

“THE WAR BECOMES PERSONAL”  
Experiences of Journalists Who Report the Middle East

Ulriikka Myöhänen  
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Department of Language and Communication Studies  
University of Jyväskylä

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| <p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Lähi-itä on jo vuosikymmeniä ollut maailmanpolitiikan keskiössä, ja alueen konfliktin hallitsevat Lähi-idälle varattua palstatilaa länsimaaisessa mediassa. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, millaisia kokemuksia Lähi-idän toimittajilla on omasta työstään ja tarkastella näitä kokemuksia rauhantutkija Johan Galtungin rauhanjournalismin ja sotajournalismin käsitteiden valossa. Galtungin teoreettista jäsenystä on käytetty aiemmin erityisesti uutisten sisältöjen analyysissa, mutta konfliktiuutisointia tekevät toimittajat ja heidän työnsä realiteetit ovat jääneet tutkimuksessa vähemmälle huomiolle. Tämä laadullinen tutkimus osaltaan lisää rauhanjournalismin ja sotajournalismin tutkimusta Lähi-idän kontekstissa.</p> <p>Englanninkielisen tutkimuksen aineisto koostui teemahaastatteluista kymmenen Lähi-idän toimittajan kanssa. Haastattelut toimittajat ovat syntyperältään suomalaisia, ranskalaisia ja palestiinalaisia. Haastatteluaineistoa kertyi noin 11 tuntia. Analyysia varten haastattelut litteroitiin. Itse analyysi toteutettiin aineistolähtöisesti teemoittelemalla.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella vaikuttaa siltä, Lähi-idän toimittajan työn erityispiirteet, työolosuhteet ja resurssit vaikuttavat siihen, millaista Lähi-idän journalismia luemme. Tarinoiden äärelle pääseminen vaatii journalisteilta uhrauksia Lähi-idän itsevaltaisissa maissa, joissa byrokratia on raskasta ja viranomaiset rajoittavat median toimintaa. Toimittajan omat verkostot alueella nousevat merkittäviksi, sillä erityisesti konflikteja uutisoivat journalistit joutuvat ohittamaan virallisia järjestelmiä päästäkseen uutisten äärelle. Haastattelut ilmaisivat huolensa siitä, miten toimittajiin aiempaa selvemmin kohdistuu uhka heidän ammattinsa perusteella. Myös lähteet ovat haluttomia puhumaan ja esiintymään omalla nimellään turvallisuussyihin vedoten. Toimittajien mukaan aikaan ja rahaan liittyvien resurssien puute, toimittajien Lähi-itään liittyvää osaamattomuus ja taustoittavan journalismin vähäisyys vääristävät kuvaa Lähi-idän tapahtumista ja uhkaavat laadukasta journalismia alueelta.</p> <p>Toimittajat kritisoivat Galtungin rauhanjournalismin ja sotajournalismin malleja mustavalkoisiksi, mutta myös tunnistivat molempien mallien tunnusmerkistöä omalla alallaan. Rauhanjournalismi rinnastettiin laatujournalismiksi, mutta toimittajat korostivat myös, että heidän työnsä realiteetit ja resurssien puute ohjaavat sitä, millaisia uutisia Lähi-idästä syntyy. Journalistit suhtautuivat osin kriittisesti ajatukseen journalismista rauhanrakentajana, mutta painottivat myös, että journalismi osaltaan vaikuttaa konflikteihin ja yleiseen käsitykseen väkivallasta ja sodasta.</p> |                                     |
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# 1 Introduction

“It is your duty to make the rest of the world aware of this situation”, insisted a well-known Palestinian activist family on chorus, when I visited their home in occupied West Bank in October 2017. During my one-week stay, I had seen the brute face of the military occupation and its effects on the daily life of the Palestinians, but I had also experienced a lot more: welcoming families, rousing culture, and creative ways of living from day to day. However, ‘to make the rest of the world aware of this situation’ seemed like a big responsibility. I had just begun to understand the country at some level, when it was time to go back home.

A year before my trip to Palestine, I was standing on Tahrir Square in the busy center of Cairo. It was almost six years after the Arab Spring – a wave of revolutions, uprisings and violence starting from Tunisia in December 2010 and spreading to other Arab countries in the region –, when it all hit me hard. I visualized the local crowds dreaming of better life and protesting for days, and I imagined the international media rushing around the square and doing their best to get hold of the revolutionary chains of events. On those days, as even now, the task of the journalists was to bear witness to the events in order to create global understanding of the conflict. The duty was easy neither then, nor these days, especially in the Middle Eastern context. The perpetual conflict between Israel and Palestine has lasted for 70 years already, and the Arab spring has left the setting in the region even more unstable and vague. In Tunisia, the political change was successful, whereas in Syria and in Yemen, the uprisings resulted in long-lasting and bloody civil wars, which neither other Middle Eastern countries nor foreign countries outside the region could keep their hands off. International media attention was guaranteed at least at that point, when great powers got involved in the fighting.

Conflict reporting is a lot-discussed topic. Current mainstream coverage of conflicts has been criticized for being biased and unilateral. News criteria, resources, and work practices in editorial offices guide the work of journalists. In the worst-case scenario, this results in reporting a remote country only when things escalate and that, in turn, causes misperceptions of events and people on the ground. Before setting off for West Bank, I was worried about my safety, and so were my friends and family. It is no wonder, as in the news, the region is often represented in the light of conflicts and terrorism. However, I had never imagined that I could feel that safe when sleeping in a strange Palestinian house in northern West Bank. My host mother was a caring Palestinian woman, who refused to wear a hijab although the men in the

village told her to do so. It was at that point when I realized that Palestine, as the Middle East in general, is a lot more than clashes, violence, angry activists, and demonstrations shown in the news.

Johan Galtung, the founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, created the concept of peace journalism in 1970s. According to him, there are two ways of scrutinizing a conflict in the media. Galtung associates war journalism with biased journalism concentrating on violence, propaganda, elite, and victory. Peace journalism, in turn, does its best to make conflicts transparent by concentrating on conflict and its dimensions and backgrounds, searching for truth and giving voice to all parties including civilians. (Galtung 2002, 259–261.) In his perception of peace journalism as quality journalism, Galtung highlights humanization of all sides and giving voice to voiceless. This is where Galtung's ideas cross with the Palestinian family's insistence on media coverage quoted in the beginning of this chapter. The family in West Bank wanted their visitors to tell the world about their restricted and violated life under the Israeli occupation and, even more importantly, to represent Palestinian people as humans, not as pawns in political game or as numbers of deaths and injuries.

Galtung's model on peace journalism has been both criticized and praised in the field of conflict journalism research. The model has also been applied for the studies concentrating on conflict coverage of the Middle East. Those studies have dealt with themes such as conflict between Israel and Palestine (e.g. Fahmy & Neumann 2012; Fahmy & Eakin 2014) and Bahrain's uprisings and Syria's chemical attack (Abdul-Nabi 2015). The findings of many of these studies offer evidence of the fact that many news stories, whether they are literary or visual, are represented more often as war journalism than as peace journalism. However, taking into account the political uncertainty, uprisings, humanitarian situation, and wars in many Middle Eastern countries, it is clear that research on conflict journalism and its effects on public understanding of the events in the region is not even close to be exhaustive.

Although there is a body of literature on conflict news in general, little attention has been given to the realities journalists deal with on the ground and the journalistic processes behind conflict news production. For example, in the Middle East, there are multiple cultures, peoples, languages, religions, and conflicts. On that account, reporting the region urges familiarity with its multidimensionality. However, many foreign correspondents and local journalists in the Middle East face the reality, in which they have limited resources and huge responsibility on their shoulders. In addition, when reporting for example frontlines,

journalists have to practice their profession under dangerous circumstances. In this study, the Middle-East-specialized journalists, their work and their working conditions will be lifted into the spotlight. The purpose of this study is to increase the research on peace journalism focusing on the Middle East. This will be done by interviewing journalists about their experiences regarding the region. Finally, these experiences will be scrutinized in the light of Galtung's models on peace and war journalism.

## 2 Media in peace and in conflict

It is alleged that bad news is good news in news production. The claim has a seed of truth in it, proved by Galtung and Ruge (1965). In their article '*The structure of Foreign News*', Galtung and Ruge examined the content of Norwegian newspapers' foreign sections and suggested policy improvements that journalists covering the conflicts should follow. These include guidelines such as concentrating more on long-term development and follow-ups than on single dramatic events, covering also the trivial and positive events and not only the drama, reporting more on culturally distant zones and not repeating the stereotypes. More coverage of non-elite nations and non-elite people was also suggested. According to Galtung and Ruge (1965, 84–85), these actions would 'counterbalance the image of the world as composed of strings of dramatic events'. Nowadays, after 50 years of publishing the article, the ideas of Galtung and Ruge are still relevant and actively discussed in terms of conflict reporting.

During the last decades, peace, conflicts and journalism have been researched a lot in the Nordic countries, especially in Norway. There are a couple of concepts, which often become central in the field of conflict journalism. In his perception of war and peace journalism, 'the pioneer of peace research' Johan Galtung (2002) associates war journalism with journalism concentrating on violence. Peace journalism, in turn, concentrates on conflict and its dimensions. First of all, it is salient to clarify of these concepts to each other. As stated in Cambridge Dictionary (referred 8.4.2018), a conflict is "an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles". At its worst, a conflict can also be referred as "fighting between two or more groups of people or countries". Violence, in turn, is defined as words or actions, the purpose of which is to hurt other people (Cambridge Dictionary, 8.4.2018). In the spoken language, these two notions are often confused, although they have a different meaning. The relation of these two is more about a causal connection: a conflict can result in violence. To take it further, war means "armed fighting between two or more countries or groups", whereas peace is described to be "freedom from war and violence" (Cambridge Dictionary, 8.4.2018).

According to Galtung (2002, 259–261), there are two ways of scrutinizing a conflict in the media. The first way, described as high road, focuses on the conflict and its peaceful transformation (peace journalism). The second way, described as low road, concentrates on the following meta conflict, which originates from the root conflict and is created by violence

and even war (war journalism). Galtung compares the low road of reporting to sports journalism: a conflict is a battle, in which one side wins and other side loses. The losses are counted regarding not only the material damage, but also the numbers of wounded and killed. Also, peace negotiations are reported as verbal battles – the question is, who gained closer to his purposes. (Galtung 2002, 259-261.) This way is usually referred as war journalism. The first way, the *high road* described above, highlights the importance of researching the backgrounds and causal connections of a conflict and the opportunities to find peaceful solutions to it (Galtung 2002, 260). This approach of conflict reporting is referred as peace journalism, and it is sometimes compared with health journalism, the purpose of which is usually not only to inform the public about different diseases, but to educate about the risks and give pieces of advice to avoid the diseases. Shinar (2007, 2) describes peace journalism as a mode of responsible and meticulous media coverage of conflict, the purpose of which is not only to contribute to peacemaking and peacekeeping, but to change the attitudes of media owners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace. Such goals are accomplished by critically evaluating the current state of conflict coverage and by conceptualizing “professional values and practices in both theoretical and operational terms”. In the next section, these two approaches to conflict reporting will be covered more precisely.

## **2.1 'Peace journalism' versus 'war journalism'**

The greatest difference in peace and war journalism is in decisions made in the journalistic process – *what kind of stories we cover, how we cover those stories and what kind of framing we use*. These two categories have their own points of departures regarding the framing and narrating wars and conflicts. As Galtung (2002, 261–262) states, peace journalism and war journalism differ from each other in four categories (see TABLE 1).

TABLE 1 A comparison of peace journalism and war journalism. Source: Jake Lynch via Wikimedia Commons.

| <b>VIOLENCE-WAR/VICTORY JOURNALISM</b>   | <b>CONFLICT/PEACE JOURNALISM</b>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>I. VIOLENCE/WAR-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>focus on conflict arena,<br/>2 parties, 1 goal (win), war<br/>general zero-sum orientation</p> <p>closed space, closed time;<br/>causes and effect in arena,<br/>who threw the first stone;<br/>poor in context</p> <p>focus only on visible effect of violence<br/>(killed, wounded and material damage)</p> <p>making wars opaque/secret</p> <p>“us-them” journalism, propaganda, voice, for “us”</p> <p>see “them” as the problem,<br/>focus on who prevails in war</p> <p>dehumanization of “them”;<br/>more so the worse the weapon</p> <p>reactive: waiting for violence to occur before reporting</p> | <p><b>I. CONFLICT-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>explore conflict formation,<br/>x parties, y goals, z issues<br/>general “win,win” orientation</p> <p>open space, open time;<br/>causes and outcomes anywhere,<br/>also in history/culture;<br/>rich in context</p> <p>focus also on invisible effects of violence<br/>(trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</p> <p>making conflicts transparent</p> <p>giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding</p> <p>see conflict/war as problem,<br/>focus on conflict creativity</p> <p>humanization of all sides;<br/>more so the worse the weapons</p> <p>proactive: reporting also before violence/war occurs</p> |
| <p><b>II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>expose “their” untruths<br/>help “our” cover-ups/lies</p>   | <p><b>II. TRUTH-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>expose untruths on all sides<br/>uncover all cover-ups</p>   |
| <p><b>III. ELITE-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>focus on “their” violence and on “our” suffering; on<br/>able-bodied elite males</p> <p>give name of their evil-doer</p> <p>focus on elite peace-makers,<br/>being elite mouth-piece</p>  | <p><b>III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>focus on violence by all sides and on suffering all over;<br/>also on women, aged, children,</p> <p>give name to all evil-doers</p> <p>focus on people peace-makers,<br/>giving voice to the voiceless</p>   |
| <p><b>IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>peace = victory + cease-fire</p> <p>conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand</p> <p>focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society</p> <p>leaving for another war, return if the old flares up</p>  | <p><b>IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTED</b></p> <p>peace=nonviolence+creativity</p> <p>highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war</p> <p>focus on structure, culture the peaceful society</p> <p>aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation</p>  |

### *Orientation of peace/conflict and war/violence*

Peace journalism makes a conflict transparent. It explores the formation of a conflict carefully and takes into account also the historical and cultural causes and outcomes. War journalism makes wars opaque and focuses on a specific time period, when a conflict is on. (Galtung 2002.) In practice, a war journalist asks who threw the first stone, whereas a peace journalist asks what happened before the first stones were thrown. One of the most salient differences between these approaches in this category is the idea of peace journalism being proactive and trying to prevent an escalation of a conflict by reporting the incidents in advance. In contrast to its opponent, war journalism is reactive, which means the reporting does not start until the violence occurs. Shinar (2007, 2) encourages journalists to pay more attention to stories about conflict resolution, peace, and post-war developments in the society than coverage of a conflict itself. Peace journalism omits an aspect of giving voice to all parties of a conflict and seeing the conflict itself as a problem, whereas war journalism adapts the setting of “us” and “them” and sees “them” as the problem. War journalism also focuses only on visible results of violence such as number of killed and material damage, whereas peace journalism puts a spotlight to invisible side of a conflict, like trauma and cultural and structural damages. (Galtung 2002.)

### *Orientation of truth and propaganda*

As stated by Lynch (2014, 38), in order to externalize propaganda, and enable critical scrutiny of key issues, journalists need to apply an insurgent approach. To put it simply, peace journalism challenges dominant account by revealing untruths and lies of all sides. War journalism, in turn, strongly favors “us”, makes efforts to romanticize ‘our actions’ and, in that way, exposes the untruths of the opponent only. (Galtung 2002.) In this way war journalism draws on patriotism. In the context of the Middle East, this was clearly seen for example in the US news media’s coverage on Gulf War in 1990–91. In Gulf War, news media were used as a tool for warfare and propaganda, and the fate of Iraqi civilians and the loss in general were dismissed. In addition, all professional ideals of journalists were challenged. This means, journalists’ access to witness events on the spot was limited the authority to edit stories independently was taken from them. (See e. g. Luostarinen 1994.)

### *Orientation of people and elite*

Peace journalism is often described to give “voice to the voiceless”, bearing the idea of not only focusing on the rival, combatant parties, but on women, children and aged rather than on

able-bodied elite males. In war journalism, the elite and their efforts to make peace become central and only the evil-doers of the opponent are named. (Galtung 2002.)

### *Orientation of solution and victory*

There are some fundamental differences in the perception of “peace” in these two models. In war journalism, peace means ceasefire and a victory of one party. A peace journalism model, in turn, highlights nonviolence, creative solutions to the reconciliation, reconstruction, and peace initiatives to prevent more violence. (Galtung 2002.) Peace journalism is not the only approach which strives for more innovative and tolerant reporting concerning conflict news coverage. Solutions journalism as a style of news coverage emerged in 1990s and it shares some basic ideas of peace journalism, for it concentrates on social issues and the consequences of possible responses to them (see e. g. Benesch 1998). Some studies on solutions journalism have shown that news stories discussing solutions to social problems have changed attitudes of readers toward the social problem itself and toward the news coverage of the problem, although news stories do not necessarily inspire action (see McIntyre 2017).

