

Peace Journalism Model in Conflict: Analysis of the Myanmar Civil War in State-Owned and International Newspapers

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Abstract

Myanmar's civil war, intensified by the 2021 military coup, has deepened humanitarian crises and polarized political narratives. In this fragmented information environment, media coverage plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding of the conflict. This study aims to examine the portrayal of conflict in two ideologically contrasting newspapers, the state-owned Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) and the international New York Times (NYT), utilizing Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Model as a framework. The research employs a mixed-method approach to analyze 117 news pieces published from June to December 2024, contrasting war-oriented and peace-oriented reportage between the two newspapers. Articles were systematically coded using Galtung's peace and war journalism indicators, and both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. The findings indicate that GNLM predominantly adheres to the war journalism principles (93%), characterized by military vocabulary, elite-centered narratives, vilification of opposing forces, and minimal attention to contextual or humanitarian dimensions. In contrast, 97% of the New York Times' coverage reflects characteristics of peace journalism, including emphasis on structural causes of the conflict, human suffering, various forms of agency, and the potential for a nonviolent resolution. Qualitative findings further show that GNLM legitimizes state brutality and suppresses dissent, whereas the NYT highlights historical context, human consequences, and grassroots peace efforts. The study demonstrates how national and international media produce sharply divergent

narratives of the same conflict, illustrating the powerful role of journalism in either perpetuating violence or fostering peace.

Keywords: peace journalism, war journalism, Myanmar civil war, media framing, state vs. international media

Introduction

The protracted Myanmar civil war is a complicated example of internal armed conflict that has been characterized by the intertwining of political authoritarianism, ethnic breakdown, and international reactions. The 2021 military coup has only aggravated the conflict, not just altering the political landscape of Myanmar but also how the war is framed and portrayed in media narratives. As conflicts intensify, the task of journalism in either advancing hostilities or opening up possibilities for peace similarly intensifies. Scholars have highlighted for many years now that the media are not simply documenting conflicts; rather, they are an active player that influences popular attitudes, facilitates dialogue, and ultimately has a bearing on the possibilities for peace (Galtung, 1998; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

At the core of this study is Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Model, a normative and analytical theory that explains two rival approaches: peace journalism and war journalism. War journalism is characterized by its emphasis on elite views, sensationalizing events, and a binary approach, frequently framing war as a necessity and emphasizing a "us vs. them" narrative (Galtung, 1998). On the other hand, peace journalism aims to place violence in context, provide a voice for non-elite and marginalized people, and bring to the forefront possible roads to reconciliation. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) expand on this model by asserting that peace journalism aligns with the media's ethical responsibility to reduce harm, create dialogue, and reveal the sources of conflict. In polarized and authoritarian cultures such as Myanmar, where freedom of the press is severely curtailed (Progressive Voice Myanmar, 2025), peace journalism is both challenging and imperative to implement.

Research on Myanmar's media coverage has overwhelmingly addressed specific humanitarian crises, the most notable being the Rohingya crisis (Lwin & Thein, 2020; Farzana, 2019). However, comparative studies between local and international coverage are scarce. Moreover, there is not much in-depth research that effectively

implements Galtung's model to investigate major civil war narratives in various media sources.

To fill this gap, the present research seeks to examine the extent to which media coverage of Myanmar's civil war reflects war journalism or peace journalism orientations. Specifically, the study aims to quantify how different media systems frame conflict, influence perceptions of enemies, and either reinforce violent narratives or facilitate understanding and peacebuilding.

This study employs a mixed-method approach to analyze 117 articles published from June to December 2024 in two ideologically opposing newspapers: *The Global New Light of Myanmar* (GNLM), a state-owned newspaper reflecting the junta's official position, and *The New York Times* (NYT), a leading international newspaper with a reputation for independent and critical reporting. The selected six-month period corresponds with intensified military activity, increased civilian fatalities, and heightened global scrutiny (OCHA, 2024). Using systematic coding and content analysis based on Galtung's indicators, the study assesses the degree to which these newspapers reinforce war narratives or promote peace-oriented reporting. Ultimately, this research contributes to scholarship on media and conflict while offering practical implications for peace communication, media ethics, and the role of international journalism in conflict-affected societies where democratic discourse is constrained or manipulated.

