In times where global and local armed conflicts and the aftermaths of such make up a major portion of international news, the book *Journalism in Conflict and Post-Conflict Conditions* is most welcome.

There is a constant need of academic studies of the state of journalism, working conditions for journalists and coverage of international conflicts. According to recent reports of press freedom, such as Freedom House’s Freedom of the Press 2016, global press freedom has declined to its lowest point in 12 years. Therefore, this book is timely and important.

### A JOINT EFFORT

The book is a result of a joint effort by faculty members and the network around the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA). This department can be considered to be Norway’s strongest in the area of international journalism and media research, especially in areas of crises and conflicts. The anthology is also a cooperation with Nordicom and Ulla Carlsson, the UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Global Policy. Several of the contributors are also associated with HiOA’s media development projects internationally, such as in Nepal, Uganda, and Colombia.

In the introduction, the editors present the book’s aims: «…to provide both empirical and theoretical input to the discussions of the role of journalism and media in conflict and post-conflict situations […] discussions about post-conflict situations will gain from including the media» (Kristin Skare Orgeret, p. 16).

Co-editor Mahmood Mamdani coins the significance of media’s role in a conflict or post-conflict situation: «In constructing a narrative for the reader, the journalist plays an active role in defining the event in question and underlining what is at stake» (Mahmoodi Mamdani, p. 11). He goes on to point at media’s
contradictory roles in a conflict; to both report on it and at the same time build a consensus on the way out of it. How can media provide both sound journalism and play a normative role, and what are the journalist’s roles in this?

DIFFICULT DEFINITION

The difficult definition of post-conflict and the conceptualization of the term are discussed in the introduction. The book aims at many concepts, some that seems hard to combine in the book, something that the book is honest about.

After the introductory chapter, the ten chapters provide ten cases of journalism in conflict and post-conflict areas:

In the first chapter of the book, Elisabeth Eide explores the concept of post-conflict in Afghanistan and that the country scores low on peace indicators. The study of two media support organization, Nai and IWPR, show that they struggle with reporting strategies in an unstable and risky society. The chapter also emphasizes the problems of practicing journalism in a society in the midst of a full-fledged conflict.

BECAME MOUTHPIECES

In chapter two, Charlotte Ntulume analyzes, via content analysis, how Uganda’s two leading newspapers, New Vision and Daily Monitor covered the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF)’s involvement in the conflict in South Sudan in December 2013 and January 2014. She shows that journalists in both media outlets mainly used and relied on official government sources and became mouthpieces for the authorities in a tense and controversial involvement in a neighboring country.

Rune Ottosen and Sjur Øvrebø investigate in chapter three the relationship between the war in Libya in 2011 and the unfolding events in Syria in 2013 in relationship to how the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten covered these two events. They claim that the connecting lines between the two conflicts are underreported, especially regarding to Norway’s previous military involvement in Libya. They argue that Norway should take a more clear responsibility for the events after the bombing.

SPECIAL FEMALE CHALLENGES

In the fourth chapter, William Tayeebwana argues, through critical discourse analysis (CDA) that the United Nations is pushing a «Western-centric liberal peace building agenda» in Burundi through the United Nations radio in the country, instead of exploring alternative and local approaches proposed by national actors.
Kristin Skare Orgeret, one of the book’s editors, has previously written extensively on various gender issues regarding journalism. In chapter five, she investigates, through interviews and discussions, the special challenges for female reporters covering wars and conflicts. She has interviewed reporters from Egypt, Norway, Pakistan, South Africa, Tunisia, and Uganda. The values, vulnerability and the human experiences of women add valuable perspectives to reporting wars and post-conflict, Orgeret argues.

Chapter six also deals with women’s perspectives in journalism. In a two case studies from Nepal, Samiksha Kaoirala explores the participation of women journalists in Nepali media and how they have covered war and conflict situations. She shows how female reporters also take on non-traditional roles, breaking with traditional roles.

WAR AND PEACE IN COLOMBIA

Chapter seven and eight deals with war and post-conflict journalism in Colombia, but from two very different perspectives. In chapter seven, Henry Caballero Fula analyzes the emergence of indigenous journalism in the country and how struggle and especially violence is contributing to shaping journalism that is closely related to a certain cause. This is different from traditional Northern journalism. In chapter eight, Roy Krøvel investigates Norwegian journalism on war and peace in Colombia. He criticizes this kind of journalism to be characterized by a Northern culture, where the autonomy of journalism is valued highly. However, this journalism might oversimplify the understanding of the conflict, especially when dealing with the topic of indigenous people. They often get reduced to voiceless victims of war.

Elisabeth Frey addresses the concept of personal trauma in chapter nine, named «Improving journalism through three dances of trauma studies». She discusses how traumatic experiences are factors in post-conflict and crisis journalism. She has interviewed Tunisian and Norwegian journalists who has experienced trauma. She argues that knowledge about trauma might add to more sensitive and understanding in journalism.

TRAUMA AND PHOTOGRAPHS

In the final chapter, Anne Hege Simonsen also addresses trauma, this time related to photographs and how they can trigger collective as well as individual emotions. The chapter, that adds to the field of memory studies in journalism, shows how photographs can aid in both remembering and forgetting traumatic events.

These ten chapters add ten valuable studies to the field of journalism in conflicts and post-conflict situations. They add to understanding a broad range of issues, from critical studies of international journalism, through unique empi-
rical material from various corners of the world to how trauma and gender influences individual journalists, to mention a few. The book contains unique and new material.

WELL WRITTEN

The book’s strongest point is its empirical material provided in the ten chapters. Each of them is well written and could stay as individual studies. It takes a lot of effort, contacts and experience to gather the material represented in the book.

However, there are issues that I think could have improved book. First, I would like to see a stronger conceptual discussion on the terms of war journalism, post-war, and maybe also transitional journalism. The introductory chapter draws up some definitions, but the book could benefit from a stronger discussion on some of the key terms. I also miss a more critical discussion of the term «peace journalism», which is presented quite uncritically in the book. There are some good examples of this discussion, for example the debate in Conflict and Communication Online a few years ago (Loyn, 2007).

COULD NEED A FINAL CHAPTER

Second, the book could need a final chapter that tied all the unique case studies together. It is fair to say that the introduction gives a summary, but a final chapter could have drawn the big lines from the studies and attempted to show a way forward. This could also have helped the conceptual discussion in the book.

Finally, I miss a European perspective on war and post-conflict journalism in the book. This is maybe natural for me to say, as one who is primarily studying journalism in the Balkans, but I think that a study from, e.g., Eastern Europe, could have completed the tour around the world.

In conclusion, I want to strongly recommend the book that represents an immense amount of hard work and brings unique studies and worldwide perspectives (as the title says) to the important field of international journalism studies. I hope the book finds its way to students and scholars in journalism worldwide.

REFERENCES