## **2.2 Valued and criticized peace journalism**

It seems like peace journalism has caught more and more interest during the last few decades. Nowadays, there is a rich store of literature and research on peace journalism, the majority of which concentrates on content and of news stories. For example, Lacasse and Forster (2012) found out that local newspaper used more peace journalism frames and portrayed conflict and its parties in a less negative way when reporting the Mexican drug war, whereas distant newspapers more likely presented complexity of the conflict and many parties involved. Perez de Fransius (2014) examined American coverage of the conflict between the US and Iraq and found out that peace journalism as an alternative approach would have exposed more varied voices and views into the public discussion. Rodney-Gumede (2016) examined the awareness towards peace journalism and alternative narratives among foreign correspondents covering Africa. In addition to analysis of contents and narratives, peace journalism model has been researched within the framework of other perspectives. McGoldrick and Lynch (2014) concentrated on audience response to peace journalism: they showed differently versioned television news stories about conflict to audiences and found out that stories with characteristics of peace journalism prompted audience’s empathy and brought about ‘arguments in favor of non-violent conflict responses’. Ottosen (2010), in turn, argued by

using examples from Norway that peace journalism can serve as a basis for journalistic training on conflict and war reporting.

Although there is a body of literature on peace journalism, there is also a dearth of research scrutinizing peace journalism in the Middle East (Fahmy & Eakin 2014, 101). Nevertheless, some research related to the region has been conducted already. Many studies dealing with peace journalism concentrate on analyzing contents, frames and aspects of news texts, but in some studies, attention has been given to the visibility of news. For example, Fahmy and Neumann (2012) analyzes the extent to which Gaza war 2008-2009 was represented as peace journalism or as war journalism in the news pictures of leading newswires. The long-lasting conflict between Palestine and Israel has also been a source of inspiration for other research concerning the peace journalism in the Middle East (e.g. Fahmy & Eakin 2014, Shinar 2009). To overcome the limitations of Galtung's sharp dichotomy, Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch and Nagar (2016) developed existing classifications of conflict reporting and created a new approach, which they used in their analysis of narratives used by Israeli media's coverage of Middle Eastern conflicts. In addition, the research has also delved into the war in Afghanistan (Ottosen 2010) and Bahrain's uprising and Syria's chemical attack (Abdul-Nabi 2015). The findings of these studies often demonstrate that news coverage of the Middle East has more characters of war journalism than of peace journalism. Fahmy and Eakin (2014, 98 & 101) point out the importance of research on peace versus war journalism and news framing in the region. They also highlight the significance of generating future studies to investigate news framing within social media, such as Twitter and blogs.

Peace journalism has always been proposed as an alternative to approach conflicts in a journalistic sense. The model itself assumes that media themselves contribute to the propaganda war, either intentionally or unintentionally. (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2014, 86.) In fact, that is the point of departure for the model: media have a role in war and in peace. However, this has also been challenged. Hanitzsch (2007) argues that peace journalists overestimate the influence the media have on politics and ignore 'the many structural constraints that shape and limit the work of journalists', such as resources, editorial procedures and hierarchies, availability of sources, and access to the reporting spots and information. Loyn (2007), in turn, stresses that it is not the job of journalists to make peace.

When exploring the research and scientific discussion concerning Galtung's peace journalism model, one quickly notices that the topic is a "hot potato" in the field of conflict reporting. It seems like both supporters and opponents share the same basic idea of quality journalism

which includes dimensions such as ‘searching for the truth’ and ‘staying objective’. Maybe it is the terms ‘war’ and ‘peace’ used in Galtung’s dichotomy, what causes the opponents to break out in “goosebumps”. In fact, the majority of criticism concerning the peace journalism is directed to the role of journalism – Loyn (2007), among other critics, do not like the idea of giving tasks to journalism. However, sometimes it appears that the model of peace journalism is somehow misunderstood, because also Galtung (1998) has contributed to the critical discussion of the role of peace journalism, as follows: ‘The task of peace journalism is serious, professional reporting, making these processes more transparent. The task of peace advocacy is better left to peace workers’. Examples of such peace workers could be professional organizations such as Finnish CMI (Crisis Management Initiative), local and international non-governmental organizations, world organizations such as the United Nations, the diplomatic corps, and so forth.

### 3 Journalists reporting conflict

The coverage of Vietnam War in 1955-75 and Gulf War in 1990-91 are maybe the most famous examples of modern conflict reporting and war-correspondence. In Vietnam, the investigative journalism was thriving, and journalists started to question the ethics of war. In Gulf War, the Pentagon was more aware of the power of the media, which resulted serious restrictions in the work of journalists and the freedom of speech in general. However, the work of journalists in conflicts is significant, as journalism is a vital contributor to the general understanding of wars, violence, and conflicts (Hoxha & Hanitzsch 2018, 46; Tumber 2013, 65). Conflicts are covered both at news desk and on the spot, and both ways have their limitations and advantages. At news desk the reporting is mostly based on news agencies' information and the own data capture of a journalist is often limited to a few phone calls or e-mails. On the other hand, journalists reporting conflicts on the ground often operate in dangerous and uncomfortable locations with significant risks of harassment, injury, kidnap, and even death (Thumber 2013, 65).

Of course, not all journalists practicing conflict journalism are on the frontline. However, the literature on journalists covering the Middle Eastern conflicts and conflicts in general has proved that, in addition to safety risks, journalists face different kind of challenges in their work. For instance, journalists reporting the Middle East end up regularly in situations where information is notably hard to verify. In his study, Vandervoort (2016) researched the situations with which journalists covering Syria were confronted. He aptly sums up the problematic of journalistic practices related to the Middle East:

How does one deal with claims that there are no chemical weapons in Syria, for instance, if no foreign visitors are allowed to enter the neighbourhoods where the attacks allegedly took place? And how far does one go in adopting or contextualizing the story of a crying little girl blaming 'terrorists' for destroying her life if you are taken to her by a regime official, who considers every form of opposition an act of terror? (Vandevoordt 2016, 306.)

The production of conflict news content is complex, and it comprises lots of editorial decisions. In their study based on interviews with conflict journalists and reconstructed articles Hoxha and Hanitzsch (2018, 61–62) found out that when 'making a complex conflict simple and accessible to their audiences, journalists have no choice but to make decisions about which facts to use and what to emphasize, and how'. This means, journalists choose the central narrative, which, in their opinion, represents the essence of the story. Importantly,

these narratives used in journalistic coverage can play a role in conflict escalation and de-escalation.

### 3.1 Journalistic performance in conflicts

Journalists are in a responsible position when reporting conflicts, for they are central in shaping the public understanding of conflicts and violence. Media coverage also influences the development of conflict, and therefore it is important to comprehend the journalistic processes behind the news stories. (Hoxha & Hanitzsch 2018, 46.) According to Lohner and Banjac (2017, 290), journalistic performance contains four components, which are work practices, role perceptions, ethical orientations and working conditions. These components are interrelated and linked with the media content.

*Work practices* include the routines media workers use to practice their profession. These consist of information gathering, logics when picking relevant topics, and practices when representing and framing them (Lohner & Banjac 2017, 290). According to Shoemaker and Reese (2013, 169–170), routines are founded on different sources. This means, the media routines stem from three important aspects: availability of information, capability of media organization to produce a certain story, and demands of audience for a story. Routines also happen in different levels. In other words, the standardized patterns of news guide media's reaction to certain events, but journalists also make decisions at individual level. On the other hand, media organizations have their own instructions of work practices and also the institutions and ideologies in the background have an influence on the media content. (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 105–110; 2013, 8–9.) All routines shaped by these sources and levels influence on media content. They are crucial, because media portray the social reality (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 108). As far as the work practices of conflict reporting are concerned, restrictive routines have emerged on account of suspicious views within the military toward the media. These routines stem from the war in Vietnam and were seen also in the Persian Gulf War in 1990–91. These routines include procedures such as denying access to reporting spots, allowing only journalists from major news companies to produce the stories, and reviewing stories before publishing. (Shoemaker & Reese 2013, 200–202; Luostarinen 1994.)

One of the work practices in conflict-ridden reporting destinations is working as 'embedded'. The term embedded journalism refers to the system in which journalists and soldiers live and work alongside each other in the conflict-ridden areas. This practice may give an access to

conflict zones, but also violate the autonomy of journalists. For example, in the Gulf War in 90s, being embedded was the only way to report the conflict on the spot. Journalists and their work were supervised by soldiers, and those journalists who managed to do the coverage solo risked their accreditation and were threatened to be deported. (Luostarinen 1994, 154–161.) Iturregui Mardaras, Cantalapiedra González and Moure Peñin (2017) interviewed embedded Spanish journalists and found out that journalists working with military are dependent of the movements of the troops. According to this particular study, during the trips, briefings given by generals and other army representatives were often journalists' only source of information. As stated by many researchers in the field of peace journalism, this kind of practices of gathering and publishing information can violate the orientation of peace journalism and lead into distortion of truth (e.g. Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2015). In embedded journalism, there is a clear risk for distributing war propaganda and concentrating on elite instead of civilians and their suffer. When it comes to Galtung's peace journalism model, one of the main problems of the system of embedded journalists is that, confirmed by Iturregui Mardaras, Cantalapiedra González and Moure Peñin (2017) and Vandervoordt (2016), journalists traveling, living and working together with soldiers are actually experiencing just one side of the conflict. However, although the practice clearly violates journalistic autonomy, it surely increases the safety and the protection of journalists.

*Role perceptions* refers to what journalists consider as their tasks while performing their profession (Lohner & Banjac 2017, 290). Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White (2009) compartmentalizes the functions of journalism into four: the monitorial role, the facilitative role, the radical role and the collaborative role. *The monitoring role* of media is maybe the most noted role of journalism. This role refers to media's function of observing the environment and its events and conditions and informing the audience about those (Christians et al. 2009, 139–140). This is the role which often becomes visible in the field of conflict reporting: war correspondents are doing stand-up lives and reporting the recent course of events. *The facilitative role* refers to media's role to promote dialogue between readers and viewers, to encourage the participation in civil society and to support diverse cultures and worldviews (Christians et al. 2009, 158–159). *The radical role of journalism*, in turn, includes the idea of insisting 'the absolute equality and freedom' of all people (Christians et al. 2009, 179). Usually journalists considering radical role as one of their professional tasks concentrate on a specific dimension of discrimination, such as discrimination of women or minorities. As stated by Christians et al. (2009, 196–197), scant attention has been given to *the collaborative role* of media, perhaps because the ideal journalism includes the idea of autonomous and free

press. Usually, media do not see themselves as voice of the power. However, there are many forms of collaboration, in which media willingly participate in the name of security or obligation, such as withholding information about the location of troops in war.

*Ethical orientations* contain certain principles and values, which navigates the reporting. They become especially significant, when a journalist has to deal with an ethical dilemma. (Lohner & Banjac 2017, 290.) In the field of conflict reporting, moral obligations of journalists have been an important topic for a long time already. For example, in connection with Gulf War, the coverage begged the question of the representation of human suffer, as in the US news media, suffer was largely deleted from the stories, and war in general was represented as clean and antiseptic (see Luostarinen 1994). Nowadays non-biased media with a global perspective is of great value in order to deepen the understanding of plurality of views. A narrow-minded story with poor arguments may cause misapprehensions, wreak havoc, and goad ethnic groups to attack each other. Ethical media with a global perspective, in turn, may help groups to relate to each other and to comprehend the global issues and political instabilities better. (Ward 2013, 2.) As stated by Tumber (2013, 64), journalists who report international conflicts confront ethical challenges on a daily basis and these challenges are a combination of political, cultural, technological, and economic motives. This means, conflict reporters constantly stand on the battle fields of propaganda and, on this account, conflict coverage often contains dis- and misinformation. Sometimes only history research based on secret archives could tell “the truth” of a conflict.

*Structural working conditions* refers to structures in political, economic and media systems and, for instance, journalism’s relationship with other social actors, such as state power, military groups, civil society and interest groups (Lohner & Banjac 2017, 290). In conflicts, the structural working conditions play a huge role in the reporting, because access is often limited, and the work of journalists is largely supervised by the authorities (see e. g. Luostarinen 1994). As stated by Lohner and Banjac (2017, 290), safety challenges and risks are examples of structural working conditions, which have a considerable influence on journalistic performance and all its dimensions represented above. In the next chapter, we will take a closer look at the safety of journalists in conflict zones.

### **3.2 Safety of journalists**

The work of journalists covering armed clashes, conflict-ridden countries and relating humanitarian catastrophes might be one of the most difficult one in the

profession. Contributing to peace mediation through journalism may sound idealistic and eligible, but reporting conflicts is also a safety issue for journalists. In fact, journalists take huge personal risks while performing their profession in conflict zones, and usually the local reporters and freelancers are the most vulnerable ones (see e.g. Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2014, 61–64).

Høiby and Ottosen (2017) argues that the reduced safety of journalists working in the conflict zones results in absence of journalists in such regions. Nowadays, blatant examples are countries such as Yemen and Syria. The coverage is more and more based on second-hand observation, which automatically affects the quality of journalism and feeds misconceptions. Poor security conditions of media workers undoubtedly lead into situations, in which the objectivity of journalism is risked, the process of information gathering, and publishing are disturbed, and self-censorship is performed. As stated by Carlsson & Pöyhtäri (2017, 12), journalists face

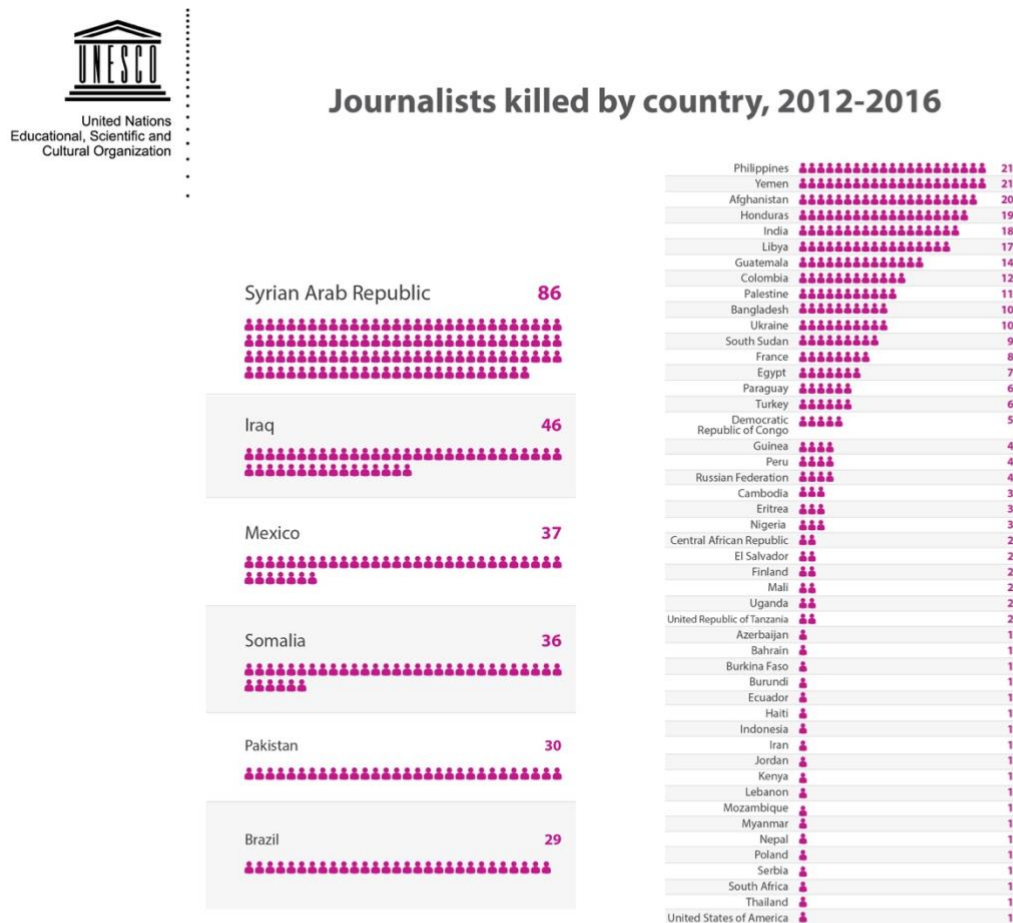
new forms of censorship and repression, self-censorship, surveillance, monitoring and control, gatekeeping, propaganda – disinformation, acts of terror, anti-terror laws, criminalization of encryption and/or anonymity, hate speech and harassment, and organized crime. These are critical issues in many countries, but especially in zones facing social, ethnic and political stress, armed conflicts or disaster situations.