Literature Review

The civil war in Myanmar has persisted for decades due to authoritarian governance, ethnic prejudice, and armed insurrection. The situation deteriorated with the military coup in 2021. The escalating confrontations between the military junta and various resistance factions have precipitated significant humanitarian crises and polarized political narratives. In this fragmented information environment, media coverage significantly impacts public understanding of the conflict. Scholars argue that in conflict zones, especially under authoritarian rule, media narratives often become contested sites of power, legitimacy, and resistance, shaping both domestic and international perceptions of violence and governance (Voltmer, 2013).

The protracted civil war has also transformed the nation's social and political landscape, underscoring the media's significance during periods

of conflict. Johan Galtung's (1998) framework for peace and war journalism provides a lens to examine how the media constructs narratives, determines which perspectives are emphasized, and influences whether reporting fosters resolution or exacerbates divisions. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) assert that peace journalism emphasizes people-centered and solution-oriented reporting, whereas war journalism concentrates on violence, elite viewpoints, and zero-sum framing. Peace journalism possesses the capacity for transformation; yet, it must confront tangible issues in perilous environments or under authoritarian regimes. Comparative studies on conflict reporting in authoritarian contexts such as Syria, Egypt, and China demonstrate similar challenges, where state control over media restricts pluralistic narratives and reinforces official versions of conflict (Voltmer, 2013; Howard & Hussain, 2013).

The research by Lwin and Thein (2020) suggests that The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM), a government-owned publication in Myanmar, functions predominantly as a governmental instrument, suppressing dissent and marginalizing ethnic minorities. Its coverage is irregular, event-based, and designed to substantiate military involvement, aligning with Galtung's concept of elite-driven news. Following the 2021 coup, journalistic freedom deteriorated further. Progressive Voice Myanmar (2025) documented restrictions, arrests, and surveillance that impede journalists' ability to operate independently. Under these circumstances, it is nearly unfeasible for local media to embrace the tenets of peace journalism. Similar patterns have been observed in other authoritarian regimes, where state-owned media legitimize military actions and frame opposition forces as security threats rather than political actors, thereby sustaining cycles of violence (Wedeen, 2015; Nossek & Berkowitz, 2006).

Conversely, international news outlets such as The New York Times emphasize civilian hardship, displacement, and pro-democracy initiatives. Their reporting encompasses human rights frameworks, structural context, and an emphasis on humanitarian impacts, aligning more closely with the objectives of peace journalism. Comparative analyses underscore this discrepancy: McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) assert that state-funded media often portray conflicts in binary terms to rationalize violence, whereas overseas channels provide counter-hegemonic narratives that highlight resistance and human rights. Studies of international coverage of conflicts in Palestine, Ukraine, and Sudan similarly reveal that foreign media tend to situate local violence within broader discourses of

authoritarianism, human rights, and global power relations (Wolfsfeld, 2004; Entman, 2004; Robinson, 2002).

Distinguishing between war journalism and peace journalism is not always straightforward. Factors such as audience preferences, editorial guidelines, and geopolitical considerations can influence news reporting. Media outlets, even those prioritizing ethics, may prioritize conflict narratives over peacebuilding tales to retain readership (International Media Support, 2018). This tension highlights the structural constraints within which even globally respected media organizations operate when reporting on prolonged and politically sensitive conflicts.

Notwithstanding comprehensive examination, inadequacies remain. Most studies analyze local and international media in isolation or focus on particular crises, such as the Rohingya issue, hence lacking a thorough cross-media analysis. Few studies examine both *The Irrawaddy* and *The New York Times*, such as Vu & Lynn (2020), and even fewer utilize Galtung's paradigm to analyze both domestic and international media. The lack of comparative research across regime types limits the broader applicability of peace journalism as an analytical framework in conflict studies.

