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CONFLICT REPORTING IN THE HIGH NORTH

Signs of Peace Journalism in Norwegian media representations of Russians? Case study: The Elektron incident

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Abstract

The case study of this thesis is the incident with the Russian trawler *Elektron* in 2005. The trawler was fishing illegally in the Barents Sea, and escaped from Norwegian authorities with two Norwegian fisheries inspectors on board. The event stirred up the military, governments and the news media. The aim of this analysis is to look at how Russian actors are framed in the Norwegian media. The concept of Peace Journalism has provided the theoretical framework. By doing a media analysis through the lenses of Peace Journalism, as well as interviews with persons of both nationalities, I have examined representations of Russians and the relationship between the two states. The analysis shows that most news articles frame Russians in a neutral way. This indicates that the media aims for balanced reporting. However, most articles do not fulfill the criteria of Peace Journalism. The sources, editors and news contributors are almost exclusively male elites. There is a lack of investigation into structural causes of the problem with illegal fishing, and almost no evidence of a win-win orientation or creative suggestions to conflict solution. In addition, the interviews show that there is mutual mistrust and conflicting interests between Norwegians and Russians. This suggests that the states have a negative peace rather than a positive peace. But the interviewees also stress the importance of the long lasting, and successful, joint management of the fisheries in the Barents Sea.

Keywords: Barents Sea, *Elektron*, illegal fishing, Peace Journalism, media analysis, representations, framing, news, conflict, mistrust, conflict solution, negative peace, positive peace

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I explore media discourses to find out what insights they can offer about how Norwegians view Russians. More specifically, I look into news coverage about the Elektron incident, which happened in the fall of 2005 in the Barents Sea. While it is not unusual that the Norwegian Coast Guard arrest trawlers that they suspect engage in illegal fishing activities, it was the first time a Russian trawler ignored instructions and headed towards Russian waters, *with two Norwegian fisheries inspectors onboard*. The following events, over the course of a few days, were reported consecutively by the news media. The military, police and government actors were on high alert.

Using relevant theoretical conceptions from discourse theory, media and peace studies and based on selected news articles, the present thesis investigates Norwegian media representations that describe the drama and actors. To explore the discourses of the news articles, I analyze the articles through the lens of *peace journalism*. Not a theory, but rather a concept (Lynch, Galtung 2010), it maps out an alternative way to report conflict. Instead of focusing on violence, elites, winning/losing and us-them, the approach of peace journalism is to dig deeper: identify the structures, causes and common people, and also; being solution-oriented.

1.2 Literature review

What “High North narratives” exist in current literature? How is Russia, Norway and their relationship described? In later years, researchers have shown increased interest for the High North/Arctic/Barents region. The topic is investigated from many academic angles: sociological, economical, historical, cultural, international relations, foreign policy, law and compliance, business, natural resources, media discourses.

Russia's relationship with its northern neighbors has been explored, for instance by Kari Roberts. She talks about Russia's newfound assertiveness – for example the planting of a flag on the Arctic seabed in 2007, and Russian strategic bomber aircraft flying near Canadian air space in 2009. However, Roberts is downplaying a possible scenario of a new Cold War (Roberts 2010: 3).

The Norwegian media has paid attention to Russia's moves close to Norway. For example, under the heading *Here flies Russia's new superjets*, this news article from 2014 in VG goes on to state: "Brand new Russian SU-34 Fullback fighter jets outside the Norwegian coast: First time seen in the High North and outside the coast of Norway (...) The advanced fighter-bomber is the newest in the increasingly robust Russian air force, and is built to carry nuclear weapons" (From vg.no, 11.11.14.) Sub-headings of the news article are *NATO warns against Russian jet provocations*, and *Flexing high-tech muscles in the High North*.

Before 2003, Norway did not really have a unified High North policy. But since then, consecutive governments, as well as actors from business and research, have molded a more coherent and pointed policy (Hønneland, Jensen 2008: 27).

Sverre Diesen, Norwegian Chief of Defence from 2005-09, has also described the assertiveness of Russia in the Arctic. He talks about how the security challenges in the Northern region should be met. Both Russia and Norway want to harvest oil and fish resources in the area. Diesen asks whether a conventional but limited conflict, stemming from a clash of interests between two or more states, could still occur. (Diesen 2008: 49). He suggests that in the "normal condition," there is a permanent but peaceful confrontation between the states. The states have a low-profile military presence, which works as *political messengers* – signaling their interests in the area. In the unlikely event of a military escalation, the confrontation would be about economic interests (resources) or possibly

international law (2008: 51). According to Diesen, the military force needed in such an event would be highly trained forces (maritime and air forces), able to react quickly in support of political crisis management (2008: 56). Finally, there is of course no balanced power-relationship between Norway and Russia when it comes to military force. Norway still relies mostly on NATO-support.

What shapes foreign policy? Many argue that *discourse* is crucial to understand politics and policies, because it is ultimately *through language* we understand, construct and make sense of the world (Jensen, Skedsmo 2010: 2). Citing Laclau and Mouffe and their concept of *nodal points* (1985) – that some concepts/statements have a privileged standing – Jensen and Skedsmo argue that “the High North discourse” in Norway does not have a Russian counterpart; “...it seemingly does not match the forceful debate that has taken place in Norway over recent years.” (2010: 8). Monitoring Russian news, they do not see signs of a clear High North discourse in Russia. They say that in Russian political science, relations between states are seen as a zero-sum game: You win, I loose. However, they identify four nodal points that the Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses in the Arctic evolve around: energy, security, economy, environment (2010: 10).

There is also literature on the Russian-Norwegian fisheries management. In 1999 Geir Hønneland published an article with the results of interviews with Norwegian and Russian fishermen. According to Hønneland, the fishermen were, for the most part, pleased with the job done by the inspectors from the Norwegian Coast Guard. Some Russian fishermen pointed out that the Norwegian inspectors were fair and incorruptible (Hønneland 1999: 5). This is similar to the answer I got from my respondent Maxim Rudomanov, the fisherman in Murmansk, who said that the Norwegian inspectors are very good specialists who performed strict controls – not like in Russia’s economic zone (see chapter 4 in this paper).

The Elektron incident has been mentioned in a few academic texts, but many more times in the news media. In addition to the Norwegian media, the story was covered by international media such as BBC, the Independent, the New York Times and Radio Free Europe. On Government.no (Regjeringen.no), there is an article published by the Norwegian government, the day the Russian trawler took off with the two Norwegian inspectors onboard: “The Russian trawler Elektron was stopped by the Coast Guard on Saturday morning on suspicion of a number of serious violations of the fisheries regulations. The vessel was arrested and told to set course for Tromsø. It later changed course and has subsequently refused to follow the Coast Guard’s orders. There are still two Norwegian inspectors on board” (Article on Government.no, published 18.10.05). The text goes on to ensure all readers that “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is being kept up to date on the situation. This is *not a conflict* between the Norwegian and the Russian authorities. On the contrary, there is close contact at diplomatic level between the two countries. There is nothing to indicate that the matter will have negative consequences for Norway’s good relations with Russia.”

Pavel Baev says the Elektron case “wounded Russia’s pride.” (Article on Jamestown.org, 27.10.05) Baev states that while the two Norwegian inspectors were treated politely, to all intents and purposes from the moment of the defiant change of course they became hostages. Russia also *refuses to recognize* the regulations aimed at protecting fish resources from excessive “harvesting” that have been introduced by Norway unilaterally in its maritime economic zones. Thus, the Russians are insulted when Norway uses a hard line to force compliance. It is then only natural that Elektron captain Valerij Jarantsev was greeted as a hero back home in Murmansk. As Jarantsev said in an interview with NRK: “We did not escape, we just went home.” (NRK, 19.09.06).

The Elektron case is arguably an example of how a judicial narrative wins over a security narrative, as presented by Kristian Åtland and Kristin Ven Bruusgaard (2009). They describe

the concepts of *securitization* and *politicization*, and how they can be applied when we want to understand interstate conflicts. When an issue/dispute is put on the political agenda of one or both of the parties, the issue is politicized. If the issue reaches a point where the actors believe it constitutes an existential threat, and may require the threat of use, or actual use, of military force, the issue may become securitized (2009: 3). In their analysis of the Elektron incident, the conclusion is that the situation was not escalated because the Russian and Norwegian governments managed to keep a close dialogue with the aim of resolution, and isolated the issue to be a criminal and judicial dispute about *a vessel*, rather than a bilateral conflict between *two states* (2009: 18).

Other research suggests more explanations as to why the Elektron incident had a peaceful outcome. In a report from the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in 2007, Tor Håkon Inderberg gives explanations as to why the Coast Guard inspectors first entered the ship, but how Norway then failed to stop the trawler by stronger means. When it comes to why Norway “let Elektron slip away,” Inderberg describes *motivational factors* and *enabling factors* (2007: 85).

For Norway, one important motivational factor not to board the trawler was fear of Russian military retaliation. The second motivational factor was a desire to test if the Russians would “be responsible” and enforce the fisheries management regime in the Barents Sea. Enabling factors were the Norwegian Foreign Ministry’s intense (secret) working for a diplomatic resolution. A second enabling factor was the Coast Guard’s safety routines. The waves got higher and they did not want to risk lives. A third enabling factor described is the unclear decision line within the Norwegian Coast Guard. Formally organized under the department of defense, the Coast Guard also operates as a police at sea, and therefore it is sometimes confusion about who is in command (2007: 79).

1.3 Statement of the Problem and the Research questions

The relationship between tiny Norway and giant Russia is “hot as ever.” By this, I do not mean that the two neighbor countries are at war, or that they are in a state of incessant arguing over matters such as territory or natural resources. On the contrary, the two states live peacefully side by side. Factors indicate that both states consider the high north to be more important than ever – economically and strategically.

“A strategy to promote peaceful, innovative and sustainable development in the Arctic: ‘Growth in North Norway is higher than in the rest of the country and benefits Norway as a whole. The Government will step up its overall efforts in the north, to make North Norway one of our most innovative and sustainable regions,’ said Prime Minister Erna Solberg. It is also an important message in the Arctic strategy, which was presented in Bodø, in North Norway, 21th of April.” This statement is from the Norwegian Government’s web page (www.regjeringen.no, 2017). In short, fish, oil and gas resources in the north are of great importance.

The Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission has been responsible for the management of the northeast arctic cod. This is coastal cod north of the 62 latitude in the Barents Sea. The northeast arctic cod stock is the largest in the world (Institute of Marine Research, 2016). Since the fish migrate, it has forced the countries to cooperate in the management. For decades, there has been a successful joint resource management, where Russia and Norway have managed to agree on fish quotas every year since 1976.

Most of the fishing grounds in the Barents Sea are covered by either Norway’s or Russia’s national exclusive economic zones. Even though the management of the valuable fish resources seems to inspire peaceful cooperation in arctic waters, it is also a source of conflict. An evolving Law of the Seas regime grants rights as well as obligations to states that border the Barents Sea. The Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission establishes the total

allowable catches each year. Scientists from both states draw up their charts, and many times have not agreed on what would be the proper quotas. There has been disagreement and obstacles. When there has been disagreement, it is often Russia that has wanted to increase the quotas, while Norway has held the opposite view. The size of quotas are always weighed against the possible endangerment of the fish stocks.

Illegal fishing in the Barents Sea is a recurring topic. In the Barents Sea, illegal catch of cod for 2005 was estimated to be more than 100,000 tons, equal to a monetary value of US\$350 million (Report by WWF International Arctic Program, 2008). In the Norwegian media, illegal fishing and the arrest of foreign trawlers in arctic waters have gotten much coverage.

