

Constructive Conflict Coverage

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**Austrian Study Center
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Constructive Conflict Coverage

A Social Psychological Approach

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Wilhelm Kempf, in cooperation with Ute Annabring, Dorothea Hamdorf
& Susanne Jaeger

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Wilhelm Kempf, in cooperation with Bettina Bucher & Michael Reimann

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Preface

Peace culture does not strive for a world of eternal harmony in which no conflicts occur. Conflicts are unavoidable. Not the elimination of conflicts, but rather the elimination of their violent settlement is the broad goal of peace policy. Only states that voluntarily refrain from employing military means to achieve national and economic goals are pursuing peace policies. Civil conflict management is intended to contribute to reaching this goal. The basic idea of de-escalating conflicts by peaceful means and their transformation to a level of reduced violence is even affirmed today in real politics, in which civilian task forces are set up for crisis prevention and civilian conflict management. The media and their reportage, which are the subject of this book, play an essential role in this. The important issue is the question of whether and how peace-furthering media reportage can constructively transform conflicts, de-escalate war discourses and construct peace discourses.

A central concern of the book is to analyze the theoretical foundations of conflict and the media, to support this analysis with a wealth of empirical data and evidence, to analyze the institutional, sociological and psychological factors which promote the propaganda role of the media, as well as to develop a model for conflict coverage that combines theory and practice in order to strengthen the constructive discourse contributions of the media.

The first part of the book begins with introductory definitions and concepts on the theory of conflict communication and the media. The starting point is the constructivist research paradigm, according to which the mass media construct social reality, as well as the empirical insight that traditional conflict reportage tends to be propagandistic: the history of propaganda is as old as the history of the media.

In the tension-filled field between war and peace and in the foreign policy arena, the media have a special role to play. The author contrasts two concepts: the so-called "Journalism of Attachment" (the expression comes from Martin Bell) and "Peace Journalism". Peace journalism attaches great value to conflict

analyses, searches for the victims on both sides and aims at de-escalation and constructive proposals for conflict resolution. In contrast, the journalism of attachment gets along without analysis and reflection, and it concentrates exclusively on war as a moral struggle between "good" and "evil". The proponents of the journalism of attachment strive neither for a neutral, detached perspective nor for the de-escalation of war. They take sides and are primarily interested in mobilizing people. Not against war, but rather against those they believe they have correctly identified as the "enemy". In the end, the journalism of attachment replaces the rules of journalism with the rules of propaganda, for which truth is only raw material.

Why is traditional conflict coverage so often identical with propaganda? This book studies the numerous factors which lead to the absence of peace discourse in media reportage and poses the resulting demand to develop strategies with which the media can be prevented from pouring oil on the fire of conflict. The media have two options: Either they can take sides with one party, or they can play the role of a third party which contributes to constructive conflict transformation. Third parties can serve not only as catalysts of conflict escalation. Defending the justified interests of both parties, they can also serve as facilitators of de-escalation.

An open question is whether and how constructive conflict reportage can be achieved against the wills of governments. The American military-media management shows that media control occurs in Western democracies as well. In the West, however, concepts of propaganda are harder to see through, and censorship is less crude, but rather more sophisticated and flexible.

Based on theories of conflict management two mutually complementary models of peace journalism were developed in the late 1990s. While Johan Galtung's model uses a more sociological approach and aims at counteracting the mechanisms of news selection, Wilhelm Kempf emphasizes the social-psychological aspects and places cognitive and emotional framing at the center of his model.

Finally, the constructive transformation of conflict, the deconstruction of war discourse and the construction of peace discourse are dealt with. While war discourse asks the questions: "Who is the aggressor?" and "How can he be stopped?", peace discourse asks the questions: "What are the objects of conflict?" and "How could a solution be found which satisfies the needs of all parties?". Because journalists are themselves members of so-

ciety and usually share the same basic beliefs and convictions which they should critically reflect on, however, the deconstruction of war discourses becomes difficult. Moreover, it is not possible to leap from competitive conflict behavior (win-lose model) to a cooperative strategy (win-win model) without risking the loss of power and influence. For these and other reasons, the implementation of peace journalism in the sense of Johan Galtung has little chance unless peace is on the political agenda already. Wilhelm Kempf, therefore, proposes a two-step procedure. The first step is characterized by de-escalation-oriented conflict coverage, which broadly coincides with so-called quality journalism. It is marked by neutrality and critical distance toward all conflict parties and keeps the conflict open for peaceful alternatives. Central for this are: a win-win orientation as an option, questioning violence as a suitable means of resolving conflict, questioning military values and exploring the conflict formation. The second step goes beyond this and is characterized by solution-oriented coverage which involves an active search for peaceful alternatives, the conversion of outrage at the enemy into outrage at war itself and attempts at reconciliation.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the training of journalists, the analysis of concrete media reportage and exercises in "rewriting the news". Here the question is how constructive reportage of the same events could be written and how the escalation-oriented bias of conventional conflict coverage can be reduced.

In the chapter on journalist training key training courses (e.g., Transcend, etc.) are presented. The critique is made that too little attention is paid to overcoming institutional pressures. Training concepts should not focus only on the cognitive side of the problem, but rather should also take account of social-psychological aspects. Importance is attached to "imparting competence in conflict theory", a demand which, e.g., is already being met in Peace-Keeping and Peace-Building Training (IPT) at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR).

The chapter on training concludes with training concepts and a variety of teaching material which is available on the accompanying CD ROM. The possibilities range from a one-day training course to a weekend intensive course on up to a one-week *block* course.

In the frame of the editor's book series "Peace power Europe?" Wilhelm Kempf has already coordinated Volume 5 ("Conflict and Violence") and contributed to Volumes 8 ("Civil Conflict Manage-

ment") and 9 ("European Peace Policy – Policy of a Peace power?"), which among other things deal with media reportage on conflict and war. Since the editor is very interested in continuing this research, he was happy to edit the present book.

The ASPR thanks Wilhelm Kempf and his co-workers, who with this book are making an important contribution to peace journalistic basic research and its practice-oriented employment in training courses and teaching materials.

Dr. Gerald Mader
Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution
Stadtschlaining, June 2003

Part I
Theoretical and empirical foundations

Wilhelm Kempf

In cooperation with Ute Annabring, Dorothea Hamdorf & Susanne Jaeger

The social construction of international conflict¹

1.1 Some basic concepts

A widely accepted definition of conflict is the incompatibility of goals and/or behaviors or actions (cf. Figure 1.1). Conflict can be either intra-personal (where incompatible goals and/or behavioral tendencies exist within one and the same person), or it can be social, i.e., conflict among two or more parties (individual subjects, groups, institutions, societies or nations).

Definition of conflict

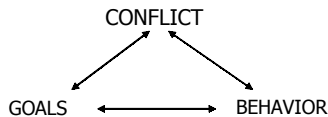


Figure 1.1: Conflict

If the parties to a social conflict belong to the same group or nation, the conflict takes place within this group or nation, and we can speak of intra-group or intra-national conflict (or domestic conflict) and thus distinguish this sort of conflict from inter-group and international conflicts, which are defined as conflicts among groups or nations. Moreover, there may be conflicts between subgroups and the higher order groups to which they belong, as well as conflicts between individual persons and groups to which they do or do not belong, etc. All these are different types of conflicts that involve different conditions with respect to the balance of power, social commitment, flexibility of goals and behaviors and various other factors that affect the course of conflict.

Forms of social conflict

Nonetheless, we adopt a point of view introduced into conflict theory by Morton Deutsch (1973), according to which all social conflicts can be dealt with under a number of specifically psychological aspects that can be shown to follow directly from the logic of conflict (Kempf, 2000).

1. Parts of this chapter are based on preliminary work by Susanne Jaeger. Responsibility for the present text is solely that of the author.

A typology of conflict vs. non-conflict situations

Objectivist vs. subjectivist approaches

Less unanimity than there is concerning the concept of conflict, there is concerning the question of whether one should only speak of social conflict when at least one of the conflict parties is aware of the conflict . This – so-called subjectivist – position is, e.g., favored by Boulding (1962), Pruitt & Rubin (1986), Putnam & Poole (1987), Donohue & Kolt (1992) and Glasl (1992). The opposed – so-called objectivist position – is found, e.g., with Sissons & Ackoff (1966) or De Reuck (1970) and maintains that a conflict is present, "if a situation arises in which the goals or acts of one party harm the goals or interests of another, even though both may be unaware of this fact" (Mitchell, 1981, 13).

Manifest and latent conflict

A social conflict is latent as long as the parties are unaware of being in conflict with each other; as soon as they become aware of it, conflict becomes manifest.

Drawing on Deutsch (1973) and Mitchell (1981) we favor an approach which links both positions and distinguishes between latent and manifest conflict. It is based on the notion that it is precisely the dialectic of objective and subjective reality from which both, the unique logic of conflict escalation arises, and which creates the possibility of constructive conflict management.

- While parties' conflict behaviors and conflict attitudes (like fear and mistrust) result from their "subjective" interpretation of the situation (hence, independently of the "objective" existence of some incompatibility),
- the parties may also actually be in conflict, yet themselves remain unaware of this fact (hence, no conflict behavior occurs and no conflict attitudes arise).

Combining both the subjective and the objective dimensions produces a typology of four basic conflict vs. non-conflict situations that call for quite different approaches to conflict resolution (cf. Table 1.1):

Table 1.1: A typology of conflict vs. non-conflict situations

		subjective conflict	
		yes	no
objective conflict	yes	real conflict	latent conflict
	no	false conflict	non-conflict

Real conflict is an incompatibility which is apparent to the parties themselves. It may result either from an incompatibility of goals or from an incompatibility of means. Accordingly, conflict resolution will either have to include a change of means or a change of goals and intentions (which naturally is much more difficult to accomplish).

Real conflict

In any case, the resolution of real conflict requires a change in the parties' positions, and this makes it necessary to become aware of the interests behind them. The process of conflict resolution thus involves a reinterpretation of the over-all situation, and as a consequence, other previously latent conflicts may come to the fore. For this reason, the process of conflict resolution is not a linear process of simplifying conflict. It can even mean an increase in the complexity of the conflict situation before it can finally be resolved or at least be settled by means of compromise.

Latent conflict, defined as an incompatibility of goals or behaviors not apparent to the parties, is indeed a quite dangerous situation. At any moment they might produce *unintended negative consequences* for the other party which the other will probably experience as an unjustified attack. Latent conflicts that are not dealt with may thus give rise to a multitude of new conflicts – either real or false – and thus increase the dynamics of conflict escalation.

Latent conflict

False conflict can arise if one of the parties (or both) misinterprets the goals and intentions of the other. Although this is the simplest form of conflict, the resolution of which does not require us to give up any goals or intentions, false conflict results from the misinterpretation of the opponent's purposes and can be settled only on the basis of open communication, which becomes increasingly difficult, however, the more the conflict has escalated and the more the inflation of issues has progressed.

False conflict

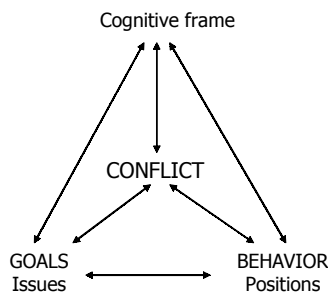
Three aspects of conflict

So far, we have referred to social conflict as an incompatibility of goals and behaviors which may or may not be apparent to the parties. As soon as the parties become aware of their conflict and the conflict becomes manifest, however, the parties' subjectivity comes into play as a new quality: The conflict, which – from an objectivist perspective – is still a conflict *between* goals and behaviors, at the same time becomes a conflict *about* issues – such

Issues and positions

as rights and interests – and a conflict *about* positions – such as the appropriateness of a given behavior, etc. (cf. Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: The meaning of conflict



Cognitive frames

Both issues and positions result from an interpretation of conflict, i.e. from a complex co-construction of meaning embedded in some sort of cognitive framework. This cognitive framework includes a variety of factors that affect the course of conflict, such as the conceptualization of conflicts (as a cooperative or a competitive process), and/or a focus on possible wins or losses.

As Morton Deutsch (1973) has shown, the risk of conflict escalation is much greater when conflict is interpreted as a competitive process, and from the work of Kahnemann & Tversky (1979) we know that it is far easier to sacrifice possible gains than to accept real losses.

Cooperation and competition

A cooperative situation exists when each participant can only reach his goal if the others with whom he interacts can also achieve their goals (win-win situation).

A competitive situation exists when the achievement of actors' goals is negatively correlated. In the case of pure competition, a participant can only achieve his goal when the others in the situation do not achieve their goals (win-lose situation).

Other factors that are part of the cognitive framework that affects the course of conflict via its interpretation are: social norms (particularly about how to behave in conflict situations, cf. Bandura, 1979), as well as the conflict parties' hierarchies of values (determining the importance of possible wins and losses), and their attitudes towards each other, etc.

The three aspects of conflict – issues, positions and cognitive frames – are mutually dependent on each other, and changes in any of these aspects may affect the others as well.

Mutual dependence of issues, positions and cognitive frames

First: The positions we take result from the framing of conflict. If an actor we evaluate negatively interferes with our aim achievement, we will tend to frame the conflict as a win-lose situation and try to reach our goals aggressively.

Second: The positions we take will raise new issues. If we try to achieve our goals through aggression, the opponent will most probably try to do so as well. Accordingly, both of us will have to resort to increasingly drastic means in order to win the conflict. As a result we may be hurt or may hurt the other, and our mutual behavior will become a new issue.

Third: The inflation of issues will affect the cognitive framework. Once the parties' behavior has become an issue, conflict is about who is right and who is wrong. Accordingly, each of the conflict parties will frame the conflict within a set of values which justifies his/her own behavior and de-legitimizes that of the opponent. As a consequence, attitudes towards the other will become even more negative than before.

Fourth: This radicalization of the cognitive frame will give rise to new issues: Even goals and behaviors of the opponent which usually would not be a problem may now appear provocative, and so on ...

Obviously, this mutual dependence of issues, positions and cognitive frames does not merely exist in the escalation path of conflicts, but also in the de-escalation path as well.

If we have a positive attitude towards the other, we will be more open to framing conflict as a win-win situation and trying to find a solution which satisfies both sides' needs. If we display cooperative behavior, the other will become less distrustful. Communication between the parties will become more open. Issues that might result from misinterpretations of the others' goals or behavior will be avoided, and positive, cooperative experience will strengthen positive attitudes, etc.

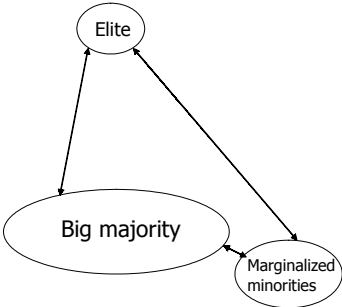
1.2 The constitution of meaning via communication

Meaning creation as a social process

As we have already seen: when constructing the meaning of conflict, parties are not completely self-reliant. They are linked together by interaction with each other, and they are linked to the world outside by interaction with their social environment.

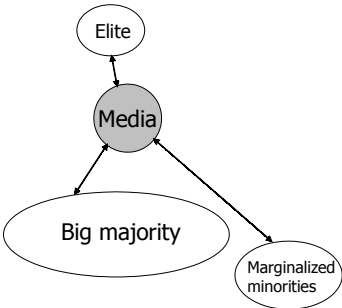
Most societies are neither homogenous nor egalitarian, but rather hierarchically organized. There is a large majority that agrees with so-called public opinion, there is an elite at the top, and there are marginalized minorities below and on the edge. In small groups, there is more or less direct communication between all parts of the group (whether positive or negative), and in case of conflict with an out-group, the meaning of the conflict is an outcome of this communication (cf. Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Communication within groups



In larger groups or societies there is much less direct communication between the hierarchically organized segments, and all segments of society use the media to learn about the others.

Figure 1.4: Communication within larger societies



Because they are "in-between" the segments of society, the media have a certain influence on the construction of social reality. They

put issues on the agenda, provide information about facts and events, and offer a cognitive framework for their interpretation.

What explains media effects? – An overview

Contemporary media researchers unanimously agree that mass media and their reporting have effects on recipients and/or societal processes.

Research paradigms

While early empirical studies assumed that the media were powerful (e.g., Lasswell, 1927), later studies adopted the opposite assumption, namely that the media are weak (e.g., Klapper, 1960). In the meantime the consensus is that the mass media and its recipients interactively affect each other in a variety of ways (e.g., Früh and Schönbach, 1982).

Three major lines of media effects research which focus on different central issues and effects have crystallized in the history of research:

1. *Linear models* are based on stimulus-response principles in the tradition of Lasswell (1927) and assume a causal effect of stimuli presented in a medium on passive recipients. Prominent representatives of this approach are, e.g., Hovland, with his famous Yale studies (Hovland et al., 1953), which focused on persuasion research, McCombs & Shaw (1972), whose agenda-setting approach postulates above all cognitive effects on recipients, or Koschnick (1988), who proposes a contact model based on product advertising.
2. *Selective models* assume active choice behavior on the part of recipients. Leading representatives of this orientation are Lazarsfeld et al. (1948), whose model of selective choice of reports by recipients resembles Heider's social psychological balance theory (1946) and is compatible with cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). The uses and gratifications approach of Katz und Blumler (Blumler, 1974) concentrates on the needs of recipients, whom they regard as being actively satisfied by the media. Bauer (1964) subsequently developed a "transactional approach" which completely rejects cause-and-effect linearity and assumes the existence of transactional relationships between sender and recipient. Früh & Schönbach (1982) systematically developed this approach in their "dynamic transactional approach" and found that the actual influ-

Linear models

Selective models

encing potential of media offerings resulted from recipients' interpretations. Simultaneously, their model displays a certain degree of reflexivity in the form of "para-feedback" by recipients to communicators which, e.g., consists in the preconceptions and expectations of communication partners.

Reflexive models

3. *Reflexive models* concentrate on the interaction of interpersonal communication and mass communication. One of the earliest approaches is the theory of two-step flows of communication through so-called "opinion leaders" developed by Lazarsfeld et al. (1948). Noelle-Neumann (1974), with her theory of spirals of silence, concentrated attention on the reflexive structure of orientations to others and thereby positioned herself in the tradition of Asch (1954), who became famous for experiments on the strength of group pressure. Noelle-Neumann's works are a prominent example of how fictional structures create actual effects and help to construct reality. In contrast to the above-presented approaches, Tichenor, Donohue & Olien (1970), as well as Neumann (1976), offer examples of research using the 'knowledge-gap hypothesis'. They no longer deal with the isolated individual, but rather with social classes, starting from the indirect effects of mass media presentations: Members of better-educated classes tend to use information more effectively than members of the less-educated classes and thereby gain additional long-term advantages.

Along with Merten (1994) or Burkart (1998), one must object, however, that despite the great number of broadly spread theoretical approaches and effect studies, there is less certain knowledge than the amount of past research would suggest.

The social construction of reality

After more than seventy years of media effects research, which can only be represented by examples here, a trend can at least be identified to not attribute media effects to the facts reported in the media, but rather to assume that "reality" is socially constructed (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1969). Media thereby serve as not only mediators, but also as constructors of social realities (cf., e.g., Tuchman, 1978; Cohen & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Luostarinen & Ottosen, 1998). Reported events serve merely as raw material. Offered in de- and re-contextualized form, they mirror senders' constructions of reality. Through cognitive processing on the part of the recipient, these constructions may be integrated into the recipient's subjective reality, or existing constructions of reality

may be modified, or the offered constructions of reality may be devalued, suppressed or rejected in order to maintain a maximally balanced basic psychic state (Heider, 1946, 1958; Festinger, 1957).

Principles of propaganda

The potential of the media to influence public opinion was recognized very early in media history, and the history of propaganda is as old as the history of the press. The idea underlying traditional propaganda strategies is to transmit propaganda messages from the top on down and to unify society in its struggle against an enemy (cf. Figure 1.5).

Traditional
propaganda
strategies

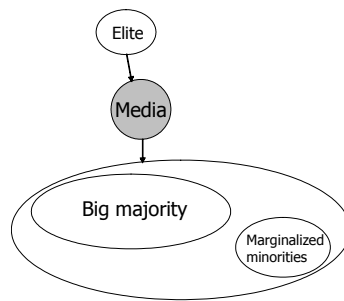


Figure 1.5: Traditional propaganda

As Lasswell (1927) put it: "Civilian unity is not achieved by the regimentation of muscles. It is achieved by a repetition of ideas rather than movements. The civilian mind is standardized by news not by drills. Propaganda is the method by which this process is aided and abetted" (Lasswell, 1927). Accordingly, the traditional means of propaganda are:

- Restrictive methods like censorship to suppress information that might reduce the fighting spirit.
- Supportive methods like the fabrication, selection and exaggeration of information that might strengthen it.

And the professional credo is: Truth is only raw material. Lies are merely a technical, not a moral problem. If no lies are needed, so much the better.

And lies are not needed if the propagandist manages to get the public personally engaged in a conflict. This was the beginning of psychological propaganda techniques that build upon:

Psychological
propaganda
techniques

- Polarization of identification suggestions (Luostarinen, 1986, 2002a; Herman & Chomsky, 1988).
- Production of a specific motivational logic (Luostarinen, 1986, 2002a)
- Immunization of the propaganda message against criticism with measures like: harmonization of referential levels (Luostarinen, 1986, 2002a), double-bind communication (Kempf, 1986; Reimann, 1998, 2002), and two-sided messages (Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953; Reimann, 1998, 2002).

The production of
personal
engagement

The idea behind these techniques is: to get the public emotionally involved and then wait for those escalation-oriented changes in the cognitive representation of conflict that we can observe whenever a person, a group or a society is involved in competitive conflicts and that are due to the logic of the underlying win-lose model (Kempf, 1996, 2002).

Propaganda based on these guidelines does not need to invent its own ideology, it becomes more or less "invisible" to normal people who have no knowledge of the psychological processes involved, and it produces a psychological infrastructure which helps society members to bear the burdens of war and motivates them to continue the fight (Bar-Tal, 1998).

All that propaganda must do is to keep one step ahead in the escalation process. One step – no more: because this would reduce its plausibility, and since journalists are members of society themselves, since they are subject to the same psychological processes as the rest of society, and since they usually have no more knowledge about the logic of conflict than the general public, war-making elites can usually rely on their cooperation on the propaganda front.

The media between war and peace

Media impact on
foreign policy

For a long time the media were regarded largely as mere news channels. Only recently has this viewpoint begun to change. The role of the media in foreign policy is now seen as more complex: Media are not just channels for transmitting news, but also make an essential contribution to constructing the environment in which foreign policy is made and implemented.

"Media set moods and agendas and create atmospheres or environments which influence the foreign policy decision-makers, but at the same time compel them to relate to this environment and to try to affect it" (Naveh, 1998, 2).

Decision-makers and politicians listen to public opinion to a greater degree than is generally assumed, and they use the media to learn about it.

The conception that journalists are not merely neutral reporters, but actually exert influence on political events has permanently influenced the self-conceptions of journalists and led to the rise of two conflicting tendencies, both of which attempt to place journalistic responsibility in a new light.

Peace journalism vs. the journalism of attachment

Influenced by the Gulf War and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, peace researchers and media scientists began thinking about how media influence can be used for the constructive transformation of conflicts (Galtung, 1998; Kempf & Gutiérrez, 2001; Bilke, 2002). In the form of training courses for journalists (e.g., Conflict & Peace, 1998; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000), peace-science insights are meant to be passed on to journalists and made fruitful for journalistic work.

This project on "peace journalism" is an effort to deal critically with not only the role of the media as catalysts of violence (cf. Knightley, 1976; Kempf, 1994; Kempf & Schmidt-Regener, 1998; Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2001, Kempf & Luostarinen, 2002), but also with the professional ethical norms of journalism (Luostarinen & Ottosen, 2001).

At the same time, under the heading "journalism of attachment" (Bell, 1997), a new school of journalism has become established which likewise assumes that the media are not merely reporters on war and peace, but also play an active role on the political stage.

Both tendencies share the feature that journalists, in view of the atrocities committed in the context of modern war, cannot remain detached from the events they report on. While peace journalism draws on conflict analyses which search for the victims of war on all sides and aims at de-escalation and constructive proposals for resolving conflict, however, journalism of attachment advocates try to get by without analysis and reflection, and focus on war as a moral conflict between "good" and "evil":

The "journalism of attachment ... is aware of its responsibilities and will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor" (Bell, 1997).

When journalists choose the role of judge over "good" and "evil" and see their task as one of exerting moral pressure on the international community to take sides and intervene with military means, however, they all too easily become recruits for the propaganda war.

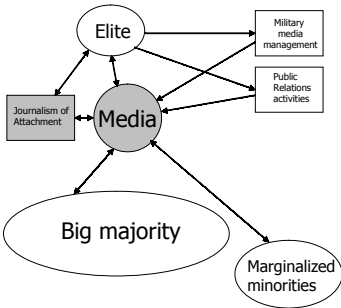
The escalation-oriented bias in everyday conflict coverage

While research on media effects has shown that the media have no simple top-down effects, the concept of propaganda itself has become somewhat old-fashioned. This doesn't mean that propaganda has ceased to exist. On the contrary: Rejecting the idea of a simple top-down transmission of propaganda messages and identifying the media as only one actor in the complex societal discourse that constructs social reality has added to the plausibility and effectiveness of propaganda, as well as to the escalation-oriented bias in the cognitive framing of political conflict. Research on the coverage of post-Cold War military conflicts like the Gulf War and the conflicts in former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Kosovo) has shown that the escalation-oriented bias in everyday conflict coverage has become so strong that there is no longer any difference between journalism and propaganda.

Privatization of propaganda

Policy-makers are quite aware that the media play a key role in the construction of the social reality of political conflict, and there are a variety of measures by which they try to influence media performance (cf. Figure 1.6): Among these, there are measures like military media management (Luostarinen & Ottosen, 1998) and public relations activities (Kunczik, 1990) which still follow the idea of top-down transmission and mainly have the effect of agenda setting, like identifying Saddam Hussein with Adolf Hitler or Serbian camps with Nazi concentration camps.

Figure 1.6: Manipulation of the media



Military media management

Insofar as truth is merely raw material for propaganda, propaganda is incompatible with the professional ethical principles of journalism and can in the long run only be effective through the limitation of freedom of the press. The importance of controlling the media is shown by the fact that in former Yugoslavia they were the first institutions which Slobodan Milosevic – even before taking control of the police and military – tried to gain control of when taking over power (Gredelj, 1998), as well as by the high value which information warfare has in the strategic concepts of the USA.

Limitations on
freedom of the press

Thus, in view of the military-media management of the USA during the Gulf War (cf. Taylor, 1992), according to Luostarinen & Ottosen (2002) the following goals are identifiable:

1. To limit reporters' access to the battlefield, for instance through the creation of news pools.
2. To deny military personnel the possibility of talking to reporters outside the pool and to implement sanctions against military personnel who make unauthorized comments to reporters.
3. To control communication between journalists and military personnel, for instance by 'punishing' reporters regarded as disloyal to the pool regulations by denying access to information, interviews, etc.
4. To introduce censorship of all reports and pictures in order to control all outgoing communication from the pools.
5. To withhold any information that can put military personnel in a bad light, including stories with no military interest, such as reports of inappropriate social behavior, etc.
6. To use disinformation and misleading reports to avoid bad publicity and for operational purposes.
7. To avoid coverage of one's own losses or other sensitive information, such as civilian casualties.
8. To sanitize warfare through a focus on its high-tech elements, such as the use of 'smart bombs'.
9. To sanitize warfare by manipulating the language used to portray the operation and its methods.
10. To use the media to mobilize public support.

Aims

A difference between dictatorial regimes and Western democracies can only be found in regard to the sophistication of the mea-

Flexible strategies

asures employed to control the media and in regard to the sophistication of the propaganda contents. Western propaganda concepts are far less transparent than, for example, Serbian propaganda, which during the war in Bosnia used largely traditional propaganda elements (Malesiĉ, 1998).

In contrast to totalitarian regimes, which strive for almost complete control of the media and media contents, military media management in Western democracies is much more complex and employs a flexible strategy – varying with the type and degree of escalation of conflicts, described by Luostarinen & Ottosen (1998) in four steps:

1. Preliminary step
 - The target country appears in the news.
 - Revolution, chaos, poverty, dictatorship rebellion.
 - Press conferences ("increasing concern"), etc.
2. Justification
 - Chief news are produced.
 - Urgency, immediate danger for neighbors, for the West and own population.
 - Threatened genocide in target country.
 - Set as aims: peace, liberty, democracy.
3. Implementation
 - News management, control of access, censorship, etc.
4. Retrospective legitimization
 - Special trips for journalists to the target country: peace, order, prosperity, democracy.
 - Target country gradually disappears from the news.