This study addresses the gap by analyzing the coverage of the Myanmar civil conflict by GNLN and *The New York Times*. This analysis, grounded in Galtung's theoretical framework, examines how journalism decisions either perpetuate violence or foster peace. The study promotes academic comprehension of media and conflict by situating media narratives within a comparative framework, highlighting the concrete influence of journalism on public perception and global responses. By drawing parallels with media practices in other authoritarian contexts, the study enhances the generalizability of its findings beyond Myanmar and contributes to broader debates on journalism, power, and conflict.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Model, initially proposed in 1998 by the pioneer of peace and conflict studies. Galtung's theory (Galtung, 1998b) challenges the idea that the media just observe conflict; instead, it asserts that journalism actively shapes the perception, legitimization, or opposition to violence. This methodology is particularly effective for studying how domestic and international media generate

opposing representations of reality under the polarized, militaristic, and highly politicized narratives of the Myanmar civil war.

The Peace Journalism Model asserts that journalism may either intensify violence through militaristic approaches or promote de-escalation through pacifistic reporting. Galtung juxtaposes two distinct styles: war journalism and peace journalism (Galtung, 1998c). War journalism is responsive, exclusive, and concentrated on observable acts of violence. It presents narratives of victory, characterizing situations as zero-sum contests, and prioritizes discrediting opponents. It frequently lacks a structural or historical background and tends to transform intricate issues into spectacular, event-driven narratives.

Conversely, peace journalism is proactive, people-centric, and solution-oriented. It highlights the fundamental causes of violence, amplifies the voices of marginalized individuals, and monitors initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue and coexistence. According to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), peace journalism seeks to inform while promoting understanding by contextualizing suffering, humanizing all parties involved, and exploring nonviolent resolutions.

This theoretical approach is relevant to the Myanmar setting, as the two newspapers examined in this study, *The Global New Light of Myanmar* (GNLM) and *The New York Times* (NYT), serve markedly different political functions. GNLM, operated by the military junta, functions as the state-controlled news outlet and predominantly focuses on war journalism. It labels resistance groups, such as the People's Defense Forces (PDFs), as terrorists, minimizes civilian casualties inflicted by the military, and infrequently covers peace initiatives. The narratives endorse the government's propaganda objectives and justify continued militarization.

Conversely, the NYT typically incorporates elements of peace journalism. It prioritizes the plight of citizens, documents human rights abuses, and amplifies the voices of dissidents, exiled activists, and ethnic minorities. The narratives contextualize the war within Myanmar's extensive history of military governance, ethnic marginalization, and the struggle for democratic principles. The New York Times' reporting aligns with the model's emphasis on truth, individuals, and solutions by situating them within a broader context.

In this study, Galtung's model serves as both a conceptual basis and an analytical and normative framework. The coding scheme is founded on operational indicators that are peace-oriented, truth-oriented, people-

oriented, and solution-oriented, in contrast to violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented, and victory-oriented indicators. These factors enable a systematic comparison of how each newspaper contextualizes violence, depicts actors, and constructs meaning.

The Peace Journalism Model provides a definitive and rigorous framework for evaluating the quality of conflict reporting. It illustrates how media may exacerbate cycles of violence or facilitate peace in public discourse. The model illustrates how media systems governed by authoritarian governments or global journalistic standards depict the same civil conflict differently, as evidenced by the contrasting narratives of GNLM and the NYT. This theoretical framework guides the study's aim of assessing journalism's potential role in either legitimizing state authority or promoting more inclusive, peace-oriented discourse.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method approach to investigate the portrayal of the Myanmar civil conflict in The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) and The New York Times (NYT). Utilizing Galtung's Peace Journalism Model, the methodology assesses the extent to which each newspaper reflects war-oriented or peace-oriented reporting methods. The concept is based on the premise that media not only reflect conflict but also significantly influence public perception and political awareness.

The study focuses on publications published between June and December 2024, a six-month period marked by intensified military operations, rising resistance movements, and heightened international attention. This timeframe was deliberately selected due to its significance during the Civil War, marked by intensified propaganda attempts by state media and heightened critical reporting from international media.

A purposive sample method was utilized to select relevant articles. GNLM exclusively incorporated news articles that explicitly addressed military actions, governmental declarations, civil disturbances, or peace initiatives. The majority of these narratives were located in the "National News" and "Local News" sections. The New York Times extracted items from the "World" and "Asia" sections. These sections were chosen because they constitute the primary spaces where sustained and thematic coverage of the Myanmar conflict appears, allowing the selected articles

to reflect the dominant framing patterns used by each outlet during the study period.