Academic research on safety of journalists and its effects to the journalistic practices not only is salient in creating safer working conditions for the professionals, but according to Carlsson and Pöyhtäri (2017, 15) it can also resolve systematic problems in society such as weak rule of law, inequality, lack of good governance, and corruption. Democratization conflicts emerge in societies, which are transiting to more democratic forms of government (Lohner & Banjac 2017, 289). For example, revolutions starting from Tunisia in 2010 and spreading through Egypt all the way to Syria and Yemen are such democratization conflicts. These types of conflicts morph not only the societies but also the journalism, as journalists experience safety threats which affect the journalistic performance. Challenges have an influence on the journalistic practices, roles, and ethics. (Lohner & Banjac 2017, 289.)

The statistics about the safety of journalists are alarming. According to Committee to Protect Journalists, in total 46 journalists were killed worldwide in 2017, and Syria and Iraq were the deadliest reporting destinations (CPJ 2018). International Federation of Journalists reported 33 killed journalists worldwide in the first half of year 2018 (referred 15.5.2018). Also, other statistics from the last few years are harsh. Recorded by UNESCO (2016), there were over 800 killed journalists, media workers, and social media producers during 2006–2015. Deadliest years were 2012 (124 cases), 2015 (115 cases) and 2014 (98 cases). 213 journalists

lost their lives in 2014–2015, and the Arab State region represents 36,5 % of these cases, which is largely due to ongoing conflicts in Yemen, Syria Arab Republic, Libya and Iraq. This is not unprecedented, as in total 59 % of the killings in 2014–2015 were registered in the regions, where there has been an armed conflict. (UNESCO 2016.) The numbers of killed journalists in the Middle East is to be seen in UNESCO's statistics (see FIGURE 1).

FIGURE 1 Journalists killed by country 2012-2016. Source: UNESCO.



Excerpted from UNESCO's report

**World Trends in  
Freedom  
of Expression  
and Media  
Development**  
GLOBAL REPORT 2017/2018

Visit:  
[en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017](http://en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017)

Statistics have demonstrated that approximately 90–95 % of the killed journalists are local media workers. The rest of the deaths falls upon foreign correspondents. (Committee to Protect Journalists 2018; UNESCO 2016.) Carlsson and Pöyhtäri (2017, 12–13) points out the increasing number of freelancers in war and conflict zones, as news media companies do not send their own staff to the regions. Freelancers are in a huge risk while working alone in the

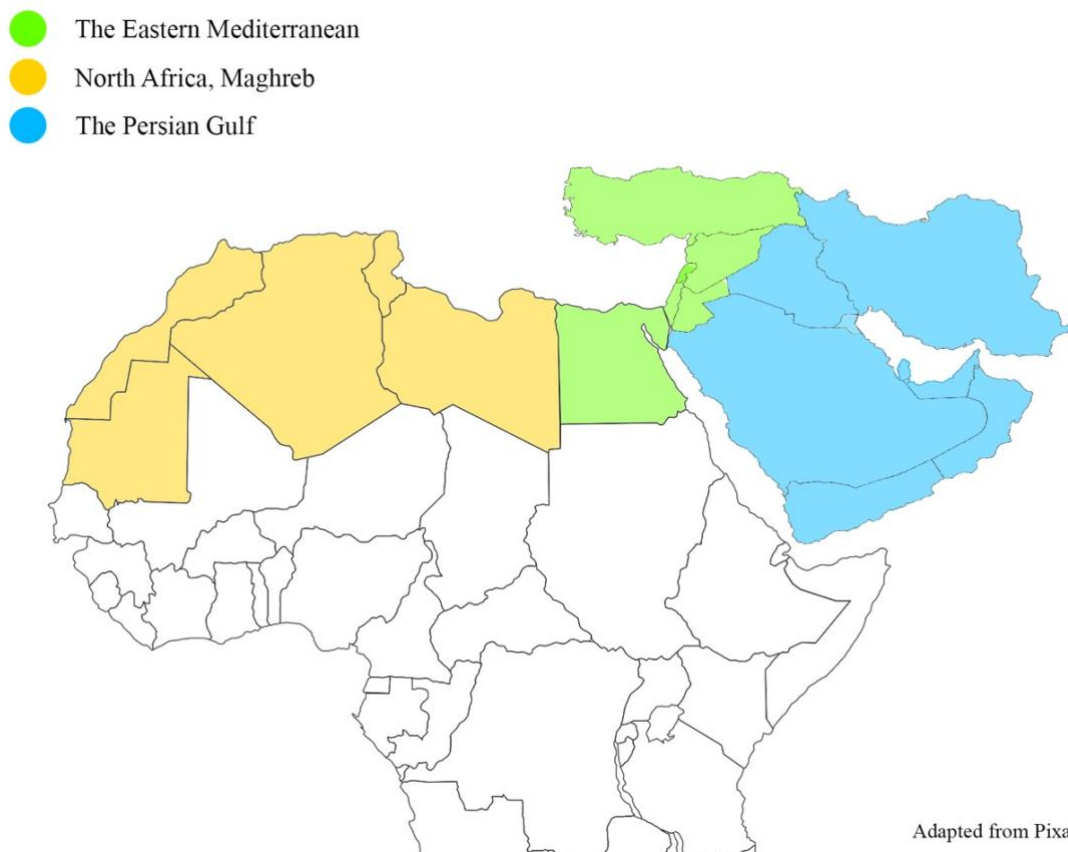
war-ridden regions, and they do not have the same security level as staff journalists do. Silencing media workers by violence builds a serious threat to freedom of expression.

The numbers of deaths presented in this chapter should be treated as estimates, because different organizations and institutions have their own ways of counting the violations and killings. For example, organizations differ in the ways how they define ‘a journalist’, and some organizations categorize deaths by types. Whatever the truth, the statistics of killed journalists demonstrate the rough reality of journalistic work in the Middle East and, in addition, the killings are not the only form of violation journalists face in their profession.

## 4 The Middle East, conflicts and media

The Middle East is located ‘at the tricontinental hub of Europe, Asia, and Africa’ (Held, Cummings & Cotter 2011, 3), but there are always differences in the definitions of the Middle East depending on an author or a researcher. Some definitions include all North African countries in the region, whereas others consider only some North African countries, such as Egypt, as core part of the Middle East. To make the conceptualization of the Middle East easier, the region is usually divided into smaller regions. The division is made not only based on the geography, but also based on the culture. The regions are called *the Persian Gulf*, *the Eastern Mediterranean* and *North Africa*. The Eastern Mediterranean (also called Mashriq and Levant) includes countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt. North Africa (also called Maghreb) consist of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania. The Persian Gulf (also called Arabian Gulf) includes countries such Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, and Iran. Sometimes, also Afghanistan, Pakistan, central Asia and the Caucasus are associated with the larger Middle East. (Sorenson 2010, 4–6; Ochsenwald & Fisher 2004, 1.)

MAP I MENA region consists of the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and the Persian Gulf.



Adapted from Pixabay 2018

Depending on scholarship, the Middle East is also called *the Near East* or *Southwest Asia and North Africa* (Ochsenwald & Fisher 2004, 1.) The common term ‘Middle East and North Africa’ (abbreviated ‘MENA’) is used when one wants to scrutinize the region in a larger scale (Sorenson 2010, 4–5). In the present study, the term ‘Middle East’ refers to the MENA region and it comprises the three entities of the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and the Persian Gulf (MAP 1). However, mapping the countries and areas in the region under one title sometimes feels absurd and can even result in misconceptions. As Sorenson (2010, 1) puts it into words, the Middle East ‘is easy to stereotype, but difficult to capture’. No one living in the Europe would say a Finn living in Lapland and an Italian living in Rome have the same living conditions and share the same worldview and culture. The same idea applies to the Middle East: there are many countries, languages, cultures and religions, which all shape the identities of the occupants.

Many outsiders consider the Middle East as a region filled with conflicts, violence, and war and rich in political and ideological ferment, because often these are the news which are offered from the region. Undoubtedly, the Middle East has its eventful history colored by battles between local religious groups, tribes, and ethnicities (see e.g. Ochsenwald & Fisher 2004; Hämeen-Anttila 2014). At the same time, great powers, such as the United States and Russia, do their best to meddle in the business. In fact, many wars in the Middle East could be described as proxy wars. The term refers to wars which are presented as civil wars to the world, but in which the great powers and their allies have their own interest. The interest can be accessing natural resources such as oil or water, inciting hatred to gain more havoc and to augment one’s own efforts, improving relationship with an ally, or anything in between. (see e.g. Loveman 2002.) No wonder that for many recipients, the Middle East may seem as a remote region with continuous conflicts and wars since the World War II. Although the region now seems to be in the middle of a violent era, it is vital to remember that in addition to all havoc and ferment, the Middle East is a huge region, which is not all about war and cruelties. Instead, the Middle East is birthplace of the three monotheistic religions, rich in history, and a cradle of cultures and traditions. (Hämeen-Anttila 2014, 8–9; Sorenson 2010, 2–3; Held, Cummings & Cotter 2011, 3.)

Hämeen-Anttila (2014, 9) criticizes modern Western media for presenting only grievances and violence of the Middle East instead of introducing the readers and watchers for the peaceful, daily life in many regions in the Middle East. Usually, the reporting stops when the unrests abate, what results in exaggerated image of many Middle Eastern conflicts and confrontation (Hämeen-Anttila 2014, 9). However, it is vital to understand that in some parts

of the region, such as in Syria and in Yemen, pain and torture are real. In those countries, the Arab Spring's wave of revolutions and urge for democratization starting from Tunisia in December 2010 has precipitated the countries into bloody civil wars in which also great powers have interfered largely. Take Yemen, for example. UN has described Yemen's war as world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis, which has left over 22 million Yemenis in need of assistance (Yemen Humanitarian Bulletin 2018).

Western media's skills to deal with the Middle Eastern conflicts is a lot-discussed topic. The backgrounds, experiences, resources and values of a journalist, the political stand of his employer, and the economic resources have an impact on the way of reporting the Middle Eastern conflicts and conflicting parties (e.g. Heinemann, Lamoum & Weber 2009, 9; Sieffert 2009, 35–36; Moorcraft & Taylor 2008, 149–150). Sieffert (2009, 35–44) asserts that in French media, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians among other Middle Eastern countries, is reported in a certain way with certain words: the bombardments of Gaza are described as 'retaliations', the wall constructed by Israel on Palestinian territories is named as 'security barrier', and 'terrorist' is replaced by 'activist'. All these terms carry with a certain message and gives a story its frames, intentionally or unintentionally. Another study showed, how Lebanese organization Hezbollah was framed mostly as a terrorist organization in U.S., British, European and Lebanese news sources, although the organization also has benign functions (Lynam, Taylor & Gade 2016). Sometimes it is the lack of time and pressure caused by haste which result in poor reporting and lack of context. The term 'parachute journalism' refers to a practice, in which a journalist is sent to a reporting destination to cover a story, in which he has little knowledge or no experience at all. The problems linked with parachute journalism comprise scant knowledge of history and culture, lack of networks, and challenges in navigating on the ground. However, sometimes parachute journalism is better than nothing, because small newspapers do not always have the resources to send permanent correspondents abroad and without parachute journalists, there would be no stories from abroad (e.g. Erickson & Hamilton 2006).

However, not only the actions of media visualize the sometimes-distorted image of the Middle East. As stated by Vandevoordt (2016, 307 & 311), political actors in the region do their best to guide media to a way, which is favorable for them. For example, journalists have difficulties to enter specific territories and to access peoples and perspectives, which results in situations, where media are forced to frame their stories based on a particular setting time after time.

## 5 Research problem and research questions

The research on conflict journalism traditionally takes either an actor-associated or content-related orientation, which both have their advantages and limitations. Information about the presentation of conflict is gained by examining the production, news stories about conflicts, whereas the research on actors may expose the journalistic practices. (Hoxha & Hanitzsch 2018, 46–48.) Also, peace and war journalism can be approached in many ways in the research field of journalism. The most popular approach has been the content-oriented research on news framing, but this value-based dichotomy of Galtung could also be used in the research on ideals and identity of Middle-East-specialized journalists. However, in this study, the focus is shifted from the news framing to the work practices behind peace and war journalism and to the characteristics of the work when working in conflict-ridden reporting destinations.

As stated by Hoxha and Hanitzsch (2018, 48), although conflict reporting is a lot-researched topic, there are surprisingly little research on ‘the realities journalists face on the ground and the processes of conflict news production’. While also research on peace journalism, also outside of the Middle East, has largely examined the framing of news, the journalistic process behind peace and war journalism and its connection to the news content are greatly understudied. Scant attention has been given to the producers of the news – the journalists – who produce the news stories and shoot the news pictures, which are then categorized as peace journalism or as war journalism. It is interesting to contemplate, how a journalist ends up covering a story, which concentrates on the numbers of deaths, violence and interests of only one side of a conflict. What about a news story, which sets the events into a framework and does its best to explain everything in the light of history, for example? The present study starts from the premise that producing ‘war journalism’ or ‘peace journalism’ is not a deliberate choice made by journalists, but the working conditions and characteristics of the work, among others, explain the outcome

By lifting the journalists behind the news into the spotlight, the aim of my study is to further the growing body of peace journalism research connected with the Middle East region. My goal is to find out, how journalists reporting conflict zones experience their work and how their experiences can be scrutinized in the light of peace and war journalism.

Therefore, my research questions are:

1. What is typically characteristic of journalistic work when covering the Middle East?
2. What kind of effect do the working conditions of a journalist have on the news from the Middle East?
3. What is the role of the media in Middle Eastern conflicts, if there's any?

## 6 Methods

The research method should be considered with regard of the purpose of the study. Given the aims of the present study, it is justified to collect the data via interviews. In interview study, the purpose is not only to seek the scientific knowledge, but also to improve the human situation investigated (Brinkman & Kvale 2015, 85; Kvale 2007; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 20). Through interviews, an attempt is made to expose how Middle-East-specialized journalists experience their work and how their working conditions influence on the news stories about the Middle East. The interviews give participants a chance to reflect their own work, and the scientific purpose of the interviews is to produce valuable knowledge of the nature of journalistic work in the Middle East. The aim of this chapter is to review the entire process of the present interview investigation and its ethical issues and concerns.

### 6.1 Snowball sampling

The present research is based on 10 qualitative interviews with professional, Middle-East-specialized journalists. The first phase of collecting the data therefore consisted of finding journalists to be interviewed for the purposes of the study. Snowball sampling was used in the search of research persons. Snowball technique, also referred as ‘network sampling’, is used to obtain a sample, when a researcher does not have a straight access to the prospective sample. This method is adequate for obtaining samples of small groups. (Sturgis 2008, 179.) In the snowball technique, a sample is seen as a snowball, which grows larger when people roll it in the snow. In the research world, this means a researcher contacts some ‘key persons’ of the group of people to be studied and asks if they know other members with certain characteristics to be interviewed for the purposes of the study. Again, the identified individuals are interviewed and asked to nominate further individuals. (Sturgis 2008, 179–180; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 59–60.)

The group of Middle-East-specialized journalists might not be described as ‘small’ in international level, but in a national level of each country outside of the Middle Eastern countries themselves, there are not too many professional journalists who cover the region. Getting in touch with the local media workers from outside of the region is not an easy task either. Therefore, in the present research, the importance of networks was crucial in the search of interviewees and, as in the snowball technique, the sample was created more by coincidence than design. In practice, I sent messages to some of my contacts, who spread the

word or linked me with journalists working in the area or covering the region. All contacts were created by sending an e-mail or starting a chat on Facebook. Some of my ‘key persons’ connected me with a prospective interviewee in Facebook group chats. In those cases, a key person introduced me and the prospective interviewee to each other and then left the group chat. In that way, I easily got in contact with my interviewees. A shared contact helped in building trust.

In ideal circumstances, snowball sampling continues until there are no further individuals to be interviewed. Otherwise, as stated by Sturgis (2008, 180), the sampling procedure and data collection are likely to result in biased results. However, as noted by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000, 60), sometimes, in consequence of lack of resources, the sampling needs to be finished before all prospective research persons are interviewed. In this case, the concept of ‘saturation’ becomes crucial. Saturation refers to a procedure, in which members of group are interviewed as long as the interviews do not contribute any new or essential information for the purposes of the research questions. In the present study, all interviews contributed some new information for the analysis, but largely, the interviews also started to repeat themselves at some point.

## **6.2 Interviewees**

Finding adequate journalists to be interviewed for this study was not unproblematic. When mapping the prospective interviewees, the question of how a Middle-East-specialized journalist is defined became crucial. In the present study, in total 15 journalists were contacted and offered a chance to participate in the study. 13 of them showed their interest to give an interview. All these candidates went through a preliminary qualification session. 3 journalists did not pass the qualification because of limited language skills and/or unclear background in journalistic work in the Middle East. Finally, 10 Middle-East-specialized journalists were interviewed in the beginning of the year 2018.

