38	2	46	44		24	79	41

3.5 Qualitative In-depth Interviews and Analysis

The methodology in this research has been chosen to gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of reporters and professionals in periods of conflict. The epistemology followed is the existing literature on conflict had not addressed completely—by first-hand perspectives—local journalist’s situation.

The interview (see for instance Wimmer & Dominick, 1997; Bell, 1992; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992) is a particularly interesting technique because it allows the respondents to have liberty in explaining their personal views. However their limitations as method, it was chosen as the more suitable tool for this research, as semi-structured in-depth interviews in order to examine journalists’ insights, narratives and their vision of their professionalism, and on their role in war. The dynamic of the interview is also less formal, which permits the researcher to focus more on certain aspects that are necessary during the session, and permit the subject to express their ideas. Follow-up topics were therefore pursued after the main questions were asked.

The interview allowed the researcher to observe non-verbal language, specific reactions, tone and specific emotions (Frankfort Namias & Namias, 1992) in the answers. This was particularly helpful, when interviewing local conflict journalists, the researcher gave them a space—chosen by them mostly—in which they respondents could feel comfortable to disclose delicate information regarding political inclination, perception of the conflict, the praxis and limitations when covering conflict, or specific people in power. In-depth interviews resulted in the richest methodological tool that gave them security to express their views—especially to open a new unexpected route: their journalistic ethos, a personal insight that only emerged at the end of the interview, when the interviewee felt comfortable with the researcher. Given the nature of these insights, in-depth interviewing was the most accurate method to attain this data. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, using a recording device and notebook. I also conducted some follow-up telephone interviews (2010).

All interviews have been transcribed and analysed individually, and then compared using a thematic coding based on theoretical coding (Strauss, 1987), which exposed uniformity, reinforcement and repetition of arguments. I performed thematic coding manually. The most important quotations and the ones that represent consistent pattern of responses are translated into English and inserted into the main body of the thesis with the names of the interviewees written either before or after the quotation in brackets.

The strengths of informal interviews are also their weaknesses. If the interview is extremely open, the breadth of its possible ramifications might result in unfocused analysis. As Wimmer & Dominik (1997) assert, if the interview is too broad, the data analysis may have an issue of categorisation of themes and it might be difficult to identify the topics and categorise the trends with all the respondents. However, the identification of general themes across all interviewees was ultimately straightforward due to the repetition and similarities between many issues and ideas. In addition, the interview guide (semi-structured interview), which was respected in most cases, served as a methodological tool for a more precise data analysis.

Debates on the validity of ethnography as a social science method concerning its alleged lack of sharp and measurable scientific evidence to describe reality usually tend to dismiss this anthropological tool. However, in order to provide the most accurate account of the reality observed, I conducted a fair number of interviews.

One of the strengths of the method of participant observation is that one can go behind the scenes in the media production of news. An insider's accounts and reports on the processes of news production can provide a vast source of firsthand evidence to analyse. Another asset of this method is the possibility of triangulation with other techniques, such as in-depth interviewing, observation, informal conversation and looking into documentary sources (Cottle, 2007). The conjunction of all these tools can give the ethnography process a comprehensive approach, in which each source or method's blind spots can be compared; solid arguments can therefore be recognised, discrepancies spotted and research furthered, in order to attain better interpretations and explanations.

The interview is designed to evaluate how local journalists in Colombia report on the conflict, and what are the tensions between normative values and praxis. Initially, the interview included ten questions aimed to find data on their professional perception, and the adaptations when covering war. The interview included the reactive on 'what is the role of the journalist in conflict' in order to analyse their perception of their profession, particularly those conflict journalists.

3.6 Mapping and Entering the Field

The challenge was to get hold of busy journalists and to gain access to newsrooms. In a country in conflict, with numerous journalists under threat, gaining access to journalists via face-to-face interviews might raise suspicions in certain situations. Therefore, accreditation had to be on two levels to interest them in engaging in dialogue with me: firstly, institutional back-up (from the university) to guarantee the journalists' security and confirm the validity of the investigation; and secondly, my own personal position as a former journalist with experience in the field. In addition, an initial set of contacts retrieved with

colleagues was useful to start the snowballing technique to create a greater network of interactions in the field.

The second challenge was to overcome the obvious contempt certain journalists felt towards academics due to the alleged misunderstanding of their *real* work pressures, newsroom dynamics, media, etc. Academic anthropologists and sociologists tend to dismiss news journalists' work as merely superficial fact-gathering, created in the 'news factory', regarding news journalists themselves as spectacle (carnage) seekers (Boyer, 2010). The misconceptions and misjudgements within academia of news journalists is a delicate issue with news professionals, which is natural since with the two professions work at different speeds and according to different logics (Boyer, 2010), resulting in divergent temporalities.

There is therefore a hidden reticence to be analysed by an academic researcher unfamiliar with the dynamics of news journalists' jobs; the researcher is effectively an 'alien' to the journalistic world. However, my status as a fellow journalist—as a hybrid journalist/researcher—was helpful when it came to establishing a profound rapport with them, understanding their arguments and helping to ease the encounters.

My condition as an outsider in Colombia was a key element to this research: it sometimes gave me an advantage in securing interviews and gaining access to newspaper newsrooms and community media. It also had the effect of making interviewees more open and liable to speak up and give fearless statements in an interview. The fact that I was a foreigner and asked questions regarding their ethical codes and perspectives on war, probably gave them, on occasion, the confidence to open up about their opinions on their professions and expand upon their political arguments.

However, my foreigner status had its disadvantages, such as the fact that not all of the people approached were willing or available to grant an interview. This was one of the constraints considered from the beginning, so the research agenda was adapted to the circumstances. Another constraint of researching in another

country was the lack of knowledge and lessened mobility around the city and country, which made the process slower than planned.

The approach to the interviewees was straightforward: I sent an email with a formal letter attached introducing myself and the nature of the research project, requesting an interview of 40–60 minutes and stressing the importance of their perspective for the research. Arksey & Knight (1999) support this action because it constitutes a suitable approach that explains the project, the researcher, the institutions involved, why the respondent has been selected and the thematic that the interview will address.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This qualitative research considered ethical aspects regarding research interviewees. At the end of each interview I produced a letter of authorisation⁵⁹ to which they added their contact details, institutional affiliation and a confirmation of their agreement to take part in an interview with me for my doctoral research on Colombia. In addition, they acknowledged that the results of the research would be included in the doctoral dissertation and they were informed that it would be a public document, and that these results may possibly be published. The ethical requirements were based on standards for social scientists (Schröder, Drotner, Kline & Murray, 2003) employing qualitative methods; in order to treat all interviewees fairly, respect their opinions, values, and decisions, and to avoid—by all means—causing any harm to the research subjects.

The issue of anonymity was an important aspect of the process: at the beginning of the interview, I explained about the journalist's right to anonymity, and the respondent decided to go ahead with the interview according to the conditions of: (a) a anonymity; (b) anonymity for the individual; but not for their organisation; (c) anonymity for their organisation; but not for the individual; and d) anonymity for both the individual and the organisation. This decision was authorised with the journalist's signature. Some interviewees preferred to retain anonymity for

⁵⁹ The authorization letter (sample) will be added in the Appendix E.

themselves and their organisation. Others included an additional clause: ‘All opinions are personal, and not from the organisation/media’ when they opted for non-anonymity for them or their media. Additionally, some journalists preferred that the sessions were not recorded, for the sake of their safety and the security of the information provided in some interviews.

The research interviewees who have authorised non-anonymity option empirical chapters utilise direct quotes from the interviewees (previously agreed non-anonymity) by using only their last names, organisations, their geographical categorization (city, region) and position (e.g., journalist, editor). For those interviewees that marked the anonymity alternative, their identities are concealed in order to protect research subjects (Tilley, 2011; Kelly, 2009) and following the ethical guidelines in social enquiry.

Despite the bureaucratic nature of this all this paperwork, it was helpful in terms of encouraging more open responses from interviewees that were reserved when it came to speaking about certain topics. All this preparation was completed with the intention of avoiding potential trouble after the research took place stemming from any suspicions or insecurity towards the researcher. I tried to take all precautions possible in avoiding misunderstandings and providing a clear picture of the purpose of the fieldwork.

3.7.1 The Researcher as Sojourner

When working in a different culture, the researcher should understand their condition as an outsider and the cultural difference that might influence their research perception. Therefore, a process of ‘reflexivity’ is essential as ‘an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with particular social identity and background has an impact on the research process’ (Robson, 2002:172). Consequently, my nationality and culture was a double-edged sword when it came to entering the field effectively.

On the one hand, approaching this new research geography as a foreigner gave me the advantage of detachment and granted me access to certain places or

people. On the other hand, the lack of familiarity and first-hand experience of practical knowledge of the country was a limitation.

Being a stranger in a new environment influenced my data collection and research in the field. The first challenge as an ethnographer was to adapt rapidly to this society and in the best manner possible, in order to be prepared to pursue the ethnographic research according to the timeline and to collect data efficiently. As a researcher, an important cultural issue that attracted my attention, and will consequently be addressed in the thesis, were the different levels of direct and indirect violence (Galtung, 2000b).

Entering a different culture—albeit one similar to one's own—entails time, strategy and subtlety. While the previous months of full-time background research seemed black and white and a rather static process, entering a new culture via fieldwork appeared Technicolor and dynamic. The work required intellectual and emotional strength: 'where one forgets nothing and brings everything to a new culture, in this process one simultaneously renounces and exploits one's surplus; one brings onto interaction both perspectives simultaneously and creates an 'architectonics' of vision reducible to neither. This architectonics creates new understanding' (Morson & Emerson, 1990:54).

This type of anthropological immersion in a new culture is also called 'sojourner'⁶⁰ (see Furham and Bochner, 1986; Ward and Searle, 1991; Ward and Chang, 1997; Siu, 1952), referring to a long-term or non-tourist traveller staying for a mid-term residence in a foreign culture (i.e., anthropologists, aid workers, guest workers). For sojourners living in diaspora, their experiences are centred in the homeland beyond the host-land. To be a sojourner in a strange, yet 'familiar', culture was a complex experience.

Mexico and Peru (my home countries) share with Colombia certain references: all former colonies of Spain, have historical, linguistic and cultural (religious)

⁶⁰ Siu (1952: 34) defines sojourner as 'stranger' one who clings to the cultural heritage of his or hers own ethnic group and tends to live in isolation, hindering assimilation to the society in which he or she resides.

similarities, but are evidently different nations. In this regard, the cultural immersion process as a researcher proved to be a very active one with cultural negotiations and a moderate cultural shock⁶¹.

The Sojourner concept can also be adapted to the condition of foreign student in England. The process of adaptation to British culture had not ended when fieldwork began in yet another strange land. Therein a cultural adaptation exists in two spaces—Colombia and England—and the potentialities and perseverance of the researcher are tested in each spaces of threshold.

Oberg (1960) identified stages of cultural shock in ‘sojourners’: honeymoon; crisis; recovery; and adjustment. This is a simplistic model, but it is useful here to illustrate the adaptation process of a researcher in another culture. ‘Anthropologists have written occasionally and only briefly what actually happens in the field. Most of the discussions of the actualities of fieldwork have been limited to private discussions among anthropologists, and these usually touch only high spots or amusing anecdotes’ (Powdermaker, 1967). In this regard, Irwin (2007) agrees that cultural shock is rarely discussed in the academic setting, and in fact, admitting to having experienced it has become a taboo in the anthropology community. However, even the most skilled anthropology ethnographers have suffered it, as we see in the well-known anthropologist Malinowski’s book, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967).

Feelings and lived experiences are almost inevitably reflected in one’s work; this idea coincides with the arguments in this dissertation on journalists’ resilience and identity. Therefore, the experiences of the ethnographer will have a certain impact on the development of her or his work. A scientific approach to the fieldwork method in media anthropology methodologies should include considerable detail on the observer (Powdermaker, 1967), including the roles he or she plays and his or her position in the society and phenomena studied. I kept a researcher’s notebook to write the impressions as a sojourner in fieldwork.

⁶¹ Cultural Shock is understood in this research, as the ‘anxiety and emotional disturbance experienced by people when they travel or move to a new social and cultural setting and two sets of realities meet’ (Irwin, 2007).

La Candelaria neighbourhood in Bogotá's downtown was a key place to live. Located in Bogotá's city centre, it was easy to move in the city and close to the Luis Ángel Arango library, where I was granted a cubicle with a PC and internet connection in the researchers' section.

3.8 Research Sample: The Snowball Technique

An initial contact, Álvaro Sierra, the Bogotá-based former editor of *El Tiempo* newspaper (then *Semana* political magazine editor until 2014), led me to key interviewees and contacts. Ella McPherson, a fellow doctoral student from the University of Cambridge, gave me this initial contact with Sierra. In addition, I obtained other contacts from colleagues at Radio Netherland⁶², Sergio Acosta and Jorge Zepeda (Latin American News Service). Along with former NGO staff, aid workers and UN staff in Colombia, these contacts were a starting point to enter the field. Subsequently, contacts were gained using a 'referral' (snowballing) system (*recomendado*) from respondents.

The process of interviewing journalists was enjoyable: they tend to be sociable/approachable people, partly because of their profession. Journalists are storytellers and are constantly looking for the right argument to hook you into their story. Journalists usually have a fresh story to tell and enjoy being interviewed as a reversal of what they normally do. Some interviewees were rigorous that certain words must not be missed; mostly when they were formulating very eloquent arguments they stressed the tone of the words in order to make their importance to the argument clear for the transcription record. I believe that some of the interviews served as a route to introspection for those interviewed, giving them a way to be heard and thereby avoid anonymity. Before every interview, some examples of the journalist's work were researched in order to have an accurate picture of her or his reports.

⁶² Radio Nederland Worldwide, one of the top five international broadcasters, provides news in 10 languages, via radio, TV and the internet. The former Spanish department offers independent news coverage of Latin America.

They also explained their personal experiences of war and the news pressures to report it. The interview process was highly enriched by the quality gathered of this sort of material. Learning about their lives enabled me to gain a greater understanding of their double-condition as reporters and human beings. Some of the interviews went on for up to five hours, yielding a large amount of extremely important material for analysis.

As Powdermarker pointed out clearly, fieldwork is a ‘deeply human as well as scientific experience and a detailed knowledge of both aspects is an important source of data in itself’ (1967:9) and is important in terms of the analysis it allows to take place. After certain interviews with war journalists, the process of debriefing as a researcher was fairly tough, particularly when hearing first-hand war reporting experiences concerning massacres, dialogue with displaced people, child soldiers, death-threats, exiles, paramilitary, guerrillas, and a host of fairly crude experiences. Some of these accounts affected me on a personal level; given the complexity of this war, I consider it inevitable that a researcher conducting fieldwork would be constantly surprised by his or her encounters. As Hannerz (2004:13) puts it: ‘After I had my own encounters with the correspondents (...) these informants do not vanish from your horizon the moment you leave the distant field site’. Ethnography with local journalists and professional workers in a conflict zone is certainly a harrowing experience for the researcher, who therefore needs to be emotionally prepared and maintain detachment in order to produce effective analysis.

During this ethnographic process, I became a silent witness of conflict journalists’ accounts, paying attention; however, to their situations and the challenges they encounter, but also to their feelings of despair and hope. In some cases, I had the chance to hear about their personal lives and on many occasions I discovered serious fear of imminent danger, exile, threats that their families would be endangered and complex personal relationships. The ethnographical voyage might tack and turn in different directions, and the effective field worker learns about him or herself as well as about the people he/she studies (Powdermaker, 1967).

I was informed of their perspectives, lives and sense of *professionalism*. There are certain conflict journalists who regard their work as a mission⁶³; this is generally when they have families based outside the country and they have themselves returned from exile. Travelling in armoured cars, having bodyguards, adding up histories of exile, threats, aggressions, paranoia—all this became part of the everyday life of conflict journalists' ethnography in Colombia.

These professionals have covered massacres, witnessed images of destruction and violence, watched battles between the military and guerrillas, listened to people's testimonies and then watched and edited the images and stories. The events have an effect on journalists in the field and in the newsroom. Certain respondents have blocked the shock and regard these events as 'normal'. Others presented high levels of stress.

An example of violence occurred when 'Iván Ríos', one of FARC guerrilla leaders, was murdered by his security chief. In order to prove that he had committed the killing and to claim the reward, the security chief cut the hand off the body and placed it in an icebox, before presenting it to the authorities. This opened up an ethical debate about whether the government should reward the murder or not.

When I was conducting newsroom ethnography at *El Tiempo*, images of the incident arrived, generating a discussion of whether they should be shown on the website or not. During that discussion, a journalist showed the video to a group of colleagues; upon being warned about the nature of the footage, one journalist said, 'I've seen worse things than that in war, I'm sure I can deal with it'. The group watched the video as if it were any other amusing, crude clip.

⁶³ 'Mission' in the sense of commitment to a cause. "Mission can be best described as a journey, one of self-discovery but also one undertaken for the sake of others and their own self-discoveries" (Kapuściński in Atkins, 2002: 224).

The first person that granted me an interview was Gómez⁶⁴, an experienced investigative war journalist from the newsweekly *Noticias Uno*, on an independent news channel. This first approach to the fieldwork gave me the hint of the situations that I would be researching. The interview was held in downtown Bogotá; the journalist arrived in an armoured car with his bodyguard. In his car and outdoors—walking the streets—he revealed a notable change in behaviour, due to the fact that ‘outside’ he became much more aware of his surroundings, and was continually looking around him as if being followed or observed. I came to recognise this as paranoia, which developed as a result of these journalists’ situations and the previous attacks they had experienced. As TV personalities and public figure, these journalists tend to be recognised in the streets. I encountered the same attitude in Morris⁶⁵, a human rights journalist. When asked about why he was constantly looking around, he replied: ‘it is a nervous tic that I have, I must be aware of everything around me, it’s my own security...’

⁶⁴ From my ethnography notes of war journalists in Colombia, Bogotá January 2008, what wrote about Gómez after the interview: ‘Gómez arrived late to our meeting point, a French Coffee, where our meeting was set up, he came directly from *Noticias Uno* newsroom. He greeted me in a hurry, I can see in his eyes traces of stress and hard work; he sat down quickly as saying “let’s start at once”. The veteran journalist does not waste time, and today won’t be an exception. His face shows scars, his sparkly-white front teeth are all fake, he says, as a result of the last attack from seven men that beat him up in the middle of the street when he was coming back from a friend’s house.

Outside, his bodyguard awaits peacefully inside an armoured tracker, he looked at me carefully as a quick test of possible threats, Ignacio says humbly - almost in an unheard and shy voice – “he is my driver and bodyguard” two in one. A tall, strong man, contrasts with Ignacio’s features; thin, short and almost fragile look. “If I didn’t have a bodyguard I would have been killed many years ago”, he says with complete security of the truth that he just said, just like that, he is used to live with death and the possibility of death. That is his curse and adrenaline that follows his life, always in the borderline, living at the edge.

In the street, this journalist remains quiet and aware of his surroundings - almost paranoid I would say - yet inside of the restaurant emerges a different persona, more natural and relaxed. At that point, I was puzzled, I was not able to understand, the role of celebrity (as a respected journalist) mixed with the reactions of hatred fanatics. Yet this person is ambivalent, in the one hand he has the journalist’s natural ego and on the other hand, he seems scared of the streets and the people. He has witnessed the most dramatic episodes in a journalists life, he has been attacked, bullied by the president, exiled, regardless he decided to stay in Colombia to work. Is he resigned to the same faith as his colleagues? Has he accepted that perhaps he will be murdered someday? Is sacrifice part of journalist’s duty? Are these journalists in risk of extinction in Latin America?.

⁶⁵ A great journalist study case for media anthropology, full of important experiences and arguments. I interviewed him in Bogotá in 2008 at his office before he left for a conference in Brazil. A year later, I interviewed him again in Mexico City, while he was working on a feature on the Zapatistas for Sony TV channel. After this trip to Mexico, he left for Honduras, just in times for the coup d’état: he was the first journalist to interview Manuel Celaya. While in Mexico, Hollman did not have bodyguards, so his nervousness was a sign of real fear. He presented the same attitude as Gómez, paranoia, shy and vigilant when walking in the streets, while becoming confident in enclosed spaces.

The location of the interviews might have conditioned the answers. The respondents that were addressed in their workplaces were somehow restrained in their talk about certain topics (i.e., censorship, advertising space sales). The interviews in newsroom meeting rooms were focused and formal, whereas at the interviews arranged to take place outside of journalists' workplaces, such as over coffees and lunches, the respondents found themselves more able to relax and free to speak up about many issues.

As a starting point of each interview, I usually asked about the conflict in order to know their arguments and to have a hint of their position towards government, politics, and media. This was an important question, but was asked as a trivial one to break the ice; however, important issues arose when the respondents described the conflict. The essential question in the interviews was what is the role of journalists in conflict?

The research approach used in this investigation was appropriate to gain knowledge into interviewees' viewpoints—some of them extremely personal; therefore, the in-depth interviews were an appropriate technique. Although quantitative approach could have helped to understand a more broad number of study subjects, this research studied qualitatively a small sample within the circumstances and time frame scheduled. The qualitative research conducted was a strong learning experience, of trial and error, that revealed the high complexity and efficiency of the ethnographic method.

CHAPTER IV

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: REPORTING CONFLICT, A STUDY OF THE CONFLICT JOURNALISTS

4.1 Introduction

These chapters will discuss the main findings from ethnography research focused in perspectives of journalism and conflict by journalists, Non-governmental organizations, community media, professionals and academics of Colombia. The main research findings are divided in six themes that emerged in the interviews, and in the research documents examined. In order to have an in-depth analysis in each subdivision, these topics are: differences between city and province journalists; Colombian journalism education in the armed conflict; multifaceted censorship and freedom of expression; ethos and resilience of local conflict journalists; reporting peace and victims.

There are various responses towards reporting conflict, human rights and peace in Colombia, either individual or collective (guild: academic, NGOs, professionals). This chapter presents firstly the conditions in which journalists work; city versus province and the dangers in which they are immersed.

Another initiative to use journalism as companion tool (watchdog) to conflict resolution is the 'Peace Units' in national newspapers. The majority of newspaper's Peace Units were created to follow the peace negotiations with president Andrés Pastrana from 1992–2002 at El Caguán (the location of the negotiations). This journalistic response from the mainstream national newspapers was important, because it allowed for the first time to civil society to read and to know about the other side of the war; the guerrilla leaders, were interviewed, and also the victims and consequences of the conflict in regions. This was a media initiative important for the better understanding of the conflict process. However the permanence of certain Peace Sections depended to a political moment in the country.

Responsible Journalism then began to be reflected and taught among the guild. Many journalists working for the Peace Units belonged also to the collective debates to enhance and produce a ‘responsible way of reporting’. This phenomenon happened almost at the same time as the Peace Units. These put forward that this country, taking a distant perspective from the Western debates on war journalism studies, developed a parallel perspective on what good-quality war reporting should be. It is important to emphasize that these reflections are on their own conflict’s coverage. Colombia matured its perspective on the topic, in an almost empirical manner, with certain similarities to and discrepancies from the global journalism debates.

This research is mainly based with in-depth interviews, which indicates that journalists in Colombia throughout these violent decades of conflict have discussed their own role in their war. They have debated the purposes of their reporting, and the different situations that they face. As with *violentología* (see Chapter II), the country has followed a different path in journalistic standards, in order to reinforce the framework and quality of conflict reporting. This has come distinctively as a Colombian version of journalism in conflict or conflict-sensitive journalism, which has been discovered in this research, along with other journalistic practices regarding professionalism.

4.2 Journalism Hierarchy: City and Regional Journalists—A Geopolitical and Social Divide

Global journalists appear to share essentially similar praxis and values regarding news agenda and coverage. However, comparative media studies scholars (Mancini & Hallin, 2004; Curran & Park, 2000; Weaver, 1998; Chalaby, 1996) point out that while we can see certain resemblances, primarily in work routines, discrepancies can be identified in cultural backgrounds and the political systems that shape the journalistic ethos, and thereby professional behaviours (see Bourdieu’s Field Theory). Based on these perspectives, it could be argued that we should expect to find explicit differences in this section between metropolitan and regional journalists —differences which would become even more evident in the coverage of conflict. Local journalists have a certain anonymous nature; these

‘anonymous journalists’ are those in charge of reporting from their communities. They undertake this endeavour with either indifference or the bravery and resourcefulness required to evade censorship, and thus provide an account of news that otherwise might be ignored. The importance of this section is to shed light to local journalism research, in order to incorporate a regional and cultural knowledge from a study case in South America. As Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2010:13) explain clearly that ‘journalism studies must therefore become truly cosmopolitan by paying more attention to regions of the world that remain largely unattended by journalism researchers, including sub-Saharan Africa, parts of the Middle East, Asia and *South America*’ [italics added].

88% of the interviewees in this study agreed that regional⁶⁶ journalists who work and live closer to conflict zones are more constrained in their professional duties. Two factors make this divide greater: security and economic disparity (in terms of income, employment, and workload). Because of the poor working conditions, certain researchers (Cardona, 2008) consider these journalists as great heroes of freedom of expression. However, recent reports on freedom of expression in Colombia (see, for instance, FLIP, 2010) demonstrate that provincial journalists suffer from higher levels of censorship because of their proximity to war, and especially to armed actors. This section, therefore, explores the roles that local and metropolitan journalists play in reporting war, especially in conflict regions. The research will illustrate how journalists construct news through their geographical proximity as well as their professional and personal constraints, by creating invisible yet well-understood professional hierarchies and social distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984) between colleagues reporting war.

Both regional and city interviewees agreed that the main difference between metropolitan and regional journalism in covering conflict issues in a war zone is *regional detachment or attachment*. Williams’ (1982) ‘culture of distance’ refers to television’s ability to represent spectacles of destruction from distant wars, while at the same time shielding audiences in a safety zone (their households)

⁶⁶ Given the limitations (economic, time-frame, and mainly insecurity) of the fieldwork, the current research ethnography did not cover all the Colombian conflict regions, only the most representative ones in order to give a panorama of the situation.

(see Sontag, 2003). This notion is taken up in this section, because to some extent it can also be applied to the distance that city journalists enjoy from the events of the conflict. It can be argued that the ‘culture of distance’ is manifested between regional and city journalists, as the latter work far from battlefields and danger zones, out of harm’s way, whilst local journalists report on the everyday war from a hazardous proximity. In the city, for example, when a reporter or editor finishes work, he or she goes home and will most probably have the weekend off.

This can detach a journalist from his or her work: the city additionally gives journalists some security, thanks to their geographical distance from the conflict zone. Meanwhile, regional journalists—supposing that they do have the weekend off—may, on their way to the shop or to church for Sunday mass, bump into either a guerrilla or a paramilitary leader who might enquire about their latest article. In Iraq, international correspondents usually live and work in the Green Zone in Baghdad, a fortified place inhabited by foreigners and which is secure and protected from hazards. In Colombia, it could be argued that the equivalent of the protection of the Green Zone is the capital, whose geographical distance mirrors for journalists the security of the fortified walls in Iraq. As Tumber and Pentroulis (2003) pointed out, that after September 11, the journalistic divide in the United States between war correspondents and the other reporters was no longer separated, given that after the attacks the reporters became ‘urban war correspondents’ in a situation similar to a war zone.

4.3 Hierarchy: Geopolitical Location and Status

This section will analyse the phenomena of difference among journalists, particularly those covering conflict and war. One of the issues that emerges from these findings is that the social stratification ranks journalists’ categories in order to locate them at a certain level. Weber’s (1948 [1991]) tacit social stratification encompassed three dimensions of inequality: economic (class position), status as a social prestige in society, and power. Therefore, he established a multidimensional nature of social rankings, namely ‘*socioeconomic status*’ opening up a wide range of social categories, amongst which it could be argued that the regional journalists’ hierarchy might be explained. Statuses are regarded

as communities beyond class; as a result, regional journalists compose a community that is socially stratified internally. Given that Colombia is a much-centralised country (economically, politically, and in terms of information), the headquarters of the majority of the media outlets covering national news are found in the capital. Journalists who work in Bogotá hold more advantages than their regional colleagues; notably, superior wages and a privileged status. A professional hierarchy classifies the highest rank as the city journalist in contrast with the lowest rank as the province reporters.

Bourdieu suggested that in every professional field (sphere) relations of power exist, a common structure of human activity. In this regard, power is exerted through rivalry, as he puts it: ‘the sources of competition go much beyond the social sphere (...) to exist socially is to mark’s one’s difference vis-à-vis others’ (2005:3). Bourdieu’s *habitus* also plays an important role in the structure and agency of journalism. *Habitus* is a set of dispositions that emerge from power structures, which manifest themselves instinctively in the person by structuring hierarchies (1977). The professional field structures its own practices and codes of conduct, but also it organises the perceptions of it by expressing the differences objectively linked to the circumstances of existence. The regional and metropolitan divide is an example of this idea, where the distinction is continuously marked, either objectively or as a status. The professional stratification of Colombia’s journalism indicates the necessity to create levels of differentiation among peers, in this case metropolitan and urban characteristics mark the variance. Although still in essence war journalists, the distinction and meritocracy (e.g., prestige, status, fearlessness) that international war correspondents historically possess (see Tumber, 2010, Knightley, 1975; 2002) is found to be the opposite in Colombia; the local war journalists are undermined by being on the lowest rung of the ladder.

Sierra (City, newspaper editor), a former editor-in-chief of one of the biggest newspapers in Colombia and currently political magazine editor for *Semana*, recognises the disparity between colleagues from conflict zones and from the cities. Metropolitan conflict journalists are aware of these circumstances, and understand their situation as ‘privileged’. He defines in an exceptionally clear

fashion the evident implications of the geographical proximity to the conflict's reported subject. As he puts it:

There are levels [in the profession]; one level is people like me in Bogotá. I work for a big newspaper. When I travel to conflict zones I'm very protected, I just stay there for a few days and then leave. A different thing is the people that work and live there. In some regions, an article can trigger a commander sending two soldiers to your home: *'The commander-in-chief needs to see you, to answer for what you've written... why on earth did you publish that stuff? [sic]'*.

Similarly, an editor from the capital (Cardona, city newspaper editor) coincides:

There is a clear difference within Colombian journalism: one thing is to practise it in the big cities and another in the regions and small municipalities. I've always alleged that the greatest heroes of freedom of expression are there, closer to the war. Because we're protected by a concrete jungle and we can enjoy many opportunities in this kind of arena [newspaper]. In some regions, journalists work as if they had a gun to their heads. For example, the newspaper in El Meta district *"La Opinión de Cúcuta"* as well as the ones in Barrancabermeja district. *Those regional journalists have a different situation from one's own. One has economical resources, work stability, but they work in precarious conditions* [italics added], they don't have distance from official sources and the armed actors, so it makes harder to report.

This is supported by a regional war zone journalist:

We [journalists] who live in these zones [regional conflict areas] are very close to the armed actors. In my town, Sincelejo, our readers and audiences are the guerrilla and paramilitary, and any information that we publish in favour or against one group or the other, we are in the eye of the storm. This has influenced Sucre's⁶⁷ journalism, as it has slightly diminished the critique and severity of reporting on topics regarding the conflict. However, I still report on armed conflict and crime (Vides, regional journalist).

For example, the decrease in critique in journalism that Vides (*op.cit.*) pointed out can also be illustrated in the case of the regional journalist Callejas (Fresco Stereo radio). Callejas had reported on guerrilla activities taking place in his region, including the extortion of local businesses, kidnappings and murder. The threats happened many times, and the journalist had to leave the city. In 2007 he

⁶⁷ District of Colombian Caribbean region, its capital, and largest city is Sincelejo. Where this journalist works for *Meridiano de Sucre's* newspaper.

received a phone call from ‘Luis Alfonso’, a FARC commander. As documented by FLIP (2007: 26), the guerrilla chief said: ‘You will have a lot of headaches because you are messing with our people’. Few journalists can disregard any kind of threats, particularly if they are close to the war zones. When we consider that the judiciary system that has not prosecuted the murderers of journalists (2007), the situation becomes more delicate and alarming.

Regarding the regional perceptions, Márquez (NGO director) points out: ‘They [city journalists] are regarded as superior when compared to those working in the provinces’. A journalist interviewed in the study coincides with this idea, and represents a typical opinion of regional reporters:

There is a syndrome that the cachaco [colloquial speech for people from Bogotá] knows everything, and that here [Barranquilla] there are dull people that don’t know anything. The dynamics and contexts are different (...) an average journalist in Bogotá earns triple the salary of the provincial reporter. The prestige and status are different (Beleño, regional journalist).

The following extract (also quoted in the education section) helps to confirm the prior argument:

The [journalistic] standards that we have in Bogotá are different from the regions, because reporters out there sometimes don’t even have a professional degree or a journalistic title; their education is poorer, but they learn the profession in their newsrooms (González, city journalist).

This phenomenon also happens on a smaller scale with journalists from the capitals of the provinces. They claim to have a higher status than those working in smaller districts, who are seen as mere ‘information gatherers’. Journalists working in Colombia’s most dangerous war-zones are regarded as the support base (important yet underestimated as underdogs), a type of social stratification. It could be argued that this particular journalistic *social* division is defined by geographical location, media privileges, meritocracy, and media protection. Given that several journalistic dichotomies have been found, it is possible to use this data to construct an argument of differentiation, illustrated by Figure 1 below. The pyramid shows the invisible yet existent hierarchies of journalists reporting on the Colombian conflict. It should be acknowledged that there are

internal hierarchies (Marchetti, 2002) within media outlets and their thematic areas; however, the classifications vary in every newsroom. Thus, the differentiation goes from a micro-sociological to a macro level, from media newsrooms to the demarcation of national and international colleagues.

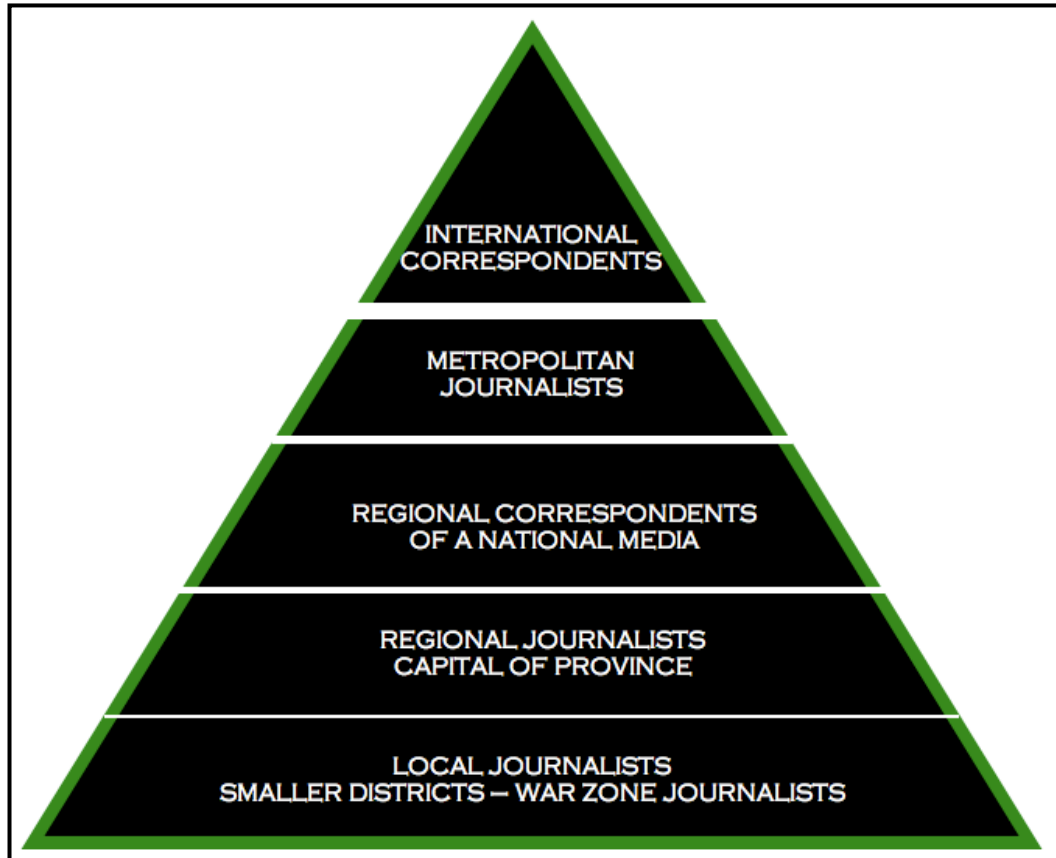


Figure 1: Reporting War: City and Regional Hierarchy Pyramid in Colombia.

The difference is evident not only between provincial and metropolitan professionals, but regional journalists appear to have internal divisions too. Three levels were detected; first, there is a distinction between the regional correspondents from a national media outlet and those journalists from local media located in the capital of the province. To some extent these colleagues working in the same regional city, covering the same areas are perceived as different. On one hand, regional correspondents from a national media outlet are more protected and are regarded as journalists with more prestige than their colleagues reporting from regional media. In a further stratification, regional journalists from the capital of a province believe that they benefit from better status than those in the smaller districts, particularly in war zones, who are

positioned one step below them, on the lowest rung. The pyramid is thus assembled with the lowest levels encompassing the most exposed journalists and the most condescended to, while at the top of the pyramid are the metropolitan and highest level international reporters. A city editor, explains the hierarchy clearly:

I've passed through all the levels in *El Tiempo* newspaper. I started from the bottom; as a cub reporter doing all the donkey-work. Then I became a regional correspondent at Cali covering Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo war zone regions with guerrilla. Then I became editor-in-chief of Cali's regional bureau. Then I moved to Bogotá as section editor of 'politics and justice', and now I am the newsroom head (Mompotes, city editor).

Newsroom hierarchy has several rungs; however, those exemplified previously (figure 1) could be an average newspaper ladder in Colombia. Therefore, it could be implied that a professional aspiration is to move up the ladder, to reach the job as an 'editor' in the metropolis. This can help to explain the slight disdain towards local beat reporters of a war zone, who are situated on the lower level of this ranking of journalists.

A regional journalist elucidates:

Here many journalists still believe that the war is far away from their regions, for example the *Montes de María* [war zone—two hours distance]. They feel privileged to live and to work here given that it is a touristy city (...). We were rather shielded because we had threats but it was not that tough. As *El Tiempo's* regional correspondent I had to report from the region, so I had to travel to *Montes de María*, it was frightening (Arcieri, regional journalist).

However, the regional journalists respond that they are dissatisfied with the patronising attitudes of their colleagues: 'We are neither heroes nor beggars [*muertos de hambre*]. We would like to dignify our profession, to be regarded with respect. We are committed to our trade, and we must fight until the last day (Guerrero, 2010:51).

This divide also happens between international staff and national reporters. Stringers and international journalists normally employ regional journalists as

cultural, political, and geographical guides. Bell (2011) regarding international correspondents in a war zone revealed a hierarchy difference between the newsreader in London, the ‘anchors’ in a war zone and the ‘sub-anchors’. He indicates a three-level ladder:

Tom would announce the news from London, then pass the ball to Dick on his platform, who in turn would throw it to Harry, who was doing the actual reporting. Harry, *the lowest paid and best informed of the three, would aspire to be a Dick and ultimately a Tom.* [Italics added] (2011:1).

Yet international corps, stringers, and foreign correspondents, have stronger security details than national reporters (Pedelty, 1995; Wilnat & Martin, 2012; Hannerz, 2004; Bishara, 2006). Pinder (in Loyn, 2007) called this segregation of local and foreign journalists an ‘*apartheid in international journalism*’, which extends special privileges to one selected group or the other. Mark Pedelty (1995) identified the same phenomena in the Salvadoran war, naming it: ‘A’ Team and ‘B’ Team; the first one referring to ‘International War Correspondents’ as media staff, whereas the second referred to the stringers/freelancers. The A–B label was used in order to explain the sense of ‘separation’ by arguing that the difference was not only a matter of professional status—and perhaps we could include ‘geographical location’—but it was a political, economic, cultural, and ideological division too. This landmark anthropological research revealed frictions between stringers and staff correspondents covering the war. These tensions revealed ‘the importance of the *hierarchical stringer/staff system* [italics added], an issue almost completely ignored by academic researchers despite the fact that it plays a fundamental role in structuring the activities of foreign correspondents and influences the news they write’ (1995: 69–70).

Deriving from the invisible divide between international journalists in war, it could be argued that this gap also exists between regional and city journalists. Therefore, the hierarchical pyramid constructed above could be regarded as a continuation of Pedelty’s argument. However, the limitation of this explanation is that it does not explain the national tensions between metropolitan and regional journalists in Colombia, beyond foreign correspondents. Existing scholarly accounts on the practices of local journalists (Franklin, 2005; Kaniss, 1991) show

the changing nature of local media, differences have been found even among the professional values of local journalists in United States.

In the same vein, Bourdieu (1984) pointed out a sphere's '*network of oppositions*' of high (elevated) and low (vulgar), refined and coarse, which are in constant competence and are part of the social order. It can be argued that there is a white-collar/blue-collar divide in regards to city/regional journalists. Even though, technically, they both belong to the first group (as professional educated workers) regardless of their social stratification, the low regional salaries, ranging between £172 and £345 a month (according to interviewees data, and Gutiérrez et al., 2010), set local journalists at a disadvantage. They could easily be included in the category of blue-collar workers, given that £113.76 (COP\$535,600) was Colombia's monthly minimum wage in 2011 and £136.86 (COP\$644,350) in 2015⁶⁸. Professional high-skilled journalists in rural regions can earn almost the same as a taxi driver in Colombia, or any working class individual without any university degree. This also opens up discussions regarding the feasibility and motivation of local journalists' work, given that it is a high-risk profession for them particularly but with the lowest salaries.