We selected 117 news articles in total from Global New Lights of Myanmar and The New York Times to ensure a balanced representation of themes and data. 117 news articles. A total of 84 articles were found from Global New Lights of Myanmar, and 33 Articles from The New York Times. Rather than isolated or episodic reporting, the selected articles collectively represent recurring narratives, terminology, and framing strategies that characterized broader coverage of the conflict within the specified timeframe.

We located articles by querying terms such as “Myanmar,” “civil war,” “military junta,” “People’s Defense Force,” “ethnic armed organizations,” “resistance,” and “ceasefire.” It was crucial to scrutinize GNLM’s terminology, such as “terrorist,” “stability operations,” and “security forces,” which possess propagandistic connotations. Conversely, NYT articles frequently addressed international condemnation, refugee movements, sanctions, and humanitarian crises.

The coding technique adhered to Galtung’s model. We developed a comprehensive coding sheet to categorize indications pertinent to war journalism (including violence orientation, propaganda orientation, elite orientation, and victory orientation) and peace journalism (including peace orientation, truth orientation, people orientation, and solution orientation). We meticulously reviewed each article multiple times and categorized it according to the presence of these signs. An article depicting the conflict as a confrontation between the state and terrorists, devoid of historical or structural background, was categorized as war journalism. An article addressing civilian relocation or referencing ethnic concerns was categorized as peace journalism.

To enhance dependability, a secondary coder independently reviewed a smaller subset of articles. We discussed and resolved the discrepancies, resulting in improved definitions of the indicators. We maintained reflexive memos documenting our analytical conclusions throughout the process to provide clarity.

The ethical implications were minimal as all data originated from publicly accessible news articles. The analysis adhered to principles of fairness and academic integrity, avoiding selective use of evidence. The objective is not to undermine either medium, but to analytically assess their framing of disputes and their impact on public comprehension.

This strategy facilitates a systematic comparison of two markedly distinct media systems: one being authoritarian and domestic, while the other is international and independent. This analysis investigates the influence of journalism on war and peace narratives, along with the media's role in either bolstering authoritarian rule or promoting wider discussions on justice, empathy, and conflict transformation.

Quantitative Findings

Overview

Overall, the dataset consists of a total of 117 news articles. Articles were taken from the websites of 2: Global New Lights of Myanmar and The New York Times. All the articles related to the Myanmar Civil War in the national beat of Global New Lights of Myanmar and the international beat of The New York Times from 1st June to 31st December of 2024 were collected for content analysis. A total of 84 articles were found from Global New Lights of Myanmar, and 33 Articles from The New York Times.

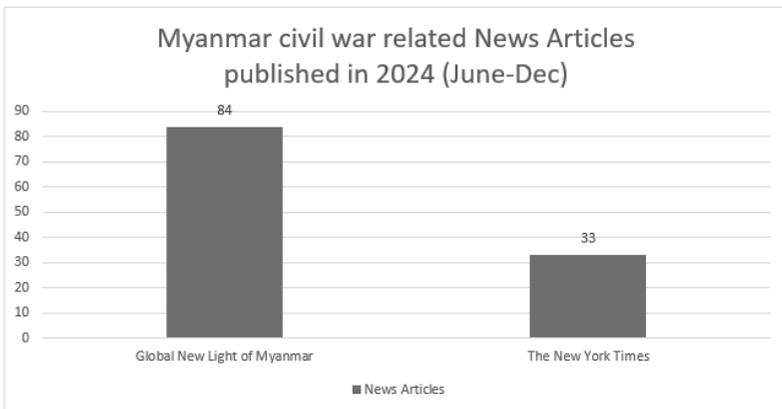


Figure 1: Myanmar civil war-related news articles published in 2024 (June-Dec)

Content Types

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of news framing in The Global New Light of Myanmar, revealing a pronounced imbalance between peace journalism and war journalism. Peace journalism appears minimally in the coverage, with only 6 articles (7%) reflecting peace-oriented principles

such as contextual explanation or humanitarian focus. In contrast, war journalism overwhelmingly dominates the reporting, accounting for 78 articles (93%), indicating a strong emphasis on militarized narratives, official state perspectives, and conflict-centered framing. This pattern suggests a systematic preference for war-oriented reporting in GNLM's coverage of the civil war.

