

7. Peace and war journalism in the New Zealand media? Reporting on the ‘arc of instability’ in the Pacific

ABSTRACT

The Fourth Estate role of the media in a democracy is to inform its citizens and to be a forum for debate about political issues so that the citizenry is able to make informed decisions about the role its government plays. New Zealand portrays itself as a leading democracy in the Pacific, but how much do New Zealanders know about what is happening among the country’s neighbours? This article is an exploratory study on media coverage of four countries in Melanesia which have experienced conflict, to assess the degree to which a peace/conflict journalism approach as opposed to a war/violence journalism approach is used. A content analysis of Radio New Zealand’s *Morning Report* programme was conducted between June and July 2012 to assess the reporting on the four Melanesian countries: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. According to Pilger (2011) war journalism is reporting on what those in power say they do, whereas peace journalism is what those in power actually do. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) state that peace journalism ‘is when editors and reporters make choices—of what stories to report and how to report them—that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict’ (p. 5). The framing of New Zealand media reporting as either war journalism or peace journalism will be an indication of how information about conflict in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is presented to a New Zealand audience.

Keywords: Fourth Estate, peace journalism, Melanesia, New Zealand, radio, war journalism

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THE POLITICAL role of the media as the Fourth Estate in a democracy has traditionally been three-fold: firstly to act as a rein on the abuse of power by politicians by monitoring political actors and exposing corruption; secondly, to 'ensure the maximal flow of information within society to create an informed citizenry' (Louw, 2005, p. 50); and thirdly to act as a conduit for informing the politicians and decision-makers about public opinion. This role of the media is compatible with a 'free' press, given special access to information, needing to protect their sources and providing unbiased, accurate reports.

However, the media themselves have become a political players with the power to have great influence on public opinion, as well as acting as the mouthpiece for a range of political parties and ideologies. They also have a major role in promoting consumption of goods and services as well as being themselves consumer items. There are arguments that this consumerism leads to a misuse of their power, and justifies some sort of control of the media or at least caution about media access to all material.

In New Zealand, the debate about the political role of the media has been muted while the free-market economic shift from the 1980s onward has also witnessed a shift in the New Zealand media from a public service model, more compatible with a Fourth Estate role, to a deregulated commercial model, with the transformation of both Television New Zealand and Radio New Zealand into state-owned enterprises. According to Cocker (2003), by the 1990s, 'New Zealand operated one of the most deregulated broadcasting environments in the world' (p. 325). While attempts were made, particularly with radio, to preserve public radio separate from commercial networks, there have been concerns expressed about the difficult 'balancing act' for RNZ with tensions and conflicting pressures (see for example Zanker and Pauling, 2005). Atkinson (2003) argues that the deregulation and commercial convergence of New Zealand news media 'has had a profound impact on the quality of journalism and of democratic discourse' (p. 305) and claims that 'it is hard to see how they could be defended as an advance for democracy...' (p. 317).

The 'Arc of Instability' and New Zealand's role in the Pacific

Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are all part of the region that has been referred to as the 'arc of instability'. This term came into prominence during the 1990s, when it became a popular way of labeling

the Melanesia region, particularly by Australian politicians and journalists (Dobell, 2006). Four Fiji coups between 1987 and 2006, the Solomon Islands ethnic conflict from the end of the 1990s, paramilitary revolts in Vanuatu, the Bougainville civil war, tribal conflicts in the highlands of PNG, and an attempted political coup in Papua New Guinea in 2011 have contributed to this labeling.

New Zealand, as one of the major powers in the Pacific region, claims to have a special relationship with Melanesia. Ties with New Zealand go back to the days of the missionaries. The Church of New Zealand set up by Anglican missionaries after 1849 became the Church of the Province of Melanesia in 1975. Both of the main political parties in New Zealand claim to want to have good relationships with Pacific Island nations and both describe New Zealand as 'a nation of the Pacific' and other nations as 'New Zealand's neighbours'. However, statements tend to be generalised, without reference to differing relationships with Pacific Island states, and there is often little differentiation between regions in the Pacific.

For example, the National Party's website on Pacific Affairs describes New Zealand as 'a nation of the Pacific', but focuses mainly on 'working hard to improve outcomes for Pacific families in New Zealand' with its reference to Pasifika people in New Zealand as including Cook Islanders, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan and Tongan. There is no reference to Melanesia specifically, or to any other Pacific state, and Pacific nations are referred to as 'our neighbours', 'our closest neighbours' or 'our immediate neighbours' (National Party, 2011).