The news coverage «hit the ceiling» when the Elektron incident played out in 2005. In addition to claims of illegal fishing, the Russian trawler Elektron also had two Norwegian fisheries inspectors onboard, as the trawler headed towards Russian waters. The military, police and government in Norway were on high alert, and the words «kidnapping» and «crooks and bandits» were used by some actors. At the time, it seemed like the relationship between the countries could be in real danger.

The extensive media coverage of the Elektron incident made me choose it as my case study. I have done a media analysis of a selection of news articles in the Northern Norwegian newspaper *Nordlys*. The news articles are analyzed and categorized, to see if they can help answering my research questions. I was particularly interested in how the articles would describe the Elektron incident, and what words the journalists would choose. Would I see a hero/villain-representation in the articles? Would they be balanced? Would I see a positive/understanding report of the actions of the Russian fishermen? To investigate these issues I am going to apply the concept of *Peace Journalism*.

In addition to my analysis of the newspaper articles, I also did fieldwork in Murmansk, Russia, where I interviewed three Russian sources and one Norwegian source. They all had connection to or insight into the issues of international fisheries cooperation and/or fishing in the Barents Sea. These interviews are qualitative data in my discussion. The fieldwork was conducted in 2007. I later chose the concept of Peace Journalism to explain the findings in the news articles. I then decided on *two research questions*:

1. How did the newspaper Nordlys describe Russian actors when Nordlys covered «the Elektron incident» in the fall of 2005?
2. Which insights do we get, when the concept of Peace Journalism is applied to the analysis of these media representations?

1.4 Relevance and importance of the study: why study media and the Elektron case?

This study can be useful for anyone interested in the relations between Russia and Norway, as well as for those interested in the role of media in our society. I question the traditional media logic that claim “conflict sells.” It proposes a new direction for reporting conflicts, and increases awareness of power-structures as well as mechanisms and restrictions that guide the work of journalists as well as governments and military decision-making. Peace Journalism offers a solution-oriented standpoint, which is needed to balance the victory-oriented security discourse commonly held by political and military elites.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

In Chapter 2, the qualitative methodology is discussed – the media analysis and the fieldwork in Murmansk. I explain the selection of news sources and informants I interviewed, as well as advantages and challenges with the chosen methods. In Chapter 3 the theoretical and conceptual framework is laid out. I present discourse and media theory, as well as the theory of positive and negative peace, the concept of Peace Journalism and the conflict-oriented

media perspective. Chapter 4 presents the empirical data from the media analysis and the interviews, as well as relevant information from academic books and articles. Chapter 5 presents the data analysis. The media analysis provides evidence of how Russians are represented in the Norwegian newspaper Nordlys, who the main actors are, whether we can identify conflict-oriented or peace-oriented reporting. In addition, I discuss if the findings have implications for the role of the media and the possibility of peace education in the newsroom. From the analysis and discussion I make the final conclusions in chapter 6. Finally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are pointed out.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1 Qualitative research

Quantitative research often involves data collection using instruments, such as surveys and extant records, to measure specific variables from large groups of people. In contrast, a qualitative approach may require individual interviews, focus groups, observations, a review of existing documents. (Hancock, Algozzine 2017: 288). The numerous subcategories of qualitative research and the complexity of research projects often lead academics to combine approaches to accomplish their goals. This is also what I have done, doing both a media discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews with four informants in Murmansk.

This qualitative research is exploratory. My goal is to get insight into the relationship between Russia and Norway, and more precisely; investigate how Russians are described in Norwegian media, using the Elektron incident as the case. Since only a small selection of news articles are used, the conclusions of this study will not be generalizable to the actors or states at large. The same goes for the small number of informants in Murmansk. The four interviewees shed important light on several issues, but from their answers I cannot conclude that this is the true reality for everyone.

To a limited extent, I have also used quantitative methodology. It is used in the analysis of newspaper articles in chapter 4. When I read the news articles, it was useful to make some categories based upon which issues I wanted to explore, and then place the articles into these categories. This level of measurement is called *nominal*. I observed, for example, that there were different types of texts, and that it was necessary to describe the nationality of the interviewees. It was also important to categorize the role/position and sex of the interviewed, since it was relevant in my analysis. Likewise, the categorization of articles into positive, neutral and negative also laid the ground for my analysis and discussion. While protocols for

quantitative content analysis tend to have numerous categories and variables, the qualitative content analysis typically tries to capture meanings and process, and is therefore fairly short and less precise (Altheide and Schneider (2013: 45).

Often qualitative research raises ethical problems in the field. The most frequent questions in the Western research ethical guidelines formulated by the professional associations deal with codes and consent, confidentiality and trust. (Ryen, in Silverman 2016: 32). But we must bear more in mind. “In the constructionist model, social reality is a more complex phenomenon where we examine how members produce recognizable forms that are treated as real (...) The stories we get, are produced *with* rather than *by* someone; they are contextually produced, designed for a particular audience, serve purposes locally produced and embedded in wider cultural contexts.” (Ryen 2016: 34).

I, as a Northern Norwegian, have my background, language, history, context, filters, ethics, worldview, goals and prejudices. So have my four informants, the Norwegian and the Russians. And this is also true for the Norwegian journalists and editors who have written the news articles that I in turn try to decode and analyze.

2.2 Media analysis

I decided at an early stage in this project to analyze a selection of news representations in Norwegian media. My goal was to gain insight into the relationship of Russia and Norway in the fisheries management, and more specifically, to look at the journalistic framings of the Elektron conflict and the Russian fishermen. The choice of topic and methodology seemed both interesting and practical, considering my educational background from journalism and my professional experience from working as a journalist and communications advisor in Tromsø/Northern Norway.

In addition, I had a general interest in Russian-Norwegian relations, having grown up and lived “next door” to the giant neighbor for most of my life. As a journalist, I had covered stories about illegal fishing in the Barents Sea, and foreign trawlers being arrested and brought to Tromsø. As I began my studies at the Master’s Programme in Peace and Conflict Transformation, I had the Elektron drama fresh in mind from countless news sources, but I did not have a deep understanding or insight into the troubles, structures, actors and their agendas, or any awareness to possible solutions to the problems.

What can be learned from studying news reports? Altheide and Schneider (2013: 16) argue that we should spend time investigating such documents for two reasons, 1. the document process, context, and significance and 2. how the document helps define the situation and clarify meaning for the audience member. Interpretation of any news report is in the eye of the beholder. The perception of reality is subjective. Still, the media and its journalists and editors are capable of shaping meaning. The media is – or wants/claims to be – a watch dog over nations, societies, governments, businesses and peoples, but the tables must also regularly be turned, so we ask critical questions about media’s practice and methods in their choice of stories, framings and search for “truths.”

2.2.1 Selecting the news source

As I was planning the media analysis in 2007, I had an idea that it could be interesting to analyze both Russian and Norwegian news sources that described the Elektron event and actors. That way, I could do a comparative analysis from the perspectives of the two countries. However, I realized that the language barrier was simply too big since I do not speak – or read – Russian. I studied some Russian news sites on the web that also presented their articles in English. But I found them to be too short and random to be suitable data sources to use from the Elektron event, which got massive news coverage nationally but also internationally over the course of several weeks. I thought of getting a translator for assisting

me with a selection of Russian news sources, but concluded that it would be too intricate and time consuming, as well as too expensive. My scope would be too broad.

That leads me to the second point. 2007 was in the early days of the internet. Newspapers had just begun to publish online articles, which I found out was only a fraction of all news articles in their printed editions. I therefore chose to use only printed news articles in my project, which I collected from Retriever/Atekst, an online database for news articles.

I then selected the Northern Norwegian newspaper Nordlys as my document source. It made sense for many reasons. First, the newspaper had its' headquarter in Tromsø, which was bang in the middle of the action concerning Elektron. Nordlys had previously written many stories on illegal fishing and foreign trawlers in the Barents Sea. The Russian trawler Elektron was arrested and supposed to sail to the harbor in Tromsø. There sat the district attorney of Troms Police District, waiting to prosecute. And finally, I lived in Tromsø and could explore the possibility of interviewing more relevant sources for my research. I considered picking one or two other Norwegian news sources as well, but realized it would be too time consuming to get through the data processing and analysis in detail.

In the spring of 2017, I counted the number of Nordlys articles in Atekst to be 108, for the period from October 18th 2005 to December 31st 2005. Working full time, I again realized that I had to narrow the scope. When doing a media analysis, it is possible to make a smaller selection from the relevant articles at hand. To get a more manageable sample, the sample should be narrowed by randomly selecting articles. Typically every second or third story would be randomly chosen for analysis. This sampling technique increases the accuracy of the findings. I narrowed the sample of articles down to 34, by choosing every third story.

In addition, I had to discard some articles because they were not relevant to the topic. The irrelevant articles would contain the search term "Elektron," but have no content about the

actual incident or actors. Examples of such irrelevant articles would be calendar items and articles which mentioned search terms out of context. For instance, I discarded an article from October 21st 2005, which was in the papers' section *In short*. This is a regular column in Nordlys, which is reader contribution-driven.

Under the heading, a myriad of short messages from readers (mostly anonymous) is presented – and the sky is the limit, it seems, when it comes to content: *“For you with cellulites. Don’t blame the treatment at Bailine. Drink lots of water and you will get rid of them.”* The message that actually was titled “Elektron,” went like this: *“Can’t believe four Coast Guard ships couldn’t stop the Russian trawler Elektron. It’s a shame. If Torstein Myhre was captain (on the Coast Guard ship), he would have singlehandedly stopped them. What the h***! Had it been the other way around, it would have been shot and sunk.”* The message is signed A. H. Under other circumstances, it could be interesting to focus on anonymous news consumer content in the media.

To get a structured media analysis, I then made categorizations for the findings in the news articles. The categories had to reflect my research questions. Their function is to sort out and place the various types of empirical data, so I could later discuss it in light of theories and hypotheses. The goal should be to not miss any significant factors. At the same time, the questions/categories cannot be too many.

1. What kind of text is the article?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. News article b. Editorial c. Reader contribution
2. Nationality of the interviewed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Norwegian b. Russian

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Both Norwegian and Russian d. Other
3. Sex of the interviewed/commentator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Male b. Female
4. Sex of the journalist/editor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Male b. Female
5. Role/position of the interviewed/commentator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Military b. Coast Guard/Police c. Government d. Politician e. Judicial/prosecutor f. Captain/fishermen g. News actor (journalist/editor) h. Scientist/specialist i. Other
6. Is the discourse mainly positive, neutral or negative, when Russian actors, intentions or consequences are described?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Positive b. Neutral c. Negative

Table 1. Topics to investigate from the articles in the newspaper Nordlys.

2.2.2 Advantages and challenges with the media analysis

Why should we care about the media? Why do a media analysis? Some researchers argue that “the media is essential to *any discussion about conflict and peace*. It is not merely a medium, but also a tool political actors employ in order to develop, refine, and promote their own agendas and strategies. It is also an independent actor that creates pressure for action on issues it deems necessary or justified.” (Gilboa, Jumbert, Miklian and Robinson 2016: 1). Newer studies of contemporary media-conflict interactions take into account the new media world, where local, regional, national and global social media and websites play influential – yet fragmented – roles.

Media can be a peacebuilder. There is a rapid change of world politics and world security. Therefore, people need to better understand the power and impact of the media, and how it influences public perception (Hardy 2011: 1). In Samantha Hardy’s study of the Peace Revolution project (Website: peacerevolution.net), she describes how peace media and journalism can help young people make informed and moral choices about how to live their lives and be active participants in society.

A critique of media-conflict research is that it often has a Western state-centered approach, where the focus is on the “hot” phases of conflict (Gilboa, Jumbert, Miklian and Robinson 2016: 4). More research should be done on the role of media in peacebuilding, peace processes or conflict prevention.