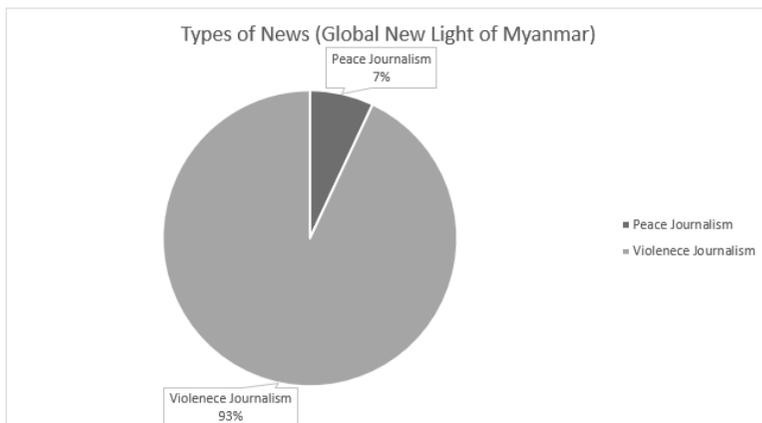


Figure 2: Types of news (Global New Light of Myanmar)

In Figure 3, it is shown that, among the peace journalism-based articles, 2 articles (2%) are peace-oriented, promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and non-violent conflict resolution. Truth-oriented reporting appears in 1 article (1%), focusing on factual accuracy, contextual analysis, and avoidance of misleading narratives. People-oriented pieces, emphasizing the voices and experiences of everyday individuals affected by conflict, are seen in 2 articles (2%). Additionally, 1 article (1%) is solution-oriented, highlighting efforts toward sustainable peace and conflict mitigation.

Of the war journalism-based articles, violence-oriented articles dominate with 27 instances (32%), often dramatizing the conflict and emphasizing casualties and destruction. Propaganda-oriented narratives are identified in 32 articles (38%), showcasing biased perspectives or unverified claims. Elite-oriented reporting, which focuses on political leaders and official sources, is found in 16 articles (19%). Finally, 3 articles (3.5%) are victory-oriented, framing the conflict in terms of winners and losers, often reinforcing militaristic narratives.

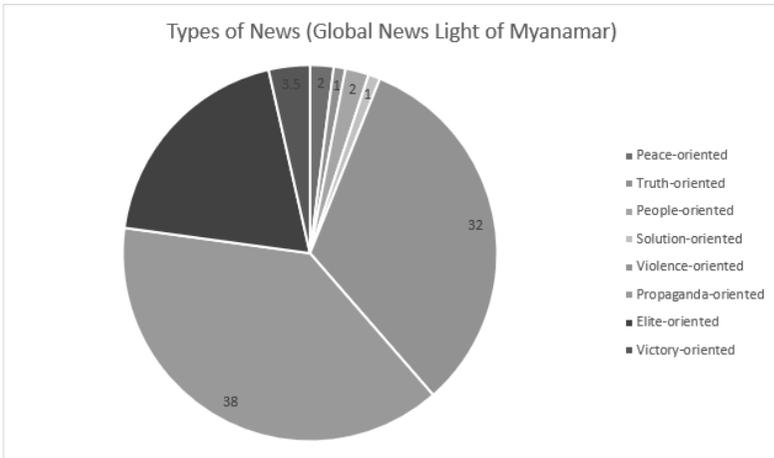


Figure 3: Types of news (Global New Light of Myanmar)

Figure 4 demonstrates that The New York Times predominantly adopts a peace journalism approach in its coverage of the Myanmar civil war. Out of the analyzed articles, 32 pieces (97%) reflect peace journalism principles, emphasizing contextual analysis, humanitarian concerns, and diverse perspectives. In contrast, war journalism is minimally present, appearing in only 1 article (3%). This distribution indicates a strong editorial preference for peace-oriented framing over militarized or confrontational narratives.