A Pacific Cooperation Foundation symposium on Melanesia in 2008 was one opportunity for the New Zealand Labour government to state its position on the region. The Minister of Pacific Affairs, Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, described Melanesians as people of the Pacific 'our neighbour and kin'. The importance of Melanesia for the Pacific and New Zealand was acknowledged to include sitting 'astride' important lines of communication, being richly endowed with minerals, energy, and agriculture and forest resources. Its diverse habitat was 'critical to global biodiversity' while 'active participation, leadership and consent of Melanesia is essential to the Pacific Islands Forum's effectiveness' (Laban 2008). She noted New Zealand's role in development, trade, fisheries and aid programmes. But she also suggested that 'the region is one New Zealanders need to do much hard thinking about'.

In order for New Zealanders to do some of this 'hard thinking', they would

need to be informed about issues in Melanesia, especially in regards to conflict. Tully (2005) has stated that there has been downsizing in resources for media coverage in New Zealand related to the Pacific. It is unlikely that much of the history and context of direct violence will be provided in mainstream news reports of the Pacific (p. 296).

Our exploratory study of war and peace journalism in New Zealand news coverage examines the information available to a mainstream New Zealand radio audience about events and issues occurring in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu over a two-month time period, and the way in which this information has been framed. A content analysis has been conducted of the most popular programme of New Zealand's highest-ranked radio station, RNZ's *Morning Report*, for the months of June and July 2012. The framing of the content will be analysed according to how it reflects a war journalism frame as opposed to a peace journalism frame in order to assess the way in which information on the Pacific is presented to a New Zealand audience.

War Journalism

Commentators argue that the mainstream Western media have a tendency to frame their reporting in terms of war and violence (Galtung, 2003; Lynch, 2008). Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) claim Western news media focus on direct violence because of news values such as negativity, unambiguity, personification and meaningfulness. He proposes that war journalism enforces structural violence. He divides violence into three categories; direct, structural and cultural. Direct violence is an event; it is overt violence such as killings, massacres etc. Structural violence is a process; it is unintended violence, which is intrinsic to people, social structures and institutions. This type of violence can result in horizontal inequalities; the difference in groups' right to use economic, social, and political resources in a society (Galtung, 1996, p.31; Stewart & Brown, 2007, p.222). Cultural violence makes 'direct and structural [violence] look, even feel, right' (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). Galtung (1990) argues cultural violence motivates actors to commit direct violence or to ignore structural violence. It can be intended or unintended. Cultural violence can be present in societal norms such as religion, law and ideology, and language (p. 31).

Some commentators argue there are other ethical concerns about reporting on war and conflict. For example, Danner (cited in Bachevich, 2006)

claims the media added to the American government's unethical decision to invade Iraq by keeping 'political debate willfully stupid and opaque' (p. 25). Mark Danner, a distinguished journalist who teaches at Berkeley and Bard College, is cited in Bachevich as not being surprised by the lying and scheming of politicians. Danner finds that the failure of journalists to expose those lies and schemes is 'far more troubling' because this failure has served to 'deepen the political crisis' (p. 25).

Richardson (2007) states that reporting of conflicts becomes shaped and driven by propaganda, most notably from organisations and institutions with a stake in the killing. Herman and Chomsky (1988) also describe the media as a propaganda model that uses a set of news filters which allow the government and elite to convey their messages to the public. The filters are; (1) size, ownership and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media, (2) advertising as primary income, (3) the reliance of media on elite sources, (4) 'flak' as a means of disciplining the media, and (5) anti-communism as a control mechanism. These elements build upon each other and reinforce these filters: 'The raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print' (p.166).

This is supported by Shinar's (2009) findings on the coverage of the 2006 Lebanon War where elite-oriented sources, such as government and military, were used rather than people-oriented sources. These elite sources 'want to use journalism to promote their version of the war to the world and hence shape the behaviour of the public in their favour' (Richardson, 2007, p. 181). Shinar suggests these institutions are focused on a zero-sum orientation.