Chapter 3. Theoretical and Conceptual orientations

3.1 Media

I will now discuss how the media is interconnected with the other topics at hand. Journalists are storytellers. They present discourses that contribute to what we are able to think, and therefore know, any point in time. Decision-makers such as politicians are also sources of dominant discourses. They shape policy, but also our lives. It can be argued that the media and various elites are in a constant power struggle. The ones who manage successfully to define the truth, has much power: power to influence thoughts and actions, power to justify decisions and power to define good and bad.

3.1.1 Discourse

When we study journalistic texts, we study *discourses*. Discourses are particular ways of representing (through talk, text, images) and understanding the social world. Since there is always competing discourses, there is also always discursive struggle. When it comes to media discourses, there are several questions I want to look into: What discourses “win” at specific moments and times, and which lose? What discourses get to define “meaning,” “fairness” and “truth”? Who are the agents who influence the outcome? What do we know about media’s role in conflicts?

Discourse theory is used in a variety of academic disciplines and branches, including sociology, psychology, political science, policy research, cultural studies and media studies. The study of discourses is also becoming a more important element in the professional fields of journalism, advertising and public relations – fields that coincide with my own educational background and professional experience as a journalist and communications advisor.

Interpretation, subjectivity and reflexivity are key words we can use when we describe what discourse theory is. It is important to note that we can look at a text in many different ways, for example from the reader’s perspective or the author’s perspective, or find evidence of

impact the text has on culture, politics and society. Some researchers dissect the language, some the aims and agenda of the author and other look for meaning, hidden meaning and true meaning. Academics also do not agree how possible it is to be an objective reader.

Lindsay Prior says that: “To understand how the words in the documents connect to the world beyond the text – to discourse, and to the actions of the policymakers and professionals who produced the document as well as to the audience (...) we would need to call upon many other sources of data (such as interview data, speeches and presentations). (...) one would be led to examine how the content of any one text interlinked to that of other texts – that is, to explore aspects of what is known as *intertextuality* (Prior, in Silverman 2016: 175). By using discourse analysis of news media content in this thesis, I aim to look into the wider sociopolitical context of the relationship between Russia and Norway. The empirical data and the discussion will help me answer my research questions.

3.1.2 Media role and independence

Traditional media is not all bad, far from it. Some argue that responsible, high quality and investigative news organizations are exactly what we need – and crave – in our complex and interdependent world, to survive the challenges of fake news, stupid news and the like, that pours out from the social media platforms we use daily.

First, what is the role of mass media? Mass media is communication – written, spoken or broadcast in a myriad of old and new ways. In the Western world, most people expect the media to be a watchdog over democratic processes (Whitten-Woodring 2009: 2). If a local or national state leader misuses the power he was given from the voters, the media can shine the spotlight on illegal/unwanted actions so that the official is punished, or – if the crime is serious – prepare the ground for overthrowing the official, or even a whole government. In democracies with a free press, the media is expected to work for transparency and open processes. News editorials and commentaries give insight into complex issues or events, so

we – the citizens – can in turn be better informed and reflect on, or make up our minds about, important questions.

The media encourage and facilitate public debate. *The debate* is the old, but not dead, expert domain of TV and radio. Today, online news sites as well as social media have video or text debate sessions/sections, where editors, journalists, elites and non-elites contribute with discussions, posts or chronicles. However, there is a tendency that mostly politicians, academics, or “expert writers and talkers,” use these forums. Finally, and perhaps most important, is the point that every time we see, read or listen to news, we learn something (new) about ourselves and our place in the family, group, society, village, city, country, world, galaxy. The information we receive may influence both our world views and choices. What education do I choose? What kind of person do I want to be? What are my skills? My limits? How will I earn a living? What is important in life? For instance, influenced by news representations, a young person may decide whether or not to join the army – or be a pacifist or peace worker.

There are challenges to media’s independent standing in society. Media’s strong link to elites can also be media’s enemy. Journalists are not only producers of news stories. They too are sometimes being “produced” and used – both in democratic and non-democratic countries – some researchers says: “Even if the news media are free from overt government censorship, some would argue that the news media are subject to government control because of their reliance on official sources... that the news media are merely a megaphone for elites, especially government elites.” (Whitten-Woodring 2009: 6).

Another potential problem is that the media corporations must make increasingly bigger profits to please their owners. When the focus is more on profit-making, it could be less on high quality journalism (2009: 6).

3.1.3 Media and elites: symbiosis and power struggle

Many have studied media's power and influence on policymaking process. Likewise, there is research on how politicians, the military and other "power actors" use the media to promote policies, justify actions, and spin, or hide, facts and truths. The relationship between the mass media and elite decision makers is often pictured as *a symbiosis*, where both parties depend on the other to thrive and exist. This mutually beneficial, but also often manipulative and harmful, relationship between government actors and the media is depicted nicely – although exaggerated, but then again perhaps not, but that is another story – in the Netflix series *House of Cards* (2013 – present).

One phrase coined in the late 80ies was *the CNN effect*. For example, during Operation Desert Storm in 1991 and the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993, the 24-hour TV news images were seen as having an effect on how US leaders viewed their goals and options, and what action they took. The media was "forcing" state leaders to act – both realists and humanitarians agreed that the news media had played a pivotal role in causing recent interventions (Robinson 1999: 4). However, such events happened in the pre Facebook and YouTube era, with personally designed news, and thus the CNN effect is today considered to be less important.

While the CNN effect proposes that the media shape policy, other theories claim that the news media is strongly influenced by governments and elites. Noam Chomsky's *manufacturing consent paradigm* holds that multiple factors contribute to media's reinforcement of the state's ideology – even if it takes place in a liberal democracy (Robinson 1999: 4). In the words of Chomsky, governments "... must find ways to ensure that they endorse the decisions made by their far-sighted leaders, a lesson learned long ago by dominant elites, the rise of the public relations industry being a notable illustration" (Chomsky 1986: 2). It is especially important for a state to influence what is featured in the news, when the government's ideologies and actions do not match with taking the high road – being honest, fair and

selfless. This view is also held by Jonathan Mermin, who argues that the media does not have much to be proud of when it comes to being an actual watchdog and defender of the First Amendment (2004: 2).

To solve this negative situation that the media, societies and citizens are in, Chomsky calls for grassroots democratic control and involvement of the media, which leads me to the theoretical ground for *Peace Journalism*.

3.1.4 Media in authoritarian states

Russia is one of several states that are low-ranking when it comes to safety for journalists and a free press. Since the early 90ies, many Russian journalists have been imprisoned, harassed or murdered each year. On a list of 180 countries, the 2017 World Press Freedom Index ranks Russia as number 148 – behind countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Sudan and Mexico. Norway, on the other hand, tops this list as the country with most media freedom, together with other Nordic countries (From the website rsf.org – Reporters without borders). In May of this year, a Russian journalist was found murdered in the city of Minusinsk. Under the heading *Anti-corruption Journalist murdered in Russia*, an article in themoscowtimes.com makes it clear that the reporter probably paid the prize for causing too much trouble for the authorities.

Traditional Soviet *propaganda* is alive and kicking in today's Russia, researchers say: “By around 1996 the entire system of the press had acquired an almost Soviet-like stability; it was divided among the empires of the oligarchs, and increasingly reflected the interests not of society, but of financial-political groups (...) For many journalists their profession had become a business. They competed for choice commissions and journalism was transformed into PR - basically the same old propaganda, which was not always very selective about the means it used” (Azhgikhina 2007: 10). Thus, government controlled media make many Russians *distrust* journalists and the news. According to Azhgikhina, in the year 2000 more

than 70 percent of Russians did not believe the reports of Moscow journalists. In sum, media censorship in many countries continues to be strong.

3.2 Peace and conflict

We live in a world of sovereign states. *Realists* will argue that military and economic might is what determines each state's power in relation to other states, as well as to the global system as a whole. According to realists, the world is still dominated by Hobbesian insecurity and power politics (Mayall 1989: 7). Population and size and proximity of territory are equally important factors, as well as "soft power" – the ability to attract through cultural and ideological appeal (Nye 1999: 25). *Neoliberalist* Joseph S. Nye Jr. argues that in the information age, soft power has become more compelling than ever: "Massive flows of cheap information have expanded the number of contacts across national borders. In a deregulated world, global markets and nongovernmental actors play a larger role. States are more easily penetrated today and less like the classic realist model of solid billiard balls bouncing off each other." Thus, Nye argues, political leaders find it more difficult to have a coherent set of priorities in foreign policy, and more difficult to articulate a single national interest.

Liberalists believe that international institutions play an important role in cooperation among states. Human society can be improved by upholding fundamental rights, the arbitration of conflicting interests and cooperation to reach common goals (Mayall 1989: 7). Even at "our darkest hours," when nations and peoples have drowned in war and blood, there have been advocates for the peace perspective. Peace movements have evolved for over two centuries in the industrial societies. They are "... concerned with the problems of war, militarism, conscription, and mass violence, and the ideals of internationalism, globalism and non-violent relations between people" (Young 2000: 229).

Johan Galtung has spent decades creating a theoretical foundation for peace research, peace education and peace action. He believes conflicts between states are inevitable, as long as we use the following *wrong* premise: the sum of mutually adjusted state interests = the world and human interests. Galtung rejects this: “The belief that people trained in promoting national interests (and even paid to do so) are *ipso facto* adequate for the promotion of world and human interests is an act of faith” (Galtung 1996: 268). An *idealist*, he criticizes the balance of power paradigm, arguing that the actors would never agree on the meaning of “balance.”

To achieve peace and conflict resolution, the “medicine” Galtung orders is deep insertion into conflicts, bypassing the state system, getting legitimacy partly from the right that stems from compassion with the victims, and partly by advocating a basic principle of peaceful action: reversibility, doing only that which can be undone, the ability to listen to the verdict of the empirical world rather than to the “self-evident,” truths in our mind (1996: 274).

3.2.1 Negative or positive peace

Why do inter- or intrastate conflicts occur? Or, inter- or intrapersonal conflicts? Which factors influence when, where and amongst whom there will be miscommunication, discrimination, prejudice, violence, protest, terrorism, revolution, war? The only thing we seem to know for sure, is that where there is people, there will potentially be trouble. Many peoples, groups, nations, countries or regions seemingly live in lasting peace. Are they particularly loving and selfless, or is it coincidence? These questions are too extensive for this thesis. I will limit my exploration to some of Johan Galtung’s theories on peace and conflict.

Conflict and violence may seem deeply ingrained in our societies. However, we do not need to be too skeptical to peacebuilding efforts: “It took centuries, even millennia, to outlaw slavery and legitimize human rights. It might take at least as long to delegitimize political violence, both from above (by the state) and from below (by non-state actors). (Webel and Galtung 2007: 8).

There are also what Galtung labels untransformed conflicts. Compatible goals of two states lead to higher levels of peace, while incompatible goals, conflict, can be handled peacefully when there is a good dialogue and respect between the parties. Violence, then, is seen as the outcome of untransformed conflict. All people have some basic needs that must be filled – the more threatened their basic needs are, the greater the chance of conflict. When we try to explain causes of peace and conflicts, we shall look at the complex interplay of factors within nature, culture and structures (2007: 19).

One must explore the way culture creates the preconditions for violence, by promoting exclusion, suspicion and hatred. According to Galtung, *negative peace* is the absence of violence of all kinds (1996: 31). *Positive peace* encompasses much more. We need to build direct, structural and cultural peace, where “cooperation is built into the structure as something automatic, and sustainable under the heading of equity for the economy, and equality for the polity: reciprocity, equal rights, benefits and dignity, ‘what you want for yourself also be willing to give to Other’. And then a culture of peace confirming and stimulating all these ‘presences’ in self-reinforcing peace cycles” (Webel, Galtung 2007: 30).