The final participants have their origins in three countries: Finland, France and Palestine. The interviews were run either Finnish or English, depending on the language skills of an interviewee. Finnish-based journalists were interviewed in Finnish in order to harness all nuances of interaction and means of expression. With French and Palestinian journalists, the strongest shared language was English.

### 6.3 Preparing for the interviews

Before starting the actual interviews, there was a need to take a closer look at the preparation phase of an interview. Informed consent as an ethical field refers to the procedure of informing the research participants about the main features and purposes of the research. This includes, for example, information about the confidentiality and individual's autonomy. The latter means that an individual participates voluntarily and can withdraw from the study at any time. (Brinkman & Kvale 2015, 93; Kvale 2017.) On the other hand, providing too much information about the study in advance may guide the answers of an interviewee too much and in that way result in biased estimates or, in the worst case, even endanger the research (e.g. Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 20). In the present study, interviewees were informed about the study with a few sentences in advance (see Annex I). The message included the main features and purposes of the study. In addition, ethical issues related to the preservation and handling of the data were presented to the interviewees. For functional reasons, most of the interviewees did not know about the theoretical background of this study in advance. This is because, first of all, knowledge of the starting points of this study could have guided the answers of interviewees, and besides, Galtung's model of peace and war journalism is quite controversial in the field of conflict reporting.

The second important aspect of preparing for the interviews is the question of confidentiality, which naturally runs through the whole research process. Many of the interviewees in this research highlighted the importance of being unidentifiable for safety and operational reasons. In a qualitative study, the consequences of participation form the third ethical principle, which should be taken into account. A researcher has a responsibility to evaluate the consequences of a study for interviewees – and even for larger group they represent – and inform the participants about possible harm of participation (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 95–96; Kvale 2007). For the protection of the individuals and to gain more detailed and sensitive information, confidentiality of journalists was guaranteed. However, snowball sampling as a method to obtain a sample may not be the most unproblematic way to maintain the anonymity of interviewed journalists, as some of the interviewees were found based on recommendations of another interviewee. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the researcher to keep the names of the participants in secrecy and process the interview material in a way, which guarantees the anonymity but respects the original message of an interviewee.

## 6.4 Semi-structured interviews

After careful reflection, a decision was made to conduct semi-structured interviews for the purposes of the present research. As stated by Fielding and Thomas (2008, 246–247), in a structured or standardized interview, the sequence and the wording of questions are the same in every interview. In semi-structured interview, in turn, every interviewee is asked the same major questions, but the order of the questions can be altered. An interviewer can also ask more questions for further information. According to Mann (2016, 91), a semi-structured interview is a type of interview, which, instead of detailed script, relies on a guide. In this kind of interview, there is a room for deviation from the guide, but for the purposes of comparison, it is important to try to cover the whole guide during an interview. Eskola and Suoranta (2008, 86), in turn, defines a semi-structured interview as an interview, in which every interviewee answers the same same questions without standardized choices, in his or her own words.

As represented earlier in this chapter, the conceptualization of a semi-structured interview is not simple. However, it is characteristic for a half-structured interview that some dimensions of an interview are decided in advance, while others vary from case to case (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 47). This, in turn, demands a lot from a researcher, who needs to absorb his or her role as an interviewer quickly, be good at interaction, and skilled in asking questions and listening carefully to the given answers. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, 96–97) point out, ‘the integrity of the researcher’ – which involves her or his experience, knowledge, honesty, and fairness – is a critical element. In interviewing, the researcher’s integrity is especially essential, because the interviewer is the one, who is responsible for collecting the data in a situation, which may be exciting not only for the interviewer but also for the interviewee.

When preparing semi-structured interview questions for the present study (see Annex II & Annex III), there were many things to keep in mind. In order to receive spontaneous answers and to encourage interviewees to talk about their values, beliefs, and attitudes instead of giving simple yes/no answers, the questions should be formulated as open ended as possible. In addition, it is important to pay attention to the questioning technique. (Fielding & Thomas 2008, 249.) In this study, a relaxed atmosphere was part of the questioning technique. Every interview started with easy chatting and warm-up questions like *how are you today?* and *what have you been doing this morning?*

The research questions guided, naturally, the interview design. The primary interview questions comprised themes like conflict reporting, news criteria, practicalities while working

in the region, challenges and opportunities in the profession, and safety. Experiences of journalists were in the center of the questions. In the last section of the interview, journalists were introduced to Galtung's model on peace journalism (Annex IV). Afterwards, the model was discussed for 10-15 minutes. Galtung's model turned out to be a good way to summarize the earlier-discussed points of an interview and evaluate journalists' own work in the region. All interviews were run in January and in February 2018. Nine interviews were conducted via video calls on Skype or on Facebook, whereas one interviewee wanted to meet face-to-face. Interviews were 45–82 minutes long. An average interview took 67 minutes.

## 7 Thematic analysis

Given the aim of the study, which is to expose the experience of journalists covering the Middle East, it is justifiable to choose a data-driven analysis approach. The interview data was analyzed with a thematic analysis. Clarke and Braun (2017, 297) describes thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (“themes”) within qualitative data’. According to (Mann 2016, 212) a thematic analysis consists of six phases, which are

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Coding (transcript)
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Writing up.

In the present study, rough notes were made already during the interviews to help the researcher to guide the discussion. However, for the analysis, interviews were transcribed. 672 minutes of interview material turned into 105 pages of transcribed text (font size 11, spacing 1,15). Interview data was stored confidentially and no one, with the exception of the researcher herself, was allowed to explore the recordings and the transcriptions. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, 85) notes that, in addition to confidentiality, it is important to pay attention to the transcribed text and its loyalty to the interviewee’s oral reports. In the present study, the challenge of loyalty was responded by transcribing the interviews word for word. Also, most of the addresses of the interviewer herself were transcribed in order to evaluate if the phrasing of a question had influenced or guided interviewee’s response.

After finishing the transcriptions, it was time to start the active phase of analysis, that is, searching for and reviewing themes. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012, 11–20) introduces the concept of *applied thematic analysis*, which refers to a methodological framework comprising a bit of grounded theory, phenomenology, positivism, and interpretivism. This sort of analysis was partly applied also in the present study. For example, it was important, albeit the analysis was data-driven that the interpretations about the themes and categories found in transcriptions were supported by Galtung’s models on peace and war journalism. This kind of approach is usually linked with grounded theory, in which the output of analysis is to build new theoretical models (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012, 12). However, in the present study, the aim was not to create a new theoretical model, but to use Galtung’s models to contemplate, analyze, and review the experiences of Middle-East-specialized journalists.

That is why also the approach of phenomenology is central in the present study. As stated by Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012, 13), in phenomenological study, ‘the participants’ perceptions, feelings, and lived experiences’ become significant. Finally, the present study tilts more towards the positivism, which highlights that ‘interpretations should be derived directly from data observed’ and ‘data collections and analysis methods should, in some way, be systematic and transparent’ (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012, 15). Interpretivism would, instead, concentrate on deeper meanings and multiple realities in discourse (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012, 14).

In summary, in the present study, the interpretations of the themes were derived not only from the data about the experiences of the interviewees, but they were partly determined in relation to research questions and the theoretical models of Galtung already when designing the interviews. Themes were compared and contrasted carefully before defining and naming them. Categorizations of interview data included major themes such as characteristics of work, ways to access conflicts, safety of journalists, general challenges, and perceptions of the elements of quality journalism concerning the Middle East. These themes and variety of analyzed sub themes will be introduced in the following chapters of this paper.

As reported by Kvale (2007, 7), in a qualitative research ‘where subjects’ statements from a private interview setting may be published in public reports, precautions need to be taken to protect the subjects’ privacy’. In the present study, this was taken care of by protecting the identity of interviewees. This means, the names of interviewees and any other private data, such as names of employers, will not be published in this report. Furthermore, although both female and male journalists were interviewed for this study, it was reasonable to edit out every cue for gender of an interviewee in pursuance of direct citations. This was a challenge, as English pronouns *he* and *she* are gender-specific, and other gender-neutral pronouns such as *one* and *they* seemed too formal for the report. Therefore, in order to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees – and to promote gender equality –, all interviewees will be represented as females in this study. In addition, there will not be any clues in direct quotations that could help to identify the interviewee based on one’s experiences. In other words, all exact information, such as names of exact reporting locations, have been deleted from this report. However, the reported countries are mentioned, so that the experiences will be understood in their real context. Finally, in the writing-up phase of the analysis, the citations in Finnish were translated into English in order to fade out the identities of the Finnish-speaking journalists.

As stated by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, 95), anonymity is an ethical demand and it protects the participants, but it can also ‘serve as an alibi for the researchers, potentially enabling them to interpret the participants’ statements without being gainsaid’. In the present study, every effort was made to do the analysis and writing-up esteeming the generally accepted scientific procedures.

## 8 Findings: Middle-East-specialized journalists

This chapter will illuminate the concept of Middle-East-specialized journalists and to give an overview of their work. This will be done on the grounds of the interviews with 10 journalists, who report the region. In total, four female journalists and six male journalists were interviewed. **In order to protect the identity of each interviewee, a decision was made to represent all interviewees as females.** The interviewed journalists had their roots in three countries: Finland, France and Palestine. Nine journalists had lived in the Middle East at some point, and four of them lived in the region for the moment of an interview. All interviewees travelled or had travelled actively for their work in the area.

Six interviewees were freelancers, whereas the remainder of them were under contract to media companies. Interviewees contributed not only for newspapers and web but did also broadcast journalism for different channels. Some of them had also done journalistic documentaries and specialized in photo journalism. Journalists had from 6 to 38 years of experience in their profession, and all of them had been focusing on the Middle East for years. Most of the journalists had studied at university, but the focus of their studies had not necessarily been in journalism. In fact, just a few interviewees had a diploma in journalism. Some journalists mentioned activism in the field of human rights and politics as part of their education concerning the Middle East.

Interviewees produced journalism in Finnish, Swedish, English, French, and Arabic. English, Arabic and French were mentioned as main working languages in the Middle East. Finnish and French journalists estimated their skills in Arabic being at beginner's or at intermediate level. Variety of dialects and differences in spoken and written Arabic were described as a challenge in the language learning.

The analysis of the interview data allows us to conclude that there are three main reasons for journalists' attraction for the Middle East. Striking military events and powerful revolutionary movements, such as the breakout of Iraq war in 2003 and Arab Spring's chain of events starting from December 2010, were described to mark the start for journalistic interest in the region. A journalist described her interest in the region, as follows:

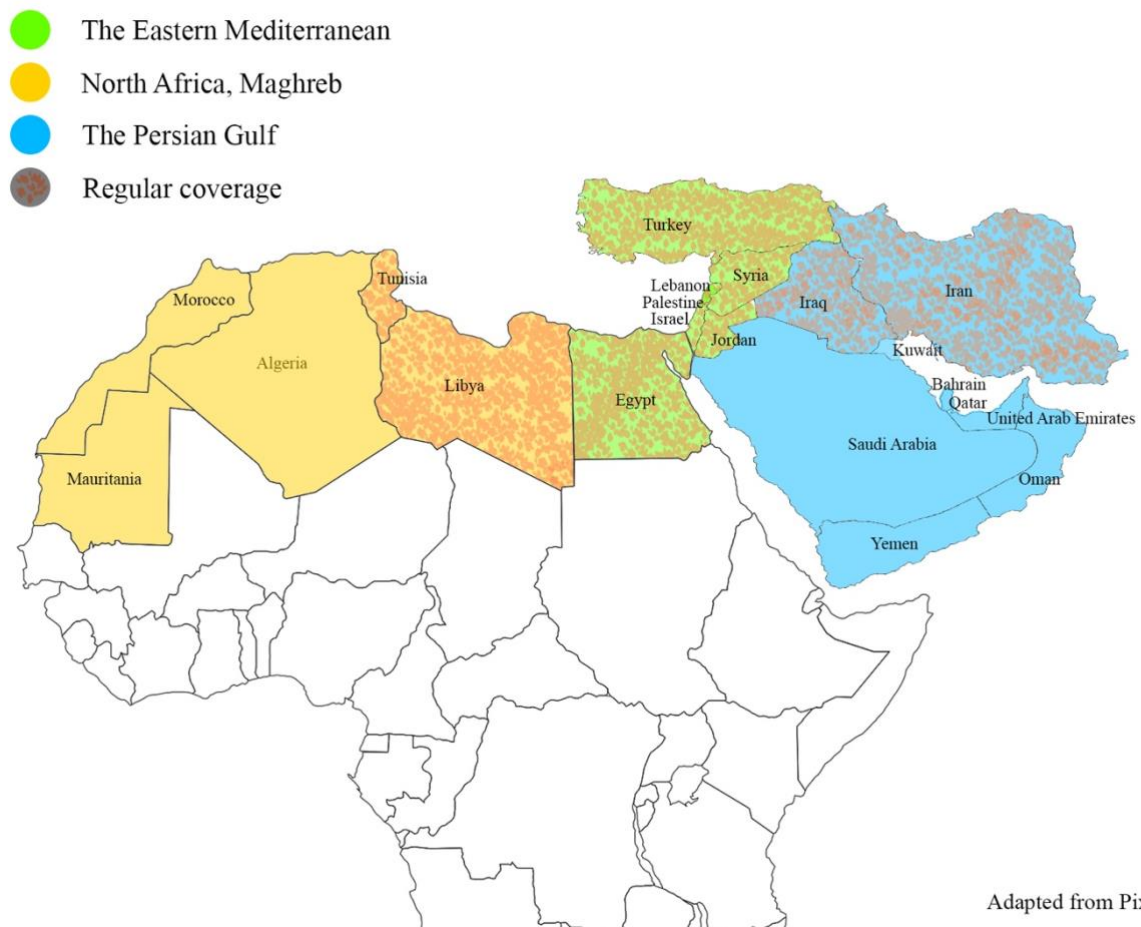
[This work] is terribly hard and stressful sometimes, and there's not too many good news, but still... it is a fascinating region politically and culturally.

The second significant reason for the attraction were personal reasons. Some interviewed journalists became interested in the region, when they had started to date someone from the Middle East. Many interviewees also mentioned having friends or family in the region. In addition, a few journalists mentioned their Middle Eastern descent as one of the main reasons for their professional interest. The third main trigger for the attraction for the Middle East were coincidental reasons. Some of the interviewees described, how their employer had ordered a journalist to start following the Middle East and specializing in the region. A few journalists described how they had been guided by their studies. In addition to these main reasons for their interest, journalists mentioned an urge to influence and an attraction to delve into the events as their motives for getting caught up in the region:

I realized that to understand a conflict for real, it is a lot more than [producing] a few superficial news pieces. It takes years to read the culture and to understand the religion and to be able to report a region.

In interviews, journalists were asked to name the countries they had recently followed and covered in their work on a regular basis (see MAP II on the next page). The mentioned countries were Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. In addition to countries in the map, Afghanistan was mentioned as one of the countries which was followed regularly. These countries were described as eventful and interesting in a journalistic sense. Networks and language skills of journalists defined the spectrum of covered countries. The journalists living in the region covered the country they were living in and the neighboring countries. Also, employer's order and the general security of a country influenced on what countries were covered.

## MAP II Regular coverage of the Middle Eastern countries



MAP II should not be interpreted too unambiguously, since it is created based on only 10 interviews. In addition, it is possible that those North African countries, which are not on the focus of interviewed journalists, are covered by reporters concentrating on North Africa. However, it is justified to come to some conclusions based on the map. For example, the general situation in the Persian Gulf seems quite alarming. Although the Persian Gulf is central for the world politics, only one journalist mentioned being focused on Persian Gulf earlier in his work: this journalist had been covering the Gulf War in 1990s. This allows us to conclude that the absence of international journalists in some Middle Eastern countries results in reporting these areas based on the information distributed by the news agencies. Those journalists who worked under contract to a media company and were responsible for covering the entire Middle East in their work, expressed their concern over the lack of resources: it is impossible for one journalist to report such a huge region properly.

## 8.1 Characteristics of the work

The purpose of this chapter is to cast light on the characteristics of the journalistic work in the Middle East and to explain how these characteristics influence on the stories from the Middle East.

### 8.1.1 Bureaucracy results in working under unofficial circumstances

The analysis of the interview data revealed that almost all journalists had faced some sort of problems when navigating between official systems. Some journalists mentioned that they had international and national press cards to help them in their work and to get more access in the Middle East. It seems that in some countries having a press card is more important than in others. For example, a journalist living in Turkey described an issued press card as a prerequisite for working in the country. According to her, journalists without press cards would be at risk to be deported or jailed. Some journalists, in turn, said that they use international press card, if any:

In many reporting destinations, it is not even necessary [to use international press card]. [In the Middle East], petitions made on a sheet of paper with stamps and signatures play surprisingly big role. Rounded and triangular stamps are precious. Every time I set off [for the Middle East], I take these recommendation letters with me. -- it is still a valid method and brings certain credibility -- although tactically, those are just pieces of paper.