4.4 Centre and Periphery

Multidisciplinary research has analysed the relationship between the periphery and the centre. Galtung (1971) has made a key contribution to the notion given that he identifies five types of imperialism: economic, political, military, communication and cultural, all of which, according to the type of exchange among centre/periphery nations. In politics, colonization could exemplify clearly the need of colonisers to centralise the decision making (Hutchinson & O'Donell, 2011) in capitals like London, Paris, and Madrid, whereas cities in the colonised areas (Mexico City, Lima, Bogotá) were strategic locations, without the power of a capital (centre) city from the colony. Latin American metropoli were founded as colonial capitals; therefore, they became the symbolic sites in the struggle for independence (Roman & Vargas, 2011).

⁶⁸ Data minimum wage from *El Colombiano* (2015) ('*Salario mínimo en Colombia para el 2015*').

Bogotá⁶⁹ is a symbol of modernity in many areas, called the ‘Athens of South America’ in 1895⁷⁰ because of its cultural and intellectual life, as well as being the financial, political and cultural hub of the country. This factor empowered the city and highlighted its importance in the country in comparison with other urban centres. This division between centre and periphery is also seen in England, with the wealthier South and the relatively deprived working class North, or in the United States with the North-East and West Coasts as hubs of economic and cultural power and the Southern regions as more deprived. For Latin American media scholar Martin-Barbero (1989), regional identity implies social marginalisation, economic pillaging and exclusion of political decisions; therefore, there is difference in addition to inequality. The antagonism between cities and provinces has existed since classical times. Cities are a symbol of modernity, hosting the most important media outlets, businesses, the hubs of information, and economic transactions, often considered the *distinctive* form of civilisation. Raymond Williams identified hostile associations with the city as a place of worldliness and ambition, and the ‘countryside as a place of backwardness, ignorance and limitation’ (1975:1).

‘Centre/periphery relationships in journalism are about power and perspective’ (Hutchison & O’Donnell, 2011: 2). The main issues emerging from this finding are the geographical divide and status, which provides support to the conceptual premise of local journalists’ vulnerability in countries with violent environments. In contrast, international correspondents enjoy a safe detachment condition given that they are ‘both physically and culturally removed’ from the host country and society (Pedelty, 2005: 69). The foreign correspondent that goes to a different country has diplomatic protection (except for some freelancers), and in most cases the reporters have the economic resources and the advantages of geographical protection; once the job is done, they will head back to their base (their newspaper’s offices and home), a safe place. Regional journalists already have economic limitations due to their job contracts or low salaries, but the

⁶⁹ This capital district is the most populated and largest city in the country, and one of the largest capitals in South America.

⁷⁰ Monsignor Carrasquilla argued that the Hispanic sister republics gave the name of ‘Athens of South America’ (Rincon, 2003) to Colombia’s capital city given the intellectual and cultural movements therein.

fundamental constraint is their geographical location (Bonilla, 2006); whatever the regional reporter writes or broadcasts, he or she will have stay put, while the international reporter or metropolitan journalists will leave for good, and that geographical distance will grant them instant protection.

However, there are not many international correspondents in Colombia, as previously explained in the literature review chapter. The conflict does not produce breaking news and is no longer on the international news agenda except when something extraordinary happens (e.g., Ingrid Betancourt's liberation). The armed actors are also less familiar to international staff, given that they do not read—or have access to—their news reports; therefore, these reporters have more security. To illustrate, a Salvadoran war journalist pointed out (Alonzo in Pedelty, 1995:205): '[t]he military has a greater respect for foreigners (...). They have less respect for the Salvadoran journalists. Before killing a gringo [slang for North Americans or foreigners], they think 100 times. Before killing a Salvadoran, they think twice or not at all'.

To report in regional cities—even in the biggest ones—is also hazardous. A regional reporter exemplifies this:

We [war journalists] have reported several issues regarding the conflict here in Medellín, given that is a metropolis besides Bogotá. However, there is much news that we know that it is not possible to report because it can bring us many problems. For example to report stuff on “Don Berna” [the region's paramilitary commandant] was very difficult because he knew *everything*. So let's say that many news issues stopped being reported and it was preferred that it be reported from Bogotá. Besides my media outlet was small and in a bigger outfit the journalist could have been more protected (Avendaño, regional journalist).

This particular journalist is currently threatened (June 22, 2011) due their investigative and muckraking journalistic reports for the newspaper *El Espectador* (Medellín regional office). The two articles⁷¹ reported territorial conflict between two newly formed drug-trafficking bands in the region,

⁷¹ Article: 'Henri de Jesús López, alias Mi Sangre: Nuevo capo en Medellín?' *El Espectador*, Nacional (10 Jun 2011) by *El Espectador*. *Important to note that the article is signed by the newspaper, not by Avendaño.

including former paramilitaries, drug traffickers, politicians' allies, and infiltrators in the local police. A source received a phone call warning: 'Tell your friend, journalist Mary Luz [Avendaño] to stop publishing rubbish, or will she want to win the lotto?' (FLIP, 2011:1). This regional journalist dares to report crucial themes that no one reports on. The FLIP indicates that there is a regional media mutiny on this topic; only police press releases are reported. This situation illustrates the hazards regional journalists of the capital of a district face, even from a national media outlet, when reporting near a conflict area, such as Medellín, Antioquia. In addition, the mobilisation and unity of regional and national journalist guilds (*Reporteros de Colombia*, FLIP) who have published press' releases and articles on support.⁷²

City journalists that travel to regions have a tactical approach to entering a conflict zone. There is a certain 'logic' that reigns in such places, and reporters must move accordingly. The majority (90%) of journalists interviewed agreed that when covering armed actors the means of transportation in the area is highly important; for example the vehicle, the majority do not embed with militaries due to their own security (whether military, police or private). Therefore, reporters hire a private car or a cab to drive them to the zone. Once there they connect with human rights organisations working in the area, in that way they approach the social base. Such actions can denote a strategic way of thinking in order to ensure respect for their work from the armed actors.

Local journalists' vulnerability is not an isolated Colombian phenomenon, it also happens in other wars such as Palestine (see Bishara, 2006). In this regard, Loyn (2007) states that, for local journalists, war represents a unique set of challenges. Anyone working as a journalist in Baghdad is automatically under threat, and particularly local journalists and stringers. In the midst of current Mexico's drug war, the Freedom of Information NGO, Article 19 (2009:7), reported that the majority of victims are male journalists and workers in printed media of the local press.

⁷² Particularly interesting is an article of one of Avendaño's colleagues Héctor Abad Faciolince entitled: '*Lo que es con ella es con todos nosotros*' (Colloquial Spanish for: 'If you mess with her, you mess with all of us') *El Espectador* July 10, 2011.

Research from the international organisation ‘Committee to Protect Journalists’ (2006:1) shows that local journalists are increasingly targeted, particularly in Iraq where they ‘constitute nearly eighty percent of journalists and support staffers killed for their work in Iraq’. Therefore, there is a critical need to protect local journalists in war.

4.5 Professional Inequity: Wages, Job security and Workload

For Weber, income (economy) is one of the most important factors of inequality. In this regard, few regional journalists have fixed wages. A small percentage of the interviewees live off advertisement revenues or quota (*cuota*). In a country where the minimum monthly salary is £136.84 (C\$644,600)⁷³ for 2015, certain regional journalists are paid with advertisement spots in lieu of salaries or fees. According to my research subjects, a journalist can earn £100 a month with one advertising spot; therefore, the selling of the space will constitute their monthly salary. In a small village; however, the only ones who can afford to pay that amount are the town council and the wealthy people of the village (i.e., businesses). As a result, journalists are restricted from reporting on or taking a critical stand against those who are paying their income.

A research regarding salaries of 390 Colombian journalists (Cardona & Manrique, 2003) of 120 media outlets in nine of most important cities confirmed the hypothesis of reduced wages that radio and press journalists earn, showing that they are the worse paid on the journalism spectrum. One of the main findings were that not any media paid the entire benefits, such as paid vacations, redundancy insurance, contributions, health benefit, among others. The median salary of reporters in 2003 was £464.48 (COP\$1,339.345). An empirical study (Gutiérrez et al., 2010) showed that radio journalists and press journalists earn less than £345.5⁷⁴ (COP\$1,000,000), confirming my interviewees’ responses regarding their salaries. Therefore, the newspaper group has the lowest wages in

⁷³ According to *El Pais* newspaper (2011) the minimum salary in 2010 was fixed by government to £178.63 (COP\$515,000). In 2009, £172.31 (COP\$486,900) and in 2008 –during this research fieldwork– the minimum wage was £154.7 (C\$461,500).

⁷⁴ All the salary figures are based on Gutiérrez et al. (2010) research’ findings.

the country, with the exception of the advertisement sellers (£100/month as previously explained). However, none of these studies differentiate between regional and metropolitan journalists, whose income might fluctuate depending on the size and location of the media outlet.

To illustrate the regional and metropolitan salary divide, according to interviewees, a regional journalist makes COP\$1,000,000 Colombian pesos a month—around £345.4. It is important to note that interviews were conducted in 2008, when the minimum wage was £154.7 (COP\$461,500). They work twelve hours a day, plus overtime, with a minor percentage having one day off per week. However, the following interviewee (see below) asserts that she is one of the best paid on the newspaper staff (*El Herald*o). The interviewee recognises that she is privileged in the region, given that she has health care and a pension plan. However, she emphasizes that in general the regional salaries are low, and again there is a distinction in the hierarchical pyramid regarding income. As this journalist expresses:

I earn \$500 USD [£345.4] which is a magnificent salary in this city [region] but it's not much. I work 12 hours a day, they don't pay me Sundays or bank holidays, and I've got one day off a week. I've got a retirement fund and social security. But I'm young and live at my parents' place, if I had a family to support my salary would be worthless. My wage is miserable compared to the Bogotá journalists; yes, the quality of life is different, but the workload here is greater than theirs. But, as journalists, we are usually under-paid, if you ask the others how much they make they'll tell you COP\$350-\$400 [£122-£139] which is much less and they've got families (Beleño, regional journalist).

The general consensus, particularly among regional journalists, is that working hours usually go beyond the eight and a half hours of the average office working hours in Colombia. The previous quote helps to exemplify this argument that reporters work between eight to 12 hours a day. In addition, some reporters confessed that they frequently take the job home as they need to catch sources, sometimes late at night. This indicates two issues; firstly that journalists have demanding schedules and patterns. Secondly, that they might merge personal and work life, resulting in a more challenging lifestyle.

Nevertheless, to earn less than £336 a month for fixed contract work and even less for journalists without a contract, makes this situation a serious threat to the quality of journalism; the result is only what they can produce in a reduced economy and with multiple pressures. In this regard, according to this researcher's interviewees, journalists' work contracts are renewed every three to six months; this contract system generates instability even for those professionals that have a 'contract'. What is more, at present in both large and small enterprises more than half of the employees are hired on freelance basis, what is called in Colombia *servicios* (services), which means that journalists do not have a direct connection with the enterprise and thus does not receive any of the accompanying benefits or security (Gómez, city journalist). These independent job agencies also provide job contract agreements. If journalists obtain their contract via these external agencies, in most cases they are fired after twelve months in order to avoid building up seniority and the benefits that it implies. Journalists with a contract are required to generate massive amounts of news information, leaving investigative enquiry behind.

4.6 Advertising and Threats

The title factors influence a journalist's labour on different levels. The work situation of many provincial journalists is dangerous since they are required to sell media advertising spaces as a measure for securing their monthly payment. This is a common practice, because some professionals do not have work contracts. This situation makes those professionals more vulnerable for a number of reasons. First of all, the economic instability of living off commission forces them to have more than one job in order to survive. Also, advertising spaces are often sold to journalists' own sources, which compromises the quality and bias of information. Some respondents claimed that this practice is used commonly by radio journalists. Therefore, the risk is high for freelance journalists covering conflict when they do not have support from the media to report it.

In this case study, there are two main issues in the coverage of conflict in the city and the provinces. On the one hand are the professional practices of the journalist outside the capital. The main problem in the regions is that several journalists are

threatened. They therefore cannot report a number of news stories because in a small region it is easier to be identified by armed actors such as guerrillas, the paramilitary or drug traffickers. 'They know where journalists live, in some occasions journalists coexist with them; perhaps they are neighbours (Costrillón, city journalist).

These factors expose journalists in an extremely dangerous manner, and the effects on their output are a lack of impartiality in order to ensure the safety and survival of their family and themselves. Therefore, many journalists have had to abandon their regions. Journalists can be targeted with violent reprisals, particularly in the regions. For example, two journalists who exposed the links of paramilitary groups and politicians in the Cordoba district, were subsequently killed. The first was the regional journalist Castilla Ospina, editor of *El Pulso del Tiempo*, who was assassinated in March, 2010. Medina Moreno, manager of the indigenous community radio station *CRIT 98.0 FM* stereo, was stabbed in Tolima Department in April 2010. According to Reporters Without Borders (2010), these assassinations were connected to new revelations on the paramilitary infiltration of politics. This NGO states that it is the infamous *Águilas Negras* paramilitary group, which has directed numerous threats against journalists, particularly local media, and which has forced journalists to flee their region.

Some journalists consider that the conflict is covered in Bogotá's newsrooms. This is argued because of the professional constraints of regional journalists; some news in the conflict is covered over the telephone, from main cities such as Bogotá and Medellín. Journalists call the commander in chief of the military brigade, the police officer, or NGO personnel and the news is written with that information.

Journalists have stopped travelling to the conflict zones. But the armed conflict cannot be covered if they don't go to these places. The main source of an armed conflict is the journalist. *I was there, I've seen, I've talked to...* (Sierra, newspaper editor).

A regional reporter points out:

Antioquia is the only department that had all the armed actors. So journalists needed to report not only from here [Medellín] but also from

Uraba [war zone]; however there were threats and lack of media resources to report news outside the main city in our own region (Builes, regional journalist).

However this is not necessarily the journalists' fault, given that media outlets nowadays have economic pressures and internal issues that make it more difficult to send city correspondents to the regions. If there is an urgent situation, the news can be covered by agencies. Consequently, the location influences the journalists' search and approach to news, as does the economic factor, since travel out of the city implies special budget authorisation and strict scheduling. For instance, there are villages far away from cities that can cost correspondents and local reporters who decide to travel there up to £67 (Colombian Pesos COP\$200,000). According to Guerrero (2010:22), the travel expenses of correspondents for national television channels are not reimbursed; they are paid £26.70 (COP\$80,000) per piece broadcasted, which covers only one third of their travel expenses. It is clearly not profitable and has therefore become a sporadic activity. Even journalists from regional capitals do not travel to nearby conflict zones, as reporters think carefully about whether it is necessary to report from there.

It could also be argued that given that the 'Peace negotiations' finished years ago, the media's budget allocated to cover armed conflict is no longer profitable. So the distribution of special resources to send war correspondents to remote regions are sometimes limited and scarce. Therefore, the regional war journalists, the lowest level on the hierarchical pyramid, are the main sources of news on the conflict given their geographical proximity. Consequently, regional war-zone reporters acquire a more symbolic importance in Colombia, as they are the only ones with access to breaking news. However, at the same time, there is a paradox of how these war-zone regional reporters are valued; the small salaries, their invisibility in society and therefore the lack of recognition of their work, and the potential threats by armed actors because of their reports. All of which makes it harder to report the truth in war. In some regions, several media groups work under pressure, and their relationships with military and armed groups are especially complicated. In some cases, guerrillas, the government (e.g., the '*chuzadas*' phone-hacking scandal described in the following section) and the paramilitary have knowledge of a journalist's complete personal details. The

armed actors are watching them, especially those covering issues of conflict, justice, and keeping of the peace. A journalist helps to understand this argument in detail:

Once I interviewed a paramilitary commander, at the end of the interview I gave him a piece of paper with my contact details. He looked at it and said, “Why would I need this, I’ve already got all your details. I have the same piece of paper. I got it from a guerrilla woman last week.” It made my whole body shudder, as I said “Yes from the ninth front of FARC, I interviewed her a couple weeks ago.” “I know,” he said, “that’s why you are still alive.” They check on you, the language that you use, if you are being too soft with one and too tough with the other, they see if you are using the same language for all [armed actors]. That’s the risk of living on the razor’s edge, if you don’t watch out you’ll cut yourself (Avendaño, regional journalist).

Another reporter concurs,

I can see that the pressures are stronger when news is revealed or when there is a suggestion that these groups [paramilitary] operated with the state’s indulgence (Ramírez, regional journalist).

Another issue that emerged in the interviews was the difficulty to access sources involved in the conflict, as well as the inability to uphold professional standards by confirming the information supplied by the sources elsewhere and the lack of more than one source to construct news. If the reporters cannot confirm information they can be manipulated by the sources; therefore, this is a delicate issue. Over-specialisation relying one source can also be dangerous for the reporter as it compromises his or her objectivity and security. The previous interviewees’ extracts highlight the need for constant changes in the sources of information and the importance of the quality of work. The latter is the passport to attain an interview and to gain the respect from any armed actor used as a source. It is crucial to avoid bias towards any actor, especially for regional journalists, in order to ensure their lives. Therefore, to produce a good-quality journalistic piece can mean juggling security issues and the possible threats that a feature might trigger.

On occasions there is bias towards certain sources; it could be any armed actor or their advertisement providers. Previous research (Gómez, 2005) revealed that many journalists do not change their sources for more than a year. This is a

delicate finding that might threaten the reporters' impartiality and their relationships with their sources. It could also impact their credibility with their media and their readership.

As a regional journalist recounts:

Once a FARC leader from my region rang me up and told me off about the spiteful article that I'd written. I replied that it was more ill-natured to have displaced 1,000 peasants and to have killed seven of them (Beleño, regional journalist).

A journalist indicates:

When the journalist is immersed [in the conflict] is harder to report what you should report, and then the journalist chooses to be quiet and to pass on the information to a colleague who can cover that information (Rodriguez, regional journalist).

This concept of 'passing on information' to a colleague when the original reporter cannot publish or follow-up anymore denotes solidarity and unity among the reporters' networks, particularly within the regions. This reflects Foucault's theories (2001) on the consequences of telling the truth with regards to power. The news finally transcends the author, by releasing or giving away their news-pieces, the journalists show an act of detachment and, up to a point, humbleness in letting go of information for the sake of the public good without regard to the professional recognition of their authorship. Just as the author remains invisible, as Kapuściński (2000) believed, the only way to do the journalistic job is to remain invisible in order to describe others' issues. It could be argued that the regional reporters are the 'invisible ones', those who are the most vulnerable yet the most essential journalists within this conflict. Therefore, invisibility is a double condition; on the one hand, they use the situation of 'invisibility' as a protective measure. On the other hand, the invisibility of reporters causes their social marginalisation in the conflict.

Evidence shows that local journalists in war zones face a more substantial risk when covering conflict in their own towns or villages; many journalists have opted to stop reporting on certain issues that might put their lives at risk. There are journalists who decide to pass sensitive information on to other journalists who perhaps have more protection. Another remarkable course of action for the

media to protect its staff is to sign the article as ‘newsroom’ (*redacción*) instead of the journalist’s name, in order to protect him or her.

There are reporter networks (guilds), a different institutional mechanism that has the potential to protect journalists, mainly in the regions. These guilds share ‘delicate’ information when it is dangerous for reporters to release it through their media outlets or personally. This is the case of the Caribbean Journalist’s Network (*Red de Periodistas del Caribe*), an organisation financed by International Media Support and FNPI (*Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano*). The network helps to unite the guild in that region, to improve quality of journalism, and to open a space to reflect on their practices. The Red de Periodistas del Caribe is a crucial network that brings together about four hundred professionals of the region to work for freedom of expression and professional self-evaluation. This will influence greater job security for reporters in a particularly poor region that has high levels of illiteracy. This network will be analysed in-depth in the next section of findings on Journalism education.

4.7 Conclusion: The Challenge of Regional Divide and the Distant War

In Colombia it is fundamental to understand the distinction between journalism in the regions and the metropolis. This finding has important implications for developing further research among regional war journalists in this country and elsewhere. Continued investigation might show similar patterns regarding social stratification, geopolitical divide, patronising variables among colleagues. The issue of ‘difference’ is a phenomenon that exists in many Latin American countries.

Two conditions under which journalism is practiced are, on the one hand, the great urban cities with their modern media enterprises and, on the other, the provinces and marginal territories which are far away from the centres of economic and political power. As there is an unbalanced situation, journalism cannot be analysed as a whole on a national level, but should be considered using these fundamental differences and focussing on issues specific to each case. In violent environments, the situation tends to become aggravated, and the more

vulnerable reporters are disappeared, assassinated, threatened, or commonly practise self-censorship in order to survive.

This is a key finding that emerges from this research; the divisions and anti-hero perceptions that regional journalists have as opposed to international war journalists (see Tumber 2010, Knightley 2003). This section has offered a glimpse into the situation of conflict reporters in a war-torn developing country. It aimed to analyse the regional conflict journalism, which works with several precarious working conditions—exposure, the lack of media support, censorship, uncertainty of formal contract conditions (namely subcontract services), market limitations, security limitations, and on-going hazard of journalists.

Finally, the twofold geographical characteristic in Colombian journalism can shed light on new perceptions of the sociology of journalists in war. These results particularly provide some awareness of regional reporters who live in *real* harms' way. It is a structure–agency phenomenon; on the one hand the constraints are separate from the journalist and generally addressed on an institutional level. On the other hand, the journalists' efforts to improve their situation, professionalism, perceptions of their role, and opportunities of specialised training are variables that compose a complete war journalists' understanding of their sociological situation. This will be analysed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER V

SPECIALISED TRAINING OF JOURNALISTS IN THE ARMED CONFLICT: THE COLOMBIAN ENDEAVOUR

This section analyses training initiatives for journalism specialisations in the midst of challenging environments. It will examine, in particular, the training of Colombian conflict journalists as crucial preparation for national reporters covering the war. This key theme emerged continuously in this investigation's data, and so a fundamental goal of this section is to develop an argument for the necessity of professionalism among *local* war journalists.

Journalism education is still regarded as the professional framework for pursuing a career in the media, yet it is an issue of longstanding concern to the academic community and to journalists (Gaunt, 1992). It is debated whether journalism is a profession, a technique, or an occupation (Tumber & Prentoulis, 2005). In this section, it will be argued that journalists' professionalism (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996) can be attained either through previous formal education in the subject, or later on the job (in media). The evidence gathered in the current study indicates that notions of professionalism in an armed conflict entail more advanced knowledge, and require expertise in the situation, from both journalists and editors. This section will examine the pertinence of an integral specialised education on war coverage and violence, as an essential framework for local war journalists, particularly in violent environments.

5.1 Journalism Education: The Gap between Academia and Praxis

Some commentators—mainly veteran journalists—claim that journalism is an innate skill, and therefore formal education is not a requirement: 'You can't teach a person how to write, any more than you can teach them how to find the crucial contact in the middle of Beirut. It's instinct; it's savvy; it's ratlike cunning' (Cole, 1998:63). Journalism education, whether formal or informal, lays the foundations for the attitudes and knowledge of journalists (Josephi, 2009). At the dawn of

formal Western educational in journalism (with the Columbia School of Journalism), Joseph Pulitzer envisaged a kind of formal education in which he thought about ‘the principles of journalism’ as professional practices. He considered that the greatest practitioners were profoundly—if haphazardly—educated and intelligent, and so formal education could further strengthen their moral and intellectual qualities (Adam, 2001). His idea was to attain recognition of journalism as an intellectual profession.

There are discussions of merely training reporters instead of educating journalists (Becker, 1996), and it has been long debated whether to teach techniques or to develop journalists’ critical thinking and situational analysis. However, the key aspect here is to analyse whether education can contribute to professionalism and ethos. Although journalism education may lead to the eventual development of critical thinking (Reese, 1999, Cohen and Reese, 2000) and the ability to connect theory and praxis, the main complaint of early career reporters is that they begin in their media organisation without enough preparation (De Burg 2003, Skinner et al 2001). Despite the lack of consensus, the Western model of journalism has been exported and taught in other parts of the world, particularly in Latin America. Using a series of surveys of students in twenty-two countries, Splichal and Sparks (1994) have investigated how reliably the model of journalistic professionalism has been internationalised, finding that journalism education is seen as an agent of change, and so is still considered necessary for new generations of journalists.

Regarding the notions of journalistic professionalism current in South America, Josephi (2010) clearly emphasises that this region has probably the most diverse combination of ideologies regarding objectivity and loyalty. On the one hand having absorbed North American influences, and on the other, being former Spanish and Portuguese colonies, the countries of South America have inherited the partisan clientelist structures of journalism. However, Waisbord (2000) states that journalists are developing from lapdogs to watchdogs and muckrakers, due to the consolidation of investigative journalism in the region.

Journalism education in Colombia consists of a formal career degree called ‘communication studies’. Thousands graduate each year knowing little of the most important tools for covering conflicts. Academic teaching in Colombia is still based in the basic notions of journalism, which deal with how to report news—any kind of news. Yet war news is different, and it needs to be addressed differently. As a country in conflict, it could be argued that the subject of war reporting should be part of the country’s basic curricula in journalism and media degrees. However even worldwide, training journalists for war coverage is not a part of the basic curricula of professional academic education, with some few exceptions (e.g., Columbia School of Journalism, Bournemouth University).

5.2 Specialised Training for War Journalists

There are different perspectives regarding education for ‘acceptable’ journalism (Beattie, Tumber & Webster, 2006, Josephi, 2009), but there is little analysis or investigation into adequately preparing professionals to cover war. What preparation does exist is mainly based on training foreign, not local, correspondents to go to war (Tumber & Webster, 2006, Becker & Lowrey, 2000). One could argue that this minor area of research is in its preliminary stages, and currently there is little analysis of local media workers living and reporting in dangerous environments, and even less on support provided by media organisations to their employees who work in dangerous zones.

Specialised training outside academia has in some places been established as a response to concerns about the lack of preparation which journalists covering conflict receive. Such training has been provided by non-profit, media, and government organisation since the early 1990s. In the beginning they were usually given by former military personnel (Tumber, 2005). This training was focused on embedded journalists, mainly European or North American, who were covering international conflicts in developing countries, but rapidly became a requirement of media organisations for journalists covering war in general; several charitable organisations and media organisations began to invest in their journalists’ education in this way. In several cases, specialised training is in-house (e.g., CNN’s training scheme). The most well-known firms that give

courses in the United States and the United Kingdom are Centurion Risk Assessment Services and AKE Integrated Risk Solutions. It is interesting to note that former members of the British military manage both enterprises (Sector, 2006). The Pentagon additionally has a weekly course which prepares journalists for embedding. Independent private firms also provide training covering life-threatening scenarios, first aid, mock hostage situations, enduring captivity, crossing checkpoints, and other topics. This training is vital for both experienced and inexperienced reporters (Tumber & Webster, 2006).

Among the non-profit organisations that give such training are the Dart Centre for Journalism & Trauma (A project of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism)⁷⁵, and the Knight Foundation, as do various NGOs and the International Red Cross (whose course covers international humanitarian law, safety, and ethics). Regarding safety training, American organisations such as the Society of Professional Journalists⁷⁶ (SPJ) and the Rory Peck Trust⁷⁷ also provide resources to journalists assigned to war. The latter provides safety training to freelance media workers globally. The SPJ provides a fact sheet to help journalists to obtain foreign press credentials when covering a war outside their country. Reporters Without Borders (RWB) offers a guide called *Safety Resources for Journalists Travelling Abroad* (2011). Given that the protection of journalists in war zones has recently developed into a crucial issue, the United Nations has declared a Security Council resolution in support of the protection of journalists.

Consequently UNESCO, in partnership with RWB, has released a 'Handbook for Journalists' (2009), intended for war reporters abroad, which covers safety guidelines, international protection norms (e.g., BBC guidelines), and psychological trauma (in cooperation with the Dart Centre of Journalistic Trauma). The handbook also gathers key documents for journalists' protection in

⁷⁵ Dart Centre was founded in 1991, is a project of journalists, journalism academia and health professionals.

⁷⁶ This organisation has around 10,000 American journalists as members, and was founded in 1909. It provides various workshops and programmes (Legal defence fund, Freedom of Information, Responsible Journalism, and others).

⁷⁷ This organisation focuses on freelancers, and was founded in 1995. It provides support for journalists and resources, training, and advice.

war zones, and discusses the role of the media in humanitarian emergencies, in addition to the types of protection offered by Reporters Without Borders, and notes on how to manage traumatic stress. Finally, basic documents relating to press freedom are provided, as are key documents on journalistic ethics—this last being perhaps a reminder of the role of journalists in conflict. Given that there is significant diversity in journalists' educational backgrounds, and only a minority have completed degrees in journalism or communication (Deuze, 2005), the need of specialised training is clear. In the context of hostilities, a lack of professional and specialised training is detrimental to the journalist.

All these examples are fundamental to the journalist's safety in war zones, yet they are mostly based on the Western perspective of war correspondents covering war abroad. Although some of the advice and certain information can be used by all types of reporters (e.g., first aid, safety, ethics), it is imperative to develop handbooks and training for regional and national journalists covering the violence within their countries.

In this sense, the education of media professionals is a key topic that has emerged in the interviews performed for this research. Continuous professional training has resulted in a valuable tool for journalists, especially for those covering conflicts. The majority of the journalists interviewed had a significant educational background in covering conflict, in international humanitarian law, in human rights, and in ethics, given by Colombian NGOs (e.g., *Medios para la Paz*) and international organisations (Red Cross). These journalists are self-motivated, energetic, and the majority are well established in their organisations, with successful careers in journalism. However, such training is obtained only by a limited number of journalists, and to some extent this is a 'privileged' group of journalists that is characterised by having sufficient resources to cover the course and transportation, time outside working hours, and willingness to reflect on and complement their training. Conversely, for some—particularly older male journalists at national US newspapers—journalism training is 'an oxymoron' (Franklin, 2006: 62). This situation occurs in Latin America, too (see García Márquez, 1996).

Thus the crucial question may well be whether or not specialised training is necessary for war journalists. The data from this research shows that the majority of reporters agree that media outlets do not support them with resources to help them obtain professional specialised training. A large number of media organisations in Colombia do not establish any further education goals for their staff, making it harder for them to obtain further instruction, especially when one considers that in certain cases (press, radio) the low salary received by journalist does not permit them to cover the costs of training by themselves. Obtaining further education is thus almost unachievable for some regional journalists. Freelancers, for example, have long working hours and low wages, and so there is no time for education, which could be regarded as a luxury. Frequently; however, neither city nor regional journalists have enough time to attend training sessions, or else cannot afford the fee for the course. ‘There is not enough time to report on news and even less to study journalism and peace (...) sometimes it is because of a lack of interest, but in many cases it’s because of the lack of support from the media outlet where the journalists work’ (Gutiérrez, city journalist).

5.3 Colombian Training to Professionalize Conflict Journalists

To acknowledge the need for specific training to cover war, the Colombian NGO *Medios para la Paz* (‘Media for Peace’), together with Universidad Javeriana and the Programme for Peace (CINEP), created in 2001 a diploma course⁷⁸ certificate course called ‘Responsible Journalism in Armed Conflict’. The course has been taught since 2001 in several cities such as Medellín (2001), Cali (2003), Barrancabermeja (2004 and 2009), Bogotá (2005), Pasto, Barranquilla (2008), and Valledupar (2009–2010). This covers all the main regions in the country, particularly those with armed groups. Each class normally has thirty journalists who work in urban zones and in internal regions. The most recent diploma course programme ran in 2009–2011, and was estimated to reach 290 journalists and 20

⁷⁸ ‘Diploma Course’ in this thesis refers to the Spanish word ‘*Diplomado*’. This refers to a ‘certificate course’ of short courses of specialised training in Colombia and Latin American countries. The certificate could be undertaken after a Bachelors university degree. It has divergent duration from three months, six months, or one year. However, ‘diploma’ in United Kingdom denominates a level of academic instruction (e.g. Diploma of Higher Education, or Postgraduate Diploma), which is not the case in this research.

organisations, of which the number of direct addressees include 190 men (9,000 in the audience) and 100 women (11,000 in the audience) (Castañeda, NGO coordinator).

The training lasts six months, with meetings every twenty days (*Medios para la Paz*, 2008), and involves instructing professional journalists on international and national contexts, and on practical elements of war reporting. This educational process also encompasses the history of the armed conflict, the political negotiations surrounding it, and the role of information in war and peace. The teaching methodology is from general to particular: starting from armed conflict in general (international perspectives and variations on regional levels); war and information; Colombia and the international context; journalism and the public sphere in war and peace; the responsibility of journalists and professional ethics; theories, international and national experiences; peacebuilding; human rights and international humanitarian law (Diploma course pamphlet, 2008). However, it is adapted to the needs of each region, and thereby includes more specialised themes, such as coverage of displacement, children, recruitment, and victims. There are also seminars covering transitional justice and post-conflict situations, coverage of paramilitary disarmament laws, and the Peace and Justice Law (*Ley de Justicia y Paz*) of Álvaro Sierra, one of the experts teaching the seminars. Around one thousand eight hundred journalists from more than eight hundred and forty media organisations have completed the training (Manrique, NGO director).

The overall course is scheduled on weekends (Saturday–Sunday), and totals around one hundred and twenty hours. These are spread over eight meetings, of which four are teaching sessions and the other four are workshops. Experts, editors, and prestigious journalists contribute to the diploma course’s syllabus and teach the classes.

After the first few years of the course, which were held in four places—Medellín (October 2001–April 2002), Cali (July–December, 2003), Barrancabermeja (October 2004–April 2005) and Bogotá (July–December, 2005)—the programme was evaluated in order to assess the pedagogy employed, and also the experiences and media practices of the first graduates. The result was the book ‘Press, armed

conflict, and region' (*Prensa, conflicto armado y región*, Bonilla, et al., 2006), which details the diploma course's benefits and flaws with the aim of restructuring and refining the pedagogical approach used in the course. After the course, the reporters' output in local conflict zones was also assessed.

This diploma course consequently came to constitute an important space for reflection and learning for professional journalists. However, to propagate the responsible journalistic perspective further was not an easy task. The reporters hit a wall and their stories were not included in the news agenda. Thus a need arose to publish news about the armed conflicts which reflected the perspective taught in the course, and this resulted in the creation of the Reporters of Colombia Network (*Reporteros de Colombia.net*), in order to produce high-quality news reports on themes related to the armed conflict and the search for peace.

I believe that we are contributing to change journalists' routines and their understanding of the profession. However it is a long process; we have been training for ten years, and in the last two, we have noticed [professional] changes in many journalists. In our diploma, five years ago, some journalists were not sure if there was an armed conflict or not ... or else they were ignoring the normativity of internal forced displacement. Manrique (NGO director).

This quote highlights the importance of the education of war journalists in the midst of challenging environments. Journalism education is seen as the laying the foundation for the attitudes and knowledge of journalists (Josephi, 2009). Yet training journalists for war coverage is not still included in the basic curricula of professional education, particularly in Colombia. In certain cases, war journalists had received their first training halfway through their careers. The NGOs have created alliances with some journalism faculties (e.g., at *Universidad del Externado, Bogotá*) to teach journalists-to-be and to reflect on the coverage of conflict.

The majority of conflict journalists that we worked with had thirty years of practising journalism in their own style. So it was more complicated for them to change, and we realised that it was necessary to start this training with students before they finished their career. Castañeda (NGO coordinator).

This diploma course offers scholarships to journalists, with financial aid from embassies (e.g., the British and Norwegian Embassies), and funding from organisations, both international (such as USAID, UNESCO)⁷⁹ and from some Colombian private enterprises (e.g., *Bancolombia* Foundation).

In 2008 at Barranquilla (on the Colombian Atlantic Coast) there was an opportunity to observe the participants in this course, which granted the opportunity to analyse *in situ* this research's subjects of study: regional journalists, in this case from Barranquilla and the neighbouring regions (Cartagena, Sincelejo, Montería). As a result, we could test hypotheses about their interactions, experiences, conditions, reflections, and output.

The challenge is to educate journalists to cover an unconventional war—a conflict that does not follow the normal structure (e.g., battles, offensives, conclusion, and clearly defined battlefields). The crucial contribution to the knowledge of Colombian war reporters was the specific training in local coverage. The teachers described that the (typically Western) way of covering a war—in which the journalist may be a stranger or an international correspondent, coming from abroad—which is what the manuals of journalism (e.g., BBC 2011, CNN) typically refer to, but established that for Colombian reporters, education should be based on the coverage of conflicts coverage in the same *barrio* ('neighbourhood'), with all the consequences that this practice might entail.

One of the course's trainers asserts:

There is a difference in conflict coverage between 2000 and now [2008], and it is remarkable. Given the magnitude of the conflict, there are still many issues unsolved, but there is a generation of journalists that have grown up and been taught to cover the armed conflict. This has been the norm for many youngsters, of 30–35 years old. That's a long time, and that generates mental schemes which are complicated to change, quite apart from military and government pressures. Sierra (city newspaper editor).

⁷⁹ Other organisations that donated funds to Media for Peace include the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives, Fondo de Paz (Colombia), the *Bancolombia* Foundation, the Broederlijk Delen Foundation (Belgium), International Media Support, Reporters without Borders (Sweden), and Peace University United Nations (Costa Rica).

The course coordinator concurs:

Journalists have told us that the course helps them to better understand the country. It gives them tools to improve their job, and most importantly to not negotiate with the truth. We [educators] do not want the journalists to become peace activists, and we are also not looking for journalists that write ‘yes, we shall work towards peace’ but we are looking to educate journalists who will work in a responsible manner (...) without the official version of the facts. Castañeda (NGO coordinator)

It is essential to highlight the fact that this educational process has been steady for ten years (2000–2010). It is evident that there is an effort being made to constantly renew the seminars in order to maintain an up-to-date training programme—one which provides practical analytical tools which are closely connected to the country’s sociopolitical context. Thus, based on the experience of teaching the course, its coordinator identified that there was a need to add the study of specialised issues according to the context of certain regions to the curricula (e.g., disarmament, paramilitary audiences in the Caribbean region). This example of the efficacy of the educational process can be examined on four levels: firstly, cases should be examined individually, for every journalist who has attended the diploma course.

Secondly, the different circumstances of different newspapers should be taken into account. Thirdly, the security of the journalist must be considered, and lastly, the regional differences are also significant. Given that there are diverse factors that intervene in the news process, attaining higher quality in the graduate journalists’ output is not straightforward, but a process of professional change and improvement. Therefore, it will be a long process to ensure that journalists change their routines and their understanding of their journalistic exercise, we repeat here for emphasis a brief part of the earlier statement of the course director (Manrique, NGO director): ‘It is a long process (...) In our diploma, five years ago, some *journalists were not sure* if there was an armed conflict or not ... or else they were *ignoring* [italics added] the normativity of the internal forced displacement’.

In this sense, the diploma course sets the standards for professional behaviour, with which journalists can identify poor-quality and high-quality coverage. Thus this training can act as a compass of high-quality journalism. Given that the conflict is about fifty years old, and that this course started fairly recently, the impact of the training on conflict reporters is still small, but there are a number of more visible cases (e.g., certain graduates of the course).

The educational process cannot be examined as a whole, since its composition is heterogeneous and its output depends on the diverse factors previously argued. However, internal assessments point out the need to continue re-educating war journalists, together with editors and, indeed, ‘entire news desks’ (Manrique, NGO director).

A side project of the diploma course is the *Reporteros de Colombia* media observatory which is a crucial strategy in continuing the educational process. The media observatory monitors the journalist’s output, in order to evaluate how the training accelerates changes in journalist’s professional behaviour and production. In this regard, it is possible to identify four qualities in this didactic process. Firstly, this is a place to publish high quality chronicles and features—published or broadcasted by mass or local media—which have been written by graduates. Secondly, the information is written under the watchword of ‘responsible journalism’, which helps journalists to pay closer attention to the variety of possible approaches used by their classmates and colleagues in writing news. Thirdly, the media observatory continuously provides refresher courses for the graduates, which contributes further to their education and keeps them up to date. The fourth quality identified is that it makes communication easier within the network, which contributes to unify journalists from different regions and strengthen professional alliances and solidarity among peers.

Regarding the strengthening of the profession, it can be argued that this might have more impact on journalists in the regions. The diploma course in Medellín (October 2001–2002) resulted in a remarkable example: the graduates continued to gather each month in the courses’ Saturday meetings. On the class’ initiative, they discussed breaking news with the aid of an expert in each topic. The

relevance of this is that they founded the Antioquia Journalists' Association (*Asociación de Periodistas de Antioquia*) in 2005, which has helped to create a higher degree of self-critique of their work (Guerrero in Bonilla, 2006).

It is also worth noting that not all journalists are keen to pursue training by themselves. One reason is the time and working hours required, so even though the interviews in this research focused mainly on educated and specialised journalists, we found that while some journalists are particularly interested in specialised training, there are others who are not. This could seem a very straightforward and obvious point, yet journalists who do not specialise are the norm, and specialised journalists the exception. As an editor of one regional newspaper put it:

(...) in conflict coverage, ideally, we look to hire experienced and specialised journalists. Yes, this is theory, but in practice, when something newsworthy occurs we give it to whoever is available... the former editor on one occasion had to send an intern, well it wasn't in a conflict zone but we don't have many resources. In this newspaper, we need to get out the daily news, so if you can analyse and investigate the background, that's a plus, and if you have Red Cross training that's excellent, but it's not a requirement, and no-one here has it, apart from me, and they won't pay you more if you get it. Editor A7 (regional newspaper).