Freedom of
information and
national security
interests

Successful media management must thereby balance the core problem of how much or little access the media should have to conflict-relevant information and the theater of war. The right of the public to obtain information about a conflict which could influence its future is thereby often in conflict with what the political and military leadership defines as "national interests" or as the "safety of journalists", which provides it with pseudo-arguments to justify censorship. In this regard the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Falkland War, the invasions of Grenada and in Panama, as well as the Gulf War provide various scenarios which simultaneously demonstrate the learning ability of the system and show its integrating power (cf. Luostarinen & Ottosen, 2002).

PR activities during the Gulf War and the Bosnian conflict

Both during the Gulf War (Mac Arthur, 1993) and during the Bosnian Conflict (Beham, 1996), the contributions of PR agencies were so massive and the filters available to help distinguish virtual PR "reality" from actual reality were so few that it was extremely difficult to assess the situation without knowing what the PR firms had contributed. The impact of PR agencies is what we will call the first step in the privatization of propaganda.

The first step of privatization

The Gulf War was the first war in which a public relations firm in the USA made propaganda for a foreign client for a high fee in order to persuade Americans to accept the need for war. The government of Kuwait paid the Hill & Knowlton public relations firm more than ten million US dollars to prepare information on Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait for showing on TV. Most that the US public was allowed to see of Kuwait came from Hill & Knowlton. It often had little to do with the facts. Thus, e.g., a video of a peaceful demonstration in Kuwait was cut to give the impression that Iraqi soldiers had fired into the crowd (cf. Strong, 1992).

The case of the Gulf War

The firm had its most spectacular success when a fifteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl testified in tears before a Congressional committee that she had seen Iraqi soldiers seize fifteen babies from incubators. The incubator story had an enormous effect. Several US senators named it as the factor that had motivated them to vote for a war resolution.

As John MacArthur revealed in the *New York Times* of 6 January 1992 (cited according to Ege, 1992), the fifteen-year-old witness, Nayirah, whose family name had allegedly been withheld "in order to protect her family" was in reality the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the USA, and her story was untrue.¹

Even a report by the international detective agency Kroll Associates, which was hired by the Kuwaiti government in 1992 to find evidence confirming Nayirah's story, after her credibility had been questioned by several journalists, confirmed that Nayirah had simply not seen what she claimed to have witnessed, and the human rights organization "Middle East Watch" largely discredited Nayirah's story on the basis of interviews with Kuwaiti physicians and cemetery employees.²

1. Cf. also Werth (1992) on this, as well as MacArthur (1993), who provides a very thorough discussion of the incidents.

The case of the Bosnian conflict

Less blatant, but no less successful were the activities of the Ruder & Finn PR firm, which received a silver medal in crisis communication for its Bosnian engagement from the Public Relations Society of America.

According to James Harff, who was in charge of the operation, the most difficult part was to win support from Jewish circles (see ID-Dokumentation, 1994; Beham, 1996):

- In his book *Wastelands of Historical Reality*, Croatian President Tudjman had made statements that could easily be interpreted as anti-Semitic, and
- in his book *The Islamic Declaration*, Bosnian President Izetbegovic had openly advocated a fundamentalist Islamic state.

Moreover, the history of Croatia and Bosnia is marked by brutal anti-Semitism, and tens of thousands of Jews died in Croatian concentration camps during World War II. Accordingly, the situation provided grounds for hostile attitudes on the part of Jewish intellectuals and organizations towards Croats and Bosnians. The goal of the campaign was to reverse this situation, and this is what Ruder & Finn succeeded in doing. After *New York Newsday* reported about Serbian concentration camps in August 1992, Ruder & Finn persuaded three Jewish organizations to publish a statement in the *New York Times* and to organize a protest demonstration at the offices of the United Nations. Thus, bringing the Jews into play on the side of the Bosnians was a great bluff. In one single blow, it located the Serbs on the same level as the Nazis in public opinion.

When, finally, British TV journalist Penny Marshall presented her prize-winning videotapes from the Serbian camp in Trnopolje – men with naked chests behind barbed-wire fences – this judgment of the Serbs was accepted as a matter of fact by public opinion – not because Milosevic was compared with Hitler, as was Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, but because the audience believed that it had seen what it needed in order to reach this judgment.

2. Middle East Watch, Kuwait's 'Stolen' Incubators: The Widespread Repercussions of a Murky Incident", New York, 2 June 1992, cited according to Ege (1992, p.1371).

Journalism of attachment

The second step in the privatization of propaganda goes further and makes journalists themselves deliberately abandon professional rules and standards of truth (cf. Luostarinen & Kempf, 2000). During the Bosnian conflict, journalists became aware that the media do not just transmit information, but that they play an active role in the construction of social reality. As a result of this insight the journalism of attachment maintains that reporters cannot remain neutral in the face of modern evils like genocide in Bosnia, but rather journalists should side with victims and demand that something be done. While the journalism of attachment sounds like a worthy appeal for concerned reporting, however, it has no vision of constructive conflict transformation. It frames conflicts as exclusively moral struggles in which "right" opposes "wrong". Appointing themselves to be the judges of "good" and "evil" in the world and exerting moral pressure on the international community to take sides, the journalism of attachment advocates, finally, replace the rules of journalism with the rules of propaganda.

The second step of privatization

Martin Bell (1997) is right when he claims that journalists exercise a certain influence and that they should be aware of this. He is right when he claims that this influence may be for better or worse. And he is right when he claims that journalists should be aware of this, too. But the way the journalism of attachment reacts to this responsibility only adds fuel to the fire. And – as always in war propaganda – it does this in the name of peace.

The coverage of the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts is full of examples of how journalists supported their moral impulses by information control and the fabrication of news. Journalists suppressed news stories which fulfilled all the criteria for prominent news value, but were not reported because they didn't fit the enemy image (cf. Hume, 1997). Journalists like Penny Marshal counterfeited factual evidence by producing television images that didn't show what they claimed to show, and put on stage the clichés and stereotypes already implemented in the minds of the audience (cf. Deichmann, 1997). And – perhaps more symptomatic – journalists like Erica Fischer (1997) openly justified the forgery by claiming that it didn't matter whether the pictures were faked, because they had only shown what people already "knew" before and served the goal of opening the eyes of the public (and of po-

The case of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia

litical leaders). Leading journalists like the director of n-tv (a German television news channel associated with CNN) are still proud that they got NATO involved in the Yugoslavian civil wars.

Conclusions

If journalists really want to contribute to ending war, to de-escalating conflicts or to strengthening peace processes, they need to have the same insight regarding the influence of the media and the responsibility of journalism. Perhaps they even need to have the same sense of moral outrage. But they also need an unbiased overall view of conflict, an unconditional sense of commitment to standards of truth, and a clear stand on the logic of the peaceful transformation of conflicts.

Human rights, disinformation and the journalism of attachment

The case of the Gulf War

Five years after the Gulf War British TV journalist Maggie O'Kane produced a prize-winning film, "How to tell lies and win wars". The film deserved a prize insofar as it focused for the first time on the human-rights violations committed by the Allies in the Gulf War. Nevertheless it is still not an example of truth- or enlightenment journalism:

- Where it fits her script to use faked evidence which the media previously used during the Gulf War, Maggie O'Kane does not refrain: For example, when she wants to blame the Allies for the oil pollution of the Gulf, she uses the same pictures of an oil-smeared cormorant which were previously used to show Saddam Hussein's ruthlessness – even though during the Gulf War it was revealed that this species does not live in the Gulf and the pictures stemmed from the Exxon tanker disaster in Alaska.
- Nor is Maggie O'Kane's film fact-finding journalism – which always poses a challenge to the civil courage of journalists – because it was made five years too late and because it reported only a few things that had not already become known during the Gulf War.

During the War the Allied human rights violations were thoroughly reported on, but they received little attention, they were a minor news report, but not a news topic. That they involved violations of human rights was not addressed or was parried with ambiguous messages and double binds.

Nine months after the end of the Gulf War Reimann & Kempf (1994) did a survey of media use and information levels concerning the Geneva Convention and human rights violations in the Gulf War among beginning psychology students.

The media as instruments of disinformation

The study reports show there was great uncertainty about what human rights violations were committed by which of the parties in the Gulf War. Although the subjects were willing to believe that Iraq was capable of greater and more serious human-rights violations than the Allies, their attitude to the Allies was also skeptical and mistrustful.

The way the media function as instruments of disinformation could be shown to be one of the causes of these signs of demoralization:

- Thus the information state of the subjects nine months after the end of the war was in part inversely proportional to the amount of media consumption during the war.
- The disinformation regarding human rights questions proved to be especially blatant. Although the questions only concerned the obligations stipulated by the Geneva Convention which were directly touched by prominent themes of war reporting, nine months after the end of the war there was no statistical correlation between the validity of (apparent or alleged) obligations and the extent to which they were held to apply.

One can understand these results as a symptom of a deviant skepticism which among other things resulted from the fact that Saddam Hussein was transformed by the media within a few weeks and months from an esteemed ally of the West (whose human-rights violations they barely mentioned during the war between Iraq and Iran) to an embodiment of evil (Palmbach & Kempf, 1994).

In the civil war in ex-Yugoslavia the media took much more time to create an enemy consensus. Unlike the Gulf War, the media appear not to have taken sides so consistently. At least the current daily reporting on the Bosnian conflict was relatively neutral toward the three conflict parties. However, they reported much more often on Serbian actors than on Bosnian or Croatian (Kempf, 2002b). This agrees with the assessment of Anne-Sophie Greve (1995), who maintains that all the sides taking part in the

The case of the Bosnian conflict

destruction in former Yugoslavia committed war crimes, but the number and atrocity of Serbian trespasses was the highest. The negative impression of the Serbs which thereby arose is due on the one hand to its crimes, and on the other to one-sided generalizations ("the Serbs").

Seen in this way, the Bosnian reporting of the key media was less tendentious than that on the Gulf War. Jaeger (1998) also reaches a similar conclusion in her analysis of the German press reporting on cases of rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the rights of rape victims were seemingly defended, however, their suffering was also misused by the press to create or cement national and ethnic stereotypes.

In the conclusion of her analysis Susanne Jaeger writes:

"An identified aggressor reduces the complexity of the war. The whole opaque confusion somewhere in Yugoslavia can be simplified into a narrative of good and bad people. We recipients can lean back, observe the events the way one watches a good movie – sympathize with the victims in the hope that the good will in the end triumph and the evil opponents will in the end be mercilessly punished."

Taking sides

If we do not lean back passively, if we accept responsibility, and if we have no other basis than outrage at the human rights violations which has already been transformed into outrage at one of the parties to the war, we will ourselves become a motor of the escalatory dynamics of war.

Thus, e.g., Maggie O'Kane, based on her experiences in Sarajevo, became a passionate advocate of the journalism of attachment, which tries neither for a neutral distance nor a de-escalation of war, but rather takes sides and is above all interested in motivating people – not against war, but against those one thinks one has identified as the "enemy".

In de-escalation-oriented conflict reporting Maggie O'Kane sees a model which would have been appropriate in the Gulf War, but in Bosnia-Herzegovina was out of place even after the Dayton peace accords.¹

Crossing the
borderline to
propaganda

This engaged attitude, supported by a moral impulse, is not far from that of Austrian journalist Erica Fischer. When Thomas Deichmann (1997) discovered that Penny Marshall's videotapes from

1. Discussion contribution, Taplow Court, August 1997.

the Serbian camp of Trnopolje were misleading, that they did not show men imprisoned behind barbed wire, but rather were filmed within a plot of land surrounded by barbed wire within which agricultural supplies had been stored before the war, he was attacked by Erica Fischer (1997) in the German weekly paper *Freitag* with the argument:

"Why does he do that? Anyway the photo aroused the world and led to the closing of a camp in the so-called 'Serbian Republic', ..."

And further:

"Did Penny Marshal claim that she had stood outside? I don't know, and basically I don't care."

Journalism which takes this view has long since crossed the border separating it from propaganda. In the subjective conviction of acting for no other purpose than to defend human rights, it heats up war or keeps conflict heated – long after a peace agreement has been agreed to and thereby an initial and extremely vulnerable basis has been created upon which one could actually work for the restoration of human rights: by contributing to reconciliation. But that was not yet on the political agenda, and the journalism of attachment still wanted to harvest the fruits it had planted in Kosovo.

The logic of conflict and the dynamics of conflict escalation

2.1 Constructive and destructive conflicts

Cooperative vs.
competitive
processes

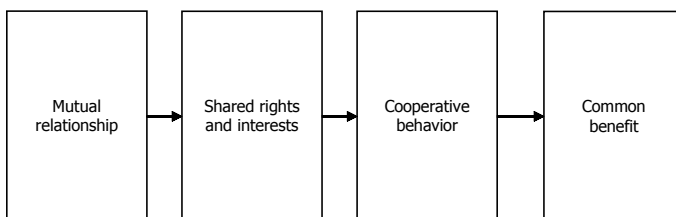
In any conflict each side has its own rights and intentions, and there is an opponent whose actions interfere with them and are consequently experienced as threatening. At the same time as the one side's actions interfere with the opponent's rights and intentions, the opponent imagines himself to be threatened as well. Still, there can be common ground, common rights and intentions and common benefits resulting from the relationship between the two parties that may provide reasons for mutual trust. In this sense, any conflict is capable of being conceptualized as either a competitive (win-lose) or as a cooperative (win-win) process.

Cooperative conflicts

The cooperative
environment

In a cooperative environment, conflicts can be conceptualized according to a win-win-model that treats conflict as a common problem that both sides can try to resolve to the benefit of both sides' needs and interests. Cooperative environments are characterized by a mutual relationship between conflict parties based on shared rights and interests, involving cooperative behavior and resulting in common benefits for all parties involved (cf. Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: The cooperative environment



Nonetheless, even in a cooperative environment there can be conflicts, and the negative side-effects of one side's behavior

may endanger a partner's goal achievement – even if this is unintended (cf. Figure 2.2).

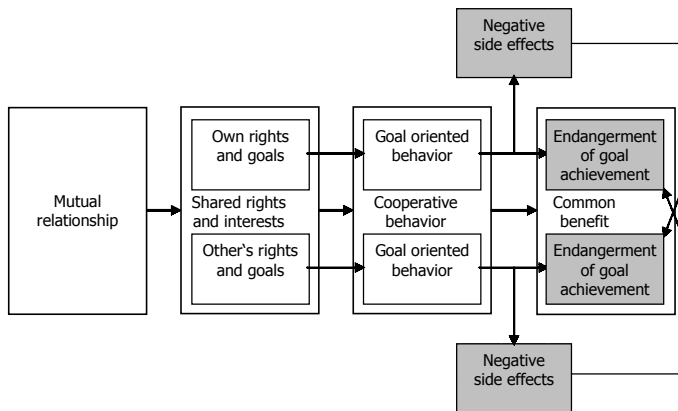


Figure 2.2:
Conceptualization of
conflict within a win-win
framework: Conflict as a
joint problem

Based on mutual respect for the other's interests, however, a co-operative environment can enable parties to deal with conflict as a common problem and to search for a solution in the interest of both sides (cf. Figure 2.3).

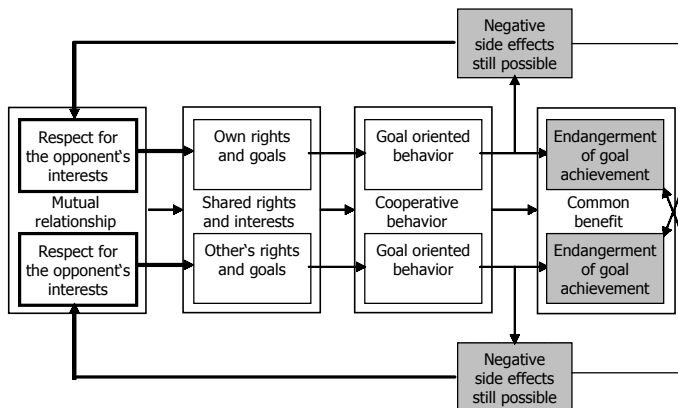


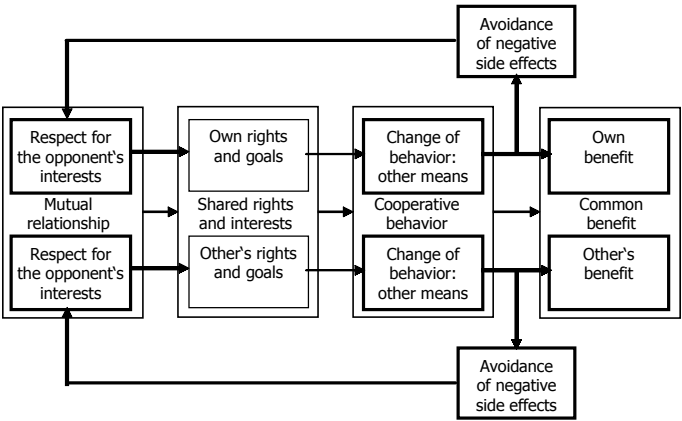
Figure 2.3:
Conceptualization of
conflict within a win-win
framework: Mutual respect
for others' interests

A cooperative process enables parties to negotiate in a constructive atmosphere where no side feels threatened, and where mutual trust inspires open and honest communication between the parties, as well as the exchange of knowledge and information without evoking a need to hide points of weakness and vulnerability. In a cooperative environment like this there are several

ways how conflicts can be resolved, some easier, and some more difficult.

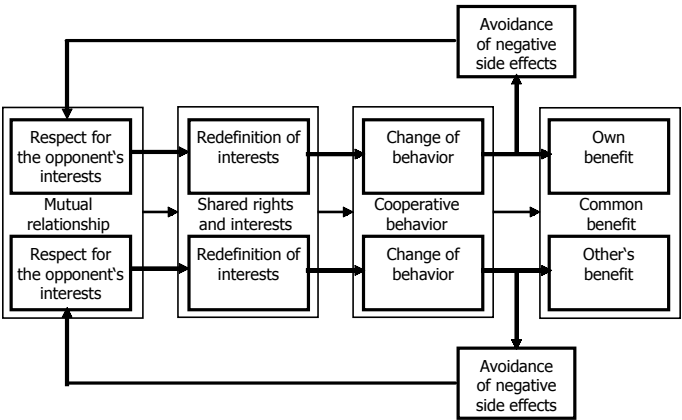
As said above, some conflicts can be resolved simply by means of a change of positions (cf. Figure 2.4). This is the simplest case, because it does not involve sacrificing any goals or interests, but merely requires the use of other means to achieve them.

Figure 2.4: Conflict resolution by change of positions



If this is not possible and if there are no means available that do not have negative side-effects, the only possibility will be to resolve conflict by means of a redefinition of interests (cf. Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Conflict resolution by redefinition of interests



In order to accomplish this, respect for the opponent's interests is a crucial factor. Open communication reduces the danger of

misunderstandings. It enables parties to explore the interests behind the issues of the conflict. It enables them to elaborate a more adequate definition of the real problem that must be resolved, and it enables them to optimize their contributions to resolving the problem. Operating as a team encourages the parties to empathize with each other and to respect their mutual needs and interests. The process of cooperation thus minimizes defensive strategies and produces positive attitudes towards each other, which makes the partners more sensitive to common interests and reduces the importance of differences (cf. Deutsch, 1976).

All these effects of cooperation reduce the intensity of conflict and make violent escalation less probable. They also pose a danger, however: relevant issues may be neglected, or the partners may invest too little energy in exploring differences, and as a result they may agree to a hasty but inadequate solution (cf. Keffner, 1968). If this happens, disappointment at failure will encourage the parties to interpret the conflict as a competitive situation and to refrain from further cooperation.

Ambivalence of cooperative conflict

Even without such disappointment, dealing with conflicts on a cooperative basis always means accepting insecurity: Can I still trust the opponent? Or will I give him an advantage if I continue to be cooperative, while he has already switched to competition? A (social) conflict with an opponent thus goes hand in hand with an intra-personal conflict about the correct interpretation of the conflict, and the simplest way to escape this inner conflict is to switch to competition.

Competitive conflicts

In a competitive environment, however, conflicts have a tendency to spread and to escalate. This may lead to issue inflation, and a conflict may continue long after the original issues have lost their relevance (or have even been forgotten).

The competitive environment

The process of competition reduces communication among parties: Existing resources for communication are either neglected or used to intimidate or deceive the opponent. The opponent's statements or declarations are not trusted, and available information is judged on the basis of existing prejudices.

The principle of competition implies that desirable conflict resolution is only possible at the expense of the opponent and can

only be imposed against his resistance. Accordingly, it encourages the use of increasingly draconian and finally even violent means to achieve goals. In the end, the competitive process leads to mistrust and the enmification of both parties. It thus reduces their sensitivity to common grounds and increases their sensitivity to differences. The parties concentrate on strategies of power and tactics of threat, pressure and deception.

This tendency to escalate conflict exists on the level of goals and issues: from the competitive win-lose principle which makes parties want to win conflicts (whatever the costs may be) on the level of framing and attitudes: through the misinterpretation of the opponent's actions and his intentions, and on the level of positions and behavior: through the process of social commitment, combined with a perception of victory as the only important goal.

Competition
between groups

Competition among groups also affects the social structures of groups (cf. Sherif & Sherif, 1969): The coherence of the in-group becomes stronger. Group members begin to identify more strongly with their group. Group members who are outstanding in opposing the opponent gain enhanced social standing. Leadership is bestowed on actors who adopt a confrontational strategy. Victory becomes the main goal, and group members who express a desire to cooperate with the opponent are suspected of disloyalty. Unyielding belligerents are praised as heroes, and neutral third parties are disqualified if they do not intervene to the own side's benefit.

These changes also affect the negotiation behaviors of groups: Group members begin to overrate their side's proposals and disparage those of the other group. They begin to block negotiations rather than trying to find a solution acceptable to the opposite side as well (cf. Blake & Mouton, 1961, 1962).

2.2 Transformation of conflicts into autonomous processes

Divergence of
perspectives

As stated already, dealing with conflicts on a cooperative basis requires accepting a state of insecurity. Due to a systematic divergence of perspectives which makes it difficult for parties to take an objective view of their conflict, this insecurity becomes even greater.

Divergence of perspectives means that parties focus on their own rights and intentions, their own interests and positions (cf. Figure 2.6) and the perceived threat of the opponent's actions which – at the same time – seem to threaten common rights and objectives, and the common good as well.

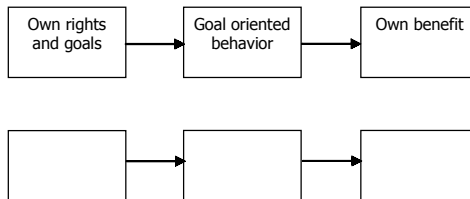


Figure 2.6: Divergence of perspectives

Already this divergence of perspectives produces a bias towards interpreting conflict as a competitive situation, particularly if there is little communication between the parties, or if they do not have a solid basis for mutual cooperation.

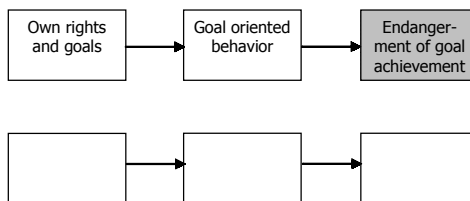


Figure 2.7: Endangerment of goal achievement

Usually parties focus on their own rights and goals, and these justify behavior that serves their own interests (cf. Figure 2.6). The others do the same, but that is not of special concern unless they become aware of a conflict. And if they do become aware of a conflict, they first experience it as a threat to their goals (cf. Figure 2.7).

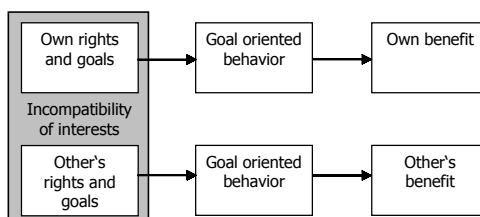


Figure 2.8: Competitive conflict

Accordingly, it becomes quite plausible to deal with conflict as a competitive situation where both parties focus solely on their own

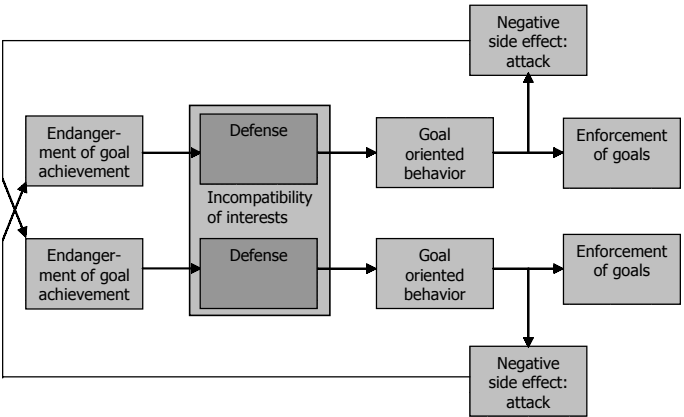
interests, and the conflict constellation is defined by the incompatibility of their interests (cf. Figure 2.8).

The autonomous process

Framing conflict within a win-lose model transforms conflict into a circular process in which each of the parties believes they are defending themselves against a dangerous aggressor (cf. Kempf, 1993).

Due to the conceptualization of conflict within a win-lose framework, whatever a party does to achieve its goals has the negative side-effect of threatening the opponent's goals and will be experienced by the opponent as an attack. Whatever the opponent does to defend against this "aggression" will have the same negative side-effect on the other side. (cf. Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9: The autonomous process



Accordingly, both sides feel themselves in a defensive position, and the conflict is transformed into an autonomous process where both parties think they are defending themselves against a dangerous aggressor and where each provokes the other to continue and even to escalate the threat.

This autonomous dynamic of conflict is produced by the fact that each of the two conflict parties provokes the behavior of the other which they want to avoid and to which they react. Characteristic of the autonomous process is its independence of the actors' success. The process is ultimately driven by the side-effects of their actions (cf. Hoyningen-Huene, 1983).

The only way to break out of this autonomous process is to acknowledge that none of the parties has an absolute monopoly on truth. Truth is highly relative, and from a systematic point of view any conflict involves at least three different truths or realities. First and second, conflict has its own subjective reality for each of the parties involved. This *subjective reality* results from the parties' entanglement in the conflict and can be seen solely from their own perspective. Third, conflict has a – so to speak – *objective reality*, which can only be seen from outside. While each of the parties believes in the justness of its goals, intentions and actions, which are threatened by the opponent, only a study of the conflict from outside can discover how these cognitions of justified aims and threats interact with each other, how they transform conflict into an autonomous process, how this process develops and how the parties lose control over it.

Subjective and objective reality

In order to break out of the autonomous process, it is essential that the parties learn to be critical of their own view of the conflict and to enter into a process of role-taking. The more a conflict has escalated, the more difficult this becomes, however, and in many cases the parties will not be able to fulfill this task without the assistance of a neutral third party.

The concept of autonomous process

The concept of the autonomous process was originally developed by the historian Christian Meier (1978) to explain the decline of the Roman Empire. The concept was translated into a cybernetic model by Hoyningen-Huene (1983) and was expanded on by Kempf (1993) to analyze the autonomous dynamics of conflicts.

Logical structure of autonomous processes

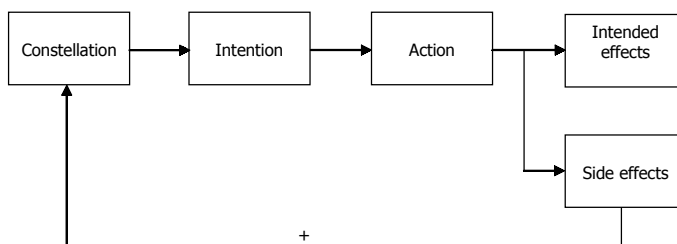


Figure 2.10: The logical structure of autonomous processes

In its most general form, the logical structure of an autonomous process is illustrated in the model shown in Figure 2.10. The positive linkage of the side-effects with the action-triggering constel-

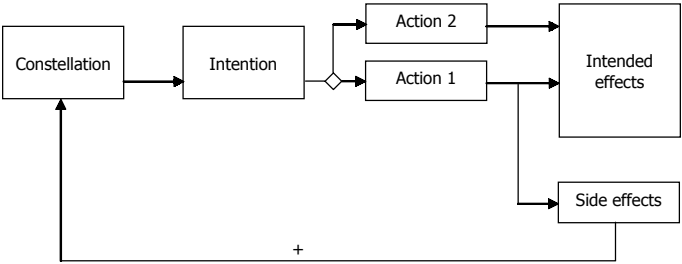
lation can thereby (as in the case of conflict) be mediated by one or more other actors. For the autonomous process as such this is, however, not the key point. What is essential is merely that such a backward linkage occurs and that it is independent of the success of the action.