	Direct peace	Structural peace	Cultural peace
Negative peace	absence of = ceasefire; or a desert, cemetery	absence of = no exploitation; or no structure	absence of = no justification; or no culture
Positive peace	presence of = cooperation	presence of = equity, equality	presence of = culture of peace, and dialogue
Peace	negative + positive	negative + positive	negative + positive

Table 3. From Webel and Galtung, “Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies” (2007), p. 31. Peace: negative and positive, direct, structural, cultural.

From this perspective, it is possible to argue that the relationship between Russia and Norway should be defined as a negative peace.

The data from my interviews in Murmansk show that there is considerable suspicion and mistrust between the two countries, even though the respondents highlight that the cooperation is good. "... your statesmen have suddenly become researchers. They say "...we have determined the hold volume from a satellite and, perhaps, there is completely our native Norwegian cod in this volume of the hold." And have you had a look at the hold? No, we had not. And maybe they carry tobacco there in the hold? "No, we think it is fish what they carry." All those who built everything on basis of conjectures are the ones who have created the climate of mistrust between the people of Norway and Russia" (From interview with V. Zilanov, 2007).

Cultural dissonance is also present on the Norwegian side. As here, in the words of Norwegian General consul Rune Aasheim: "It is no doubt, that there is a considerable overfishing on the Russian side. And there is much illegal activity. This is a country with many laws, but no law enforcement. And it is a corrupt country, where you can, also on the government level, buy yourself out of things."

Thus, the peoples of Russia and Norway – elites and non-elites – must work harder, to look into and solve the issues of mistrust and prejudice, and obtain a *positive peace* that will enhance the lives of their inhabitants, cooperation and development. This is equally true for the media, where we could substitute war-violence journalism with peace journalism (Galtung 1996: 33).

3.2.2 Concept of Peace Journalism

Peace Journalism is a trans-disciplinary field, first described by Johan Galtung, «the father of peace studies» in the 90ies. The concept offers both a set of practical plans and options for editors and reporters, and a basis for developing evaluative criteria for the critical analysis of war reporting – all derived from, or at least attentive to, propositions about conflict, violence and peace from Peace and Conflict Studies (Lynch, article on transcend.org – What is peace

journalism? 2008). Often, news about conflict has a bias towards violence. The concept of Peace Journalism has a different approach: the journalist should report what caused the conflict, and how it might be resolved. Why did the actors act the way they did?

From a peace/conflict-solution perspective, it is of great importance to understand the logics and structures that guide storytelling in the media. The normatively oriented peace studies tell us to be in favor of more peace and less conflict. “What may happen is a better balance between peace and violence, meaning more and better peace and less and “better” (less evil) violence (...) The task of peace studies is the same as that of health studies: not unrealistic total triumphs of good over evil, but better deals, with less suffering, from violence as from disease” (Galtung 1996: 17).

However, the news media mostly follow their own guide for newsworthiness. “It is widely understood that news organizations thrive on conflict and entertainment, on the one hand, while also relying heavily on established governmental news sources for information, on the other.” (Altheide, Schneider 2013: 28). Some common indicators of the newsworthiness of an event – from a news organizations point of view – is 1. accessibility to the event/visuals of the event 2. drama and action 3. encapsulation and thematic unity 4. audience relevance (Altheide, Schneider 2013: 30).

3.2.3 War Journalism vs. Peace Journalism

The following table from Lynch and Galtung (2010: 12) explains the perspective of *War Journalism vs. Peace Journalism*:

Journalism vs. Peace Journalism:

War journalism	Peace journalism
<p>I. Violence-victory oriented</p> <p>focus on conflict arena</p> <p>two parties, one goal (win), war</p> <p>general zero-sum orientation</p> <p>closed space, closed time</p> <p>causes and effect in arena</p> <p>who threw the first stone</p> <p>poor in context</p> <p>focus only on visible effect of violence (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</p> <p>focus on who prevails in war</p> <p>dehumanization of “them”</p> <p>more so the worse the weapons</p> <p>reactive: waiting for violence to occur before reporting</p>	<p>I. Conflict-solution oriented</p> <p>explore conflict formation</p> <p>x parties, y goals, z issues</p> <p>general “win-win” orientation</p> <p>open space, open time</p> <p>causes and outcomes anywhere</p> <p>also in history/culture</p> <p>rich in context</p> <p>focus also on invisible effects of violence (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</p> <p>focus on conflict creativity</p> <p>humanization of all sides</p> <p>more so the worse the weapons</p> <p>proactive: reporting also before violence/war occurs</p>
<p>II. Propaganda-oriented</p> <p>expose “their” untruths</p> <p>help “our” cover ups/lies</p>	<p>II. Truth-oriented</p> <p>expose untruths on all sides</p> <p>uncover all cover-ups</p>
<p>III. Elite-oriented</p> <p>focus on “their” violence and on “our” suffering</p>	<p>III. People-oriented</p> <p>focus on violence by all sides and on suffering all over</p>

<p>on able-bodied elite males</p> <p>give name of their evildoer</p> <p>focus on elite peacemakers being elite mouthpiece</p>	<p>also on women, aged, children</p> <p>give name to all evildoers</p> <p>focus on people peacemakers</p> <p>giving voice to the voiceless</p>
<p>IV. Victory-oriented</p> <p>peace = victory + ceasefire</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 older flares up</p>	<p>IV. Solution-oriented</p> <p>peace = non-violence + 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>

Table 4. From Lynch and Galtung, “Reporting conflict: New directions in Peace Journalism” (2010), p. 12.

It is important to make clear that the Elektron incident was an *unarmed* conflict. In no way was it a war or an armed conflict. Physical violence was never used. Also, Norwegian government officials were quick to underline that it was not a conflict, but a situation. However, the nature, drama and timeframe of the case indicate that it is correct to call it a conflict. Russia and Norway clearly had conflicting interests as to what actions – or non-actions – they wanted to see. This was also true for the various actors within Norway.

David Altheide discusses problem framing and the production of fear in the news media. By choosing stories that contain conflict and action, and tell the stories in an “entertaining” way, the audience finds it interesting (1997: 8).

Altheide defines *the problem frame* this way:

- Something exists that is undesirable
- Many people are affected by this problem
- Unambiguous aspects or parts are easily identified
- It can be changed or "fixed"
- There is a mechanism or procedure for fixing the problem
- The change or repair agent and process is known (usually government)

Arguably, media's reporting on the Elektron incident fulfills all of the points above. Illegal fishing in the fisheries protection zone is undesirable. Norwegian fishermen and perhaps, in the big picture, all Norwegians are/will be affected if the Barents Sea is emptied of fish. The parts (Russia and Norway) are identified. The problem of illegal fishing can certainly, and has in the past on a case by case basis, be resolved. There are procedures for enforcing regulations in the fisheries (arrest, fine, trial). Finally, the change and repair agents are known – in the Elektron case they are the Coast Guard, the military and the judicial system.

A basic point about peace journalism is not advocacy, but the *expansion of the conflict discourse* to include peaceful outcomes and processes, making *peace perspectives visible*, say Lynch and Galtung (2010: 71). This means that the peace journalist must adopt a critical/constructive attitude to facts. Since facts are always selected, one must also select peace issues. Importantly, the peace journalist must have a critical/constructive attitude to texts. "The texts/narratives of conflict parties, like governments, must be contrasted with the counter-texts of other parties. There are usually subtexts where other intentions are hidden, embedded: try to get at them through investigative journalism". (2010: 71).

According to Ross Howard, many journalists are experts in reporting conflicts, but at the same time they know little about the idea of conflict, the root causes of conflict or how conflicts end. (Howard 2003: 6). Journalists lack training in the theory of conflict, they merely report on the conflict as it happens. If they get the skills to analyze conflict, they will be more effective professional journalists and more aware individuals. Howard labels this *conflict sensitive journalism*. Conflict analysis is important for reporters for a number of reasons: they should seek out other sources to talk to, not only repeat old grievances by the old elites, examine what the parties are seeking and the possibility for compromise, and understand what negotiators and diplomats are trying to do (mostly in secret). (2003: 12).

Traditional conflict-focused journalism often includes news factors such as negativism, simplification, personalization, justice of own cause and delegitimization of the other. However, Stephanie Thiel and Wilhelm Kempf show in their study on a German audience – the case being news stories on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – that traditional escalation-oriented conflict coverage *is not* better suited to awakening the audience interest, but rather de-escalation oriented peace journalism has the same potential (Thiel and Kempf 2014: 2).

The researchers stress that the respondents' individual frames are important when they try to analyze their interpretation of various news stories. How we understand news is no one way channel. "Contrary to the widely held assumption of many journalists and media researchers that "violence sells" (cf. Kunczik 1990, Hanitzsch 2007), the recurring stereotypical reports of Israeli and/or Palestinian violence tend rather to annoy German recipients. As a result, part of the audience does not even deal with the relevant news items and refrains from forming a personal opinion about the reported events." (2014: 24).

3.2.4 Critique of peace journalism

Some researchers criticize the concept of peace journalism. Thomas Hanitzsch says that the philosophy of peace journalism partly grew out from disillusioned journalists who were tired

of the endless atrocities of war, and partly from critical scholars (Hanitzsch 2007: 2). Hanitzsch states that the objectivity debate is never ending: “Some argue that journalism is not objective; others that it cannot be objective; and still others that it should not be objective (...) The objectivity debate is an evergreen in journalism studies because it touches upon the philosophical underpinnings of modern journalism or, more specifically, its epistemological foundation” (2007: 4). Hanitzsch says peace journalism lacks an explicit-made epistemological foundation. When Galtung, Lynch and other peace journalism supporters point out that traditional war reporting is a distorted representation of reality, they are missing the point. Their argument, says Hanitzsch, assumes that there is one proper and true objective reality, something that is impossible from a constructivist view and therefore false.

Another critique of peace journalism is that it is not easy, or possible, for the individual journalist to change her or his ways of reporting conflicts. This is because many *structural factors* hinder a peace-oriented/conflict-solution reporting: few personnel, time and material resources, editorial procedures and hierarchies, textual constraints, availability of sources, access to the scene and information in general (2007: 5). And there might even be “... an inherent contradiction between the logic of a peace process and the professional demands of journalists” (Wolfsfeld 1997: 67, in Hanitzsch 2007: 5). While a peace process is complicated, dull, long-lasting and often closed, the media logic favors stories that are simple, quick, dramatic and action-filled.

3.3.5 Gender, media and peace

Does gender have anything to do with the media, and with peace? If we ask Galtung, he will reply: yes! The absence of women in the Nordlys news articles, female interview sources and female journalists, calls for a closer investigation.

The lack of women in national and international military forces is a fact – historically, this is male territory. In 2014, only 10 percent of the military personnel in Norway’s armed forces

were women, while there were 33 percent women in *civilian jobs* in the armed forces (From www.forsvaret.no – the official website of Norway’s armed forces. Accessed 05.06.17). The number of women in the military is very slowly increasing.

In a PRIO-report to the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, Inger Skjelsbæk describes benefits and challenges involved in an increase in female military participation within the Norwegian armed forces. Attempts to recruit more women to the military – and to top positions in the military – must take many factors into account. It is a complex relationship between political, social and cultural factors. The international context and strategic orientation matter, as well as military culture and organizational structure within the military. “... and in practical terms this means that everything from the size of military uniforms, family politics and the international security threat must be part of the rhetorical calculations.” (Skjelsbæk 2007: 19).

In 2014, Major General Kristin Lund of Norway was appointed force commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). She was the first woman ever to command a United Nations peacekeeping operation (From www.un.org. Accessed 05.06.17). The UN states that “Major General Lund’s appointment is the first major acknowledgement of the implementation of the year 2000 UN Security Council resolution 1325 on *women, peace and security*. That resolution highlighted a shift in UN policy to engage more females in peacekeeping operations around the world. It affirmed *the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, negotiations, peacekeeping, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction (...)*.” (From www.unu.edu – United Nations University. Accessed 05.06.17).