This editor's comment helps to illustrate the rationale of the newsroom, and this way of thinking particularly holds in small regional newspapers, since they need to publish daily news which is affected by their need to keep on good terms with their advertisers—who may include government, local authorities, or regional businesses (as analysed in the previous section). Therefore the specialisation of journalists is not a priority but a necessity, and it could be argued that it would be seen as over education or as a nonegalitarian difference among peers. Paradoxically, conflict regions are some of the places where specialisation is most crucial. A regional journalist from a newspaper's crime section (*Sección Judicial*), concurs:

Covering stories as simple crime reports is predominant here (...) this explains absolutely nothing: "*Mr. So-and-so was killed at 7:00 AM in unknown circumstances, attributed to a crime of passion*". For example,

the majority of the deaths here [Barranquilla] last year were said by police to be of ‘street vendors’, but if you care to look at it closely, you realise that they were demobilised [paramilitary members], and not street vendors. Since Salomon [a paramilitary leader] was imprisoned, the demobilised groups have started to kill each other. In the newspaper there are only two of us: one covering crime reports and me. We must produce large amounts of news every day. So when am I supposed to work on it? I haven’t got any time. Beleño (regional journalist).

On the coverage of the paramilitary demobilisation process:

I believe that the specialisation of journalists is a serious issue. We don’t understand the processes: there’s criminal law, sociology, and historical significance. In most cases, we don’t have that background, and sometimes there is no coherence, no connections. I think we journalists are lacking a lot of training, a better specialisation. A6 (regional journalist).

Another journalist,

Journalists need tough training in order to know exactly how to cover the conflict. I believe that journalists don’t cover news badly just because they are good or bad [reporters], but because we are not educated for it. That’s why we don’t see another way to do it, since we don’t know how. Mercado (city journalist).

According to journalists, ‘beat reporting’ is not as common in Colombia as it should be. One of the most important topics in the last fifty years has been the conflict with all its sub-themes (e.g., the guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug trafficking, displaced people, victims), and so there are not many beat conflict reporters in regional media organisation. The present study found them working in national newspapers in the main cities, Bogotá and Medellín. So to be specialised in the provinces is uncommon, and this is the main importance of this diploma course for regional journalists covering the conflict. It is a good opportunity that challenges reporters’ limitations and encourages them to pursue further training.

It should be noted that Gabriel García Márquez’ Foundation of New Ibero-American Journalism (*Fundación de Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano*, FNPI) also provides training to media journalists in the subject. These workshops are based in Cartagena (on the Atlantic Coast), and have had the titles ‘Workshop of war journalism: for reporters and camera operators’ (2–7 September, 2002),

‘Investigative Journalism workshop for war reporters’ (10–14 December, 2001), and ‘Journalistic narratives: a history of war’ (4–8 February, 2006) with Jon Lee Anderson. Although the FNPI gathers journalists from all Latin America, the workshops just mentioned were specifically focused on Colombian journalists (FNPI, 2011). The aim of this training is not to teach journalists to be what they already are, but to improve their practices (García Márquez, 1996). A key theme that this NGO has worked with since the beginning is the protection of journalists, and it also works with an important group of teachers of journalism gathered by García Márquez. This NGO has contributed to the setting up of the *Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa* (FLIP), now a landmark organisation in the country, which works on press freedom and journalists’ protection.

There is a high degree of debate, self-critique, and cooperation, regarding journalism, compared with any other country in conflict. We believe that a system of protection of journalists is key in Latin America. For instance, Mexico is experiencing a serious issue on attacks on reporters covering drug-trafficking mafia. And here [Colombia] the phrase [drug-trafficking] mafia sums up the conflict, so journalists’ protection is crucial. Abello (FNPI director).

This interviewee resumes the dialogue among the Colombian guild to report with higher standards and the importance of their professional network as a protection. The workshops maintain quality of coverage, with the objective of the FNPI being to return to the primary teaching system through workshops with small groups. As the FNPI’s leader, Gabriel García Márquez, stated in his speech at the Inter-American Press Society (*Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa*, SIP),

All education [of journalists or media students] must be maintained on three key pillars: the priority on talent and vocation, the certainty that investigation is not a speciality of the trade, but journalism must be investigative by definition, and the awareness that ethics is not an occasional condition, but one that must always accompany journalism as buzzing to the botfly. García Márquez (1996:15–16).

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) offers International Humanitarian Law training in countries in conflict, such as Colombia. In the following, the two most important training courses, according to interviewees, on this topic in Colombia at the moment will be compared (see Table 2 below). Even though the courses may complement each other, the differences between them

should be noted, and their similarities shed light on journalist's training in the midst of an armed conflict. Some more experienced journalists have attended both courses (Vélez, regional journalist).

Table 2: Comparative table with data from ICRC's Colombia (2011a, 2011b, 2010), Reporteros de Colombia (2011).

	ICRC International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), Colombia. CRC's Regional sub office and local office. Course run in partnership with local universities.	MPP Media for Peace (<i>Medios para la Paz</i> , MPP) Centre for Investigation and Popular Education (<i>Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular</i> , CINEP) Universidad Javeriana
Course title	'Journalism, armed conflict, and International Humanitarian Law'	'Responsible Journalism in armed conflict'
Course length	Five to eight sessions (Saturdays). One-two months	Eight sessions. Every twenty days (Saturday & Sunday). Six months
Hours/ Session	Five hours per session 8:00–13:00 hours Total: Forty hours per course	Fifteen hours Saturday: 9:00–18:00 hours; Sunday: 9:00–15:00 Total: 120 hours.
Pedagogy	Lectures and workshops	Lectures and workshops
Themes per session (S)	S1) Principles of the Red Cross and of humanitarian action. Protection and assistance in conflict. S2) International Humanitarian Law (IHL) I and II. The Colombian armed conflict. S3) IHL principles and rules. IHL and Human Rights as protection mechanisms. S4) Main humanitarian issues and the ICRC's answer (Women and armed conflict). S5) Main humanitarian Issues: Disappeared, Displaced. S6) Journalists and war. Journalistic language and armed conflict. Journalism's construction of information in armed conflict. S7) Journalists and IHL. Journalists and ICRC's information (Journalists' protection in IHL). S8) Challenges of humanitarian action in urban-armed violence (Medical missions)	S1) Module 1: Past and present of the Colombian armed conflict. S2) Workshop I: Electoral process and journalistic narratives I. S3) Module 2: Old Wars, new wars. Colombia in the international context. S4) Workshop II: Journalistic narratives II S5) Module 3: Peace, Human Rights, and International Humanitarian Law. S6) Workshop III: Personal dimension of journalists. S7) Module 4: Journalistic Ethic and Journalism in the midst of an Armed Conflict. S8) Workshop IV: Use of professional tools to attain quality of information.
Follow up Student & Graduates	N/A.	Media observatory. Evaluations (content analysis) of information quality and professional output as the course student advances.
Places	Medellín, Cali, Barrancabermeja, Bogotá, Pasto, Barranquilla, Valledupar, Tunja, Ibagué, Buenaventura, Montería, Cúcuta, Villavicencio, Puerto Asís, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Caucasia, Ocaña, San José Guaviare, Quibdó, Bucaramanga.	Medellín, Cali, Barrancabermeja, Bogotá, Pasto, Barranquilla, and Valledupar.
Students	40 per class.	30 per class.
Admission	Professionals working in media, press and information officers, NGOs, state, and private	Journalists (reporters, editors, newsroom chiefs, directors) working in media, particularly covering

	organisations, communication consultants. Application: Editor signs the application form.	armed conflict and peace. Application: No need for editor's signature. Hand in two journalistic pieces before the training and two during the course.
Instructors	ICRC experts.	Media editors, established journalists, academics, and experts.
Tuition fees	Free.	C\$250,000 (£80). Full and partial scholarships offered (subject to financial support).
Graduates	1,500 journalists	325–400 journalists
Since	2002	2001
Degree	Certificate of ICRC/university in partnership.	Diploma course from the Universidad Javeriana.

Table 2 summarises and compares the best available data on these two courses for journalists in armed conflict. It highlights the main differences, although both courses constitute high-quality education. This is done since the data was collected by participant observation at the MPP course, but not at the ICRC course, although it was attended by some of our respondents. Indeed, some of our more senior interviewees who had taken the ICRC course reported its high standards. It is important to analyse the difference between these two courses in order to examine their strengths and weaknesses, as the content of both courses are essential for professionals working in conflict situations, and the Colombian MPP course in particular could possibly be developed in other similar conflict situations (such as Mexico or Palestine). Here we present a summary of differences:

- a) The courses take different approaches. The ICRC course is mainly focused on international humanitarian law, as its name, 'Journalism Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law', indicates. On the other hand, the MPP's 'Responsible Journalism in Armed Conflict' is focused on Colombian journalistic coverage. This focus is structured according to the type of organisation, and the rationale for the approaches is understandable. ICRC's mission is to train journalists on IHL in conflict zones, whereas the MPP's course aims to enrich the professional practice of journalists.

It is also evident that the specialisation taught in the latter is centred on the essential themes of the armed conflict, examining in-depth as it does the conflict's historical origins, and the subsequent peace processes.

Participants gain analytical tools to understand the economics, politics and legal aspects of the conflict. In addition, the course coaches them on journalistic narratives, but in this goes beyond the ICRC's course, as there it contains reflection and debate on journalists, journalistic ethics, and ethical dilemmas.

Self-examination of journalists' role and social dimension also takes place.⁸⁰ This gives some evidence that the course does not only contain training in theory, but also attempts to go further to remind participants of their role in society and in the conflict. This comprehensive approach, it can be argued, is the result of the alliance of three institutions: media studies, conflict journalism, and human rights education and research NGOs. The result is thus a *sui generis* formative project that not only instructs journalists, but also accompanies them through their professional praxis.

- b) The time-frame of MPP's course is seen as adequate, and allows the course to function as a 'laboratory', in the words of one of the trainers: 'Over six months you can see everything that happens with a journalist. For example, a very active reporter started the course, but had to leave the city due to threats, and hasn't come back yet. Another reporter left the media and started working at a university. We can see the changes in the journalists. It's a laboratory' (Gómez, NGO director).
- c) Their pedagogy of both courses gives both theoretical and practical tools. Since the MPP course is longer, it can dedicate an entire day to lectures, and then the next to journalism workshops. Its methodology is strongly focused on journalist education. This explains the choice of teachers and trainers, who are senior journalists and editors, specialists in the subjects they teach on the course. One example is the editor of the *El Tiempo* newspaper editor (during my fieldwork), Álvaro Sierra⁸¹, a veteran war

⁸⁰ As a researcher, I was not allowed entry to this particular session during my participant observation of the course (in Barranquilla, 2008). One of the course coordinators said that this session was very personal, and only students and teachers were allowed. As I understood it, the session on 'Journalists' personal dimensions' was rather introspective, working on individual professional ideals and purpose. This might also be a strategy for exposing a 'sense of greater good' and producing catharsis, and also bonding among fellows. This might help to strengthen the solidarity of the profession.

⁸¹ Sierra is currently *Semana* magazine editor.

correspondent and a conflict-savvy and experienced lecturer on armed conflict (he also teaches the subject at the UN Peace University in Costa Rica, and at the Knight Foundation). Senior journalist Javier Darío Restrepo, who has spent more than fifty years in the profession, is yet another example of the high quality of the tutors. This expert on journalistic ethics is an essential journalistic figure in Colombia.

- d) There is no information available on whether the ICRC provides follow-up. However, the MPP diploma course graduates have the Media Observatory, in which a member of staff closely supervises their learning development during the course (Manrique, MPP director). Since students hand in two of their journalistic pieces prior to the beginning of the course, and another two during or at the end, content analysis is used to examine the students' work. This is a strong point of the course, and indicates that, firstly, a more personalised education is given—they are focused on training individuals by considering the media institution they work for. Secondly, monitoring students and graduates and constantly tracking them demonstrates that their pedagogical objective goes beyond the diploma course. Focusing on the long-term development and the gradual progress of the graduates may in a way enable them to obtain top-quality pieces from journalists, and as a result to have some effect on the improvement in journalism in Colombia.
- e) The schedule of both courses is structured by considering daily newspaper working hours, since targets of these courses are journalists working in daily, weekly, and online media, among other. In Colombia, as in other countries, media staff normally works Monday to Friday, and so weekend training is suitable for most of them.
- f) It is evident that the duration of the courses differs, with the ICRC course being shorter (it covers forty hours in total in weekly seminar over approximately one month). This can be handy for journalists who do not have much time, and the course's length may be sufficient to get an idea of the topic. On the other hand, the duration of the MPP course (120 hours distributed over six months) indicates a different approach, one focused on the specialised training journalists to a high level, by tackling it with theory, debates, and practice workshops.

- g) ‘Education comes home’: providing instruction in the regions appeals to regional conflict journalists. Given the proximity of the course, it facilitates journalists’ attendance. To decentralise education it is fundamental to reach regional journalists, particularly when it is impossible for them to commute to Bogotá to pursue a course. Even holding courses in the regional capital is sufficient to encourage reporters from surrounding regions to make an effort to attend. For example, the MPP course held in Barranquilla (the regional capital of the Atlantic Department) in 2008 gathered journalists from not only this capital city but also from a considerable number of smaller neighbouring towns and villages, such as Cartagena (Bolívar Department), Sincelejo (Sucre Department), around two to three hours’ drive away.
- h) Reasonable tuition fees: the ICRC course is free, and the MPP course, according to sources who attended the course at Barranquilla in 2008, costs COP\$250,000 Colombian Pesos, which is approximately £80. Journalists’ average monthly wages range between COP\$500,000 and COP\$1,000,000 (approximately £150–£336) (Gutiérrez, 2010), so over a six-month period it could be affordable even for the lower-waged reporters. However, in certain cases, full and partial-scholarships are provided for journalists covering conflict and peace (Manrique, 2008).
- i) The ICRC has taught a fair number of journalists (1,500) in its nine years of existence (2002–2011). This is a fine achievement, and as an international organisation it has the resources to programme constant and continuous courses for journalists. On the other hand, since 2001 MPP’s course has taught around 325–400 journalists (*Periodistas de Colombia*, 2011). The smaller class size (30 students per course) makes it more personalised, but at the same time reduces the number of graduates.
- j) That the MPP course results in a diploma indicates that it is an achievement, as it indicates a short university degree and the high level of specialisation of the graduates. In Latin America university degrees and certificate courses are well regarded. ICRC’s certificate is also acceptable given the prestige of the organisation and the specific focus on international humanitarian law. However, it should be noted that ‘diploma

course' can have duration from three months to one year, and there is no difference of the length, as it is given the same certificate.

As Pulitzer (1904) suggested, journalists' excellence and best editorial practices would be developed only through intensive comparative study and criticism. Given in a constant manner by more trained instructors and mentors, this clearly applies to the MPP course.

It is essential to note that the training initiatives of some international non-governmental organisations, such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), have similar programmes to those in Colombia. IWPR trained Afghan journalists on conflict-reporting and investigative journalism before the fall of the Taliban (IWPR, 2011). Yet there are differences in comparison with the Colombian endeavour, since the IWPR's training is organised by an international NGO, whereas in Colombia it is a programme of a national NGO. In addition, the IWPR's trainers are international, whereas in Colombia they are national journalists and experts. Another disparity is the journalists' background: in Afghanistan the course focused on the basics of journalism, while in Colombia there is a specialised course for professional journalists. However, the connection between these two programmes is the network of journalists which monitors the graduates throughout their work.

5.4 The Reporters of Colombia Network: The Guild's Union

The Reporters of Colombia Network was created by CINEP's Peace Programme, Media for Peace, and Javeriana University, as a result of a workshop on responsible coverage of conflicts. Graduates of the program become members of the network. Its aim is to deliver information on the armed conflict to a higher standard and with an eye to the peace-building processes. The network encompasses journalists from diverse media (press, TV, radio, internet). Their website acts as a platform for publishing articles and reports and sharing information. Their main journalistic claim is to achieve high standards in journalism, such as independence, accuracy, contextualisation in news, and balance.

The project thus gives journalists the tools (practical and theoretical tools, ethos, and personal experience) to work in dangerous circumstances. The process not only educates journalists, but is succeeded by a follow-up process after the diploma course finishes, in order to observe the graduates' work, constructively criticise, and to create boundaries among conflict journalists and peer support among colleagues. This initiative thus provides supervision of journalists from more experienced colleagues in the form of a newsroom council which assesses proposals from all over the country.

They suggest the best angle for the article, in which sources must be consulted, in order to have more balance. One example was the proposal to cover a displaced community, which after five years of displacement due to a massacre, can return to their place of origin. The trainers can suggest sources and the scope of news features or report. Another example is the chronicle, 'A country of mutilated people' (Salcedo Ramos, 2008), which is concerned with the antipersonnel landmines that are buried in thirty-one out of the thirty-two departments of Colombia. In seventeen years there have been 6,637 victims, and since 2005 on average three cases a day are reported. This chronicle is thus an example of the scope of *Reporteros de Colombia*, which shows how they promote a space for additional information on the conflict—stories that the traditional media does not always include.

One of the project's coordinators asserted:

There is a lack of reporting on the conflict and the peace building activities, and any reports are isolated. They don't provide a context to what is happening, and therefore the civilian population cannot understand what is happening ... When the story is highly sensitive, the name of the journalist is not published, and the "Reporteros" name is given as a substitute. The network helps journalists improve their coverage of the conflict. Castañeda (NGO coordinator).

A journalist member of the network states that, 'We feel less scared now with the network behind us. As more journalists are joining and will join in the future, we're getting stronger and people [journalists] are less frightened' (Avendaño, regional journalist).

To educate journalists, it is crucial to break the mental frameworks of journalistic routines that can be part of their media's newsroom culture (e.g., bias, lack of training regarded as common, lack of specialised knowledge regarded as normal). An investigation undertaken by the NGO Media for Peace, entitled 'War: Threats to the Press' (*Guerra: Amenaza para la Prensa*), revealed how information on the conflict is produced and its relation to threats and risks to journalists (Gómez, 2005). It detected a series of journalistic routines that in various ways generated risks to reporters covering the conflict.

The research dealt with reporters who covered conflict in the country (on TV, radio, or newspapers), and who lived and worked in high-risk zones. In relation to news output, it analysed factors such as information enterprise, the general direction of the reporting, production, editing, and the situation of journalists. As a result, the NGO created a series of sarcastic posters to be displayed in newsrooms, press offices, journalist's unions, and NGOs. The posters demonstrate and remind the reader what journalists should do in their professional practice. The text is written in an ironic manner, since it is addressed from journalists to journalists as a wake-up call to colleagues.

The illustrations by Vladdo—a renowned Colombian political satirist and cartoonist—cover the topics of threats to journalists, reporting on displacements, advice to media directors, security of journalist around armed actors and information on child soldiers. Another poster on instructions on how to become a self-censored journalist (Appendix F), instructions on how to approach armed sources in order to become a threatened journalist (Appendix G) and finally a poster on instructions for managers and media directors, on how to get your journalists to become victims of the conflict (Appendix H). In this section, we examine the poster entitled "*Instructions on becoming a threatened journalist*" (Figures 2 and 3), which helps to reinforce the arguments for the necessity of specialised journalistic training in the Colombian conflict.

Instrucciones para convertirse en un periodista amenazado



**NO SE PREPARE
PARA ENTENDER EL
CONFLICTO. NO
ESTUDIE LA HISTORIA
DEL PAÍS.**

**NO SE CAPACITE
EN TEMAS COMO
ARMAMENTO,
EXPLOSIVOS, NI
PRIMEROS AUXILIOS Y
MEJOR SI NO SABE
NADA DE DERECHO
INTERNACIONAL
HUMANITARIO.**

**OLVÍDESE DE LA
RESPONSABILIDAD
SOCIAL QUE IMPLICA
INFORMAR SOBRE LA
GUERRA.**

**PERMANEZCA MÁS DE
UN AÑO SIN CAMBIAR
DE FUENTES DE
INFORMACIÓN SOBRE EL
CONFLICTO ARMADO.**

**MANTENGA RELACIONES
IDEOLÓGICAS, AFECTIVAS
O DE NEGOCIOS CON SUS
FUENTES.**

**NO CONFRONTE
NI RECONFIRME LA
INFORMACIÓN QUE LE
SÚMINISTRAN SUS
FUENTES. CONFÓRMESE
Y ACEPTÉ, SIN DUDAR,
TODO LO QUE LE
CUENTAN.**

**NO MIDA RIESGOS.
DÉJESE LLEVAR POR
LA PASIÓN, EL DESEO
POR LA PRIMICIA Y
EL AFÁN DE
RECONOCIMIENTO.**

**HAGA TRATOS CON
SUS FUENTES Y
ACEPTE TODAS LAS
CONDICIONES QUE LE
IMPONGAN. DESPUÉS
INCÚMPLALAS.**

**ADJETIVE Y OPINE
SOBRE LAS NOTICIAS
DEL CONFLICTO.**

**CUANDO VAYA
A ZONAS PELIGROSAS
VIAJE DE NOCHE, SOLO
Y SIN DISTINTIVOS.**

**COMBINE EL OFICIO
PERIODÍSTICO CON
ACTIVIDADES QUE
COMPROMETAN SU
INDEPENDENCIA,
COMO TRABAJOS CON
POLÍTICOS LOCALES.**

**ACUSE A SUS COLEGAS
ANTE LOS ACTORES
DEL CONFLICTO.**

**UTILICE LOS
VEHÍCULOS DE LOS
COMBATIENTES.
CONVIÉRTASE EN
OBJETIVO MILITAR.**

**ANTE LOS GRITOS
Y PRESIONES DE SUS
JEFES PARA
CONSEGUIR "LA
CHIVA", ASÚSTESE,
CÁLLESE Y HAGA LO
QUE LE PIDAN.**

**NO REFLEXIONE
SOBRE SU TRABAJO.**

www.mediosparalapaz.org



Figure 2: The poster 'Instructions on becoming a threatened journalist' (*Instrucciones para convertirse en un periodista amenazado*), Medios Para La Paz (2008).



Figure 3: Translation of the poster 'Instructions on becoming a threatened journalist' (*Instrucciones para convertirse en un periodista amenazado*) Medios Para La Paz (2008). Translated by the author.

The use of satire in this work is essential in delivering the message. Every statement on the poster is supported by research, and is a conclusion of the investigation. This coincides with the testimony of our interviewees, who suggest circumstances that can influence the quality of information on the war. The lack of professionalism, deviations from ethical behaviour, and particularly the lack of specialised training of war journalists is highlighted:

- ‘Do not prepare yourself to understand the conflict. Do not *study the history of the country*’.

Interviewees in this research agreed that there is a general lack of knowledge of the history of Colombia and the armed conflict. The multifaceted violence, the length of the war, and the difficulty of understanding the conflict are factors that make it difficult to get a grasp of the situation. Certain journalists and journalism students are not exceptions. As one reporter states:

I teach a class on ‘journalism and conflict’ at a private university. There is no journalism degree at the public university. My students know about the conflict through the media, they haven’t read much, so their perspective is radical: good (the state) versus evil (the guerrillas) (Jaramillo, city journalist).

Sometimes we haven’t got time to contextualise, given that I haven’t finished an article and I’m told that I need to hand in another two in the next hour. It is the routines, but I blame myself too. I know that I could do a better job, but I go for the safest and fastest way (García, B7).

- ‘Do not *train* yourself on topics such as weaponry, explosives, or first aid—and better if you don’t know anything about *International Humanitarian Law*’ [italics added].

A reporter explains:

A solid and rigorous education is needed in order to know exactly how to cover the conflict. I believe that journalists ought to get some distance from the media and educate themselves in another kind of conflict coverage. We’re not educated for it, why we don’t see another way to do it, since we don’t know how (Mercado, former city journalist).

Another journalist concurs:

I promote training with professionals, since I am what I am now because of the specialisation courses. The standards that we have in Bogotá are different from the regions, because reporters there sometimes don’t have a

professional degree, so their education is poorer, but they have learned the craft in the newsroom (González, city journalist).

- ‘Do not *reflect* on your own work’ and ‘Use *adjectives* and give your *opinion* on news of the conflict’ [italics added].

One reporter shyly recalls:

Once my editor called me up and read out loud my article about a confrontation between the ‘guerrilla and indigenous communities’. I was ashamed when I heard it. I realised I had made several catastrophic mistakes. The next thing: the indigenous community leader called me up to tell me off about how I depicted him, and the cherry on the cake was that I was threatened by the guerrilla via email. But I knew that it was because I didn’t report accurately (López, regional journalist).

This is an important category of analysis; the accuracy of words used by journalists. Therefore a recommendation is to assess wisely every word written, and to be extremely careful with adjectives employed in the coverage of the conflict. For instance *El Tiempo* handbook states that they should not use words that the armed actors utilise but the accurate words needed to complete their news information. This suggestion is related with the peace journalism perspective ‘do not exacerbate the language to produce a confrontation atmosphere’; however, it is also interlaced with the BBC guidelines to report, ‘not to produce chaos with the information’.

In this regard, as a result of an extensive debate and research, the NGO Media for Peace published a dictionary whose title translates as ‘To Disarm the Word’ (1999), which states that the press does not promote peace, but does have a duty to avoid escalating the situation. This work emerged as a part of a discussion of the language used by journalists, which reflected the guerrillas/paramilitary/government/army actors. The proposal intended to disarm words (*desarmar la palabra*)—that is to avoid any kind of violent or war language. In their perspective, it will contribute to balance information, by focusing on the precision in the word employed in the news (Moreno, 2005).

The dictionary is written by journalists for journalists; Guerrero articulates clearly the implications of discourse in war coverage: precision and grace. ‘The precision gives clarity and sense, and grace produces fluency, understanding and efficacy. Precision and grace can become the press’ fundamental contribution towards the discredit of war and towards the promotion of peace’ (2005:9) [My translation]. It could be argued that this proposal is connected with peace journalism aims, yet it is part of the perspective of responsible journalism.

The appropriate language is important for well-trained conflict-reporters. A visible difference is reporter who cover conflict from the judiciary side, which are mainly focused on mines, battles, etc. reporting from an army perspective. Whereas a journalist covering conflict have to be extremely careful with its writing. For example, they will report about an anti-personal mines and people killed in combat, and will not employ the military terminology, which translates as ‘discharged in combat’.

- ‘Do not challenge or confirm information given by sources. Be satisfied and accept it all’.

This is addressing directly the media dynamics of one-source news, which in some cases are only based in one perspective, which in a conflict it implies to leave beside the other actors, victims; therefore, a great part of the information.

- ‘Forget about the social responsibility that is entailed by reporting on the war’.

The MPP course puts strong emphasis on journalists’ ethics and their understanding of their role in society and the conflict. As one reporter expressed it,

Journalism has contributed very little towards a new viewpoint on the conflict, but we could have been worse, we could have disregarded the parapolitics, never found the mass graves, humanitarian accord... yes we could have been worse but we could have been better (Zuluaga, regional journalist).

- ‘Make deals with your sources and accept all the conditions’.

The journalists that cover illegal armed groups agreed that these groups attempt to regulate the journalists’ work. They demanded certain types of information and

reporting tones in the news, in order to get a pass to the region to cover the news. So the free access of journalists to conflict zones is most of the time regulated. In this regard an editor asserts:

I've never promised anything to my sources about whether I can publish it or not—that's not up to me but to the editor-in-chief and other media issues. Sources such as armed actors always want to pressure you to publish exactly what they've said in the interview, even if it will be eight pages long. But you have to explain the dynamics of media and never guarantee that it will be printed (Olimpo, regional editor).

The language of the poster is rather informal with some slightly crude statements, which makes it more visible and gives it a higher probability of being read and reflected on by the audience, since it is written as from colleague to colleague. The sarcastic statements thus give the poster a higher relevance among professionals, being a self-critique inside the profession, by people that have profound knowledge of their own flaws. If the poster had come from another source, for example academia, it would probably receive less attention from journalists, as it is argued—in Colombia as in other parts of the world—academia and the journalism profession are divided with regard to understanding the reality of their work routines. These research findings of *Medios para la Paz* constitute yet another reason to pursue and organise specialised training for journalists.

This is not a poster with a simple caricature of journalists, but is appealing in its approach, and therefore different understandings and negotiation might occur when journalists read the poster. Each point is the result of a detailed investigation, yet the output is a simple ironic line, a punch line. Yet what is more important is what might happen after journalists read the poster—a self-reflective process can take place, a re-evaluation and reality check to evaluate if they fully identify or reject the poster. Journalists might take the hint in certain points or take offence at it. Consequently, either way there is a reflection of their work, and if they feel it refers to them, there might result a change in their professional behaviour. The poster aims to appear in every newsroom, where it might act as a reminder of professional standards.

5.5 Conclusion

There is in the world a North–South divide in the specialised training of journalists for covering wars or reporting from a hostile environment.⁸² Some media organisations (for instance, in Europe, the USA, and Australia) require the fulfilment of prior training from personnel. For this, there are varied educational tools available, such as courses and emergency handbooks for journalists.

Research findings explain that journalism education has led to the development of quality journalism in Colombia and is, as Curran states, ‘one way in which society can intervene to influence the development of journalism’ (2005, p. xiv). In this way, Colombian organised society has made a tremendous contribution to its journalism and journalists in recent years. Finally, the feasibility of the Colombian educational approach of conflict coverage within current journalism education is a noteworthy example of improving the quality of war journalism. This method might shed light on educational perspectives for reporting in violent societies. This experience reveals the journalist’s constant need for specialisation and training throughout their professional life.

Future writing on journalism education will have to accept a broader range of journalism. Only by examining journalism training from the general to the particular can the major necessities in each case be revealed. For example, in places with unstable democracies or with violent environments, such as this study case, the professionalism of war journalists demands specialisation.

The MPP diploma course on Responsible Journalism in Armed Conflict responds to the need of the media profession to achieve higher standards and to respect the basic journalistic guidelines in the midst of an ongoing armed conflict. It sheds light on the evolution of journalism and its constant reshaping according to local circumstances, culture, and societal needs. This style of journalism, still at its beginning, is a laboratory that will be assessed carefully in the following years to

⁸² The concept of ‘hostile environment’ is understood in this thesis as war, conflict, natural disaster, a pandemic, and may also refer to a country’s lack of security regarding police forces or military—such as is the case in Mexico’s current war on drugs.

measure its characteristics, failures, and potentials.

The potential is to create a space where journalists can show their own work and their rationale for covering news. This is extremely valuable since this ‘time off’ or reflective time may help them to improve their work, as in the case of some of the professionals interviewed.

What is important is the strength shown by the guilds and the unity between networks that collaborate jointly to break news that is impossible for regional colleagues to break. It is important to reinforce regional journalist networks (e.g., *Red Caribe*, Antioquia) and maintain a collaborative coalition with the stronger metropolitan networks. That line of work has been developed by the ‘*Medios para la Paz*’ Diploma course and also by ‘*Fundación para el Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano*’, who have contributed to link city and local reporters, enabling the passing on of news that their media did not publish.

CHAPTER VI

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MULTIFACETED CENSORSHIP

In the following, we will present research findings regarding press censorship in Colombia that shed light on a triple menace: the decrease in journalistic quality, a citizen's right to information and, unfortunately, the influence on journalists' professional behaviour. Research revealed that there are three kinds of censorship: political interests, economic interests, and fear. Censorship can work in different forms linked to power, repression and discipline. Foucault (1984:60) is certainly accurate in explaining that power does not weigh on society as a repressive form, but instead 'traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of *knowledge*, produces *discourse*' [italics added]. That is, power needs to be regarded as a productive network, which is intertwined in the social system, beyond the negative function of dominating and repressing society. In the same way, reporting news faces censorship through the selective discourses adopted by the media outlet, the access to sources as a form of knowledge and the gratification that can be manifested as professional status or higher salaries, among other benefits. In Colombia, during Álvaro Uribe's government, the official discourse permeated several media institutions, as the power underneath the social body, reproducing the endorsed discourse of the war on terror. As Philip Knightley asserts,

The truth is that governments wage war to win and do not greatly worry about *how* they do it. To them media are a menace and unless there is an actual declaration of war and they can impose censorship then they have to try to persuade and coerce the media to get on side (Knightley, 2010:4).

George Orwell argued that 'unpopular ideas can be silenced and inconvenient facts kept dark, without the need for any official ban' (1972). He pointed out subtle forms of censorship that can be immersed in media culture and journalists' professional practices. There are many academic studies focused on censorship (Curry Jensen, 1991; Green & Karolides, 2005; Jones, 2002; Warburton, 2009),

given that the history of journalism has always been linked with censorship, not only under authoritarian regimes but also in democratic states. Colombian journalism has different levels of censorship interlaced with government, armed groups, and media. As a result, it is easy to observe evidence for Restrepo's theory that journalist's greatest and vilest professional behaviour is clearly exposed when they are under attack by violent actors (2010).

Curry Jansen (1991) elucidates that censorship is a form of surveillance and a mechanism that gathers intelligence that the powerful can use to increase control over ideas or individuals that threaten to disrupt the established sense or order. Self-censorship manifests as the silence that journalists might impose on themselves in defence of their lives or interests. Journalists and media are targets of power, and Colombia is not the exception. The majority of interviewees lived under the pressure of armed groups and criminality, but also—and sometimes disregarded—are the influences exerted by politicians, public servants and advertisement revenues, all of which might silence the press.

Censorship⁸³ becomes more explicit during wartime. Given that censorship is characterised as the suppression by any strategy of information, preventing citizens from being informed. In war, information control is a frequent tactic used by all sides of the conflict with the objective of preventing the enemy from using it in its favour. Therefore, censorship and self-censorship exerted formally and informally has become a practise often used and justified (Miller 1994; 2004); during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the BBC, ITV, and Channel 4 regularly postponed or stopped the transmission of documentaries on Ireland.

Censorship increased at the peak of the drug-traffic war in Colombia in the eighties with terrorist attacks and threats that limited the freedom of expression. These were followed by paramilitary and guerrilla intimidation, which censored journalists directly. More recently, another important factor in the censorship or direction of information was the propaganda campaign articulated by former

⁸³ In this sense, and for the purposes of this research, the rationale of the use of censorship is within the contexts of Political censorship, military censorship, and corporate censorship. However, censorship is exercised in other contexts and methods.

President Uribe that reinforced a good image of the president and the government. Therefore, any opposition to that regime was regarded suspiciously.

Álvaro Uribe had taboo topics, such as his family connections, his past, family helicopters, and paramilitary. That is also a clear form of hidden censorship, the president was offensive and intimidated certain journalists who strayed from the official line (e.g., Hollman Morris, Claudia Jimena Duque, Daniel Coronell, Alejandro Santos); therefore, the result within the journalist's guild was silence towards these particular, yet very important, issues.

In terms of symbolic attacks on journalism in Colombia, we can refer to the cases of Jaime Garzón⁸⁴ and Guillermo Cano. Garzón's murder resulted in the disappearance of political critique and political humour on television. However, despite these crude displays of violent and direct censorship, there are many cases of formal censorship in journalism that will be analysed in the next section.

6.1 Legal Framework

In Colombia, according to Article 13 of the American Convention of Human Rights (*Convención Americana de Derechos Humanos*) and the parameters established by the jurisprudence of the Interamerican Court of Human Rights (*Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos*), the country has a judicial framework to ensure the right to freedom of expression.

This is stated in the Political Constitution (*Constitución Política*) of 1991; there are three articles regarding rights and guarantees of freedom of expression. The first article, Article 20, makes general provisions for Freedom of Speech and Information:

Everybody has the fundamental right to freedom of speech and the broadcast of ideas and opinions, the right to inform and receive

⁸⁴ Jaime Garzón Forrero, (1960-1999) a famous journalist, humorist, and peace-negotiator, assassinated by the paramilitary Carlos Castano. He directed a television programme (*Zoociedad, Quac! El noticiero La Lechuza*, "Zoo-ciety, Quac! The Owl's Newscast") a social and political parody of the country. He was also peace negotiator for hostage releases with the guerrillas.

information with veracity and impartiality, and the right to establish mass media that is freely accessible and socially responsible. They are guaranteed the right to rectification in matters of equality. They will not be censored (Colombian Constitution).

More recently, the legal reform Law 1426, enacted by the Executive branch on December 29, 2010, amended Law 599 passed in 2000, in regards to punishable conduct against the legally protected welfare of human rights defenders and journalists. It increases the statute of limitations in violent crimes (i.e., torture, forced displacement, assassination) against human rights defenders and journalists to up to thirty years. However, the flaw in this law is that it is not retroactive. It is important to note that this legal reform followed recommendations by the *Asociación de Diarios Colombianos* ‘ANDIARIOS’ (Association of Colombian Newspapers) together with the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA⁸⁵) in their research ‘Rewarding Injustice: A Review of Impunity in Crimes Against Journalists in Colombia (...)’; a document that called on Colombia’s legislative and judicial branches to introduce policy reforms to combat impunity—i.e., the elimination of sentence reductions applied to some convictions for journalists.

This amendment was not only important for Colombia’s constitution and journalists, but it was also set up as an example for Latin American countries in regards to freedom of expression. In this regard,

The Colombian legislative and executive branches have made important strides as the leader in this battle on behalf of freedom of the press—steps which we hope will be mirrored by governments such as those in Mexico and Honduras, where crimes against journalists and impunity are the biggest problems facing the press (Ealy-Ortiz, 2011:1).

⁸⁵ The Inter American Press Association is a non-profit organisation based in Miami which defends freedom of expression in the Americas. Around 1,300 print publications belong to this organisation. An important project is the IAPA Impunity Project regarding violence against journalists and the decrease in impunity surrounding journalists’ crimes. The project is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

It is important to note that journalists are also guaranteed the right to keep their sources secret. Finally, Law 918 of 2004 is designed for the protection of journalistic work from the workplace to the social arena.

The country has also signed two international treaties and international declarations of freedom of expression, the first being the Civil and Political Rights Pact, Article 19. This shows the government's commitment to freedom of expression, and the adherence to international treaties recently shows a sustained obligation to accomplish. However, the circumstances are different, as will be argued in this section. Also, in 2003, President Álvaro Uribe signed⁸⁶ the 'Chapultepec Declaration'⁸⁷ which guaranteed Freedom of Expression, for journalists witnessed by the committee members⁸⁸ of the Inter-American Press

⁸⁶ The Declaration was ratified by the majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries; Antigua and Barbuda, Dutch Antilles, Argentina, Bolivia, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, USA, Granada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, San Christopher-Nevis, San Vicente, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

⁸⁷ The 'Chapultepec Declaration' or '*Declaración de Chapultepec*' adopted at the 'Hemispheric Freedom of Speech Conference' held in Mexico City on March 11, 1994. This Declaration is unique, among international documents, since private citizens created it without any participation of governments. The declaration states that any law or governmental action may not limit freedom of expression or freedom of the press, no matter what medium is concerned. With this framework, the Chapultepec Declaration adopted ten principles to enable societies to have free press, and these are: 1) No people of any society can be free without freedom of expression and of the press. The exercise of this freedom is not something authorities grant; it is an inalienable right of the people. 2) Every person has the right to seek and receive information, express opinions and disseminate them freely. No one may restrict or deny these rights. 3) The authorities must be compelled by law to make available in a timely and reasonable manner the information generated by the public sector. No journalist may be forced to reveal his or her sources of information. 4) Freedom of expression and of the press are severely limited by murder, terrorism, kidnapping, intimidation, the unjust imprisonment of journalists, the destruction of facilities, violence of any kind and impunity for perpetrators. Such acts must be investigated promptly and punished severely. 5) Prior censorship, restrictions of the circulation of the media or dissemination of their reports, forced publication of information, the imposition of obstacles to the free flow of news, *and restrictions on the activities and movements of journalists directly contradict freedom of the press* [My emphasis]. 6) Media and journalists should neither be discriminated against nor favoured because of what they say or write. 7) Tariff and exchange policies, licenses for the importation of paper or news-gathering equipment, the assignation of radio and television frequencies and the granting or withdrawal of government advertising may not be used to reward or punish the media or individual journalists. 8) The membership of journalists in guilds, their affiliation to professional and trade associations and the affiliation of the media with business groups must be strictly voluntary. 9) The credibility of the press is linked to its commitments to truth, to the pursuit of accuracy, fairness and objectivity and to the clear distinction between news and advertising. The attainment of these goals and the respect for ethical and professional values may not be imposed. These are the exclusive responsibility of journalists and the media. In a free society, it is public opinion that rewards or punishes. 10) No news medium nor journalist may be punished for publishing the truth or criticising or denouncing the government.

⁸⁸ The *Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa's* committee visited Álvaro Uribe back in 2003.

According to the government's press release on January 22, 2003, which is reproduced at the Chapultepec Declaration's website www.declaraciondechapultepec.org, the committee was formed by: Alberto Ibargüen (Editor and President of The Miami Herald), Jack Fuller (President of the Chicago Tribune Publishing Company), Phil Bennet (International Editor for The Washington Post), Gonzalo Marroquín (Director of Prensa Libre de Guatemala), Ricardo Trotti (Press Coordinator for

Society (*Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa—SIP*). However, in the following years Uribe's government, as described in this chapter, acted in opposition to every one of the treaties signed.

Journalists are also specifically regarded in the constitution: Article 73 states that journalistic activity will be protected to guarantee professional autonomy and freedom. Finally, Article 74 states that all people have the right to access public information except in cases established by law (*Constitución Política de Colombia*, 1991).