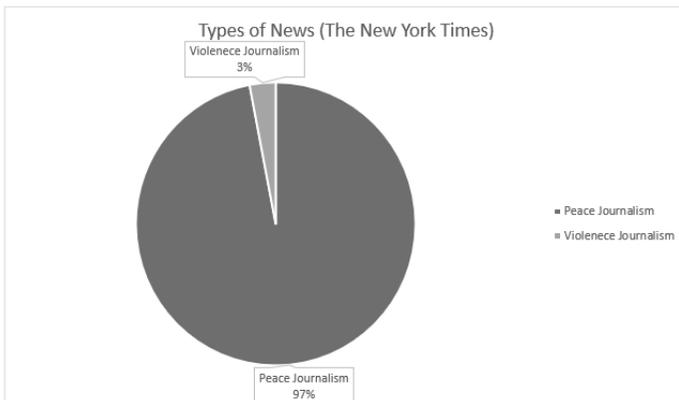


Figure 4: Types of news (The New York Times)

Figure 5 illustrates that 11 articles (33%) are peace-oriented, advocating for non-violent solutions and mutual understanding. Truth-oriented reporting is present in 11 articles (33%), with a strong emphasis on balanced perspectives and source verification. The people-oriented approach is evident in 9 articles (27%), amplifying the stories of those directly impacted by the conflict. Solution-oriented content appears in 1 article (3%), showcasing grassroots peacebuilding efforts and policy alternatives. Violence-oriented coverage is seen in 1 article (1%), frequently focusing on battlefield developments and graphic content. Propaganda, elite, and victory-oriented reporting are entirely absent, with 0 articles (0%) representing these war journalism subtypes.

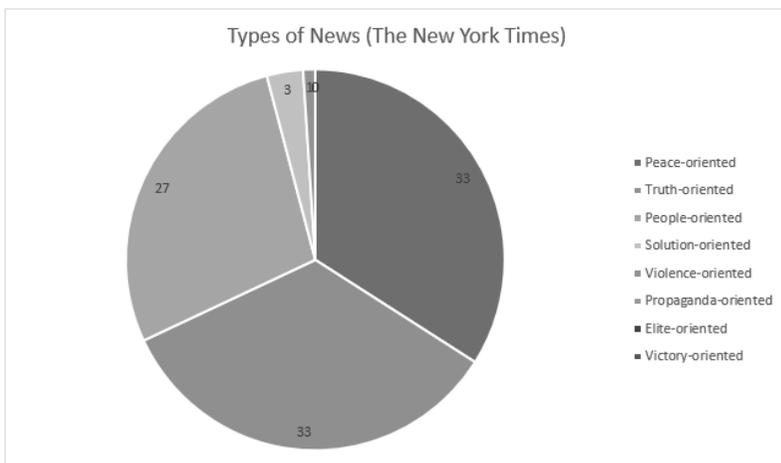


Figure 5: Types of news (The New York Times)

Qualitative Findings

The New York Times (NYT) and the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) report on the Myanmar Civil War in markedly distinct manners. The thematic analysis identifies five key themes: the conceptualization of violence, the utilization of structural context, the attribution of agency, the regulation of dissent, and the significance of peace-making attempts. These themes reveal profound editorial logics that influence public perceptions of war and peace.

Framing Violence: Glorification vs. Humanization

The terminology employed in GNLM's reports is predominantly military. Terms such as "crush," "neutralize," and "eliminate" normalize state aggression and portray military action as a patriotic obligation. Violence is justified, glorified, and detached from its civilian consequences, an approach that aligns with Galtung's concept of war journalism, which magnifies violence while concealing its human impacts.

The New York Times has a contrasting stance, prioritizing civilian suffering. Narratives include names, quotations, and imagery to enhance the authenticity of war by emphasizing dislocation, dread, and personal loss. Violence is portrayed as a political failure rather than an inevitable response. This human-centric methodology is integral to peace journalism, which seeks to restore empathy and complexity.

Structural Context: Present vs. Absent Histories

The New York Times contextualizes the war in Myanmar within the nation's extensive history of military governance, ethnic subjugation, colonial legacies, and democratic efforts. These structural explanations are integral to the narrative, illustrating Galtung's appeal to reveal the "structural violence" underlying armed conflict.