The lack of women in the military, especially in leading positions, combined with the lack of women in the police and as editors in the media, leads to a male-dominated setting and discourse. The actors involved in the Elektron incident – directly and indirectly via creating or

participating in the constructed narratives – are overwhelmingly men. For the newspaper Nordlys, this tendency is further exaggerated because there are almost no female journalists who cover the issues of international politics, fisheries, international conflicts or the military.

Another factor of significance to the issue “gender, media and peace,” is how men and women relate differently to the news media. Research done by Toril Aalberg and Jesper Strömbäck show that male members of parliament are more eager than female to be interviewed and have close contact with journalists. This indicates that men more often accept the media logic than women (Aalberg and Strömbäck 2011: 2). Politicians’ relationships with the media influence their public visibility, and hence their chances to *make an impact on politics*. The issue of gender representation is important, since scholars have documented that the sources on which journalists rely are typically middle-aged *men* with power, while women are under-represented (2011: 3). The study also shows that women are most critical to the way media cover politics. Finally, it should be noted that while the majority of journalism students in Norway are female (76 percent), male students seem to have a stronger preference for *politics* as their field of specialty (2011: 17).

Chapter 4. Presentation of empirical data

4.1 Actors interviewed by Nordlys

First, this is an overview of the factors and data, after I read and analyzed the 34 news articles in Nordlys.

1. What kind of text is the article?	a. News article	24
	b. Editorial	7
	c. Reader contribution	3
2. Nationality of the interviewed?	a. Norwegian	24
	b. Russian	4
	c. Both Norwegian and Russian	6
	d. Other	0
3. Sex of the interviewed/commentator?	a. Male	46
	b. Female	2
4. Sex of the journalist/editor/reader contributor?	a. Male	33
	b. Female	1
5. Role/position of the interviewed/commentator?	a. Military	2
	b. Coast Guard/Police	8
	c. Government	7
	d. Politician	6
	e. Judicial/prosecutor	4
	f. Russian captain/russian fishermen	3
	g. News actor (journalist/editor)	11
	h. Scientist/specialist	4
	i. Other	2
6. Is the discourse mainly	a. Positive	5

positive, neutral or negative, when Russian actors, intentions or consequences are described?	b. Neutral	22
	c. Negative	7

The data shows that most of the texts are *news articles* (24). There are also editorials (7) and reader contributions (3). A news article is written by a journalist or editor, and typically contains interviews with one or more sources. The news article can also be written by a journalist who is not an in-house reporter. This is the case with ANB-reporters (ANB is a Norwegian news agency that writes and distributes news articles to newspapers within the Amedia news group).

The nationality of the interviewed is also significant. In the article sample the sources are exclusively Norwegian (in 24 of the articles). 4 articles have solely Russian sources, while 6 of the texts have both Russian and Norwegian sources.

4.1.1 Sex, role and power

It is interesting to note *the sex* of the sources. 46 of the interviewed persons or contributors are male, while only 2 are female. The same goes for the journalists/editors: Most (44) are male, while only 1 is a woman. The sex of the actors is important, as I will discuss in chapter 5, data analysis.

4.1.2 Representations of Russians

Finally, is the discourse of the articles mainly *positive, neutral or negative*? The data shows that most articles are neutral (22). 5 articles are positive, while 7 are negative. I am aware that I analyze the data from my perspective – a Norwegian’s point of view. In order to try to define the texts from a Norwegian perspective, I create the following definitions: By *positive*, I mean a mostly positive presentation of Russian actors, Russian intentions and descriptions of outcomes from Russian actions. Explanations and background information is collected

from interviews with Russian as well as Norwegian persons. Criticism of the Russians is curbed, or presented in a way that is not as overt as in the neutral and negative discourses. By *neutral*, I mean a mostly balanced presentation of facts, actors, issues, intentions and consequences. Explanations and background information is collected from interviews with Russian as well as Norwegian persons. Critical views of both Norwegian and Russian actors and/or actions are presented. By *negative*, I mean a mostly negative presentation of Russian actors, Russian intentions and descriptions of outcomes from Russian actions. Explanations and background information is collected from interviews with mainly Norwegian sources. The picture is painted in black and white, with few – if any – critical questions directed at Norway’s actors or actions.

What does it mean, that most of the news articles (22 out of 34) are neutral? To be sure, categorizing the texts into three strict perspectives (positive, negative, neutral) was not easy. One of the reasons is that I can never ignore the impact of my own worldview, my moral convictions, assumptions or prejudices. In my view, it is not possible to be “an objective observer” when doing a media analysis. I can never escape being a Northern Norwegian, fed and interpreted media narratives and socialized into my local environment and at the same time the global world, when I try to deconstruct the “true meaning” of any media article. There is also a myriad of unknowns and dependencies when we try to analyze any text. What do we know about the author’s objectives and context? What factors influence journalists and editors when they rush to cover a story or event, or a string of complex inter-connected events? What facts are included, or omitted, in the story – and why? In the next chapters, I will look at the narratives in the news articles *through the lens of Peace Journalism*, and see if there is any trace of peace journalism in the Nordlys articles.

4.2 Four informants in Murmansk

The second part of my collected data consists of four interviews conducted in Murmansk in the summer of 2007. The first respondent was Vjatsjeslav Zilanov, at the time the vice governor of Murmansk oblast, and also chief of the fisheries department in Murmansk. An academic and advisor for years in fisheries questions, Zilanov was vice minister of fisheries in the former Soviet Union. He was also a former leader of the joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission. The second respondent was Nina Javdotjsjuk, at the time vice chief of the fisheries department in Murmansk oblast. The third respondent was Maxim Rudomanov, a fisherman who had worked for the Murmansk Trawl Fleet. The fourth respondent was Rune Aasheim, at the time General consul in Murmansk for the Norwegian government (Foreign ministry).

All the interviews were taped, and for the interviews with the Russians I used a translator to simultaneously translate my questions in English to Russian, and then their answers in Russian to English. The interview with General consul Rune Aasheim was done in Norwegian. Apart from the Russian fisherman, my informants held higher positions in the governments, and must be characterized as elite persons.

Eight major issues emerged from my interviews - see the table below. From these eight issues I have selected five that I discuss in detail (Most important issues).

Number	Issues that were discussed in the interviews concerning the Russian-Norwegian fisheries cooperation	Most important issues
1	The cooperation has improved, and is today overall well-functioning	x
2	It is sometimes a challenge to estimate fish stocks, due to different scientific approaches	
3	A challenge to the cooperation is the Spitsbergen protection zone	x
4	The Elektron case of illegal fishing could not, and should not, influence the cooperation	x

5	The incident with the Elektron was a well-planned provocation from Norway	x
6	Russia is a corrupt country. You can, also on the government level, buy yourself out of things	x
7	In Norway, law enforcement is strong. In Russia, law enforcement is weak	
8	The problem of illegal fishing in the Barents Sea can, and should be, resolved	

Table 2. Major issues that emerged from my interviews in Murmansk.

4.2.1 The cooperation has improved, and is today overall well-functioning

The first question I asked the informants was how they consider the Russian-Norwegian cooperation in the fisheries to be working. They all had a quite positive view. Nina Javdotjsjuk described it like this: “I think our cooperation is at a good level at the moment, and I think it is improving all the time. With every meeting of the joint Russian-Norwegian commission, they meet in working groups and have close contact.” The Norwegian General consul Rune Aasheim is on the same note: “It is seen as very fruitful and valuable. It has made it possible for us to cooperate about issues that concern both our countries. By far, it has made it possible to manage the fish resources in an overall good way.” Vjatsjeslav Zilanov draws the historical lines: “Look at our relations in the fishery (...) they have had over 200 years of history and were set, those times, by Fridtjof Nansen and Nikolay Dnepurovich, when they first met each other and concluded that the fish resources of such a polar and close to the Arctic Ocean area like the Barents Sea were important for them both - Norway and Russia.”

4.2.2 A challenge to the cooperation is the Spitsbergen protection zone

When I asked if there were any challenges to the cooperation, the respondents pointed out a common issue, namely the fisheries protection zone around Spitsbergen. Russia has not acknowledged Norwegian jurisdiction in the sea around the archipelago of Svalbard. They believe Russian ships are not obliged to follow Norwegian law unless the two countries have a joint agreement. Norway on the other hand has slowly tightened its grip on Svalbard,

arguing it has territorial rights manifested in both the Svalbard Treaty and the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Zilanov states: “The unsolved question that remains is the question related to the area of the agreement in Spitsbergen.” Likewise, Javdotjsjuk says: “I think the only difficulties will be out of our economic zone, in the area of Spitsbergen. (...) there should be a joint management regime, because it is joint stock. It should be the same conditions for both Russians and Norwegians.

It will be a matter for the ministry of foreign affairs.” The Norwegian General consul Aasheim holds the opposite view on this issue: “If no one had taken care of the fishing regulations in the Spitsbergen zone, it had been unrestricted. Norway is the one that decides in that area. If there was to be a change in the law or regulations in the 200 mile around Spitsbergen, perhaps more states would get access. But it would still be Norway who decides the quotas.” In the interview Aasheim also stated: “Under the trial of Elektron, it became evident that witnesses from the surveillance organization claimed that in the Spitsbergen zone, Norway was not in its right to do what we did. This was «open seas» - everyone could fish. Quite incredible! There are very few fishing areas where one can empty the ocean for as much fish as one wants.”

4.2.3 The Elektron case of illegal fishing could not, and should not, influence the cooperation

When asked if the Elektron incident had a negative impact on Russia-Norway relations, the respondents denied this. Javdotjsjuk’s answer was “The (Elektron) captain was at trial in Russia. It was according to the city code, and the regional code. The captain was fined. The process took almost two years. I think this separate case, could not and should not influence our cooperation.” Fisherman Rudomanov stated that the Elektron case was a new development in Svalbard waters: “... we did not have any conflicts. I was many times in the Spitsbergen zone. This problem has appeared recently.” Zilanov’s opinion was that “... that

case had no relation to the threat for the cooperation in the field of the fishing industry. It did not threaten the cooperation.”

4.2.4 The incident with the Elektron was a well-planned provocation from Norway

Zilanov commented on why the Elektron incident came to be. “It’s my personal meaning, it must be said, that, personally, I consider that the incident with the Elektron was definitely a well-planned provocation.” He elaborated: “... every time, these arrests begin when a bigger delegation goes to Norway at a high level, or when the Russian-Norway commission session opens, or when your big delegation goes to us in Russia.” Zilanov went on to explain, that Russian boats are inspected more often than Norwegian boats. This shows that Norway has a prepossession on how they believe Russian fishermen will act. Or even; “... this tells us about a special planned campaign.” The other Russian respondents did not describe the Elektron incident as a Norwegian provocation. Aasheim refutes Zilanov’s arguments: “... there are certain issues that the Russians are unhappy with. They perceive the Norwegian controls as aimed only at the Russians. Even if we explain it; we control everyone from Iceland, Faroe Islands, Spain et cetera. They get fined and arrested. But they say: You catch only the Russians. We say: But we control and investigate the Norwegian boats as well. But the Norwegians are allowed to continue fishing. That shows Norway is a well-functioning society.”