6.2 Government Programme to Protect Journalists

In 2000 (August 18), the Colombian government approved the decree 1592, which created the Programme to Protect Journalists and Media Professionals (*Programa de Protección a Periodistas y Comunicadores Sociales*) which implements security measures to protect journalists in violent zones and dangerous missions. Therein, journalists were acknowledged as a vulnerable professional group. The 1952 decree also established the Committee of Regulation and Risk Evaluation (*Comité de Reglamentación y Evaluación de Riesgos, CRER*), which examines the veracity of cases and suggests and approves protection guidelines. The members are the vice-chancellor, the governmental human rights director, a delegate of the Security Administration Department (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, DAS*) and NGOs (Media for Peace, Freedom of the Press Foundation, Journalists Associations, among others), all of whom meet monthly. This programme is crucial, since the government and non-governmental organisations regulate the institutional protection to journalists.

The programme started with 14 journalists in 2000. In 2002, 168 journalists were under this programme. According to the Colombian Home Office Report (2009) on Freedom of Expression, by 2009 this number had decreased to 129. This

the Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa)and, ironically, Enrique Santos, who in 2003 was the Director of *El Tiempo* and is still a shareholder of the newspaper, and who is also the cousin of Colombia's ex-vice-President, Juan Manuel Santos, who became President of Colombia in 2010.

reflects a decrease in need of the programme only in the last year⁸⁹. The Government claims that this optimistic data shows how the journalist protection programme has led to a decrease in journalists' assassinations, yet one could argue that censorship has been the main protection.

In this regard, the numbers of journalist's assassinations have decreased, according to the Colombian Freedom of the Press Foundation (FLIP, 2009): since the creation of the Programme to Protect Journalists and Media professionals in 2000, FLIP registered eight journalists' murders due to professional work, in year 2008, none were registered and, in 2009 there was only one case. This is a significant decrease. The protection programme demonstrates legislative advancement in this country, backed by institutionalised protection that is a unique case within Latin America. Additionally, international organisations have recognised important improvements regarding journalist's protection in Colombia. However, the programmes' flaws and assertions will be discussed flowingly, since the decrease in journalist's assassinations are not only due to the institutional protection but also a result of self-censorship.

According to NGO reports (FLIP 2009, 2008) and this research's data, journalists in this country clearly fear to exercise their rights. The censorship manifests mainly indirectly. For instance, the freedom of the press organisation (FLIP, 2008) expressed their concern that high-ranked public officials, such as former president Álvaro Uribe, reprimanded journalists on their war reporting. This hostile rhetoric serves to publicly stigmatise journalists and put them at risk of violence (Freedom House, 2009).

Politicians, particularly at a local level, frequently denounce journalists. Even though the government provides physical protection (bodyguards) to journalists this protection is not accompanied by *political* protection. President Uribe's accusations towards certain journalists increase their vulnerability. In regards to their helplessness, journalists concur: 'To have a bodyguard in Bogotá can certainly help you. A bodyguard in rural areas, in a conflict zone, is useless'

⁸⁹ According to the Colombian *Ministerio del Interior y de Justicia* 2009 in the Freedom of the Press report, 2009.

Sierra (City editor). Another journalist expresses it thus:

Bodyguards, armoured cars, bullet-proof jackets, police patrols of our homes, office reinforcement in certain cases... there are thirty-four of us journalists who live this way, otherwise we could be killed. Gómez (Deputy director, city journalist).

To live with the fear that you can be killed anytime... it's difficult. [This is true] mostly in small villages such as Santa Marta [Pacific Coast] where everybody knows everyone, and even though you don't sign your piece, they'll know who wrote it. Beleño (Regional journalist).

A clear example of how the government infringed the Programme to Protect Journalists can be seen in the following account. On February 2, 2009, at the liberation of civilians kidnapped by FARC, accusations came up against journalists. Jorge Enrique Botero (Telesur journalist), alongside with the Red Cross, acted as a guarantor of the process and took several images that were later shared by the Associated Press (AP) news agency. The government demeaned the photographs as 'a part of the advertising game of terrorism' and implied that the guarantors were guerrilla collaborators (FLIP, 2009). However, the fact that journalists use armed groups as a source cannot be considered illegal. The broadcasting of information that is 'uncomfortable' for the government should not be considered a justification or advertisement of terrorism.

At the same time, Hollman Morris, as a journalist, attended the liberation of four hostages at a clandestine camp of FARC in the department of Caqueta. On February 3, 2009, the President of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe, stated in a news conference that Morris (OEA-IACHR, 2009): 'shielded himself through his condition as a journalist to be a permissive accomplice of terrorism, [...], one thing are those friends of terrorism who act as journalists, and another thing altogether are journalists'. In addition, the former head of state added that Morris 'took advantage of his situation as a journalist [...] and he held a terrorist party at an alternate place from that where the soldiers and the police were released'.

The UN and OAE (Organisation of American States) rapporteurs of freedom of expression, La Rue and Botero (2009), stated that they did not have knowledge of

any evidence that tied the journalists to criminal activities. What is more, La Rue and Botero expressed their concerns regarding the statement made by high-ranking government officials against journalists who are critical of the government. Uribe's statement (on Morris) 'increased the risks to life and personal integrity of journalists and human rights defenders, and that generated an effect of intimidation and self-censorship among social communicators in Colombia' (OEA, 2009)⁹⁰.

In this regard, to mark a journalist as a 'terrorist collaborator' or simply as a 'guerrilla collaborator' (*colaborador de la guerrilla*), without any legal evidence of such link is a clear example of the Colombian State's failure to guarantee and respect basic constitutional rights. The State attempted to slanderously criminalise these reporters without appropriate verification of the facts, and as a result this accusation created media turmoil.

Another journalist interviewed concurs,

The government's line at the present states that besides the conflict, Colombia is under a terrorist threat, consequently media should be part of the government's propaganda line. I crossed that line, but I believe that I'm a minority and the majority of media has bought that argument of 'united against the war on terror (...) [I]nformation here, mainly political, is part of government's news agenda, such as RCN and *El Tiempo*. The journalist does not consider its critical role, but its role as an apologist of a critical government. The president has made false accusations through *its* media; RCN, to attack my credibility and that of the director of TV program *Noticias Uno*. Gómez (news programme, deputy director)⁹¹

The exact case which Gómez is referring to is a scandal about a bridge that was built near president Uribe's villa in Antioquia. The former president of Banco

⁹⁰ Organization of American States and Inter American Commission on Human Rights, Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Joint Press Release 05/09 'The *rapporteur* for freedom of expression of the UN and of the OAS express their concern regarding comments made by high authorities of the Colombian government against journalist' (2009).

⁹¹ Ignacio Gómez is the former research director at *El Espectador* newspaper, currently the director of FLIP (Freedom of the Press Foundation). His reports have probed deeply into drug-trafficking, political corruption, arms trade, and mercenary involvement in the Colombian civil war and have appeared in international newspapers, such as The Guardian and Der Spiegel. Gómez has won the Rothko Chapel Award (1991), the Sam Chavkin Prize (2000) for Integrity in Latin American Journalism. He is also a three time winner of Simón Bolívar National Journalism Prize, revealing how British mercenaries had trained Colombian right-wing paramilitaries involved in the narcotics trade. He later released a book, *Los Comandos de la Guerra*. In 2002, he was a recipient of the International Press Freedom Awards from the Committee to Protect Journalists. Gómez is also a recipient of Amnesty International's Human Rights Media Award for Journalists under Risk.

Central, in a press conference, questioned the ways in which public works were assigned, using as an example the bridge that had been built as a direct result of the president's decision and without passing through the established procedure of the National Council of Law (*Consejo Nacional de Licitación*). The government's response was severe and relentless against the accusations, but left many unanswered questions and was a perfect scoop for a research feature, in this regard, as this same journalist (Gómez) indicates:

I decided to do that story, together with a correspondent in the Montería region. The correspondent/cameraman didn't want to shoot the images. I didn't know why at that point, so I decided to shoot the images myself and run the story. Then we learned that the camera operator was a friend of the president and he was supporting his candidacy to run as mayor of Montería. The president threatened to denounce me to the Latin American Press Society for violating the cameraman's right to work, this man that didn't want to do his job! These ridiculous conclusions were exposed on prime-time in RCN radio, TV and press to damage my prestige.

As it turns out, the president had already been accusing him since 2002. The first slander and accusation was made after he broke the news of the president's helicopter being found in a cocaine laboratory. 'The president was outraged and said that I was working for a German spy, whom I had written a book about, and that spy was a terrorist' Gómez (news programme, deputy director).

Gómez' book *La última misión de Werner Mauss* (Werner Mauss' Last Mission) (1998) a meticulous investigative work, revealed the illegal activities of Werner Mauss, a German spy in Colombia, working at that time as a hostage negotiator. Yet, it also exposed that former president Uribe—who was Governor of Antioquia at the time—was working for the English intelligence service MI5, and not for Colombian authorities. These shocking revelations made this journalist the target of several attacks, causing Gómez to flee to exile in 1989. Once again, in 2000, he was exiled following his feature report which exposed the connections of the paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño with the 1997 massacre in the Mapiripán village.

La Masacre de Mapiripán, in the Guaviare region is known as one of the biggest paramilitary assassinations of FARC guerrilla collaborators. On July 22, 1997, paramilitaries, with the help of military forces, murdered civilians as they controlled and besieged this village, searching not only for presumed guerrilla collaborators but also guerrilla supporters. According to testimonies (CIDH, 2005) the people—civilians assumed to be guerrilla collaborators—were tortured and dismembered. In 2005, the Inter-American Human Rights Court (*Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos*, CIDH) declared the Colombian State internationally responsible for the forty-nine murders and ordered compensation to the victims' relatives, among others⁹² (Cf. Inter-American Human Right's Court, Case: '*Masacre de Mapiripán vs. Colombia*').

Investigative journalism in Colombia, is not a priority of the mainstream press; however, we can find *Semana* and the closed *Cambio*⁹³ newswEEKlies with research units. For instance *Semana* has uncovered critical issues like the Paramilitary and Politics '*Parapolítica*' scandal. In addition, newspapers such as *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* have their investigative units. Muckraking journalists from mainstream and alternative media (both veteran and new), reporting on topics such as conflict, human rights, politics, the paramilitary and drug trafficking can face intimidation and threats from different sources (i.e., Gómez, Morris, Cano, Santos). In this regard, Figure 4 sets out in more detail various different types of violations of freedom of expression between 2007 and 2008 in Colombia. The diagram highlights threats as the most frequent act of intimidation against both journalists and media, in attempts to prevent their reporting. As the table also shows, inhuman treatment is the second most common action against journalists in this context.

⁹² The sentence by Inter-American Human Right's Court states that in relation to the international responsibility of the State with the facts (what do you mean here? That the State had the facts and was therefore responsible, or the facts regarding the State's actions?), the court acknowledged that although the massacre was perpetrated by paramilitary groups; the preparation and execution would not have been committed without the collaboration and forbearance, manifested in the many actions and omissions by members of the Army, including high commanders, (2005:3).

⁹³ In 2010, the *Cambio* informative magazine, owned by the *Planeta* Division of *El Tiempo* Publishing Corporation, announced that the magazine profile would change to report soft news and the reporters and staff were fired. *Cambio* was a muckraker, reporting scandalous agricultural millionaire subsidies to prominent businessmen (BBC Mundo: 2010).

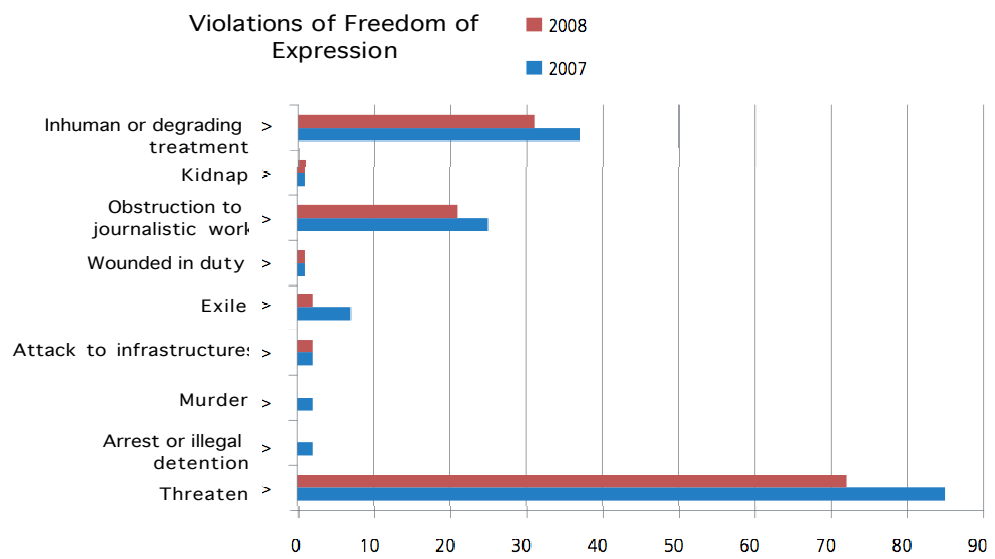
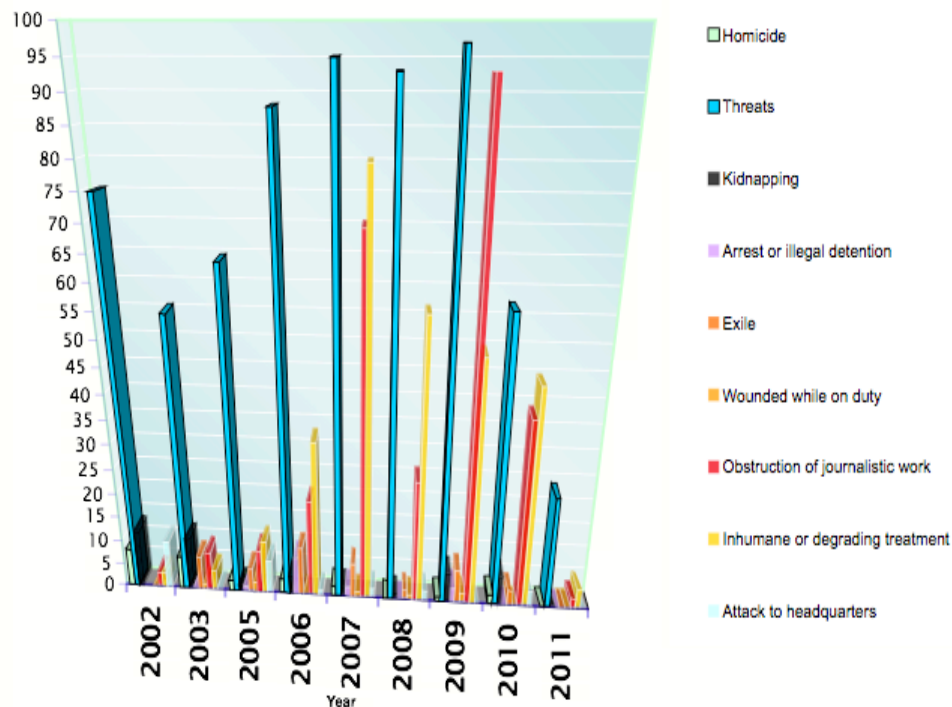


Figure 4: Attacks on Freedom of Expression against Journalists in Colombia 2008–2007 (FLIP Report 2008). Although there is a 2009 report, this research presents the 2008, due to the period analysed.

Freedom of Expression situation regarding Colombian journalists, 2002-2011



Source: Freedom of the Press Foundation's annual reports from 2003, 2005 to 2010 and bi-monthly report 2011...

Figure 5: Freedom of expression situation regarding Colombian journalists, 2002–2011. Graph constructed with data from annual reports of Freedom of Expression by Freedom of the Press Foundation (2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2011).

The NGO that produced this data also documented and exposed the origins of the threats alleged to have been carried out by many actors in the conflict. As shown in Figure 6 (below), the greatest percentage of threats (33%) came from ‘unknown’ protagonists, a factor which served to heighten the concern of journalists. As the diagram also shows, other notable sources of threats include armed groups and public servants.

6.3 Censoring Journalists and Media: President Called for ‘Prudence’ and ‘Discretion’

Former president Uribe called the media to show ‘prudence’ and ‘discretion’ in news coverage and urged journalists to exhibit self-control. In this regard, for certain journalists ‘discretion is the essential element for survival’ (Anonymous, regional journalist). Figure 6 (below) shows the diverse threats to journalists, that illustrate that are multifaceted.

Threats to journalists in Colombia 2010

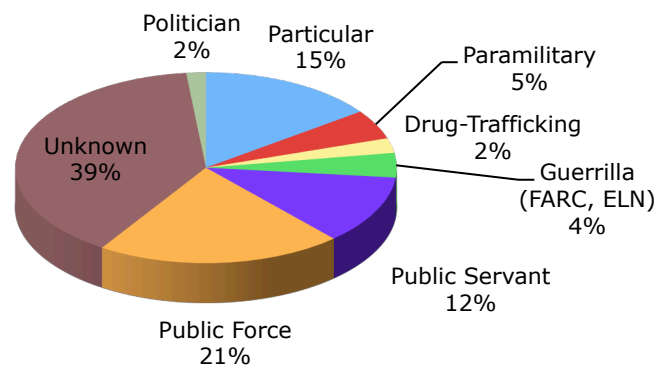


Figure 6: Threats to journalists in Colombia 2010 (FLIP, 2011).

Francisco Santos Calderón, Colombia’s newly elected president and former Minister of Defence, declared at the ‘Media and Terrorism: Friends or Foes?’ conference held in Madrid in 2005 that the ways in which media portray terrorist actions serve as a sounding box. However, what is the line that divides discretion and silencing? Similar debates happened in the midst of the peace negotiations, when *El Espectador*’s editor in chief, Carlos Lleras, proposed that Tirofijo (Manuel Marulanda), FARC’s former leader, write an opinion column regarding the peace process, in order to have a deeper understanding about what was happening at that time inside the negotiation process from the guerrilla’s perspective. A similar proposal was made later by *El Colombiano* newspaper in

later years; however, they sparked a heated debate regarding the freedom of expression of armed actors and an apology for violence. These debates are compelling, since the arguments are still pertinent in conflicts today, the notion that to publish the views of armed (mainly illegal) actors is an apology for violence and criminality and serves as a resonance boxes. Yet to open up media to armed actors might help create a better understanding from different perspectives.

Former president Uribe's propaganda campaign was another cause of censorship, since his government was exceptionally skilled with its media management and discourse. To illustrate this argument, we have Uribe's public reprimand on national television to *Semana's* magazine editor in chief; Alejandro Santos in April, 2006. This rebuke was made after the magazine published a suit against the Colombian Department of Security (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*). One Uribe's arguments went thus: 'You cannot abuse the freedom of the press to undermine the legitimacy of Colombian institutions. The freedom of the press has greater responsibility with institutions than with the pursuit of money' (Uribe, 2006, *RCN Noticias*). Journalists must therefore display 'prudence' as their ticket to survival. 'My prudence is what I've got to do to stay in this newspaper' (Anonymous, regional journalist). The call for discretion from the former president was a blunt example of State censorship towards media.

6.3.1 Colombian Media Discretion Accord

In November 1999, media representatives signed the Colombian 'Media Discretion Accord'; an agreement regarding the broadcast of violence. Given the criticised media coverage of the conflict, and aiming to reach higher quality standards regarding the coverage of violence, media academics from the Media Department of Colombia's *Universidad de la Sabana* proposed the framework of the '*Acuerdo por la Discreción*' (Discretion Accord). Thirty-two directors of the most influential media outlets in the country agreed and signed the accord in 1999. This agreement, conceived in the midst of the violent environment that dominated Colombia at the end of the nineties, aimed for higher-quality coverage of the conflict as well as greater responsibility in regards to the broadcasting of

violence and violent situations, and peace negotiations. It is important to note that the agreement did not intend to undermine the war on drugs nor any of the actors in the armed conflict, but only to decrease the apology for violence portrayed by the media.

This was an effort at self-regulation to control news of extreme violence. However, one can argue that this was another case of censorship—is more subtle and institutionalised one—and limitation of the freedom of expression. The theoretical framework of the accord was based on the Social Responsibility Theory, developed by the Hutchins Commission⁹⁴ regarding better professional practices and better information quality to set the basis of a journalistic renovation. The main point was that the press should acquire, in a symbolic manner, responsibility to society through an implicit ‘contract’. It should be acknowledged that the initiative came from academia and the media, not from the government.

⁹⁴ Hutchins Commission from USA, develop a Report ‘A Free and Responsible Press’ made by Freedom of the Press Commission in 1947, lead by Robert Hutchins. The report’s findings highlighted the necessity of media’s self-criticism and regulation and recommended the creation of an independent organism that examine press’ performance (Discretion Accord, 1999).

Table 3: The Discretion Accord (*Acuerdo de discreción*)

The Discretion Accord
<p>As we are aware of the social responsibility of our work, we—Colombian media professionals—commit to this Discretion Accord to contribute to peace, the respect for life and the search for communal well-being.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) News coverage of acts of violence—attacks on villages, massacres, kidnapping, and combat between conflict actors—shall be accurate, responsible and balanced. In order to accomplish this purpose, every media outlet will define professional standards that promote quality in journalism and, benefits for their public. 2) We will not present rumours as facts. Exactness, which implies situating the context, shall have priority over speediness. 3) We will fix clear criteria on direct broadcasts, aiming to improve information quality and avoiding media manipulation by violent actors. 4) For ethical reasons and those of social responsibility we will not pressure victim's relatives through the media. 5) We will establish criteria for the publishing and broadcasting of images that might generate public repulsion, widespread violence or indifference. 6) We will respect and promote ideological, doctrinarian and political pluralism. We will utilise expressions that help coexistence among Colombians. <p>Signatory parties: Aida Luz Herrera, Director <i>Cadena Noticias radio Net</i>; Ana Mercedes Gómez, Director <i>El Colombiano</i> Newspaper; Andrés Botero Molina, Director <i>Radio Ecos 1360 of Pereira</i>; Aura Isabel Olano, Director <i>El Liberal</i> newspaper, Cecilia Orozco, Director <i>Noticiero de las 7</i>; Daniel Coronel, Director <i>Noticias Canal RCN</i>; Darío Arizmendi, Director <i>Noticias Caracol Radio</i>; Daissy Cañón, Director <i>Noticiero 24 Horas</i>; Diana Calderón, Director <i>Informativo 24 Horas</i>; Eduardo Durán Gómez, Codirector <i>Vanguardia Liberal</i> Newspaper; Enrique Santos, Codirector <i>El Tiempo</i> Newspaper; Felipe Zuleta, Director <i>Noticiero Hora Cero</i>; Félix de Bedout, Director <i>NTC Noticias</i>; Francisco Javier Díaz, Director <i>TV Hoy y NCA</i> newscast; Gerardo Páez, Director <i>Cadena Melodía</i>; Guillermo Gaviria, Director <i>Periódico El Mundo</i>; Jairo Gómez, Director <i>Noticiero Uninoticias</i>; Jairo Pulgarín, Director de <i>Noticias Radio Santafé</i>; Javier Ayala, Director <i>Noticiero En Vivo 9:30</i>; Jhon Dider Rodríguez, Director <i>Noticias Colmando Radio</i>; Jorge Uriel Hurtado, Director <i>La Tarde</i> Newspaper; Juan Carlos Pérez, Director <i>Noticias Todelar Radio</i>; Juan B. Fernández, Director <i>El Heraldo</i> Newspaper; Juan Gossain, Director <i>Noticias RCN Radio</i>; Juan Guillermo Ríos, Director <i>Noticias Radio Melodía</i>; Juan Lozano, Director <i>Noticias Canal City Tv</i>; María Teresa Ronderos, Magazine Director <i>La Nota Económica</i>; Mauricio Vargas, Director <i>Cambio Magazine</i>; Max Duque Rengifo, Director <i>Diario del Huila</i>; Lays Vargas, Director <i>Noticiero Hora 13 de Tele-Antioquia</i>; Rafael Santos, Codirector <i>El Tiempo</i> Newspaper; Ricardo Santamaría, Director <i>Noticiero CMI</i>; Rafael Vergara, Director <i>Cadena Radial Súper</i>; Sebastián Hiller, Codirector <i>Vanguardia Liberal</i> Newspaper; Yamid Amat, Director <i>Noticias Canal Caracol</i>; Miguel Silva, Director <i>Semana</i> Magazine.</p> <p>Bogotá, November 4th, 1999. [Author's translation]</p>

The accord aimed to improve language, increase respect for victims and families, avoid sensational (yellow) journalism, verify facts, and contextualise information, but above all to inform responsibly. In a study conducted by the media observatory of *Universidad de la Sabana* (see Velásquez & Gutiérrez; *Universidad de la Sabana*, 2001, 2010), researchers interviewed media directors from across the country with regard to freedom of expression, the peace process, and the discretion accord in order to assess the effectiveness of the accord (see Figure 7).

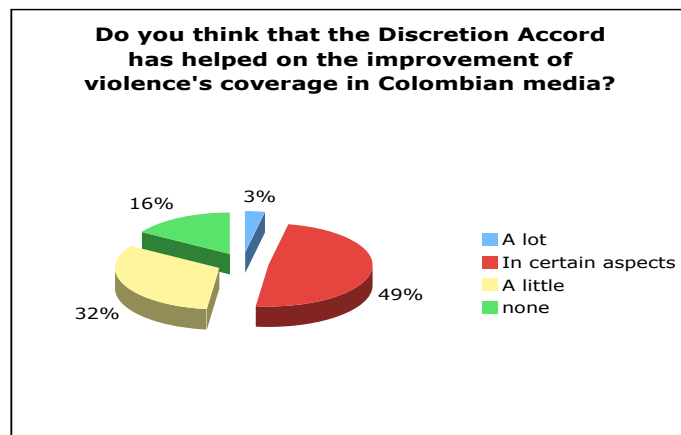


Figure 7: Chart constructed with data (reactive 11; Media signatory of the Accord) from research on 'Media directives perceptions on Freedom of expression, peace process and the Discretion Accord' (*"Directores conceptúan sobre la Libertad de Prensa, el proceso de paz y el acuerdo por la discreción"*), Media Observatory, Universidad de la Sabana (2010).

6.4 Informal Censorship

Censorship does not always involve laws and constitutional articles that dictate what to publish. It has various forms, such as interference with what journalists' report, such as gathering of information, sources or obstruction of their work. Take the intimidation of journalists for instance, or the occasional use of contempt-of-court law against the media (Article 19, UDHR, 1989).

Gómez (city journalist) recalls that, during Uribe's mandate, two departmental capital cities remained without journalists: Arauca⁹⁵ and Pasto. Arauca journalists

⁹⁵ Arauca is a petrol region in the northwest of the country which has been disputed among FARC guerrillas (front 10 and 45), ELN guerrillas (front Domingo Lain and ABC Block) and the paramilitary (Block Vencedores of Arauca). Since 2002, three boroughs have been part of the rehabilitation and consolidation zone, created by the government by increasing military in these areas. Arauca is a strategic region because of its border with Venezuela and the coca leaf

had been covering human rights abuses from armed groups when they had to flee their region. A particular case is *Radio Meridiano 70* at Arauca. Paramilitaries murdered the director Efrain Varela⁹⁶ for having revealed information about them.

A year later, the paramilitaries entered the radio station and killed the director in the middle of the programme. Immediately after that, two lists of targeted journalists appeared, one list from guerrillas (FARC) and another from paramilitaries (*Bloque vencedores de Arauca*); the two blacklists (*listas negras*) together named all sixteen Arauca journalists.⁹⁷ Of the eight targets on the guerrilla list and the ten on the paramilitary list, two had been already killed. The Colombian Freedom of Press Foundation (FLIP) organised an emergency operative to send a plane to bring all the journalists to Bogotá.

However, Varela's assassination changed journalism in the region⁹⁸. The majority of news programmes are now limited to reading military news releases and to publishing soft news. That murder was clearly directed to produce silence among journalists, and it achieved its aim. The direct or indirect threats made by guerrillas or the paramilitary have affected journalists' performance, and their freedom to inform. As Reporters Without Borders (2010) indicate:

The constant monitoring by the Armed forces of the information published in local media, as well as the multiple complaints towards journalists in regards to their [paramilitary, guerrilla] satisfaction or dissatisfaction of news content have become both hidden and direct pressures on the media. Today in Arauca, almost all news has as a single source: the military.

Examples of self-censorship as a result of fear and threats include Carmen Rosa

plantations.

⁹⁶ Polemic and critical, Varela was the 52 year-old journalist, owner, and director of Meridiano 70. Murdered on June 28th, 2002, Noriega directed the news programme '*La actualidad informativa*' for 8 years. He was also a former *El Espectador* correspondent.

⁹⁷ Threatened journalists, according to International Federation of Journalists (2003), were: Carmen Rosa Pabón, Lizneira Roncancio, Yineth Pinilla, Hernán Morales, Henry Colmenares, Willian Reyes, José Antonio Zocadagui, Carlos Pérez, Emiro Goyeneche, Rodrigo Anila, Narda Guerrero, Ángel María León, Miguel Ángel Tojas, Zorayda Aliza, Luis Guedes.

⁹⁸ Arauca has four broadcast stations: *La Voz del Cincuro* (affiliated to Caracol Radio), *Meridiano 70* (independent), *La Voz del Río Arauca* (affiliated to RCN), and *Radio DIC* (community radio). There are two local media: *Sarare Estéreo* and *Tame Estéreo*, besides the army's radio. Newspapers: *El Corredor* and *Nueva Frontera* (RWB, 2010).

Pabón, one of the journalists threatened by FARC, and the director of the news programme *La voz del Cinacure*, an adjunct of Caracol Radio. Pabón fled the region, and when the journalist returned, she radically changed the news programme's content; at present, it only broadcasts official news releases and light information, according to Reporters Without Borders (2010).

In this regard, a point of agreement is that *real* journalism, also referred as *true* journalism by some reporters, is to *tell* the public what happens to their fellow citizens. This means to show people's stories and everyday reality, which is only reported by a small number of journalists. In the Colombian case, for example, war is ignored by many citizens, as we have already discussed 'the physiological denial' of citizens in war (Chapter II). This aspect, together with mainstream news (press, radio, television, i.e., *RCN*, *Caracol*, *El Tiempo*) portraying the official government's perspective and the censorship of media and journalists are factors that contribute to the dismissal of the war. It can be argued that such a situation can influence people's dehumanization of war, and thus lead to the assassination of citizens and journalists.

6.5 The Other Side of the News: Threats, Fear and Paranoia

The Colombian State has shown its inability to guarantee safety to practice journalism, particularly in certain regions, and its failure to punish crimes against journalists. The government has shown inadequate concern for the reputation or security of journalists. On one hand, the government protects journalists through the state-funded programme of journalistic protection, which provides bodyguards and armoured cars to protect those under threat. On the other hand, the president and government officials (DAS) target journalists in national declarations, discrediting their work and value, as well as engaging in phone tapping and hacking, a scandal that will be analysed in the following section. It is clear that any protection is useless if the president and government officials can accuse you of being a journalist for terrorist groups or a guerrilla supporter. The libel and stereotyping that political institutions can hang on a reporter are great and bring immense negative consequences. Morris (City Journalist) comments:

Threats to my life have become frequent, unfortunately. In 2000, threats made me flee the country with my family. After I had come back, I was threatened again with funeral wreaths in my home in 2005. Then president Uribe pointed to me on all the radio stations as having links with guerrillas.

This reporter was detained for several hours while covering a hostage release in Southern Colombia. President Uribe declared via national media that Morris ‘shielded himself with his condition as a journalist to be a permissive accomplice to terrorism (...) Morris took advantage of his situation as a journalist’ (*El Espectador*, 2009). The effect of this declaration was extensive and harmful for the reporter’s reputation, since it was made on national television following the internationally famous hostage release of Ingrid Betancourt and other FARC prisoners. The president admitted his guilt, saying that it was a mistake to point to him as guerrilla collaborator, and the government later issued a press release acknowledging the mistake. However, that statement, coming from the president on a national level, put this journalist in the spotlight, and consequently, threats increased.

Stigmatization of journalists is recurrent in this country. There are clear differences between North American/European journalists and their Latin American equals, especially when it comes to public regard (Waisbord, 2000). Many have gained prizes, international prestige, published bestselling books. However, defamation by the government can throw all their acclaim and years of work into oblivion.

In this regard, the United Nations and the Organisation of American States (OAS) have urged the Colombian government not to stigmatize journalists. The UN *Rapporteur* of Freedom of Expression, Frank La Rue (IACHR, 2010), expressed serious concern regarding this stigmatization of journalists in Colombia, particularly in regards to Hollman Morris. This journalist works under the OAS (Organization of American States) preventive measures, and thus the Colombian state is obliged to protect him. Since 2005, he has been assigned bodyguards.

However, Morris (city journalist) declares that:

Stigmatisation is like a bomb. Where it falls it first destroys the family base, it affects your children, your wife, your family... and the explosion reaches your neighbours, the guards, colleagues, and people around you. Your social network regards you with suspicion. It's terrible for me, but it's even worse for democracy.

Another form of stigmatization is legal harassment, such as the belittlement and slander of witnesses. In this vein, legal harassment also includes judiciary orders to testify in court and violate their right to professional secrecy as well as criminal libel and legal responsibility lawsuits towards journalists. Around twelve journalists (columnists) have been charged, including Alfredo Molano columnist of *El Espectador* and María Jimena Duzán of *El Tiempo*.

Through judiciary actions, opinion journalism has been restricted, and freedom of the press has been attacked. An emblematic case is that of Alfredo Molano, a veteran journalist and sociologist, who was sued for libel due to one of his weekly articles in *El Espectador*, entitled 'Araujos et al.' published in February 2007. In this article he criticised the corruption of economic and political power among certain Caribbean families in Colombia. The *Araujo de Valledupar* family sued Molano for slander. The process lasted three long years, until the court found him innocent. This is a clear example of the type of persecution that journalists may face. Therefore, in sensitive cases, journalists often prefer to leak the story to bigger national media than to break the story by themselves.

6.6 The Scandal of the Phone Tapping of Colombian Journalist by Intelligence Services: The 'Chuzadas'

At the beginning of 2009, the systematic espionage of journalists devised by high-ranking officials from the Colombian government's Administrative Department of Security (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, DAS*) was exposed. Since 2003, government officials had intercepted and recorded emails and telephone conversations and had followed certain journalists.

In consequence, sources became more hesitant to talk to journalists, because they are no longer guaranteed protection, and not even the journalists themselves are immune. In the phone tapping (*chuzadas*) scandal, government was exposed—for either covering up or instructing—the illegal telephone interceptions and by following journalists and human right defenders, orchestrated by its intelligence department the DAS.

Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad DAS

Administrative Department of Security

Set up after the '*Bogotazo*' riots in 1948 that officially marked the start of violent conflict, the Colombian Intelligence service took the name of *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS)*. The DAS employed 6,000 agents, 27 departmental sections and 20 operational posts throughout the country. When it was bombed in 1989, Pablo Escobar and the Medellín cartel were blamed. The demonic reputation of the DAS stems from the years 1989–90 for its role, never fully elucidated, in the murder of three presidential candidates, Luis Carlos Galán, Bernardo Jaramillo and Carlos Pizarro. '*Since Uribe, they have been more likely to eavesdrop on (television journalist) Hollman Morris than (drug lord) Pablo Escobar!*', mocked one journalist. From 2002 to 2009, the intelligence body had no fewer than five directors, but this made no difference to the continued wiretapping and negative propaganda.

Reporters Sans Frontières, Hervieu, B. et al. (2010) Investigation Report: The activities of the Administrative Department of Security.

A recent delegation of Reporters Without Borders (RWB) visited Colombia together with AMARC (the World Association of Community Radios) in 2010. The committee researched illegal interceptions of intellectuals and journalists who were critical of the establishment during Uribe's government. Among those investigated were sixteen journalists and several media (Reporters Without Borders report, 2010).

Watergate was child's play in comparison to this scandal. The government spied on journalists, human rights defenders, NGOs, politicians from opposition parties, and top judges—they even spied on themselves—and all these actions were ordered by Uribe during his term as president.

'*Puerto ASIS*' was the name given to the intelligence gathered on Hollman Felipe Morris Rincón and his *Contravía* crew⁹⁹, Daniel Coronell (*Noticias UNO*), Félix de Bedut (*La W Radio*), their families, and work team. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (2010), the strategy was to primarily gather information in order to start a smear campaign on an international level through press releases, to include them in a FARC guerrilla video, and to suspend their visas. A free, pluralist, and independent press is essential for a democratic society. The Latin American press has been strongly affected in countries ruled by dictatorships, where all arguments that differ from the official line are considered dangerous and therefore an excuse to control the media¹⁰⁰. Nowadays, not only dictators but also presidents regard the media as a counter-power opposed, in certain cases, to the transformations that they want to bring about.

6.7 Self-censorship in Warfare: A Survival Device

Self-censorship is subtle. It is the systematic omission of information that reporters or media inflict on themselves in order to secure their lives and, in certain occasions, economic interests, i.e., advertising revenues. Certain reporters perceive self-censorship as a 'shield' or perhaps a life vest. In such cases, there is no need of the government's call for discretion or threats, as it has been internalized in the journalist's mind. There is a lack of literature addressing the subject, since here is not even consensus on the definition yet. This practice is hardly ever acknowledged, and in this case, for example, it was confessed in the light of a research interview; always asserted with a hint of apologetic guilt and embarrassment. Orwell (in Brevini, 2010) identified the most terrifying kind of censorship: the kind that you practice on yourself and that you even embrace. Molano (2008) asserts that the paranoia created by a regime that imposes the Manichaeism makes self-censorship a way of life, a manner of speaking and writing. 'The word loses its strength. Adulation wins and criticism loses (...) the enemy is within, it becomes part of its sight and eventually of its word'.

⁹⁹ *Contravía* journalists: Iván Sierra, Julián Vallejo, Juan Pablo Morris (admin), among others.

¹⁰⁰ Argentina March 24, 1976, Coup d'état. The dictatorships in South America were open dictatorships, such as in Argentina where the army and military took control of the TV channels. Franco's dictatorship repressed intellectuals who then fled to Latin America.

In this regard, eighty percent of journalists interviewed in this research agreed that self-censorship has become a synonym for self-protection, as journalists pled guilty to this practice for their own safety. Social environment and the guild's situation have clearly influenced their practices, as they recall having omitted certain news or scopes in regard to other colleagues' experiences or incidents that had occurred to them. In some regions, self-censorship has become socially accepted. Impunity is another issue that was persistently guiding their professional work; the government's weak approach to implementing justice to solve hostilities against their colleagues has affected their professional judgement to avoid the same issue. 'Self- censorship is that Colombian journalists are no longer going to the conflict zones, since the government has pointed to journalists that wander these zones as 'linked to terrorism'' (Morris, city journalist).

Fear is the fundamental core of self-censorship among Colombian journalists. Fear of losing their job or losing their life. As this reporter puts it bluntly: 'I regret to admit that I censor myself because I'm afraid to lose everything; my employment, my professional strength, my family... it is my way to stay alive...' (Anonymous B1, Regional journalist). In this regard, the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, in the Colombia report (2005), states that self-censorship and intimidation has brought forward three issues. Firstly, it has stopped journalists reporting in certain places about specific news. Secondly, reports are based on official numbers or statements, and some facts that are considered dangerous are omitted from reporting. Thirdly, the report registered that many journalists abandoned their line of work.

To monitor self-censorship is a complex endeavour, as the nature of personal censorship can be caused by various factors. However, the media outlet where journalists work can also be a catalyser of self-censorship practices. Scholars (Reyes, 2007) claim that self-censorship takes place in two places, firstly as pre-censorship (journalist self-censored) and post-censorship (media censorship).

Journalists in certain cases have decided to avoid pressing issues in their region citing various reasons: self-protection, economic and political pressure, or working strains. Consequently, as observed and corroborated with colleagues,

this is not open censorship, but it underlies institutions, editors, and journalists. This situation becomes more frequent in regions of conflict. Journalists' fear amidst the armed conflict is exposed through these practices. Therefore, the silence and disregard of certain information are not only a last resource but also a mode of survival.

A reporter in Buenaventura (Valle), in the Pacific area, recalls that on April 19, 2008, twelve young footballers were killed. Local journalists found out rapidly that the paramilitaries had pointed out two players as being linked to FARC¹⁰¹. To contextualise, many journalists had been murdered in the area; this is one of the most affected regions in the conflict. 'All the neighbourhood knew what happened, but we couldn't publish it because of the *fear* [italics added]' (Vides, Local reporter).

Local journalist Vides is a clear example of a reporter who challenged the constraints of social censure through his feature report: 'Massive detentions' at Montes de María—northern Sucre and Bolívar regions. When former president Álvaro Uribe started his term in office he instituted the 'democratic security' policy, which was a strategy to attack illegal groups. FARC (group 35, 37) and ELN guerrillas operated in Montes de María. In 1993, one hundred and fifty-six people were detained by military and police forces; among the detainees were peasants and tobacco workers who were presented as guerrilla supporters without proof. These detentions caused impoverishment to several families in the region, yet again the feature was under-reported. A few years later, threats followed his work:

When I was a journalist for regional Radio Caracol of Sincelejo, in 1996 I was threatened and I had to flee from the zone for a year. I went to work at a TV news channel for two months. When I came back I was threatened again and I had to run away once more. Since then, I've been threatened constantly. I haven't stopped doing journalism, but I've taken some precautions such as self-censorship. Vides (local journalist).