Peace Journalism

Pilger (2010) describes war journalism as reporting on what those in power say they do, whereas peace journalism reports on what those in power actually do. Peace journalism suggests a change in the focus of the mainstream media away from elite people, elite nations and negativity, towards people, processes and paths to peace. It is argued that media should not concentrate on reporting of the violent events of conflict only, but should also provide information that could lead to resolution of conflict. From this perspective it is seen as an attempt to restore balance in media coverage by expanding the sources to include, not just elites, but other parties involved in the conflict in order to provide material that helps to explain the situation in more depth. In this way, peace journalism is another approach along with citizenship

journalism, civic journalism and development journalism that aims to uphold the Fourth Estate role of the media in a democracy. However, there is an additional prescriptive element advocated by some commentators on peace journalism who argue that in our present conflict-ridden world, the media have a particular responsibility, not just to provide balance, but also to be active in promoting resolution of conflict and peace-building (see Galtung, 2003; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Here peace journalism would act as a counter to the elite, commercial, war journalism approach that tends to promote and value violence because it is more commercially attractive, or as described in the well-known mantra 'If it bleeds, it leads'.

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) state that peace journalism 'is when editors and reporters make choices—about what stories to report and how to report them—that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict' (p.5). Peace journalism for them is a conscious effort to report not just the visible effects of conflict, but also the invisible effects and solutions to the conflict. Galtung (2003) suggests that structural and cultural violence should be included in news content to highlight the issues for all sides, and to deescalate conflict. Conflict formation, the parties and their goals and issues need to be discussed for journalism to be comprehensive and informative. Journalists should 'not fall into the trap of believing that the key actors are where the action (violence/war) is' (p. 179).

Peace journalism is not solely focused on criticising how media portray conflict for commercial gain, but also is intended to create a guide for better practice for media outlets. It is suggested that a more responsible approach to reporting on conflict would include providing information in a way that might contribute to the resolution of conflict rather than to an increase in violence. Robie (2011) argues that peace journalism is an approach that can help make sense of the Pacific region, which 'has become increasingly complex, politically strained and violent' (p. 1).

Taimi Media Network chief executive Kalafi Moala (2011) says media is a tool that engages in the process of social change, as 'how the media message is conveyed creates either a destructive or a constructive force in peace and development' (p. 21). Moala argues that in the Pacific region, conflict resolution techniques are overlooked because the focus of the media is already on the next conflict, because of its Western media framework. He believes Pacific Island media should break free of this Western format. Media freedom and

purpose-driven journalism are not opposed to each other. The media should be a tool for increasing understanding of issues in the region and the possible solutions to these conflicts (pp. 20-25).

Methodology

A content analysis of RNZ *Morning Report's* news coverage of Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu over a two-month period has been conducted to explore whether *Morning Report's* news coverage of these four countries shows a prevalence of war or peace journalism framing. This content analysis examined RNZ *Morning Report's* news coverage of Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu during June and July 2012. *Morning Report* was chosen as the news medium for the content analysis because it is a well-known New Zealand mainstream current affairs programme with a large audience base. RNZ is New Zealand's highest-ranking radio station. Radio 'continues to be a very popular medium for New Zealanders with 82 percent aged 15 years and over listening to live radio in an average week in 2011' (RNZ, 2012). In 2011 an All New Zealand Radio Survey found that RNZ ranked 'number one with the biggest market share and the biggest audience size with 522,000 listeners' (RNZ, 2012). *Morning Report* is RNZ's most popular programme with an estimated weekly audience of 347,000 people aged 15 years and over (based on weekly cumulative audience) (RNZ, 2012). Over the 2011 period *Morning Report* had a station share of 13.6 percent (RNZ, 2012).

There is consistent news coverage of the Pacific by *Morning Report* as there is a segment every morning called 'Pacific News', which focuses on top stories related to the Pacific region overnight. Radio New Zealand International, a shortwave broadcaster that provides comprehensive news coverage in the Pacific region, also contributes to the segment. In this study, there were 108 news stories analysed that focused on Melanesia over the two-month time period.

The research question addressed in this content analysis is: To what extent does the news coverage of four Melanesian countries: Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, between June 1, 2012 to July 31, 2012 by RNZ's *Morning Report* display war journalism and peace journalism framing? The period analysed was conducted in 'real time'.