4.2.5. Russia is a corrupt country. You can, also on the government level, buy yourself out of things

A rather blunt statement from Aasheim was that not everything in Russia is done according to law. “This is a country with many laws, but no law enforcement. And it is a corrupt country, where you can, also on the government level, buy yourself out of things. And it is silently accepted, as long as you pay for it.” Aasheim adds that there has, however, been a positive development. “We now see that if it is a broader acceptance among for example the Russian coast guard, that there is a problem (with the fisheries), they see that it is in conflict with vital

Russian interests. And when they see this, that it hurts Russia's reputation abroad, they start to react." Fisherman Rudomanov seem to agree with Aasheim's critique: "The Norwegian economic zone is the only place where the fishing rules are followed. It is the high standard. People who work in Norway and are in charge of the controls are very good specialists. It is difficult to cheat them, they straight away understand. There is not this kind of control in Russia. Not so total, not so strict."

4.3 Concluding remarks

The empirical data in this project consists of two parts:

- The media analysis of 34 articles in the newspaper Nordlys
- Four interviews done in Murmansk in 2007

The analysis of the 34 articles revealed the following data from the media coverage of the Elektron incident:

- 1) 24 of the articles had only Norwegian sources.
- 2) 46 of the interviewed persons are male, while only 2 are female.
- 3) 44 of the journalists/editors who wrote the articles are male, while only 1 is female.
- 4) 34 of the sources are elite persons, 11 are journalists/editors and only 2 are common people.
- 5) The discourse can be defined as neutral in 22 articles, negative in 7 and positive in 5.

The data from the four interviews done in Murmansk pointed to some themes of interest:

- 1) The cooperation between Russia and Norway in management of the fisheries has improved, and is today overall well-functioning.
- 2) A challenge to the cooperation is the Spitsbergen protection zone.

- 3) The Elektron case of illegal fishing could not, and should not, influence the cooperation.
- 4) The incident with the Elektron was a well-planned provocation from Norway.
- 5) Russia is a corrupt country. You can, also on the government level, buy yourself out of things.

Chapter 5. Data analysis

5.1 Norwegian elite males

The data material in chapter 4 of this thesis showed that most of the newspaper's sources were *Norwegian elite men*: 46 of the interviewed persons are men, while 2 are female. A count of all sources gives the following result: 24 of the articles have only Norwegians as sources, 4 of the articles have only Russians as sources, and 6 of the articles have both Norwegian and Russian sources. The question is: Is this a problem?

First, it can be argued that Nordlys primarily is a local/regional newspaper for the citizens in the city of Tromsø and, more broadly, Northern Norway. This audience will perhaps expect the newspaper's reporters to take "their point of view," as Norwegians with an interest in the Arctic, the fisheries and relations with Russia. To get these news angles, the traditional way is for the media to interview elite sources who are "in charge of things" – they are the decision-makers and the influencers.

From both a government/political, military and judicial viewpoint, it would be important that the news articles focus on what Norway could win or lose. It would be natural for these actors to refer to sustainable resource management goals as well as laws, regulations and historical treaties. This is also in fact what they did when interviewed. At the same time, the political actors and diplomats want to accomplish another important goal, namely to maintain good relations with Russia. A military confrontation had to be avoided. Thus, Norway did not push Russia's buttons in a way that could have escalated the conflict. On the contrary, the Norwegian interviewees repeatedly underlined that the countries have good relations and that the "story" was about *a criminal fishing boat*, not relations with Russia in general.

My categorization of news articles shows that most of the persons interviewed by Nordlys fit into categories of "elite people": government, military, politicians, police, judiciary, scientists/specialists – and, not to forget, the news actors themselves, typically editors. This

type of elite focus and “war journalism”, Lynch and Galtung argue, is both passé and not a fruitful approach: “War journalism reflects the warrior logic of a world of states pitted against each other, with inter-state/national conflict and war being matters of states and statesmen, not to be touched by the common folk.” (Lynch and Galtung, p. 17). Furthermore, in a table named “Reporting conflict: the low road and the high” (p. 13), they distinguish between *peace journalism* and *war journalism*. The former is defined as people-oriented, with descriptions of women, aged and children, while the latter typically is focusing on “able-bodied elite males” as well as ““their” violence and “our” suffering.”

In the Nordlys articles, *only two examples* of non-elites was found among the interviewees: the young Russians from the National Bolshevik Party who demonstrated in Murmansk and argued that Spitsbergen is a Russian island (Nordlys article 22.10.05), and the interview with the mother of Richard Storås (one of the Norwegian fisheries inspectors who was on board the trawler Elektron), Liv Unni Benum (Nordlys article 24.10.05).

The collected data from the articles in Nordlys reveal a clear imbalance in sex, both for the sources and the journalists and editors, as well as the reader contributors. 46 of the interviewed persons or contributors are male, while only 2 are female. The same goes for the journalists/editors: Most (44) are male, while only 1 is a woman.

According to Lynch and Galtung, sex is an important factor in journalism: “Might women make better peace journalist than men? Many female journalists’ hackles would rightly rise at the proposition that “hard news is for the boys.” The point here is not to essentialise differences. A useful perspective can be read across from sociolinguistics, in which the focus is (...) rather on the diverse realizations of the dynamic dimensions of masculinity and femininity.” (Lynch and Galtung 2010: 67). Quoting Holmes (1997), Lynch and Galtung argue that women are often required to use language to construct a much wider range of social

identities – i.e. give voice to people far outside the narrow circle of “official sources”: a task that may come more readily to women than men (Lynch and Galtung, p. 68).

As chapter 3 showed, there are many explanations as to why women are missing in this picture: there seems to be difficult for the military to recruit women, even though they seem to try. Still, only one in ten of military personnel in Norway are women. When it comes to the fisheries, it is also a male-dominated occupation. In the media, more male journalists cover politics and international conflicts than female journalists. This happens despite the fact that there are more women than men in journalism schools.

It is highly probable that male and female journalists contribute with differing angles when they chose how to write a news story. More and varied perspectives are essential, to explore conflict formation, give voice to all parties and contribute to a proactive discourse and dialogue, which in turn can lead to creative conflict solution – all are important elements of *Peace Journalism*.

5.2 How are the Russians framed?

I will now look closer at seven of the articles in Nordlys. Three of these articles have a «neutral» framing of Russians, two have a «positive» framing of Russians and two articles have a «negative» framing of Russians.

As the empirical data showed, the majority – 22 of the 34 articles – give neutral representations of Russians. Five articles are positively framed and seven are negatively framed toward Russians.

5.2.1 Evidence of neutral reporting

In the article *A problem across borders* (Nordlys, 19.10.05), the interviewees are Norwegian law professor Per Christiansen at University of Tromsø and Sergej Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, from an interview he did with the Russian news agency Itar-Tass.

Although the news article uses phrases like *the drama with the two Norwegian persons on board*, the article is in total neutral. The content underlines that despite the disagreement between the two states, the actors use a judicial and diplomatic tone. The following excerpt is an example:

«They (Russia) simply do not agree with that interpretation, he (Per Christiansen) says». The Svalbard treaty only considered the land areas and the ocean a few kilometers from the coast. The professor says that this is impossible to solve in the International Court of Justice in Haag, or any other court. «This can't be solved legally anytime soon. It must be solved diplomatically», Christiansen underlines.

Since a Russian actor is also cited, the news article appears balanced and seems interested in presenting both sides' view on the issue.

«We have never accepted that unilaterally decided Norwegian regulations should apply in this area», says Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergej Lavrov, to the Russian news agency.”

The next neutral article I want to look into is dated 24.10.05 and is titled *The Elektron incident*. It is published when the event is over and the Norwegian inspectors have returned home. The young inspector Richard Storås is interviewed as he arrived at the airport in Tromsø and meets his family. Although Richard's family experienced the event as quite stressful, no harsh words are used against the Russian fishermen:

«I have been thinking nonstop about how he's been. What food does he get? Is he healthy? (...) » the mother Liv Unni Benum says

in the interview. She continues: «You hear this and that about the conditions onboard the Russian trawlers. But I've told myself, they know what they are doing – both the Coast Guard and the Russians have things under control».

The “family reunion” at the airport is a classical «human touch» story, where feelings are an important ingredient.

The third neutral article I look at in detail is titled *Toward a solution?* and is published 05.11.05. In contrast to the two previous traditional news articles, this is an editorial written by the editor-in-chief in Nordlys, Hans Kr. Amundsen. The analysis of the editor is that Norway and Russia should agree on the border delimitation question in the Barents Sea, that the Elektron incident has not caused political waves and that the two states should focus on being “... better neighbors than they have been for generations.” However, the editor also explains that it is smart to have a “wait and see approach” to these questions, that it is not in Norway’s interest to push the agenda:

“... there is no rush when it comes to controlling the fisheries. In three decades, Norway and Russia have steadily improved the control systems.”

The text is neutral in its representation of Russians, since it clearly stresses the need for the two states to come to an agreement, seemingly without prejudice:

“We hope it is possible. Agreed-upon borders are the best way to secure stability in the north.”

5.2.2 Evidence of positive reporting

I found that five of the 34 Elektron articles in Nordlys portrayed Russians positively. I will look at two of the positive stories.

The first positive article has the title *Captain is hero of the day*. It is a news article, published 20.10.05, two days after the Russian trawler escaped. The interviewees are Russian fishermen, and the interviews are done in Murmansk. The sub-heading reads:

“Seamen in Murmansk say the captain of Elektron is a hero. They blame the incident on Norway. Fjodor Berugk is a mechanic on the research vessel Smolensk. A third of the crew on Smolensk used to be fishermen on the Elektron.”

According to the news story, Fjodor and his fellow seamen are following the Russian news about the Elektron incident. They are convinced the captain of Elektron acted from what he deemed right from the Russian perspective. Also, previously, when Russia delivered fish to Norwegian ports and not the EU as of today, Norway seemed to not care:

“Back then, Norway made lots of money on us. But when we started delivering to the continent we got the Coast Guard hot on our heels, says an increasingly heated Ilya.”

This perspective is similar to what V. Zilanov says in my interview with him – that Norway is rich and has some sort of political campaign to “squeeze” Russian fishermen/ship owners from the market.

Finally, the Russian fishermen state that Russia has done nothing wrong in the case of Elektron until a Russian judge has given a verdict.

The second positive article has the title *The black fish*, and was published 23.11.05. This is an editorial written by the newspapers' political commentator Oddvar Nygård. The sub-heading says that "the captain of the eco-pirate Elektron became name of the year in Murmansk." The text then goes on to describe:

"The interviews brought by NRK radio, with people on the street in Tromsø, with regards to the name of the year competition, left no doubt: "There you go, that is how they are, the Russians"."

The political commentator then goes on to argue that it is not right to generalize about a whole people – the Russian people. Surely, they are not all criminals. Likewise, not all Norwegians are law-abiding either. The commentator then points to structural causes:

"We (Norwegians) have neighbors on the other side of the border in the east. They have quite different living conditions than us, who live in the world's richest country. Also, the Russians handling of the Elektron incident show that their authorities and scientists understand very well that a good cooperation with Norway in the fisheries is the best for both countries."

This editorial seems to pay attention to structural causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality and (elite) corruption. It is sensitive to the harsh life of many Russian citizens, and critical as to the elites' actions:

"The real crooks in this case are the ship owner mafia in Murmansk. (...) The leader of the ship owner company gave orders to Elektron to escape from "KV Tromsø". (...) and of course these profit-pirates whip up an anti-Norwegian atmosphere in Russia."

Thus, the fishermen are acquitted, while the ship owners/capitalists are depicted as the real bad guys.

5.2.3 Evidence of negative reporting

I will now look at two of the negative articles. As my empirical data showed, seven of the 34 news articles could be categorized as negative, when it came to how the articles framed the Russians.

The first article is titled *Hunt for pirates/crooks*, and was published in Nordlys 18.10.05 – the same day it was known that the trawler turned away from its planned route to Tromsø, Norway, and set course to Russian waters. Already in the title, we get the understanding that the Russians have committed a crime, long before any trial has started. We know in general that *pirates and crooks* cannot be trusted. The sub-heading adds to the dramatic intro:

“Escapes to Russia - with a Northern Norwegian inspector on board.