¹⁰¹ Indeed, there is an absence of regional reports on the subject (*Meridiano de Sucre*). Only found in *El País de Cali* (24/05/2008).

Censorship is not a uniquely Colombian phenomenon; it happens even in societies with the most plural media. A recent survey of journalists by the Pew Centre and Columbia Journalism Review (2000) showed that forty percent of professionals practice self-censorship. Local journalists face many challenges, and about 32% of local reporters acknowledged that they have softened the tone of a news story at the request of their news organisations. Although this is a case from United States, it shows similarities among the types of censorship that local journalists face; even in a country without conflict and with stability, journalists might be required to censor their work. ‘At the present, assassinations of journalists have diminished, but that doesn’t mean that there is more information, or that freedom of expression is better, rather that the journalists have self-censored. In this situation there are less threats but there is less information’, Cortés (NGO director).

In this regard, journalists covering conflicts face various threats and their work is produced as if they were observed. Beleño (local journalist) says: ‘*Bochinche* (the concept that everything is known but at the same time not known) is very common, everyone knows what is happening but it is never published, you never see a word of it in the newspaper’.

On censorship and reporting on paramilitary issues (at the Colombian coast):

In 2002, the year with the most paramilitary activity, everyone knew who they [the paramilitary] were, but there was no way that the newspapers would publish it. This was true of all regional newspapers on the Caribbean coast: *El Meridiano* of Cordoba and *Sucre* and *Vanguardia Liberal*. Beleño (local journalist).

There is a hidden censorship among journalists, in this case from the Atlantic Coast. They apparently knew that the paramilitary were operating in their region; however, if they had reported the issue they would have likely been disappeared. The situation is even harder on a more local level, for example in small villages such as Santa Marta (Atlantic Coast), ‘the entire city knows that you work in the newspaper, and report on crime. Since there are not many of us, people know who was enquiring about certain news’ Ramírez (journalist, regional newspaper).

In this regard, there is a news agenda with several omissions, citizens learn news through *bochinche* and rumours, and street gossip. As a result, controversial yet important information is absent, at the cost of the protection of journalists' lives (or work). This concept of *bochinche* alludes to a culture of silence¹⁰²—in regards to certain information—as a consensual behaviour immersed in a culture that is either permissive of/or unable to recognise transgressions of freedom of expression.

The paramilitary demobilisation has created several risks and hazardous topics whereby journalists are confronted with a minefield of what to report on and what to avoid. In the 2007 FLIP report, the organisation documented the intimidation that journalists faced when covering the judicial hearings of demobilised paramilitaries from the AUC in Medellín, Antioquia. Their reporting was recorded and documented for unknown purposes. Additionally, they received messages of intimidation in relation to interviews recorded outside the venue of the hearings (FLIP, 2008:64). This resulted in journalist's self-censorship and inhibition, and the result was *bochinche*, as already noted. In addition, it intimidated the victims and removed them from the process (in which they were allowed to attend the hearings and ask questions regarding disappearances), thus preventing them from attaining information about their missing relatives.

Colombia's conflict merges three stages of this phenomenon: pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict processes. The first one is the origin—as we have seen in the literature review, the guerrilla movements—the second the armed confrontations, and the third is non-violent solutions such as reconciliation and demobilisation. We will focus now on the latter, the coverage of demobilisation process (post-conflict). This stage was based on the disarmament of paramilitary groups through Colombia's Justice and Peace Law (Law 975) which was approved by the Colombian Congress on June 21, 2006 and ratified by the government in July of the same year.

¹⁰² When we refer to culture of silence, the spectrum embraces media, journalists, and citizens who choose to overlook certain information.

This measure led to a considerable reduction in prison sentences to members of illegal armed groups (in theory), who laid down their artillery in exchange for full confessions of their crimes and information. However, this process was focused in praxis on paramilitary fighters, who have been responsible for the majority of massacres of civilians, together with disappearances and torture of civilians and guerrilla people (cf. Amnesty International, 2005). The majority of paramilitary hearings took place on the Atlantic Coast (Barranquilla) and were open to the media.

Before, much information was not published because of fear of targeting by subversives, but now it has changed. In Sucre we send our information to newscasts and colleagues at national newspapers, once they publish it we pretend to do the follow up, but it is our work. There are many informations [*sic*] that have come up [from national press] but we're afraid to publish it, so we take the news from Colprensa¹⁰³, even though we are the ones who sent it (Anonymous, Regional journalist, Meridiano de Sucre).

The Freedom of Press Foundation (FLIP) pursued an exercise with journalists from the Atlantic Coast which identified how the paramilitary themes—even during the demobilisation process—are still causing intimidation and self-censorship (2007). The topics that presented highest risk were: how many groups continue operating in the region, also the number of possessions they have handed in as a requirement to appease the peace and justice law. Other hazardous topics concerned the number of victims, clandestine burials, and minors handed in within their state. The intimidations of the paramilitary groups are still notorious in the paramilitary trials (*versiones libres*, 'free versions') and their relation with the press.

During *El Caguán* peace negotiations, journalists that covered the process suffered prejudice in newsrooms. Since journalists were required to stay and live

¹⁰³ COLPRENSA S.A. is a Colombian news agency based on national news, directed by Víctor Diusabá and created by an amalgamation of regional newspapers in 1981. These include thirteen of the most important newspapers in the country, such as: *El Colombiano* (Medellín), *Vanguardia Liberal* (Bucaramanga), *El Universal* (Cartagena), *La Opinión* (Cúcuta), *La Patria* (Manizales), *La Tarde* (Pereira), *La República* (Bogotá), *El País* (Cali), *El Nuevo Día* (Ibagué), *El Liberal* (Popayán), *El Meridiano* (both Córdoba and Sucre), *Hoy Diario del Magdalena*, as well as popular newspapers such as *La Chiva* (Medellín) and *Qu'hubo* (Cali). This news outlet has obtained a journalism prize. (*El Colombiano*, 2006). *El Colombiano* (2010) 'Colprensa, más de 9,000 días conociendo a Colombia' Piñeros, A.

there around two to four weeks, ‘In the newsroom, when we arrived (...) after such a long time, my co-workers told me: “where are your [guerrilla’s] rubber boots, where’s your rifle? Did you bring the camouflage?”’ (Castrillón, City Journalist). The reporter affirmed that although this was a joke at first, it became a grim comment and accusation from colleagues at the same newspaper. The result was a slight polarisation of the newsroom between journalists and conflict journalists covering the peace talks. This not only happened in the newsroom but also within society, the journalist states that they suffered threats because of the stigma that conflict journalists carried as connected to the guerrilla, based only on the fact that they had to interview them and travel to their guerrilla bases as part of normal journalist reporting.

In recent years, threats have become the most common instrument to silence the press and to consolidate self-censorship in certain regions (FLIP, 2007). There are many levels of threats; the most common are telephone calls, text messages, and e-mails. Intimidators have also sent funeral crown wreaths (*coronas fúnebres*), and intimidating pamphlets. This can have a tremendous impact on journalists’ fear, as the following journalist illustrates: ‘I was threatened by AUC’s [paramilitary cluster] northern section (....) it was an e-mail and I believed it was meant to scare me. For that reason, I didn’t write too revealing things [*sic*] about the paramilitary leader Jorge 40’ (Beleño, regional journalist).

In this case, an e-mail threat to this regional journalist might have been sent out as a warning. Although the e-mail format was depersonalised, some journalists take it seriously while others choose to disregard it, according to each journalist’s circumstances and particular conjunctures. However, the threat was still a caution that he might have been close to crossing the line, since—according to the journalist—the article was not *that* revealing of the paramilitary leader. That is why this forewarning did not inject fear, although it did make the reporter reflect on his work and whether he had written something provocative. This exposes the vulnerability of the regional journalist, who works close to paramilitary hearings, and shows a small degree of self-censorship. Even if the threat was ignored, the poisonous effect of the menace kept the journalist aware by emphasizing that this armed group was following his work and movements. Research respondents

agreed upon the importance of the unity of the journalist's guild to counterbalance self-censorship because a lonely journalist is more vulnerable.

6.7.1 The Untouchables: Colombia's Unreported Topics

In all war, there is certain news which is under-reported in mainstream journalism. According to Guerrero (2010),¹⁰⁴ in Colombia these topics include paramilitary rearmament, emerging criminal gangs, the increase in violence levels post (paramilitary) demobilisation process, links between armed groups and politicians (*paramilitary-politicians*), bonds between drug dealers and armed forces, the strengthening of drug-dealing networks and those of social control, the appropriation of lands belonging to indigenous groups, fieldworkers, and Afro-Colombian communities, displacement, and mine exploitation, among others. This coincided with some of this research interviewee's answers. The pie chart in Figure 8 reveals the main under-reported topics within the Colombian press. Given that the data was gathered in 2008 (when this fieldwork research was carried out), topics differ from the previous research (Guerrero, 2010).

However, the majority coincides with regards to the paramilitary rearmament, the lack of reporting on conflicts, news about drug trafficking, corruption, and displacement. It can be clearly shown that ninety percent of journalists agree that the paramilitary rearmament is a disregarded issue. Since paramilitary hearings are taking place the focus is centred there, but regional journalists do not dare to become muckrakers in order to report on the well-known and documented issue of the formation of new paramilitary groups. While the demobilisation process has ended, the attention has focused on other topics surrounding the conflict. The main reason given for its self-censorship is fear and lack of interest in the national news agenda.

Eighty-five percent of interviewees concurred that news about displacement is rare, and never prominent in the media. When asked why they thought this issue

¹⁰⁴ Guerrero (2010) presented this first and unique research on Regional journalism and Censorship in Colombia through publication in 2010 *Medios para la Paz* together with *Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa*.

was underreported, the greater part of respondents that had never reported about it, showed a slight embarrassment and argued that they lacked time and resources to travel to these areas or to track displaced people. In contrast, those who had covered it revealed a sense of accomplishment and gratification in knowing that they had done a decent job.

Corruption is also absent from the news, particularly in regional media. Journalists admitted that corruption dealing with the state or the private sector is reported with less frequency. The situation becomes aggravated when the information is concerning certain groups connected with the media. This is due to commercial interests and advertising pressures, as will be illustrated in the following section.

Drug trafficking was the most prominent theme in the eighties and nineties news agenda. The issue has diminished significantly and some cartels were dismantled during the fight against drug lords. For example, direct violence from drug trafficking on society is no longer an issue; however, the phenomenon still exists in this country. As it is impossible to eradicate such a powerful network, there are Colombian drug cartels working in combination with their equals in Mexico. However, the news only reports the capture of key figures, not the context and activities in which the Colombian cartels are currently working. This might be due to a collective memory of the direct and rampant violence exerted upon journalists that reported the issues (for instance Fidel Cano's death at the hands of Pablo Escobar). Consequently, fifty-percent of media workers agreed that is not on the news agenda.

Self-censorship is also clear on issues such as homosexuality and scandals related to the Catholic Church. It could be argued that this censorship is because of Colombian culture, particularly in the provinces, in which homosexuality is repressed and stigmatised. Therefore, reporters might not regard it as a crucial issue to report, or as one interviewee put it: 'Most of my colleagues don't want to be known as gay-friendly because of what they write' (Anonymous B7, provincial journalist). Figure 8 (below) illustrates the unreported topics.

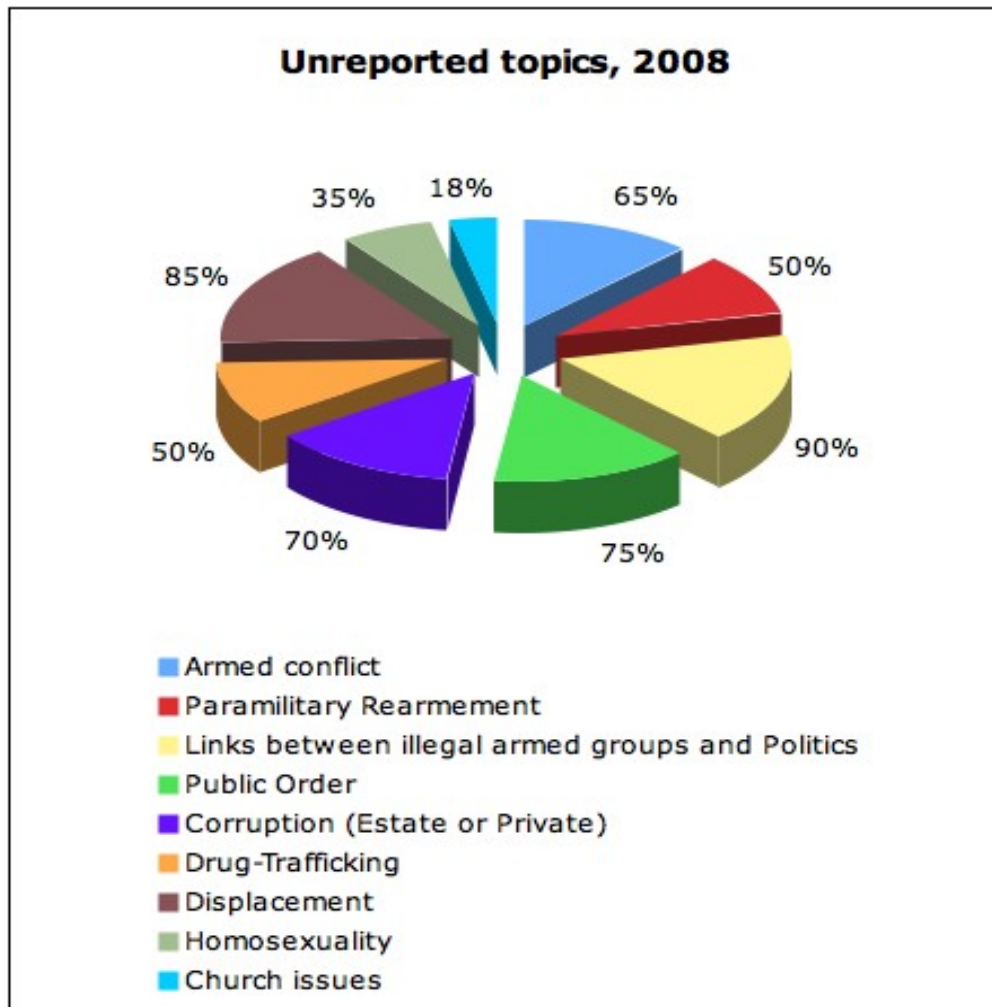


Figure 8: 'Unreported topics' (FLIP, 2008).

There is a disregard for investigative journalism within the regional press, given that resources are scarce. Additionally, the enormous workload, disregarding bank holidays and extra hours, make the task of investigative reporting an almost impossible one. This is due to the lack of time to reflect and assemble news with a more in-depth analysis in order to explain it as a process. Another factor, as analysed before in this section, editors and reporters favour non-controversial topics that might lead to any form of coercion.

Every journalist in this research was asked whether there is freedom of information in his or her city or region. The common answer was affirmative; however, further questioning revealed unreported topics when covering victims. A journalist stated that victims often 'lie' since they do not see the truth objectively, given that they are in shock if they are interviewed right after the

incident (Sierra, Newspaper editor). However, as will be explored further in the following chapter, victims were reported minimally in the Colombian press.

In the coverage of conflict, the news agenda usually focuses on¹⁰⁵ the evolution of the conflict, detentions, the guerrillas, forms of control of armed actors, the military budget, child recruitment, mines, displacement, humanitarian accords, kidnapping, and the definition of combatants, among others. Post-conflict coverage includes demobilisation, actors demobilised (leaders, groups, individuals), and reintegration programmes.

6.8 Advertisement: The Cost of Silence

Freedom of the press in Colombia is no longer determined by the newspaper's owners but by the advertisers, asserts Samper (1984). To illustrate, in 2007, the Freedom of the Press Report by FLIP documented the statistics of threats to, exile of and assassination of journalists; see Figure 9.

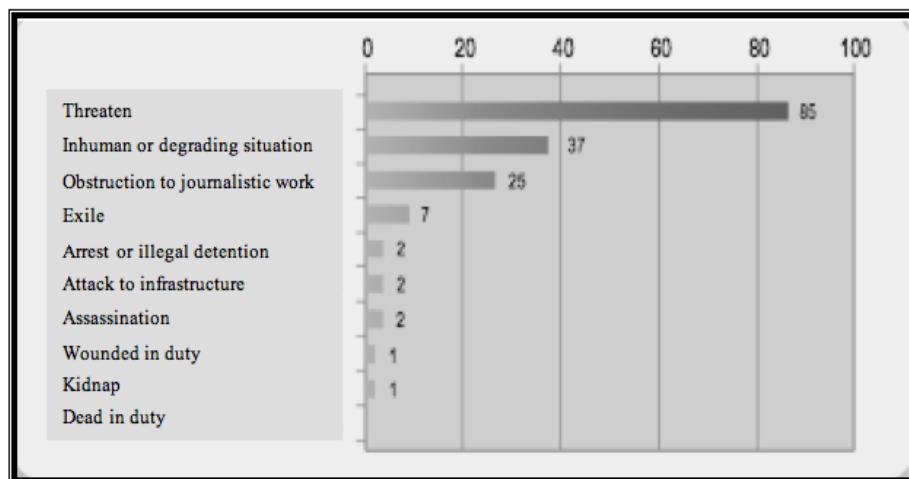


Figure 9: FLIP Report Colombian Journalists Situation in 2007.

Regarding the Colombian Press' Censorship, FLIP's 2008 report argues that threat and stigmatisation are the new form of invisible intimidation directed at journalists and the media. The organisation also exposed the arbitrary distribution

¹⁰⁵ Notes from Sierra's class '*Periodismo en Tiempos de Conflicto Armado*' in Medios para La Paz workshop, Barranquilla, April, 2008.

of state advertising, which serves political objectives and is used as a financial pressure applied to journalists and media (2008:3).

Indirect censorship manifests through random distribution of estate' advertisement with underlying political reasons, and is also used as financial pressure on media and journalists. The forms of pressure exerted by the public estate advertisement are the manipulation of contracts for certain non-aligned media and journalists. The main objective is to support partisan media and punish critical reporting. In this way, in certain cases, the government conditions the content of journalistic coverage. There is no editorial independence, since it is subordinate to the advertising revenue.

6.9 Conclusion

The lack of social recognition and lack of trust of certain journalists and against journalism as a professional guild in Colombia explains that issues of censorship, self-censorship, threats, stigmatization and homicide are minor concerns. Despite the symbolic hits to journalism, there is no social valuation of journalists as essential actors who report on the armed conflict and the strengthening of democracy. There is a geographical divide regarding the freedom of expression, as explained by an editor; 'In Colombia there are two kinds of freedom of expression: there is one kind in Medellín, Bogotá, Barranquilla and Cali [the main cities], and the other one is that of the rest of the country [the regions]' (Sierra, city newspaper editor). Therefore, the advances of defence of journalists are located mainly in the cities, with city journalists, given that there are major difficulties to protect regional journalists. Despite regional journalists are the most vulnerable ones they are the most relegated in society given their geographical location by living faraway the urban centres and power hubs. Additionally they are immersed in or extremely close to the armed conflict, in which the disciplinary measures of protection of journalists do not function, or operate with difficulty.

In this aggressive environment for free press and journalists, one might wonder at the quality of information available in Colombia. Are Colombian news media and

journalists contributing to the weakening of democracy? The conflict has surpassed the question of professional ethics for certain journalists; silence, for certain reporters, is the best survival discourse. As this section exposed, self-censorship is the result of impunity in the country. As long as the assassinations of journalists are not solved (FLIP, 2011) this might help to explain or validate—to a certain degree—their silence on a regional level. Yet this situation does not explain the self-censorship in bigger national media (e.g., El Tiempo, Caracol, RCN). The latter can be explained according to media politics and interests.

The decrease in assassinations of journalists in the last three years can be seen as a direct result of the spread of self-censorship: no information produces no threats. Yet, intimidation and coercion is still a serious problem, professionals, in many cases, perform a mechanical role rather than acting as watchdogs (Waisbord, 2000).

Although this research focuses primarily on printed press, the serious censorship issues that Colombian journalism faces centres on television news (Guerrero, 2010). This is the most popular news reference for Colombians, since only a small percentage of citizens read the press. The '*Seguridad democrática*' as a political strategy has enlisted the media to help the correct implementation of defence of the state. Former president Álvaro Uribe (*op. cit.*), has expressed on several occasions his dissatisfaction with the role of the press in the coverage of the conflict, and has called upon the media to become an ally of the government. This democratic security strategy intends to include civilians in the defence of the state, as informants or collaborators. The former president asked the press to incite the desertion of young people who have joined the guerrillas, as well as to inform the security forces about the location of guerrilla leaders who are contacted by the press for interviews (Ruíz, magazine editor). This not only violates the press' code of ethics, which prevents journalists from disclosing their sources, including their whereabouts when dealing with armed actors; it also makes it impractical for journalists to perform their job in the future since revealing their sources may open a window to threats and intimidation from the armed actors implicated.

The aggressions towards journalists constitute censorship as direct violence (Galtung, 2000b) that not only risks journalists' right to work and express themselves, but also society's right to information. Therefore, there is the need to remove from legislation measures that allow self-censorship. There is a flaw in the makeup of the State that allows legal persecution of those that question or criticise the actions of public servants. This is best exemplified in the case of former Colombian president Ernesto Samper and the columnist Claudia López. The latter faced a judiciary process back in July 2006, accused of slander and defamation because the journalist questioned Samper's appointment as ambassador to France in her *El Tiempo's* newspaper column entitled: '*La reinserción Uribista: del 8 mil al 64 mil*' ('The Uribist reinsertion: from 8 thousand to 64 thousand') (*El Tiempo*, 2006). The jury, despite the petition of the judiciary prosecutor, absolved López. Although there is wide jurisprudence regarding freedom of expression, as presented in this chapter, Colombia needs precise measures in its legislation to prevent and protect journalists and media from self-inflicted censorship.

The situation presented throughout this chapter shows the tendencies of news coverage in the midst of the internal war. However, the conflict without peace negotiations in the agenda, if it flares back to a more confrontational scenario, information will once more be targeted, as actors struggle to gain visibility for their points of view.

CHAPTER VII

WITNESSING THE CARNAGE: ETHOS AND RESILIENCE OF LOCAL CONFLICT REPORTERS

This section will analyse two categories which have emerged from the respondents' analysis: the ethos and resilience of war journalists. It aims to have a greater understanding of local journalists' identity by examining what ethical dilemmas reporters face when covering these conditions as witnesses, and their capacity of resilience or the lack of thereof. Therefore, this section will shed light on local conflict journalists' motivations, beliefs, and professionalism (Weaver, Voakes & Wilhoit, 2007). It will also reveal the frustrations that conflict journalists face in their everyday personal and professional lives. There are sociological studies about journalists (Tuchman, 1978) that analyse the dynamics of news production.

Comparative research about journalists (Hanitzsch, 2010, Weaver, 1998; Sparks & Dahlgren, 1994) in several countries does not take into account the particularities of different countries, such as Colombia. Regional academic research has analysed diverse journalistic facets, such as media structures (Fox & Waisbord, 2002), critical reporting (Waisbord, 2000), content analysis and ethical dilemmas (Restrepo, 2004; Restrepo & Herrán, 2005). However, there is little research on the ethos of local conflict journalists and their capacity of resilience. This section attempts to throw light on this aspect.

There are key studies in various disciplines about war journalists and their coping strategies, including sociological (Tumber & Webster, 2006), anthropological (Pedelty, 1995) and psychological (Feinstein, 2003) perspectives. However, investigations about journalists in the midst of war have mostly centred on international Western war correspondents of major media outlets who have covered wars and returned home—such as those from Europe or the USA—(see Tumber & Webster *ibid*). There is little research regarding local journalists who cannot go back home, since 'home' is literally in the war zone. There are fewer regional studies focused on the study of journalists (Arroyave & Blanco, 2004)

and even fewer regarding the ethos of war journalists in Latin America (except Pedelty on Salvadorian journalists reporting for international media outlets during the El Salvador war), and especially a lack of information about Colombia. As Pedelty (1995) stated, the dangers of international war correspondents are not similar and not as critical as for local journalists.

This section highlights the importance of conducting qualitative research primarily through face-to-face in-depth interviews with conflict journalists. Interviews conducted outside their workplaces were extremely detailed, more natural, and gave the researcher a glimpse of their beliefs—mostly private—and their professional ethos.

The crucial question is how their values, the understanding of their role, and their identity influence their war coverage. Moving beyond the common stereotype of war journalists (i.e., epic accounts of courage, nerves, and heroics), this section will discuss local war journalists as complex people, with strong convictions, beliefs, passions, motivations and fears, along with critical thinking about their jobs in their country torn apart by a violent and complex conflict.

7.1 Professionalism: The Role of Local Journalists in the Armed Conflict

This subsection intends to discern Colombian war journalists' understanding of their role when reporting on conflict. It also analyses the principles, ethics, values, and professional stance that journalists have in their everyday work. This section is based on the study of professions, particularly Abbott's key argument on 'professional jurisdiction' (1988) as the connection of the sense of profession and its work. Jurisdiction is the daily way in which a profession concretises and displays its praxis (Schudson, 2010) by acknowledging that journalistic expertise (objectivity notions) is the core claim of professionalism (Schudson & Anderson, 2010). However, it should be noted that the notion of 'objectivity' has rarely been interlaced with that of professionalism.

One could argue that professionalism might influence a journalist's construction of news and their approach to reporting and researching. By answering the simple

question of how they perceive their role and the general role of journalists in conflict, interviewees offered fascinating insights through in-depth and private personal interviews as a research methodology, which allowed for more privacy. In some cases their declarations were established as ‘off the record’, in other cases respondents were more comfortable to speak up given this option of anonymity in the research.

However, it should be noted that this research acknowledges that journalists’ answers, particularly in this section regarding their ethos and role, could have been responses that are *socially accepted* (‘socially accepted behaviours’, see Barrett, 1984). Therefore, social pressure could have made reporters evade verbalising their professional dissatisfaction and, in the case of local war journalists, to not be confident enough to recognise *fear* or to express their real thoughts earnestly. In this regard, Persaud states: ‘It seems that ambition, coupled with a belief that war reporting enhances a career by giving a high media profile, leaves journalists reluctant to speak out about their fears and insecurities’ (2003:1). Certain answers; however, have helped to examine this topic, although it should be noted that certain respondents did not answer the specific questions related to this topic, which revealed a subtle reluctance to approach the subject. Regarding their job [professionalism] covering war, one reporter (Gómez, city journalist) explains:

I believe that the function of the journalist is opposed to the conflict. The role is to reveal facts, to be independent, to be able to analyse the situations deeply enough that this analysis and diagnostic can lead to discovering a solution to the problems; a peaceful solution and one that discusses all the arguments involved. This is the role of the journalist and the complete opposite of war.

Another journalist comments:

Journalists and media outlets play a fundamental role, but we haven’t been very aware of it. I believe that we are the main actors in the resolution of the armed conflict. We journalists have the responsibility to explain to people what’s happening, the seriousness of the matter, and how to break the cycle, this order of ideas is fundamental to solving the conflict (Avendaño, regional journalist).

Another journalist states: ‘Our role is very important in the conflict, not only to research official sources but to direct the spotlight onto the victims (Builes, regional journalist).

A Polish war journalist, Kapuściński, argued that a cynical person cannot write about war. ‘The journalist, in his vocation and formation, is somebody whose first quality is to be a human being (...) Journalists shall be militant, not for one side or another, but against the phenomenon of war’ (*Cuadernos de Análisis: El Conflicto Armado en las Páginas de El Tiempo*, 2003:92) [My translation]. There is a documentary ‘*Unwanted Witness*’ by Juan Lozano (2009), an anthropologist who studied war journalist Hollman Morris as a single case study. The film clearly exemplifies one of the arguments pointed out in this section, as it shows, with profound insights, what led this particular reporter to pursue a dangerous job. This documentary is used as a secondary source to help reinforce certain arguments stated in this section, given the in-depth personal and professional insights it provides. Thus, Morris (in Lozano, 2009) justifies his ethos in the documentary:

How is it possible to move forward as a society knowing what’s happened in the past? Either we ignore it and move on with our lives, or we’re completely aware of what happened and say it doesn’t matter as long as it doesn’t concern us. As Colombians, we know there are people in this country who played football with human heads. And that wasn’t one or ten or 100 people but thousands and thousands who died begging for mercy. Who died knowing they were alone because no one came to their aid. So how does this society continue living as if nothing happened?

War journalists have a special interest in conflict; the majority of interviewees completed bachelor degrees in journalism or media studies (as described in previous chapter on education) and in their professional careers have focused on covering crime and war. Half of them demonstrated a special empathy towards the topic, given that they are specialised, and have experience in the area. ‘War correspondents have a unique relationship to terror; however, a hybrid condition that combines both voyeurism and direct participation’ (Pedelty, 1995:2). Therefore, whether their work is either a coincidence or a professional goal, war reporters develop a special bond with the topic, given that is not light news or

financial or entertainment reporting. Rather, conflict news is the toughest news to report on, particularly when their own country is at war, and can be overwhelming as it could be argued that there is an undertone of a certain aspiration to eventually cover peace negotiations and agreements. At the end of the interviews, the journalists were asked what their thoughts were about the conflict and the possible solution. This question was designed to gather their way of thinking of the conflict. Half of the interviewees responded with a certain degree of hope, mostly the younger ones. However, the others were more apocalyptic regarding the situation believing that it is a lost cause. A journalist from the first group states:

I started covering war as a coincidence, because they needed someone and the person appointed did not want to go to that conflict zone in Urabá, so I went. But when you cover so much war, what you want most is to cover a peace process (Gómez Giraldo, city journalist).

A city editor indicates below two basic principles regarding professionalism in the armed conflict, which are part of a discussion in Colombian non-governmental organizations, journalists and media. The interviewee expresses:

The basic principles of professionalism when reporting on war and armed conflict are safety and high-quality coverage. In practice, this is done by trying to be independent and balanced in the midst of a difficult environment. All armed actors, both official or extra-official armed groups are treated alike. So basically it is the journalist's job to do a good job in the middle of chaos (Sierra, city editor).

This editor asserts the importance of 'independence' and 'impartiality', in this way ensuring the breadth and diversity of opinions by avoiding one-source news, particularly when reporting armed conflict and crime. However, according to research Proyecto Antonio Nariño (2004), this basic practice reveals serious limitations of the professional praxis of journalists in the attempt to present both sides of the story and the everyday construction of news. Additionally, given the level of risk that reporters face if they only inform from the same source—particularly the army—(Proyecto Antonio Nariño, 2004). For example, in the case of the failed peace negotiations at Caguán, according to interviewees'

accounts, reporters who were assigned to cover the topic—given the length of coverage and residence *in situ*—were categorised (identified) in this single theme and with specific sources (guerrilla, army, government). This resulted in stigmas and the devaluation of certain journalist's independence and professionalism. Consequently, the Responsible Journalism in the Armed Conflict journalistic proposal (presented in the previous chapters) is an attempt to remind journalists of the importance of impartiality, which is earned by covering multiple sources (e.g., under-represented voices in the war).

International war correspondents, according to Seib (2004), consider their role is to grab the attention of audiences in another part of the world that does not know about the situation. Colombian conflict journalists share the same value; however, their challenge is to reveal information to the national audiences that are saturated by the war. A reporter illustrates this point:

(...) I will be very careful when writing about those personal stories [of the victims] that at some point can be the story of many of the article's readers (...) and through those stories to show the readers of the capital cities, who are those in positions of power, the horror stories [of this war] to touch them a little (Builes, regional journalist).

The Colombian conflict journalists' professional values are simple yet they are a reminder of the essential values in journalism: accuracy, objectivity and impartiality; values that highlight the necessity of independence within an armed conflict. The data indicates that for Colombian conflict journalists, professionalism (Abbott's professional jurisdiction) is interlaced with the role of the journalist, as it is defined as the responsibility to accomplish high-quality work. Thus, besides instinct and experience, it could be argued that journalists' education and specialised training in covering conflict are fundamental frameworks (both technical and ethical) to construct more skilful pieces that go beyond the brief and basic news reports that only answer the five Ws (namely *periodismo de registro*). On the other hand, for Colombian journalists and editors, professionalism is intertwined with objectivity. Some groups of interviewees understood that their role was to *clearly explain* the conflict news. Thus they see the professional role as essentially interlaced with society. These

journalists recognise their agency in society and assume their function within the system as ‘essential’ in order to create a better understanding of the past and current situation. Although the notion of objectivity was implied in interviewees’ responses, it was scarcely mentioned—replaced by terminology such as independence, accuracy, and multiple sources.

7.2 Ethos of Local War Journalists: The Anti-heroes

Every journalist has an ethos that guides his or her professional work. News production is not only a mechanical process; the circumstances of specific media outlets (e.g., work routines, working conditions) can also have an effect on their input. Additionally, in the following section we will argue that journalists in this study are moved and disturbed by the war stories they have covered. War journalists’ pieces of work are influenced by their level of security (economic, political, personal) they have or the lack thereof. Certain Colombian journalists showed stress and fear of threats, which circumstances somehow challenged their capacity to carry out work normally.

National journalists reporting on conflict are clearly different from international war journalists, mainly in their geographical location and circumstances regarding their security and censorship. In regional conflicts, the journalist’s family is directly affected by their situation, and occasionally this extends to their media co-workers and friends. This increases the pressures under which Colombian journalists perform their jobs. In this regard, Waisbord elucidates clearly, that to certain journalists ‘personal convictions are fundamental to understand why some reporters disclose wrongdoing despite several obstacles. Harassment and threats from police officers, and military, government officials and drug-traffickers makes muckraking extremely dangerous. [It puts] personal and family safety at risk (2000:173). In some countries, war correspondents are highly regarded, due to the historically romanticised stereotype of the legendary war journalist who enjoys the allure of celebrity status (Tumber & Webster, 2006).

Colombian local journalists in this case study showed that they are the opposite. This high status label is replaced by the ‘unknown local journalist’ who works under constant pressures from illegal armed actors and the government, and who lives with frequent threats. In some regions, they are the last link and rather ‘negligible’ workers for news production process, which is reflected in the low or lack of salaries, life insurance, and security from the media outlet where they work. Therefore, local war journalism is not the celebrated profession that it is in the United States and Europe, where journalists are seen as ‘special’ or ‘media personalities’. It should be noted; however, that according to Tumber & Webster’s research (2006) in *Journalists under Fire*, most reporters interviewed rejected the ‘war correspondent’ title due to connotations of presumptuousness and a macho stereotype. On the contrary, it could be argued that Colombian society regards conflict journalists as a regular part of news production. There is even a certain animosity towards some of them (Hollman Morris, Ignacio Gómez, Daniel Coronell, Herbin Hoyos) who have high media profiles and have shed light on unreported issues which directly affected government employees and the president. Therefore, the Colombian president has criticized them publicly (without evidence), and as a result has created hostility towards them.

Colombian war journalists are the ‘anti-heroes’, as opposed to their European and North American colleagues. Colombian war journalists do not have time to write books of *memoirs* about their experiences in war because they are continuously reporting from the war field. Their work is permanent in that geographical location, in comparison with Western reporters that travel in and out of a country. There is no time to rest or retire, their reporting falls into a continuum of reporting on violence, victims, paramilitary hearings (*versiones libres*), atrocities or human rights abuses. Therefore, harassment, threats, and the murder of journalists are not seen as an issue of freedom of expression. Journalists’ [professional] situations and [personal] lives are almost disregarded, and do not attract the great public and community interest necessary to condemn the aggressors.

‘Really, we are asking journalists to perform a task which is almost impossible, and almost heroic. Unfortunately, intellectual labour does not pay (...) talent,

dedication and public service are politically, socially and economically devalued and defenceless' stated Ignacio Ellacuria, a Salvadoran journalist, to Pedelty (1995: 203). Therefore, in Colombia there are three factors that impact war journalists: firstly, the local journalists covering conflict are disregarded by their own social group (journalists in better positions) given their geographical location, secondly, there is the public stigmatisation of certain journalists by politicians, and thirdly, the government's official stance (particularly during Álvaro Uribe's government) that the conflict is not considered a '*war*' but rather a fight against terrorism, makes journalists' work harder, given that to report on a topic that is officially nonexistent is akin to covering a fictional reality. Regardless, conflict news shows the reality of the country and reveals that their *war* continues to exist.

Morris (in Lozano, 2009) reflects as a journalist on the motivation to pursue his job. In a heartfelt effort, the journalist reflects on his empathy for the people that he reports on and interviews:

You can put yourself in their place [people/victims] that gives you understanding. That's why I respect those people [the victims]. I understand them, their situation... That's why you can understand victims more, they stay. They've never left. They risk everything. They set an example... we can't be less than their example. When people ask me if I'm afraid... [I answer] Ask them [the victims] if they're afraid.

For many journalists interviewed during this research, the understanding of the other is a key point of reflection in their lives and profession. The necessity to report on people's reality is a basic rule of their jobs. In this regard, journalist Bedoya (in Simpson, 2009), agrees with this argument,

Courage is something that is very subjective. We can be courageous in certain circumstances and become real cowards in others. This is my life. I love what I do. I went to the jungle on many trips to cover military operations. I know there is a chance of not coming back. There are fears. These are not personal fears, but more about my family and things that depend on me (...) and there are millions who read my work. This is my contribution to society.

This journalist is the editor of the Crime Section at the national newspaper *El*

Tiempo, which covers stories about military forces and the armed actors. In 2000, while working for *El Espectador* on a story on paramilitaries in prison, this journalist was kidnapped, tortured, and physically abused by paramilitary groups. Three years later, in 2003, FARC guerrillas kidnapped the journalist in a small southern village of Puerto Alvira (in the Meta department), while she was reporting on how the town had been taken over by the guerrillas, during which several families disappeared and the entire village was forced to work in cocaine production. This journalist returned to her job two weeks after being abducted and wrote the story of this village controlled by guerrillas.

An underlying work rationale for the journalists interviewed is their patriotism and their passion for their profession. Journalists scarcely acknowledged the importance of their job and its contribution to the understanding of the conflict. A vast majority of their statements explained the difficult situation of the country and also detailed the extreme violence that put their lives at risk, although journalists generally did not belabour this latter point. Conflict journalists rarely recounted the danger and perils in depth, and in general never complained about their situation. It was certainly challenging but not a burden. This demonstrates their professionalism and respect for their job and concern for their country. Certain journalists continue to report on delicate topics such as drug trafficking, arms, paramilitary, government corruption and guerrilla activity, even though they always receive threats afterwards.

To live in constant danger, threatened, with the risk of being kidnapped, tortured, or abused can be regarded as an insane or unwise way of living just to pursue their profession. Journalists are identified by civil society as watchdogs in the conflict. They shed on light the stories of the victims and the victimizers. These journalists continue working in Colombia despite the hazardous atmosphere where violent agents can kill them despite their bodyguards, bullet-proof vests, and armoured cars. These protection measures are symbolic when the scope of danger that they are facing is fully recognised. Local journalists are not always lucky enough to have an armoured car and a bodyguard, and are therefore easier targets. Even so, some journalists expressed that they refused such protection or security measures because they believed that it made them more of a target.

7.3 Identity: War Journalists as a Subgroup (an Interpretive Community)

Interviewees understood their dimension and identity as war journalists, working in the Colombian conflict. They recognised to some extent that they are not ‘conventional’ journalists, as they normally regard themselves as ‘war journalists’ reporting a local conflict. For example; ‘I am not the classic war journalist that goes to Iraq (...) I’m a local conflict correspondent’ (Vélez, regional journalist). Therefore, this journalist self-identifies as a ‘conflict correspondent’, in a national dimension. Most journalists clearly defined the difference between themselves as national conflict journalists and their colleagues as ‘international war correspondents’ covering conflicts abroad. In this regard, the same journalist explains in greater depth:

We [conflict journalists] are slowly going crazy and that’s why we have a very bitter sense of humour (...). We are distinct characters, we have acquired a reputation that we believe that we belong to another kind of ‘family’, a different from others (Vélez, regional journalist).

By *family* this journalist refers to a particular group, a specific category to which local conflict journalists belong (as interpretive community). They tacitly belong to a ‘sub-culture’, separate from the rest of their colleagues (see also Pedelty, 1995). In this regard, international war correspondents have similarities with this perception of their profession, for example Janine Di Giovanni—veteran war correspondent—states ‘I was part of an elite, tight band of international reporters—a tribe, really—who roamed the earth, working from frontlines or cities under siege’ (in Goodman, 2005:1). This reveals a sense of belonging and identity as a particular group of reporters. This shared identity is also manifested in their professional practices and coping mechanisms, as a Colombian conflict journalist explains: ‘We, the conflict reporters... became a bit mental from the moment we got used to living with threats to our security (...)’ (Morris, city journalist).

These statements reveal another side of the reporter’s features. The topics covered in the interviews led them to reflect about how they are affected by their

reports and experiences. Their reports are objective, but journalists' identity (and emotional and physical well-being) are imprinted by the stories they work on. This finding also supports the argument that conflict journalists regard themselves as different in the guild, and are equally seen—in the guild—as *different* personages. A sub-group identified by their nerve, but also their recklessness, as they admit that conflict journalists have an unusual approach to war. The data showed the repetition of the word 'crazy' when defining some of their motivations to pursue their jobs. Moreover, the sense of social responsibility was revealed as an understanding of the importance of their role in society, and their persistence—against all the odds—to continue working on the frontline, for economic need as well as professional motivations.