Degree of severity of autonomous processes

To answer the question of how such an autonomous process can be terminated, Hoyningen distinguishes three degrees of severity of autonomous processes, corresponding to the already-named possibilities for constructive conflict management:

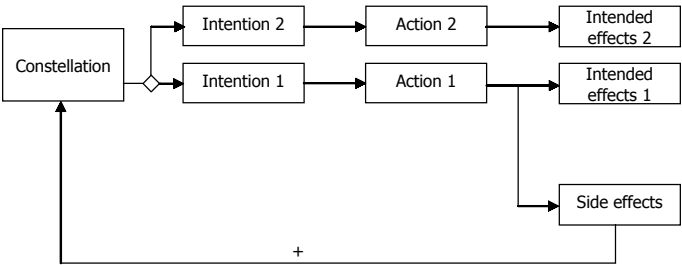
The first degree of severity is present if an autonomous process can be terminated through a simple change of means, i.e., if there is another action possibility which also has the intended effects, but not the harmful side-effects (cf. Figure 2.11). In this case the autonomous process is relatively easy to stop: it is not important to the actor what means are used to achieve his goal.

Figure 2.11: The first degree of severity of autonomous processes



The second degree of severity is reached if a change of means would not help, but a change of intentions is still possible (cf. Figure 2.12). This is far more difficult, for the actors must give up a goal they especially want.

Figure 2.12: The second degree of severity of autonomous processes



With the third degree of severity even this is no longer possible and the autonomous process can only be stopped if the constel-

lation can be dismantled. There are essentially two possibilities to do this: A change in objective reality (e.g., ending structural violence), or a change in the subjective interpretation of this reality, whereby a new situation arises in which other aspects of the situation become relevant to action. This new interpretation of reality is the most difficult to bring about, because it involves fundamental values, and orientations previously accepted as self-evident must suddenly be put in question.

2.3 Dynamics of conflict escalation

Once a conflict begins to be dealt with on a win-lose basis, the dynamics of conflict escalation will take their course and gradually transform the competitive win-lose framework into antagonism, polarization and, finally, into a zero-sum framework, where the enemy must be destroyed, even at the risk of one's own existence.

Process of conflict escalation

This process of conflict escalation can be described in nine steps (Glasl, 1992) and three major levels or stages (Creighton, 1992), each of which corresponds to a specific framing of conflict (Kempf, 1996, 2000a).

Intercultural conflicts

While the stages of conflict escalation are due to the inherent logic of the competitive process and, therefore, can be assumed to be culturally invariant, this is not the case with the steps of conflict escalation as described by Glasl. Insofar as these stages relate to concrete conflict behavior, it can be expected they will not be equally present in all cultures.

Cultural dependency of escalation steps

The possible cultural dependency of the escalation stages thereby does not necessarily mean that these stages will be entirely absent in specific cultures or replaced by others. Because of cultural dependency, stages may sometimes occur in a different sequence. This can give rise to intercultural misunderstandings, to new (false) conflicts, or it may extend the range of conflict objects.

A conspicuous example of this is offered by Watzlawick et al. (1980): Many American soldiers stationed in England during the Second World War believed that English women could easily be persuaded to provide sexual favors. At the same time, however,

Intercultural misunderstandings

English women thought that American soldiers were emotionally capricious.

A study, in which among others Margaret Mead participated, found an interesting explanation for this seeming contradiction: Mating behavior – from first acquaintance to sexual intercourse – was interpreted as passing through about thirty different behavioral forms, whereby the sequence is different in the two cultures. While, e.g., kissing occurs very early in the USA (at about stage 5), in British mating behavior it occurs much later (at about stage 25).

Thus if a US soldier attempted to kiss an English woman, this was for him still a rather harmless approach attempt, while on the other hand the English woman, who felt herself already under a high level of sexual pressure, found this very passionate. The English woman felt herself confronted with the choice of whether to break off the relationship at this point or to surrender herself sexually to her partner. If she chose the latter alternative, the US soldier found himself confronted by a behavior which for him was not at all consistent with this early stage of the relationship and must have seemed quite arbitrary.

Stages of conflict escalation

Competition

In the first stage, conflict is conceptualized as a competitive situation, based on a win-lose model. On this level of competition, the framing of conflict is determined by the incompatibility of the parties' interests (cf. Figure 2.9).

Glasl describes the process of *competition* in 3 steps (cf. Figure 2.13): The first step is characterized by a hardening of positions. At this starting point of conflict escalation, cooperation still predominates, but sometimes the viewpoints collide. At the second step, the parties enter into a discussion characterized by an unstable balance between cooperative and competitive attitudes. Standpoints, cognitions, emotions and intentions begin to radicalize. At the third step, competitive behavior becomes predominant. The parties confront each other with completed facts, rather than engaging in seemingly needless dialogue.

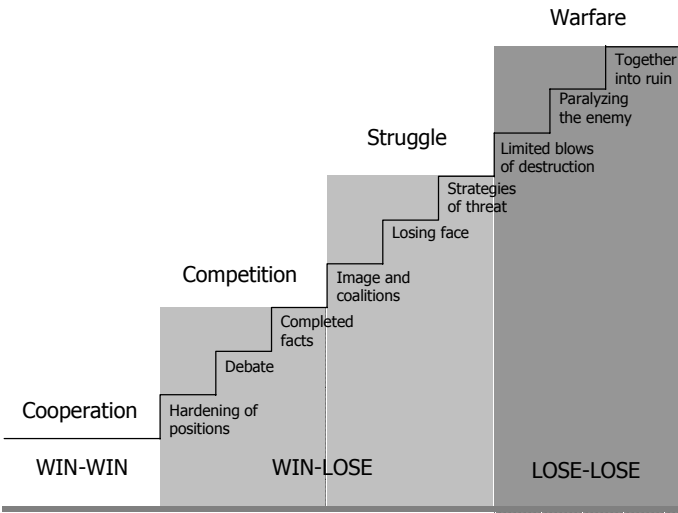


Figure 2.13: Steps of conflict escalation

If one of the parties feels it has been harmed or fears being harmed even more, the conflict escalates into a struggle, and the cognitive framework becomes antagonistic: On this level of struggle/antagonism, the axiom of incompatible interests is aggravated by mutual mistrust, and tension begins to mount (cf. Figure 2.14). The parties start to fight with each other, injuring the opponent becomes a goal in itself, and no one will admit to any weakness.

Struggle/Antagonism

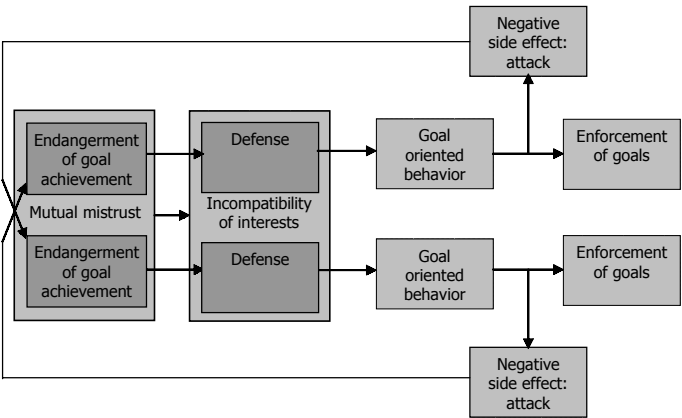


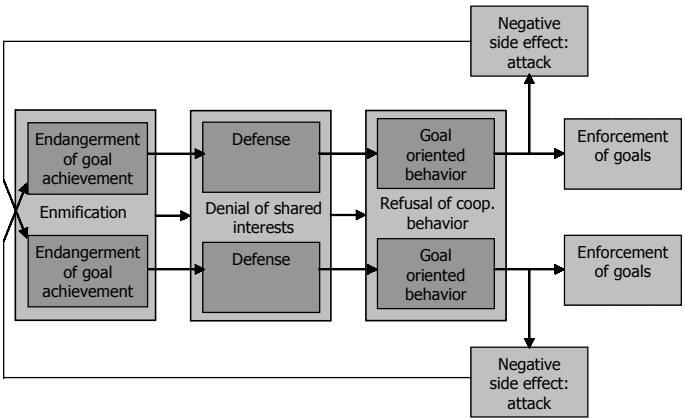
Figure 2.14: Mutual mistrust

According to Glasl, this process of struggle, which leads from antagonism to polarization, can be described in 3 steps as well (cf. Figure 2.13): As a first step the parties start to invest in creating images and coalitions: They force each other into negative roles and search for supporters and coalition partners. As a next step the opponent loses face: the opponent's whole person appears in a new (negative) light. Even positive experiences in the past are reinterpreted as negative. Finally, the parties resort to threat strategies: Violence has not yet broken out, but it is considered to be an option, and the parties try to coerce each other by threatening serious consequences.

Warfare/Polarization

If violence is actually used to force the opponent to comply, struggle finally escalates into *warfare*, and the cognitive framework becomes polarized: The whole world is split into opposing camps with no commonalities. Anyone who is not for us is against us. And the only ones who are "for us" are those who support us unconditionally. Mutual mistrust radicalizes into enmification, and the axiom of incompatible interests is backed up by the denial of any interests in common. Cooperative behavior is actively rejected: constructive conflict-resolution is ruled out, for the opponent must be forced to yield (cf. Figure 2.15). At this level of conflict escalation, parties no longer view each other as fellow human beings, but only as enemies.

Figure 2.15: Enmification



Communication and negotiation degenerate into the continuation of warfare by verbal means: Everything opponents say (as well as non-communication) is used as a weapon, and everything they

hear (including silence) is interpreted as an attack. Even if the opponent tries to reduce the conflict, this is only regarded as a tactical maneuver or as an attempt at manipulation. The mutual violence becomes the main issue of the conflict, and – in the end – the parties lose sight of their original goals. They no longer fight to achieve their goals at the expense of the opponent; they fight to deny him victory. Finally, the conflict becomes a zero-sum game in which there is only one goal, to win, and to win means: not to be the loser. On this level of lose-lose/zero-sum orientation, violence is the only option left, and any resolution of the conflict is rejected (cf. Figure 2.16).

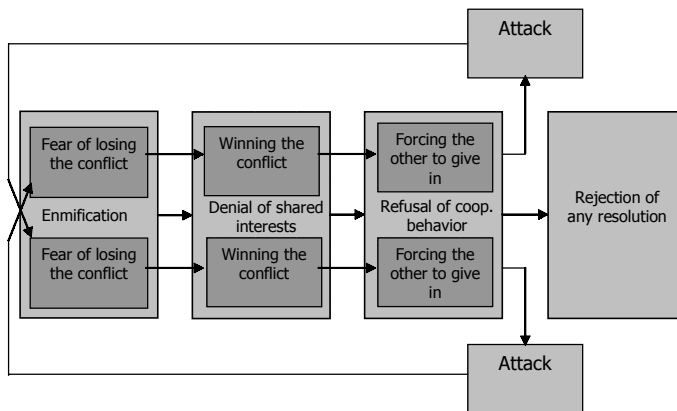


Figure 2.16: Zero-sum orientation

Again, Glasl describes the process of warfare which leads from polarization to a zero-sum orientation in 3 steps (cf. Figure 2.13): In the first step, the opponents' strategies are still restricted to inflicting limited destruction. In order to endure the casualties they suffer, the parties invert their values: to suffer low levels of damage rather than high ones is already regarded as a benefit. In the second step, disabling the enemy's system becomes the main objective. Finally, conflict may degenerate into total war, which plunges the parties into mutual devastation: There is no way back, and the enemy has to be destroyed at any cost, even one's life.

2.4 Asynchronous conflict processes

Developmental logic of the escalation process

The stages of conflict escalation follow a certain developmental logic, just as do changes in the ways conflict parties perceive conflict. One stage follows the other as parties resort to increasingly drastic measures to achieve their ends. The more drastic the means, the more the parties need a justification to give their aims the appearance of being both just and necessary and to make it seem as though they had been forced into the role of victim. At the same time, they regard their opponent as a dangerous aggressor who would have nothing to fear if he did not pursue unjust aims and if his actions were not totally wrong. Yet the more evil the opponent appears, the fewer shared interests there seem to be and the more drastic the means needed to defend against his aggression.

Non-linearity of the escalation process

The process of conflict escalation is usually not a linear process proceeding stage by stage, but rather it assumes the pattern of "two steps forward, one step back". On every level of conflict escalation there is in principle a chance of withdrawing, of step-by-step conflict de-escalation – even if this proves all the more difficult the higher the level of escalation. In particular, if only one party attempts to de-escalate a conflict, disappointments are pre-programmed. Insofar as the level of escalation is still high, the frustration of de-escalation efforts seemingly offers new proof of the opponent's ill will and simultaneously confirms the justness of one's cause. The dynamic of escalation continues with ever greater force.

The length of time spent on the various levels of conflict escalation can be quite varied. A conflict can continue over a long period at a stable level of escalation and then move rapidly through several successive stages of escalation in a very short period.

On the basis of the distorted communication between the conflict parties, escalation often does not occur synchronously on both sides. If the parties operate on different levels of escalation, this further radicalizes the escalation dynamics:

- The party operating on the higher level of escalation interprets his opponent's actions in the sense of his own level of escalation and attributes aggressive intentions to the opponent which far exceed the latter's actual intentions.
- To the party acting on a lower level of escalation, the opponent's actions seem, to the contrary, excessive and disproportionate.

tionate and thereby confirm that the opponent's ill intentions are far greater than previously feared.

Asynchronous courses of escalation are often the consequence of a power imbalance between conflict parties. While a stronger party can impose his claims and goals without actually having to engage in physical conflict, a weaker party is exposed to constant frustration and finds himself in a continuing state of deprivation. He finds it increasingly pointless to try to extricate himself using moderate means, and in the end unrestrained violence breaks out.

Consequences of power imbalance

This can go so far that the more powerful party imagines that he is engaging in a process of cooperative problem resolution with his partner, while the less powerful is already preparing for limited destruction. In the extreme case it may even happen that the more powerful party does not even notice the existence of conflict and imagines himself in a state of complete harmony with his partner, until he is suddenly confronted by conflict with a completely unexpected level of violence.

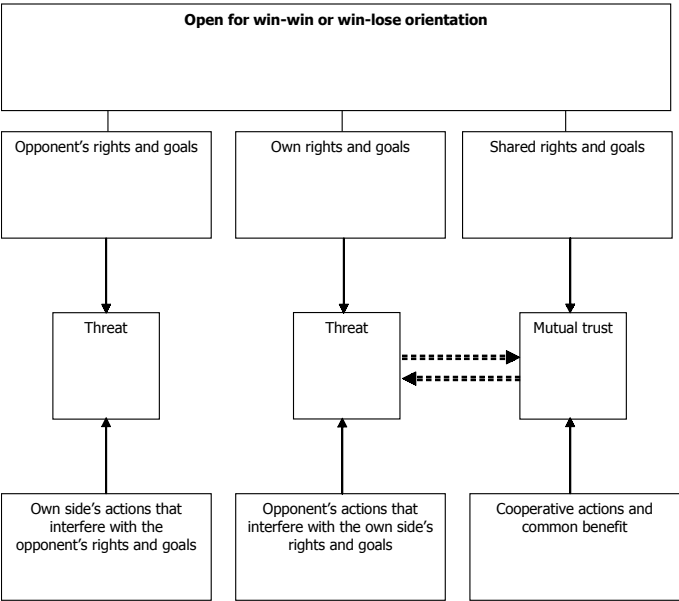
Since powerlessness also means that one can achieve little or nothing through discussion, it often means that the weaker party will not even discuss the conflict with his opponent. Fixation on one's own rights and aims leads to their idealization, and the opponent's actions (no matter how cooperatively they are intended) are condemned even to the point of demonizing him. The rights of opponents are denied and at most discussed with third parties from whom support is desired. Because others far too often give this support instead of intervening to mediate conflict, prejudices against the opponent receive social support and gradually acquire a sense of certainty. If conflict suddenly breaks out, this happens with such vehemence that the concrete substantive questions which informed the (original) conflict recede behind a bulwark of hostility. Indeed, they can no longer be concretely specified – or perhaps only as a long list of proofs of the opponent's evil intentions. But the frustrations which burden the relationship lie in the past and are no longer the issue. The relationship itself is in question; the former partner has become the enemy.

Similarly fatal consequences result from suppressing aggression, which indeed would be necessary to defend interests with non-violent means as well. Conflict escalates covertly, and when it eventually becomes manifest, it has already reached such a high level that it can be brought under control only with great effort.

2.5 Cognitive change during conflict escalation

During the process of conflict escalation, which can be observed not only in political conflicts, but also in interpersonal and inter-group conflicts as well, the parties gradually apply increasingly drastic means to impose their goals. Since the use of drastic means violates ethical norms and is often subject to both social and legal sanctions, this calls for special legitimization. According to our theory (cf. Kempf, 1996, 2002a), this legitimization is provided by changes in the cognitive representation of the conflict on each of the four levels, conceptualization of the conflict, evaluation of the parties’ rights and goals, evaluation of their actions, and the resulting emotional involvement.

Figure 2.17: The conflict constellation



Conflict constellation

As we have seen, the complete truth about a conflict is always a complex, multifaceted truth (cf. Figure 2.17). The conflict constellation is open for both win-win and win-lose orientations. Each of the parties interferes with their opponent’s interests and each feels threatened by actions of the opponent that interfere with their own rights and goals. Still, there are shared interests as well, and cooperative behavior may be mutually beneficial and give rise to mutual trust. For both of the parties, this produces a

situation of ambivalence and intra-personal conflict between trust and mistrust.

Due to the conflict parties' divergence of perspectives, their view of the conflict is incomplete, however (cf. Figure 2.18). They tend to disregard the opponent's rights and interests, they do not recognize that they are interfering with his rights and interests, nor do they recognize the threat that they themselves pose for the opponent. As they focus on their own rights and the threat that results from the opponent's interference, they find themselves in a state of heightened insecurity in which they do not know whether they can still trust him or not. Accordingly, their common rights and interests and the common benefits of their mutual relationship seem to be endangered as well.

Divergence of perspectives

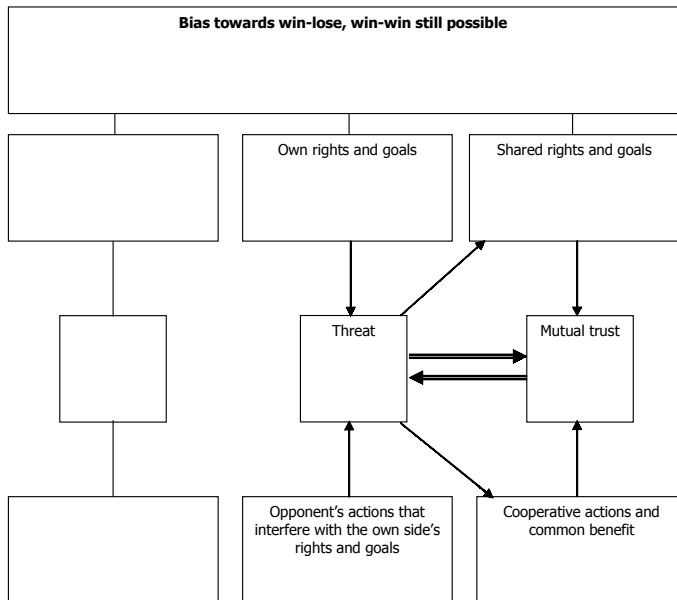


Figure 2.18: Divergence of perspectives

This insecurity will diminish if they choose to interpret the conflict as a win-lose situation (cf. Figure 2.19). As soon as the parties interpret the conflict as a win-lose situation, they enter into a competitive process in which shared rights and intentions as well as the common benefits from the mutual relationship tend to be lost from view. Mutual trust declines. The cognitive representation of the conflict is reduced to the parties' own rights and inten-

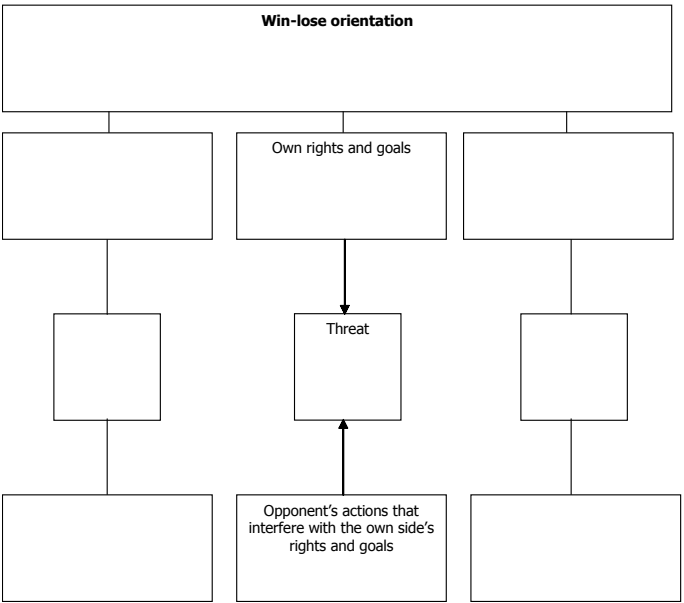
Competition

tions, and to the threat which results from the opponent's actions.

The image of the conflict, which was formerly a highly complex system of interfering interests and actions, becomes seemingly simple. There is no longer any reason for insecurity, since mutual trust is no longer on the agenda. Each actor strives for his own goals, and there are no longer any common interests that might be endangered by this.

But the price to be paid for this simplification of conflict is high: the conflict is transformed into an autonomous process. Each actor feels threatened, each believes he is defending himself, each believes in the need to impose his goals by force. The forcible imposition of interests has the side-effect of threatening the opponent even more. The opponent responds to this threat by forcibly imposing his goals, and the means employed become increasingly draconian.

Figure 2.19: Competition



Struggle/Antagonism The enforcement of goals with drastic means requires a justification, and in the course of further escalation from competition to struggle the parties' behaviors and attitudes become increasingly

hostile (cf. Figure 2.20). The opponent's rights are soon denied and his intentions condemned. Actions that interfere with the other's rights and interests are justified, and the parties emphasize their own strength. As a counterpart to the perceived threat from the opponent, the parties become increasingly confident of their ultimate victory and the realization of their rights and intentions.

At the same time, each party places great weight on its own rights and intentions. Actions by the opponent that interfere with them are condemned, and the threat is underlined. A threat to the opponent is denied: "If he behaves himself, he has nothing to fear."

The opponent's attacks appear unjustified and create mistrust. The fighting spirit is supported by a delicate balance between threat and confidence of victory.

The seemingly simple image of the conflict has become more complicated once again. Both the opponent's rights and intentions and one's own opposition to them are no longer unnoticed, but they are interpreted on an antagonistic basis which de-legitimizes the opponent and justifies one's own side.

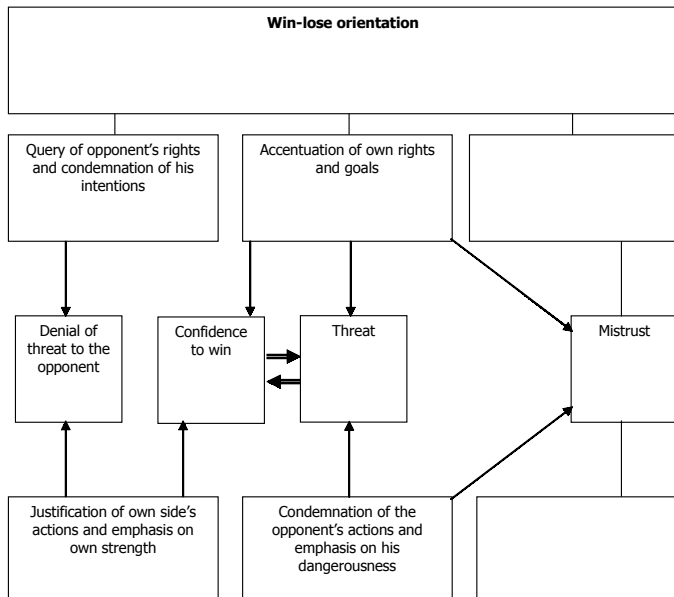


Figure 2.20: Struggle/
Antagonism

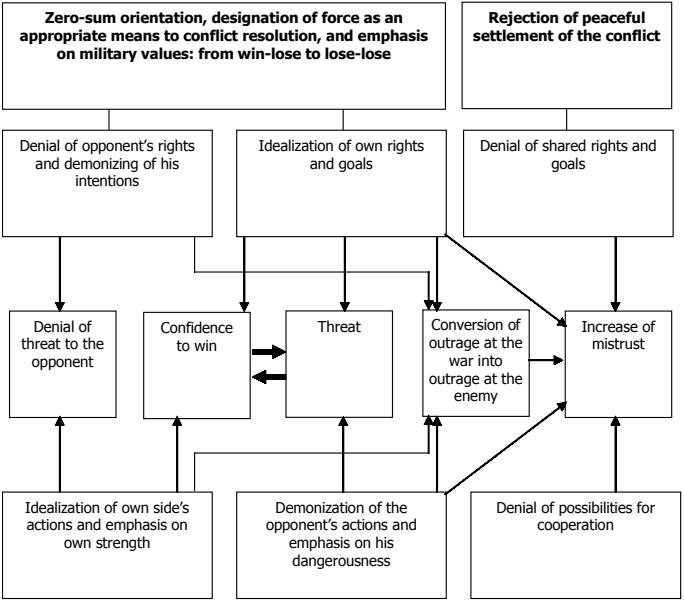
Warfare/Polarization

Finally, further escalation to warfare reduces the framing of the conflict to a military logic that shifts from win-lose to lose-lose (cf. Figure 2.21). The main characteristics of this framework are:

- Zero-Sum orientation: There is only one goal, which is to win, and to win means not to be the loser.
- Acceptance of force as an appropriate means of conflict-resolution
- Emphasis on military values like bravery and unconditional loyalty

The relationship between "us" and "them" becomes polarized: While one's own rights, goals and behavior are idealized, the opponent's rights are denied, and his intentions and actions are demonized.

Figure 2.21: Warfare/Polarization



Peaceful alternatives are rejected, and mistrust of the enemy is promoted. Higher-order interests that might serve as the basis for nonviolent, constructive conflict-resolution are rejected, and so are possibilities of cooperation with the enemy.

(Justified) outrage at the war is converted into (self-righteous) outrage at the enemy: The common suffering that war causes

and the common benefits that peaceful conflict-resolution could entail are lost from sight. The atrocities of the enemy become a self-fulfilling prophecy, and whatever he does seems to prove his evil nature. According to our theory, it is exactly this image of conflict which propaganda tries to establish.

2.6 Cognition and emotion

In many cases, propagandistic efforts are not even needed in order to intensify the cognitive representation of conflict and its emotional correlates, which are closely interrelated with each other and often take their course in a seemingly natural way. The cognitive representation produces emotional consequences, and emotional reactions affect the cognitive framework. Particularly under conditions of stress or in the case of unexpected violent incidents, emotional reactions may be precipitated quite spontaneously and affect the respective interpretation of conflict.

Interactions between cognitive processes and emotional reactions

In the case of the Gulf War, for instance, it took half a year until public opinion was prepared for war. In case of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia it took six years – and in the case of the War against Terrorism it took only six weeks.

In the case of the Gulf War, the public could rather easily be convinced of the prospects of a New World Order and the necessity to depose Saddam Hussein before he had nuclear weapons capability. And this was especially so because the average person didn't know much about Iraq or Saddam Hussein, and human rights organizations as well as pacifist groups had already opposed Saddam Hussein during the war between Iraq and Iran (1980-1988), when Saddam Hussein was still a valued ally of the United States.