Journalists described application processes for visas and work permits as long and heavy. Accesses were described to be denied because of security issues. A journalist wanted to write a story about migrant issues in Morocco, but she never got a permission to do it. The same journalist described the press accreditation process in Jordan, as follows:

[In Jordanian refugee camps,] it the depends on the political situation and the authorities how strict they will supervise and control. But the press accreditation process is very heavy and in many other countries it is even heavier. They will screen you in advance to decide who they license to produce stories.

A journalist currently living in Lebanon described how she was on tourist visa during her first year in the country and had to travel abroad every second month to get a new tourist visa. Earlier, she was afraid of not being able to enter the country again due to critical stories she had made about the ruling power. Then she was accepted for residency and work visa, what had helped her to work in the country. However, especially freelance journalists concentrating on the frontline stories seem to avoid formalities and to hide from authorities as much as possible, as the next quote proves:

The Middle East is bipartite. On the one hand, you get easily to some spots -- on the other hand, there's a huge bureaucracy. -- It is a lot more difficult region than others. -- If you try to organize something through official channels, you won't get anything. You'd better trust official sources and organizers as much as you can. I myself have operated just like this.

Another freelance journalist concentrating on Syria and Iraq confirmed the interpretation of the above-cited journalist and highlighted the importance of connections:

I have never been officially allowed to enter Syria, but I have been sneaking around. Yes, I have to do lots of illegal stuff -- pass the official systems -- you need connections and local knowledge to swing these matters.

Although none of the interviewed journalists reported having a false identity, some of them described how they kept a low profile regarding their profession, especially when entering countries and being questioned at the airport. This included introducing oneself vaguely and selecting the topics of discussion carefully. Another journalist described how her looks and working methods helped her to keep a low profile in Aleppo:

-- In fact, people thought I was an insurgent, not a journalist. -- It is all about your substance, you live with those people, you look like them, you identify with that realm. It gives you access. I never run around and wear bulletproof vest promoting I am a journalist. -- I think being incognito is kind of essential, so that [the local people] greet you like one of their own and not as an outsider ordering information.

Based on this subchapter, it is reasonable to argue that cutting through the red tape is something that makes some journalists pass official systems and work unofficially – even illegally – while hunting for stories in the Middle East. Bureaucracy in the official systems includes procedures, which favor the authorities as sources but deny access to other sources of information. This character of the work admittedly has influence on the daily routines of the journalists and on news stories.

### **8.1.2 Overenthusiastic and suspicious authorities**

Interviewees spoke at length about the overenthusiastic authorities and how they make it even more difficult to report the region and get the people to speak. These chaperones, persons who accompany journalists in order to keep an eye on them and to interrupt interviews if they get too inflammable, were a much-discussed topic in the interviews. Many journalists said that it is very common in the field of conflict reporting that the authorities do all they can to prevent journalists for interviewing the opponents or the insurgents. A journalist described her experiences of writing a story about the expansion of presidential powers in Turkey. She wanted to interview both supporters and opponents of the expansion, but ended up in trouble:

When I interviewed the supporters, everything was fine. But when I went to interview a person, who resisted [the expansion of presidential powers] -- a troop of police officers gathered around us -- and I asked them what the problem was. They wanted to see my press card, I showed it and it was ok. Then they just stayed and listened the whole interview. In practice, they stayed and put a squeeze on my interviewee. -- after that [the police officers] followed me for the rest of my interviews and listened what I talked about with people.

A journalist, who had covered Jordan, had similar experiences with an officious police officer:

[In a Jordanian refugee camp], an officious police officer was following us for the first three days [we spent there]. He took down all names of the interviewees -- in that kind of situation, no one could criticize Jordan government, or anything else.

In addition, several journalists had experiences of being guided and even fooled by the authorities in authoritarian Middle Eastern countries. A journalist described, how she sometimes felt like journalists were theatregoers and authorities were giving an act to convince the press. Another journalist narrated her experiences in Lebanon, as follows:

After Trump's decision [to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel], Hezbollah organized a huge protest -- and basically [Hizbollah] controls everything. You have to ask their permit to be able to go to this protest and once you're in this protest -- and I thought it was very interesting in a way, but it is very weird -- you're just walking in the protest and you see this woman coming and checking on you and asking 'do you need anything, like a picture or something?'. I asked like 'who are you?', and she said, 'Hezbollah press officer'. And you're like, wow, they're really good at the control. They do everything to make sure you don't say anything, which they don't agree.

While at first glance aforementioned examples may seem controlling but harmless, they actually play a huge role in story production. Many interviewees reported being pushed and even blackmailed by the authorities. Furthermore, sources are not willing to speak, if they feel being spied by authorities. The control seems to be everywhere and, at least at some level, the authorities seem to have their own ways to keep track on the stories a journalist had produced -- no matter in which language even. Again, if those stories do not please the ruling power, there will be problems. Journalists reported being questioned and insisted on to show the contents of their cameras and laptops. A few journalists described how they struggle to keep their materials safe. As the internet connection is not that good everywhere in the region and uploading the materials to cloud services is not always possible, old-fashioned methods are still used, as the next example proves:

I have my story in memory stick. Then I make three copies. I keep one of them, the photographer has the second copy and the third copy will be given to a nobody, who will say, OK, I will mail it. In that way it is easier to protect the material.

The analysis of interview data proved that journalists covering the Middle East had to deal a lot with authorities and to learn to balance somewhere between staying in good relationship

with them and maintaining one's journalistic integrity. A journalist summed up the daily routine of a Middle-East-specialized journalist, as follows:

They always strive to lead you, to bullshit you, to use you in propaganda. But you need to have the knowhow. As if to go through this all, sift it out and to understand, what happens for real.

### **8.1.3 Networks as an entry to inside**

Almost all interviewees emphasized the importance of contacts when reporting the Middle East. Journalists described how networks are often created by chance and developed in time. Networks had helped journalists not only to get one's hands on information and interviewees, but also to get access to some closed reporting spots. In some of these relationships, a journalist was considered as a confidant by the local people. A few journalists mentioned, how their contacts called them even at midnight, if something newsworthy happened. However, some interviewed journalists highlighted that networks and connections should not be taken for granted. Maintaining relationship requires time, mutual respect and even favors in return. One journalist described the quality of her networks, as follows:

I associate a lot with people, I waste time, in a sense, to understand the topics I cover. -- Syria, for example, the only reason I was able to operate there as I did is that I had created an enormous network in there. In every damn village I had a family, which considered me as one of them or as a friend. If something happened, they would shout my name and drive me somewhere -- If I wanted to go somewhere, I had a connection from a village to another village.

Professional fixers are used, if a journalist does not have sufficient networks and enough experience in operating in the reporting destination. Fixers are also used to avoid language barriers and to organize practicalities easily and quickly, as the following citation proves:

My Arab skills are not good enough to operate there alone. Also, my travels in the region are so short and I have to work effectively. It is extremely important to have a good and reliable fixer, with whom I can plan practicalities in advance --

Journalists also highlighted how important it is to keep in mind that everyone, including contacts and fixers, have their own agendas, and it is the responsibility of a journalist to critically evaluate the information in order to produce quality journalism. A journalist with decades of experience in the Middle East pointed out that fixers can also be security risks in some reporting spots, as the information about the presence of the international media goes around in advance. Journalists, who had used local photographers or videographers in Israel and in Palestinian territories, faced other kind of challenges, as the next example proves:

When I go to Gaza, I can not take [an Israeli cameraman] with me, because he is not allowed to go there. -- [On the other hand,] the Palestinians in the West Bank are not allowed to go to

Israel without a special permission. So, I have a cameraman I can only use in West Bank. -- That is why I have a pool of professionals for different situations [and territories].

### **8.1.4 Dealing with cultural differences**

The statements of the interviewees show that, inevitably, journalists face cultural differences when covering the Middle East. The analysis of the interview data exposed four often-mentioned special characteristics of the region: coffee-drinking as a way of building trust, gendered communities and societies, strong debate and argumentation culture, and the feelings of being offended.

Those journalists who did not have their origins in the region or had grown up elsewhere, mentioned the concepts of time and coffee drinking as one of the most striking cultural differences. In many Middle Eastern countries, the schedules are slack, and an interview may include meeting the whole family and drinking coffee for two hours. A journalist planning tight schedules may face problems, as building the mutual trust and getting down to business will take its time within many cultures in the region. Several journalists mentioned drinking coffee or tea as one of the best ways of getting a grasp of the story they are producing:

If you make it to the living room or a kitchen, or wherever people tend to sit about – at least once during your reporting trip – then all has went well.

Some journalists mentioned that many Middle Eastern communities have strong debate and argumentation culture. This culture combined with experienced injustices in the history and in the present sometimes makes a big mess, as one journalist described:

[In the Middle East], there's a lot of feelings of being insulted and bruised. It is both justifiable but also irrational. People say the Western countries and Russia and Israel have treated them extremely unfair, what mainly stacks up, -- but in those situations, -- you [as a journalist] should not start arguing. It is an endless road and will blot the key issue itself out.

A few journalists mentioned gender issues as one of the special characteristics of the region. They described, how they needed to pay more attention to the code of behavior and decency in gendered communities. For instance, not all Muslim women are allowed to talk with a male stranger and not all reporting destinations are allowed to all sexes. This means, sometimes journalists get or do not get access to the stories because of their gender. One journalist described his experiences regarding the gender issues, as follows:

I suppose I benefit from my gender, because the Middle East is a masculine and macho region. Me being a male journalist is more of a help than a hindrance, especially regarding the crisis and conflict journalism. -- The Middle East is one of the regions in this world, in which the private relationships play a huge role. And those relationships are made between men.

The aforementioned example let us suppose that there are more male journalists than female journalists on the frontlines and in the hotspots of armed conflicts. In the present study, all interviewees doing frontline stories on a regular basis were males.

### **8.1.5 Limited resources affect the quality of reporting**

The interviewed Middle-East-specialized journalists mentioned three types of limitations concerning the resources in their work: insufficient time resources, financial limitations and challenges concerning the amount of work and responsibilities. Those journalists, who did not live in the region, but travelled actively in order to cover the Middle East, often wished they had a chance to spend more time in the reporting destination. This challenge was often interwoven with financial challenges: editors did not have the resources to keep a journalist in a spot for a long time, and in case of freelancers, travelling expenses cut too big portion of their monthly pay. Financial challenges may have far-reaching consequences, as a journalist living in the region pointed out:

The financial aspect of this job explains, how things are covered. Because freelancers get paid very little most of the time, and the amount of money they get paid will often sort of influence [on] how much time they're gonna spend on a story. It will sometimes influence the quality of reporting, because if they can't afford a translator, they'll do it without and they'll miss a lot of information because their level of the language is not enough. They might choose not to travel to the area because they can't afford to rent a car for another day -- so in terms of the editorial decisions that we make as freelancers, the financial component is important.

Some journalists mentioned that they use technology and work remote to overcome the financial challenges. Journalists also pointed out that 'dangerous zones' such as battlefields and beleaguered areas would cost a lot of money, because when reporting those zones, journalists needed more protection and insurances, for instance. The financial challenges were also described to be connected with the third challenge, which concerns the amount of work and responsibilities of a journalist in a region. A journalist covering the frontlines in the Middle East pointed out how the conflict reporting has been entrusted to very few journalists. On the one hand, this phenomenon was seen as positive, because those journalists also had the networks and knowledge of the region. On the other hand, a fresh perspective was welcomed in the field of conflict reporting. Another aspect concerning responsibilities was revealed by those journalists, who worked as correspondents to a certain media company. Those journalists described their work in the region as impossible to manage, because their duty was to cover the entire Middle East from Tunisia to all the way to Iran and to Yemen.

## 8.2 Delving into conflicts

Although the Middle East is not all about wars and crises, all interviewed journalists had dealt with conflicts in their work in one way or another. A journalist, who had reported the region for over 30 years, expressed her deep concerns about the direction the region has taken during the last decades. She described the region and its conflicts, as follows:

The crises have more sharper contrasts and are crueler than before. We always say that humankind slowly gets more sophisticated and more humane, but you really can't see it there [in the Middle Eastern conflicts]. Violence against civilians is used more systematically than before.

The above-cited journalist also highlighted that the problem is not only the local people, but also the great powers interfering in conflicts, fighting and politics in the region. That is, many of the conflicts in the Middle East have turned from civil wars into proxy wars, in which smaller and weaker countries fight against each other and support the interests of larger powers at the same time.

The general atmosphere in the region has had an effect to the work of the media. Journalists found it difficult to balance between different parties and groups in the region. Because the political atmosphere is very tense in many countries in the Middle East, journalists also expressed their concern over the general, distrustful attitude towards media workers and limited access to the reporting destinations. Not all of the interviewed journalists had been doing frontline journalism, but those who had, described the nature of wars in the region as irrational and insane. Especially the first experiences in war and on the frontline were described as strong and tense, but also as didactic. These frontline journalists admitted that they had experienced horrible things themselves, but they also highlighted the importance of journalists' presence in the war zones. One of the interviewees portrays her contradictory experiences in Syria and in Iraq, as follows:

Suddenly, the people dying there are your personal friends. The war becomes personal. You strive to have your foot in both camps, to kind of maintain your journalistic integrity, and that's is maybe the most difficult part. But if you don't stand there on the edge, you won't be able to produce good journalism either, because you don't know what you're doing -- I was able to live these conflicts with those people -- I was able to document it from the inside.

This and the following chapters make an attempt to clarify the circumstances, under which journalists work in the Middle Eastern conflicts. The following subchapters will discuss the ways to access conflicts in the Middle East.

### 8.2.1 Working and travelling with NGOs and international organizations

Many interviewees mentioned contacts within non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations, such as International Red Cross, International Red Crescent or the United Nations, as one of their primary sources of information when accessing conflicts and crisis on the spot. Some journalists pointed out that this kind of organizations and movements can provide a lot of background information about the crises, evaluate the situation on the spot and give advice related to the security issues and traveling in the region. Contacts among these organizations also play a role in building a bigger picture about a crisis or a conflict, as stated by one of the interviewees:

Humanitarian organizations have been important partners of mine during these decades, as they have local knowledge, as those organizations have been in the field for a long time. -- There are often very experienced people, who have the ability to compare the situation on the spot to the general world order, and, at the same time, they have good connections in the field.

Almost all journalists, who had reported conflicts in the Middle East, stressed the importance of international organizations and NGOs, when it comes to accessing conflict areas and refugees, for instance. The connections within NGOs have also helped journalists to cover closed communities and more sensitive themes, such as violence against women, sexual harassment and LGBT issues. International Governmental Organizations, such as United Nations, were often described as more challenging and bureaucratic, whereas smaller NGOs were considered as more flexible and easier to work with. Many interviewees mentioned that by cooperating with these organizations, they had reached reporting destinations and covered topics they could not have reached otherwise. However, the interviewed journalists noted that it is important to critically evaluate the situation while working and traveling with organizations:

We don't do advertising, but they do good work and I am happy mentioning it. The trick is sort of... you go with them, you see what they want to show you, but -- once you're there you have to do other things also by yourself without them being there all the time.

[While working with International Red Cross,] I have made it clear from the very beginning that although I travel with them, I won't sing their songs, and I will critically evaluate everything I see. And it has been accepted. They are professional organizations -- and they know the rules.

However, being independent journalist and traveling together with an organization in the conflict area is not always an easy combination, as the next example proves:

When you think about the International Red Cross, one of the cons is that, for them, it is important to maintain the principle of neutrality and that's why they have to restrict the activities of the people who travel with them. In those kind of situations, I am grinding my teeth: if I was alone, I would do this differently.

Although different humanitarian organizations and NGOs were mentioned as an important source of information and as a way to access conflict zones, media tours organized by these organizations were criticized by many of the interviewed journalists. Some of the journalists also mentioned that their employers refuse to send journalists to media tours and rather pay the trips themselves.

### **8.2.2 Working and travelling with military groups**

According to the interviewed journalists, working and travelling with military groups was seen as an important way to access certain reporting destinations, such as frontlines and besieged areas. Many journalists described ‘conflict reporting’ as an extreme occasion, in which there are no other options than to go with troops – otherwise, there will be no news stories from the conflict-ridden areas. The co-operation with military groups was also seen as a ‘life insurance’ for journalists: soldiers have local knowledge and accurate information about the development of a conflict, and they know which areas are mined. However, journalists agreed that, as a journalistic work practice, traveling with troops has its weaknesses, especially when it comes to the risk of distributing war propaganda and seeing only ‘one side of a story’.