The texts collected for this study have been analysed using an adaptation of the models developed by Galtung (2003) and Lee and Maslog (2005).

Galtung’s distinction between war journalism and peace journalism is: (1) peace or conflict-oriented versus war or violence journalism, (2) truth-oriented versus propaganda oriented, (3) people-oriented versus elite-oriented, (4) and solution-oriented versus victory-oriented. Galtung (2003) argues that ‘good reporting on conflict is not a compromise...but favours peace journalism and opposes war journalism’ (p. 178). Lee and Maslog (2005) in their analysis of Asian newspapers’ coverage of conflicts, reconstruct Galtung’s categories into 13 indicators of war journalism and 13 indicators of peace journalism, to classify the framing of news reports. Lee and Maslog’s indicators are made up of two themes: approach and language. The approach-based criteria include a) reactivity, b) visibility, c) elite orientation, d) differences, e) focus on here and now, f) good and bad dichotomy, g) party involvement, h) partisanship, i) winning orientation and j) continuity of reports. The language-based criteria include wording that is a) victimising, b) demonising, and c) emotive (pp. 325-326).

Lee and Maslog’s approach indicators were adapted for this content analysis. Because of the short-term nature of this research three of Lee and

Table 1: Coding categories used in content analysis

Indicator	War journalism	Peace journalism
Visibility	Reports mainly on visible events.	Reports also on the issues behind the event.
Orientation	Elite-oriented (focuses on leaders and elites as actors and sources of information).	People-oriented (focuses on common people as actors and sources of information).
Differences	Focuses mainly on differences in society.	Reports areas of agreement that might lead to a resolution.
Here and Now	Focuses mainly on here and now.	Reports causes and consequences that led to the incompatibility/event.
Good/bad dichotomy	Dichotomises between the good guys and bad guys, victims and villains.	Avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys.
Party involvement	Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses).	Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties).
Partisanship	Partisan (biased for one party).	Non partisan (neutral, not taking sides).
Sources	Only one source identified in item.	More than one source identified in item.

Source: Adapted from Lee, S.T. and Maslog, C.C. (2005). War or peace journalism? Asian newspaper coverage of conflicts. *Journal of Communication*, 55(2), pp. 325-326.

Maslog's approach indicators were deemed not applicable; reactivity, winning orientation and continuity of reports. The remaining seven indicators—visibility, elite orientation, differences, focus on here and now, good and bad dichotomy, party involvement, partisanship—were modified and a new indicator—sources—was added (see Table 1 for further explanation).

A score of one (1) was recorded for each peace journalism indicator found. A score of negative one (-1) was found for each war journalism indicator found. If an item did not meet the criteria outlined in Table 1 for the indicator being analysed it was ranked as unclassified and given a score of zero. Based on the scores each story will be classified as peace journalism, war journalism, or neutral. When the peace journalism indicators exceed the war journalism indicators, the story will be classified as peace journalism. When the war journalism indicators exceed the peace journalism indicators, the story will be classified as war journalism. If the score is equal, the story will be classified as neutral (Lee & Maslog, 2005, pp.316-317).

Results

Overall, the texts analysed were predominately framed according to a war journalism classification based on the eight indicators examined. Of the 108 articles examined in this content analysis, 15 (13.9 percent) had a peace journalism frame, 80 (74.1 percent) had a war journalism frame, and the remaining 13 (12.0 percent) were coded as neutral. Overall war journalism was the dominant frame. However, there was a range of different results within each indicator in terms of peace journalism and war journalism framing, and differences in coverage of each of the four countries studied.

Of the 108 texts examined from RNZ's *Morning Report* over the two-month period: 45 (41.7 percent) were items concerning Fiji, 34 (31.5 percent) were items concerning PNG, nine (8.3 percent) were items concerning Solomon Islands, 18 (16.7 percent) were items concerning Vanuatu, and two (1.9 percent) were items with a pan-Melanesian focus.

The 45 items concerning Fiji had a predominately war journalism frame. Namely 32 (71.1 percent), whereas five (11.1 percent) were found to have a peace journalism frame, and eight (17.8 percent) of the items were found to be neutral.

The 34 items concerning PNG also had a predominately war journalism frame. Namely 31 (91.2 percent) of the items were found to have a war journalism frame, whereas one (2.9 percent) was found to have a peace journalism

frame, and two (5.9 percent) of the items were found to be neutral. This war journalism frame may be in part because of the elections ongoing in PNG over this time period—33 of the 34 items (97.1 percent) were focused on politics, in particular the election process.