The case of the Gulf War

In former Yugoslavia, the situation was much more complex:

The case of former Yugoslavia

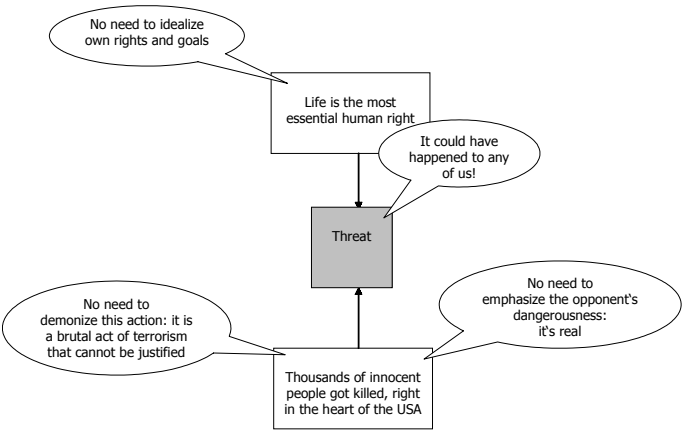
- Serbia, which had been part of the anti-German alliance during two world wars, clung to socialism, which was not in the interest of the European Union.
- German and Austrian diplomacy supported the struggle for independence in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and, as these countries were ready to open their economies to the free market, this was consistent with EU interests as well.
- On the other hand, Croatia and Bosnia had collaborated with the Nazis during World War II, and their current leadership was rather suspect.

The case of the
Afghanistan War

Although the Bosnian Conflict involved a similar motivational logic as the New World Order concept, this was not sufficient to unite the European nations against Serbia and to draw in the United States. In order to produce the necessary balance between threat and self-confidence, propaganda could not simply take sides against the Serbs, but rather differences in the media images of the three ethnic groups had to be gradually developed.

In the case of the Afghanistan War, things were completely different, and much less propaganda was needed to convince the public to accept the war. The attacks of September 11 were criminal acts of horrendous proportions, the threat was real, and it could be experienced first hand by anybody. Thousands of innocent people were killed in the heart of the USA, and as life is the most essential human right there was no need to idealize US rights and goals. There was also no need to demonize the attack: that it was a brutal act of terrorism was self-evident. And there was no need to emphasize the opponent's dangerousness: It was real, and what happened on September 11 could have happened anywhere (cf. Figure 2.22).

Figure 2.22: The threat of
September 11



As a criminal act, the terrorist attack of September 11 could have been dealt with on the basis of international law. The Taliban could have turned over Osama Bin Laden to a neutral country, and an independent court could have tried him. Terrorist organizations all over the world could have been fought by police operations subject to control by courts, and the struggle against terrorism could have been fought in compliance with the demo-

cratic principle of the division of power. Perhaps this is what critics like the German author Günter Grass or German President Johannes Rau were thinking of when they called for a civilized response to the terrorist acts.

Obviously, however, such a civilized response was not on the political agenda. The events of September 11 were not only a terrorist attack against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. They were a symbolic act as well that humiliated the US by demonstrating what had been unimaginable before: the vulnerability of the American superpower.

In a situation like this it was only a natural impulse that American self-confidence needed to be restored and strength needed to be demonstrated by fighting back. Fighting back needed to be justified, however. It could not look like pure vengeance, and to accomplish this, the attack had to be seen as more than criminal and humiliating. Interpreting the attack as an attack against civilization in general, the forthcoming war could be portrayed as a sort of civilized police operation employing all available means, including armed force, which would add to the expectation of victory. And as every nation in the world was given a choice between unconditional solidarity with the US or being regarded as part of the terrorist network, the war presumably would not threaten any civilized country either (cf. Figure 2.23).

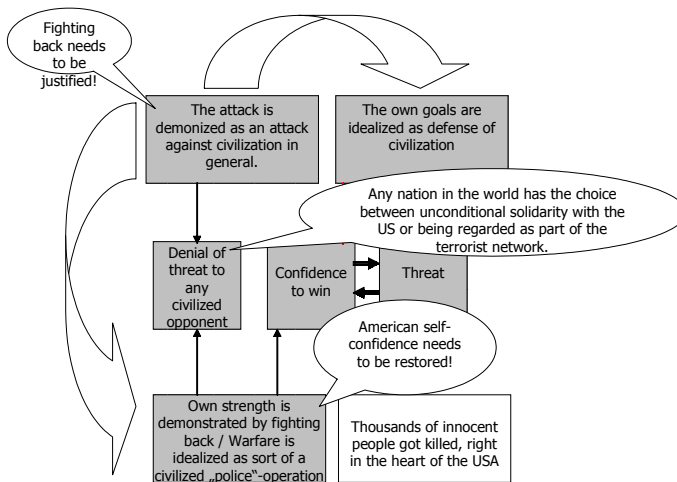


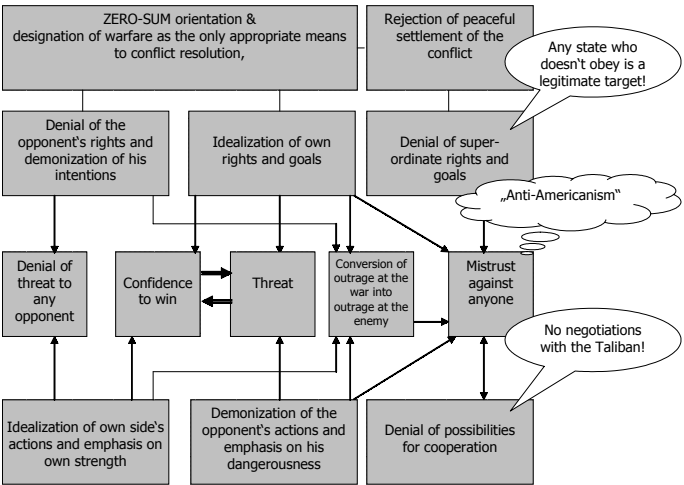
Figure 2.23: Spontaneous reactions to the terrorist attack

One month after the terrorist attack, on October 11, 2001, US President George W. Bush (cf. Weiner, 2001) came to the climax of this interpretation and even aggravated it by expressing an inability to understand what had happened and why:

"How do I respond when I see that in some Islamic countries there is vitriolic hatred for America? I'll tell you how I respond: I'm amazed. I'm amazed that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us. I am – like most Americans, I just can't believe it because I know how good we are."

The rest of the mind set that was needed to gain public support for the War against Terrorism was due to pure automatism: outrage at violence was replaced by outrage at the enemy, literally anyone could be suspected of anti-Americanism, any negotiations with the Taliban could be rejected, and higher-order rights could be denied: Any state which did not cooperate with the USA would be a legitimate target. Any sort of peaceful settlement of the conflict had to be rejected and the whole mind set turned into a zero-sum game where warfare was the only option. (cf. Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.24: The ultimate mind set



Naturally these are all traditional propaganda contents, and the media were saturated by them. Targeted propaganda measures were not needed to plant them in the public mind. All that was needed was a lack of understanding of the terror attack of 11 September and its pseudo-explanation in terms of completely groundless hate, through which the initially still unknown enemy

was demonized, the US idealized, and the search for possible conflict causes tabooized.

Nonetheless, it can be assumed that George W. Bush's statement was not a deliberate propaganda message. It sounds like the honest words of a somewhat simple-minded man facing an unbelievable excess of violence against his own people, expressing what millions of people felt at this moment. People who never gave much thought to other people in some distant corner of the world, to whom our wealth and abundance is their poverty and starvation, our liberties destroy their culture, and our way of life is an insult to their concept of honor.

Nonetheless, these were also words that set the world on fire. They were words that declared total war, that rejected any analysis of the conflict sources, that did not allow any resolution but the elimination of the enemy and that even denied his most essential human rights. That the US government later decided that thousands of imprisoned suspected or actual El Kaida terrorists were neither combatants (otherwise they would have been entitled to the protection of the Geneva Conventions) nor criminals (otherwise they would have been entitled to the protection of American criminal law), but rather belonged to a third category without rights or claims to respect for their human dignity, was merely the logical consequence. For words like these are also words suitable to destroy the so-called "civilized world" from within. – And all this, without calls for revenge, without enthusiasm for war in the true sense of the word and out of the pure necessity of dealing with the emotional burden imposed by the terror of September 11.

War reporting and propaganda¹

Exploitation of social-psychological processes

The polarized image of conflict which propaganda disseminates is not invented by propaganda, but is instead due to psychological framing processes that take place in a seemingly natural way whenever conflict escalates into warfare. Propaganda merely exploits these processes to gain credibility and plausibility, and in order to ensure that the propaganda message will not be rejected: neither by the audience nor by the journalists who are exploited to transmit it. Both the plausibility and the effects of propaganda are due to the structural resemblance between the propaganda message and the "natural" cognitive processes behind conflict escalation.

Manipulation of the audience's engagement

According to Luostarinen (1986, 2002a), the aim of war propaganda is to motivate people to strongly and personally identify themselves with the goals of a war. This can be achieved when the propagandist manipulates the audience's engagement in the conflict to influence its interpretations and thereby to reorganize its hierarchy of values so that winning the war is placed at the top and all other values – for instance truth, ethical considerations and individual rights – are subordinated to this goal.

In order to enmesh the public in a conflict, propaganda uses various manipulative tactics, in particular: the polarization of identification suggestions, a specific logic of motivation which helps societal members to adjust to the hardships of war and makes them want to contribute, and the immunization of the propaganda message against criticism.

3.1 Polarization of identification clues

Construction of higher-order values

"Polarization of identification clues" refers to the fact that identities have many aspects: citizenship, ethnic group, language, re-

1. Parts of this chapter are based on preliminary work by Susanne Jaeger. Responsibility for the present text is solely that of the author.

ligion, gender, social class, etc. Propaganda tries to influence these identity structures so that people prioritize the identity of the particular unit at war. In this context, it is typical to show that interests connected to all other identity aspects depend on military success as well, and that the enemy threatens each aspect.

In complicated networks of values, propaganda establishes higher-order values and promises that defending them will also support other values. In constructing such higher-order values, propaganda emphasizes the social conceptions of the sacred and the profane. It carefully examines the values and things regarded as sacred or profane by each target group and tries to link everything sacred to one's own actions and all that is profane to that of the enemy. A nation's own war-making is always portrayed as just and in accord with the highest values.

As a result, propaganda messages are often inconsistent and make contradictory claims, depending on the target group. During the Gulf War, for instance, it was quite useful to stimulate the fighting spirit of the American public by portraying the war as serving American interests, such as free access to the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf, while the European – and particularly the German public – had to be assured that this was "not a war for oil", but a purely disinterested endeavor, fought only for the liberation of Kuwait and to uphold the standards of international law (cf. Kempf, 1994, 2001a).

Inconsistency of
propaganda
messages

In functioning to unite a community, war propaganda exploits historical, institutional and other symbolism. Typical are, for instance, the national flag, national anthem, respected national figures and personalities, heroes of previous wars and historical events that can awaken and heighten a sense of patriotic pride. The reference of these symbols is linked with one's own troops, and their defamation with the enemy or internal opponents of the war.

Exploitation of
historical and
institutional symbols

There is an attempt to back official interpretations of the situation with maximally authoritative sources. Since varying social values are found in a nation, propaganda often uses authorities connected with different institutions simultaneously: state, trade union, and business leaders, industrialists, popular athletes, university professors and intellectuals, religious leaders, etc. For successful propaganda it is important to obtain approval of the war from

Exploitation of
authoritative sources

persons representing both sexes, different social classes and religions and various ethnic or linguistic communities.

Social identities

Processes of social comparison

From a psychological point of view, the development of social identity is due to natural processes of social comparison which aim at creating a consistent self-concept. From early childhood we all strive to know who we are or are not, where we do or do not belong, what and where the differences and similarities are between us and others. As soon as we are confronted with others (even imaginary ones), we tend to pigeonhole ourselves and the others in social categories in order to structure the information available in our social environment (Tajfel, 1969). These social categories tend to be chosen spontaneously, freely and automatically. As soon as a process of social categorization takes place, these categories begin to affect perceptual processes. They lead us to absorb social information very selectively: information consistent with our expectations is more easily accepted than information that is not consistent with them.

Social Identity Theory

According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979, 1986), the self-perceptions and self-concepts of individuals depend mainly on group ties and the attribution of a certain group membership, and there is a general tendency to judge members of the other group as inferior to members of one's own group or oneself. In other words, social identity, like personal identity, is linked to the individual's self-esteem, and the individual therefore attempts to maintain the positive distinctiveness of his or her in-group as opposed to relevant out-groups.

Exploitation of social identities

Propaganda profits from these processes, not simply by telling people what they should think or do, but rather by providing a framework of social categories, like nationality, religion, physical characteristics, dress, race, etc., and by offering proof of the suitability of judging the social environment according to the given categories.

National identity, for instance, is not just manifest in the coverage of the national mass media, but the media serve to maintain and protect national identity as well (cf. Rivenburgh, 1997). They do so by putting national issues on the agenda, by providing information and by offering a cognitive framework for their interpretation.

Propaganda tools of identification management include demonizing the enemy and disregarding his perspectives and interests, glorifying national actions, drawing a clear distinction between socially functional and dysfunctional behavior, and alluding to positive role models (heroic soldiers, their peers and parents), etc. From a journalistic viewpoint, they offer appealing material, because they imply strong contrasts and conflicts, human-interest stories and emotional stimulation.

Propaganda tools of identification management

In modern warfare, the enemy is usually demonized by targeting the leadership of the enemy group or its ideology. According to Luostarinen (2002a), war is seldom waged against ordinary people or soldiers, because this might create an identification bridge between populations on both sides who identify themselves with "ordinary people". On the contrary, the purported aim is often the very rescue of the enemy population from the hands of leaders who are oppressing them and leading them towards disaster.

Worthy victims

A powerful instrument of identification management, which applies several of the aspects described above, is the unequal treatment of what Herman & Chomsky (1988) refer to as "worthy" and "unworthy victims": Victims of national or international violence, whose suffering is objectively comparable.

The political economy of victimization

- In one case they are useful – hence worthy – since they can be used as a propaganda weapon against the current enemy.
- In the other case they are useless – hence unworthy and uninteresting – since responsibility for violence lies in one's own sphere of influence, and any reporting on its victims would be unfavorable to the national interest.

According to Herman & Chomsky, reporting on worthy and unworthy victims differs with respect to the presentation and the support of accusations against perpetrators, as well as with respect to the presentation of their actions and their victims. In the case of worthy victims, accusations are presented in a convincing style which permits no criticism or alternative interpretations whatsoever, and an effort is made to obtain corroboration from an authority figure. The treatment of the actions and their victims makes use of an emotionalized choice of words and searches for responsibility for actions at the top. Events are dramatized and the victims humanized and described in great detail, along with their context.

German newspaper coverage of allied POWs during the Gulf War

An empirical case study

Taken prisoner by Iraq and presented publicly on Iraqi television, allied pilots who were shot down during the Gulf War can be regarded as a typical example of "worthy" victims: the Western news media presented them as proof of the torture and maltreatment of prisoners and exploited them to legitimize allied war objectives beyond the liberation of Kuwait.

In their study of the German press coverage of these events, Kempf & Reimann (1994) found that the propaganda techniques used during the Gulf War were less one-sided but – on the other hand – even more sophisticated than described by Herman & Chomsky (1988).

Substantiation of accusations

The focus on and substantiation of accusations of human rights violations during the Gulf War involved a total of five different reporting styles, the first of which was characteristic of the majority of the analyzed text passages (41%) which reported factually about the Geneva Convention and in which accusations were dealt with only marginally. In 9% of the analyzed text passages the authors found a coverage style expressing a critical attitude towards the Allied forces; 7% of the analyzed text passages tried to defend Iraq by minimizing some of the accusations, and 5% of the analyzed text passages focused on accusations against both war parties.

With 38% of the analyzed text passages, however, the second most frequent press coverage style, to a large extent, corresponded with the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky. This style was characterized by accusations against Iraq, often combined with expert corroboration but not including any accusations and/or expert corroboration directed at the Allied forces.

As compared with Herman & Chomsky's model, the press coverage proved to be more differentiated and not completely without criticism of the accusations, however. Occasionally it provided counter-arguments and made use of so-called two-sided presentations by which attitude changes can be made more resistant against subsequent counter-propaganda (cf. Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953).

Featuring victims

With respect to the featuring of worthy and unworthy victims, 71% of the analyzed text passages contained relatively unbiased

press coverage, which, nonetheless, portrayed Iraq unequivocally in the role of perpetrator.

Some 10% of the analyzed text passages used the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky: Through the use of emotionalized words, responsibility was generally located at the top. Allied victims were frequently humanized and dramatically portrayed. Often elements from the everyday world of the Allies were included, while the Iraqi perspective, in contrast, was never shown.

Another 18% of the analyzed text passages made use of a propaganda style which does not occur, in this form, in the model of Herman & Chomsky. This can be described as the propagandistic construction of human interest stories: The reporting emphasized the humanization and usually also the dramatic presentation of the Allied protagonists, with frequent inclusion of elements from their everyday life world and with occasional use of emotionalized words. On the other hand, however, responsibility is not sought at the top. The stories speak for themselves.

A significant difference between this propaganda construction of human interest stories and the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky is that the reader is not presented with a concluding judgment: neither concerning atrocities, nor concerning responsibility at the top. Readers must (ostensibly) form their own judgment, even when this is already given by the characteristic style of the story and cannot be interpreted in any other way than that intended by the propaganda.

Propagandistic use of human interest stories

Readers might be tempted to imagine that they had formed their own judgments based on personal experience. Consequently, a conclusion might be reached that seemed particularly credible and thus became especially immune to counter-propaganda, as well as to attempts at emancipating enlightenment.

Identification management during the Bosnia Conflict

Another typical example of the unequal coverage of worthy and unworthy victims is the reports on incidents of rape during the Bosnia conflict (cf. Jaeger, 1998): Although the Western media did not take sides during the Bosnian conflict, as clearly as they had during the Gulf War, and although the press reported incidents of rape in former Yugoslavia in a more sophisticated way

Reports on incidents of rape in former Yugoslavia

than might have been expected, they did not pay the same attention to victims from other ethnic groups. There was a fairly high share of texts that dealt mainly with Serbian violence against non-Serbian women, and it was particularly these texts that revealed a tendency to exploit victim suffering to determine which side was the most guilty.

The example shows that the polarization of identification suggestions does not necessarily mean that propaganda will produce a clear-cut distinction between "good" and "evil". Because excessively black-and-white stereotyping can reduce the credibility of propaganda, particularly of more subtle propaganda, it will consequently usually be avoided.

Gradual development of media images

During the Bosnian Conflict, for instance, the media did not simply take sides against the Serbs, differences in the media images of the three ethnic groups developed gradually and were mainly due to the different roles in which the groups were portrayed by the media (cf. Jaeger, 2001; Kempf, 2002b).

The most positive role was constructed for the Muslims, who were depicted as the least confrontational and most often forced into a defensive situation. In accordance with this, the press also gave more incentives for identification with Muslim victims than with those on the other side(s). Both Serbs and Croats, on the other hand, were generally portrayed as aggressors.

Images of the Serbs

Although military logic was least reported for the Serbian side, and the press put the least emphasis on the explicit evaluation of Serbian actions (whether positive or negative), the negative image of the Serbs resulted from other factors.

- *First*, Serbian actors were covered by the media twice as often as each of the other groups, and Serbian behavior was depicted as the most confrontational.
- *Second*, Serbian rights and intentions were given little emphasis, and because the possibilities for cooperation between the Serbs and their opponents were emphasized, the confrontational Serbian behavior appeared even less justified.
- *Third*, the press encouraged the least outrage at the opponents of the Serbs and most often presented the suffering of the Serbian side together with the suffering of their counterparts on the other side.

- *Fourth*, incentives for social identification with Serbian victims were extremely low, and there was even a considerable amount of dehumanization of victims on the Serbian side.

Moreover, the media tended to support cooperation between Croats and Muslims by giving more attention to the price of military victory and to the reduction of mistrust between these parties than in the Serbian case. They also put more emphasis on the hardships of Croats and Muslims caused by their opponents' actions and thus discredited the Serbs even more.

While it is not surprising that the international press portrayed the Muslims as playing a defensive role and the Serbs as aggressors, the really striking result of the above studies is how the press managed to keep the Croats out of the line of fire:

Images of the Croats

- The Croats were found to be most oriented to a military logic (both positively and negatively) and as most consistently rejecting the logic of peace. Outrage at the war was nearly as high in the context of Croat actions as in the Serbian case.
- At the same time, Croat actions were justified more often than those of the other ethnic groups, and Croat rights and intentions received the most attention (both positively and negatively).
- Although the possible gains from ending the conflict were stressed in the context of Croat actions, that there were possibilities for cooperation between the Croats and their opponents was denied more often than in the case of the other groups, and there was a high level of outrage at the enemies of the Croats.

Thus both the Croat emphasis on military logic and the rejection of the peace logic by the Croats were seemingly justified by giving high priority to their rights and intentions and by denying the existence of possible cooperative alternatives.

Despite the fact that the international press reported quite unevenly about the three ethnic groups, the press was quite ambiguous about all three of them. The press identified itself with none of the Bosnian war parties, but rather with the international community, which had a problem with the warring parties in Bosnia. In taking this position, however, the journalists' lack of understanding of the logic of peaceful conflict resolution became crucial. As a result, the coverage supported a policy of peace

Image of the international community

enforcement (by military intervention), rather than a policy of peace-making (by third-party mediation efforts). The more the international actors became involved in the conflict as external actors, the greater was the media sympathy for them.

According to a study by Kempf (2002b), what was wrong with the Bosnian coverage was not so much its partiality (as assumed by Serbian counter-propaganda; cf. Malesič, 1998), nor its commitment to human rights. The trouble with the Bosnian coverage was its imprisonment in the vicious circle of war and military logic.

Some 72% of the reports about neutral third parties supported a policy of force by focusing on confrontationist behavior and framing it with a bias towards military logic.

- More than a quarter (19% of all articles) had both a strong focus and a clear bias towards a military logic.
- Another 53% of the articles had the same sort of bias, but largely disregarded third parties and gave them little attention.

A total of 12% of the articles put great emphasis on criticizing third parties' actions, which were framed ambivalently between military logic and the peace logic.

Only 15% of the articles reported about third parties in a slightly more positive way:

- Though with a strong focus, but only with slight bias towards military logic, 7% of the articles reported more about cooperative behavior and presented some incentives for social identification with the third party.
- Only 8% of the articles focused on peace logic and framed third party actions more within the logic of peace than within a military logic.

3.2 Motivational logic

Aims of propaganda

From the military point of view, propaganda is a non-material means of warfare based on voluntary action. The aim of propaganda is to affect the motivation of one's own troops and civilians positively, to affect enemy troops and civilians negatively, and to win support from the international community.

Since the primary targets of propaganda are people's intentions, its argumentation typically motivates in a variety of ways:

- Aimed at third parties, the goal of propaganda is to ensure acceptance and support for one's views.
- Aimed at the enemy, the goal of propaganda is to encourage resistance against the enemy country's leaders and to encourage defeatism and passivity.
- Aimed at one's own people, the goal of propaganda is to motivate them to serve their country and to approve the decisions of its military leaders.

This is the most demanding task of propaganda: one's soldiers and civilians must be motivated to sacrifice their freedom, health, even lives and to stand firm despite the hardships of war. To accomplish this, a certain balance between fear and trust is important.

- If the enemy is portrayed as particularly strong and threatening, the reaction could be defeatist.
- If the enemy is portrayed as a weak opponent, the result might be passivity and indifference.

According to Luostarinen, at least three factors are at work in society members' decisions to act voluntarily in the service of their society and against the enemy:

A three-factor model of motivation

- Conception of the past
- Conception of the present situation
- Conception of the future

The acceptance of propagandistic suggestions is evaluated in relation to these views and one's own values, and propaganda is intended to influence them.

In many cases propaganda does not consist of explicit exhortations or imperatives to act in a certain fashion or to avoid acting in some other. It is rather an attempt to frame the interpretation of the situation so that action or approval seems to be a rational choice, both in view of one's own values and in terms of rationality in general. The purpose of framing and limiting the alternatives is for the recipient to make the choices that propaganda is meant to induce.

The conception of the past offered by war propaganda is conflict-oriented and saturated with military values. Typically it contains the following elements: the justification and necessity of military force in certain historical situations and historical proof of one's

Conception of the past

own society's good intentions and desire for peace, but also of its resolve and capability to stand up to external aggression.

At the same time it stresses the historical threat of the enemy, his aggressiveness and dangerous arms build-up and the resulting inevitability of conflict.

All decision-making is based on a conception of the lessons of the past and the forces that guide history.

Interpretation of the present

The interpretation of the present situation has three typical features:

First: There is an effort to steer the interpretation with vigorous, slogan-like expressions, concepts and metaphors which give a package-like crystallization of the basis of the conflict.

The more quickly and clearly the crisis can be conceptualized, the better the chances are for the crystallizations to gain a dominating and seemingly natural position, especially in media discourse.

Blatant examples of this are, for instance, the names the United States has given to its various interventions, *Urgent Fury* (Grenada), *Just Cause* (Panama) or *Restore of Hope* (Somalia), as well as the presentation of the Afghanistan War as a "War against Terrorism".

Second: There is an attempt to direct, limit and compromise alternative perspectives concerning the interpretation of the situation.

- "Efforts to direct perspectives" means favoring certain ones,
- "to limit perspectives" means to ignore certain points of view, and
- "to compromise" means presenting certain viewpoints as detrimental in a way which causes them to be conceptualized in a critical fashion. For instance, they are shown to be linked with the interests of the enemy, or some other moral or cognitive flaw is pointed out.

A typical example is the marginalization of peace movements as eccentric marginal groups, as fifth columns of the enemy, or simply as incompetent in security matters, as happened during the Gulf War (cf. Liegl & Kempf, 1994) and many other international conflicts.

Third: The situation is interpreted as calling for immediate action. If action is delayed, the moment will be forever lost. In doing so, the suggested perspective is usually supported by information made to appear as precise as possible and with various representations whose reference to reality the public usually accepts as direct and genuine. As a consequence, the material most intensively used and manipulated by war propaganda are statistics and seemingly objective figures, photographs, news films and so-called "hard news".

The conception of the future, finally, is typically presented as consisting of two polarized options: Our fight is a bulwark or a barricade protecting our values, traditions, community, families and property against the enemy's depredation. And, at the same time, the struggle is also a bridge, taking us to a better world and future, to a world of peace and justice.

Conception of the future

New World Order rhetoric during the Gulf War

An instructive example of this sort of motivational logic is the official information activities of the United States before and during the Gulf War in 1991, as condensed into the concept of a "New World Order" by the then US President George Bush.

Conception of a New World Order

The past: Appeasement of Adolf Hitler ultimately led to the Second World War and resulted in a terrible catastrophe. If Hitler had been opposed early enough, the war could have been avoided. The same goes for Saddam Hussein. If he is not stopped now, right after the invasion of Kuwait, he will attack the whole Persian Gulf region.

The present: The collapse of socialism and the triumph of western democracy have provided just the right moment to restore the position of the UN and to show terrorist states that nothing can be gained from violence. Economic sanctions would work too slowly. While the world is waiting, Iraq might get nuclear weapons or might attack other countries with chemical weapons.

The future: After the war, a New World Order will be established where the rights of small nations will be protected and where the rules of international law will be respected. The alternative scenario would be that the world's oil reserves would come under the control of an Iraq armed with nuclear weapons, while internationally dictators and terrorists would be encouraged.

Media reception of the New World Order concept

A comparative study According to a comparative study of US, German and Scandinavian media, one out of every thirty news items dealing with the Gulf crisis between August 2, 1990, (Iraqi invasion of Kuwait), and January, 1993, (US-launched air-strike against Baghdad intended to force Iraq to obey to the conditions of the ceasefire), referred to at least one of the three aspects of the official motivational logic of the Gulf War (cf. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 2001).

This may be due to quotes of political leaders who used the concept of a New World Order in their public statements. But not only did the media report the political rhetoric, journalists also incorporated the concept of the New World Order into their own way of thinking and made it a prominent issue in editorials interpreting the Gulf Crisis.

Although the slogan of a New World Order belongs to the type of trite, grandiose one-liners which have most often proved to be empty or misleading and which professional journalists should treat with a certain skepticism, they repeated the same rhetorical patterns as the politicians and did so with the same relative preference for the various patterns. Especially the Swedish editorials (which had to cope with a long tradition of Swedish political neutrality) and the German editorials (which had to cope with a strong German anti-war movement) made use of this motivational logic to encourage support for the Gulf War.