It is quite unilateral, because at some level, you inevitably are in the shoes of the group you’re traveling with. The conquest of Mosul, for example, [although I travelled with the Golden Division, Iraqi special forces against terrorism] my aim was not to present the Golden Division at its best advantage, because all of them are killers – but inevitably, the story I made reflected the fact that those soldiers are just young boys, who have fought hard. It was a story that needed the facts from the opposite side as well --

To overcome the challenge of objectivity, journalists use different methods to maintain their journalistic integrity and to give the public the means to evaluate the premises of a story. Such methods are, for example, not writing a story until a journalist is out of military group’s sphere of influence, and explaining to the public, with whom and under which circumstances the story was made. Interviewees also emphasized journalists’ skills to critically evaluate the information given in conflict zones. One journalist highlighted that it is hard to define different groups in the Middle East, which makes it even more complicated to evaluate the information:

In the Middle East, different groups mix easily. Civilians fight, civilians work as paramedics, and it is a big mess. Especially the Syrian insurgents -- you really don’t know how to classify a person and it becomes kind of irrelevant as well.

The variety of military groups with ethnic or religious nuances and mutual relationships of those groups were also seen as a challenge when it comes to reporting the conflicts in the region. In Iraq, one of the interviewed journalists had entered a Sunni village together with armed Shia volunteers, who were at that moment fighting against ISIS. She described the circumstances, as follows:

The openness of the [Sunni] people was not at good level [because I came together with an opposing party, Shias], but it was the only way to get in that area. It is all about compromises.

The aforementioned example, among others, suggests that in the Middle East, traveling and working with one group may give access to a certain reporting destination, but it does not guarantee access to all parties of a conflict. Some interviewees pointed out that the access provided by military should not be taken for granted either, because in many cases, the military troops are not willing to send journalists to the conflict destinations. One of the interviewees was not allowed to access the Syrian-Lebanese border, when there was a big operation in summer 2017. She described, how the denial affected the story she was producing, as follows:

In that specific case, I was doing it for TV. So, if I had had an access, we would have gone there and shot a full package, like a report. Since we did not have access, and we could not film images, we did stand up lives from Beirut.

This example, among others, suggests that limited or denied access leads into a situation, in which a journalist has to lean on to second hand sources, what has an effect to the quality of a story.

### **8.2.3 Embedded journalism and the risk of war propaganda**

Only two interviewees mentioned being officially embedded with military troops while working in the Middle East. These interviewees also had many years and even decades of experience in conflict reporting and frontline journalism. Both journalists linked their experiences as officially embedded with many challenges, as the next citation shows:

They show you the locations they want to show you and you listen to their stories. The chances to meet anyone else and [to experience] anything else that would set their narrative in a contradictory light are very limited -- that is why I have tried to avoid [working as embedded] -- the only way [this practice] is newsworthy, is that you physically get on the spot and you see how the troops operate there.

The troops have certain expectations of journalists traveling with them. One journalist described her experiences with American embedded system in Iraq war as follows:

I was once embedded with American troops on the oil fields -- I started to talk with local people in Arabic, but in fact, those discussions were interrupted immediately. [The soldiers] did not like it at all, because they did not know what I was talking about. I was treated nearly hostile and almost labelled as a spy --

When it comes to embedded journalism's impact on framing a story, journalists highlighted the importance of informing the readers about the backgrounds of a news piece. According to them, it is important to let the readers know, from which perspective the story was made. The nature of embedded practices was also understood as culture-specific. For example, the control system of American troops was described stricter than the practices of the British army.

[Britain is] a cradle of free press and it affects even the procedures of the army. The difference compared to Americans is extremely big. It does not mean that there is a perfect freedom to do whatever you want to, but with [British army] you have the chance to act and even question something they present to you.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, interviewees' attitudes towards embedded journalism can be described as critical and even negative. Many of the journalists accounted embedded system as a means of military to distribute war propaganda. Embedded journalism was also discussed in the light of war journalism, as follows:

[Journalists] are taken with to witness the 'victory over them', over the evil-doer -- and, of course, when [the troops/army] represent this all plausibly, it plays a role. Especially these days, when this news spread all over the world just by pushing a button --

### 8.3 Safety

The analysis of the interview data allows us to conclude that journalists reporting the Middle East face three types of security risks. The first type is caused by the nature of armed conflicts and it includes such risks as stepping on a landmine or being shot. The second type refers to the risks, which are directly linked with the profession of a journalist. Only one journalist reported being directly pointed at with a gun, others described being arrested, harassed and chased because of their profession. Some journalists described the threats more psychological – being pushed was mentioned especially within journalists covering Turkey. The last, third type of safety risks is based on the descent or looks of a person.

Importantly, journalists also need to take care of the safety of their sources in terms of anonymity and protection of sources. Next, the focus is set on the safety of journalists and the

risks, which stem from the profession, and descent and looks of a person. Safety of sources will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 8.3.1 Directly targeted journalists

Lately, the security of journalists has dominated the public debate about foreign reporting. In this study, two interviewed journalists said they had not faced any threats in their work in the Middle East, and one of the journalists did not want to talk about the threats he had faced. The remainder of interviewees reported a variety of safety issues they had faced in their work. A journalist with decades of experience in reporting the Middle East described a change in the safety of journalists in the Middle East:

Journalists' work [in the region] has changed a lot. Earlier, -- if something happened, it was largely a coincidence. Nowadays we are directly targeted. [As journalists, we are] creatures worth kidnapping and destroying. We are scored high.

The above-mentioned description reflects the next example, in which another journalist describes her experiences in a Lebanese village:

-- When they saw us getting out of the car, obviously we looked western [and] we had nothing to do there. They all sort of gathered around the car and asked what we were doing there, and we said we are journalists. Then, they literally attacked us, everybody started running towards us, they destroyed the car, they beat up my driver. Me and the other journalist, they threw us in a shop and we stayed for a while. Then a solution was found, and we were able to go home, but we were clearly threatened that day.

A Palestinian journalist had even more brutal experiences:

We [me and my friend] were documenting this demonstration in the city [in West Bank] and there were Israeli snipers. We saw the snipers, but we never thought they will shoot a journalist, you know, we had complete uniforms that showed we're journalists. My friend was taking a picture of a sniper at the moment, when the sniper shot him on knee.

Some journalists mentioned being targeted and harassed on social media because of their profession. One journalist said that he avoids social media and do not have profiles in any platforms:

It is a security question. I constantly travel in the region, where I face the threat of kidnapping. I don't want to have my face nor my name in social media. It is one of the easiest way to trace someone. Quite many journalists have been kidnapped in Iraq and in Syria, because they have been blabbermouths and [posted] 'here I am now' and showed their face [on social media].

In some cases, interviewees described how they constantly change their routines and plans to avoid kidnapping and other security risks in the Middle East. A journalist described, how she had developed techniques to mislead the quarters, which could possibly threat her:

I will schedule a meeting somewhere for a certain date, but in reality, I will leave [the location] already days before the meeting.

Some interviewees mentioned the concept of 'healthy fear', which means that the fear is stimulated by real danger. One journalist described, how fear prevents her from taking too big risks. Journalists said that they often trust their inner feeling regarding the safety questions. This means, if they feel uncertain about reporting an event, they will not do it. In some cases, employers had evaluated the safety risks and prohibited a journalist for going to certain reporting destinations. Journalists face security risks not only in war zones, but also when they are following the daily events in the region. Protests were described as risky reporting spots. The crowds and force imposed by authorities put journalists among others in danger, as the following quotes show:

I joined Pride parade [in Turkey], which was actually banned this year, but people tried to march anyway. I was forced to leave the parade, because the police started to shoot teargas, -- then I was almost run over by the crowds, which were running away from the police.

[When I joined the protests in Cairo], the army troops attacked and drove over the Tahrir square. People started to run, there were stones and tear gas rounds in the air... yes... sometimes protests can be very dangerous.

Mass hysteria combined with prejudices and hostile attitude can also be a security risk for a journalist in the Middle East. A journalist describes her experiences in Egypt:

In protests, I have come across with situations, in which a protester has pointed at me and shouted 'Jew!'. The crowd started to run towards me and I had to run away as fast as I could.

Four journalists mentioned being harassed based on their looks or their descent. Usually such experiences were linked with conflicts between the Jews and the Arabs in the region. Especially Palestinian journalists living in West Bank under the Israeli occupation are in difficulties. According to the interviewees with Palestinian descent, general bullying and harassment of Palestinian journalists happens on daily basis. A Palestinian with strong English skills had presented herself as an international journalist in order to get access to the news stories. A journalist described her experiences, as follows:

I ask for international presence [of media and activists] to be with me to cover up my identity in front of the Israeli military. -- It has been a challenge and it has been a risk too. If the Israeli military did actually figure out that I am not an international, I would be facing risks, I might face detention. I could spend years in jail.

The interviews with journalists proved that the safety risks have a direct impact on the stories from the Middle East and they sometimes result in situation, where journalists do not want to risk their lives to get the voices of all parties into their stories. A Palestinian journalist also pointed out, how risky and even impossible it is for her to try to get comments from the

opposing side, because the general atmosphere related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is so explosive. Also, the intense political atmosphere in Turkey has resulted in restricted freedom of speech. Journalists covering Turkey mentioned being more careful nowadays when it comes to interviewing certain political parties and groups of people. Journalists were afraid of being labelled as supporters of terrorism, what could result in arrests and even imprisonments in worst case. A journalist in Turkey described her feelings as follows:

I have never been in war directly, but [the threat I experience here in Turkey] is linked more with mental pressure [caused by the restrictions in freedom of speech]. I stress quite a lot about these things. -- The mental pressure has an effect to all what we write. For example, no one wants to go to Kurdish territories, although there are lots of very important stories to be reported.

Journalists also reported that the lack of security is one of the main reasons, why they can not report all countries and areas in the Middle East. Some journalists mentioned that they had been trying to find a way to go and report countries such as Yemen but were forced to cancel their plans for security reasons.

### **8.3.2 Sources need protection**

Conflicts, crises and the overall security situation in the Middle East is a safety risk not only to the journalists who cover the region but also to the sources. Interviewees pointed out that, in general, individuals and groups of people, who are subject to violence, must be protected carefully. Refugees, opposition groups and LGBT people were mentioned as examples of this target group. Basically, there were two practices regarding the protection of sources: to run the interviews in a hidden place and to represent the source anonymously.

Generally speaking, most interviewees noted that their sources in the Middle East are willing to speak, but journalists had conflicting experiences concerning the willingness of the sources to speak up with their face and real names. Many journalists highlighted journalists' professional skills in estimating the necessity of anonymity and the risks the publicity could cause to the source. A journalist described her experiences, as follows:

I have written a lot about Syria. I have had those situations, in which it is ok to the interviewee to publish his/her name, but I have decided myself I don't want to. In today's world, the information travels fast -- and the borders of countries don't matter. In fact, there are no language barriers either, because every country has its own diasporas with people representing different political opinions. And then there are Google translators and so on... I think a lot about the protection of these people -- In worst cases, these countries have their means to track you via your mobile phone and to find out where you go and who you interview.

Interviews with journalists proved that the experiences in Turkey and in Palestine were exceptional in relation to the experiences in other countries in the region. Many journalists stressed that in these two countries, very few people are willing to speak up with their own forenames and last names nowadays. Some journalists described how their interviewees had received threats after publishing a story. Anonymity was seen as an only possible way to get the source speak. Interviewees stressed that the anonymity is easier to guarantee in written stories. Journalists, who were at work on documentaries and other video production, highlighted the importance of meticulousness and expressed their concerns over the video editing, as the news quote shows:

[You can shoot the video on reverse light] and the face of an interviewee will be dark. But in video editing, you can adjust the contrast, and, in the worst case, the face will come out.

Although none of the interviewees reported direct attempts to break the reporter's privilege, some journalists mentioned being questioned by the authorities and insisted on to reveal to whom they have talked.

## **8.4 Journalism about the Middle East**

As the previously presented chapters show, working methods, working conditions, resources, and the characters of journalistic work in the Middle East were deliberated at length in the interviews. However, journalists' ideas of high quality conflict reporting were also discussed both intentionally based on the interview design and on interviewees' own initiatives. In the next two chapters, an attempt is made to cover these ideas more closely.

### **8.4.1 Ideas of high quality journalism**

In the first half of each interview, before being introduced to the peace/war journalism model, journalists were asked to describe the characteristics of 'good' journalism about the Middle East. Many journalists foregrounded not only topical themes, but also daily lifestyle and local scenes combined with something that everyone in the world can identify with. Some journalists also asserted that the following of the political processes in the Middle East can be done from anywhere in the world, but when traveling to the region, the biggest value is in meeting people, chatting with them and then portraying the thoughts and ideas of these people in the stories. In addition, many journalists highlighted that journalists on the spot have the best picture of the events and the chance to write stories about the daily life of the people. Some interviewees noted that skillful and thorough journalists recognize the narratives

usually linked with the region and are able to critically evaluate their impact on the story. A journalist described her ideas, as follows:

In my opinion, it is important, although [reporting the Middle East] is often all about the politics, conflicts and religions, to portray the people not only as political players and to kind of bring out the variety of the context. [It requires that] we don't always talk about the age-old Shia-Sunni conflict and portray the Middle East as a playground of superpowers.

The interviewees mentioned the local people behind the stories as an important element of conflict and crisis reporting. In addition, the interviewees linked high quality conflict reporting to the ability of a journalists to give the backgrounds for a story and explain the context.

[A good piece of conflict reportage] includes not only the news, but also the background, based on which people get even a partial explanation for why the crisis exists and why it still continues. Reporting the Middle East demands deeper knowledge of history and religions than usual. Almost everything [in the region] is linked with the relationships between three [Abrahamic] religions in one way or another. It is important to have a perspective, with the help of which anyone without any knowledge can come to a conclusion about the reasons for the fights in the region. This perspective often lacks from one-sided news. They leave behind more questions than give answers and also give reason for assumptions and kind of racism, we say 'let the ragheads fight'. -- but those are people, who have their right to be offended by the ways they are treated --

Although most of the journalists described their ideas about good journalism in a similar way as above-cited journalist, some of the journalists also pointed out that sometimes the working conditions and the breaking news situations do not enable a deep analysis of the backgrounds. Journalists working at news desks described how they often cover the escalation of conflicts:

[When working at news desk,] we mainly cover the escalation of a conflict -- [and] always when we have the chance -- we will add some context -- but sometimes we need stories, which inform only about the facts -- without a human voice. There are many types of stories and in this regard, we must be able to produce those all.

The concept of cultural knowledge of journalists was also pointed out by some interviewees. One journalist described his pursuit to understand the Middle Eastern cultures and to report the region, as follows:

It took a year or two before I started to understand and assimilate. I will never be an Arab or a Muslim for real, but maybe I just try to understand it at least a little bit, how is it to be an Arab and why there happens, what there happens. And not until that point I knew I can start to report this, now I really understand what I will report about this

#### **8.4.2 Ideas of peace and war journalism**

In the last part of the interview, journalists were introduced to Galtung's peace and war journalism model. A few interviewees had heard about the model before and knew the

outline. The model received both praise and critique. Many journalists acknowledged both war journalism and peace journalism as manners of approach, whereas one journalist did not acknowledge the model and its dichotomy at all. Some journalists described both types of reporting as necessary when covering the Middle East.

A few journalists said they could name journalists for both categories. Some American and Russian media were mentioned as promoters of the characteristics of war journalism.

I recognize these violence/war journalists. I have met them many times. These male and female journalists are very interested in the frontlines and in the fighting. 'Boom, boom, bang bang, bang, and we made it through again'. They get addicted to the conflict -- The actual war is interesting to them, not the results of it.

Many journalists described peace journalism as 'high quality journalism'. Almost all interviewees said that they identify or would like to identify themselves more as 'peace journalists'.

War journalism includes all the simplifications I try to avoid in my work. -- [I would like to identify myself with peace journalism], because -- my goal is to describe the backgrounds of incidents in my stories instead of limiting the story only to the mechanical fighting --

Although some journalists considered the model as a practical reminder about different ways of doing coverage, almost all of the interviewees criticized Galtung's model for being theoretical and too black-and-white. Many interviewees mentioned that, in reality, conflict reporting is more like combining both paragraphs, tough politics and humanity. A journalist covering mainly frontlines was especially critical towards the dichotomy and criticized the model for being made by someone, who had not been in the field:

[This model] has stirred a fierce debate [in the field of conflict and crisis reporting] and the main argument is 'we want to produce peace journalism'. It is kind of like a starting point that 'we want move on to this kind of coverage'. I have the feeling that this discussion is run by people, who don't do this for their work and who are not in the field. -- I myself don't recognize [this model of peace and war journalism] at all.

However, the same journalist described her ideas of high quality conflict and crisis journalism, as follows:

[There is a difference between] going to a country in crisis with a fixer and following the post war situation for a couple of days and living this shit: the realm of conflict reporting and all the shades of a conflict, such as pre-war, during the war, post war... [including] human interest stories, refugees, politics, economics among others... they are far away from both of these paragraphs. This model doesn't correlate with anything in reality.