However, GNLM distinguishes events from their political and historical contexts. Reporting is fragmented, with isolated confrontations and arrests that lack contextual explanation. The absence of context leads individuals to forget and reinforces the state's narrative that violence is an essential reaction to disorder rather than a consequence of profound systemic issues.

Agency Attribution: Centralized Control vs. Shared Responsibility

The state possesses nearly all authority in GNLM. The narrative centers on military officers, seen as authoritative and beyond reproach. Civilians appear to be mere passive beneficiaries of military safeguarding. This exemplifies Galtung's "elite-oriented" journalism, which posits that ordinary individuals lack genuine authority.

The New York Times empowers a diverse array of individuals, including activists, citizens, rebels, aid workers, and local leaders. Civilians are shown as proactive participants who oppose, negotiate, and navigate conflict. This diversity aligns with peace journalism as it emphasizes collective responsibility and grassroots perspectives.

Addressing Disagreement: Suppression versus Engagement

GNLM consistently portrays disagreement as erroneous. Individuals opposing the government are labeled as “terrorists,” “foreign agents,” or “destabilizers,” and their motivations are not examined. By criminalizing dissent, GNLM obstructs democratic discourse and empowers the government to employ coercive measures, analogous to the tactics of propaganda-driven war reporting.

The New York Times, conversely, incorporates perspectives from protest leaders, ethnic minorities, and exiles. Their perspectives are examined and contextualized, rather than dismissed. Embracing disagreement as a legitimate mode of political expression fosters opportunities for negotiation and comprehension, advancing the objectives of peace journalism.

The Visibility of Peacebuilding: Neglecting vs. Acknowledging

GNLM predominantly characterizes peace as a condition arising under military governance, rather than as a product of negotiation or participatory processes. Individuals often neglect or refrain from discussing peaceful initiatives, civil society discourse, and humanitarian diplomacy. Peace is synonymous with dominance, reflecting the conventional emphasis of war media on victory rather than reconciliation.

The NYT, conversely, reports on initiatives aimed at fostering peace, ranging from grassroots discussions to international mediation attempts. These perspectives do not romanticize peace; rather, they perceive it as a continuous process requiring engagement and concession. This aligns with Galtung’s solution-oriented journalism, emphasizing nonviolent alternatives.

Discussion

This study’s findings reveal a clear divergence between the conflict narratives produced by The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) and The New York Times (NYT), closely aligning with the theoretical tenets of Galtung’s Peace Journalism Model. The predominance of war journalism in GNLM (93%) and peace journalism in the NYT (97%) not only corroborates but also expands upon prior research about media behavior in authoritarian and democratic contexts.

GNLM’s framing robustly corroborates other research indicating that state-controlled media in Myanmar frequently employ propaganda-laden,

elite-centric narratives that bolster military authority while suppressing alternative perspectives (Progressive Voice Myanmar, 2025; Lwin & Thein, 2020). The consistent labeling of resistance factions as “terrorists,” the omission of civilian casualties, and the emphasis on military operations illustrate the fundamental characteristics of war journalism as outlined by Galtung (1998), notably, a violence-centric viewpoint, a propaganda-oriented methodology, and a zero-sum narrative. This supports McGoldrick and Lynch’s (2000) claim that state-funded media frequently reduce conflicts to binary oppositions, thus reinforcing state power and popular compliance.

Furthermore, the findings corroborate Smith’s (2018) comparative research, which suggests that authoritarian or state-aligned media rarely employ people-oriented or solution-oriented frameworks, even with considerable civilian distress. The absence of structural and historical context in GNLM illustrates what Lee (2019) described as a deliberate state-media strategy in other authoritarian regimes: hindering public understanding by obscuring the underlying causes of violence. Thus, the results of this study align closely with prior research demonstrating that Myanmar’s official media consistently hinders peace-focused reporting due to political constraints and ideological objectives (Progressive Voice Myanmar, 2025; Farzana, 2019).