Rhetorical patterns Nearly 90% of these editorials and news items were completely uncritical of the New World order and supported it with various focuses:

- The most prominent rhetorical pattern (35%) gave a central position to the "lessons of the past". Thereby, the Saddam-Hitler comparison was more or less isolated and was only rarely supported by the "right moment" argument, and nearly never by the "fair play" promise.
In some cases the historical comparison was also questioned or even denied, but this was due to so-called "two-sided messages", which formulate counter-arguments only in order to reject them.
- As prominent as the "lessons of the past" rhetoric was another rhetorical pattern (35%) which centered on the "fair play" promise. In doing so, the fair play argument was less isolated.

It was often supported by the right moment aspect, and sometimes also by the historical parallel between Saddam and Hitler.

This comprehensive rhetorical pattern also seems to be more ambivalent than the "lessons of the past rhetoric" and makes at least some reference to critical voices which question the fair-play promise, the historical comparison with Hitler, or the right moment aspect. But again, this is due to two-sided messages – and to the fact that after the Reagan era (and especially after the Nicaragua-Contra War and the invasions of Grenada and Panama), part of the European public still doubted how serious the United States really was about "the rights of small nations" (at least when their "own backyard" was concerned). Such reservations could not be simply ignored, but had to be made an issue in order to refute them.

- The least common rhetorical pattern in support of the New World Order (20%) focused on the right moment aspect. Again, this rhetorical pattern is less comprehensive and less ambivalent: The right moment argument is only sometimes supported by the Saddam-Hitler comparison, and almost never by the fair-play promise. Although the right moment aspect is sometimes also doubted or denied, there is very little negative reference to the lessons of the past and none at all to the fair play aspect.
- Only 10% of the editorials and news items were critical of the New World Order. This criticism was usually based on doubt or denial of the fair play promise, often on questioning the Saddam-Hitler comparison, and sometimes on denial of the right moment argument. While the "fair play" and "right moment" aspects were never supported, the criticism was much more ambivalent with respect to the historical comparison, however, which was appealed to nearly as often as it was refuted.

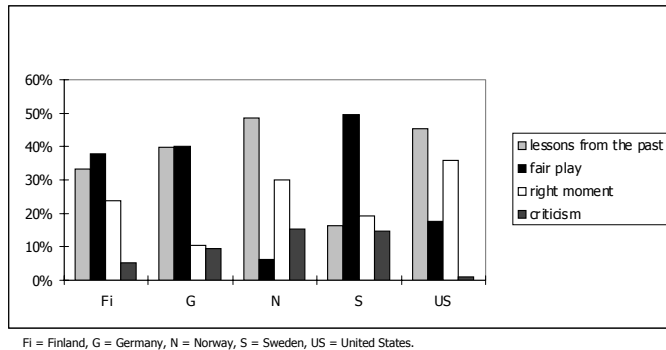
Obviously the threat to Israel was such a strong argument that even the few European journalists who were critical of the New World Order could not ignore the fact that poison gas produced with German technology had killed millions of Jews in the gas-chambers of the Holocaust, and such gas was now in the hands of Saddam Hussein, who had targeted missiles at the Jewish state.

Adaptation of New World Order rhetoric to national news discourses

As a consequence, the declared parallel between Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler was such a strong metaphor that it came into play not only in each of the rhetorical patterns that supported the idea of a New World Order, but even in the minority pattern that was critical of it.

Nearly all of these critical articles were published by European media, mainly in Norway, Sweden and Germany, and to a lesser extent in Finland. In the US media there was almost no criticism of the New World Order (cf. Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Adaptation of New World Order rhetoric to national news discourses



Acceptance of this kind of rhetoric and motivational logic is a clear sign of a strong commitment on the side of journalists. This may be due to several facts, one of which is the enormous flexibility with which the concept of a New World Order could be adapted to the various national discourses in order to legitimate the Gulf War under the variety of historical, political and cultural conditions to be found in different countries.

In Sweden, which has a long tradition of political neutrality, in Germany, where the Gulf War faced political opposition from a strong peace movement, and in Finland, a small country itself, which had just become free of its relative dependence on the Soviet Union, the motivational logic of the Gulf War focused on the prospect of a bright future where international law would protect the rights of small nations.

In Sweden, this argument was in accordance with a long history of positive engagement for the United Nations. In Germany, it was in accordance with the peace movement's tradition of opposing the superpowers' interventions in the affairs of small Third

World countries. And in Finland, it served the needs of a future perspective for the Finnish population itself.

In the US, the leading nation, both, of the World War II Alliance and of the Gulf War coalition, and in the NATO member Norway, which had been a victim of German aggression during World War II, the focus was on the lessons to be learned from the past and on the right moment to act. In both cases, these two aspects provided sufficient motivation for immediate military action, without having to broach the issue of the rights of small nations in order to make the Gulf War defensible. In the US media discourse, the fair-play aspect played only a minor role, and in Norway the media tended to avoid this sensitive issue as far as possible. If the fair-play promise was touched upon by Norwegian media, this was usually done in a negative way.

3.3 Immunization of propaganda against criticism

A distinctive aspect of war propaganda is the application of refined propaganda techniques like the harmonization of referential levels, double-bind communication and two-sided messages in order to immunize the propaganda message against criticism.

Harmonization of referential levels

The harmonization of referential levels, as described by Luostarinen (2002a), refers to a specific form of circular argumentation that repeatedly tells the same story on different narrative levels, as for example: concrete descriptions of topical events, interpretations of the conflict context, and descriptions of the mythical or religious dimensions of the conflict.

A specific form of circular argumentation

- The level of topical events contains classical propaganda material like descriptions of battles, expressions of support by other countries, heroic tales and reports of atrocities, etc. Level of topical events
- On the level of the conflict context, propaganda explains the roots of the conflict, why it is unavoidable, what we are defending and why the enemy has attacked us. Level of the conflict context
- On the mythical level, finally, material is presented about the logic of history, the meaning of life, etc. Mythical level

According to Luostarinen (2002a), successful propaganda features a coherent construction with tight links between its differ-

ent levels. The different levels support each other. Although the harmonization of the referential levels may lead to texts which seemingly, and on the surface, are heterogeneous, they repeat the same themes that have been chosen as the core propaganda message on different narrative levels which seemingly lend proof to each other.

Some examples

A classical example, described by Luostarinen, is the oft-recurring propaganda motif of the murder of a priest or a nun.

- On the level of the conflict context, the concrete act is interpreted as an example of the barbaric aggression of the enemy which is the very root and cause of the war.
- On the mythical and religious level, the act lends credibility to the idea that we are fighting for God, and the enemy fights for Evil.

The argument works both ways: The enemy rapes and murders a nun, therefore he is godless. Because the enemy is godless, he rapes and murders nuns.

Another example is the following editorial from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of Dec. 23, 1992, as analyzed by Jaeger (2004):

- On the level of topical events, the editorial reports about the rape of Muslim women by Serbian soldiers.
- On the level of the conflict context, the events are explained by referring to a lack of moral restraint on the side of the perpetrators, who were often under the influence of alcohol, most of whom had little or no contact with the church, and many of whom were not even baptized.
- The mythological dimension of events, finally, is constructed by putting them in the context of the Serbian custom of kidnapping brides, which is presented as evidence for the allegation that Serbian men were deeply convinced of having the right to take whatever they wanted.

Again, the argument works both ways: that the Serbs rape Muslim women proves that they lack any moral restraints. Because they lack any moral restraints, they rape Muslim women.

The merger of myth and reality

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it should be noted, however, that those mythological dimension(s) of conflict which are usually constructed by propaganda are not restricted to customs

or religion, as in the examples given above. Even secular and originally rational concepts like democracy are mythologized by propaganda as well, and in many cases it becomes nearly impossible for the audience to distinguish between concrete political content and simple ideology, prejudice and pure fiction. Some examples:

- Democratic states do wage wars, and some of them – like the US – do so almost continuously.
- US support of military governments in Greece or Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s did not defend democracy and human rights. It helped to suppress democratic movements and assisted quite brutal dictators responsible for torture and the deaths of thousands of citizens.
- The slogan of trying to get Osama Bin Laden "dead or alive" (George W. Bush) may have been acclaimed by the American public due to its reference to the Myth of the West. It is *not* a legal position, however, compatible with the democratic principle of the division of powers.

The great communicator

A consummate master at blurring the difference between myth and reality, President Ronald Reagan knew how to confuse not only the public, but also political opponents.

Example of Ronald Reagan

"We had some bitter arguments on Nicaragua", commented Tip O'Neill, until 1986 the Opposition Leader in the House of Representatives, on his experiences with the President. "We argued bitterly a few times. He cannot discuss, to be honest, because he does not know the facts one wants to discuss. He tries to tell something about Hollywood, how he was once a Democrat, how much Harry Truman admired him, how well he knew Franklin D. Roosevelt, just nothing on the topic" (cited from the ZDF, 1 December 1986).

What the Opposition Leader regarded as an inability to argue on the President's side was, however, more than just this and helped Reagan distract attention from the facts, which he replaced with a unique mixture of mythology and everyday reality which were meant to lend his political action the appearance of credibility and legitimacy.

The central instrument of this media policy was to acquire definitional control of the topics to be discussed publicly, for which Reagan's Press Office under the leadership of David Gergen was responsible. On the basis of public opinion research, the topics to be emphasized to the public were carefully selected and arranged into long-term communication scenarios. On the basis of these determinations, appropriate events for the President's schedule were selected or invented. The 'Line of the day meeting' of the staff leaders, which set the topical focal point of the day, was then analyzed by the press people in order to decide on the best presentation. Thus they collected positive reports from the whole government in order for the President to present them in an attractive frame and establish a visual linkage between himself and the good news. If there were a number of positive announcements, they were spread out over several days so that positive headlines did not have to compete. Bad news were if possible sent to the departments, and the attempt was made to avoid corresponding pictorial material. If the announcement of negative news was unavoidable, several items were bundled on the same day, and a time was chosen where there was a wealth of news or an uninteresting point in time. David Gergen even admitted that occasionally minor scandals were steered by the White House in order to distract attention from the larger ones.

Case of the Beirut hostage drama

Among the "minor scandals" were the "embarrassing mistakes" which Reagan constantly made, as when (apparently) during a microphone test the President surprised his hearers with "jests", such as – at the peak of the hostage drama in June 1985 – his announcement, "Guys, I am glad that I have seen Rambo. Now I know what I have to do next time" (cit. from *Der Spiegel* of 15 July 1985, 81).

After he had brought about the release of the hostages by diplomatic means, America's Right wing accused President Ronald Reagan of not reacting in a 'tough enough' way to the 'humiliation of the USA'. With the aid of the quip that he would follow Rambo's example in the next hostage affair, he signaled to his countrymen that he was not entirely pleased with the diplomatic conclusion of the hostage drama. While his tough words contradicted his political actions, Reagan was able to win his countrymen for his policy, because he thereby addressed their patriotic mood, which had been heightened by the Sylvester Stalone movie (cf. König, 1987).

If one examines the manner in which Reagan succeeded in satisfying these patriotic expectations, the seamless transition is apparent with which Reagan shifted from the level of political-historical reality to a fictive film reality and thereby redefined the topical horizon within which the Beirut hostage drama was presented to the public. Just as the film cited historical reality in order to weave it into a fictive action plot and counterfeit it, Reagan cited the fictive reality of the film in order to reverse the meaning of his political action.

Thereby it was by no means only a matter of an accidental meeting, but rather of a media-policy instrument which Reagan constantly used in staging his Presidentship and in which he was aided by his acting past. This enabled him to withdraw behind the roles he had played in Hollywood films, which he simultaneously merged with other heroic Hollywood figures to create a seamless tissue of myths, fictions and facts (cf. König, 1990; Palmbach & Kempf, 1990).

Double-bind communication

War culture is based on fundamental contradictions. First of all, there is the contradiction between beliefs about security to be achieved by enduring conflict and confronting the enemy and beliefs about peace as the ultimate desire of society. Second, there is the immanent contradiction on which lasting conflict is based. It stimulates society members' fighting spirit by portraying an enemy who seems sufficiently dangerous and inhumane, and at the same time, sufficiently weak and fallible that the public does not lose heart, remains certain of victory, and is not frightened by the prospect of possible defeat.

An instructive example of such inherent contradictions is the Cold War logic that legitimated the stationing of medium-range missiles and cruise missiles in Western Germany during the early 1980s. Stressing the need to deter the "inhumanitarian Soviet Union" from war, it simultaneously referred to the good-will of the Soviet Union (which was supposed to be interested in protecting Europe from destruction). This was portrayed as the only security guarantee which would prevent the nuclear arms race from precipitating the destruction of Europe (cf. Kempf, 1986).

Contradictions like this are typical of war culture and interweave propaganda and traditional war reporting on all levels, from the

Inherent
contradictions of war
culture

explanation of the logic of history (cf. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 2001), via the explanation of the conflict sources (cf. Elfner, 1998) and the evaluation of alternatives to violence (cf. Kempf & Reimann, 2002), to the coverage of everyday atrocities (cf. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996).

Creation of a double-bind situation

A war culture thus forces the members of a society into a permanent double-bind situation where they have to cope with contradictory messages. They are given no chance to either react to both of the messages, or to withdraw from the situation.

As a result of emotional involvement with both contradictory messages, it becomes extremely difficult to question either of them. If societal members have no access to independent information, they have no alternatives other than to believe the conclusions they are given by the media or to withdraw into selective indifference, prejudice or evasive skepticism, etc. All these are consequences that serve the goals of psychological warfare by paralyzing the capacity for resistance to war (cf. Kempf, 1992). Double-bind communication results in emotional confusion. And, as the audience will long for a way out, it will be prepared to adopt any conclusion that is offered.

From an analytical point of view, double-bind communication involves three aspects, which can be demonstrated with an article from *The Times*, January 22, 1991, reporting about Allied pilots shot down during the Gulf War and paraded on Iraqi television (cf. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996).

Contradictory messages

First: Double-bind communication presents two contradictory messages, both of which call for an adequate reaction by the audience. In the present article these messages arouse both fear and hope: On the one hand, "Iraq threatens to use prisoners of war as human shields", and, on the other hand, there is the promise "that captured Allied airmen had nothing to fear from the Iraqis".

Social identification

Second: By the presentation of incentives for social identification with the respective sources, the trustworthiness of both contradictory messages is established. In the present article, a threat is linked to the fears, sorrow and comments of the POWs' relatives and friends; hope is linked to a "former British hostage in Iraq", described as a 59-year-old marine biologist. All of them are depicted in detail, and there is a comprehensive and easily understandable presentation of their views.

At the same time, these incentives for identification produce social commitment to both sources. Questioning the threat would seem to imply a lack of loyalty to innocent civilians, whose sons and friends are in the hands of an unscrupulous dictator, and who call for compassion on the side of the audience. Questioning the hope would look like questioning the competence of an intellectual authority ("a marine biologist"), who, moreover, has experienced what it means to be a hostage in Iraq, and last but not least, who should consequently be honored as a British hero.

Third: This double offer of social identification leaves the reader helplessly torn between contradictory messages, both of which are trustworthy and none of which can be rejected without violating social commitments. Thus lacking any rational or emotional basis for drawing his own conclusions, the only way out of his dilemma would be to accept the conclusions offered by propaganda, whether logical or not. In the present article, these conclusions are to share the outrage at Saddam Hussein with the friends and relatives of "our" POWs and to support the continuation of air raids against Baghdad, whatever the consequences for the POWs might be.

Social commitments

Two-sided messages

Though double-bind communication is an important propaganda tool, it is not used routinely, but only when the inherent contradictions of war culture become visible and propaganda has the task to obscure them. In most cases where propaganda has to cope with contradictory information, this is not due to the inherent contradictions of war culture, however, but rather to the contradictions between polarized interpretations of reality or to the contradictions between interpretations and facts.

Coping with contradictory information

The simplest way to deal with these contradictions would be by means of a selection of information, presenting only the propaganda message and those facts which are in accordance with it, and disregarding facts which might raise doubts about its credibility.

Although such blatant measures of information control can be found throughout the history of propaganda, they are very dangerous. At least in democratic societies, the credibility of the media is based on pluralism, and, if a propaganda message is oversimplified, the audience might lose confidence. Moreover, as

Lumsdaine & Janis (1953) have shown, propaganda is more effective if possible counter-arguments are already anticipated by the propaganda message. By using a two-sided propaganda presentation, the propagandist can both increase the credibility of the propaganda and refute possible counter-arguments before they are offered by the enemy. Presenting both arguments and counter-arguments thus makes propaganda less blatant and more resistant to counter-propaganda, since its arguments are already familiar.

Rejection of counter-arguments

The critical point about two-sided propaganda messages is that the counter-arguments should not be accepted by public opinion. There are several ways this can be accomplished:

First: Counter-arguments may be rejected by the use of arguments, presenting facts, etc. This is not specific to propaganda and would be expected from critical journalism as well.

Second: Even if counter-arguments cannot be refuted, they may be devaluated by the use of psychological or linguistic tricks (cf. Reimann, 1998, 2002):

- Presenting incentives for social identification with representatives and/or institutions that share the propaganda message, the propagandist may win the audience to his own point of view.
- Dehumanizing the enemy and/or the sources of counter-arguments, the propagandist may take the edge off counter-arguments, because they only reflect a minority opinion (marginalization), because their advocates are untrustworthy, incompetent or immature, etc. (devaluation), or because their advocates are in the wrong (allocation of guilt).
- Concealing counter-arguments in subordinate clauses, framing them within the propaganda message or embedding them in strings of arguments which ultimately support the core message of propaganda can also weaken them.

In employing such tactics, propaganda often provides all the facts and information that might raise doubts about the truth of the propaganda message – and yet still prevents the audience from doing so. The boundaries between journalism and propaganda have become fluid, and the more refined propaganda techniques are, the less they can be detected on the surface of the text.

The challenge of post-conflict reconciliation¹

4.1 The media as third party

The lack of differentiation between traditional conflict coverage and propaganda calls for the development of strategies through which journalists' work can be improved in order to avoid fanning the flames of conflict. Particularly after a cease-fire or peace treaty has been negotiated, it becomes crucial that the media do not jeopardize the peace process, but rather support post-conflict reconciliation and the reconstruction of war-torn societies. But during the process of conflict-escalation, as well, journalists always have two options: either to take sides and to incite one party against the other, or to play the role of a moderating third party in order to improve the communication between them and contribute to constructive conflict transformation.

Two options of journalism

On every level of conflict escalation, third parties can either serve as catalysts of conflict escalation or as facilitators of de-escalation.

Third party influence

First: In the transition from divergence of perspectives to competition, neutral third parties can play an important role in keeping the parties from switching from cooperative to competitive behavior. They can help to maintain and rebuild trust, encourage the parties to tolerate insecurity, overcome the parties' divergence of perspectives, and reconstruct an open-minded and comprehensive view of the conflict.

Second: During the transition from competition to struggle, they can help to discourage antagonism. By not letting themselves be drawn into taking sides with one side or the other, they can encourage the parties to exercise self-restraint, discourage unfair evaluations of each party's respective rights, aims and actions and those of their opponents and make clear what the price will be – on both sides – of a further escalation of the conflict.

1. Parts of this chapter are based on preliminary work by Ute Annabring and Dorothea Hamdorf. Responsibility for the present text is solely that of the author.

Third: During the transition from struggle to warfare, they can help to prevent polarization. By consistently furthering the perspective of peaceful conflict resolution and defending the justified concerns of *both* parties, they can keep conflict from turning into a zero-sum game.

Antagonistic bias of the media

Because of their interests, the media usually do not take the role of a neutral third party, however. Black-and-white portraits tend to be seen as a means to make news stories more exciting and conflict more easily understood by audiences. Despite their professional code, according to which the task of journalism is merely to *report* facts, journalists usually start by *interpreting* facts in an antagonistic framework.

That journalists and the media function in this way is also due to a number of institutional, sociological and psychological factors resulting from the change in social rank order which takes place during conflict escalation. Those who stand out for their fighting spirit gain influence, while willingness to compromise and attempts to mediate are regarded as disloyal. In escalated conflicts, therefore, journalists not only tend to share the antagonistic beliefs of their society, they are also under pressure to take sides in conflicts in order to maintain their own social status and influence. Moreover, as journalism has a strong bias towards elites, both as sources of information and as subjects of coverage, a good deal of the information on which journalists' work is based is not mere facts, but facts which are already interpreted in a conflictual way – and most news stories are stories about those who are at the forefront of conflict.

Social pressure

The social pressure to which journalists are exposed can be expected to be greatest in the societies directly participating in a conflict. But even in societies which (still) avoid military involvement, it can be quite extensive, as shown by the hostility expressed toward Peter Handke (1996) for his report on "Justness for Serbia" during the Bosnian conflict. While on the surface a rather uninteresting travel report and landscape description, this article fulfilled an important peace-journalistic function by making it clear that people also live in this landscape.

Greek journalists felt they were in a similar situation – even if the omens were reversed – when during the Kosovo War they deviated from the conventional anti-NATO and pro-Serbian discourse that was typical of the Greek media and Greek society (cf. Kon-

doupoulou, 2002). Christos Tellidis, correspondent of the daily newspaper *To Ethnos*, for instance, found himself in an uncomfortable position. When he reported news about the Kosovo Albanians and the massive abuses of their human rights, his newspaper censored some of his "most revealing reports" on Serbian atrocities. Even worse, the majority of Greek journalists attacked those colleagues who attempted to articulate a different point of view, both publicly and privately. Richardos Someritis of the newspaper *To Vima*, for example, was charged with "irrationality" and "paranoia" (Raptis, 2000).

4.2 Ground rules of peace journalism

Based on experience in the Gulf War, the Bosnian conflict and the peace processes in Israel and Northern Ireland, two different models of "peace journalism" were developed during the late 1990s:

Two models of peace journalism

- Peace/conflict journalism vs. war/violence journalism (Galtung, 1998, 2002; McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000).
- Escalation vs. de-escalation-oriented conflict coverage (Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996; Kempf & Gutiérrez, 2001; Kempf, 2002a).

Based on theories of conflict management, both of these models focus on the contents of conflict coverage. While Galtung's model follows a media-sociological approach and aims at counteracting the mechanisms of news selection, the model proposed by Kempf et al. is based on a social-psychological approach and focuses on the cognitive and emotional framing of the news.

Ground rules of peace journalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None of the parties has absolute standards of truth.• Conflicts are always open to being conceptualized either as a competitive (WIN-LOSE) or as a cooperative (WIN-WIN) process.• Conflicts can take a constructive course only if they are conceptualized in the framework of a WIN-WIN model.• War culture is biased towards WIN-LOSE interpretations.• Peace processes must be based on creativity: they must give a voice to the voiceless.• Peace journalism must provide an alternative motivational logic and rechannel outrage at the enemy into outrage at war itself.• Peace journalism must adopt an unconditional commitment to encompassing standards of truth.

Table 4.1: Ground rules of peace journalism

Both approaches share certain ground rules that journalists should observe if they want to avoid inadvertently fanning the flames of conflict (cf. Table 4.1).

- | | |
|---|---|
| None of the parties has absolute standards of truth | 1. Journalists must be aware that none of the parties has absolute standards of truth. In typical escalated conflicts, each of the parties believes it is defending itself against a ruthless aggressor. |
| Conflicts can be win-lose or win-win | 2. Journalists must be aware that conflicts are always open to being conceptualized as either a competitive or a cooperative process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can be conceptualized according to a win-lose model, where each party can win only on the expense of the other; • or, they can be conceptualized according to a win-win model, where each party can only win if both parties win: that is, if both sides' rights and vital interests are mutually respected. |
| Win-win is a precondition for a constructive course of conflict | 3. Journalists must be aware that conflicts need not necessarily take a destructive course. Conflicts can also be constructive for the mutual relationships between the parties. But conflicts can take a constructive course only if they are conceptualized in the framework of a win-win model. |
| War culture is biased towards win-lose | 4. Journalists must be aware that war culture is always biased towards a win-lose interpretation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists must consequently not just accept the official interpretation of the conflict provided by political elites and political leaders. • They must not simply accept the positions political leaders take in the conflict, nor the so-called "solutions" they try to impose on their opponents. <p>The constructive transformation of conflict requires a search for the interests behind the positions of the warring parties, and these interests cannot to be found in the conflict arena or on the battlefield.</p> <p>Peace journalism, therefore, must be investigative journalism rather than just depending on the official statements of warring elites.</p> |
| Creativity is needed | 5. Journalists must be aware that peace processes must be based on creativity. This creativity is often not found on the side of politicians, but rather in segments of the civil popula- |

tion which must endure the burdens of war, such as NGOs and peace groups, which often have little access to the media.

In other words: peace journalism must give a voice to the voiceless,

- Journalists must not just wait until they are involved in some event of high news value in order to report about them,
- they must initiate an active search for these creative, voiceless people and report on their ideas and visions.

6. The harsher the burdens of war, the more easily political leaders can direct public outrage against the opponent and the more easily they can transform it into hatred of the enemy.

An alternative motivational logic must be provided

- Propaganda usually provides some sort of motivational logic which promises that enduring war and attaining military victory will guarantee a brighter future – and that warfare is the only path which leads to this future of peace, welfare and prosperity.
- If journalists do not want to fan the flames of war, they must reject the official line of propaganda and must instead provide an alternative motivational logic which will show how both sides could benefit from dealing with conflict in a cooperative environment.

In other words: journalists have to rechannel outrage at the enemy into outrage at war itself.

- Journalists can do so by making a critical evaluation of *both* sides' actions (rather than simply blaming their country's enemy).
- They can do so by describing the harm and pain that war causes on both sides (rather than exploiting one's own side's victims as proof of the enemy's desire to commit atrocities), and
- they can do so by describing the benefits that both sides could gain from peace.

7. Because the borderline between peace journalism and peace propaganda must not be crossed, journalists must adopt an unconditional commitment to comprehensive (universal) standards of truth.

There must be an unconditional commitment to encompassing standards of truth

Although these rules seem quite simple, they are not easy to follow. They call for professional skills beyond detached reporting and journalistic neutrality, and their observance involves counter-

acting institutional and psychological processes that have an impact on journalists’ work.

4.3 Four-factor news communication model

News values and criteria for news selection

In the selection of international news, just as with national or local news, sensational items (e.g., catastrophes, riots, and coups d’état) are especially interesting. The presence of regionalism, found in all media systems, can be made responsible for the disparity of press coverage of comparable events: one’s own particular region is given the most attention. The more important countries (i.e., world powers), as well as geographically or culturally close countries, are covered more intensively by the media; and, likewise, economic, ideological, and political alliances lead to more intensive press coverage of countries (cf. Kunczik, 1990).

Four-factor news communication model

Based on a four-factor news communication model, Galtung (1998, 2002) demonstrates how such criteria of news selection provide from the start a structural frame that creates a biased image of (international) society:

Table 4.2: The four-factor news communication model of Galtung & Vincent (1992)

		Person		Structure	
		Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
Elite country	Elite people	No problem: any rumors; however false (4)	Happy family events (3)	Cabinet falls (3)	Cabinet falls (3)
	Non-elite people	Accidents (3)	Prizes, lottery, wealth (2)	Economic crashes (2)	Economic growth (1)
Non-elite country	Elite people	Scandals (drugs) (3)	Prizes, lottery, wealth (2)	Coup d’état (2)	Elections, but major change (1)
	Non-elite people	Mega-accidents (2)	Miracles (1)	Revolutions, 'trouble', riots (1)	No chance: however true (0)

According to Galtung’s model (cf. Table 4.2), the news value of an event is higher,

- the more negative it is (positive events are less interesting),
- if it happens to a person (structures or institutions are abstract

and accordingly less interesting),

- if this person belongs to an elite (while ordinary people are less interesting), and
- if it happens in an elite country (not in a Third World country, for instance, which again would be less interesting).

Accordingly, the ideal news event would be something negative happening to a member of the elite of an elite country. For example, what if Khrushchev and Kennedy (members of the elites of elite countries) had gotten into a fight (negative) in the men's room at the Vienna Hotel Imperial during their meeting in June 1961. Or: Princess Diana's fatal automobile accident.

Ideal news

An absolute *no-news* incident would be something like the formation of an interest group (structural) through which landless farmers (non-elite persons) in some Third World country (non-elite country) organized themselves to fight poverty (positive).