There were nine items concerning Solomon Islands over the time period analysed and seven (77.8 percent) of the items were reporting on the Festival of Pacific Arts being hosted in Honiara, where a Māori kapahaka group was performing. The other two items discussed population growth in Honiara and bird smuggling from the Solomon Islands. Only three (33.3 percent) of the items had a war journalism frame, whereas five (55.6 percent) were found to have a peace journalism frame, and one (11.1 percent) of the items was found to be neutral.

There were 18 items concerning Vanuatu over the time period analysed, with 12 (66.7 percent) found to have a war journalism frame, whereas four (22.2 percent) were found to have a peace journalism frame, and two (11.1%) of the items were found to be neutral.

There were only two additional items with a Melanesia focus and both were coded as having a war journalism frame.

There were two indicators that produced results of war journalism framing for almost all of the items; *orientation* (102 out of 108 items (94.4 percent)) and *sources* (98 out of 108 items (90.7 percent)). This means that the majority of the news stories focused on leaders and elites as actors and sources of information rather than being people-oriented; and for the majority of the items only one source was referred to specifically.

The four other indicators that also produced a war journalism frame for the majority of the items were: *visibility* (64 out of 108 items (59.3 percent)); *differences* (61 out of 108 items (56.5 percent)); *here and now* (83 out of 108 items (76.9 percent)); and *party involvement* (65 out of 108 (60.2 percent)). A high result for the war journalism framing in terms of *visibility* means the reporting concentrated on the visible event rather than exploring the issues behind or surrounding the event. This is similar to the indicator of *here and now* which focuses on the present, and not the past causes or possible future consequences of the issue being covered. In addition, for the indicator of *party involvement*, the reporting predominantly focused on two opposing parties or points of view, rather than providing voice to multiple parties or viewpoints. Win/lose framing is also evident under the *differences* indicator, where differences within society are emphasised, rather than areas of agreement. This

type of reporting provides limited information about conflict issues and how people may be affected by conflict.

There were two indicators that showed results of a peace journalism frame: *good/bad dichotomy* (75 items out of 108 (69.4 percent) and *partisanship* (81 items out of 108 (75.0 percent)). This is an interesting finding as with the win/lose scenarios found under the other indicators, one might have expected *partisanship* to be evidence of this too. There is little evidence of overt partisanship in this reporting, and little evidence of labeling one side as ‘the good guys’ and the other side as ‘the bad guys’.

Discussion

The presence of a particular segment called ‘Pacific News’ on RNZ’s *Morning Report* (approximately four minutes out of a three-hour programme) means there is coverage of Pacific Island issues every weekday. Occasionally, there is more in-depth coverage of Pacific Island nations in other segments of *Morning Report*. Over the time period studied, approximately half of the items broadcast on *Morning Report* were on Melanesia, with Fiji having the highest percentage of the coverage (41.7 percent). The second highest coverage was PNG (31.5 percent), followed by Vanuatu (16.7 percent), with Solomon Islands being the nation covered the least of the four (8.3 percent). New Zealand’s involvement in Fiji was mentioned, for example, as related to the possibility of the resumption of talks between New Zealand, Australia and Fiji, and promises by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to provide help with facilitating the elections scheduled for 2014 in both the Pacific News segment and longer items in the *Morning Report* bulletin. New Zealand’s connection to PNG was made explicit in terms of New Zealand’s role holding observer status during the election. In items on Vanuatu there was mention of Australia and New Zealand in relation to funding for prisons, and in the Solomon Islands New Zealanders were reported as being involved in the Pacific Islands Festival of Arts.

The majority of the items were included in the ‘Pacific News’ segment. War journalism framing dominated the analysed coverage of three of the Melanesian nations studied, Fiji, PNG and Vanuatu. The predominance of a war journalism frame can be attributed in part to the brief nature of the news items examined. It is less likely that short items are going to satisfy some of the indicators used to judge peace journalism framing as longer length items are required to provide the explanations and discussion of alternative views

and solutions advocated by peace journalism (Lee & Maslog, 2005).