Here, in waves 8-9 meters high, the Russian trawler “Elektron” escapes from Norwegian authorities.”

The news report describes that four Coast Guard ships are involved in the chase. In my opinion, this information would be received as quite serious, or intriguing, to the common Norwegian news consumer. While fines and confiscation of the catch is quite common in the management of the fisheries, it is not normal that Norway chases a foreign trawler, and neither that this trawler have Norwegian citizens on board as they aim to escape.

The news article states that the event is both dramatic and serious. The situation is defined by high alert and uncertainty among the actors – and the news article illustrates this:

“The Coast Guard ship tries to intercept the trawler, without success

(see photos). The closer the trawler gets to Russian territory, the more

unpredictable the situations gets. If the situation demands it, it may be an option to shoot blanks, says Coast Guard chief Steve Olsen.”

The narrative in the article is hectic. That is understandable, because the events have just turned with the trawler making a U-turn back to Russia, and a whole new uncertain situation where Norwegians are, potentially, kidnapped by Russians. It is natural that the media is keeping many options and outcomes open, and describe and explore the new, dramatic, events in detail. The answers from the Norwegian authorities is clear: serious crimes and violations of the fisheries regulations are revealed, it is not the first time *Elektron* has been in trouble, and it is not acceptable that foreign trawlers empty the ocean of fish. The Norwegians seem determined to catch the trawler and bring it to a Norwegian port.

In this news article, there are no Russian sources. The final section in the article is named *Ministry of Foreign affairs silent*. The Norwegian authorities seem intent on calming the situation:

“We keep Russian authorities oriented on the situation. But it is not a bilateral conflict between Norway and Russia, it’s a trawler we are talking about. We don’t want to comment any more on this issue, says spokesperson Anne Lene Dale Sandsten to Nordlys.”

This early on in the breaking story – working on a tight deadline – there probably has not been possible for the newspaper to get an official statement from Russian authorities. As to getting an interview with captain Valery Jarantsev or the other Russian fishermen, it was obviously not possible either. In this textual narrative of the “James Bond-ish” action drama, the heroes and villains are sharply defined.

Another negative news article is published four days after (22.10.05) and has the heading *How the Russians cheated*. Also in this article, the choice of title gives a negative impression of the Russians. There are only interviews with Norwegian sources, no Russians. The topic of this news report is the evidence of illegal fishing:

“This is illegal fishing gear that is used intentionally to catch fish under the minimum size. This type of gear was more common 10-12 years ago, but we still see it today, says fisheries inspector Gudmund Johansen, and says illegal fishing gear is used by all nations.”

The main problem with this news article, from the perspective of peace journalism, is that it does not interview any Russian sources. A Norwegian police attorney is cited, saying that the police have a dialogue with Russian authorities to conduct interrogations of the fishermen onboard Elektron.

5.3 Concluding remarks

While some of the articles in Nordlys have a negative or positive framing of Russians, the majority of articles – 22 of 34 – give quite *balanced narratives* where Russia/Russians are portrayed neutrally. This is in line with the Western model of journalism: it is an ideal to be as objective as possible – although disputed to some extent – and interview both sides.

However, balanced reporting is still not Peace Journalism. Most importantly because the concept of Peace Journalism holds that the reporting should *always be normative*: peace is better than conflict and war, non-violence is better than violence. The newspaper does not deliver to us enough alternative voices that should be part of the stories – Russians, women, common people.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This thesis project focuses on how Russian actors are represented in Norwegian news media.

The case study is the Elektron incident that took place in 2005, which put the military, police and governments on high alert. I have conducted a media analysis with articles from the newspaper Nordlys, to see if they frame the Russians in a positive, neutral or negative way. During my fieldwork in Murmansk, I also interviewed four respondents, one Norwegian and three Russians.

I have used the concept of *peace journalism* to explore how the journalists frame stories about the Russian actors. If we want to find out how we can get more peace and less conflict and violence, we must look into the peace theories of scholars like Galtung, and take into consideration the complex interplay of *nature, culture and structure*.

This study has used a qualitative approach. The aim was to explore the relationship between Russia and Norway in the High North, and gain more insight into how the media cover conflict. While there is significant research in the field of peace and conflict transformation, as well as in the field of media theory, there is not as many studies on both aspects: media and conflict, or peace journalism. This study, then, is a very small contribution to the branch of peace journalism, a still emerging field. The empirical data I received and my theory review helps to answer my two research questions:

1. How did the newspaper Nordlys describe Russian actors when Nordlys covered «the Elektron incident» in the fall of 2005?
2. Which insights do we get, when the concept of Peace Journalism is applied to the analysis of these media representations?

The media analysis shows that Russians are mostly described in a *neutral* way. In many of the reports, both sides in the conflict are interviewed or cited. However, some articles give a black and white representation of Russians vs. Norwegians, where Russian fishermen and ship owners are depicted as pirates and crooks, while the Norwegian fisheries inspectors and authorities are described as heroes and peacemakers.

Even if the newspaper articles are mostly neutral and balanced, this does not mean that the reporting equals *peace journalism*. The concept of Peace Journalism holds that journalists should have a normative approach when they report news. It can be compared to a doctor, who works *for* health and *against* disease. Peace Journalism is *for* peace and *against* conflict/violence. This means always trying to find out why conflicts emerge, who all parties are including all their goals and issues. History and culture must be explored to reveal grievances and hidden structural causes for the conflict. Creative conflict resolution is sought, with participation and voices of people of all ages and sexes, not only able-bodied elite males.

My interviews with the sources in Murmansk – both Russian and Norwegian persons – illustrate that it is still a way to go, before we can say that the countries have a *positive peace*. There has been a fruitful – and peaceful – joint management of the fisheries in the Barents Sea for decades. However, my interviews show that mistrust, conflicting interests and disagreement are topics the parties bring up, when they describe the other. The empirical data and the theory illustrate that the relations and actions of Norway and Russia are mostly defined by *pragmatism*.

6.2 Pragmatism governs relationship

As I showed in chapter 4, presentation of empirical data, I selected five issues from my interviews with the four informants in Murmansk that I looked at in more detail. Their statements revealed something significant: both the Norwegian respondent and the Russian respondents described a long lasting, successful and important joint management of the

fisheries in the Barents Sea. All respondents rejected that the Elektron incident had a negative influence on the Russian-Norwegian cooperation. On the other hand, the persons also pointed to some troubles in the relationship of the two countries: the charges of corruption from the Norwegian General consul, the charges of political campaigns from the Murmansk Chief of fisheries authority, and their statements of the Spitsbergen protection zone as problematic.

The data evidence points, to some degree, to different directions. If we look at Galtung's theory of positive and negative peace, it seems like the relationship between Russia and Norway should be defined as *a negative peace*. This is due to the suspicion, mistrust and cultural dissonance, the four interviewees express. The goal should be *a positive peace*, which includes respectful and open dialogue, reciprocity and a culture of peace in organizational and inter-personal layers. The parties must look beyond the zero-sum game and more humbly explore the history, grievances, cultural and economic issues of both sides.

From the empirical data it is clear that the relationship between Russia and Norway has several tense pressure points. The interdependence can be seen as yin yang-ties, where the actors negotiate their options on a case-by-case basis. As this thesis has described in previous chapters, several factors shape foreign policy and decision-making as well as foreign policy media narratives.

In today's political, cultural and military climate, I find it convincing that both Russia and Norway maintain a pragmatic approach when the states consider what will be their best options and actions in foreign policy. I think this was also the case with the Elektron conflict. If there is an increased possibility of negative diplomatic relations or the threat of force, both countries are likely to contribute to de-escalation. Supporting arguments for this can be found in the writings of, for example, Åtland and Brusgaard (2009) and Inderberg (2007). However,

de-escalation of a potential harmful (in terms of diplomacy or violence) crisis is very different from a sustainable and proactive positive peace.

6.3 Implications for role of the media

Those who work in the media live in a state of constant pressure: Tougher than ever deadlines. Demanding editors, the lack of time and never enough colleagues. News content must be pushed out on all (un)imaginable platforms, 24-7. The editors are most often in a tight spot, their owners want more profit, more readers, viewers and clicks. Media logic tell us that conflict and drama sell. But important bits are left out, and opportunities for dialog, mutual understanding and peace are lost.

Instead of chasing conflicts, journalists can choose another way. In the words of Jake Lynch: “To report is to choose. ‘We just report the facts’, journalists say, but ‘the facts’ is a category of practically infinite size. Even in these days of media profusion, that category has to be shrunk to fit into the news. The journalist is a ‘gatekeeper’, allowing some aspects of reality through, to emerge, blinking, into the public eye; and keeping the rest in the dark” (Lynch, article on transcend.org, accessed 16.06.17).

The audience will get news stories that show alternatives to conflict and point at options of non-violent and constructive responses to conflict. As research has shown, it is possible that the increasingly well-educated and attentive citizens of today will appreciate this.

6.4 Peace journalism-education in the newsrooms

Already there are many initiatives and centers around the globe, as well as online resources, that promote a more constructive and peaceful understanding and resolution – and prevention – of conflicts. Peace education centers at universities around the world recruit students, who can then become advocates for these issues in their professional lives. Who needs peace education? The easy answer is “everybody.” Clearly, both elites and non-elites, young and

old, as well as journalists, could profit from it. For journalists, this education could be combined with the many “dig deeper”-projects in news organizations around the world.

Peacebuilding is to move people into new action, new speech and new thoughts, in the words of Galtung (2007: 29). To be able to do this, they must be trained. Ideally, journalists are in contact with many levels of society – from government tops to grassroots. They are therefore in a good position to influence the way we think and speak of peace and conflict. While peace education is important, the “problem” with it is that people associate it with schooling and think they have graduated. This argument is convincing – we need peace journalism, observing and reporting events within a solution-oriented peace discourse, not only within the victory-oriented security discourse (2007: 27).

6.5 Limitations and suggestions for further research

It takes time to conduct large-scale media analyses, which often consist of hundreds, or thousands, of visual or textual reports, perhaps over several years. For this master’s thesis I had to limit the scope in both numbers of texts and time frame, to be able to analyze the content in enough detail. No doubt, my analysis would have given more insight if I had the time to analyze different news media and compare content and discourses. Also, it should be interesting to compare stories on the same topic over years, and see if the narratives change.

Digital analytical tools now makes it easier for researchers to analyze big data sets, putting in relevant key words and letting the computer sort the data, instead of doing it manually. It can therefore be expected that researchers can conduct more and bigger media analyses in the future.

Another limitation with my project is the four interviews I conducted. Only one of the four persons – the fisherman – was “a common person,” that is; someone not employed in the government/bureaucracy. To truly follow the recipe of peace journalism, an important task is

to talk to all kinds of people about the issue at hand – also non-elites. Of course, this must also be weighed up against who has relevant information and knowledge about the issue. It is true that knowledge equals power.

The area of Peace Journalism is part of the larger realm of peace studies and peace research, and also media-conflict research. It should be further developed as an applied science and teamed up with journalism schools, classrooms and newsrooms across the globe. In today's world, journalists must be aware of their important role when they report on conflicts. Likewise, students, social scientists and peace researchers should learn about the mechanisms, possibilities and restrictions that guide the work in newsrooms.

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Appendix 1: List of articles from Nordlys

All articles are downloaded from the online database Retriever.no: <https://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive>. Titles are in the original language Norwegian. For English titles see appendix 2.