Absolute no-news

While elite members from elite countries have good chances to be in the news – even if there is only something positive to be reported, non-elite countries have little chance unless something dramatically bad can be reported about them.

Formation of a structural frame that divides the world into "good" and "evil"

While for elites in an elite country even little bits of gossip are worth reporting, an event needs to be something like a major earthquake to interest the media if it happens to ordinary people in an ordinary country. And thus we get an image of the First World as a quiet place, livened up by occasional court gossip, while in reporting on the Third World we usually learn only of social and natural catastrophes.

As a consequence, the mere criteria of news selection produce a conflictual picture of the world as divided into the rich and the poor and at the same time into the "good" and the "evil". As ordinary countries have to compensate for their 'ordinariness' by producing negative incidents, while elite persons in elite countries make headlines even if they do something positive, there arises a stereotypical image of conflict, according to which anything bad (war, terrorism, dictatorship) happens on the periphery, and anything positive (peace) is given to them through the patient and costly intervention of 'benefactors' from the metropolitan centers of the world.

Examples of this stereotype are not just the post-Cold War military conflicts which have received top media attention, like the

Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia or Kosovo. The media image of the peace processes in Northern Ireland and Israel were likewise bi-ased by this stereotype.

Both reports about the Oslo accords and reports about the North-ern Ireland peace treaty over-emphasized the role of prominent elite actors from the Western World (even if they were not directly involved, like US President Clinton in the Oslo negotiations be-tween Israel and the PLO), they downplayed the performance of the negotiators and political leaders of the conflict parties (even of those who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize), and they ignored the role of ordinary people in conflict regions (although they are a crucial factor for the further prospects of the peace process).

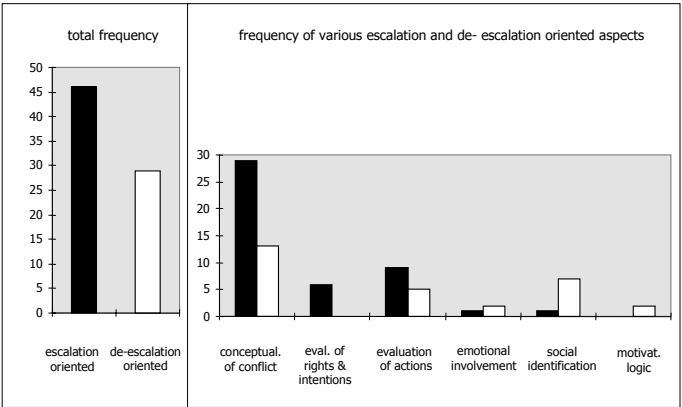
4.4 Northern Ireland peace treaty in the *Berliner Zei-tung*

Empirical case study

As an example, we might take a closer look at a study by Hamdorf (2000, 2001), who analyzed the coverage of the Northern Ireland peace treaty in the *Berliner Zeitung* on April 11, 1998.

The results of the study show a clear dominance of escalation-oriented aspects, even though the article was full of sympathy for the peace treaty and occasionally even suggested some sort of positive motivational logic (cf. Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Frequencies of escalation and de-escalation-oriented aspects in the coverage of the Northern Ireland peace treaty



Although the coverage included some incentives for affective in-volvement and social identification which were rather dominated by de-escalation-oriented aspects, the conceptualization of the

conflict and the evaluation of both the parties’ rights and intentions and the evaluation of their actions were clearly biased towards conflict escalation and the continuation of antagonism.

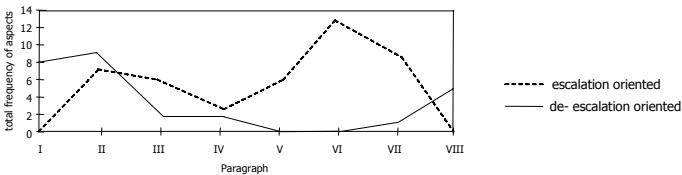


Figure 4.2: Distribution of escalation and de-escalation-oriented aspects throughout the article

From Figure 4.2 we see that the article starts by expressing a positive attitude towards the peace process which gradually diminishes, however, and finally disappears completely, until it is revived towards the end of the article. Already in the second paragraph the escalation-oriented aspects come to the fore and dominate the entire article from paragraphs III to VII. Only in the last paragraph do these negative tones fade into the background.

	Escalation-oriented aspects	De-escalation-oriented aspects
Conceptualization of the conflict	zero-sum / win-lose orientation (7x)	win-win orientation (10x)
	refutation of peaceful alternatives (12x)	
	emphasis on antagonism (10x)	emphasis on seeing all sides (3x)
Evaluation of the opponent's rights & intentions	'demonization' of the opponent's intentions (1x)	
	denial of common interests (5x)	
Evaluation of the opponent's actions	denial of possibilities for cooperation (9x)	description of cooperative behavior and interpretation of a 3rd party's role as mediator (5x)
Emotional involvement in the conflict	mistrusting the opponent (1x)	new perspective for peace possible through empathy (2x)
Social identification and personal entanglement	devalorization of positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace (1x)	'humanization'/respect for peacemakers (7x)
Motivational logic		definition of peace as a bridge to a brighter future (2x)

Table 4.3: Absolute frequencies of escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in the article

On the de-escalation-oriented side, the emphasis is on a win-win orientation and cooperative behavior (cf. Table 4.3): The peace treaty is described as a structure for further cooperation (10x), as a bridge to a brighter future (2x) and as a new perspective through which the prospects of reconciliation increase (2x). Concessions on both sides and joint efforts result in agreement (5x). All sides receive attention (3x), and the prime ministers on both sides are portrayed as satisfied, and their personal efforts are honored (7x).

These positive aspects are outnumbered on the escalation-oriented side, however, by the denial of both common interests (5x) and possibilities for cooperation (9x). The treaty is presented within a zero-sum or win-lose orientation by describing it as not being a real solution (7x), as well as by directly rejecting or indirectly questioning peaceful alternatives and possible conflict resolutions (12x). Agreements are interpreted as giving in, and antagonism is emphasized (10x). This is underlined by mistrust of the opponent (1x), demonization of his intentions (1x) and a devaluation of positive (emotional) reactions to the peace treaty as 'simple-minded' naivety (1x).

Production of
mistrust for the
peace process

A more detailed account of how constructive and destructive aspects are interwoven throughout the article is given in Table 4.4, from which we see that even the headlines give expression to a

Table 4.4: Distribution of escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects throughout the article

	Escalation-oriented aspects	De-escalation-oriented aspects
Subtitle (heading 1)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• description of cooperative behavior ...
Headline (heading 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• peaceful alternatives rejected or questioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• win-win orientation
Paragraph 1: presentation of the treaty		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• win-win orientation• description of cooperative behavior and interpretation of a 3rd party's role as mediator, new perspectives possible through empathy• definition of peace as a bridge to a brighter future• humanization / respect for peacemakers
Heading 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• emphasis on antagonism	

Paragraph II: description of the treaty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • zero-sum- / win-lose orientation • refutation of peaceful alternatives • denial of possibilities for cooperation • emphasis on antagonism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of cooperative behavior... • emphasis on seeing all sides • new perspective possible through empathy • humanization / respect for peace promoters
Paragraph III: comments on the treaty by both sides' politicians 'Personalization'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rejection of peaceful alternatives • denial of possibilities for cooperation • emphasis on antagonism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • win-win orientation
Paragraph IV: comments on the treaty by both sides' politicians 'Personalization'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rejection of peaceful alternatives • denial of possibilities for cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • win-win orientation
Paragraph V: background treaty 'Personalization'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rejection of peaceful alternatives • denial of possibilities for cooperation • emphasis on antagonism • denial of common interests 	
Paragraph VI: background conflict 'Personalization'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasis on antagonism • denial of common interests • zero-sum / win-lose orientation • denial of the opponent's good intentions 	
Heading 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mistrusting the opponent... 	
Paragraph VII: statements about the conflict 'Personalization'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasis on antagonism • denial of common interests • zero-sum / win-lose orientation • rejection of peaceful alternatives • denial of possibilities for cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • win-win orientation
Paragraph VIII: statements about the treaty 'Personalization'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • win-win orientation • emphasis on seeing all sides • definition of peace as a bridge to a brighter future

certain amount of ambivalence and prepare the audience to keep its distance from the peace process. While the subtitle emphasizes

es the peace treaty as a possible solution to the long-lasting conflict in Northern Ireland,

"After three decades of civil war in Northern Ireland an historical document for a peace settlement is presented. After drawn-out negotiations all parties have finally agreed to extensive compromises."

a win-win orientation is counterbalanced by the rejection of peaceful alternatives in the headline, which reads:

"The Northern Irish wall is shaky but still standing"

After the first paragraph introduces the peace treaty as a result of negotiations, there follows a third heading,

"No handshake"

stressing the antagonism between the conflict parties and setting the mood for the rest of the article, which is finally summarized after paragraph VI in a fourth heading that reads:

"Deep mistrust remains"

Summarizing the results of her analysis, Hamdorf admits that a possibility for conflict resolution is presented, and cooperative behavior is highlighted in the article. But the way both the conflict and the peace treaty are conceptualized in the article portrays the incompatibilities between the conflict parties as insurmountable and makes the treaty seem like a merely artificial political construction. Although the article refrains from underlining the outrage of the conflict parties at each other, outrage at the peace treaty itself becomes obvious.

Moreover, important information is not mentioned in the article: The actual issues of the conflict remain invisible, civil society is ignored, the achievements of peacemakers are minimized, and the emergence of a solution-oriented discourse is thus limited.

As journalists are members of society themselves and as they are entangled in the same inner conflicts between hope and fear, between trust and mistrust, as the rest of society, de-escalation-oriented reporting is still limited – even when peace is on the political agenda and even if the journalist's own society is not directly involved in the conflict that he is covering. As they are themselves only human, journalists cannot stay detached in violent conflicts, and even if they try to stay neutral between the conflict parties, their own ambivalence will bias their account of the peace process.

4.5 The Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the *Frankfurter Rundschau*

While the above-described shortcomings of peace coverage were mainly due to the framing of the Northern Ireland peace negotiations within the journalists’ own ambivalence about the peace process, Annabring (2000) studied the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in order to learn about the possibilities and limitations of counteracting the selection criteria of news coverage.

Empirical case study

The aim of the study was to test whether and how these mechanisms of news selection affect the coverage of peace processes even in the case of quality journalism, which sets unconditional standards of truth and tries to stay neutral between the (former) conflict parties. In order to do so, Annabring studied the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process during 1993-1997 in the German *Frankfurter Rundschau*.¹

The *Frankfurter Rundschau* is a national liberal paper dedicated to the rights of minorities, human rights, and peace and nonviolence. All the journalists who work for the *Frankfurter Rundschau* are required to accept these principles by their employment contracts. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* tried to follow these guidelines by observing strict neutrality and detached reporting.

Israeli protagonists	Palestinian protagonists
Personalized Israeli Elite (69%, mainly Netanyahu, Rabin, Peres)	Personalized Palestinian Elite (42%, mainly Arafat)
Israeli government (66%)	Palestinian government (31%)
Israeli military (36.6%)	Radical Palestinians (26%)
Conflict-oriented segments of Israeli civil society (17%)	Conflict-oriented segments of Palestinian civil society (15%)
Israeli Negotiators (13%)	Palestinian Negotiators (15%)

Table 4.5: Most frequently covered types of protagonists

On both sides, the most frequently covered types of protagonists were elite persons like Netanyahu, Rabin and Peres on the Israeli, and Arafat on the Palestinian side (cf. Table 4.5). In second place

1. The empirical basis of the study was a random sample of 283 articles about Israel and/or Palestine during the September 93–September 97 period. Included in the sample were news items and reports, as well as commentaries and editorials. The analyzed material included a total of 2418 *issues* portraying an Israeli or Palestinian protagonist in either a negative or a positive context.

was the government, and in third place were the representatives of violence: the Israeli military and the radical Palestinians. While conflict-oriented segments of the Israeli and Palestinian civil society received about the same coverage as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, who followed in fifth place, reconciliation-oriented segments of both societies played no role at all and were almost completely ignored.

Table 4.6: Most frequently covered types of context

Negative	Positive
Violence (40%)	Measures against one's own side's violence (20%)
Continuous repression (28%)	Willingness to engage in negotiations (20%)
Claims against the opponent (20%)	
Criticism of one's own side (20%)	
Threat to the opponent (19%)	
Short-term repression (16%)	
Criticism of the opponent (16%)	
Claims against one's own side (15%)	

Only two of the ten most frequently covered contexts were positive: measures against one's own side's violence and willingness to negotiate (cf. Table 4.6). Most of the contexts were negative and confronted the (former) enemy: violence, continuous repression, claims against the opponent, threat and short-term repression, as well as criticism of the opponent. The same amount of criticism and claims were directed against one's own side as well. While one's own side was sometimes criticized, the opponent was more frequently confronted with claims.

Table 4.7: Combination of contexts and protagonists in the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process

		Context		Total
		Negative	Positive	
Israel (Elite country)	Elite persons	700	399	1099
	Non-elite persons	262	117	379
Palestine (Non-elite country)	Elite persons	273	276	549
	Non-elite persons	278	104	391
Total		1522	896	2418

Confirmation of Galtung's model

Combining protagonists and contexts results in Table 4.7, which confirms the Galtung & Vincent model to a great extent.

- Negative contexts outnumber positive ones (cf. Figure 4.3);
- there is a clear preference for elite countries and/or societies (Israeli protagonists) rather than non-elite ones (Palestinian protagonists) (cf. Figure 4.4); and
- there is also a clear preference for elite persons (political and military leaders) rather than non-elite ones (ordinary people) (cf. Figure 4.5).

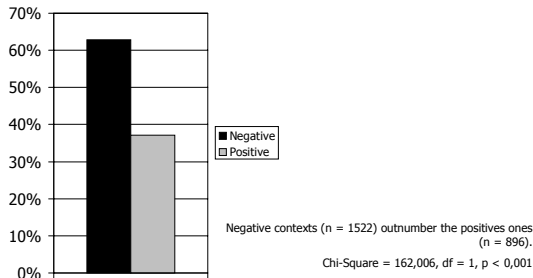


Figure 4.3: Preference for negative contexts

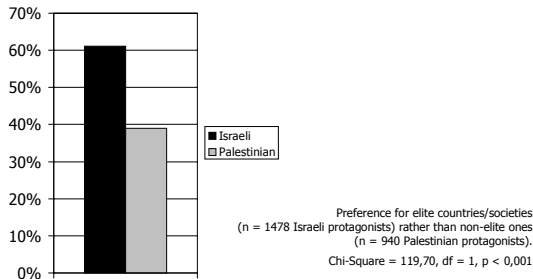


Figure 4.4: Preference for elite countries and/or societies

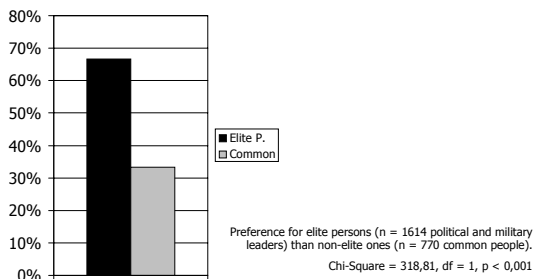


Figure 4.5: Preference for elite persons

Deviations from
Galtung’s model

Although the data largely confirm the Galtung & Vincent model, they also show some deviations from the model, which are due to the *Frankfurter Rundschau’s* interest in the peace process and its attempts to maintain neutrality.

Figure 4.6: Preference for negative contexts in the coverage of elite persons

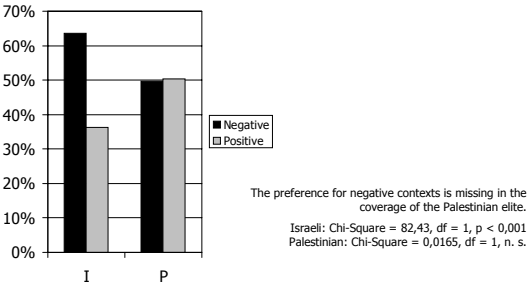
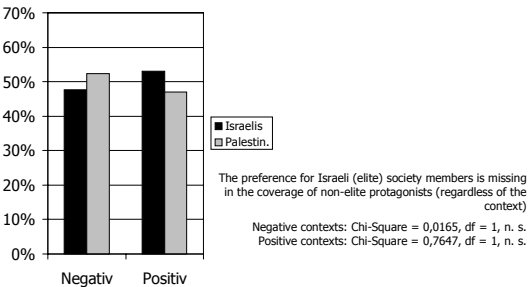


Figure 4.7: Preference for elite society members in the coverage of non-elite protagonists



As the preference for negative contexts is omitted in the coverage of the Palestinian elite (cf. Figure 4.6), the *Frankfurter Rundschau* contributes to building trust in the Palestinian leadership, and as ordinary people from Israel and Palestine are given equal coverage (cf. Figure 4.7), the *Frankfurter Rundschau* maintains an equal distance from both societies.

While both of these deviations show that the media do have some flexibility in how to handle the criteria of news selection, they also demonstrate some of the shortcomings of pure neutrality and detached reporting. As a result of the *Frankfurter Rundschau’s* attempts at neutrality, the Palestinian elite appears *less often* in a negative context than would be expected, and ordinary Palestinians appear *more often* than expected in a negative context.

As an unintended side-effect of detached and neutral reporting, Palestinian society was thus divided into an elite portrayed as trustworthy and a Palestinian population which continued to be threatening, unfamiliar and dangerous. This splitting of Palestinian society increases insecurity about the prospects of the peace process and resembles the Israeli coverage, which legitimized Arafat as the Palestinian representative who had signed the "peace of the brave" and recognized him as a "partner for peace", while ignoring the local Palestinian leadership (cf. Mandelzis, 2003) and continuing to de-legitimize not only the Palestinian population, but also the Arab citizens of Israel (cf. First & Avraham, 2003).

Pitfalls of neutrality

4.6 Prevalence of societal beliefs

The studies reported so far clearly indicate that mere neutrality and detached reporting are inadequate to support conflict resolution. Even when peace is on the political agenda, reporters are not apt to reframe conflict on a more constructive basis, and they will rather perpetuate mistrust and suspicion, both against the opponent and against the peace process itself. And they will do so even in third countries which are not directly involved in the respective conflict, such as Germany in the case of Israel or Northern Ireland.

Coping with intractable conflict

In conflict societies themselves, there is an additional factor that adds to the continuation of a war culture and needs to be counteracted: the societal beliefs that emerged during intractable conflict (cf. Table 4.8)

Societal beliefs in intractable conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs about the justness of one's own goals• Beliefs about personal and national security and how it can be achieved• Positive self-image• Own victimization• Delegitimizing the enemy• Patriotism• Unity of one's own society• Peace as its ultimate aim

Table 4.8: Societal beliefs in intractable conflict

Intractable conflicts are demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting and costly, both in human and material terms. This requires that society members develop conditions which enable successful

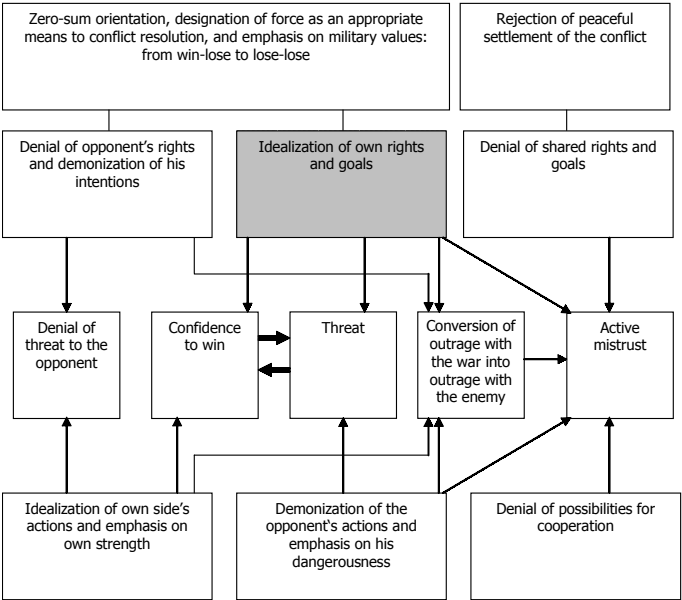
coping. One type of condition created by war cultures is a psychological infrastructure which consists, for example, of devotion to one's own side and its leadership, commitment to its objectives, a high motivation to contribute, perseverance and readiness to make personal sacrifices. According to Bar-Tal (1996), societal beliefs fulfill an important role in the formation of these psychological conditions.

Societal beliefs

The term "societal beliefs" refers to society members' shared cognitions of topics and issues that are of special concern for their society and contribute to their sense of uniqueness. According to Bar-Tal, they are part of a society's ethos and construct society members' views of the conflict. They motivate them to act in the interest of the society and to the disadvantage of the enemy.

Since they are both part of society's ethos and a crucial factor for enduring the burdens of war, they will still persist after the war is over, and, moreover, the change from war to peace will result in increased insecurity about a new situation that society members have not yet learned to cope with.

Figure 4.8: Beliefs about the justness of one's own goals



Societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals concern the reasons, explanations and rationales of the goals which led to the conflict. The idealization of one's own rights and intentions gradually unfolds into a general rationale of justification which sets the unconditional justness of one's own goals as an axiom and justifies their crucial importance. (cf. Figure 4.8). They motivate society members to struggle and fight for these goals, and they enable them to endure and bear the sacrifices, losses, stresses and costs of intractable conflict.

Justness of one's own goals

Societal beliefs about security are essential for any society engaged in conflict which involves violence, hostile acts and wars. They stress the importance of personal safety and national survival and they outline the conditions for their achievement.

Security

They include beliefs about military conditions indispensable for ensuring security, as well as beliefs about the heroism of one's soldiers. They give security a high priority and serve as a rationale for personal and societal decisions and actions. They mobilize society members for active participation in conflict and strengthen their ability to endure the hardships of war.

Personal and national security are linked together by repeated constructions of conflicts as zero-sum games, by the resulting experience of threat, by the acceptance of force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution, by an emphasis on military values and by confidence in being able to win conflict, by mistrust of the enemy, by a refusal to engage in mutual cooperation and by a rejection of peaceful alternatives (cf. Figure 4.9). As a consequence, confronting the enemy seems to be the only means by which personal safety and national survival can be achieved.

Societal belief in a positive self-image is related to the ethnocentric tendency to attribute positive traits, values and behavior to one's own society. In times of intractable conflict, special effort is made to propagate characteristics supportive of courage, heroism and perseverance, as well as characteristics supportive of humaneness, morality, fairness, trustworthiness and progressive attitudes.

Positive self-image

As these characteristics are presented in contrast to those of the enemy, they allow for a clear differentiation between the two parties, and they contribute to moral fortitude and a sense of personal superiority. The idealization of one's own rights and goals,

Figure 4.9: Beliefs about security

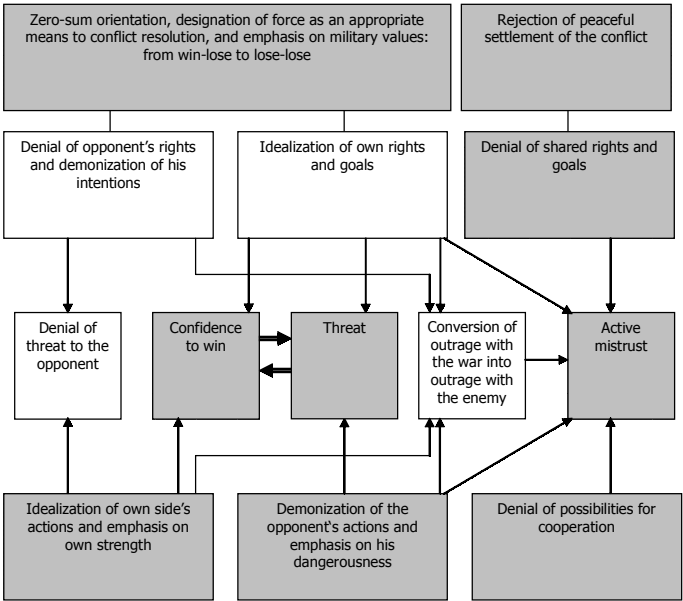
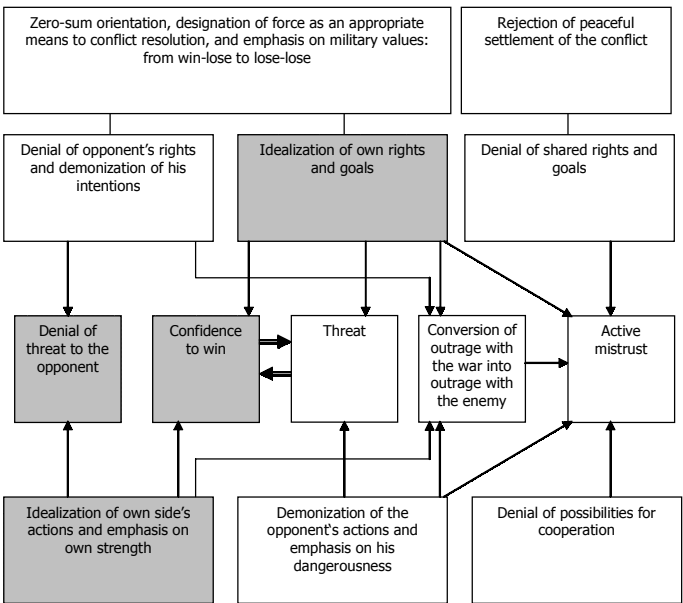


Figure 4.10: Belief in a positive self-image



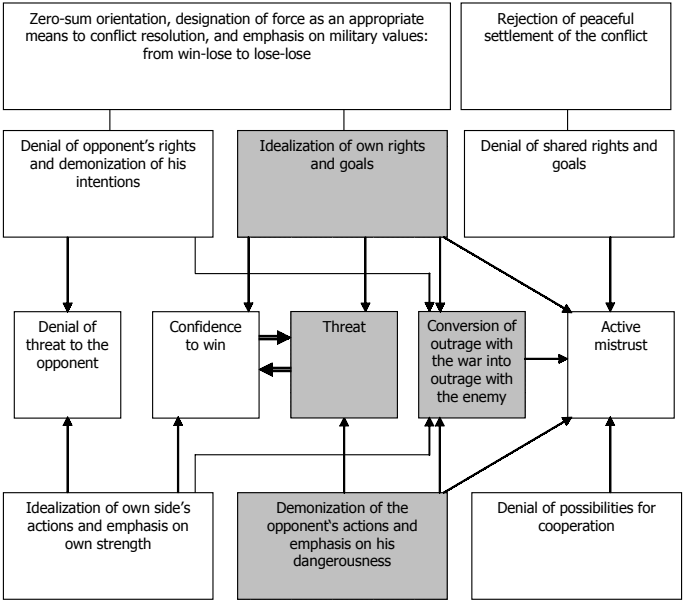


Figure 4.11: Belief in one's own victimization

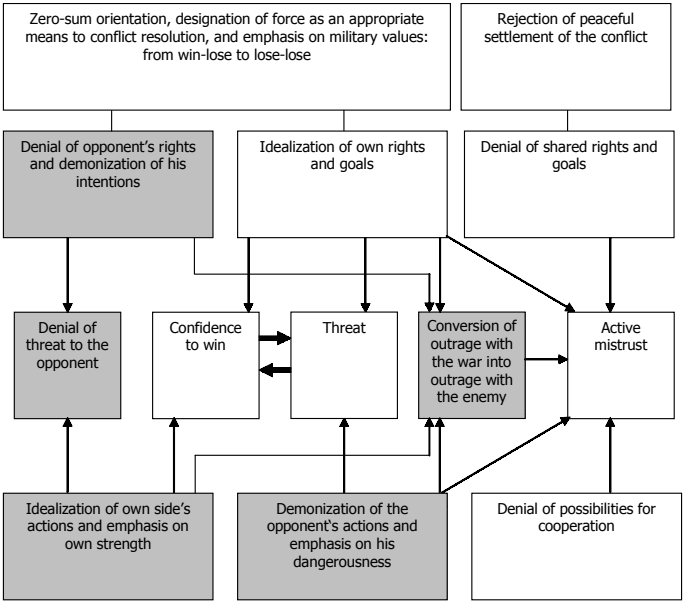


Figure 4.12: Beliefs that delegitimize the opponent

justification of one's own side's actions and emphasizing one's rightness, as well as an emphasis on one's own strength provide the "concrete facts" on which a positive self-image can be built (cf. Figure 4.10).