The above-cited journalist seemed to describe the characteristics of peace journalism as a good way of reporting the region, although she considered Galtung's model as humbug. Also,

other journalists described parachute journalism as a poor way of doing conflict reporting, but they also linked this phenomenon more to the characteristics of war journalism.

Violence/war-oriented approach looks more short term in the sense that someone who would be sent from Paris or London or whatever to a conflict area for a limited amount of time and then move on to something else, whereas the conflict-oriented approach takes a lot more time.

Introduction to Galtung's model gave journalists a chance to estimate their own work, working practices and resources with relation to the final product, news stories from the Middle East. Many journalists expressed their concern over the axe of media companies. They described, how even the best peace journalists have to compromise on their principles because of money:

The number of journalists in the Middle East has been reduced and it begins to show. The less there are journalists, the more the materials from news agencies are used. And those materials cite the elite etc. -- When there's a correspondent on the spot, the daily experience of local people will stand out.

Journalists also pointed out that sometimes the nature of the work had an impact on the stories. Breaking news were described to be covered according to the war journalism model. Some journalists also pointed out that one story can not tell the entire story, and all aspects can not be fitted in one story. A journalist described conflict reporting as a process, which starts from war journalism and develops into peace journalism:

-- Often when a conflict breaks out suddenly and it becomes breaking news, in general, most of the journalism starts on the left of this table [war journalism]. But I also think, that high quality journalism strives to move on the right side of this table [peace journalism] as fast as possible. As a phenomenon, it is kind of a process. It starts from black-and-white violence and war journalism and at its best strives to move on the other paragraph --

Many interviewees did not like the idea of giving missions, such as promoting peace, for journalism. They also highlighted that journalism should always stay critical and objective. One journalist asserted that 'peace' is a wrong starting point for reporting:

We can not report just events, which promote peace. The most important task of journalists is to tell the truth, or at least approach the truth. And sometimes telling the truth will result in escalation of a conflict. -- That's why it is very complicated -- and I am not sure if it is the purpose of journalism to build peace. -- but of course, stoking a conflict and dehumanization are not tasks of journalism either. It is important to portray people, including the enemy, as humans.

However, although many journalists did not like the idea of giving missions for journalism, the same journalists among others admitted that journalism has a role in conflicts and in peace. A few journalists pointed out that by being critical, journalism can contribute to the peace. One journalist described good journalism as an intermediary, which can increase

knowledge of and understanding of a conflict. Another journalist understood the role of journalism as a creator of a forum, where discussions are run, and decisions are made.

According to my opinion, every journalist is responsible for promoting dialogue -- the thing journalists can do is to tell about injustices fairly -- I think this is something to strive for, because when journalism is used in propaganda, it can be used in building an equal, peaceful and impersonal world view.

Some journalists also highlighted that as media cover the wars in the Middle East, media should also cover the peace initiatives. This argument was often supported with examples of media used in propaganda, as the next example shows:

I think media can play a role in both. I think, we're living time when the different parties involved in a conflict know the value of media and they know how to use it and how to use journalists in order to push a certain message. And so, this can lead to escalation of violence or to peace resolution as well. -- definitely the media plays a role. The images that will be broadcasted of a conflict will play a role, they'll play a role in public opinion, they will be a way of... for a party to showcase itself: are they the victims, are they victors --

Well, I am not sure if journalism could be a peacebuilder -- I wish it could -- but I am sure that unfortunately journalism contributes to the escalation of conflicts. -- Take Syria, for example. Media and journalism are used in inciting conflict -- different parties try to make media to slander one's opponents -- I don't see it as a duty of journalism to build peace, but journalists definitely have to represent people as humans and in that way, journalism can contribute in de-escalation of conflicts.

Many journalists foregrounded that journalism itself is not a direct tool to fix a conflict, but it can highlight the flaws and create a power of change inside the conflict-ridden countries and communities. A local journalist in Palestine described based on her own experiences in occupied West Bank, how journalism can influence on local communities in a positive and in an empowering way:

I believe that journalism has power. Through media, journalism and all we have nowadays, in terms of social media and networking and all of that, we can completely change the world -- [we should stop] wasting time in propaganda, in showing one side of the story, putting all the resources and the all energy in one side of the story-- If there's a full narrative of a community suffering [in the news], it means that community might get thousands and millions of people to support that community -- I believe that journalism is one of the tools that can be actually used to direct this energy to the end of a war. Yes, [in that way] journalism can finish a war.

Some local and international journalists also pointed out that journalism about the Middle East with characteristics of peace journalism is important, because usually the actions breaking the news in Western media are conflict- and war-related. A Palestinian journalist faced this problem in her own community. He spoke at length about international media staff coming to the occupied villages with cameras, shooting only the incidents and clashes happening and at least partly ignoring the actual daily life and narrative of the

community. This kind of reporting, in turn, generates a distorted image of the Middle East as a region, as another journalist described:

-- unfortunately, the conflicts in the region dominate people's perception of the region. -- it is totally clear that Middle-East-specialized journalists should be able to tell about the daily life of people. Because if you only follow the conflict reporting, you are under the impression that the war happens all around the region. People don't know the context and don't have enough background information to evaluate the conflict news --

## 9 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to present, how journalists reporting the Middle East experience their work and how these experiences can be examined in the light of Galtung's model on peace and war journalism. This was done by way of three research questions. The findings of this study were discussed at length in chapter 8. The aim of this chapter is to give complete answers to the research questions, to proportion the findings of this study to the previous research about the topic, and to estimate the reliability of the findings.

### 9.1 The nature of work influences the news production process

The first research question asked what is typically characteristic of journalistic work when covering the Middle East region. The findings of this study indicate that, in general, the characters of the journalistic work in the Middle East are intertwined with the problems of 'having access'. The findings demonstrate that in authoritarian, non-democratic countries, every effort is made by the authorities to restrict the freedom of speech and to represent the ruling power to its best advantage. In the daily life of the Middle-East-specialized journalists, this is to be seen, for instance, in bureaucratic procedures. This means, permissions are delayed, uninvited guests disturb the interviews, and journalists are constantly monitored and even accused of being terrorists. In addition, in many authoritarian countries, authorities do their best to fool the media. The 2018 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) revealed 'a historic decline in press freedom' in Turkey. This change was also seen in the interview data of the present research, as many journalists covering Turkey expressed their concerns over their safety and the press freedom in the country in general.

The findings of the present study demonstrate that journalists in the Middle East have been forced to develop their skills to balance between different parties, to please the authorities and to maintain their journalistic integrity in tandem. In addition, journalists have been forced to find unofficial ways to report the region. At the same time, they risk their own safety for a story. The present study demonstrated that these risks stem not only from dangerous working environment, but also from the profession itself, and even from the looks or a descent of a person. Many studies in the field of conflict reporting support these findings (see e. g. Lohner & Banjac 2017; Palmer 2016). The 2018 World Press Freedom Index demonstrated that the Middle East is at the bottom of the press freedom index, and armed and political conflicts in the region seriously threaten journalists in the region. However, the findings of present study

proved that journalists have created ways to respond to the safety risks. Those include practices such as avoiding social media posts from reporting spots, asking for presence of reliable quarters when reporting inflammable topics, and changing routines and plans. Equivalent responses to safety risks have been reported also in the previous studies on safety of journalists (see e. g. Hughes & Márquez-Ramírez 2017).

Extreme working environment, limited access and reduced safety bring us to the next research question which concentrated on the effect of working conditions on the news stories from the region. The experiences of interviewees explained successfully, how challenging conflict reporting can be and how the journalistic processes are disturbed and violated on a constant basis. These findings are supported by Høiby and Ottosen (2017), who studied journalists and editors in seven countries and found out that reduced access to conflicts and safety of journalists might influence the quality of conflict reporting and distort the coverage of wars in general. The findings of the present study indicate at least two crucial factors which influence the news stories from the Middle East: the restrictive nature of conflicts, and the lack of resources. The former is linked with limited access to conflicts. As presented in the findings of this study, sometimes journalists manage to reach frontlines and other conflict-ridden areas with the help of different organizations, military, or insurgents. The downside of these practices is that journalists are forced to operate by the rules of the quarter they are working with. Professional journalists are certainly able to proportion the information given by this kind of quarters, but in some situations, such working method can inevitably lead to biased reporting. In their study, Iturregui Mardaras, Cantalapiedra González and Moure Peñin (2017) interviewed embedded reporters from Spain and found out that some of the Spanish journalists had close relationships with soldiers, what could influence in journalistic principles and practices. In the present study, embedded journalism was highly criticized by the interviewees because of the restrictive nature of the practice. None of the interviewees either reported having close relationships inside the embedded system. In general, concerns over the logistical problems at conflict hotspots and the risks of being fooled by different quarters have been discussed a lot in the field (see e. g. Risso 2017).

In addition to the restrictive nature of conflicts, lack of resources was seen as a huge challenge by the interviewees. Limited resources were discussed in pursuance of working conditions and working methods. Financial challenges influence inevitably not only the work of freelance journalists, but also the performance of those who work on a contract. Lack of money prevents journalists for reaching certain reporting destinations and spending time there. This is alarming, because, in the present study, many experienced journalists mentioned

that they have created their networks and reached their level of knowledge of the events in the region only by associating with local people. Wide networks and contacts in every layer of the society has helped journalists to get a grasp of the news and to understand the multidimensionality of the stories.

The findings of this study indicated that the coverage of many parts of the Middle East is not even close to be exhaustive in international media. During the last decades, there have been huge declines in the numbers of foreign correspondents abroad due to financial challenges of newspapers and other media. However, some big newspapers such as The Washington Post announced foreign expansion recently by naming more correspondents abroad (The Washington Post 13.2.2018). It is desirable that this kind of decisions inspire also other media companies in action. Nevertheless, it is clear that the financial aspect of conflict reporting puts journalists from different backgrounds in unequal positions: journalists from big news companies have the chance to do reportages on the spot, whereas smaller newspapers do their coverage based on the information given by the news wires and reports. Freelance journalists in the field face problems when trying to sell their ideas, and there is only scant space for details and nuances in the stories (see e. g. Plaut 2017). This, in turn, influences the quality of reporting and the diversity of covered topics. Financial challenges can also be a security risk, as safety equipment and insurances for conflict-ridden areas are expensive, and regardless of the risks, some adventurous freelancers may do the coverage without sufficient protection. In her study on cultural differences between local fixers and foreign reporters, Palmer (2016) found out that, as regards the safety in the field, local fixers in the Middle East are put in an unequal position compared to their international colleagues. This phenomenon was present also in this research. For example, a Palestinian journalist described the challenges in journalistic work under the military occupation.

Another aspect concerning the lack of resources relates to the remit of a journalist. The Middle East is a huge region with many cultures, and one journalist can not report it properly. However, this phenomenon is not characteristic of the Middle East only. For instance, Plaut (2017) has expressed his concerns over the lack of correspondents in Africa. What also influences the quality of reporting and is connected with the problems of having access and lack of resources, is the ‘showing one’s face at the hub of events’ reporting style. Sometimes this type of coverage is seen as a journalist’s personal attempt to bask in the glory, but as the present study proved, it is not always a decision made by the journalist herself to do the stand-up lives hundreds of kilometres away from the actual battlefield. Luostarinen (1994, 161–162) puts the difficulty of war correspondence into words, as follows: “CNN-styled real time

coverage will bring the viewers at the hub of events, but before anything at the hub of media events. A war correspondent cannot go in a trench and wear satellite dish on his back'. Of course, nowadays, almost 25 years later, the smartphone and almost ubiquitous mobile internet connections have enabled realtime reporting also without heavy gadgetry.

Despite the challenging and even dangerous working conditions, journalists seemed to be fascinated by the region in a journalistic sense. Their dedication to the region inevitably deepen their understanding of the region and, in that way, result in more trustworthy reporting. On the other hand, personal interests and close connections to some regions and groups of people may challenge the objectivity. However, ethics and moral questions is something that every journalist, no matter if working in Finland or in Syria, struggles with.

## **9.2 Peace journalism and the role of media in the Middle East**

The third research question asked what the role of the media is in Middle Eastern conflicts and whether there is any. This question is somewhat complex, as it attempts to expose any other roles than those which are traditionally seen as obligations of journalism, such as searching for and revealing 'the truth', monitoring the power independently, and offering a public forum for discussion. The traditional obligations of journalism are, inevitably, crucial for journalism in the Middle East context. However, based on the findings of this study, media seem to have more dimensions in its roles as regards conflicts.

The aim of the third research question was to pilot Galtung's ideas of conflict reporting in practice. This was done by discussing war and peace journalism with Middle-East-specialized journalists. This kind of approach is not common in the field, since the previous research on peace journalism and the Middle East has concentrated on the analysis of news coverage (see e. g. Abdul-Nabi 2015; Fahmy & Eakin 2014; Fahmy & Neumann 2012). Many of these studies have demonstrated that the Middle East is more often represented with the characters of war journalism than peace journalism. Before being introduced to Galtung's models, interviewees pointed out that good journalism recognizes the age-old, clichéd, and distorted discourses of a conflict and its backgrounds and represents people as humans. A sharp-eyed reader of this report maybe notices that the foregoing are characteristics of peace journalism. High-quality journalism is often associated with being critical, but it is important to understand that being critical does not automatically indicate being negative towards something. High-quality journalism about conflicts not only seeks for 'the truth', but also

promotes dialogue – and can possibly in that way contribute to the development of a conflict in a positive way.

The discussion about the roles, missions, and functions of journalism is not novel in the field. Galtung himself conceptualized peace journalism already in the 1960s as a consequence of his and his colleagues research on how an event becomes news. The studies exposed that events which are negative, concentrate on high-ranking people and countries, and are actor-oriented instead of process-oriented make the news (see e. g. Galtung & Ruge 1965). Roughly 30 years later, solutions journalism was developed. Solutions journalism outlined that journalism should not concentrate only on problems, but also to the responses to them. (see e.g. Benesch 1998.) Peace journalism and solutions journalism share some basic values. Both of them want to concentrate on something that is now missing in the news. Furthermore, both of them see that quality journalism is not just about news coverage, but it includes also a social responsibility to contribute to the development of conflicts.

Many interviewees considered the characters of peace journalism as characters of high-quality journalism. Many journalists also said that they identify themselves more as ‘peace journalists’. The findings of the present study show that media themselves do not like the idea of adding missions such as ‘promoting peace’ or ‘offering solutions’ for journalism. Nevertheless, many interviewees admitted that media is used for war propaganda. On the other hand, some journalists considered themselves as intermediaries. The conception is justified, because as ‘a forum for public discussion’, journalism contributes to development of conflicts by reporting about the incidents, by choosing the interviewees and other sources, and by representing different groups in different ways, for instance. Based on these reports, consumers of media – at the conflict hotspot or far away from them – visualize the events and conceptualize their ideas of the conflict.

In her study on foreign correspondents’ awareness towards peace journalism in Africa, Rodny-Gumede (2016) found out that the focus on war and violence is not a result of journalists’ poor knowledge of the conflicts and the countries covered. In actual fact, the conflict is often the most visible part of the reality in those countries. The same idea applies to the Middle East – the region is filled with violence and war, and media have to raise awareness those issues. Therefore, it is no wonder that bad news dominates the news from the region. However, Rodny-Gumede (2016) also highlighted that the scope of the stories need to be broaden and a variety of sources and voices should be included in stories. Based on the previous studies and the findings of the present research concentrating on the Middle East, it

is justified to state that the role of media in the Middle East is not only to witness the events on the spot, but also to increase the general knowledge of the events and their dimensions. This is done by way of journalism which is oriented towards truth, people, solutions, and conflict's many dimensions. By reporting about the events in the region, media influence general attitudes towards the Middle East. In that way, media also contribute to the development of conflicts

### 9.3 Evaluation of the findings

The terms *validity* and *reliability* become central when evaluating the study and its findings. *Validity*, also referred as credibility, refers to “the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings in research” (Bernard 2011, 41). *Reliability*, also known as dependability, in turn, strongly refers to stability and suggests that the findings are not dependent on occasional and irrelevant factors (see e. g. Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012, 81–82; Bernard 2011, 42). Usually, validity and reliability are guaranteed by enforcing the research by generally approved scientific practices and by reporting back precisely on the course of research. In the present study, decisions made concerning the methods, analysis of data, and the presentation of the findings were evaluated and validated precisely in chapters 6 and 7. Next, the findings of this study will be evaluated briefly.