The New York Times’ coverage, conversely, corroborates research indicating that international media are more inclined to adhere to peace journalism ideals, particularly when addressing human rights, structural violence, and humanitarian concerns (International Federation of Journalists & Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2006; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). The articles in the NYT consistently addressed issues of displacement, civilian casualties, historical oppression, and the voices of activists. This aligns with Galtung’s (1998) emphasis on truth orientation and people orientation. These findings align with Vu & Lynn’s (2020) comparative examination of The Irrawaddy and The New York Times, which also noted that overseas media frequently contextualize Myanmar’s conflicts within broader paradigms of military authoritarianism and ethnic marginalization.

This study elucidates nuances that both corroborate and complicate prior findings. Prior researchers, such as Farzana (2019) and International Media Support (2018), have cautioned that international media may occasionally amplify conflicts or oversimplify political circumstances;

nonetheless, the NYT sample analyzed here did not frequently exhibit these tendencies. Conversely, the majority of the pieces in the NYT provided comprehensive analyses of ethnic politics, historical memory, and grassroots opposition. This contradicts the notion that Western media predominantly use event-driven or sensational frameworks. This suggests that during periods of increased violence, international media may shift towards more comprehensive explanatory reporting, an insight that complicates previous discussions about the reliability of peace journalism on global platforms.

Furthermore, the quantitative distribution of peace and war indicators enriches the limited comparative literature on Myanmar by offering systematic data that substantiates and extends prior research (e.g., Smith, 2018; Lwin, 2025). Prior studies often concentrated on discrete events, such as the Rohingya crisis; however, this analysis spans a broader temporal framework and demonstrates that GNLM's war journalism is not only episodic but fundamentally interconnected. This supports and expands upon prior research demonstrating that authoritarian media environments maintain consistent propaganda patterns regardless of fluctuations in battlefield intensity (Lwin & Thein, 2020).

The findings robustly endorse Galtung's theoretical framework by illustrating that media systems, shaped by political structure, ownership, and editorial independence, substantially affect the continuation or challenge of violent narratives. The GNLM framing exemplifies a victory-centric, elite-focused, and decontextualized paradigm of war media. The New York Times predominantly highlights the people-oriented, truth-focused, and solution-driven aspects of peace journalism. This study's comparative methodology fills a notable void in existing work by providing direct cross-media evidence of the discursive reconstruction of a singular war by two ideologically divergent news systems.

Conclusion

This study highlights the differing narratives created by local and foreign media concerning the Myanmar civil conflict. The analysis, grounded in Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Model, indicates that The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) and The New York Times (NYT) occupy diametrically opposed positions in their conflict reporting. GNLM, operated by the military, predominantly adheres to the principles of war

journalism. Ninety-three percent of its coverage employs militaristic terminology, perspectives of the elite, and state-sponsored propaganda, which normalizes violence and obscures underlying causes. Resistance factions are portrayed as malevolent, while citizens are depicted as passive beneficiaries of military protection. Peace is linked to military dominance rather than dialogue or reconciliation. These patterns support Galtung and Ruge's (1965) notion that journalism can sustain structural violence by reproducing state authority and silencing minority voices.

Conversely, 97% of the New York Times' reporting aligns with the principles of peace journalism. The narratives emphasize human suffering, contextualize the conflict historically and structurally, and highlight various stakeholders, including civilians, activists, and ethnic minorities. Dissent is treated as legitimate political speech rather than illegal disruption. The NYT frequently covers grassroots peacebuilding, civil society initiatives, and international mediation, which GNLM largely ignores. These differences illustrate how institutional and political factors shape media content, demonstrating that journalism can either exacerbate violence or facilitate pathways to peace (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000).

The findings underscore the importance of promoting peace journalism in both domestic and global media, particularly in authoritarian contexts where government narratives dominate. Local journalists may face systemic challenges, but foreign media must avoid sensationalism and emphasize justice, empathy, and democratic reform (Farrell, 2024). The divergent reporting of GNLM and NYT highlights the broader struggle for truth and narrative authority during conflict, showing that journalism can transition from merely reporting violence to actively fostering reconciliation and enduring peace. Future research could explore additional media outlets, examine changes in framing over time, and investigate how audiences interpret war versus peace journalism, providing deeper insights into the media's role in conflict resolution.

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