One's own victimization

A society's beliefs about its victimization by the enemy lead to a self-presentation as a victim and focus on unjust harm caused by the cruel acts and atrocities of the enemy. They result from repeated condemnation of the actions of the opponent that violate one's own rights and goals, from an emphasis on his threatening intentions and from the transformation of outrage at war into outrage at the enemy (cf. Figure 4.11). Finally, these aspects are condensed into a victimization syndrome which provides a moral incentive to seek justice and to oppose the enemy, and which enables a society to mobilize moral, political and material support from the international community as well.

De-legitimization of the enemy

Societal beliefs that de-legitimize the opponent include beliefs which deny the enemy's humanity. The denial of the opponent's rights, demonization of his intentions, condemnation of his actions and emphasis on his threatening intentions develop into a general rationale (cf. Figure 4.12). Through dehumanization, extremely negative trait characterization, exclusion, the use of negative political labels, etc., a society categorizes its opponent into negative social categories excluding groups one considers to be acting within the limits of acceptable norms and values. These beliefs explain the causes of the conflict outbreak, its continuation, and the violence of the enemy. Moreover – and most importantly: they justify hostile acts against him.

Patriotism

Societal beliefs in patriotism generate attachment to one's country and society by propagating loyalty, love, care and sacrifice. They increase social cohesiveness and commitment. They serve an important function in mobilizing society members to take an active part in conflict and to endure hardships and difficulties.

Unity of one's society

Societal beliefs in unity refer to the importance of ignoring internal conflicts in order to join forces in the face of an external threat. These beliefs strengthen a society from within, develop a consensus and feelings of belonging, increase solidarity, and make it possible to direct a society's forces and energy at the enemy.

Societal beliefs in peace, finally, present peace as an ultimate goal of society and society members as peace-loving. They are important for inspiring hope and optimism, they strengthen positive self-images and contribute to an empathic self-presentation to the outside world.

Peace as the ultimate goal

According to Bar-Tal, it can be assumed that these societal beliefs can be found in any society engaged in intractable conflict, especially in those that successfully cope with it. Of course, these beliefs are far from sufficient to win a conflict, and other conditions of a military, political and economic nature must also be fulfilled. They are necessary for enduring intractable conflict, however, and any nation at war, therefore, tries to create and to maintain these beliefs by means of propaganda.

Need to accept facts before they are interpreted

Nonetheless, they are not just an ideology imposed on society from outside or by its political leaders, and they are not just the result of misleading propaganda, either. They result from a long history of experience with concrete conflicts at a high level of escalation, and they constitute themselves as a generalized interpretation of these conflicts. Once these beliefs have emerged in a society, they provide a framework that literally interprets every interaction with the opponent as another event in the great historical drama of the struggle between "good" and "evil". And once an event has been interpreted in this way, it seemingly proves the stereotypes and prejudice that created this interpretation. There is no way out of this vicious circle, except to learn to accept facts before they are interpreted.

If we accomplish this, even conflicts that prevail after a peace treaty or that arise during peace processes can provide experiences that can gradually overcome prejudices and transform a war culture into a more constructive social contract between former enemies.

Mistrusting the plausible

The first rule for journalism which tries to facilitate such a process of social learning is to mistrust the plausible. The second rule is to investigate the underlying facts.

Constructive conflict coverage

Lack of a peace discourse in the media repertoire

We have identified a number of factors which make journalists volunteer on the propaganda front – whether deliberately or naively. These factors include strategies of military media management, the impact of PR agencies, the framing of conflict as a zero-sum game with all its consequences, the inner (moral) conflict in which journalists become involved as a result of this framework, and criteria of news selection which construct an antagonism between elites and the periphery and – at the same time – between "good" and "evil".

There are other factors that should also be taken into account:

- The Cold War heritage, which resulted in a far-reaching militarization of popular culture (cf. Whitfield, 1996).
- Privatization of the media and the globalization of media discourse, which produce a demand for "sensational" news stories, a need for simplification and time pressure, which makes journalists less likely to check their sources and reflect on what they are doing.
- The close relationship between journalists and political elites and their mutual dependence.
- The working situation of journalists, especially of war reporters who often have to endure threats to their own lives, who usually work on one side of the frontier only and accordingly become eyewitnesses of exclusively this sides' casualties and victims.

After a cease-fire or during peace processes, the antagonistic bias of media discourse becomes counter-productive, and conditions become more favorable to constructive journalism. But even then there is still a lack of a peace discourse in the media repertoire with far-reaching implications (cf. Shinar, 1998). The societal beliefs which helped a society to endure intractable conflict still prevail, and the transition from a war culture to a peace culture, therefore, calls for a gradual process of strengthening civil society and combating stereotypes and prejudices. Even the

most powerful political leaders cannot just switch to a cooperative strategy without risking the loss of power and influence (or even their lives). It is impossible to switch from enmification to reconciliation in a single bold leap, and if policy-makers and/or the media did so, they would lose their credibility.

Accordingly, the deconstruction of the escalation-oriented bias of media discourse and the transformation of the cognitive framework which interprets conflict require a stepwise process. As long as war is on the political agenda, we cannot expect more from journalists than that they *not fan the flames*, and only after a cease-fire or a peace treaty has been agreed to does it become realistic to take further steps towards reconciliation.

5.1 Constructive conflict transformation

The principal idea behind the concept of cooperative conflict behavior is that neither peace nor a peace culture is a state of permanent, conflict-free harmony. Since conflicts are unavoidable, a peace culture will rather have to be defined as a cooperative environment where conflicts can be approached in the framework of a win-win model that supports conflict resolutions in the best interests of all parties. The question is: How can this be accomplished?

Peace culture

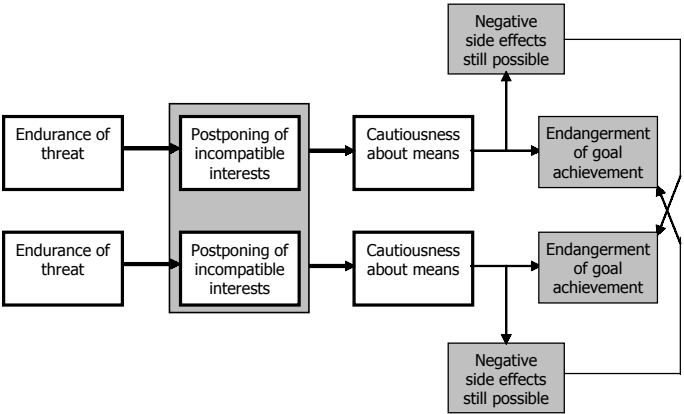
Cooperative conflict behavior and peaceful conflict resolution call for a reasonable amount of mutual respect, empathy, open communication and flexibility of positions and interests, all of which are positive characteristics that can be lost during the process of conflict escalation. Moreover: as soon as conflict becomes an autonomous process (cf. Figure 2.9), it can no longer be resolved without prior transformation.

To resolve conflict it must be restructured: the negative effects of conflict (the endangerment of goal achievement), which constitute the action-triggering constellation of so-called security policy, must be returned to their original position, which is at the end of the action, where frustration is one possible outcome, but not the starting point of goal-oriented behavior (cf. Figure 5.1).

There are several steps to be taken, but there is no defined time sequence in which to do so. Among these steps, there is living with threat, postponing incompatible interests and being cautious about means. Due to the negative framing of conflict, this will be

all the more difficult, however, the more conflict has escalated, and in many cases it cannot be accomplished without the assistance of a neutral third party.

Figure 5.1: Transformation of conflict



Constructive conflict coverage

One of the crucial aspects of successful third-party mediation is that the mediator refrains from taking sides with either of the parties, and rather helps them to reframe their conflict on a more constructive basis. The idea behind our concept of constructive conflict coverage is that the media could play this role during peace processes, just as they use to side with and support their own nation or society and its leadership during wartime.

In order to succeed, the confrontation of traditional, violence-oriented war journalism with an alternative concept of conflict-oriented peace journalism (cf. Table 5.1) is an important first step that specifies the goal *to which* we are oriented. It does not yet answer the question, unfortunately, of *how* we can get there. Nor does it answer the question of *what* journalists can contribute at *which* stages of a conflict or post-conflict process. Based on our knowledge of the psychological processes underlying the social construction of conflict, it would be rather naive to assume that peace journalism as defined by Galtung could be implemented at the peak of confrontation and enmification.

War/violence journalism	Peace/conflict journalism
I. War/violence-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on conflict <i>arena</i>, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation • Closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone • Making wars opaque/secret • 'Us-them' journalism, propaganda, voice, for 'us' • See 'them' as the problem, focus on who prevails in war • Dehumanization of 'them'; the more so the more destructive the weapons • <i>Reactive</i>: waiting for violence before reporting • Focus only on visible effects of violence (casualties and material damage) 	I. Peace/conflict-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore conflict <i>formation</i>, x parties, y goals, z issues general win-win orientation • Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture • Making conflicts transparent • Giving voice to all parties; Empathy, understanding • See conflict/war as a problem, focus on conflict creativity • Humanization of all sides; the more so the more destructive the weapons • <i>Proactive</i>: prevention before violence/war occurs • Focus on invisible effects of violence, (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)
II. Propaganda-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expose 'their' untruths • Help 'our' cover-ups/lies 	II. Truth-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expose untruths on all sides • Uncover all cover-ups
III. Elite-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on 'our' suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece • Give name of their evil-doer • Focus on elite peacemakers 	III. People-orientes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on suffering all over; on women, aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless • Give name to all evil-doers • Focus on people peacemakers
IV. Victory-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peace = victory + ceasefire • conceal peace initiative, before victory is achieved • focus on treaty, institution he controlled society • leaving for another war, return if the old flares up 	IV. Solution-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace = nonviolence + creativity • Highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war • Focus on structure, culture the peaceful society • Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation

Table 5.1: Violence-oriented war journalism vs. conflict-oriented peace journalism according to Galtung (1998, 2002)

5.2 Deconstruction of war discourses

In order to develop a strategy for the transformation of war journalism into peace journalism, we may start with the cognitive changes that take place during the process of conflict escalation and take a closer look at the role played by the resulting distortions in the perception of conflict in the social construction of the reality of conflict.

Distortions of conflict perception

Table 5.2: Perceptual distortions during the escalation of conflicts

Escalation step	Cooperation	Perspective divergence
Conceptualization of the conflict	Win-win orientation	Bias towards win-lose, but win-win still possible
Evaluation of rights and aims	Mutual respect for the rights of all participants and emphasis on common interests	Focus on one's own rights and needs (including common interests), the rights of others, however, vanish from the field of vision
Evaluation of actions	Consideration of the benefits of each of the parties	Focus on one's own benefits (also those resulting from the mutual relationship)
Emotional involvement	Empathy and mutual trust	Conflict between threat and trust
Identification offer	Mutual	Self-centered

That there are distortions in conflict perception is apparent when we recall that conflicts affect the rights and aims of *all* participating parties and that conflicts can be either cooperatively managed for the benefit of everyone (win-win model) or conducted competitively (win-lose model), with each of the parties trying to realize its rights and aims at the expense of the others. Accordingly, we can speak of a distortion of conflict perception as soon as the perception of conflict excludes one of the two solution options. Consequently, Deutsch (1976) finds that there are not only competitive, but also cooperative perceptual distortions.

Competitive perceptual distortions

The process of competitive perceptual distortion thereby results first from the divergence of perspectives of the conflict parties, and due to the consequent asymmetry of trust and suspicion it exacerbates conflict, so that

1. the willingness of the conflict parties to view their opponent's actions (also) from the opponent's perspective declines,
2. there is a decline in the capacity of the conflict parties to absorb information which could correct the prejudicial interpretations of their opponent's actions, and

Competition	Struggle	War
Win-lose (possibly defused by rules of fairness)	Win-lose (increased by threat strategies)	Zero sum orientation. Force as the appropriate means of solving conflict, emphasis on military values, transfer from win-lose to lose-lose
Focus on one's own rights and needs; common interests, however, vanish from the field of vision	Emphasis on one's own rights and needs combined with questioning the rights of the opponent and condemning his intentions.	Idealization of one's own rights and needs, at the same time contesting the rights of the opponent, demonization of his intentions and denial of common interests
Focus on one's own benefits	Justification of one's own actions and condemnation of those of the opponent	Idealization of one's own actions and demonization of the actions of the opponent
Focus on threat to one-self, that to the opponent disappears from the field of vision, mutual trust is lost	Emphasis on one's own strength and the danger from the opponent creates a delicate balance between threat and confidence of victory; the threat to the opponent is actively denied; mistrust exists	Balance between threat and confidence of victory continues to exist, mistrust directed also against neutral third parties who attempt to mediate the conflict, outrage at the war turns into outrage at the opponent
Dualistic	Antagonistic	Polarized

Table 5.2: Perceptual distortions during the escalation of conflicts

3. the conflict parties tend to regard their own aims and actions as more reasonable and justified than those of the opponent.

The exacerbation of conflict increases tensions and reduces the possibilities to choose other paths to conflict resolution. The social demand to prevail against the opponent further limits conflict-solving competence:

1. Group members who play a leading role in conflict gain increased influence;
2. Willingness to compromise and mediation attempts are rejected as disloyal, and
3. continued involvement in conflict binds group members to the conflict strategy by justifying their previous participation.

The termination of a destructive conflict is often impossible until the costs of its continuation become so great in relationship to the values which continued conflict can provide that the senselessness becomes compellingly clear. According to Deutsch (1976), the senselessness of conflict first becomes apparent to

Perceptual distortions as catalysts for the escalation process

those who have not played a decision making role in the conflict and thus feel no necessity to justify it, as well as to those who must bear the greatest costs.

During the escalation of conflicts, the competitive perceptual distortions summarized in Table 5.2 (see pp. 110–111) take on the role of legitimating conflict behavior and function as the catalysts of the escalation process.

- Focusing on own rights and needs while at the same time condemning the actions of the opponent, and so on, makes it easier to jump from simple competition to struggle where the parties now attempt to enforce their own aims.
- Justifying the confrontation by emphasizing one's own rights and needs while at the same time questioning the rights of the opponent, condemning his intentions, and so on, makes the switch from struggle to war easier.
- Here the conflict is reduced to a zero sum game in which there is now only one aim – to win the conflict even by using violence – and this is justified by idealizing one's own rights and demonizing those of the opponent.
- If the escalation process cannot be stopped, it ends up in a total war in which the only thing that matters is not to be the loser (lose-lose model).

War discourses vs. peace discourses

The perceptual distortions which play a role in this process involve both the conceptualization of the conflict and the assessment of the rights, aims, and actions of the conflicting parties and the inducement for emotional involvement in the conflict. As products of the social construction of reality they can also only be deconstructed again in the social discourse. This transformation of the social discourse into a peace discourse involves more than just a change in the perception of the conflict and/or in the reporting as its published perception which is brought into the social discourse. What is involved is primarily the direction taken by the questions associated with conflict. While the war discourse turns on the questions

- "who is the aggressor?" and
- "how can he be stopped?",

the key questions in the peace discourse are

- "what are the objects of the conflict?" and
- "how can they be transformed in a way that permits a satisfactory solution for all parties?".

Over and above the perception of the conflict, this also has an effect on the identification offers that are presented in the discourse, on the truth orientation of the discourse partners, and on the motivation logic which the conflict unfolds (cf. Table 5.3).

	War discourse	Peace discourse
Key questions	Who is the aggressor? How can he be stopped?	What is the object of the conflict? How can it be transformed?
Identification offer	Polarized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • humanizes "our" political and military leaders and dehumanizes those of the other side • humanizes "our" soldiers and dehumanizes those of the other side • humanizes "our" victims and ignores or dehumanizes those of the other side • humanizes "our" civilian population for their loyalty and willingness to make sacrifices and dehumanizes that of the other side because of their nationalism • humanizes the anti-war opposition of the other side and ignores or dehumanizes one's own as treasonous 	Universal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoids identification with political and military leaders on each side • avoids identification with military personnel on each side • humanizes (at least respects) victims on each side • humanizes (at least respects) civilian society and avoids identification with warmongers on each side • humanizes (at least respects) peace forces on each side
Truth orientation	Sees truth simply as raw material and harmonizes the frames of reference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tells stories about "our" heroic deeds and the atrocities of the other side • construes the context of the conflict as insoluble antagonism • founds "our" values by means of political, historical, and ethnic myths 	Is unconditionally committed to standards of truth and also exposes inconsistencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • also reports about "our" atrocities and the suffering of the other side • explores the opportunities for a constructive transformation of the conflict • deconstructs mythological interpretations and looks for common values
Motivational logic	Presents the war as a bulwark against destruction and/or as a bridge to a better future	Focuses on the price of victory, the destruction of cultural, economic and social values
Conflict reporting	Escalation oriented with respect to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conceptualization of the conflict • evaluation of the rights, aims, and actions of the conflict parties • inducement of emotional involvement in the conflict 	De-escalation-oriented with respect to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conceptualization of the conflict • evaluation of the rights, aims and actions of the conflict parties • inducement of emotional involvement in the conflict

Table 5.3: War discourse vs. peace discourse

As we have already seen, war propagandists are well aware of this and therefore attempt to influence the social discourse at all of these levels. The aim of this propaganda is to maintain a delicate balance between threat and confidence in victory and thus to strengthen the readiness of the own soldiers to fight and the population's will to hold out. The enemy must appear to be so dangerous that all possible force must be used to stop him and, at the same time, be seen to be so vulnerable that the certainty of the own victory does not vanish.

Logical, emotional
and motivational
influencing factors

As war discourse is marked by such contradictions, it can be deconstructed only with great effort. There are logical reasons for this. From contradictory premises any conceivable conclusion can be drawn. Conflict parties usually conclude that their war is just, their war aims are fair, the enemy's aims are illegitimate, etc.

The internal logic of the war thus becomes circular and can only be broken up from a critical distance from outside the conflict. As dealing with social conflicts on a cooperative basis is associated with internal conflicts, however, there are also emotional and/or motivational factors which oppose this (Kempf, 2001b). To get involved in cooperation with the conflict partner always means living with uncertainty: "Can I still trust the other, or am I giving him an advantage by doing this?" Through the perspective divergence discussed above this inner conflict is further exacerbated: "Can I reveal my aims to the other, or would I harm myself by doing this?"

On the other hand this internal conflict is resolved when the social conflict is interpreted as a competitive process. The widespread tendency to deal with conflicts competitively can, in this respect, also be understood as a way of avoiding the inner conflict inherent in a cooperative approach. And because this tendency is so widespread, the inner conflict of the parties becomes still more intense. And the more intense the inner conflict is, the greater will be the temptation to avoid it by attempting to win the conflict at the expense of the other.

The fearful dynamic that conflicts thereby develop could be reduced by a media policy of focusing on the shared interests of the conflict parties and identifying the joint advantages of a cooperative relationship. But for journalism this would mean continuing to be entangled in the inner conflict from which the conflict parties have already freed themselves. The feverish search for "good" and "evil" that the media engage in once they are aware

of conflicts can, in this respect, also be seen as a liberating blow which now releases journalism, too, from the burden of the internal conflict. And foregoing this secondary gain is no easier for journalists than it is for the other members of society.

5.3 Construction of a peace discourse

Because polarized conflict presentations appear so convincing and exercise such moral pressure to take sides, their effects continue to be felt long after the war itself has ended. Especially in long-term, uncontrollable conflicts, distorted conflict perceptions solidify – as we have already seen – into basic societal beliefs which include, besides delegitimation of the enemy, a positive self-image, belief in the justness of one's own goals and one's own victim status, resulting (national) security needs and belief in peace as the ultimate goal of one's society.

Two-step process

The deconstruction of war discourses thereby becomes more difficult in a double regard:

1. In that journalists do not have a vantage point outside of society, but rather belong to their society and usually share the same basic convictions as other members, they are expected to critically question these convictions and particularly the interpretations of reality which have the greatest plausibility because of these shared convictions.
2. Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance arouses doubt whether dissonant information which is incompatible with these basic convictions will be accepted or rather dismissed by the audience, and the more so the more it departs from the dominant societal reality.

In Kempf & Gutiérrez (2001) I therefore proposed a two-step procedure (cf. Table 5.4) for deconstructing war discourse (cf. Table 5.3), reducing war-caused distortions of conflict perception (cf. Table 5.2) and transforming violence-oriented war journalism into conflict-oriented peace journalism (cf. Table 5.1) .

The first step is called "de-escalation-oriented conflict coverage" and broadly coincides with what is usually called quality journalism. It is characterized by neutrality and critical distance from all conflict parties. De-escalation-oriented conflict coverage goes beyond the professional norms of journalism only to the extent that the journalists' competence in conflict theory bears fruit and

De-escalation-oriented conflict coverage

Table 5.4: De-escalation oriented and solution-oriented conflict coverage

	De-escalation-oriented conflict coverage	Solution-oriented conflict coverage
Conceptualization of conflict	Exploration of the conflict-formation with a win-win orientation; questioning violence as a means of resolving conflict and questioning military values	Peace orientation (peace = non-violence + creativity); proactive (prevention before violence occurs); people-oriented (focus on the civilian society)
Evaluation of rights and aims	Respect for the rights of the opponent and undistorted representation of his aims; realistic and self-critical evaluation of one's own rights and aims; fair reporting of peace initiatives and attempts at mediation	Focus on common rights, aims, and interests and on the benefits all sides can get from ending war/violence; gives the anti-war opposition a say; focuses on peace initiatives, signals of readiness for peace and mediation attempts
Evaluation of actions	Realistic and self-critical evaluation of one's own actions and undistorted evaluation of opponent's actions; critical distance from the bellicose on all sides	Focuses on the sufferings of all sides, focuses on the invisible effects of war: trauma and loss of reputation, structural and cultural damage; humanizes all sides and identifies all who act unjustly; focuses on reconciliation perspectives
Emotional involvement	Recognition of the threat to the opponent and reduction of one's own feelings of threat	Recognition of the price of war, even in the case of victory and transformation of outrage at the enemy into outrage at war
Identification offers	Neutral and distanced	Universal

the conflict is kept open for peaceful alternatives: win-win orientation as an option; questioning violence as a suitable means of conflict resolution, questioning military values and exploration of the conflict formation (cf. Figure 5.2).

Exploration of the conflict formation

A war culture tends to reduce conflict to two parties fighting for the same goal (which is to win) and has a general zero-sum orientation that precludes constructive transformation of conflict. The real conflict, usually, is not so simple: there are several parties, several goals and a multitude of issues, and there is always the possibility of an outcome that might serve the interests of all parties.

De-escalation-oriented conflict coverage, therefore, must study the conflict formation and investigate the causes and possible outcomes of conflict that might be found anywhere, not just in the closed space of the conflict arena.

Fairness to all sides

In order to achieve a realistic evaluation of the conflict parties' rights, intentions and actions, de-escalation-oriented conflict cov-

erage must give voice to all parties and use empathy and understanding without making any distinction between "us" and "them". Vice versa, it should expose untruth on all sides and not just "their" cover-ups and "their" propaganda lies.

On the level of emotional involvement, this will be a first step towards reducing one's own feelings of threat and thus reduce the level of stress that society experiences. And, because we learn that it is not only "our" goals, rights and values that are threatened, it is also a first step towards seeing "us" and "them" on a more equal basis.

Reduction of stress

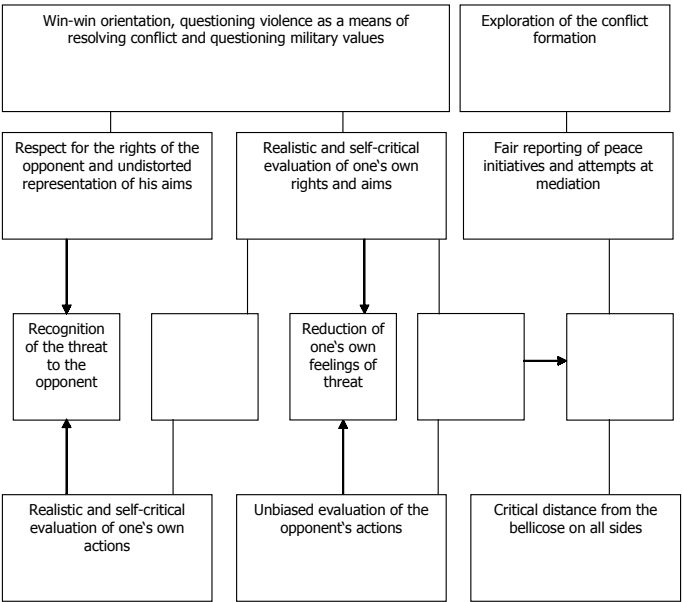


Figure 5.2: De-escalation-oriented conflict coverage

This is, of course, still a long way from peace journalism in Galtung's sense, but it clearly goes beyond conventional war reporting and is consistent with what Luostarinen (2002b, 283) writes:

"In my view, under no circumstances can it be a professional fault for journalists to give peace a chance. It is not even necessary to give such journalism a name like 'peace journalism', 'peace-oriented journalism', 'de-escalation oriented journalism', etc. What we are discussing is simply good and many-sided journalism which is conscious about the fact that no profession can escape the social reality and ethical considerations of the community. As long as peace is a desired goal of the international community, it must be a major point of view in the coverage of conflict

issues. Indeed, it is not such journalism, but journalism which fails to pay attention to or analyze the possibilities for non-violent conflict resolution that is partisan and biased."

De-escalation-oriented conflict coverage does not free society from the burden of a war culture, nor can it transform conflict into a cooperative process. But it is a first step away from seeing "them" as the problem and from focusing on the question of who will prevail in war. If the media successfully create such a less biased perception of conflict, it will be less important for society to cope with conflict by maintaining beliefs about the justness of its goals, the rightness of its self-image, its victimization and the illegitimacy of the enemy. While the exploration of the conflict formation draws a more complex picture of conflict, it still does not free society from facing a seemingly unsolvable problem. Yet it can promote an awareness that the simple solution offered by war and military logic is no solution at all.

Solution-oriented conflict coverage

While de-escalation-oriented conflict coverage still contains a dualistic construction of the conflict and merely deconstructs the antagonism and polarization of the conflict parties, part of this dualism is abandoned in "solution-oriented conflict coverage" (cf. Figure 5.3). In that societal beliefs about security are questioned by this second step of peace journalism, solution-oriented conflict coverage must at the same time assure that their deconstruction does not leave behind a vacuum. The transformation of war culture into peace culture thus requires an active search for peaceful alternatives which cut across the antagonism between "us" and "them".

Active search for peaceful alternatives

In order to accomplish this, solution-oriented conflict coverage must replace the antagonistic understanding of peace as "victory plus a cease-fire" with a cooperative concept of peace as "nonviolence plus creativity", and as a consequence, journalism must change its focus in several aspects:

While traditional journalism focuses on the political and military elites active in the conflict arena, solution-oriented journalism should report on all segments of a society whose creativity might contribute to the peaceful transformation of conflict. It will not only focus on elite mediators, but will also emphasize peace-makers at the grass-roots level, as well, and call attention to all peace initiatives and signals of peaceful intentions on all sides.

While traditional journalism is more or less reactive and focuses on the conflict arena after violence has broken out, solution-oriented journalism reports on conflicts already before violence occurs. As opposed to the distinction between "us" and "them", it reveals the price that all sides must pay for war (even in the case of victory) and focuses on the parties' shared interests and on the benefits they could gain from peace.

Focusing on suffering on all sides and also on the hidden effects of violence, humanizing all sides, but also naming all perpetrators, solution-oriented conflict coverage aims at redirecting outrage at the enemy into outrage at war and violence per se, and, finally, opens perspectives for reconciliation.

Realistically viewed, this level of peace journalism can therefore only become widely accepted after a truce or peace treaty already has been agreed on. As a consistent minority position, solution-oriented conflict coverage can, however, contribute significantly to societal discourse even during war and lead to the gradual deconstruction of war discourses.