7.4 Duality: Ambivalence

An interesting point raised by journalists, is the double life that they live. One facet of their lives is their professional identity as regional war journalists, reporting on the conflict and travelling to war zones. The other facet is their personal lives, including their family life. These two identities are hard to merge but rather intertwine and overlap. Some journalists struggle to separate their professional life from their personal relationships; however, they are not always successful, according to the interviewee. Given that frontline reporters work under life threatening and stressful situations, one of their defence mechanisms is to develop an 'emotional bullet-proof vest' (Friedman, 1995). This shield protects their sanity, and in this way, a reporter Jon Steele (in Tumber 2006:443) recounts:

We [war journalists] are a cynical bunch, but corner any one of us in a bar ... and you'll find we do it because we believe it *must* [italics added] be done. Even if no one else listens, even if no one else cares. The innocent ones whose lives we've captured have no voice, they have no protection (...) Telling their stories gave me a reason to stay alive.

This reporter says that they do it because it ought to be done. In this regard, Gómez (city journalist) expresses that he has fought hard not to succumb to 'cynical reporting' in Colombia, a country that has become increasingly habituated to violence and death. In 1989, the journalist relates that after covering 36 different massacres, viewing countless corpses and dreadful manifestations of

violence; the newspapers where he worked asked him to take some *time off*. However, this journalist was distraught about that kind of request from the editor, as he regarded this ‘special break’ from work as a type of ‘sick leave’, and was therefore offended by it. ‘I had to learn to recover my sense of outrage. It’s something I can never afford to lose’ (Gómez, city journalist). This journalist showed a remarkable capacity for resilience, which will be developed in the next section. Moreover, this comment reveals a culture in which journalists do not easily accept that they might need some time off after reporting a considerable amount of violent news, and if such a request is imposed by the editor, it could affect their professional ego and status. It could be argued that it is a ‘culture of silence’ to neglect such topics.

Family is an important issue for local reporters, as this study’s participants only travel short distances and are not far away from their hometowns. This allows more opportunities for their family and personal life to overlap with their work. As a journalist puts it:

Once, Professor Kapuściński¹⁰⁶ talked to me about family. He covered every war of our time. He said you can’t cover a conflict if you’re thinking about your family. He spoke about leaving his own for a year to cover one of those conflicts. But me... I’m committed to deeply figuring out this war in Colombia, travelling across this country filled with beauty and also horror [of clandestine graves]. Yet I’ve never been able to leave my family for more than a month... Perhaps I will? When you are faced with the barbarity of mass graves, your thoughts about your work get all jumbled up with thoughts about your loved ones. Then you *get scared* [italics added] and everything gets muddled. You’re *impatient* [italics added] to get home or to find the nearest telephone, and that distracts you from your work, it rushes you. And you stop focusing all your attention on the victims. Those victims have been waiting for you for months, for years, as the only way to stop the impunity imposed by the official versions of the fact. Kapuściński was right (Morris, city journalist) (in Lozano, 2009).

A characteristic of conflict journalists was their acceptance of *fear*, shown by acknowledging that their situation is risky, yet commitment to their job, as this journalist expresses, is the reason to persevere. In a second interview with the

¹⁰⁶ As a part of *Fundación para el Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano* workshops in Cartagena, Colombia.

journalist Morris in Mexico City (July, 2009), we met in the middle of the ‘*Chuzadas*’ phone-hacking scandal. He showed me a full report on the illegal espionage and monitoring carried out by the Colombian state intelligence agency (DAS), directly linked to the government. According to FLIP (Foundation for Freedom of the Press, 2010), government agents who were supposed to be protecting journalists as part of an official protection programme for journalists at risk were, in fact, spying on them and collecting intelligence. Among these journalists were Hollman Morris¹⁰⁷, Ignacio Gómez (*Noticias Uno*, deputy director), Jineth Bedoya (*El Tiempo*), Daniel Coronell (*Noticias Uno*, director), Norbey Quevedo (*El Espectador*, research editor), Salud Hernández (*El Tiempo*), as well as several others, totalling sixteen journalists (FLIP, 2010).

According to the nation’s attorney general, the objective for intercepting communications and movements of the journalists was ‘to discover their sources and to know what kind of investigations they were working on, especially those most critical of the government’ (FLIP, 2010:27). Morris showed grave concern, since these reports had a detailed register of his daily activities, and the exact times, dates, and places of his children’s and wife’s movements as well.

I’ve discussed the topic of exile with my wife on certain occasions. But the truth is that for me, ‘exile’ means accepting professional failure. Recognising that there’s no other solution for me, or for journalists, than going away, escaping from the violence is utterly unacceptable. But I know that it’s just a matter of time (Morris, city journalist).

7.5 Witnessing: Ethical Dilemmas of Reporting Carnage and Conflict

In covering conflict, journalists are constantly facing ethical and professional dilemmas; for instance choosing between the duty of saving someone’s life or just reporting the situation. This example, reminds us of Bell’s ‘Journalism of Attachment’, which questions whether reporters should be part of the solution of the conflict or unattached to it. It is a question that could end in one group of

¹⁰⁷ He later became director of public media television channel Canal Capital (2012-2014). Later on he became an activist of the progressist political movement lead by Gustavo Petro (Bogotá’s mayor). He was running for Bogotá’s mayor in 2015.

reporters believing that they should help the victims—however, this could open another discussion about which side is being victimised—while others think taking photographs (and strictly register news) is the more ethical position. Beyond professional questioning, the problem is first and foremost a human dilemma. Vélez (regional journalist) states:

You must ask, are you a person first or a journalist? Because you were born as a human being and brought up in a family with values that taught you how to live in community. People can tell me that if you leave [the shoot-out] you are failing as a journalist because you don't take pictures. My first 25 years [of life] I was Clara Vélez, and after that, I became a journalist, and perhaps in 50 years I will still be a journalist, but after that, I'll still be Clara Vélez, I'll live with my conscience thinking that I could have helped someone somehow (...).

This journalist refers to her experience of watching (and accompanying) people as they die, 'I had to hold the hand of a man in the throes of death; he was completely alone and I said the Our Father with him while he died' (Vélez, regional journalist). She claims that this fact will not change the war in the country, but she appeals to a sense of compassion, such as buying medicine for a sick person or buying groceries for a low-income family that she interviewed. Her position concurs with Jon Lee Anderson, war correspondent to *The New Yorker*, who asserts that one's moral duty is always to save a life because the news article or photo does not last longer than the memory of not helping a person in need. He recalls a massacre in Uganda, where he and his photographer found a beaten old lady, naked and alone under the tropical sun. The other survivors had fled her destroyed village. The photographer and reporter were shocked by all the atrocities they saw. Later on two women appeared and told them that the lady needed water. However, the journalists walked away instead of returning to the woman to give aid. The photographer never took pictures again. 'No one knew about that massacre of 250 people. I wrote an article and no one cared. I would have felt better if I had served water to the old lady. The guilt followed me for a while' (Badrán and Lee Anderson, 2002:6).

This might cross the line of journalism objectivity—the attempt to avoid getting involved in the story—however, the more controversial question is whether ethical standards should be rethought for local war reporters? A local journalist

describes this argument:

We have to deal with the grievances of the victims in one way or another. Sometimes it's way too much for us, it's like a gloomy burden, but it's our duty since we are writing about people; displaced people, victims, families in grief, not financial news. We conflict journalists decided to be unhappy people ever since we got to know close up what happens in this country (Avendaño, regional journalist).

A regional reporter explains their situation in detail with victims, and how they cannot be completely unattached given that is happening to their regional and local neighbours:

To report on [paramilitary] crimes and the 'paramilitary hearings' (*versiones libres*) is overwhelming. To listen to terrifying testimonies of their actions, the ways in which they killed a child, how they dismembered a person, affects you, but you must remain silent and listen. When you leave the trial you come across the victims and they ask you why you haven't done anything to enquire [in the hearings] where their disappeared or murdered relatives are. So, one has to have a lot of internal strength to cover these trials, to avoid any reaction of your moral principles (Rodríguez, regional journalist).

Woollacott (2005) points out that journalists are instinctive moralisers; after witnessing sad events, they wonder how to answer the needs that stare them in the face. Woollacott emphasises the prominence of this point, stating 'Such journalists are morally concerned before they are anything else'. After observing the worst human tragedies, local journalists' values and ethics are affected. When Colombian journalists are reporting the drama of their fellow-citizens, the conflict acquires a closer and a more personal aspect. This is not a new report from a faraway war; they are reporting their country's situation and while there is professional detachment it is intertwined with a thin layer grief.

The journalists interviewed agreed that becoming a conflict journalist should be the result of a process involving professional maturity. It has been suggested that reporters should have worked previously in related topics, such as justice, politics, world affairs and drug trafficking. Consequently, the change to covering war should be a personal and professional choice and not the result of an editor's appointment or, in the worst case scenario, an accident. Those who cover war should pass a test of 'psychological stability' to evaluate their mental and

emotional stability (Guerrero in Bonilla, 2006). War reporters should be allowed respite particularly after coverage considered delicate, and debriefing sessions with a trained counsellor. Such is the case of the BBC and CNN, the first news agencies to offer confidential counselling. During this recess from the war zones they can report on lighter news, as a mental and emotional break. However, work routines and job instability clashes with the ideal work model for conflict journalists, particularly in Colombia.

Some journalists believe that their *agency* in the conflict is to help citizens have a better understanding of the war and to direct them to the authorities who compensate victims. The comment below illustrates a perspective of this sense of agency:

You learn that in our job you can help people with paperwork or procedures. When I write an article I say what has happened and I mention that the family is waiting for the social work bureau to come through with the benefits, which are their right (Vélez, regional journalist).

Certain international war journalists' experiences (see Bell, Lynch, Di Giovanni) and the experiences of local war journalists analysed in this chapter have shown that after witnessing terrible atrocities, there is a moral and professional debate as to whether or not to remain calm as a third-party observers. There are many arguments regarding this subject; however, the ethical dilemma of whether journalists should be attached or not, whether they should be considered witnesses or participants, is still relevant. This is an open question that can haunt war journalists all their lives.

To illustrate, during the famine crisis in Sudan in 1993, Kevin Carter, a South African photojournalist, took the famous picture of the small and evidently undernourished toddler barely alive and a menacing vulture nearby. The picture was published in the New York Times, The Mail and The Guardian. The emotional impact of the image is impressive and the media impact at the time was enormous. Certain analysts consider that Carter acted with professionalism; he took the photo and walked away. His objective was to show the drama of Sudan. In his words 'my first instinct was to make the picture. After the child

moved on, I felt completely devastated’ (in Ryan, 2006). Given the numerous questions regarding the immediate future of the girl after the picture was taken, the New York Times had to publish an editor’s note saying that after the photograph was shot, the girl resumed her journey to the feeding centre, but there was controversy about the truth of this version. Carter won the Pulitzer Prize and a year later he committed suicide. However, while it cannot be stated that this was a result of the issue of the child, it could be argued that it could have been related to having witnessed suffering as a photojournalist in post-apartheid South Africa and while covering various wars (Keller, 2010). This helps to maintain the argument that journalists are affected on certain level by the work they produce.

Another factor of reporting is the adrenaline rush to get the news and to have the latest scoop, ‘(...) Thinking beyond our own security (...) there is no journalist in the world who doesn’t vibrate with a scoop (*chiva*)’ (Anonymous, city journalist). However, this shows a high level of danger when reporting conflict, which might lead professionals to risk their integrity and their lives: ‘I’m fearless and I do like danger. So I’ve told my boss “look there are combats... they will only let *me* get in”, and my boss says: “it is very dangerous, we better wait”. But I tell him “no... I want to have that scoop, let me go.” I beg him. “It will be my responsibility”’ (Anonymous, city journalist). Furthermore, the competition, together with the dissolution of the press workers guild in some regions, has resulted in ‘animosities between press workers and a stigmatisation of those they consider their rivals, colleagues from the same area but working for another media outlet’ (Manrique, NGO director).

The majority of journalists interviewed presented a strong ethical basis and showed an in-depth reflection of the goals of their job. A sociological approach is reflected in the following:

Journalists—because of the conflict—have become lawyers, social workers, nurses, doctors, drivers, priests. Once I went to report and I had to pray with the suffering people there. We have been lawyers, we have told people where to seek help. Sometimes we went out with a notebook full of contact information. Technically you don’t have to do that, but we did it anyway, from 1997 to 2005 (Vélez, regional journalist).

The ethical dilemmas described here reveal the rationale of journalists amid war, which is similar to colleagues in other war-torn countries. Some of the issues emerging from these findings are the complex ethical questions that the majority of respondents have had throughout their professional careers. Such questions are intrinsically related with life and death, a question of detachment versus empathy. They have revealed in-depth professional thoughts—and certain unanswered questions—on their role as journalists, citizens, and/or third-party observers in war. Given that ethical dilemmas are always interlaced with any journalistic practise, it highlights the importance of journalists having a solid ethical basis especially when reporting on war, and particularly for local reporters in war zones. Once again, specialised journalistic training on the Colombian armed conflict is a key exercise to allow conflict journalists to preparedly face ethical impasses in violent places.

7.6 Local Journalists Covering War: Trauma and Emotional Breakdown

This section attempts to analyse some of the effects of journalists covering the local war and the length of the coverage of conflict. By analysing the respondent's insights, a certain disdain is revealed of a news culture that does not take care of its own (Feinstein, 2006, 2012, 2013; Dworznik, 2007). Therefore, an important finding in this section is the need to look after reporters' mental health, particularly of those in conflict zones. It could be argued that should be a key strategy to protect journalists' emotional stability, and the coping mechanisms. In Colombia this 'emotional' protection for journalists is led by civil society (mainly the Freedom of the Press Foundation), this *sui generis* Colombian initiative reveals a concern from the civil society's to meet the need of psychological support for journalists. This initiative, together with the work of the Dart Centre for Journalism & Trauma, can be mirrored in similar violent environments in the region.

Dr. Anthony Feinstein, a pioneer in the study of war journalist's mental health, points out that the profession itself has helped to undermine the silence regarding the situation of psychological trauma and stress. If we acknowledge that war journalists are at the top of the professional hierarchical pyramid (see the section

on cities versus the regions), the hazardous job will challenge their capacities to cope with war in order to continue in the same position. Feinstein's research (Feinstein & Owen, 2002) revealed that journalists with post-traumatic stress disorder or serious depression seldom received treatment. This type of neglect was part of a 'macho culture of silence' regarding psychological health, that Feinstein (2006: 183) argues has historically enveloped the profession, 'It helps to explain [the] failure of news organizations to provide treatment for their employees (...)' yet also of journalists to accept help with a combination of 'naiveté and embarrassment'. Given that this researcher pursued his study with journalists of international news organizations, the situation in smaller national news media, such as the case of Colombia, is unknown.

There are studies regarding the impact on journalists of covering traumatic events (e.g., catastrophes, disasters, murder, fire) which discovered that reporters can be traumatised after witnessing distressing events during their coverage. Research demonstrates (Newman et al., 2003; Pyevitch 2003) that events concerning violence, death, and human suffering can be distressing for journalists, especially when children are involved.

Therefore, war journalists are more prone to be traumatised, as they bear witness to the most appalling human suffering when reporting on war. Studies that mainly focused on war journalists, photojournalists and print journalists revealed psychological effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression (Feinstein et al. 2003, Backholm & Björkqvist, 2010, 2012; Brow, Evangeli & Greenberg, 2012, Teegen & Grotwinkel 2001, Weidmann et al. 2008, Newman et al. 2003). However, there is little research on the impact of war on journalists' well-being and psyche after completing their war coverage (Smith & Newman, 2009). Psychological research on traumatic stress has recently begun to include the study of the mental health of journalists, especially those covering war. This section's exclusive interviews conducted with journalists showed mainly two different types of answers regarding trauma (PSTD) and their coping mechanisms. One group generally accepted their current or past PSTD condition while the other generally avoided the subject. It is clear that journalists' resilience appeared in many forms as they struggled to overcome daily traumatic events.

It could be argued that it is almost impossible for a journalist to avoid reacting, being impacted or suffering the emotional consequences of being exposed to a tragedy. Tompkins (2001) of the Poynter Institute of Journalism states the following on the lack of psychological support given to journalists covering tragedies,

Reporters, photojournalists, engineers, soundmen and field producers often work elbow to elbow with emergency workers. Journalists' symptoms of traumatic stress are remarkably similar to those of police officers and fire-fighters who work in the immediate aftermath of tragedy, yet journalists typically receive little support after they file their stories. While public-safety workers are offered debriefings and counselling after trauma, journalists are merely assigned another story.

For instance, Feinstein, Owen and Blair (2002) assessed the psychopathology of fifteen war journalists who witnessed and reported on one single traumatic event such as an execution. In general, they presented short-term stress, dissociation, anxiety and depression. This study is interesting because it was only one event that they reported on and they had time to prepare psychologically and their lives were not at risk. Following this, a research study (Pyeitch, Newman and Daleiden, 2003) analysed the severe impact of repeated exposure to traumatic events required as part of a job.

A considerable minority of war journalists present symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, especially after witnessing a crude or violent event (Feinstein et al., 2003). The British Royal College of Psychiatricians (2005) declares that PTSD can start after any traumatic event that we experience directly or when we see other people suffering, dying or being injured. The symptoms can start after a few weeks or months. These include grief, depression, anxiety, anger, and alcohol or drug abuse. Recurrent flashbacks and nightmares are also common, as is hyper-vigilance. However, these symptoms are hard to recognise, especially for a journalist without previous knowledge of PTSD.

Additionally, to earn an assignment to cover war is a rather prestigious task in the field, particularly for international war correspondents as such assignments grant them a high media profile in their careers. Therefore to accept that one has PTSD is difficult; as Feinstein (2002) put it 'an admission of emotional distress in a

macho world was feared as a sign of weakness and a career liability (...) left journalists reluctant to talk about their fears and insecurities'. Media organisations must offer access to debriefing for their personnel covering war in order to ensure their employees' well-being. The media, especially those with war correspondents or those working from within a conflict zone, should consider the mental health security of their journalists as a labour right, and employers must include health and safety measures within the statutory duty for war journalists after exposure to war. However, this mental health discussion is not part of the curriculum of journalism education at universities, particularly in Colombia, nor is it part of the media's operational culture.

Recent research has found that the emotional impact of covering conflict for journalists has been linked with depression and high levels of alcohol and/or drug consumption. A key finding by Feinstein, Owen & Blair (2002) examined (through questionnaires) one hundred and forty journalists (BBC, CNN) who had covered at least one war and one hundred journalists who did not cover conflict. A significant number of war journalists presented more signs of depression, more weekly alcohol intake—mainly with women—and PTSD. In comparison with the other group, war journalists presented more psychiatric difficulties.

An interesting study took place in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Journalists based in New York who reported on domestic news were required to cover this violent and tragic event. The investigation discovered that three months after the attack, these journalists presented superficial similarities to PTSD that war correspondents presented in in a subsequent research study which assessed how journalists fared psychologically in the current war on Iraq (Ghaffar & Feinstein, 2005). Psychiatrists analysed British and US journalists. The most important findings associated with this research are the consistency in journalists' emotional responses during conflicts. Journalists presented symptoms of PTSD in a consistent manner, and to lesser extent, showed signs of depression. Results also indicated high levels of alcohol and drug consumption. "While war journalists show higher rates of PTSD and major depression and drink more heavily, our data revealed that they were not more likely to have received psychological help for these conditions" (2005:2). In another example in the UK,

Allan Little, one of BBC's former war correspondents, said (in Brayne, 2010:1) '[H]e'd once viewed PTSD as an indulgent, Nancy-boy, thing'. However, when one of his co-workers was killed, this journalist changed his mind as he started showing belated PTSD symptoms, as he became '*paranoid*' and '*very moody*'. He describes himself as 'socially *dysfunctional* and *unable* to work. The idea that you can spend a decade swaggering into war zones... and have a normal life and *not be affected* in any way really has got to be challenged' [italics added].

Therefore, this research breaks the myth of war reporting in which 'a journalist can enter the war and emerge both physically and psychologically unscathed' (Feinstein, 2002). However, it is important to recognise that the majority of studies have been focused on foreign war journalists who returned to their homes in developed countries (i.e., US, Europe), and there has been no study of the effects of a national journalist covering a conflict in their own country and living under constant threats. As Feinstein (2009) asserted, there is a need for further research regarding PTSD of local journalists covering war, as there is no analysis of whether or not the studies of international war correspondents could apply to journalists covering conflict in their own countries. This research attempts to analyse the situation in Colombia; however, the results of this study are a priori and much further research is needed on this topic.

The closest approach to discussing traumatic news coverage in regards to local journalists is the *Handbook for Journalists and Tragedy* (2003) from the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, a project of the Columbia University School of Journalism. This handbook covers traumatic events in the journalists' community. In addition, the BBC, in partnership with the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, is working on the effects of conflict on journalists as retellers of violent stories, but this is an ongoing project.

Colombia has their own 'Handbook for emotional support to journalists' (2006) written by FLIP's psychological adviser Chichilla-Murillo, former director of Resilience Centre for Research and Emotional Support for Journalists (Journalism School, Universidad Sergio Arboleda); it offers practical tools to overcome trauma and PTSD. The handbook explains common reactions to

violent situations, psychological conditions or symptoms of PTSD by explaining the illness and the ways to recover from it. This handbook is a strategy to instruct journalists in the psychological risks they take. Therefore, it reveals a concern—from members of civilian society—for taking care of their journalists' mental health, and it is a way to tackle a journalistic culture of silence and disregard of trauma¹⁰⁸.

7.7 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in an Endless Conflict

Covering a long-term conflict with continual violence, such as the one in Colombia, presents many risks for journalists. For some regional conflict journalists, wearing a bullet-proof vest and changing the routes they take to their workplace or home every day is part of their life. Their paranoia increases when they consider that they have just released a delicate 'issue' or when they receive a death threat; they must sleep in a secret place and simply not go home.

To cover violent and sordid stories can produce psychological reactions that could last for weeks, months or years. According to Chinchilla (2009), these reactions include terrifying memories, and feelings of dread. Some of the emotional disorders that can develop in journalists are PTSD, severe stress disorder, chronic depression and vicarious trauma. Severe stress disorder is associated with anxiety, hyper-surveillance and, in some cases, disconnection or disengagement from reality.

A regional journalist exemplifies her experience when she worked for *Noticiero Nacional*, now *Noticias Uno*. The journalist, together with other reporters, travelled to cover a massacre at *El Carmen de Bolívar*, a conflict zone with a guerrilla presence. However, once in the zone, the guerrillas appeared and took them to 'Martín Caballero', the FARC Caribbean and Atlantic chief.

¹⁰⁸ During the participant observation at the Barranquilla journalist's training workshop, a journalist started reading the 'Handbook for emotional support' to some of their colleagues during a break. Some of them listened carefully, others, when they heard symptoms such as 'alcoholism, paranoia, isolation, moodiness', laughed nervously and looked at each other with complicity.

It was February 1999. We didn't eat for 48 hours. Mobiles were blocked. They granted us an interview and let us go into the mountains while the guerrilla and military battled. It was a difficult situation, as you've seen in the movies. I fainted twice. We thought that we were going to die. We were without food or water in an inhospitable zone. We got out with help from peasants, it was an odyssey (....) I was marked for life. It left me several emotional scars, what is called Post-Traumatic effect or Post-Stress (....) The day he [Martín Caballero] was killed, I was stunned when asked about him on air. I know everything about him, but that day I was shocked (Rodríguez, regional journalist).

As mentioned earlier, there is an innovative centre in Colombia called the Resilience Centre for Research and Emotional Support, located in the Journalism School of the *Universidad Sergio Arboleda*, which has offered personalised psychological support to journalists since 2003. Led by Dr. Chinchilla-Murillo, an expert psychologist in trauma treatment for journalists who works as a consultant, the centre provides free psychological treatment to journalists through the Foundation for Freedom of Expression (FLIP) and the journalists' protection network. Chinchilla has been trained at the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma and conducts research on trauma and journalists in Colombia for more than 30 years. He has developed proven techniques for remaining resilient in the face of trauma (Chinchilla, 2006).

Colombian war journalists demonstrate various symptoms of PTSD, and it is important to analyse how working conditions affect their emotional state. Three levels of risks are identified by Chinchilla (2009): personal, workplace and community, see Table 4.

Table 4: Three levels of risks to journalists with PTSD, with information from Chinchilla (2009).

Risks at a Personal Level I	Risks at the workplace II	Risks in the community III
Isolation	Informal contracts or the lack of thereof	Stigmatisation
Stereotypes and stigmatisation that prevents seeking help	Low wages	Harassment
Loss of life-protecting activities	Media outlets not taking precautions for their war journalists' mental health	
Low quality of life	Long working hours	
Loss of social support networks	Censorship	

It is clear that there is a difference between global war journalists—i.e., those from northern developed countries, and national war journalists. The issue of readaptation to their normal lives in the first group is significant given the difficulties they face after their return from a war coverage assignment. However, the international war journalists are in their home countries, in generally safe and secure environments where they can recover and have respite. On the other hand, Colombian war journalists have no time to recover or to live in a safe place as they live near the conflict battles; it is part of their lives. The adaptation issue for the Colombian war journalists who are exiled or under protection schemes (through the Journalist's Protection Network, FLIP) is harder, because in order to be protected they have to leave their cities or villages. Therefore they lose everything: their home, their job, and they are separated from their network of family and friends. They are safe, but these missing elements are 'everything that gave sense to their existence' (Chinchilla 2009).

This hazardous job can also affect relationships. A journalist stated that 'my wife left me because of my dangerous work'. However, he had to commit to staying in Colombia in order to report the drama of his country (Gómez, city journalist). Some conflict journalists sacrifice their relationships and family in order to pursue their job. Feinstein's study reinforces the notion of these journalists as single and divorced people, data which coincides with a great part of the interviewee's profiles in this study.

Gender is yet another differential risk factor, and is especially an issue for female war journalists. In conflict, another form of aggression beyond torture is the rape of women reporters. However, the sexual assault is often not denounced because of shame or the fear of being seen as weak (Matloff, 2007) which might lead to gender discrimination on future assignments.

7.8 Resilience

The concept of 'resilience' comes from the Latin word *resilio*, which means to leap back or bounce back. The term was originally used in engineering in reference to metals that recovered their original form once bent or compressed.

Since then it has been adapted to social sciences—particularly psychology—in reference to people who live in environments that have a high risk of death (e.g., war). However, research indicates that these people generally have good responses to crises given that they are able to recover promptly from adversities, thus survive and bounce back to normality (Ghaffar & Feinstein 2005; Chinchilla, 2009).

Twenty percent of war journalists interviewed showed a capability of resilience to overcome the difficulties faced in their work, such as exile, assault, multiple threats, intimidation from all parties, and loneliness due to the fear of endangering families. This finding was unexpected since the question of resilience was not included in the initial set of research questions, but emerged constantly in the majority of interviews. However, exploring the issue of resilience was challenging since it usually emerged after a few hours of interviewing, once the interviewee had discussed the rational part of the questions and had reached a certain degree of trust with the interviewer.

A crucial result is that these particular journalists were the most important supporters of the active role of reporters in the resolution of the conflict in Colombia. Their profession had become a mission rather than a simple job, their agency is a ‘crusade’ for certain interviewees. Despite ‘repeated exposure to work-related traumatic events’ (Smith & Newman, 2009), many reporters demonstrated consistent resilience. Even returning from exile transformed them into more resilient survivors and consequently strengthened their ethos and objectives. However, local reporters in war continue to be more vulnerable to suffering damages in the aftermath of their assignments. As they expressed it:

Colombian journalists are more exposed to physical and psychological damages than other journalists in the world. Because they are local reporters covering their communities, they are not special correspondents that stay for a few days and then leave. It is more difficult to manage the coverage of traumatic events of which the ending is unknown. There is no post-trauma (Newman in Manrique, 2009:1).

To report from a war zone when the armed actors are close by is very hard. There will always be pressures, they’ll never like what you write

and we'll constantly receive complaints by phone or they'll ask about the topic of the following news report. Once the guerrilla told me off about my report saying it 'was very nasty...' and I have been asked, 'Why did you report that the commander was dancing in front of the victims?' But I'm telling the truth, so that protects me (Arcieri, regional journalist).

In Colombia, these journalists are protected by government agencies, which provide them with bodyguards and armoured cars. They are in the spotlight, not only because of the possible threats from armed actors due to their work, but also from the government. When the local, regional or national government does not agree with their reports, they can arbitrarily condemn the journalists and turn public opinion against them. Journalists must decide to either practice self-censorship or to live with threats from every ambit of their environs. For example, 'the president generates fanatics, I receive terrible insults in the street, and if I wasn't accompanied by my body guards people might kill me' (Gómez, city journalist). Another reporter (Bedoya, city journalist) confides, 'Some days are still very difficult when I remember what happened to me'. After her kidnapping in 2000, she received many offers of asylum which she turned down. When journalists leave the country they will be safe, but they normally do not work as journalists overseas; therefore, there is a sense of loss, of living in oblivion.

Some journalists even mentioned that conflict reporting was not made for weak people. The war journalist must have a profile that suits the dangerous situations that they work in (cf. Tumber & Webster, 2006). 'When Guillermo Cano was murdered, many colleagues left the job. Others chose more benign fields (Gómez, city journalist). Another reporter declares: 'Surely I could report on finances, economy or entertainment but, knock on wood, those themes are extremely boring after witnessing the war up-close' (López, regional journalist). Hoyos, a journalist who uses a bulletproof vest daily and at the time of the interview was relying on the permanent presence of bodyguards, adds to this point clearly (Hoyos, city journalist):

I'm with a team of six bodyguards and I move in an armoured car. Three attacks on me have failed, thank God. It's all because of this job, my entire family lives outside the country. It's an important job, my work

affects them [guerrilla, paramilitary] it negatively puts them in the spotlight so they want to kill me.

7.9 Conclusion

This combination of findings provides some support to the conceptual premise that journalists are affected by the stories they cover, particularly those covering war or violence. Emotional responses are connected with the ways in which they approach their news; therefore, the importance of the reporter's psychological stability in order to produce balanced information must be stressed. It can be argued that when Martin Bell wrote *In Harm's Way* he was probably affected by the war and his Journalism of Attachment proposal could have been an 'emotional' response to the atrocities witnessed. As a consequence, it could be argued that this call for journalists' attachment in war, disregarding journalistic objectivity was a signal of a more poignant and urgent issue in the discipline: the ethical discussions—both individually and in a group—regarding the professionalism that journalists frequently face on the frontline.

These results have a contradictory element; on the one hand, interviewees' responses show a high degree of passion for their profession and work, which motivates them to continue in their jobs. Moreover, some of them consider reporting about the conflict a proper 'mission' in their life and as members of society. This shows an understanding of their agency in the public sphere, they perceive their job as vital for society. These particular journalists showed a high capacity of resilience. On the other hand, they are seriously concerned for their well-being (psychological and physical), their lack of security, and issues with their families—besides the low wages—all factors that undermine their passion for the job.

However, it should be acknowledged that there is a need for more research on the topic. Given the time-constraints of this investigation, it was difficult to obtain more data regarding the resilience and mental health of the subjects, which could be better pursued by specialists in the area of psychiatry and trauma together with journalism scholars. Very little was found in the literature reviewed regarding

trauma and the mental health of local journalists, a consideration recognised by Feinstein, the leading researcher on the topic. The literature is divided between journalism studies (which are focused more on professional dynamics and identity) and psychiatric studies focused on mental health exclusively. This indicates that there is a vacuum of knowledge that is crucial to fill in future research through studies that interlace journalism and psychology of trauma.

The constant variables found in this research are the isolation, vulnerability and pain shown after covering a traumatic event. In part this can be attributed to the fact that journalists have a minimal or complete lack of knowledge about the psychological risks of covering trauma and violence. Interviewees could explain their situation, yet it was shown that the majority ignored the symptoms or the psychological classification of their behaviours. Some reporters were slightly surprised to be quizzed about their ‘feelings’ and ‘emotions’ after covering war. However, those who answered these questions—without the anonymity clause—provided extremely rich and somewhat cathartic and emotive responses.

The situation of insecurity, censorship and threats that the journalists’ interviewed face daily have, in some cases, triggered the emotional instability of reporters. Alongside with the media’s ‘culture of silence’, the lack of support by media organisations regarding mental health and the state’s double standards on protecting the journalists all add to this precarious situation.

These results show that covering war and violent situations represents psychological risks and challenges for the journalists. This is another issue of professionalism and expertise that should be acknowledged by media organisations in small countries in conflict. Moreover, it is crucial to address professional questions regarding coverage of violence in order to enrich journalists’ education and training in developing countries. This can be done through professional networks, workshops and media institutions.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHALLENGE OF REPORTING PEACE, VICTIMS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN HARM'S WAY

This section will analyse the ways in which war and peace have been reported on in the Colombian conflict. There are two time-periods analysed; 'Truce intervals' during the peace negotiations (between FARC guerrilla and government) and recent events (since 2008). First we will examine the origins, development and decline of the 'Peace Sections' of three important newspapers. Secondly, we will present contemporary initiatives and techniques for reporting on not only *peace* but also *human rights* issues and on the conflict's *victims*—namely the greatest forgotten ones in this war. In this section three case studies will be presented; community media (*Montes de María's Communication Collective*), alternative media (*Contravía*), and mainstream radio (*Caracol Radio*—the Voices of the Kidnapped programme (*Voces del Secuestro*)).

The Peace Sections in newspapers were created to address the Colombian peace process in a more comprehensive fashion; they also aimed to highlight the negotiations and to bring background to news about the conflict. Based on the consensus that responsible media has to open a channel of communication among actors, the Peace Sections were produced in three newspapers—one regional and two national—*El Colombiano*, *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo*. However, this happened at different times; *El Colombiano* created this section in the 1990s, while *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* only introduced this section to their pages in 1999–2002 to fully cover the peace negotiations between President Pastrana and FARC guerrilla. But whenever the section was introduced, this is an effort of media owners and editors to improve the coverage of war.

As Kapuściński (in *El Tiempo*, Handbook, 2003) articulates, when a conflict is extended over various decades, there is the tendency to cover it as a sport; it can easily be uprooted from its main context and consequence—death. Another danger, which follows on the heels of the first, is to trivialize death (namely

massacres, homicides), to portray it like any other normal situation. Currently, two of the Peace Sections have been closed down (*El Tiempo*) or changed name and approach (*El Colombiano*); only one has remained (*El Espectador*). However, this section will argue that these peace areas were a point of departure for a *different* approach to cover the conflict.

Although there are no longer Peace Sections or the interest in reinstalling them, peace and human rights are covered in alternative media, community media, and sometimes in mainstream media. Human rights and victims are an important issue on the agenda at the moment since this is the way in which peace and harmony can be shown in news. As the public gains a more thorough knowledge of their fellow citizens' situation in the conflict, they can better understand the victims' reality and aid the reconciliation and forgiveness post-conflict process in the midst of the ongoing war; although this reads as an oxymoron, post-conflict and conflict are interlaced in Colombia. The findings reveal an extensive reflection and experience on reporting peace in the midst of a conflict, one of the explanation is the concern from civil society towards peace. As an editor articulates clearly:

We, beyond the theorists and the international experience, we have our own experience, that is extremely intense in all fields (...) There are many organisations that undertake theoretical and intellectual debates on models that have been applied in other countries. But I believe that we've got a long history of 50 years of conflict with terrible variables that have taught us several things regarding peace (Cardona, city editor).

In our investigations we have not found yet, in any other country in conflict —either internal or external—a similar proposal [press' responsibilities] by the journalists (...) the press attempts an in-depth reflection on the duties and responsibilities in the conflict (Moreno, 2001: 8).

8.1 *El Colombiano*: The 'Peace Unit'

Formerly known as the 'Peace Unit' (*Unidad de Paz*), and now called 'Armed Conflict', this section was the first to appear in the press. *El Colombiano* brought forward the idea of a special segment focused on reporting peace efforts and

negotiations. It was created around the mid-1990s, when the country, and particularly Antioquia (the home region of the newspaper), was passing through a complex situation. Specifically, the strong paramilitary presence became stronger, the EPL was demobilised, and there was an increase in displacement and massacres by armed groups.

The establishment of the Peace Unit was the result of a series of reflections in the newsroom on how to contribute towards the balance of information to give the readership more perspectives and to understand the conflict from both sides. The intention, according to Carlos Olimpo, editor of *El Colombiano*, was to contribute to overcoming the conflict through the publication of the ideas and purposes of all the armed actors. In that way they could achieve, asserted Olimpo, the mitigation, at least in a small proportion, of the readers' mindset. The aim was to open the space of the newspapers to free debate. The opening of the newspaper's pages to all the actors involved in the conflict—including the government—carried two conditions: firstly to not defend or make an apology for the atrocities being committed. The second condition was not to make the Peace Unit's pages a confrontational forum against their enemies. The proposal was simple: to expose their situation, project and rationale. The pages had participation from many sectors; the church, the government, civil society, and illegal groups (FARC, EPL and AUC). They all had the opportunity to publish their arguments in a large-scale and important newspaper such as *El Colombiano*. The newspaper was simply a space where they debated and looked for solutions.

In addition to opening the newspaper to groups involved in the conflict, the 'Peace and Human Rights Unit', founded around 1997–1998, aimed to cover the conflict in a different manner. *El Colombiano* group agreed on the need to have a different section in the newspaper because they considered that the armed conflict deserved a distinct approach, asserts Olimpo (regional editor). Therefore, the unit was made up of a special group which included the best-prepared journalists in the subject. The newspaper educated them in International Humanitarian Law, among other diverse courses connected to the coverage of conflict. This page, it is said, was the example that other media used to replicate this peace initiative.

The journalistic perspective is to have analysis, pedagogy and background, and to

try to clarify the information in the Peace Section. The newspaper has a style handbook, internal guidelines, and international guidelines to undertake their approach to reporting on peace. It is important to underline that they do not acknowledge influence in the peace journalism perspective or debates related to it.



Figure 10: “Face to face, reconciliation between ex-AUC and victims” (*Cara a cara reconciliador entre ex AUC y víctimas*), ‘Peace & Human Rights Section’, *El Colombiano*, 19/05/2008.

After a varied debate among armed groups in these pages, dialogues were opened in the Antioquia zone. This resulted in the demobilisation of the EPL guerrilla, which became a political group instead. Whether the debate of ideas and display of positions exhibited in the Peace Section pages were a tool to solving the conflict, is met with scepticism by Olimpo (regional editor):

I don’t think that it contributed directly [to the peace dialogues], but at least it helped to encourage armed groups to decide to leave the conflict. This allowed people to think about it, but it wasn’t the main factor. I couldn’t say that *El Colombiano* achieved the demobilisation of one of the Uraba groups in the war, no, but I believe that a platform was opened up, and helped to start a critical thought process. In addition, people started looking for alternatives through the Church, which had special conflict delegates for dialogue with that group.

A limitation of the Peace Section was the unbalanced participation of the actors. Whereas some groups had important contributions, FARC sent only one letter/press release, and then decided to stay outside of the debate. However, the other groups wrote and discussed their proposals. At present, the newspaper no

longer has this forum for armed groups; it currently operates as a daily informative section on peace, printing in-depth analysis mainly on Sundays.

8.2 *El Espectador*: The ‘Peace Unit’

When the peace negotiations start in 1999, *El Espectador* opened the ‘Peace Section’ and appointed a special team called the ‘Peace Unit’ to cover the negotiations. One of the founders asserts, ‘When I created the Peace Unit (...) it had an educational purpose. Peace is a matter of education, to explain the roots of the conflict (...), besides the news had to have an explanation of the process of how the conflict developed’ (Morris, city journalist).

The Peace Unit worked rather intuitively and with a vision towards the consensus. The section is a convergence of the political and judiciary sections of the newspaper, and the objective is to give a human rights perspective, to cover conflict resolution and peace negotiations from pedagogical and informative angles. Before the creation of the Peace Unit, they had a section title of one or two pages entitled: peace and national resolutions. *El Espectador* editor-in-chief (Cardona, city editor) asserts:

We must report on war, but we must always have a small space to report on topics of peace, negotiation and peaceful coexistence. Beyond war, there is a negotiation. As Guillermo Cano, the former editor of *El Espectador*, asserted openly ‘the defence of human rights cannot be part-time, they are either defended or not...’.

The newspaper has had an open and democratic role with all parties in the conflict; the director Carlos Yeras de la Fuente (seven years ago), publicly offered a column in the newspaper to ‘*Tirolfijo*’ (FARC guerrilla leader). ‘Señor Marulanda: all the issues that you need to express, the problems of the country, the inequality, and oligarchy... I offer you a column to discuss it’—Gutiérrez (city journalist). The guerrilla leader turned down the proposal. But the newspaper considered that the guerrilla should speak out, and the citizens should also listen to their position, to have another perspective of the other side of the conflict.

8.3 *El Tiempo*: The ‘Peace Unit’ and ‘Pazaporte’

The Peace Unit (*Unidad de Paz*) at *El Tiempo* newspaper had an irregular existence, according to the information agenda. It was created when it reported on the negotiations between ELN and Germany, and afterwards covered the Caguán peace talks. This unit which specialised in peace was part of the newspaper’s political section. The journalists that were part of the Peace Unit are Marisol Gómez, Juanita León, Bibiana Mercado and Nubia Camacho. Afterwards, ‘*Pazaporte*’, a Sunday supplement was created. The structure was based on a central story of a special situation of the conflict and its victims, and had a record of the facts of the week. However, in this newspaper the unit ended due to inertia after Caguán ended. ‘The section survived until it was not essential for the newspaper. We did make a difference, but it was not indispensable, the section was swapped sometimes for news considered more important, until the page faded out (Giraldo, city journalist).