1. Klappjakt på pirater/kjeltringer	18.10.2005
2. Fisk og fangst	19.10.2005
3. Et grenseløst problem	19.10.2005
4. Dramaets gang	19.10.2005
5. Tøff start for Gahr Støre	19.10.2005
6. – Var ikke kidnappet	20.10.2005
7. Har styrket forholdet	20.10.2005
8. Kapteinen dagens helt i Murmansk	20.10.2005
9. – Burde blitt med til Norge	20.10.2005
10. Helga tror ikke på fiske-trøbbel	21.10.2005
11. Fiskevernsona og gråsona	21.10.2005
12. Vurderer erstatningssak mot Norge	21.10.2005
13. Norges ansvar	21.10.2005
14. Pirater og frihetsberøvelse	22.10.2005
15. Slik jukset russerne	22.10.2005
16. «Svalbard er russisk»	22.10.2005
17. Styrkeprøve i nord	24.10.2005

18. «Elektron»-saken	24.10.2005
19. – Fare for opptrapping	25.10.2005
20. Norge står alene i nord	25.10.2005
21. Samler Norden i nord	26.10.2005
22. Melder ikke Norge for Haag	27.10.2005
23. Kampen mot fiskerane	27.10.2005
24. «Elektron» stakk av med inspektørene	02.11.2005
25. Mot løsning?	05.11.2005
26. Politiet skulle vokte russisk skip	11.11.2005
27. Elektron-skipperen kan bli årets navn	18.11.2005
28. Ny sjanse for Svalbardsonen	21.11.2005
29. Den svarte fisken	23.11.2005
30. Hvem blir årets nordlending?	26.11.2005
31. Fritt fram for piratene	03.12.2005
32. Fyhn ut mot regjeringen etter «Elektron»-saken	09.12.2005
33. Tar russerne feil?	24.12.2005
34. Litt av et «nytt-år»	31.12.2005

Appendix 2: Categorization of articles

Text – name, date	Interviewees Norwegian	Interviewees Russian	Interviewees Norwegian and Russian	Positive framing of Russians	Neutral framing of Russians	Negative framing of Russians	Type of text: (news article, editorial, reader contribution)
1. <i>Hunt for pirates/crooks.</i> 18.10.05	- Coast Guard - Military - Foreign minister				X - No harm - Not a bilateral conflict	X - Pirates and crooks	News article
2. <i>Fish and catch.</i> 19.10.05			-Murmansk vice gov. V. Zilanov - Stoltenberg		X - Russian fishermen in debt		Editorial

			- Støre		- Target Russians		
<i>3. A problem across borders. 19.10.05</i>			-Law-prof. Christensen - Russ. foreign m. S. Lavrov		X - Svalbard protection zone is unresolved		News article
<i>4. The drama. 19.10.05</i>			-Norw. military authority - Russ. news agency		X - Elektron headed for Russia with two Norw. inspectors		News article
<i>5. Tough start for Gahr Støre. 19.10.05</i>	- Foreign minister Gahr Støre				X - Keep good relations, shared understanding		News article
<i>6. – Were not kidnapped. 20.10.05</i>		-Murmansk shipowner A. Losev -Russian Coast Guard		X - Norw. inspectors not kidnapped, want to stay on Elektron	X - Claims of kidnapping untrue		News article
<i>7. Has strengthened the relationship. 20.10.05</i>	- Norw. ambassador in Moscow, Ø. Nordsletten				X - Success with isolating incident from diplomatic rel./regulation		News article
<i>8. Captain is hero of the day. 20.10.05</i>		-Former fishermen on research ship Smolensk		X - Elektron-captain a hero - Incident was Norway's fault - Norw. treat Russ. stricter			News article
<i>9. – Should have gone to Norway. 20.10.05</i>		-Russ. Federal official to website RIA Novosti				X - Elektron-captain should have gone to a Norw. port	News article
<i>10. Helga doesn't believe in fish-trouble. 21.10.05.</i>	-New Norw. minister of fisheries H. Pedersen				X - Incident will not affect fisheries negotiations		News article
<i>11. The fisheries protection zone and the grey zone. 21.10.05</i>	- Contribution by Norw. politician (SV) Pål J. Skogholt				X - A problem that it is undecided who has authority around Spitsbergen		Reader contribution
<i>12. Considers suing Norway for compensation. 21.10.05</i>			- Russ. fisher - Norw. Coast Guard chief S. Olsen		X - A trawler got «something» in propellers that ruined engine		News article

13. <i>Norway's responsibility.</i> 21.10.05	-Refers to Norw. politicians who want to bring out big guns				X - No need for big guns - No conflict, only enforcement of rules in sea		Editorial
14. <i>Pirates and kidnapping.</i> 22.10.05	- Contribution by Norw. E. Johansen					X - Pirates and kidnappers - Norw. must be tougher - Russ. no respect	Reader contribution
15. <i>How the Russians cheated.</i> 22.10.05	-Norw. police/investigators - Norw. fishing inspector				X - Has collected many types of evidence	X - Police evidence - Elektrons' illegal fishing nets caught too small fish	News article
16. «Svalbard is Russian». 22.10.05		-Russian demonstrators			X - Bolshevik party demonstrate - «Svalbard is Russian» - fisheries protection zone is illegal		News article
17. <i>Showdown in the north.</i> 24.10.05	-Nordlys editor in chief H. K. Amundsen				X - Norw. is challenged on the sovereignty claims in the Svalbard zone		Editorial
18. <i>The Elektron incident.</i> 24.10.05	-R. Storås, one of the two Norw. fisheries inspectors - Storås' mother				X - Nothing negative said about the time on board Elektron		News article
19. – <i>Risk of escalation.</i> 25.10.05	-W. Østreng, High North-researcher				X - Norw. and Russ. must cooperate or else we have a dramatic situation		News article
20. <i>Norway is alone in the north.</i> 25.10.05	-T. Axelsen, ANB				X - Russ. investigators: no proof Elektron did anything illegal	X - Not promising for future cooperation between Ru. and No.	News article
21. <i>Assemble Nordic countries in the north.</i> 26.10.05	-Norways' prime minister Jens Stoltenberg				X - The Nordic countries met. - Norw. PM Stoltenberg talked about the Barents		News article

					Sea situation		
<i>22. Does not take the case to Haag. 27.10.05</i>			-Ru. judge A. Kolodkin, Int. Tribunal for Law of the Sea - Akselsen, leader No. foreign c.		X - Joint Ru-No control with fisheries in Svalbard best (A.K.) - Ru-No have good cooper. (A.K.)	X - Cannot negotiate that No. has the rights around Svalb. (O.A.) - Ru. trawlers the problem	News article
<i>23. The fight against the fish bandits. 27.10.05</i>	- Contribution by I. Kristofferse n, former editor in Nordlys				X - Various alternatives for Norw. governance in Svalbard zone		Reader contribution
<i>24. «Elektron» ran away with the inspectors. 02.11.05</i>			-Ru. prosecutor - No. distr. attorney - No. coast guard chief S. Olsen	X - Positive that Ru. charged captain. Ru. auth. takes this seriously (S. Olsen)	X - Elektron captain V. Jarantsev charged with illegal fishing + kidnapping		News article
<i>25. Toward a solution? 05.11.05</i>	-Nordlys editor in chief H. K. Amundsen				X - Norw and Ru. may solve delimitation dispute in the «Grey zone»		Editorial
<i>26. Police was to guard Russian ship. 11.11.05</i>	-Governor of Svalbard, P. Sefland, to NRK					X - 20 Norw. police were on way to stop two Ru. ships from escaping (like Elektron)	News article
<i>27. Elektron captain can be name of the year. 18.11.05</i>	-Cites VG, which cites Komsomols kaja Pravda				X - Elektron-captain Jarantsev nominated to «name of the year» in Ru. in category «patriotism»		News article
<i>28. New chance for the Svalbard zone. 21.11.05</i>	- L. Fause, Norwegian district attorney				X - Elektron-case slipped, but No. can take other cases to court		News article
<i>29. The black fish. 23.11.05</i>	- O. Nygård, political commentator			X - Ru. poverty, No. rich – explains importance of fishing for Russia	X - Elektron-captain is name of the year in Murmansk. - A real hero in Ru., a dirty criminal in No	X - The real crooks are the Murmansk shipowner-mafia	Editorial
<i>30. Who will be Northern Norwegian of the year? 26.11.05</i>	- List of nominees – who should be «Northern				X - No. fisheries inspector Richard Storås one of		News article

	Norw. of the year?»				the nominees		
31. <i>Pirates can just go ahead. 03.12.05</i>	- T. Bongo, leader of No. officers association - S. Olsen, Coast Guard				X - Coast G. cuts sailing days for helicopter-carrying vessels to save money		News article
32. <i>Fyhn criticizes government after «Elektron» case. 09.12.05</i>	-Cites ANB, police chief T. Fyhn in Troms interviewed				X - Wrong that No. Foreign min./Govt. interfered in Elektron-handling		News article
33. <i>Are the Russians wrong? 24.12.05</i>	-Nordlys editor in chief H. K. Amundsen			X - Russia important market for No. fish, partner in oil+ gas - Clash of interests = normal	X - Conflict can be infectious, f.ex. Russian stopping No. salmon can be retaliation for Elektron-arrest		Editorial
34. <i>Some «new year». 31.12.05</i>	-Nordlys sums up their news coverage in 2005				X - During Elektron-incident, up to 10 Nordlys-journalists covered drama		Editorial

Table 1:

A categorization of 34 news articles in Nordlys in the period of October 18. – December 31. 2005.

Some of the articles are hard to define clearly as either positive or neutral or negative, thus they have a (x) in more than one category. The translation from Norwegian to English is my own translation.

Appendix 3: List of interviewees

1. Nina Javdotjsjuk

Vice Chief FGU Murmanrybvod (Murmansk regional fisheries administration). Also a member of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission.

Interview conducted: July 2007 (audio recorded).

2. Vjatseslav Zilanov

Chief of FGU Murmanrybvod (Murmansk regional fisheries administration). Also vice minister of fisheries in the former Soviet Union, and former leader of the joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission.

Interview conducted: July 2007 (audio recorded).

3. Rune Aasheim

The Norwegian General consul in Murmansk from 2004-08.

Interview conducted: July 2007 (audio recorded).

4. Maxim Rudomanov

Former fisherman who had worked ten years on Russian trawlers. Last employed by the company Murmansk Trawl Fleet.

Interview conducted: July 2007 (audio recorded).

Appendix 4: Interview questions

1. How do you view the cooperation between Russia and Norway in the fisheries?
2. What is the goal with cooperation in the fisheries?
3. How do you view the relationship between Russia and Norway? Are they equal parties or not?
4. What are the positive sides of the cooperation on the fisheries management?
5. What are the negative sides, of any, with the cooperation?
6. Traditionally, Norway is more restrictive than Russia when the fish quotas are to be set. Why do the states have different perspectives on this issue?
7. Norway is a much smaller country than Russia. Is it reasonable that Norway has so much to say in this management of the Barents Sea?
8. In what way is Russia culturally or politically different when it comes to how they manage the fisheries?
9. How do you feel the Norwegians understand the Russian point of view?
10. How do you think the cooperation between the two countries will evolve in the future?
11. Are there any future challenges to the joint cooperation?
12. How will you describe a typical Norwegian Joint Fisheries Commission representative?
13. What role does the Joint Fisheries Commission play, with regards to wider security issues?
14. When discussing the fish quota, which questions are potentially problematic in the negotiations?
15. Problematic incidents have happened, that could threaten the cooperation in the fisheries. The Elektron incident took place in October 2005. Describe that incident, and what you think it did to the cooperation?

16. One mutual concern for both governments is illegal fishing. What are your concerns about illegal fishing?
17. How does illegal fishing affect the relationship between Russia and Norway?
18. How important are the fisheries for Russia, economically?
19. When do you feel suspicion occurs, between Russia and Norway?
20. How does Russia's domestic situation and problems influence the fishing negotiations?
21. What actors and institutions are most capable of facilitating cooperation in the fisheries?