Coverage of the Solomon Islands was not predominantly found to have a war journalism frame. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from this distinction, as the Solomon Islands had the least amount of coverage, and most of the items concerned a festival of arts, a topic which does not lend itself to war and peace journalism framing. Despite the fact that the Solomon Islands is in a post-conflict phase, there was only one item that made any reference to the 'tensions'. This item also had a peace journalism frame.

On the other hand, coverage of elections and politics is more likely to be framed according to a war journalism perspective because of the controversial nature of politics. This is evident in particular in the coverage on PNG where the vast majority of the items concerned politics, and the items were mostly about the elections that were being conducted during the time period studied. PNG scored the highest percentage of war journalism framing. The second highest war journalism rating was for coverage on Fiji. More than half of the items on Fiji were political, with several of the items referring to the possibility of elections. There was also reference to the relationship between Fiji and both New Zealand and Australia. In the case of Vanuatu, the war journalism framing was less obvious, but nevertheless was the tendency. The majority of these items were about politics or law and order, once again issues that lend themselves to a war journalism framing (see for example, Fransworth & Lichter (2010) and Hayward and Rudd (2004)).

The content analysis found that 94.4 percent of the coverage displayed elite orientation. This means that the opinions and realities of the majority of the Melanesian people were largely absent from *Morning Report's* coverage. While the New Zealand government is commenting on and giving advice about the politics of Melanesia, the New Zealand public is unlikely to be in a position to assess how valuable, necessary and effective New Zealand's involvement is for the people of the Pacific.

However, there is little evidence of either direct partisanship or of any explicit bias towards one side over another as demonstrated in the result that 75.0 percent of items were from a peace journalism frame for the partisanship indicator, and 69.4 percent of the items were from a peace journalism frame for the good/bad dichotomy indicator. These peace journalism findings are encouraging as this demonstrates that there is evidence of objective reporting for most of the items examined.

Conclusion

This study is limited by analysis of only one news programme and the short period of time examined. As mentioned at the start of this article this content analysis is an exploratory study on the framing of conflict in four countries. Because of time constraints, and the time required to collect radio data, only two months of data were collected for this study. This means that events had significant impact on the news coverage as seen by the difference in reporting on Solomon Islands. News coverage of Solomon Islands focused on a cultural festival and had a peace journalism frame. PNG however was conducting elections, an event that has a history of violence and instability. The different events focused on may impact on the framing. The analysis of only one news programme also does not provide a complete picture on reporting of mainstream news outlets to the New Zealand audience. A further study on other news coverage of these countries would give a more comprehensive analysis on the framing of conflict in Melanesia to the New Zealand audience. Another limitation of this study is that the indicators used in the content analysis may be interpreted differently by individual researchers. As the items were coded by one researcher the indicators could not be tested for intercoder reliability. The importance of the analysis is identifying common themes that were found in the news coverage.

Bearing in mind these limitations, there are some tentative conclusions that can be made. Applying a war/peace journalism model of analysis to the coverage of four of our Melanesian neighbours, produces a finding that RNZ's *Morning Report* programme conscientiously provides coverage to listeners about events and issues in Melanesia over a two-month period. However, this coverage is limited in terms of the short amount of time devoted to Melanesian issues and the brevity of items covering the four nations studied, Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with most of the items being restricted to the 'Pacific News' segment.

The results of this content analysis of items broadcast during June and July 2012 reveal that the items were consistent with war journalism framing overall. This is partly a result of the brief nature of the items as this does not allow for explanations or the more in-depth coverage that peace journalism advocates. However, it is also a result of the concentration on only one source and the dominance of elite sources to inform the reporting, thus excluding other information, views and opinions. On the positive side, there are attempts

to keep the reporting objective to the extent that overt partisanship is not in evidence. The coverage also had little labeling of parties or opinions as good or bad.

Using a war/peace journalism framing has been a useful way to identify that overall, the reporting analysed concerning the Melanesian region lacks a broader peace journalism framing that may better inform the New Zealand public on issues concerning the four countries examined. RNZ's *Morning Report*, one of the most informative of New Zealand's media outlets, has a predominant war journalism framing in the news coverage of Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu analysed. This limits its Fourth Estate role. A peace journalism approach may help New Zealanders understand the complexities of the Melanesian region, which is more than just the 'arc of instability'.

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MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY IN THE PACIFIC

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