Figure 11: ‘Convención con Proceso de Paz’ (‘Peace Process with Convention’), Peace Unit (Unidad de Paz), *El Tiempo*.

For almost a decade, the powerful *El Tiempo* was the only national newspaper for forty million Colombians. Therefore, the Peace Unit worked as a tool to inform on the other side of the conflict, as well as news about peace conciliation efforts,

victims, human rights, etc. This initiative from a huge news media shows the efforts that even mainstream media have shown to improve their coverage of the conflict in order to provide balanced reporting.



Figure 12: '¿Se hace camino al andar?' (We create the path while we walk?). Peace Section (Sección de Paz), *El Tiempo*.

8.4 Analysis: Reporting Peace as an Old Fashion

The majority of interviewees acknowledged the Peace Unit from *El Colombiano* as an important space throughout the past decades for reporting human rights and peace. In the times of the Pastrana presidency and the peace talks he promoted, their perspectives are valuable and help to shed light on the debate of peace in Colombian society. This Peace Unit was significant in the big media outlets that reached a broad public in the country. As mentioned before, peace news is no longer on the agenda; therefore, to refer to Peace Units at present is an alternative perspective. As an editor asserts:

Colombian newspapers have the Peace Units, but it's a rather odd thing. I've always asked them why don't you have a 'conflict area' or 'war area', because this is an armed conflict. The *Caguán* [the peace negotiations] lasted for four years and those units pre-existed it. The name

was very eloquent. To have a Peace Unit is like an aspiration, the emphasis of media is peace, and I am very sceptical about those kinds of aspirations. Our role is to cover and to explain reality (Sierra, city editor).

It is important to highlight that even though *El Tiempo* is known as a newspaper with tendencies to support the ruling party and establishment, their Peace Unit could publish documents without editing, directly from the peace negotiation desks. Therefore, the newspaper devoted entire pages to inform on the peace process and to show the other side of the conflict with '*Pazaporte*', a high quality information section.

The creation of the Peace Units was a consequence of the sociopolitical situation of the conflict, the news agenda was focused on *peace* because it was a unique political circumstance. According to interviewees, Colombian society hoped for a pacification process with the guerrilla. The creation of these units resulted, then, from a need to provide better understanding of the historical and political roots of the conflict, as well as the social origins and consequences of the different types of '*violence*' in the country (as argued in the literature review). 'In the Colombian approach it is necessary to explain the war, but also the theme of peace from a historical viewpoint' (Cardona, city editor).

At present, the only Peace Section that continues is in *El Espectador*. However, at *El Colombiano* there is a remnant of the former Peace Unit. In the current news agenda, peace is not prevalent—news has the tendency to report on war and confrontations. The main reason *El Tiempo*'s Peace Unit disappeared was the rupture of the peace negotiations at Caguán. In addition to this is the new direction of Pastrana's successor, Álvaro Uribe, which radically changed the government's stance regarding the conflict; the new President Juan Manuel Santos continues with the lack of negotiations.

The framing of the conflict changed to 'terrorism', guerrilla actors were no longer recognised as such but as mere terrorists, and that definition justified the total disregard of any initiative to reinstall peace negotiations with this particular armed group. Therefore, the failed 'peace negotiations' at Caguán was an exceptional situation that obeyed a particular political moment, and newspapers

responded accordingly. Given that the peace process with the guerrillas has not been replicated yet, to report news on 'peace' or 'guerrillas' has become more unusual in mainstream newspapers.

Beyond the fading of the 'peace' units, it could be argued that there are contemporary approaches to news that relates to those units. These new approaches to reporting move beyond the 'Peace Units', but aim to report the conflict with a focus on victims and human rights, which are the most crucial issues now.

The 'Peace Units' presented a dichotomy of reporting on the one hand peace and in the other war. Given that these three newspapers continued covering war from other sections, such as in the crime section, as a result there was a contradictory division of coverage of the same theme. Also, interviewees accounts agreed that the stigmatization of journalists covering the 'peace negotiations' was severe, sometimes considered as guerrilla supporters; 'We didn't covered it [peace negotiations] because we wanted to, we were appointed by our media. At one point, black lists circulated of journalists stigmatized as guerrilla spokespeople, allies, and we weren't liked or welcomed in many places (Costrillón, regional journalist).

Interviewees rarely acknowledged the 'peace journalism' concept. They generally agreed in their answers; that they worked mainly with the circumstances rather than theories, the majority of the interviewees did not know the peace journalism postulate. Even though they ignored the Western scholarly and professional debates on peace and journalism, they implicitly understood that the concept of that kind of 'journalism' had to be linked to peace. 'We, beyond the theorists and the international experience, we have our own experience, which is very intense, so we create our own concepts (Zuluaga, regional journalist). They certainly have a long history of fifty years of conflict that has forced them to analyse the information on peace in the conflict. Consequently, for the conflict reporters to provide news about victims, displaced peoples, citizens whose human rights had been violated was their way to practice 'responsible journalism in the armed conflict' and not simply journalism on peace. As a reporter expressed:

Peace journalism works in a very anonymous fashion. To let victims tell their story and others to listen to it and identify with the tragedy of the other, that's the valuable contribution; there are not many examples, but this is peace journalism. Gutiérrez (city journalist).

8.5 Reporting the Forgotten: Victims of Conflict

One of the foci of the Colombian concept of 'Responsible journalism when covering conflict' is to report on the victims. They argue that victims are the forgotten ones in the Colombian conflict. The press' representation of these subjects has had a tendency to portray them as weak actors who suffer violence, generally wretched, represented as people without ideas, illusions, rights, and who are mainly powerless. The aim of this new conceptualization of journalism is to give them a voice, to show a different angle of their stories: resistance and empowerment.

Reflections on reporting on victims are also echoed by CNN's Christiane Amampour (in McLaughlin, 2002) who asserts that fairness in reporting does not mean treating perpetrators on an equal basis with their victims. Therein responsible journalism is not taking the side of the victims, it is just reporting both sides of the story accurately, and giving all actors the space to be heard or visible in society.

To focus on the victims gives the conflict a different dimension according to Restrepo (city journalist), when the media reports on the victims, society can see the face of the horror, the dark side of the war, and it produces rejection and disapproval. Whereas only reporting about the wins and losses of the confrontations (guerrilla, military, police, paramilitary) links the information about death and victims to part of an impersonal strategy. Restrepo tries not to represent the conflict in the media as a military operation, because that is not the main objective of journalists. This postulate is partially connected with peace journalism standpoints in regards to the representations of 'war' discourses. However to focus on 'victims' means not only to include them in the report; the idea is to explain the context of their situation and describe the violence that they survived. It could be argued that this is the core of the perspective, to report the

holistic situation of the victims, not just categorising them as the unfortunate victims.

Health, education, and human rights issues are not linked with this binary choice. There is the popular belief or myth that once the guerrillas and government sign the peace agreements the conflict will end. However, the conflict, as exposed before, is extremely complex, therefore, the news agenda should also focus on all the other issues surrounding the war-peace duality.

Victims want to know why their family was killed. What happened? This stuff is invisible. So this work is important for society. To regard other kinds of pain is slightly boring. But it generates *solidarity* [italics added], than the approach of reporting war from the battles and war strategies. Mercado (city journalist).

The victims are also looking for the ‘truth’ regarding their families and relatives disappeared and murdered by the paramilitary. The current ‘paramilitary hearings’ (*versiones libres*) work as a part of the reconciliation process with the demobilised armed group. Some hearings allow the terms of *reparation* to be transmitted by the media.

There are contrasting arguments regarding reporting on victims. Some journalists consider that the treatment of these social subjects has to be less stereotyped; they argue that the victims are commonly shown in a sensational light which disregards their condition as social subjects whose human rights have been infringed. A reporter explains:

The main problem of this country’s journalism, is that those affected by the violence do not talk about peace, whereas the extradited—the great leaders of paramilitaries, drug traffickers, and guerrillas, but not the affected—they only talk from the melodramatic perspective, not as a social subjects. Mercado (city journalist).

Another journalist expresses, ‘Generally a journalist’s work is insufficient. The stories that allow a true understanding of the phenomenon of human rights abuses are not reported. Reality has not been registered’. Bedoya (city journalist).

Other journalists consider factors which influence the coverage of victims:

Some media say that we should make the victims visible, rather than the perpetrators. There is a tendency to do it, but it is more discourse than reality because there are many limitations; it is expensive to take a plane, boat, a five hour car drive; it's expensive, and the media will not send a team for 15 days to have an article. Costrillón (city journalist).

This society [Colombia] has given too much space to murderers and very little to victims, but that is not a problem of journalism, it is a problem of how we look at ourselves as a society. We are used to listening to those who have weapons, not to those who suffer, and Colombian journalism is part of it. Mercado (City journalist).

When reporting about victims, certain media outlets have made this suggestion as part of their editorial guidelines, namely *El Colombiano* newspaper works from the victims' perspective. One of their conflict journalists, Vélez (regional journalist), asserts:

There was a turn in the journalistic language, they tried to remind the reader that beyond the factual attack, International Humanitarian Law was being infringed, they endeavoured to remind the peasants that they are protected citizens who have rights and must not be attacked. The feature article included a factbox (*recuadro*) on people's right to compensation from the government then we left the article posted in the Town Hall.

The understanding of journalism that reports facts and journalism that does an in-depth analysis of situations and their context are two elements that are clearly differentiated among educated conflict journalists.

8.6 Reporting Peace through Peaceful Means: The 'Communications Collective Montes de María Line 21'

An example of reporting peace in the regions is the job of the 'Communications Collective Montes de María Line 21'. This community media is from the most affected regions in the conflict; the Montes de María, in the Bolívar department north of Colombia. El Carmen de Bolívar is a town hidden on the northern coast of the Caribbean region. El Carmen was affected by heightened guerrilla activity during the 1990s and paramilitary massacres and it also received several displaced people from neighbouring regions. The collective has the idea of

‘communication for transformation’ in the midst of the conflict. The main objective of this communication collective is to open spaces of communication, information (concealed), and to rebuild the sense of community that is often lost in a war. By creating this space, the community (youth, children, women, displaced, parents, etc.) can start a process of bonding and solidarity through understanding each other’s situations and sharing public spaces. Community media leaders showed a dedicated understanding of their journalistic mission.

This collective works with community radio and television and is the winner of the 2003 Colombian National Peace Prize. Here the collective coined the concept of ‘communication for social change and transformation’. This collective promotes a democratic culture through spaces of civic participation for children and youth. The aim is to construct bonds through socialisation as a community, instead of a culture of violence and conflict.

This holistic process of communication and recovery of the right to speak and be heard in a community is an enormous effort and it was planned almost by instinct. ‘We act with our hearts and intuition and because life has put us here,’ says Bayuelos (community media director). This interviewee stresses that they are common people in a difficult situation. The academic debates on journalism and peace are beyond the knowledge of the collective, and yet they employ similar dynamics to report on victims and humanise war. However, in this region the priority is practical: to bring back hope to their communities through communication, and goes beyond the theoretical debates on journalism and conflict that are happening in Bogotá.

Soon after the collective started in 1997, the armed conflict in the zone became more violent. People disappeared, massacres and mass displacements took place; the region was affected by violence that included control of the cities and rural areas and restrictions of the rights to free movement and interaction in public spaces, such as streets, plazas, and parks. An unspoken curfew enforced by the armed groups prohibited circulation after 18:00 hours. Therefore, people stopped their daily community life and took refuge at home.

There was solitude, fear, sorrow, sadness, bombs, death, conflicts, and desperation. With a terrible heat, and lack of electricity, because guerrilla hit electric plants, it was chaotic, a very difficult situation, and hopeless (....) People didn't talk, we couldn't speak, we could only endure. Bayuelos (community media director)

It was in the middle of this terrible war situation that the collective challenged the status quo and resisted with creativity, through different ways of using communication. First they set up a travelling cinema in the main square (using a white table cloth as a screen) to recover public space and recover community interactions. It was impossible to speak up on the radio, so they decided to not have news programmes. Even if the Monte María's citizens were limited in their speech, the act of watching movies in the open air functioned as sublimation of free speech and re-established the sense of community. Soon after, the Film Club in the main square was well received and successful among the community, they named it the 'Purple Rose of Cairo Itinerant Film Club', and later on the film club travelled around nearby small villages.

We had to do another kind of journalism, not only informative. We didn't report the breaking news of massacres and disappearances, those were reported by Caracol and RCN—they used to come here, briefly show Montes de María and leave. We had to do journalism in a different language, to give hope to people and analyse the issues. So we changed the format, it wasn't informative or a newscast, it was a format to build knowledge and to reflect. We weren't allowed to do chronicles, life style segments or documentaries. We worked with 'social and community Journalism'.

Peace journalism concepts or postulates about civic journalism can be adapted to these initiatives; however, those theories are unknown to these community leaders. In addition, the purpose of the collective is not to neutralise the conflict. Rodríguez (2008), who based his extensive research on alternative media in the country, states that Colombia is a world pioneer in understanding the role of citizen media in the armed conflict. It is the act of communication from the people as a cultural resistance to war.

So their strategy was to work with children in a discrete manner, accompanying women in the barrios. They included many voices in order to record the community and to avoid risk to the journalists. Their survival tactics were

reflected in the communication and journalism that the collective could produce. To rebuild, as they say, everything that war has damaged.

The basis of their work with children is to have the collective train them as journalists, camera people, scriptwriters, etc. In this regard, they consider that they are creating warriors for the new generations; the kids that participate in the collective are learning new skills for life. Alongside this task, their project is to rebuild the historical memory of the community; they stress the social responsibility to document what has happened in their region.

One of the most crude and visible effects that armed conflicts produce is silence and fear. This is where the importance of this case study resides; the collective opened meeting spaces and offered the opportunity for dialogue and to interact as a community. The collective helped to recover the right to communicate. The Montes de María collective became an important agent in the reconstruction of the social bond of the community affected by war (Rodríguez, community media coordinator).

In this faraway village of Montes de María, the aim of artists and journalists focused on how to recover the words for the community through their community media. To show the stories of the people helped them to understand others and their situation and to empathize as a community. This situation is similar to other community media collectives in the country, which have likewise been developed in the most difficult conflict zones. Their objectives are clear and directed to people in their community: to transmit understanding, information and hope.

8.7 Reporting on Children in War

The Colombian situation in regards to children in war comprises recruitment, reintegration, as well as several cases of murder, mistreatment, sexual exploitation, and abuse, as well as those who live in extreme poverty. In this regard, Martín, a UNICEF representative in Colombia, states that in only 2007, of the hundred thousand displaced people fifty percent were children and young people. Also, this group comprised twenty-nine percent of 6,426 civilians

affected by anti-personnel mines (Universidad de los Andes, 2002:17). In this regard, one editor states: ‘It is necessary that news coverage should be respectful, non-sensationalist, contextualised and from a perspective not of victimhood but of children’s rights (Sierra, city editor). Therefore, child soldiers must be considered as victims, not as offenders or perpetrators (see Paris Principles, 2007).

A demobilised Colombian paramilitary chief recently confirmed that more than 3,000 minors in paramilitary groups got out via the back door; in other words they did not enter the Colombian reconciliation process (under the Justice and Peace Law). ‘All these victims remained without the right of reparation. They did not receive psychological aid, nor any kind of rights, they returned home, and the country only knew about this information through a paramilitary chief’ (Manrique and Beltrán, 2009:7).

As specialised journalists point out (Sierra, 2002), the main problem is not only stopping children from being recruited for war, but also to ensure their correct demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration into society as citizens with rights, the same as adult combatants but with programs adapted to their necessities.

The reintegration of children of war has been a difficult process in many parts of the world. Colombia, among other war-torn countries, has been running the reintegration process together with the United Nations. The following table shows the comparison with other war-torn countries.

Table 5: Children in conflict in Colombia. Free Children from War, UNICEF (2007)

COUNTRY	Estimated number of demobilised and reintegrated children since 1998	Source
Burundi	3,015	UNIDDRS
Ivory Coast	1,194	UNICEF
Democratic Republic of the Congo	27,346	UNIDDRS
Haiti	N/A	
Republic of the Congo	N/A	
Somalia	360	UNICEF
Sudan	16,400	UNICEF
Colombia	2,916	UNICEF
Nepal	N/A	
Philippines	N/A	
Sri Lanka	5,900	UNICEF
Uganda	20,000	UNICEF
Liberia	11,780	UNICEF
Angola	3,200	UNICEF

The Media for Peace and Foundation, in association with NGO *Colombia Multicolor* (2009) released a manual on how to report on children in war. One of the tools and main arguments are illustrated clearly in the Figure 13 (next page).

Instructions
on how to
inform
poorly on
children in
war

Consider that a
kid or teen who
belongs to an
armed group is
a delinquent
and not a victim
of war

Keep
believing that
right to
information
prevails over
children's
rights

**Instrucciones
para informar mal
sobre los niños
de la guerra**

1 SIGA CREYENDO QUE UN NIÑO ES UN MENOR INDEFENSO, NECESITADO DE PROTECCIÓN Y GUÍA, Y NO UN SER HUMANO CON TODOS LOS DERECHOS.

2 CONSIDERE QUE UN NIÑO O JOVEN PERTENECIENTE A UN GRUPO ARMADO ES UN DELINCUENTE Y NO UNA VÍCTIMA DE LA GUERRA.

3 PIENSE QUE UN NIÑO SOLDADO ES ÚNICAMENTE EL QUE DISPARA, Y NO EL QUE COCINA, HACE MANDADOS, ESPÍA, LLEVA MENSAJES O ES OBJETO SEXUAL.

4 CONTÍNUE CREYENDO QUE EL DERECHO A LA INFORMACIÓN PREVALECE SOBRE LOS DERECHOS DE LOS NIÑOS.

5 NO SE PREOCUPE POR PROTEGER LA IDENTIDAD DE ESTOS ENTREVISTADOS, NI POR EVITAR QUE SE CONOZCA SU FAMILIA O SU LUGAR DE HABITACIÓN.

6 MANEJE LA PUBLICACIÓN DE FOTOS E IMÁGENES DE ESTOS NIÑOS, COMO SI ELLOS FUERAN MAYORES DE EDAD.

7 NUNCA OLVIDE LA PREGUNTA CLAVE PARA ESTOS NIÑOS: "¿USTED A CUÁNTOS MATÓ?".

8 EN EL CASO DE LAS NIÑAS, ESMÉRSESE AVERIGUANDO POR ABORTOS, VIOLACIONES Y COMANDANTES DE LOS QUE HAN SIDO "COMPAÑERAS SENTIMENTALES".

9 DESINTERÉSESE POR INDAGAR QUÉ PASA EN EL ALMA DE UN NIÑO QUE HA DISPARADO Y HA VISTO MORIR.

10 TOME AL PIE DE LA LETRA LA AFIRMACIÓN DE QUE LA MAYORÍA DE LOS NIÑOS Y JÓVENES ENTRAN A LOS GRUPOS ARMADOS DE MODO VOLUNTARIO.

11 CONTRIBUYA CON SUS TEXTOS Y NOTAS A AJUSTAR LA IMAGEN DE HÉROES QUE SE PROYECTA SOBRE LOS ARMADOS.

12 REFUERCE EN SU INFORMACIÓN EL AMOR POR LA MOTOS POTENTES, LAS CAMIONETAS 4X4, LA SILICONA SEDUCTORA, LA PLATA A COMO DÉ LUGAR.

13 NO INCLUYA EN SU AGENDA INFORMATIVA LAS EXPERIENCIAS DE CULTURA, ARTE, PRODUCCIÓN Y CREACIÓN, QUE PUEDAN SER PARA LOS JÓVENES UNA SALIDA DISTINTA A LA DE EMPUÑAR UN ARMA.

14 APROVECHE A FONDO, SIN CONFRONTAR FUENTES NI VERACIDAD, LOS "REGALOS" INFORMATIVOS DE LAS ENTIDADES DE SEGURIDAD DEL ESTADO: ARCHIVOS DE COMPUTADOR, DOCUMENTOS INCAUTADOS, FOTOS Y VIDEOS, NIÑOS TESTIGOS.

15 QUE JAMÁS SE LE CRUCE POR LA CABEZA LA IDEA DE QUE UN NIÑO SOLDADO PODRÍA SER SU HERMANO, SU HIJO O SU SOBRINO.

16 SIÉNTASE MANIATADO Y CENSURADO POR CAUSA DE LAS PRECAUCIONES CON QUE SE DEBE INFORMAR SOBRE LOS NIÑOS DE LA GUERRA.

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Fundación Colombia Multicolor

Figure 13: 'Instructions on how to report badly on children in war' (Instrucciones para informar mal sobre los niños de la guerra), Medios Para la Paz (Media for Peace), Fundación Colombia Multicolor (Multicolour Colombian Foundation) (2009). Complete translation in Table 6 (below).

The core of these ironic guidelines on the poster has a certain connection to four UNICEF ethical standards regarding the reporting on children associated with armed groups, namely the 2007 Paris Principles (particularly points 3.29 on Information-Sharing and 3.20 on Media coverage). Firstly, the issue of sharing children's personal information regarding human rights violations should be confidential. The organization indicates that inappropriate media coverage can be dangerous for children and their families and cause psychological damage.

Table 6: Reporting children in conflict: A comparative scheme constructed with data from Media for Peace-Multicolour Colombian Foundation Poster [*translated by the author*] and UNICEF Principles of ethical reporting on children (The Media and children's rights, 2005)

The poster (Figure 13) states that, to incorrectly report on children in war, you should:	Principles of ethical reporting on children (1–5), Guidelines for interviewing children (I–VI) and Guidelines for reporting on children (A–H) (UNICEF)
1: Keep believing that a child is a defenceless minor, in need of protection and guidance, and not a human being with all the accompanying rights.	1. The dignity and rights of every child are to be respected in every circumstance.
2: Consider that a child or young person who belongs to an armed group is a delinquent and not a victim of war.	
3: Think that a child soldier is only the one that shoots, and not the one that cooks, runs errands, spies, bring messages, or is a sexual object.	
4: Keep on believing that the right to information overrides the rights of children.	5. Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.
5: Don't worry about protecting the identity of the interviewees, and don't avoid showing their family or place of residence.	2. In interviewing and reporting on children, special attention is to be paid to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their opinions heard, to participate in decisions affecting them and to be protected from and retribution, including the potential of harm and retribution.
6. Publish pictures of these children using the same criteria as if they were of legal age.	3. The best interests of each child are to be protected over any other consideration, including over advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights.
7. Never forget the key question: 'How many have you killed?'	4. When trying to determine the best interest of a child, the child's right of have their views taken into account are to be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

8. In case of girls, work hard to find out all about the abortions, rapes, and 'sentimental relationships' they have had with commanders.	I. Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.
9. Put aside any interest in what happens to the soul of a child that has shot people and seen death.	
10. Blindly believe the affirmation that the majority of children and youth enter armed groups on a voluntary basis.	A. Do not further stigmatize any child; avoid categorisations or descriptions that expose a child to negative reprisals—including additions physical or psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection by their local communities.
11. Through your columns and articles, contribute to the growth of the image of heroes that is projected onto armed groups.	
12. Reinforce in the information you print a love for powerful motorbikes, four-wheel-drive trucks, seductive silicon, and money at any cost.	
13. Do not include in your information any experiences of culture, art, or creativity that could offer another way out for youth that would otherwise take up arms.	
14. Make the most of 'gifts' of information from government security bodies without double-checking the sources or veracity of the facts: computer files, unverifiable documents, photos and videos, and child witnesses.	
15. Don't even let the idea cross your mind that one of these child soldiers could be your brother, son or nephew.	
16. Feel that your hands are tied and your words censored because of all the precautions you must take to report on children in war.	

8.8 Reporting on Victims: Internal Forced Displacement in the News Agenda

According to the dictionary 'To Disarm the Word' (2005:78–79), forced displacement is an 'imposed migration of people who are in a vulnerable situation or have threats to their life or safety, due to armed conflict, violence, or human rights abuses'. It can also be caused by transgressions of International Humanitarian Law that can disrupt public order. Internal forced displacement produces 'psychosocial effects such as uprooting, disappearance, fear, silence and forgetfulness'.

In 2004, *Medios para la Paz* provided workshops for journalists on a different approach to cover the issue of displacement in Colombia. *Medios para la Paz* had the technical support of the International Migration Office (IMO) and financial aid from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that helped to organise workshops on the topic. As a result of the courses, the ‘Handbook on Responsible Journalism of Internal Forced Displacement’ (*Cubrimiento Periodístico Responsable del Desplazamiento Forzado Interno*, Herrán et al., 2005) was created, and a poster summarised the main findings and warnings to journalists. The poster ‘*How to poorly cover internal forced displacement*’ is reproduced below. Alongside the courses, the NGO organised meetings of thirty journalists from eight different cities who gathered during seven months (May-December, 2004) to analyse how to improve the coverage of internal forced displacement. They considered that the topic did not receive proper attention within Colombian mass media and that it was not commonly associated with negotiation processes or conflict resolution.

INSTRUCTIONS TO REPORT POORLY INTERNAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Do not bother researching who provoked the displacement and the reasons

Ignore that many citizens affected by displacement do not appreciate being called 'displaced'

Place impoverished people and victims of displacement in the same category

Confuse the State, which has an obligation to help, with NGOs and international organisations that that help voluntarily

Mistrust them: they are potential delinquents. They are perhaps linked to illegal armed groups, they are lazy a hindrance to the city.

Do not distinguish between being in condition of displacement and being in situation of displacement

Disregard the victims' specific needs when they happen to be indigenous, afro-descendent, children, women or elderly.

Do not investigate what happened to the lands, goods and relatives who stayed in the place of origin

Do not prepare for interviews and press conferences. Do not examine in detail beforehand the official budgets, nor be familiar with the function of each entity in charge.

Consider that the food, provisional refuge, school and health places, the State provides, are favours and not an obligation

Do not pay attention to compromises of reparation that the State demands to illegal armed groups that result from their dialogue

Pay great attention to opportunists that pretend to be displaced persons. Make the readers believe that those are the majority

Interrogate official functionaries on the emergency attention and never on their socio-economic stabilisation or on what to do to prevent their displacement

Give public order treatment to any news on displacement. Write of the victims as if they were bushwhackers

Let yourself be confused by the disparity of statistics on displacement, and ignore that behind every figure there is a policy.

Figure 14: 'Instructions on how to report poorly the internal forced displacement'. Medios para la Paz, UNHCR, USAID, Peace Found Canada [Translated by the author].

For example, a journalist wrote about this topic in an article entitled ‘Caracoli: Displacement report on southern Bogotá’ in an online magazine called *Semana* (2006b). The feature reported on twenty-two thousand displaced people living an hour away from the presidential residence ‘*Casa de Nariño*’ in the capital. The majority of are Afro-Colombians. Although they live close to the main political centre in the country, they are unseen by society. Gutiérrez (city journalist) said, ‘I discovered their sorrows and joys, their efforts to preserve their ancestral cultures. While reporting I witnessed that the paramilitary and guerrilla violence does not let them live peacefully even after they have been forced to abandon their lands’. For those who believed that the capital was not affected by war, this report showed that the Colombian conflict is everywhere in the country.

The feature evoked reactions from readers around the world. Many contacted a missionary priest in the community and offered help to build a well to provide water for the community. Therefore, the journalist did not only intervene directly through his article, but by showing the situation of a small disregarded community in Bogotá, he influenced further action. That report won the *Rey de España* prize for digital journalism in 2006.

Semana Online is part of *Semana* magazine, which has been in publication for twenty-five years. Using multimedia tools, it features in its majority stories that deal with human tragedy and how war is affecting culture in their country. The online editor Ronderos explains that the website tries to reconstruct the truth of the armed conflict (2009). This multimedia approach gives much more information, including videos and images. This can overwhelm the reader; however, as it is an online platform, the audience can choose what information to read. The downside is that since it is a new media format, it does not reach a wide audience in the country because of a lack of resources and media literacy. Therefore, these reports are only read by upper-middle class citizens, mainly from the metropolis that have access to internet and can understand the dynamics of this medium.

8.8.1 Reporting the Voices of the Kidnapped (*Las Voces del Secuestro*)

As it is known internationally, the taking of hostages in Colombia is a common practice amongst the guerrillas in order to achieve political demands or in order to exchange hostages for *guerrilleros* imprisoned by the army forces. Currently there are 4,200 kidnapped people, of whom 2,800 are held hostage by FARC guerrilla, and 800 by the ELN guerrilla (Hoyos city journalist).

Hoyos, a metropolitan journalist of the national mainstream media outlet '*Radio Caracol*', was kidnapped by FARC guerrilla in the middle of his radio programme in 1994. The guerrilla came into the radio station, which is located in an upper-class neighbourhood on one of the main avenues in Bogotá. As a hostage, the journalist was chained to a tree. A man in a close proximity, who was also chained to a tree, said that he had been kidnapped over two years previously and kept in inhuman conditions. After realizing that he was talking to the very journalist that he had been listening to before, he pointed to a radio and said, 'Look, this is my partner' and enquired why journalists never do anything nor report on kidnapped people. Hoyos was rescued after 16 days by the army forces, and after that experience he started one of the most successful programs for hostages and their families. It was a radio program dedicated to victims kidnapped by the guerrilla and the families who lived in fear for their loved ones.

Hoyos opened the microphones of the programme to the victims' families, which was followed by an extensive denunciation by the citizens with—past or current—hostage experiences. Consequently, they started to build the list of kidnapped people up to that moment, Colombia's government did not have any exact numbers. In the first month, they reached sixty victims of kidnapping, and the following months the numbers reached two hundred and forty. The program started to make kidnapping a visible problem in Colombia.

The radio programme showed the kidnapping practices of FARC guerrillas through the broadcast of content that showed how the guerrillas violated human rights, including their use of child soldiers and the use of civilians as hostages. To date, Hoyos has been the victim of six murder attempts from both guerrillas and

the paramilitary. In 2009 the journalist narrowly escaped a murder attempt, presumably from FARC guerrilla. Due to these threats he had to leave Colombia, and is now exiled in Spain; this is the sixth exile in his career.

8.8.2 The Counter-current: A Maverick Journalist Reporting on the Under-Reported

Hollman Morris is a Colombian independent journalist. He has covered the conflict for fifteen years from a human rights perspective. Morris has worked in diverse media: local and national radio, television, press, documentary filmmaking, and as correspondent for Al Jazeera and Radio France International. He is intensely committed to revealing the atrocities perpetrated by the paramilitary and guerrilla groups. He has also reported abuses by government authorities such as police, military and high-ranking government officials. For example, he uncovered links between paramilitary chiefs and government leaders. He covered the peace negotiations in 1999–2000 for the RCN TV channel. He founded the ‘Peace Unit’ at *El Espectador* newspaper in 2000; however, that same year he had to leave the country amidst threats to his life and live in exile in Spain. Following his return, he founded a TV program called ‘*Contravía*’ a programme focused on the conflict, human rights, and victims, and he became an internationally acclaimed journalist. He has won prestigious awards from human rights and journalistic organisations; however, in Colombia those awards are disregarded as he remains in the spotlight, facing threats and intimidation.

The three main television channels in this country (RCN, *Caracol*, *Canal Uno*) do not have special features sections where the conflict is reported in the field outside the main two cities. There are opinion shows and debate, which lack pictures of the conflict battleground. “70% of every [TV] show is focused on sports, local show-biz, and catchy anecdotes about national policy”, argues Lozano (2009:8). In this panorama, barren of images of the ‘other country’ (that of the war and its victims), Morris’ TV programme acquired particular relevance.

Contravía is a thirty-minute, weekly news and documentary television programme produced by Juan Pablo Morris and directed by Hollman Morris. The series airs weekly on TV Channel 1 (Colombia's third public channel) at midnight; this schedule reflects the many constraints the show faces in order to be broadcast on the TV. *Contravía* is a unique TV news magazine programme that has uncovered stories that were never seen on television before. He has exposed violence perpetrated by guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and government authorities.

In addition, his aim is to focus on the victims of war, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities (such as Afro-Colombians), and peasants, among others. The main purpose of the programme is to show the hidden stories behind the Colombian conflict. The programme reports on eyewitness accounts of the most severe human rights violations. This journalist believes that journalism is linked to the defence of human rights. Among his reports are: 'Negotiation processes among AUC', 'Peace laboratories', 'Indigenous Resistance', 'Scrutiny of the ELN guerrilla', 'Paramilitary', 'Women against war', 'San José de Apartadó',

Colombia represents one of those grey zones for which there appears to be no solution—one of those endless conflicts that fail to interest either the media or public authorities and are eventually forgotten. For us, journalists coming out of these grey zones, we know up to what point our words can save lives, and it is not only a matter of life and death of our countrymen, but also of the humanity. As Anna Politkovskaia said: '*it's about all of us*'. Morris (at Canadian Journalists for Free Expression 'International Press Freedom Award', 2006).

The television programme started in 2002 with the support of the European Union, the governments of The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Canada, Colombian diplomatic missions, and donations from international NGOs such as The Open Society Institute. The programme has been awarded many prizes, such as the Human Rights Defender Award (2007) by Human Rights Watch, as well as the New Ibero-American Journalism award. The latter award was issued "to rescue the voices of victims from a respectful perspective, to build a historic memoir of the voices of the few and to show the dreadful situations perpetrated upon minority groups that could be forgotten" (FNPI, 2007). John Pilger states

that a journalist must be a guardian of public memory, quoting Kundera ‘the struggle for people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting’ (ITV, 2007). The show has become one of the most important video archives of the country’s recent history, according to Restrepo (city journalist).

In February 2009, Morris was doing research in the southern department of Caquetá, trying to get an interview with a guerrilla leader for his programme. While he was there the guerrillas (FARC) released hostages so he could report it. The government officials labelled him as a ‘guerrilla supporter’ and President Álvaro Uribe stated in a press conference that ‘it is important to distinguish between friends of terrorists who act as journalists and those who are real journalists’ (February, 3, 2009). He added that ‘the actions of Morris and the other journalist were ‘deceitful and a glorification of terrorism’. These accusations were made without any supporting evidence or facts, and can therefore be considered defamatory; however, since they were made by the President it was difficult to respond. Moreover, the then Minister of Defence, now president of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos, said that with these actions Morris ‘made a statement of justifying violence’ and that ‘he had a lot of common with FARC’ (Amnesty International, 2009). Naturally, these accusations affected Morris’ public image and credibility.

A factor that makes this journalist more vulnerable is his independence; he has no backup from any media consortium, or any institutional support. This makes him more defenceless when it comes to defamation and threats. *Contravía*’s reporting has caused intense reactions, and as a result, Morris was forced to leave Colombia on many occasions for long periods. On May 2005, the journalist received a wreath and condolences on his ‘death’, despite him being perfectly healthy. This is a common threat used on other journalists in Colombia.

Since then, he started living with 24/7 protection from bodyguards and traveling in armoured cars for him and his family. ‘That is something they don’t teach you at school, how to defend yourself from different threats. Instead of working full time on my news reports. I also have to work on how to defend myself physically as well as my integrity from defamation and libel’. Given that the situation

became more difficult during the last years, the journalist went to study a journalism course at Harvard University from 2010 to 2011.

8.9 Conclusion: The Colombian Experience on War Coverage

The extended analysis on the weakness in conflict reporting has led to a series of plans of action and recommendations to the media, editors, and journalists. As stated before, some mainstream and alternative media are pursuing these initiatives. These recommendations have shown limited influence, and mainly in cities, because, as previously explained, given the situation in the provinces—mainly small regions—it is difficult to fully develop new ways of reporting. Sierra (city editor) asserts that the Colombian debate brings forward conclusions that can be key contributions to the international debate on journalism and war, and can offer recommendations on how national media can cover the armed conflicts in their war.

The main contribution is the issue of quality. Journalism debates around the world have stressed the importance of maintaining a high quality of reporting. Although this is not a key contribution to the coverage of conflict, it is a general reminder to look back at the basic principles of journalism. This conclusion can also be read as part of journalism's essential framework, there must be an aim to produce high-quality journalism. [In Colombia] 'There are all kinds of perspectives, some are focused on peace journalism, positive journalism or community journalism; however, there is a crucial agreement on the issue of quality' declares Sierra (city editor)

The recommendations are for directors, media owners, editors and journalists (Sierra, Universidad de la Paz) and by Freedom of the Press Foundation (FLIP) handbook for journalists covering conflict. This material is given to the majority of conflict journalists as a basic guide: background research, their duty, the code of ethics and self-protection. This advice reinforces the idea of responsible coverage, and stresses the importance that all actors in the process of producing information (editors, directors, journalists) are responsible for the news.

A permanent preoccupation shall be to develop mechanisms of discussion, aided by the participation of experts and academics, with editors and journalists. Negotiation with paramilitary forces, characteristics of guerrilla movements, relations with Armed Forces, knowledge of other conflicts in the world, and terrorism, these topics should be debated seriously in the newsroom (*El Tiempo* handbook, 2003).

The importance of the Peace Units and reporting different perspectives to the army or official version is the framework to report the conflict with a different viewpoint. However, the Peace Units after the change in government discourse—from Pastrana to Uribe; from peace negotiations to the discourse of war on terror—the peace areas fade out to crime sections or ‘armed conflict’ in the main national newspapers analysed in this chapter, except *El Espectador*. However, even though the political and media agenda no longer included the theme of ‘peace’, it could be argued that this different kind of reporting initiated in the Peace Units transformed or evolved into the ‘Responsible Journalism’ rationale and praxis created by the civil society and journalists. A better-informed public sphere will traduce in more knowledge and understanding of the conflict and ultimately could contribute to peace.

CONCLUSION

9.1 Implications of the Findings

The aim of this study was to analyse Colombian journalists' practices in local conflict and the rationale of journalism in the midst of an armed conflict. Empirical evidence exhibited confirmation that the research subjects (local conflict journalists) have passed through a process of reflection and comprehension of their professional performance, along with a pondering of their professional ethos. This might shed light on professional experiences from a war-torn country from the periphery when reporting war in their own nation.

The hypothesis is corroborated, given that Colombian local conflict journalists have had profound critical reflections on their praxis during five decades of war, mainly since the early nineties; this is intertwined with a collective thinking and the definition of professional logic to cover their violent, multifaceted war. In order to develop this proposition further, I will summarize and discuss the implications of the five categories of findings: specialised training of local conflict journalists in the middle of an armed conflict, the local and regional divide, censorship, ethos and resilience, peace and victim reporting.

9.1.1 Specialised Training of Local Conflict Journalists in The Midst of Conflict

The empirical data in this case study shows that there has been a profound debate and reflection on journalism in this country since the early nineties, as documented in the literature review and of the empirical findings. Consequently, the specialised training for conflict journalists—taught in workshops or diploma courses—is a by-product of this critical thinking on journalism, professionalism and local war.

The rationale for this training has been created from the discussions of a triad: academia, journalists (editors) and specific NGOs, during the last three decades

of conflict. Therefore, a key factor in attaining a higher degree of quality reporting is the civil society. As argued in the literature review and Chapter V, for many years, civil society, media and academics have made important contributions to protecting their journalists and helping them become specialised. This initiative is important because it emerged in the midst of decades of armed conflict, and it has spread and developed further over time. This educational method could probably serve as an example—adjusted to the journalistic cultures and particularities of each case—that could be replicated in other violent environments. This also reinforces the argument that the professionalization of journalists is fundamental and is on-going process throughout their careers, particularly for those reporting on war and essential for those reporting on war at home. Specialised education in journalism is a framework within which to practise professionally, and is a key factor as shown in this case study, in improving conflict reporting as an essential tool in everyday work.

Evidence shows that there is a significant role played by Non-governmental organizations dedicated to a range of topics on media and conflict (Media for Peace), journalists' education (FNPI), and peace education research (CINEP). This might indicate that there is an understanding of the importance of journalists in their society, particularly during times of conflict. Possibly without the NGOs' participation and support this educational project might have not succeeded. These NGOs funded, organized and provided specialised training for their journalists with significant results on the improvement of conflict reporting by student journalists; as shown in the evidence in Chapter V, key factors included follow-up by senior journalists (or editors), the constant guidance of journalism and ethics scholars, mentoring beyond the workshops and diploma courses, and the publication of their learning process through their reports, such as 'Press, armed conflict and region: Learning from Responsible Journalism in the Armed Conflict Diploma Course' (2006) and 'Responsible journalism coverage on the armed conflict to cover internal forced displacement' (2006). These results are evidence that the pedagogic formation had an effect on these students' journalistic performance and professionalisation.

The main purposes of training for responsible journalism in armed conflict are to provide journalists with the knowledge and essential tools to reflect on how to improve their praxis. They must also learn about the underlying jurisdiction rules and international humanitarian law and right of war. Consequently, training is crucial for local journalists covering an armed conflict. The challenge is precisely to cover issues professionally; to give readers/public the background information that allows for a better understanding of the situation.

There is a gap between academia (journalism/media bachelor education) and praxis when covering conflict. It needs to be addressed given that in this particular case, journalists will report on conflict and it is necessary to teach specialised knowledge (Tumber & Webster, 2006). But it is also important to form students as people that they may bring a humane perspective to their work and not adhere blindly to journalistic techniques.

The theme of specialised education in journalism in this study echoes discussions with similar standards (professionalism). This research shows evidence that specialised education in war journalism helped to elevate the quality and professionalism within the fieldwork areas investigated in Colombia.