The findings of this study are based on 10 qualitative interviews with Middle-East-specialized journalists. All interviews contributed new information for the purposes of the study, and as the findings together with the presented citations show, the quality of interviews was at good level. Interview data succeeded in giving answers to the interview questions. In addition, this research enriched the previous research on peace journalism and the Middle East. However, this research inevitably has its limitations, although every effort was made to implement this research based on ethical and reliable scientific practices. The first limitation concerns the number of interviewees. 10 interviews are not maybe to judge the entire group of ‘Middle-East-specialized journalists’. However, considering the extent of master’s thesis in general, the amount of the interview data (672 minutes, 105 pages of transcribed text) met the expectations. In addition, interviewees represented three nationalities and had divergent backgrounds that maybe increases the validity of this study. Furthermore, it is important to remember that qualitative research is not usually about numbers. Also, when researching sensitive issues, interviews have proved to work the best (see e.g. Uskali 2003). In this research, the experiences of journalists were on the particular focus what makes every experience important. In that way, the present research has adopted hermeneutic

phenomenological approach. According to Laine (2010, 28–45), phenomenology investigates the experiences of people – a person's relation to his own consciousness of life. Hermeneutic dimension, in turn, refers to researcher's need to interpret the experiences.

Despite the justified approach of this study, researching the experiences of journalists create the second limitation of this study. That is because that what the journalists narrated in the interviews does not necessarily reflect the reality of their work and the practices what has been reported in the previous studies. For instance, Hoxha & Hanitzsch (2018) examined how journalists reconstruct the reality through telling stories about conflicts. The research was based on interviews and examination of articles produced by the interviewees. One of the findings of Hoxha & Hanitzsch (2018) was that although journalists suggested that they report 'just the facts', their actual production demonstrate that, in fact, they choose the factual evidence that best exemplifies their narrative and their ideas of what 'really' happened. To improve the validity and reliability of this research and to evaluate the level of which interviewees implement the frames of peace and war journalism in their work, it would have been a good idea to conjoin these two approaches: the interviews and the evaluations of the news stories the interviewees have produced. However, it was not possible within the framework of master's thesis. Due to the hermeneutic phenomenological approach of this research, the analysis of news stories was not necessary either.

## 10 Conclusion

The experiences of journalists who were interviewed for this study expound the reality of journalistic work in the Middle East. The experiences also explain how the working conditions influence the news stories about the Middle East, and why some topics, countries, and regions are absent in the news coverage.

Three themes concerning journalism about the Middle East and the conflict reporting in general became central on the grounds of this research. The themes are, as follows:

1. Lack of all kinds of resources disturbs the work of journalists covering distant regions and conflicts. Resources include financial, time and staff-related resources. The lack of resources influences the whole journalistic process and can result in reporting a country without sufficient knowledge of the backgrounds etc. This in turn, causes a risk of constructing a biased image of a country and its conflict.
2. Based on the foregoing, media companies should not pare down their budgets for foreign reporting and conflict reporting. In fact, they should expand their international coverage and increase the resources.
3. The quality of conflict journalism should be discussed in editorial offices. Journalists should be offered a chance to evaluate their own work so that they had a chance to recognize the risks of distributing propaganda and building a biased image of a conflict. Journalists and editors should admit of peace journalism and contemplate how they could improve their routines in conflict reporting.

Peace journalism is a well-intentioned concept promoting better, multi-dimensional coverage of world's events, but still many journalists do not recognize it. Galtung's model is criticized for being too black-and-white, and I am not going to repudiate this model's dichotomy either. However, based on this research project, I have come to a conclusion that Galtung's model of peace journalism is somehow misunderstood – either intentionally or unintentionally. It feels a bit paradoxical to write it down, but I think the problem is in the concept of 'peace'. Many associate peace journalism with something similar to peace movements emerging due to Vietnam War, some of which have quite radical reputation. In that way, the concept of 'peace' is politicized and includes a political agenda. In fact, I guess that most journalists would sign the characters of peace journalism as high-quality journalism if they were

presented under other title than *peace journalism*. Also, Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2015, 232) have proposed that the ‘peace journalism’ should be replaced by a more apposite term, such as ‘consequence-ethical reflexivity’.

Many opponents of peace journalism rely on arguments such as ‘peace journalism is a bad idea, because there are so many wars in the world, and it is the duty of journalists tell the world about those’ and ‘it is not the duty of journalists to promote peace, but to witness the ‘truth’’. According to my understanding, especially those, who cover the frontlines and see the horridness of war seem to take this model as an insult towards their work. To appease these skeptics, I would like to cite Galtung himself:

There is no argument that violence should not be reported. But the first victim in a war is not truth - truth is only the second victim. The first victim is, of course, peace. Good reporting ( -- ) should obviously be truthful. But truth journalism alone is not peace journalism. And truth does not come easily, given the tendency to take sides once the 'who wins' perspective has been adopted. (--) The task of peace journalism is serious, professional reporting, making these processes more transparent. The task of peace advocacy is better left to peace workers. (Galtung 1998.)

As far as I understand Galtung’s model, following the characters of peace journalism does not mean that a journalist could not cover war, conflict, or violence. I think, a peace journalist can do all of that, but different to a ‘a war journalist’, she would do it more properly, checking the facts, adding some background, contemplating the situation from different point of views, and representing people as humans. Again, this does not mean that a journalist has to write a positive story about a suicide bomber. The trick is that the dichotomy of peace and war journalism itself should not be interpreted as ‘black-and-white’. Sometimes we have to use the characters of war journalism in our work, because sometimes we have to interview the elite and tell the numbers of deaths. However, as stated by one of the interviewees in the present study, high quality journalism will develop the story and add the backgrounds and details as soon as there is a chance for that. Of course, there are many practical challenges, which relate to the busy news situations, the limitations of exposure in newspapers, and to the resources of journalists in general. In breaking news situation, there are no time to waste for adding lots of backgrounds for a story. But this is actually a useless discussion: the implementation of Galtung’s model in the conflict reporting culture should be more about the major policies, not about hair-splitting.

The present study leaves space for the future research. The peace journalism model has been researched, educated, and trained more and more during the last decade, and now there is a respectable quantity of published papers and material related to the model (Nohrstedt &

Ottosen 2015). Yet these papers along with the present study have revealed a need to improve the peace journalism model. Some attempts have been made already, but so far there has not been any analyzed and consistent proposal approved by the research community (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2015). The present study indicated that Galtung's model on peace and war journalism has value in the evaluation of journalistic practices. One important direction for the future research could be development of this strongly theoretical model for the needs of conflict reporting in practice. As the present study proved, Galtung's model offers apt means of challenging both personal and mutual working practices, but it is seen as too theoretical in its present format. The basic idea of the present study could be applied to other contexts as well. The research on conflict reporters' experiences in their work is important, because unlike the analysis of news coverage, this approach explains the nature of conflict reporting. However, it would be a good idea to combine these two approaches – interviews with journalists and analysis of news stories – in the future, as Hoxha & Hanitzsch (2018) did. Finally, only few papers in the field of conflict reporting have discussed the challenges of tight budgets and their influence on news stories. However, the financial challenges in conflict reporting is an important topic and it inevitably influences the quality of reporting. Therefore, there is a crying need for research on the financial aspect of conflict journalism.

In the introduction of this thesis, I cited the Palestinian activists, who insisted their Western visitors 'to make the rest of the world aware' of the situation in the West Bank. Reporting the Middle Eastern conflicts – as conflicts in general – is a huge responsibility addressed to the few. Both international and local journalists in the region do valuable and extremely important work when struggling to get the grasp of the incidents in the region. Finally, I want to highlight that although the Middle East is colored by conflicts, war, and violence, it is also a lot more: a region filled with fascinating cultures, warm people, and incredible life stories. And this all can make interesting news coverage.

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## Annex 1: Examples of requests for participation

Dear x

I got your contact information from y. I am a master's degree student of journalism at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. Currently, I am writing my master's thesis about Middle-East-specialized journalists and their experiences in their work. I would like to kindly ask you to participate in my research.

Some basic information about the process: Data for my research is collected via interviews with journalists who cover the Middle East region in their journalistic work. The interview is run via Skype and it takes approximately 1 hour. Participants need to have good command of English. Interview data is confidential, and the original data will be destroyed as soon as the thesis project is finished. Interviewees won't be recognized from the final version of thesis.

What do you think? Would you be willing to give an interview related to your work as a Middle-East-specialized journalist?

Best wishes,  
Ulriikka Myöhänen

Hei x

lähestyn sinua Lähi-idän tuntemuksesi vuoksi. Olen tekemässä gradua Lähi-idän journalismista ja tavoitteenani on haastatella graduun Lähi-itään perehtyneitä toimittajia, kirjeenvaihtajia ja mahdollisesti paikallisia toimittajia.

Pro gradu -työni tavoitteena on muodostaa toimittajien kokemusten perusteella käsitys siitä, millaista Lähi-idän toimittajien työ on.

Aineisto kerätään haastattelujen avulla. Haastattelujen kieli on suomi tai englanti haastateltavasta riippuen. Haastattelut toteutetaan mahdollisuuksien mukaan Skypessä tai kasvokkain. Haastateltavat ovat journalistisessa työssään perehtyneet Lähi-idän tapahtumiin.

Haastatteluaineisto on luottamuksellista, eikä siihen pääse tutustumaan muut kuin tutkimuksen tekijä. Haastatteluaineisto käsitellään niin, etteivät toimittajat ole tunnistettavissa valmiista työstä. Aineisto hävitetään gradun valmistuttua.

Miltä kuulostaa? Olisitko kiinnostunut antamaan haastattelun tästä aiheesta?

Ystävällisesti,  
Ulriikka Myöhänen

## Annex II: Interview design in English

Examples of questions and themes discussed in the interviews

### **Education & journalistic background**

Tell about your journalistic education and background

Which languages do you speak?

When and how did you become interested in the Middle East region?

### **News, conflict reporting, news criteria**

Tell about your journalistic work related to the Middle East region

Which countries or areas do you cover? Why? (expertise, job description)

Describe the recent or latest stories you have reported from the Middle East region. What areas/countries, themes were covered?

Which conflicts or crisis have you discussed in your stories?

Have you discussed different stages of a conflict? (e.g. backgrounds, conflict emergence, escalation, stalemate, negotiation, post-conflict/ peace building) How?

What makes a news story from the Middle East good and interesting? Where do you pay attention when producing a story from the Middle East region?

### **Journalistic work in practice, sources, safety**

How have you produced your stories in practice? (trips, help of NGOs/army/authorities, embedded journalists, technology, databases...)

Why did you end up doing your stories like this? (financial reasons, safety, employer's order, own interest...)

What advantages do you see in the ways you have covered the region?

What challenges do you see in the ways you have covered the region?

Who are your sources? (authorities, local people, second hand information, news agencies, databases...)

Have you discussed different parties of a conflict in your stories? (opponents, civilians...?) How?

Do you see any challenges when it comes to conflict reporting and sources?

As a Middle-East-specialized journalist, have you come up with any challenges or opportunities when it comes to protection of sources or anonymity?

Have you ever been denied accessing an area or a source of your interest? How did this affect to the story you were covering?

Have you ever been forced to give up on a story, interview or journalistic trip for security reasons? Tell about the situation.

Have you ever felt threatened in any other ways while covering the Middle East region? How?

### **Introduction to peace journalism and war journalism**

Have you ever heard of peace and war journalism model by Johan Galtung?

What is your first impression? What do you think about this model? How useful/practical/theoretical do you see it?

Do you think that journalism plays a role in conflicts? Could journalism contribute to peace building? How concretely?

As a journalist, how do you see the quality of reporting the Middle East region in general?

Is there anything you would like to add?

## Annex III: Interview design in Finnish

### Taustat & työhistoria

Kerro lyhyesti journalistisesta koulutuksestasi ja taustastasi.

Kerro kielitaidostasi – mitä kieliä puhut?

Milloin ja miten Lähi-itä alkoi kiinnostaa sinua?

### Uutisaiheet, konfliktiuutisointi, “uutiskriteerit”

Kerro lyhyesti journalistisesta työstäsi Lähi-idän alueen parissa

Mistä alueista teet eniten juttuja? Mitkä maat kuuluvat vastuualueeseesi? Miksi? (Ammattitaito, erikoistuminen, työnkuva...)

Kerro lyhyesti viimeisimmistä journalistisista, Lähi-itään liittyvistä työtehtävistäsi. (esim. mitä aiheita, alueita, teemoja käsiteltiin)

Mitä konflikteja tai kriisejä olet käsitellyt (viimeisimmissä) jutuissasi?

Oletko käsitellyt konfliktin eri vaiheita jutuissasi? Miten? (konfliktin taustat, konfliktin eskaloituminen, pattitilanne, konfliktin ratkaisut, konfliktista toipuminen, rauhan aika)

Mikä tekee mielestäsi Lähi-idän uutisesta hyvän / mielenkiintoisen? Millaisiin seikkoihin kiinnität huomiota ideoidessasi/toteuttaessasi juttua?

### Journalistinen käytännön työ, lähteet, turvallisuus

Miten olet käytännössä toteuttanut Lähi-itään liittyvät journalistiset juttusi? (esim. matkat, järjestöt, armeijat, teknologia)

Miksi olet päätnyt toteuttamaan juttujen tekemisen näin? (esim. taloudelliset syyt, turvallisuus, työnantajan määräys, oma mielenkiinto)

Mitä etuja näet näissä tavoissa, joilla olet tehnyt Lähi-idän uutisointia?

Mitä haasteita näet näissä tavoissa, joilla olet tehnyt Lähi-idän uutisointia?

Ketä olet haastatellut, ketkä ovat lähteitäsi?

Oletko käsitellyt konfliktin eri osapuolia jutuissasi? Miten?

Liittyykö lähteisiin ja konfliktiuutisointiin mielestäsi joitakin epäkohtia? Mitä?

Oletko kohdannut työssäsi Lähi-idän toimittajana joitain lähdesuojaan ja / tai anonymiteettiin liittyviä haasteita/mahdollisuuksia?

Onko sinulta joskus eväty pääsy jonnekin alueelle/jonkin lähteen luo? Kerro tilanteesta. Miten tilanne vaikutti siihen juttuun, mitä olit tekemässä?

Oletko turvallisuussyistä joutunut luopumaan jostakin juttuideasta, haastattelusta, journalistisesta matkasta tms.?

Kerro tilanteesta.

Oletko kokenut olosi muuten uhatuksi uutisoidessasi Lähi-idästä? Kerro tilanteesta.

### Johdatus rauhanjournalismiin ja sotajournalismiin

Mitä mieltä olet Galtungin mallista? Miten käyttökelpoisena/teoreettisena pidät sitä?

Onko journalismilla mielestäsi jokin rooli konflikteissa? Mikä ja miksi? Voiko journalismi osallistua rauhan rakentamiseen?

Millaisia ajatuksia suomalainen/ulkomainen Lähi-idän konfliktiuutisointi sinussa herättää toimittajana?

Lisättävää?

## Annex IV: Galtung's model on peace and war journalism

A comparison of peace journalism and war journalism. Source: Jake Lynch via Wikimedia Commons.  
Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peace\\_Journalism\\_table.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peace_Journalism_table.jpg)

| <b>VIOLENCE-WAR/VICTORY JOURNALISM</b>  | <b>CONFLICT/PEACE JOURNALISM</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>I. VIOLENCE/WAR-ORIENTED</b><br>focus on conflict arena,<br>2 parties, 1 goal (win), war<br>general zero-sum orientation<br><br>closed space, closed time;<br>causes and effect in arena,<br>who threw the first stone;<br>poor in context<br><br>focus only on visible effect of violence<br>(killed, wounded and material damage)<br><br>making wars opaque/secret<br><br>"us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice, for "us"<br><br>see "them" as the problem,<br>focus on who prevails in war<br><br>dehumanization of "them";<br>more so the worse the weapon<br><br>reactive: waiting for violence to occur before reporting | <b>I. CONFLICT-ORIENTED</b><br>explore conflict formation,<br>x parties, y goals, z issues<br>general "win,win" orientation<br><br>open space, open time;<br>causes and outcomes anywhere,<br>also in history/culture;<br>rich in context<br><br>focus also on invisible effects of violence<br>(trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)<br><br>making conflicts transparent<br><br>giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding<br><br>see conflict/war as problem,<br>focus on conflict creativity<br><br>humanization of all sides;<br>more so the worse the weapons<br><br>proactive: reporting also before violence/war occurs |
| <b>II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED</b><br>expose "their" untruths<br>help "our" cover-ups/lies  | <b>II. TRUTH-ORIENTED</b><br>expose untruths on all sides<br>uncover all cover-ups  |
| <b>III. ELITE-ORIENTED</b><br>focus on "their" violence and on "our" suffering; on<br>able-bodied elite males<br><br>give name of their evil-doer<br><br>focus on elite peace-makers,<br>being elite mouth-piece  | <b>III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED</b><br>focus on violence by all sides and on suffering all over;<br>also on women, aged, children,<br><br>give name to all evil-doers<br><br>focus on people peace-makers,<br>giving voice to the voiceless   |
| <b>IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED</b><br>peace = victory + cease-fire<br><br>conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand<br><br>focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society<br><br>leaving for another war, return if the old flares up  | <b>IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTED</b><br>peace=nonviolence+creativity<br><br>highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war<br><br>focus on structure, culture the peaceful society<br><br>aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation  |