One of the main achievements of this specialised training was to reunite journalists from the same region into pedagogic and professional working-groups in order to critical thinking on quality, standards, possible alternatives and *modus operandi* when working safely in their regions. This also offered possible strategies and scenarios that allow journalists to embrace, remember, and create praxis that connects them with global journalistic standards. Another accomplishment that the data suggests is the interaction among peers, especially regarding the challenges on practicing professional journalism in their regional contexts. Finally, they participated in debates on ethics that allowed them to share their experiences, failures, hesitations, practical questions and limitations. These workshops opened up a milieu with a double outcome; a learning process and a place to consolidate the regional or local peer network and to create alliances. In a violent context, this output could be regarded as secondary; however, it is important to explore in future research.

9.1.2 Geographical Divide

One of the themes to emerge from the work of international frontline war correspondents work under stressful conditions is that local conflict journalists work under a higher degree of hectic circumstances due to the geographical proximity to armed actors namely '*regional attachment*' or '*regional detachment*'. They face threats to themselves and their families, insignificant legal prosecution of colleagues' murders, and factors such as their low salaries. All of this is encompassed within a hostile environment where to report on certain subjects is dangerous.

This study observed that these regional conflict journalists are placed on the lowest rung of the professional hierarchy; the '*regional attachment*' of local conflict journalists places them at the frontline to report breaking news but at a cost. This professional stratification of Colombia's journalism places a major risk for war journalists. One emerging theme is the paradox that even though local journalists are covering war, they are located on the lowest hierarchy of status and salaries. This is contrary to the accounts of international war journalists (Tumber 2010) who are known by its fearlessness and heroics when covering war. '*Local conflict journalists*' might be a new category emerging from regional war journalism to be discussed in academic studies, possibly prefaced by Tumber & Pentroulis' (2003) classification of '*urban war correspondents*' after September 11 in the United States.

'Local conflict journalists' are key journalists due to their geographical place and professional circumstances. It could be argued that they have become a type of *chronicler* of local realities that, without some of their reports, might remain unknown to the country. These watchdog war journalists are the most vulnerable ones, contributing to providing news that otherwise might fall into oblivion. Some of these reporters are producing quality news that is hardly seen in national mainstream media. This journalism is carried out in harm's way, risking their own lives, without *time off* or breaks and without the institutional support of psychologists. These reporters can ultimately become war casualties; even though the subjects interviewed manifested a particular understanding of their

professional duty, mostly regarded as a ‘mission’ in society, they know that they carry a responsibility towards their communities to report in the best professional manner.

The research findings offer confirmation on the practices of these self-identified as ‘local conflict journalists’ (see Chapter VII) who are reporting on the armed conflict in a specific context during the time-frame investigated. The geographical divide was an important factor that influenced this type of reporting; the insecurity, economic disparity (a third of the income of metropolitan journalists) professional status (local journalists of smaller peripheral districts are regarded as information gatherers subordinate to the centre).

Censorship is stricter for local journalists and this often results in lower quality news reporting. The themes of regional divide and censorship are intertwined. Local reporters acknowledged certain degrees of censorship as a survival strategy, given that they live in harm’s way in close proximity to armed actors on whom they are reporting. However, the regional divides (province, capital of province and capital city) are relevant to analysing the practices of regional ‘conflict’ journalists, particularly regarding censorship.

9.1.3 Censorship

Censorship in journalism is an evident issue in Colombia, particularly in provinces that are close to the actors involved. As found in this research, self-censorship is a frequent practise. The geographical divide between the provinces and the capital affects freedom of expression; therefore, the challenges presented when reporting are mainly in the regions located near conflict zones.

The research found that the three types of interests that produce censorship (political, economic and fear) are a triple menace that is more explicit in conflict areas and is a challenge to ‘*periodismo de calidad*’ (quality journalism). There is a tension between ‘quality’ reporting and supressing information, mainly due to threats. Given that many assassinations of journalists are never solved, this might help to understand—but not justify—the silence in the regional press on certain

delicate issues. Self-censorship in this context has become such a strong tool of survival and protection that journalistic culture in this context permits it. But these attacks on journalists lead to a vacuum of information in the public sphere and the right to know. The decrease in journalists' assassinations might be due to the increase in self-censorship praxis. Therefore, 'specialised journalism' is tested in this scenario by how journalists can devise strategies to produce information and, at the same time, stay safe. As presented in the data, coercion and intimidation can lead journalists to disregard their watchdog role and it might lead also to a move from 'crime' 'beat' and 'conflict' sections to different areas, i.e., 'economy' or 'light news' for protection.

It is clear that the conflict journalists are still in the spotlight of threats and intimidations. Evidence shows several factors that are omnipresent: the challenge of working in this arena, the low wages, the lack of social recognition and the aggressive environment. Despite discrimination by some colleagues, there are editors (e.g., Cardon, 2008) who see this as a key job, a test of survival and professionalism for those in this situation.

9.1.4 Ethos and Resilience

An important factor to understanding conflict' journalists rationale in Colombia is to examine their motivations, ethos, identity, professionalism (Weaver, Voakes & Wilhoit, 2007) and resilience. The study shows evidence that local journalists are complex people, the interviewees show evidence that they have strong convictions, clear beliefs, professional motivations, critical thinking and fear. Evidence shows that this subgroup of journalists (Marchetti, 2002) have a clear sense of identity 'local conflict journalists (correspondent)' or 'local journalists', their praxis and rationale, as they understand that they are not conventional journalists.

This research found key data that shows conflict journalists have a degree of sensibility and can be overwhelmed by the stories they report, particularly those covering war, human rights, victims and violence. Emotional responses are connected with the ways in which they approach their news. Therefore the

importance of the reporter's resilience and psychological stability—especially after traumatic events (e.g., clashes, massacres, battles)—must, in order to produce balanced information, be stressed as a work-related 'affliction'. This could lead to employees could having benefits and rights to medical psychological care, privacy and leave of absence. On another level, it is necessary that war journalistic culture, acknowledge as an institution the psychological risks of their job. This might help, to avoid stigmatization and humiliation of those affected, and secondly and therefore the concealment of their condition.

In this regard, there is a necessity of further research in the field of journalism studies, beyond the psychiatric (Feinstein, 2003) or anthropological (Pedelty, 1995) single subject approaches. It is important to determine this only happens to war, human rights or crime beat reporters, or if other areas in journalism have a similar situation. This research would help to uncover newsmaking routines, particularly on a personal level, and could propose possible ways a media enterprise could cope with their personnel professional and at a personal level. Multidisciplinary research is needed—among psychiatry, psychology, sociology and journalism studies—to build common strategies and tools to help conflict journalists. Given the time frame of this investigation, it was difficult to obtain more data regarding the resilience and mental health of the subjects, which could be better pursued by specialists in the area of psychiatry and trauma together with journalism scholars. Academic debate splits in two directions: firstly, journalism studies focusing on media routines and reporters' identities and, secondly, psychiatric research concentrated on journalists' mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder. The evidence in this research shows that it is key to connect the fields of journalism and psychological trauma to strengthen the flaws in professional performance during crucial times in a war journalist's career.

9.1.5 The Challenge of Reporting on Peace and Victims

This study shows that an important journalistic rationale in conflict is to report on peace, victims and human rights. The 'responsible journalism in the armed conflict' approach maintains that journalists not forget the people affected by the conflict, especially children, displaced people and survivors. This might seem

elementary; however, besides BBC's Editorial Guidelines' section on reporting 'War, terror and emergencies' (2016) and UNICEF's Principles on Ethical Reporting on Children (2007), research did not find concluding evidence of an agreement on international journalism standards to report on victims of war. Therefore, evidence suggests that this rationale of 'Colombian Responsible' journalism might contribute to the debate on international war and peace journalism studies (Lynch, 2007a, Tumber, 2010).

Another finding is the challenge to report peace when there is still an on-going war with multiple kinds of violence. The evidence found in the 'Peace Sections' (*Secciones de Paz*) in three main newspapers during the *El Caguán's* peace negotiations (with former president Pastrana from 1992–2002) is a practical example of how journalism can contribute to a better understanding of a complex period of the conflict.

El Espectador newspaper 'Peace Unit', *El Tiempo's* 'Pazaporte' and *El Colombiano* 'Peace Unit' are examples that support the argument of quality journalism through a specialised reporting delivered in a special section dedicated to the analyse and report news on war and peace. Also this was a single part of the newspaper that reported and explained negotiation towards peace—at that time the focus was on peace negotiations. The only Peace Section that continues nowadays is in *El Espectador* newspaper. During the current peace negotiations, it was very active in adding a special subsection named 'Building the peace' in regards to the possible post-conflict scenario after the peace was signed. There is evidence of a connection between the journalists and editors working on the 'Peace Sections' and the on-going debates on journalism' rationale in Colombia, many of these journalists where interviewed in this study (i.e., Cardona, Morris, Gómez, Olimpo).

This journalistic praxis from the three mainstream national newspapers was relevant, given that it allowed—for the first time in Colombian history—the public sphere to know the other, rather unknown, side of the war: the guerrilla's leaders, the victims, the peace efforts.

This investigation appears to provide evidence to answer the initial research question, by showing that the Peace Units are relevant to observing the by-product of conflict journalism in a particular period of the on-going conflict in Colombia. It demonstrates the rationale and praxis of higher quality reporting. Notwithstanding the censorship, stigmatization, threats, and PTSD of certain research subjects, they managed to produce quality reporting and balanced journalistic pieces. This is partly due to 'responsible journalism' and the collective of journalists that helped to unite a number of journalists as a strong guild and have accompanied them in their specialisation process and in their everyday challenges of reporting.

Colombian responsible journalism in the armed conflict aims for a good-quality coverage by trying to achieve the most independence and balance possible. This approach acknowledges journalism's normative international (Western) values on plurality, accuracy, diversity of sources and subjects, contextualization and in-depth research. It also shows that by practising 'quality journalism' (*periodismo de calidad*) close to the truth, the journalists can achieve professionalism and stay safe.

The evidence shows that in this perspective is built around certain pedagogy, critical thinking and reflection on ethos. It enters into debate with media and ethics experts on the role of journalist and their social responsibility beyond the media outlet. They reflect on the personal dimension, connected with the vision of the profession as a 'mission' in society.

The discussion also includes the respect to public and how the satisfaction of their profession can lead to quality and accurate reporting. In workshops given by NGOs and academics, Colombian journalism books and reports, they promote analysis and reflection on Colombian conflict. The workshops offer the guild a novel space to learn and reflect on their praxis, given their journalistic routines are hasty, to have a space to make sense and assimilate the theory behind professionalism is important, as the evidence shows.

9.2 Limitations of the Research

The methodology used in this research was a useful tool to gather information on journalists' perceptions and practices and provided important insights into the research subjects. The in-depth interviews provided detailed relevant data on journalists in conflict. Even so, there are methodological shortcomings; although the sample was adequate for this research, further investigation could be done with a larger number of research subjects and a longer period of fieldwork research.

The findings in my study are limited to the qualitative research tool of the ethnographic work, due to the subjectivity of the subjects' insights. Further research can be done to gather more information on journalists that report on conflict in Colombia, particularly the regional journalists. This was not carried out here due to limitations on budget, time, and knowledge of the country. This research acknowledges its shortcomings and that its study is focused on a small, though meaningful, sample.

9.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research into journalism studies in war might usefully focus in particular on local journalists in other contexts. There is evidence that there has been teaching of the Colombian rationale and praxis experiences in workshops and dialogues (e.g., journalism ethics with professor Javier Darío Restrepo, the 'journalism in conflict' workshop with Colombian journalist María Teresa Ronderos) with Mexican human rights conflict-zone journalists, such as journalists' group *Reporteros de a Pie*, led by Mexican journalist Marcela Turatti.

A further research question could be how Colombian reflections and practices can be replicated in other journalistic cultures with different sociopolitical context, especially in the case of Mexico with a violent drug war since 2006. How can local Mexican journalists learn from this case? What tools can be adapted to other regional or international conflicts? What are the similarities and differences between Colombia and Mexico's case studies of 'local conflict'?

journalists' praxis and rationale?

Another avenue for further study would be research into specific journalism performance and the role of journalism in the current peace negotiations (since 2012 in Havana). Questions would be on how are local journalists are reporting on the current peace negotiations process. Without further research into local journalists in war it will not be possible to deeply understand their challenges and situation and their praxis and rationale of journalism.

9.4 De-colonizing War Journalism Studies

This study of the Colombian case appears to support the argument that it offers important analytical evidence that journalism is reflected in and adapts to its context and culture. This war-torn country from the Global South has profoundly discussed journalistic rationale (standards) and encouraging better practices in news reporting. The interviewees showed that even though there is an acknowledgment of global journalism standards, the reflections on war reporting in this study case are specially constructed for the context.

On the face of it, this would suggest that Colombia's professional journalists, NGOs and media practitioners have developed an analogous yet contextualized notion to the Western debates on war and peace reporting called 'responsible journalism in the armed conflict'. Some of the research subjects, mostly local journalists, did not know of the existence of the simmering controversy over the Western debates on war and peace reporting; their objective was to find better ways to work based on their direct experience of living and reporting on internal conflict. These perspectives have been reflected in the journalism field in Colombia originating from the experience and deliberations of these self-sense journalists. Additionally, evidence shows that those who have developed the notion and practice of Colombian Responsible Journalism are outside the international (Western) debates on conflict coverage (beyond the main interactions with Latin America and Spain), but are focused on their own conflict concerns.

A tentative contribution to the debate on conflict coverage is the analysis of the reflections from journalists covering their *own* conflict. It is important to understand and address the perspectives and experiences of professionals working and living *in situ*. This is different to the debates on war journalism and reflections on how to cover a foreign conflict (as war correspondents), where the journalists are generally foreigners (from Europe or the U.S.A.) covering distant wars. This is a perspective on war coverage from within.

This study hopes to contribute to the internationalization of media and communication studies by the illustration of the local dynamics of journalists in conflict zones that could be debated in the international communication arena. By looking for the similarities and differences with global, local and *glocal* journalists, the conversation can be expanded to incorporate more voices.

International dialogue in academia is key to having a robust field, given that it is necessary to discuss findings across the borders to understand the different dynamics of media and journalism in-depth. The discourse on American and European media and communication studies needs to be expanded in order to enter into a dialogue with non-Western local realities and the global field. Such a discussion can work to avoid parochialism and unidirectional Western perspectives. Thussu (2009) encourages thinking beyond the notion of the West versus the Rest and ‘decolonizing’ discourses in journalism studies. This study of Colombian local conflict journalism offers valuable evidence that deserves to be debated and shared in global academia, and might eventually serve as an experimental case study of how to cover conflict, peace and victims in other scenarios.

This thesis has made certain contributions to the literature of journalism studies in war (Terzis, 2015, Tumber 1998, 2006, Knightley, 2002, Lynch 2008), especially concerning local war journalists (Pedelty, 1995, Hannerz 2004, Bishara 2006). Research in these two areas is developing, yet is moderately new and the literature in these topics is still small, making this study a valuable complement.

In conclusion journalism can be discussed and adapted according to its context, especially in mitigating circumstances such as war, when information is indispensable to help the public sphere understand the events. This research offers a small look into on how local journalists report on war; it sheds light on how journalism can cover contemporary wars. These reflections are a tool that might help advance discourses on de-Westernizing (de-colonizing) journalism studies by integrating debates of the Global South experience into Western academia. There could also be a horizontal dialogue among Global South experiences of local journalists—as McBride Report (1980) proposed—in order to share knowledge and valuable experiences and praxis.

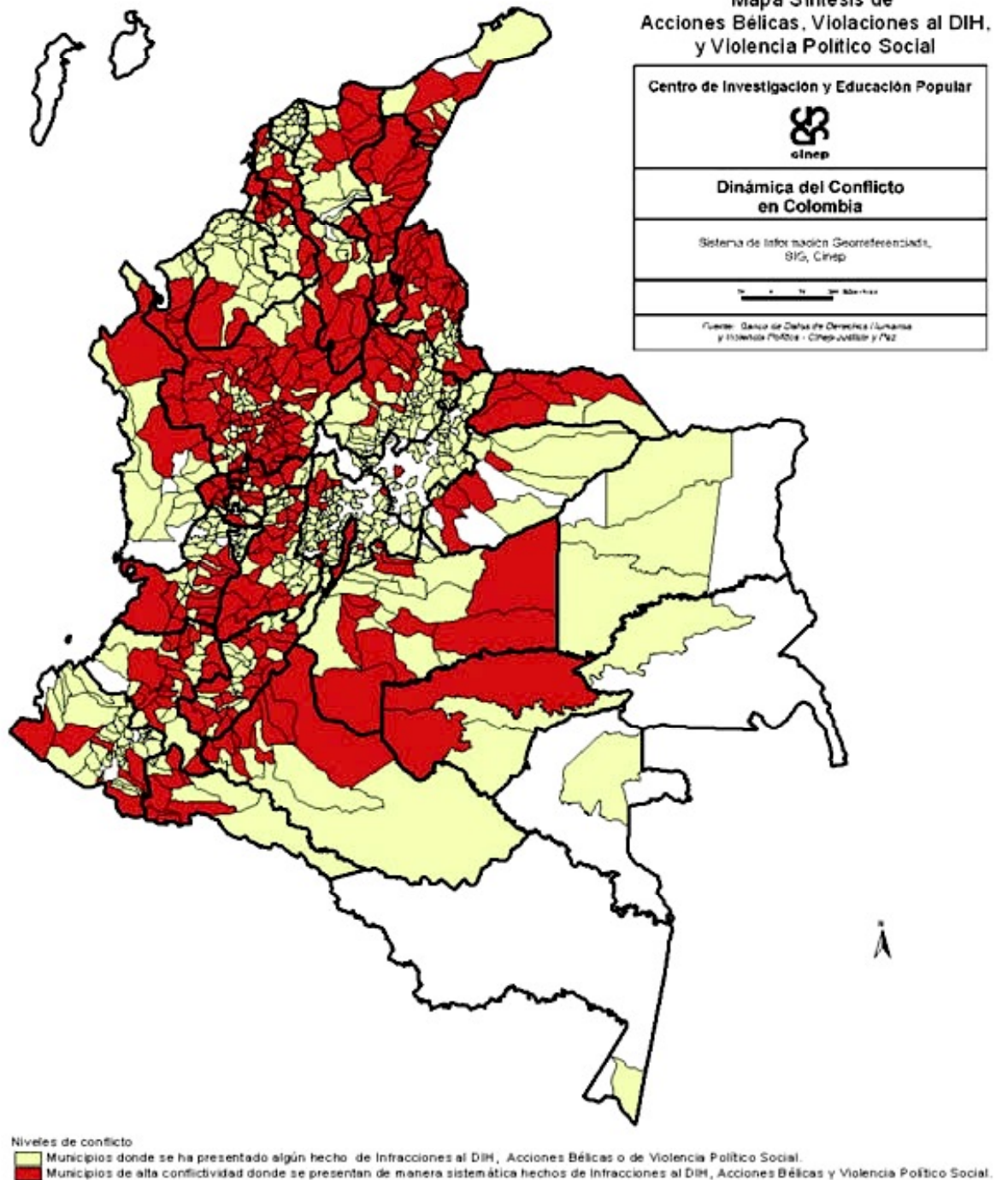
Given that war reporting has been researched by numerous scholars focusing on international wars and international correspondents, the gap identified in this thesis is the need for further research into local journalists in conflict and the necessity of international collaborative research. This is a significant case study from Latin America that shows the performance of journalism in the complex environment of a 54 year-old conflict, the oldest in Latin America. Although it has wounded Colombia deeply, it has also allowed for instinctive reflections on journalists' praxis and rationale. The length of the conflict has allowed for the analysis of the improvement of journalism by way of trial and error through the decades. Albeit extremely complex, this case study is an encouraging experience that offers different reporting techniques and reflections might help open up debates and analysis of local war journalism studies.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Colombian Conflict's Dynamics: 1997–2002. Synthesis of Military actions, violations of International Humanitarian Law and sociopolitical violence. Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP).

CONFLICTO ARMADO EN COLOMBIA 1997-2002



Level of Conflict:

Yellow areas: Municipality that presented violations to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Military actions, or sociopolitical violence.

Red areas: Municipalities of high conflicts where are presented in a systematic manner violations to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Military actions, or sociopolitical violence.

Appendix B

Colombian Discretion Agreement

On news coverage of violence:

Aware as we are of our social responsibility, we professionals working in communications media in Colombia commit ourselves to this Discretion Agreement in the hope of contributing to efforts aimed at achieving peace, respect for human life and the welfare of our fellow citizens.

1. Coverage on violent actions -attacks on towns, massacres, kidnappings and combats between warring parties- will be factual, responsible and balanced. To put this into effect, each media will define norms for professional behaviour to foment quality journalism and thus benefit the public.
2. We will not present rumours as if they were established facts. A concern for exactness -which includes a presentation of context for each event reported- will prevail over speed.
3. We will decide on clear criteria to guide our live transmissions, in order to improve the exactness of our information and to avoid being manipulated by those who are instigating violence.
4. For ethical reasons, and because of our sense of social responsibility, we will not put journalistic pressure on the families of those who have been victims of violence.
5. We will establish criteria for avoiding the divulgation and publication of images and photographs, which may produce feelings of repugnance in the public, or may, by a sort of contagious effect, arouse violent reactions -or feelings of indifference- in the receiver.
6. We will respect and foment ideological, doctrinal and political pluralism. We will employ expressions aimed at contributing to a sense of solidarity and tolerance among Colombians in general.

We prefer to miss out on a news item rather than miss out on saving someone's life.

November 4, 1999. *[Translated by the author].*

Appendix C

‘Alternative’ Discretion Agreement

Bucaramanga and Barrancabermeja Reporter-Journalists, July 1999, Media for Peace workshop. ‘A sense of awareness in journalistic practice and its implications for peace Colombia’

1. Create channels for dialogue among proprietors, directors and journalists, with a view to permanently assessing everything related to the journalist’s profession in practice.
2. Draw up a Code of Ethics to be self-regulated by the communications media regarding information on war and peace. The said code should be the end result of an agreement between proprietors, directors and journalists.
3. Arrive at a commitment on the part of the media on the subject of peace, the civilian population and the victims of this armed conflict.
4. Acknowledge the journalist as an active member of civil society who is seeking after a negotiated solution to the present conflict, and not as a mere alienated messenger for transmitting information.
5. Return the discredited profession of journalism to its true position of dignity vis-à-vis society in general, and obtain for it a more humane treatment within the media.
6. Rethink the idea of ‘the scoop’ (that is, the ‘exclusive first’) in order to develop the work of obtaining and publishing information in a more human context. From a practical viewpoint within the profession, teamwork should be fomented by involving journalists from different media working in the same zone of conflict, thus enabling the media to make maximum use of resources, guarantee the reporters’ personal safety and give greater balance to published information.
7. Encourage professional alliances to be built up among regional journalists, so that sources will not adopt a discriminatory or selective attitude when it comes to communicating information.
8. Help contextualize information through investigative support and the training of journalists in matters related to the conflict, and to International Humanitarian Law and journalistic expression. Only thus can a journalist properly carry out his (or her) role with full responsibility vis-à-vis society in general.
9. Guarantee travel for correspondents to the war zones so that it will be the responsibility of the media they work for and not a compromising assistance from those who are themselves actively involved in the conflict. This would be one way of ensuring the neutrality of information.
10. Foment the decentralization of informative sources based on confidence on the part of directors in regional journalists and an acknowledgement of their expertise and previous work.
11. Strengthen the various journalists’ associations, and create them where they do not yet exist, in order to propose legislation to protect the journalists’ working conditions and the free exercise of their profession. *[Translated by the author]*.

Appendix D

The ethnography data. Research subjects.

Media	Editors/ Managers	City Conflict reporters <i>*Region Correspondents</i>	Regional Conflict reporters	Quotation in text
National Newspapers				(c) City (r) Region
El Tiempo	Roberto Pombo Editor in chief			Pombo, News paper Editor
	Alvaro Sierra Editorial Page Editor			Sierra, Newspaper Editor
	Andrés Mompotes Newsroom Editor			Mompotes, Newspaper Editor (c)
	Marisol Gómez Giraldo Editor	*		Gómez Giraldo, Newspaper Editor (c)
		Jineth Bedoya*		Bedoya, City newspaper reporter
			Vicente Arcieri	Arcieri, Region al newspaper reporter
			Roberto Llanos	Llanos, Region Newspaper reporter
		Carlos Salgado		Carlos, city newspaper repoter
El Espectador	Jorge Cardona Editor in Chief			Cardona, Newspaper editor (city)
		Enrique Rivas* Peace & HR Area	*	Rivas, newspaper reporter (c)
	Elber Gutiérrez* Newsroom Editor	*	*	Gutiérrez, Newspaper editor (c)
El Colombiano				
	Carlos Olimpo Editor Peace & Human Rights Area			Olimpo, newspaper editor (c)
		Clara Isabel Vélez * Peace & Nation Area		Vélez, newspaper reporter (c)
	Javier Darío Restrepo (columnist)			Restrepo, newspaper columnist (c)
		Javier Arboleda Peace & HR area		Arboleda, newspaper reporter
Regional Newspapers				
El Meridiano de Sucre			Jaime Vides Feria	Vides, newspaper reporter (r)
			María Victoria Bustamante (Anon. for her)	Anonymous, newspaper reporter (r)
El Heraldo de Barranquilla*			Isis Beleño	Beleno, newspaper reporter (r)
Weekly Magazines				
Semana	Marta Ruiz Security Editor			Ruiz, magazine editor (c)
		Mauricio Builes*	*	Builes, magazine reporter (c)
Cromos	Gloria Costrillón Research Editor HR Area	*	*	Costrillón, magazine editor (c)
TV				
Noticias UNO	Ignacio Gómez Deputy Director	*		Gómez, news programme deputy director (c)
Contravía	Hollman Morris Director	*	*	Morris, news director
TV Antioquia		Mariluz Avendaño*		Avendaño, TV reporter
Radio	Producer/Manager			
Caracol Radio	Herbin Hoyos Director/Editor			Hoyos, radio director
Correspondent Radio Nederland Colombia		María Isabel García		García, radio reporter (c)
La FM RCN corresponsal costa atlantica			Irama Rodríguez	Rodríguez, RCN (r)
Community media				
Colectivo de Comunicaciones Montes de María	Soraya Bayuelos Director			Bayuelos, community media director (r)
			Nyria Ramírez	Ramírez, comm..media jour. (r)

			Julio García	García, comm. Media (r)
News organisations				
Red Caribe			Raimundo Alvarado	Alvarado, news org. director (r)
			Luz Elena Ramos	Ramos, news org. journalist (r)
Terra			Juan Guillermo Aldana	Aldana, magazine journalist (r)
Press, FoE NGOs/Academia				
Medios para la Paz	Marisol Manrique			Manrique, NGO director
UNDP Press Manager	Bibiana Mercado (former conflict reporter)			Mercado, UNDP press manager
Fundación Colombia Multicolor/SIPAZ	Mauricio Beltrán			Beltrán, NGO director
CINEP	Rocio Castañeda			Castañeda, NGO worker
FLIP	Carlos Cortés			Cortés, NGO director
FNPI	Jaime Abello Banfi			Abello, NGO director
UNHCHR	Javier Hernández			Hernández, UNHCHR press worker
CNR		Glemis Mogollón*		Mogollón, CNR press worker
Politician/freelance journalist	John Mario González			González, freelance journalist
Anonymous 1 El Tiempo Cartagena		x	x	Anonymous A1, newspaper journalist ®
Anonymous 2 El Tiempo Cartagena		x	x	Anonymous A2 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 3 El Tiempo Cartagena		x	x	Anonymous A3 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 4 El País Cauca			x	Anonymous A4 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 5 Diario de Occidente		x	x	Anonymous A5, radio journalist (r)
Anonymous 6 El Caleño		x	x	Anonymous A6 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 7 El Caleño		x		Anonymous A7 newspaper journalist (c)
Anonymous 8 El Meridiano de Sucre		x	x	Anonymous A6 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 9 Vanguardia Liberal		x	x	
Anonymous 10 Vanguardia Liberal		x	x	1
Anonymous 11 Vanguardia Liberal		x	x	1
Anonymous 12 El Meridiano de Córdoba		x	x	
Anonymous 13 El Meridiano de Córdoba		x	x	1
Anonymous 14 El Meridiano de Córdoba		x	x	Anonymous A14 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 15 El Universal - Bolívar		x		Anonymous A15 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 16 El Universal - Bolívar		x		Anonymous A16 newspaper journalist (c)
Anonymous 17 CM		x	x	Anonymous A19 newspaper journalist (cm)
Anonymous 18 Heraldo de Branquilla		x	x	Anonymous A18 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 19 El Mundo – Medellín		x	x	Anonymous 19 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 20 EL Universal Cartagena		x	x	Anonymous A20 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 21 LJ		x	x	Anonymous A21 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 22 CJ		x		Anonymous A22 newspaper journalist (c)
Anonymous 23 LJ		x		Anonymous A23 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 24 LJ				Anonymous A24 newspaper journalist (r)

Anonymous 25				Anonymous A25 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 26				Anonymous A26 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 27				Anonymous A27 newspaper journalist (r)
Anonymous 28				Anonymous A28 newspaper journalist (r)


Categories city (c) include Bogotá and Medellín. Category region (r) all the conflict areas where local journalist report. LJ- Local Journalist. CJ- City Journalist. CM- Community Media

Media	Editors/ Managers	City Conflict reporters <i>*Region Correspondents</i>	Regional Conflict reporters	Total
National Newspapers				
<i>El Tiempo</i>	4	2	2	8
<i>El Espectador</i>	2	1		3
<i>El Colombiano</i>	1	2		3
Regional Newspapers				
<i>El Meridiano de Sucre</i>	-	-	2	2
<i>El Heraldo de Barranquilla</i>	-	-	1	1
Weekly Magazines				
<i>Semana</i>	1	1		2
<i>Cromos</i>	1	-	-	1
<i>Cambio</i>	1	-	-	1
TV				
<i>Noticias UNO</i>	1	*	-	1
<i>Contravía</i>	1	*	-	1
<i>TV Antioquia</i>	-	1	-	1
Radio				
<i>Caracol Radio</i>	1	-	-	1
RCN, La FM (Atlantic Coast)	-	-	1	1
FoE NGO				
<i>Medios para la Paz</i>	1	-	-	1
<i>FLIP</i>	1	-	-	1
FNPI	1	-	-	1
UNHCR	1	-	-	1
CNR	-	1	-	1
<i>Fundación Colombia</i>	1	-	-	1
<i>Mulicolor/SIPAZ</i>				
News Organizations				
Red Caribe (News organization)	-	-	2	2
Terra	-	-	1	1
Anonymous (Organisation and person)				
Anonymous 1 LJ Vanguardia			1	1
Anonymous 2 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 3 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 4 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 5 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 6 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 7 CJ		1		1
Anonymous 8 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 9 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 10 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 11 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 12 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 13 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 14 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 15 CJ		1		1
Anonymous 16 CJ		1		1
Anonymous 17 CM			1	1
Anonymous 18 LJ			1	1
Anonymous 19 LJ			1	1

Anonymous 20 LJ		1	1
Anonymous 21 LJ		1	1
Anonymous 22 CJ	1		1
Anonymous 23 LJ		1	1
Anonymous 24 CJ	1		1
Anonymous 25 CJ	1		1
Anonymous 26 LJ		1	1
Anonymous 27 LJ		1	1
Anonymous 28 LJ		1	1
		TOTAL	98

Appendix E

Sample Authorization Letter – Ethnography Interview.

 University of Westminster

Nombre (Name):

Fecha (Date):

Medio/organización (Media/Organization):

Teléfono/Correo (Telephone/Email):

Estoy de acuerdo en ser entrevistado (a) por Yennué Zárate en lo referente a su investigación de campo doctoral.

Entiendo que los resultados de su investigación serán escritos en su tesis de doctorado y que ésta será un documento público. Asimismo comprendo que es posible que los resultados de su investigación sean publicados.

La investigadora me ha hablado de mi derecho de anonimato, y he decidido entrevistarme con ella de acuerdo a la siguiente condición:

☐ No anonimato.
☐ Anonimato para mí, pero no para mi organización.
☐ Anonimato para mi organización, pero no para mí.
☐ Anonimato para mí y para mi organización.

Firma:

Mis datos de contacto:

Yennué Zárate Valderrama Ph.D (c)
Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI)
Journalism and Mass Communication Department
The University of Westminster, Watford Rd. Northwick Park Harrow,
London HA1 3TP, United Kingdom
y.zaratevalderrama@student.westminster.ac.uk
+44 (0) 77. 3717.8928 (Londres)

Translation authorization interview letter: I agree to be interviewed by Yennué Zárate for her fieldwork research of her doctoral programme. I comprehend that the results of the research will be written in her thesis and that it will be a public document. I understand that it is possible that the research findings will be published. The researcher has told me about my right to anonymity, and I have decided to be interviewed on the following condition: ☐ No anonymity. ☐ Anonymity for me, but not for my organization. ☐ Anonymity for my organization, but not for me. ☐ Anonymity for me and for my organization. Signature. Researcher's contact details.

Appendix F

Instructions on how to become a self-censored journalist (Media for Peace/FLIP/Norwegian Embassy).

Instrucciones Para convertirse en periodista autocensurado

Por intimidación frente a los armados o corruptos. Límitese a hacer periodismo de registro y no de investigación. Hágase el sordo ante la cultura de la ilegalidad.

Como el sistema de 'cupos' de publicidad y de repartición arbitraria de la pauta oficial es un problema nacional, asuma que es algo natural y no busque alternativas ni lo discuta con el gremio.

Publique informaciones sin respaldo sólido y sin respaldo de fuentes y luego sorpréndase porque lo amenacen.

Considere que la agresión verbal de directivos y la intromisión de funcionarios administrativos

Por intimidación frente a armados o corruptos, límitese a hacer periodismo de registro y no de investigación. Hágase el sordo ante la cultura de la ilegalidad.

En casos de amenazas o agresiones derivadas de su trabajo, no las denuncie ante las entidades correspondientes, porque "denunciar me pone en riesgo". Contribuya así a que las autoridades manifiesten que la situación es normal.

Como el sistema de cupos de publicidad y de repartición arbitraria de la pauta oficial es un problema nacional, asuma que es algo natural y no busque alternativas ni lo discuta con el gremio.

Haga una lista de temas que no se tocan en los medios. Nunca se pregunte qué tan deformada queda la sociedad y qué consecuencias trae este vacío.

Olvide que "seguridad viene de solidaridad". Dese crecer la confianza entre los medios colegas. No critiquen a los colegas.

Arriéguese a que en el futuro la gente reclame "¿dónde estaban los periodistas cuando pagaron tantas cosas?".

Considere que la agresión física o verbal de directivos y la intromisión de funcionarios administrativos en la agenda editorial son prácticas connotables al ejercicio periodístico, y no factores de censura.

Publique informaciones sin respaldo sólido y sin contraste de fuentes y luego sorpréndase porque lo amenacen.

Conviértase de que las entidades públicas que pautan y administran transportes a ritos noticiosos compran con ello un derecho a no ser investigados ni denunciados.

Irrompa con su cámara y micrófono, sin conocer las diferencias culturales de poblaciones indígenas. Y después quejese por no tener acceso a estas fuentes.

No se preocupe por crear una agenda informativa propia. Para eso están las fuentes oficiales que la dictan.

Conviértase en periodista extorsivo. Difunda informaciones falsas para presionar a fuentes o empresas a que pauten en su medio.

Si no puede publicar una historia, prefiera dejarla morir a compartirla con colegas o medios nacionales que la pautarán.

Juzgue que la autocensura es el único mecanismo de protección y la única forma de conservar neutralidad frente a bandos armados.

www.mediosparalaiz.org

MPP

FLIP

Embajada de Noruega

Appendix G

How to approach armed sources in order to become a threatened journalist
(Media for Peace-Peace Fund Canada).

Como acercarse a las fuentes armadas para convertirse en un periodista perseguido



TOME PARTIDO POR EL ACTOR ARMADO QUE A USTED MÁS LE SIMPATIZA.

ESPECIALÍCESE EN EL CUBRIMIENTO DE UNA SOLA FUENTE ARMADA. HÁGASE ÍNTIMO DE ELLA Y ACÉPTELE INVITACIONES PERSONALES A SU CASA, CAMPAMENTO Y FIESTAS.

CUANDO SU FUENTE LE PIDA UN FAVOR, COMO LLEVAR A LA ZONA DE CONFLICTO MATERIALES DE INTELIGENCIA (MICRÓFONOS, ANTENAS, CÁMARAS OCULTAS), HÁGALO SIN NINGÚN RECELO.

PERMITA QUE SU FUENTE ARMADA SE HAGA PASAR POR PERIODISTA, FOTÓGRAFO O CAMARÓGRAFO, PARA CAMUFLARSE A SU LADO EN UNA ZONA DE GUERRA.

COMPARTA CON SU FUENTE ARMADA EL MATERIAL QUE GRABÓ Y LA INFORMACIÓN QUE RECOGIÓ CON EL ADVERSARIO, EN LA ZONA DEL CONFLICTO. ENTRÉGUELE COPIA DEL VIDEO Y DE LAS NOTAS QUE TOMÓ DURANTE LAS ENTREVISTAS.

DIFUNDA CONSCIENTEMENTE PROPAGANDA DE SU FUENTE, DISFRAZADA DE NOTICIA, O MENSAJES PARA DESACREDITAR A LOS OTROS ADVERSARIOS EN EL CONFLICTO.

DÉJESE MANIPULAR POR SU FUENTE. NO DUDE, NO CONFIRME NI CORROBORE LA INFORMACIÓN QUE ÉSTA LE SUMINISTRE.

SEA 'LEAL' CON SU FUENTE ARMADA, MAXIMICE SUS VICTORIAS Y MINIMICE SUS DERROTAS.

ATAQUE Y DESCALIFIQUE A SUS COLEGAS QUE CUBREN OTRA FUENTE DEL CONFLICTO ARMADO. ACÚSELOS COMO POTENCIALES ENEMIGOS ANTE SU FUENTE.

www.mediosparalapaz.org

 **Medios para la Paz MPP**

FONDS CANADIEN POUR LA PAIX

 **PEACEFUND CANADA**

Appendix H

Instructions for managers and media directors on how to make your journalists victims of the conflict (Media for Peace/PeaceFund Canada).

Instrucciones para empresarios y directivos, sobre cómo volver a sus periodistas víctimas del conflicto

PERMITA QUE SUS REPORTEROS UTILICEN VEHÍCULOS OFICIALES DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS Y LA POLICÍA, PARA DESPLAZARSE EN ZONAS DE CONFLICTO.

NO LES ENTREGUE DISTINTIVOS (CHALECOS, CARNÉS O CUBOS PARA MICRÓFONO), QUE LES FACILITEN IDENTIFICARSE COMO PERIODISTAS ANTE LOS GRUPOS ARMADOS.

NO LES SUMINISTRE TELÉFONO CELULAR, BOTIQUÍN Y OTROS IMPLEMENTOS NECESARIOS EN CASO DE UNA EMERGENCIA.

NO LES DÉ OPORTUNIDAD DE CAPACITARSE EN PRIMEROS AUXILIOS, DERECHOS HUMANOS Y TÉCNICAS PARA MANEJAR SITUACIONES EXTREMAS DE PELIGRO COMO LAS QUE SE VIVEN EN UNA GUERRA.

ENVÍE AL CAMPO DE GUERRA A SU REPORTERO MÁS INEXPERTO Y NO LE DÉ NINGUNA INSTRUCCIÓN SOBRE CÓMO ACTUAR EN MEDIO DE UNA ACCIÓN ARMADA.

DESESTIME CUALQUIER AMENAZA EN CONTRA DE ALGUNO DE SUS PERIODISTAS. NO LES CREA A LAS INTIMIDACIONES, NI ADOpte MEDIDAS DE PROTECCIÓN.

EN CASO DE CRISIS ECONÓMICA, EMPIECE POR DISMINUIR AL MÁXIMO LA PLANTA DE REDACCIÓN Y REDUZCA CASI A CERO LOS GASTOS PARA CUBRIR Y ELABORAR LA NOTICIA. LIMITE COMO PUEDA LA POSIBILIDAD DE CUMPLIR BIEN CON EL TRABAJO.

PARA EVITAR GASTOS EN TRASPORTE, NO LE PERMITA AL PERIODISTA SALIR DE LA OFICINA. REDÚZCALO A LOS BOLETINES OFICIALES, COMO FUENTE DE INFORMACIÓN.

NO LE EXIJA AL PERIODISTA EQUILIBRIO EN SU INFORMACIÓN NI LE PIDA RECONFIRMAR LOS DATOS SOBRE CUALQUIER HECHO DEL CONFLICTO.

SI LLEGA A VARSE CUENTA DE QUE LA INFORMACIÓN DEL PERIODISTA ES PARCIALIZADA, HÁGASE EL DESENTENDIDO YA QUE ESO LE PUEDE GARANTIZAR 'CHIVAS' O EXCLUSIVAS PARA EL MEDIO.

NO REFLEXIONE, COMO EMPRESARIO Y DIRECTIVO, SOBRE EL OFICIO PERIODÍSTICO NI SOBRE LA INFORMACIÓN COMO UN BIEN COMÚN ESPECIALMENTE EN TIEMPOS DE CONFLICTO.

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FONDS CANADIEN POUR LA PAIX

PEACEFUND CANADA

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