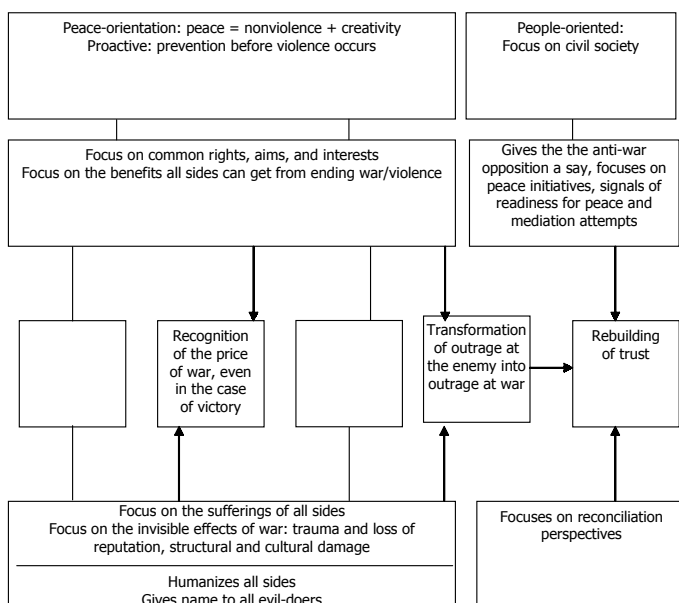


Figure 5.3: Solution-oriented conflict coverage

Social systems are by no means statically fixed structures, but rather open, dynamic entities in which there is a continuous pro-

Minority influence

cess of definition and re-definition of roles, norms, values and behavioral rules. According to Moscovici (1979, 1980), it is not the majority alone which can influence these processes. Minorities may exercise an influence on public opinion as well, if they manage to maintain their point of view consistently against the majority. Key characteristics of an effective style of minority action are: consistency in argument, steadfastness in argument, autonomy, investment and fairness. Acting upon these principles, minorities may produce an internalized change of opinions based on conviction, rather than merely a superficial adjustment, such as can result from group pressure (cf. Levine, 1989).

Multiple identities

Based on these findings, Jaeger (2002a) concludes that social change towards reconciliation calls for courageous journalists and committed mass media that are not afraid of challenging either the conventional media rules and routines or the beliefs of the societal majority; and Kempf & Gutiérrez (2001) make the point that society will never achieve reconciliation if it does not widen its horizons. From this point of view, the most urgently needed form of peace discourse is *not* a discourse *about* peace processes, but simply a pluralistic discourse which puts all those issues on the agenda that were formerly neglected during wartime and reconstructs society on the basis of the insight that societal life should be guided by democratic principles rather than by a camp mentality.

Reconciliation is impossible unless future partners come to understand each other. While wartime journalism tends to reduce social identity to those categories which divide conflict parties along dimensions like ethnic and cultural differences, nationality, religion etc., peace processes also require emphasizing shared identities and similarities between (former) opponents. During wars, it may seem urgent to distinguish friends from enemies and, accordingly, to emphasize concepts that separate the opponents. As soon as peace is on the political agenda, however, antagonistic categories like "good and evil" or "winner and loser" become counterproductive and there arises a need to reconstruct the social relationships between former enemies by focusing on what the parties share in common.

According to Jaeger (2002a), the reconstruction of a pluralistic society based on tolerance and multiple identities requires an alternative framework of news coverage as well. Instead of perpet-

uating the unit at war and its central categories, the media may contribute to peace-building by reconstructing a fluid set of social identities based on categories common to the members of both societies. In order to accomplish this, the civilian life of both societies must become a media issue, and there are a great variety of topics and possible media events that may provide the material for this new framework: sports and professions, gender and family life, schools and education, culture and the arts, etc.

In view of the rejection of dissonant information (cf. Festinger, 1957), however, here it is always only individual aspects of solution-oriented coverage that are selectively realizable. In the same way that conventional media reporting (even in peacetime) is always one step ahead toward escalation, peace journalism must always proceed one step ahead toward de-escalation, conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Some empirical case studies

Empirical studies of the Salvadorian media after the end of the civil war in El Salvador and the peace treaty of 1992 (Nuikka, 1999), as well as of German reporting on France after the end of the Second World War (Jaeger, 2002b), show that the media can serve this function quite productively, if peace is actually on the political agenda. Thus Nuikka (1999) shows that journalism is quite capable of furthering the democratization process by offering a platform for discussion which could gradually replace violence as the predominant means of conflict resolution. And Jaeger's results (2002b) show that news selection criteria are not insuperable natural laws with which journalism must comply. Not only in the immediate post-war period (1946-1950), but also in times of largely stabilized German-French cooperation (1966-1970), German press reporting on France was dominated by reports of positive results. With the advance of German-French reconciliation, reports about non-elite topics increasingly found their way into the German press. This was due, among other things, to increasing contacts with French culture and life-style which helped the German readers perceive the French population as members of a cultured nation and no longer as the (former) enemy.

The studies already cited on German press reporting (*Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Berliner Zeitung*), on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process between 1993 and 1997 (Annabring, 2000), and on the

Northern-Ireland peace treaty of 1998 (Hamdorf, 2001) show, in contrast, clear deficiencies.

To summarize these first empirical findings, the impression arises that the media in conflict regions are more likely to make an effort to overcome their attitudes and support beginning peace and reconciliation processes than the international media, which at best persist in a skeptical wait-and-see position.

The international media environment

While the chance of making constructive contributions to shaping the environment of the peace process seems to be passed up by the international media, the significance of the international media environment for foreign policy decision processes has only recently received attention from media studies. Thus, for example, Naveh (2002) holds the view that the mass communication channels have two dimensions. They are an input source, influencing the foreign-policy decision-making process via the information they provide, and at the same time they serve as an output media environment which compels political leaders to relate to the media in their decision-making. Foreign policy decision-making processes thus take place within an environment that is partly created by the media and which involves both the national and the international media environments (cf. Figure 5.4).

"When an external international event occurs, leaders learn about it from the media (the input process, CNN effect, etc.), information is processed via the various image components, and the policy or decision-formulating process is set in motion. Media consultants and PR professionals participate in the process, and officials consult with them and consider their advice. When a decision is made or a policy is formulated (the output phase), leaders take into consideration the media environment (national and international) in the decision itself, and mainly in the publication (MM) process" (Naveh, 2002, 11).

In regard to the support of beginning peace processes, it is in particular the role of the international media as an output media environment that offers a range of possibilities to be developed. On the basis of their greater distance from conflict events, they not only have great freedom of action in terms of open-minded reporting, overcoming prejudices and reducing enemy images, but also in terms of avoiding overreaction, which can create false expectations and/or illusions that the recently started peace process could end the conflict in a single stroke.

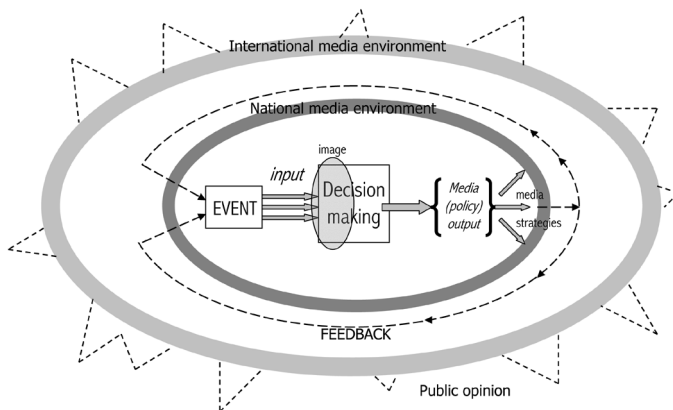


Figure 5.4: The complex process of foreign policy decision-making

While both the public and the media often expect quick results, overly-optimistic end-of-conflict expectations, especially in long-term, intractable conflicts, are not only inappropriate, but even counterproductive (cf. Shinar, 2003). Peace processes are controversial and particularly the transformation of conflicts, which – as in the Israeli-Palestinian case – have a strong cultural component and are anchored in the (national) identity of society members, requires a gradual reduction of stereotypes. This cannot be achieved by simply adopting a new political discourse and ideology that harmonize contradictions and idealize former arch-enemies as partners for peace, as reflected by Israeli news media during the post-Oslo process (cf. Mandelzis, 2003). For, as Azar & Cohen (1979) have warned:

"If stereotypes and prejudice are suppressed only, they will prevail under cover and return to the surface of social life as soon as they are given the slightest chance."

Part II

Analyzing the media and rewriting the news

Wilhelm Kempf

In cooperation with Bettina Bucher & Michael Reimann

Training in journalism

6.1 Introduction

The project of peace journalism can be misinterpreted so that journalists slip out of the role of reporters and instead begin to actively mediate in the conflicts they are covering. This cannot be the task of journalism, and it is also questionable whether uninited and quasi-self-appointed mediators can exert any constructive influence on the course of conflicts. On the other side, journalism and the media play a central role in the process of societal construction of reality which they can use for better or worse. The model of constructive conflict coverage as developed in the previous chapters, therefore, aims at strengthening the constructive contributions of the media.

Need for training in journalism

The mere observation of the above-formulated Ground Rules of Peace Journalism, however, asks for more than just good will. It entails, among other things, overcoming the institutional constraints that result from the criteria for news selection, editorial procedures and expectations, the economics of the media, the connections between the media and politicians and the military, etc. It requires emancipating the journalists from the (apparent) automatism of social-psychological mechanisms (group processes, distortions of perception etc.) in which the journalists themselves are trapped, but which they can react to in one way or another as soon as they become aware of these processes. They require the journalists to have knowledge of conflict theory (understanding of conflict and conflict analysis, conflict management) and they require professional skills and journalistic working techniques that permit the journalists to write exciting news stories which get their sex appeal from the struggle to achieve a universal peace solution and not from the polarization of the conflict parties and a recurring cycle of violence and atrocities.

This raises the question of journalism training and/or further education offerings for journalists.

Previous experiences Relevant training courses for journalists which try to teach journalists peace science knowledge and make it useful in journalistic work have been – beginning with the Conflict & Peace Courses held in 1997/98 in Taplow Court near London – offered in the last few years by among others *Transcend* (see www.transzend.org), by the *Conflict Resolution Network Canada* (see www.crnetwork.ca), as well as in the frame of the *International Civilian Peace-keeping and Peace-building Training Program* (IPT)¹ at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (AS-PR). Not all of the named topics are dealt with equally by the various advanced training offerings, however.

In particular the question of overcoming institutional pressures has not really been dealt with so far. On the side of journalists it requires not only civil courage, but also communicative competencies which they must use in interaction with institutions. Training programs for journalists which deal especially with this point have, to my knowledge, not yet been developed. To develop such programs, it might be possible to draw upon experience from organizational psychology (management training) and also upon models of interpersonal change (Bläsi, 2001) and training methods from group dynamics.

The emancipation of journalists from the automatism of social psychological mechanisms first presupposes that sound knowledge of the appropriate social psychological theories and research findings will be conveyed. Although this is attempted within the framework of the IPT program at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), the time available for it is relatively short. On the whole, it would be desirable to give the social psychological aspects – the work situations of journalists and also the social construction of reality and the role of journalism in this process – a larger place in the education of journalists and to combine imparting theoretical knowledge with contributions from their own experience. Also the training concepts presented here focus on the cognitive side of the problem and assume that self-experience can be naturally integrated into the group work and its evaluation. They are not (yet), however, developing any didactic strategy for this integration.

1. The IPT Program is, however, not directly oriented to journalists, but is rather open to peace workers from all professions.

While imparting competence in conflict theory has a central place in the framework of the IPT program, it is given a relatively small place in conflict and peace courses and Transcend's resulting peace journalism training. In contrast, the training courses provided by the Conflict Resolution Network Canada concentrate 100% on this aspect of the further education of journalists. In a personal communication, Jenifer Newcombe points out that the demand for the courses of the Conflict Resolution Network Canada is fortunately increasing and that the Network does not have the same difficulty in attracting journalists for their training program that was reported by Jake Lynch (quoted in Zint, 2001) for the British NRO "reporting the world", which uses the Transcend model. There, the use of the term "peace journalism" seems to have had a rather off-putting effect. While war correspondents enjoy recognition, peace correspondents are seen as biased from the start and are thus discredited. Dropping the term "peace" and focusing more on factual topics like methods of dealing with conflict are seen by Lynch as a possible way out of the dilemma. The experience of the Conflict Resolution Network Canada appears to confirm this.

Zint (2001), also mentions the alternative that, assuming good journalism is always peace-promoting, the *only* thing required is to promote journalistic quality. We can agree with the aim of this alternative, but its use of the word "only" leads it away from the institutional, social psychological, and conflict-dynamic factors which affect the escalation bias of conventional conflict reporting. Unless they know about these factors, journalists cannot emancipate themselves from them. In addition, the appeal to journalists to learn their craft properly and to deliver quality journalism threatens their self-esteem. This may therefore not exactly increase their willingness to participate in the appropriate training.

Nonetheless, peace journalism training programs cannot manage without communicating professional skills and journalistic work techniques like those which are central to the IPT courses offered at the ASPR and to the Transcend peace journalism courses. My experiences as a lecturer at the IPT courses, at a seminar of the Heinrich Böll Foundation with journalists from Ethiopia and Eritrea, and in courses for journalism students at the University of Costa Rica suggest that attributing the escalation bias of conventional conflict reporting solely to a lack of professional compe-

tence grossly underestimates the constructive potential and creativity of journalists.

In practical work with journalists, four principles have proved worthwhile: (1) making available basic knowledge of conflict theory and social psychology, (2) trust in journalists’ abilities and creativity, (3) learning by doing, and (4) for this end using news reporting about conflicts in which the participants in the course, their society, or their country are not directly involved.

6.2 Training concepts

Training materials

The possibilities for using the present book in training journalists range from a one-day short training course to a weekend intensive training to a one-week block course, corresponding to a one semester course in the extent of 2 hours per week. It is, however, also suitable for private study.

For this end on the accompanying CD ROM training materials are presented:

- 1. All the illustrations and tables used in the book are on the CD ROM as pdf-files for printing *overhead transparencies*.

Overhead Transparencies
F01_Figures F02_Tables

- 2. In order to be able to visualize the dynamic development of the illustrations, several illustration series are additionally given as *Powerpoint presentations*:

Powerpoint Presentations
P01_ The meaning of conflict P02_ The role of the media in the social construction of political conflict P03_ Constructive conflict P04_ Destructive conflict P05_ Cognitive change during conflict escalation P06_ September 11 P07_ The formation of societal beliefs P08_ Transformation of conflict P09_ "Absurd"

- 3. A selection of illustrations and tables can be found on the CD ROM also as pdf-files for printing *handouts*.

Handouts
H01_Steps of conflict escalation (Figure 2.13) H02_Ground rules of peace journalism (Table 4.1) H03_A four factor news communication model (Table 4.2) H04_Societal beliefs in intractable conflict (Table 4.8) H05_War journalism vs. peace journalism (Table 5.1) H06_Distortions of conflict perception (Table 5.2) H07_War discourse vs. peace discourse (Table 5.3) H08_De-escalation- and solution-oriented coverage (Table 5.4)

4. As *work sheets* for the practical exercises the checklist for escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in conflict coverage presented in Chapter 6.3 and also the texts analyzed in Chapters 7 and 8 are presented:

Work sheets
W01_Checklist for escalation- and de-escalation oriented aspects of conflict coverage W02_"Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis" W03_"Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein" W04_"Absurd" W05_"The Worst Possible Solution" W06_"Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence" W07_"Peace on the Agenda in Pretoria and Washington" W08_"Bush and Peres Discussed the Egypt-Jordanian Truce Plan"

5. The *sentence by sentence analyses* of the above-given texts were prepared as Powerpoint presentations:

Sentence by Sentence Analyses
A02_"Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis" A03_"Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein" A04_"Absurd" A05_"The Worst Possible Solution" A06_"Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence" A07_"Peace on the Agenda in Pretoria and Washington" A08_"Bush and Peres Discussed the Egypt-Jordanian Truce Plan"

6. The same holds for the *evaluation of the group work* from earlier training courses in which students had the assignment of rewriting texts and eliminating the escalation-oriented bias (cf. Chapter 8):

Evaluation of the Group Work
G05_"The Worst Possible Solution" G06_"Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence"

7. To prepare for work with texts other than the text examples presented here, there are also *blank forms* on the CD ROM for creating work sheets as well as for the graphic presentation of analysis results.

Blank Forms
B01_Work sheet B02_Analysis graphic

Short training

One-day short training is addressed to participants who already have knowledge of conflict theory and conflict analysis and corresponds to the one-day course module "The Role of the Media", such as I taught in the last few years in the frame of the IPT Specialization Course on Information Dissemination at the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution. It is divided into a theory block of two 90-minute sessions on the topic "The Impact of Mass Media on Conflict" and an exercise block with likewise two 90 minute sessions on the topic of "Media Analysis with Regard to Conflict Situations".

1. The theory block on "The Impact of Mass Media on Conflict" gives an overview in Chapters 1 and 2 of the present training book with a focus on the topics
- The constitution of meaning via communication (Chapter 1.2) and
 - Cognitive change during conflict escalation (Chapter 2.5).

It ends with the presentation of the checklist for escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in conflict coverage presented in Chapter 6.3.

2. The exercise block "Media Analysis with Regard to Conflict Situations" builds directly on this and introduces the application of the checklist on the basis of the text example "The Worst Possible Solution" (Chapter 8.2).¹ Then the possibilities will be discussed for reducing the escalation-oriented bias of the text. In the second part of the exercise block another suitable text, e.g., the text example "Sharon Blames Arafat" (Chapter 8.3), will be studied using the checklist on escalation- and de-esca-

1. In place of the texts suggested here and below other (escalation-related) texts can be used after they are suitably prepared. In each case, however, it is advisable to do the exercises on the basis of reporting on conflicts in which the course participants, their nation or society were not directly involved.

lation-oriented aspects. After this the students, in working groups of 3–4 participants, are assigned the task of rewriting this text and eliminating its escalation-oriented bias. In a concluding plenary session the results of the groups are presented and discussed.

Schedule of Short Training:	
9:00–10:30	The Impact of Mass Media on Conflict
11:00–12:30	
15:00–16:30	Media Analysis with Regard to Conflict Situations
17:00–18:30	

The weekend intensive training follows essentially the same didactic concept as the one-day short training. It differs from this, however, in that it does not presuppose *previous knowledge* of conflict theory and conflict analysis and offers more room for group work.

Weekend intensive training

It begins on Friday evening with an opening session (ca. 30 minutes) for the participants to get acquainted. This is followed by a theory block of three 90-minute sessions on the topic of "The Impact of Mass Media on Conflict" and an exercise block with four 90-minute sessions on the topic of "Media Analysis with Regard to Conflict Situations".

1. The theory block on "The Impact of Mass Media on Conflict" also begins on Friday evening and lasts until the lunch break on Saturday. It deals with Chapters 1 and 2 of the present training book in detail and ends – as in the short training – with the presentation of the checklist for escalation and de-escalation-oriented aspects in conflict coverage given in Chapter 6.3.
2. The exercise block on "Media Analysis with Regard to Conflict Situations" begins after the lunch break on Saturday and leads – as in short training – to the application of the checklist to a selected text example. Then there is a discussion of possibilities for eliminating the escalation-oriented bias of the text.¹
In the second part of the exercise block, after the coffee break on Saturday afternoon, another suitable text² will be discussed in work groups of 3–4 participants using the checklist of esca-

1. Suitable for this is, e.g., again the text example "The Worst Possible Solution" (Chapter 8.2).
2. E.g., again the text example "Sharon Blames Arafat" (Chapter 8.3).

lation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects. The work group results will then be presented and discussed at a plenary session.

In the third part of the exercise block, on Sunday morning, the work groups – as in the short training – receive the assignment of rewriting this text and eliminating the escalation-oriented bias. After the coffee break the work group results are presented and discussed in a plenary session.

After the lunch break a concluding plenary session is held (course evaluation, farewell).

Schedule for the Weekend Intensive Training:		
Friday	17:00–17:30	Opening session
	17:30–19:030	The Impact of Mass Media on Conflict
Saturday	9:00–10:30	
	11:00–12:30	Media Analysis with Regard to Conflict Situations
	15:00–16:30	
	17:00–18:30	
Sunday	9:00–10:30	
	11:00–12:30	
	14:00–15:00	Concluding plenary session

Block course

The block course, or respectively the one-semester course, works in detail with Chapters 1-5 of the present training book. About 8 lecture modules of 90 minutes each are provided for this. Between the lecture modules 8 exercise modules will be scheduled.

1. The first exercise module follows Chapter 2, which concludes with the presentation of the checklist for escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in conflict coverage (Chapter 6.3), and presents – as above – first the use of the checklist using the text example "The Worst Possible Solution" (Chapter 8.2). Then possibilities will be discussed for eliminating the escalation-oriented bias of the text.
2. In the second exercise module directly after this – as in the weekend intensive training – work groups of 3–4 participants will examine the text example "Sharon Blames Arafat" (Chapter 8.3) using the checklist of escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects. The results of the work groups will then be presented and discussed in a plenary session.

Schedule of Short Training:	
Module 1	Preliminary discussion, getting acquainted and overview of course
Module 2	Chapter 1: The social construction of international conflict, and Chapter 2: The logic of conflict and the dynamics of conflict escalation
Module 3	
Module 4	
Module 5	Analysis of the text example "The Worst Possible Solution"
Module 6	Analysis of the text example "Sharon Blames Arafat"
Module 7	Rewriting "Sharon Blames Arafat"
Module 8	Chapter 3: War reporting and propaganda
Module 9	Analysis of the text example "Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis"
Module 10	Chapter 4: The challenge of post-conflict reconciliation
Module 11	
Module 12	Analysis of the text example "Absurd"
Module 13	Rewriting the editorial "Absurd"
Module 14	Chapter 5: Constructive conflict coverage
Module 15	Analysis of the text example "Gorbachev blames Saddam Hussein"
Module 16	Rewriting "Gorbachev blames Saddam Hussein"

3. As in the weekend intensive training, a third exercise module follows in which the work groups receive the assignment to re-write this text and eliminate its escalation-oriented bias. Then the work results will be presented and discussed in a plenary session.
4. The fourth exercise module follows Chapter 3 and analyzes as an example of war propaganda the "Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis" (Chapter 7.1)
5. The fifth exercise module follows Chapter 4. As an example of escalation-oriented reportage – even during the most normal peacetime long after the end of war and successful reconciliation among former conflict parties – the work groups analyze the editorial "Absurd" (Chapter 7.3). Next the course participants are given the assignment of researching the background of the conflict.
6. In the following sixth exercise module, the results of the research are combined. Based on this the work groups receive the assignment of composing a constructive editorial to replace the presented editorial. The work results are presented and discussed in a plenary session.
7. The seventh training module follows Chapter 5. As an example of war reportage the work groups analyze the text example

"Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein" (Chapter 7.2). Then the course participants are assigned to research de-escalation-oriented facts (here on Gorbachev's peace initiative).

8. In the following eighth exercise module the results of the research are again combined. Building on this the work groups receive the assignment of composing a de-escalation or solution-oriented article as an alternative to the presented text example. The work results are presented and discussed in a plenary session.

6.3 A checklist for escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in conflict coverage

Topical focal points

"There is an urgent need", wrote Ignacio Martin-Baró shortly before his death¹ in a social-psychological study of the civil war then going on in El Salvador "to work toward a process of greater social openness in order to be able to learn something about the reality before it is set in concrete, in order to recognize facts before they are interpreted" (Martin-Baró, 1991).

The contribution journalists can make to starting such a process of greater social openness is the focus of the training concepts developed here, which place three interdependent topic complexes at the center of journalistic training:

1. The transmission of theoretical knowledge of the social-psychological mechanisms involved in an escalation-oriented construction of reality;
2. The application of this knowledge to sensitize participants to the escalation-oriented perceptual distortions typical of conventional conflict reportage; and
3. The development of writing techniques which enable journalists to report the facts without interpreting them in advance in an escalation-oriented manner.

Aids

The checklist for escalation- and de-escalation oriented aspects in conflict coverage given in Tables 6.1 – 6.7 serves as an aid for sensitization to escalation-oriented perceptual distortions. It operationalizes the two poles of the (cognitive) escalation process

1. P. Ignacio Martin-Baró S.J., Professor for Social Psychology and Vice Rector of the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas in San Salvador was murdered on 16 November 1989 by the Salvadorian military. Five other Jesuits died with him who had, like him, tried to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the civil war in El Salvador and to protect human rights. Also shot and killed were the community cook and her fifteen-year-old daughter.

developed in Chapter 2 as well as the propaganda techniques presented in Chapter 3.¹

Although the checklist was originally developed for research purposes, the exercise modules, in which they are applied to analyze the respective text examples, do not intend to train course participants in social-scientific content analysis. The checklist should merely help to sharpen their awareness of escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects of conflict coverage and to separate the reported facts from their (escalation-oriented) interpretation.

Escalation-oriented-aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
E 1	Polarization (or respectively support of war) & confrontationist (or respectively military) logic	D 1	Query of polarization (or respectively warfare) & confrontationist (or respectively military) logic
E 1.1	Zero-sum or at least win-lose orientation (construction of conflict as a competitive process); conflict resolution is regarded as impossible; agreements are interpreted as "giving in", compromise is devalORIZED	D 1.1	Win-win orientation (or at least questioning win-lose) and/ or presentation of structures for possible cooperation (construction of the conflict as a cooperative process)
E 1.2	Emphasis on military values	D 1.2	Cooperative values and/or questioning militarism and military values
E 1.3	Designation of (military) force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution and/or downgrading of doubt in its appropriateness	D 1.3	Emphasis on negative effects of (military) force and/or questioning its appropriateness
E 1.4	Refutation, questioning or downgrading peaceful alternatives; focus on violence reduces the prospect of peace and/or obstacles to peace are emphasized or portrayed as overwhelming	D 1.4	Perspectives on, demands for and/or agreement with peaceful alternatives
E 1.5	Emphasis on antagonism	D 1.5	Emphasis on openness to all sides or at least abandonment of dividing the protagonists into two camps

Table 6.1:
Conceptualization of the
(conflict-) situation

1. Drawing on a content-analytical coding schedule initially developed by Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen (1996) for research purposes, the checklist has since then been modified several times, expanded, refined, and made more transparent in its logical structure – among other things on the basis of research on press reporting on the peace process in Northern Ireland and Israel.

Table 6.2: Evaluation of the war parties' rights and intentions

Escalation-oriented-aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
E 2	Antagonism	D 2	Balance
E 2.1	Demonization of the opponent, denial of his rights and/or demonization of his intentions	D 2.1	Respecting the opponent's rights and/or unbiased description of his intentions
E 2.2	Idealization of one's own rights and intentions	D 2.2	Realistic and self-critical evaluation of one's own rights and intentions
E 2.3	Denial of common interests or emphasis on incompatibility of interests, culture, etc.	D 2.3	Emphasis on common interests and/or description of the (concrete) benefits that both sides could gain from ending the war

Table 6.3: Evaluation of the war parties' actions

Escalation-oriented-aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
E 3	Confrontation	D 3	Cooperation
E 3.1	Justification of one's own side's actions and underlining of one's own rightness ----- demonstration of uniformity and /or downgrading differences within one's own party	D 3.1	Self-critical evaluation of one's own side's actions ----- focus on plurality of behavioral options within one's own party
E 3.2	Condemnation of the opponent's actions ----- disregarding plurality on "their" side	D 3.2	Less confrontationalist or unbiased evaluation of the opponent's actions ----- focus on plurality of "their" behavioral options
E 3.3	Antagonistic behavior is emphasized, possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the war are denied, cooperation between conflict parties is not taken serious and/or ----- the role of third parties is interpreted more as exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose) than as mediating (win-win)	D 3.3	(Supporting) description of cooperative behavior, of possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the war and/or ----- the role of third parties is interpreted as mediating (win-win) rather than exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose)

Table 6.4: Emotional involvement in the conflict

Escalation-oriented-aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
E 4	Destructive emotions	D 4	Constructive emotions
E 4.1	A focus on "their" viciousness and dangerousness & accentuation of "our" strength create a balance between threat and confidence which promotes willingness to engage in struggle (or war)	D 4.1	Unbiased assessment of "their" intentions & behavior and emphasis on the price of victory deconstruct threat and confidence and promote "our" willingness for peace

E 4.2	Mistrust of the opponent and/or neutral third parties who try to mediate in the conflict is encouraged (e.g., by depicting the party as untrustworthy, prone to violating treaties, etc.)	D 4.2	Respect for "their" rights and unbiased assessment of "their" behavior reduce mistrust
E 4.3	A focus on "their" atrocities and "our" justness transforms outrage at war into outrage at the enemy	D 4.3	Empathy with both sides' victims, emphasis on both sides' causalities and unbiased evaluation of both sides' behavior redirects outrage at the war
E 4.4	Interpunctuation of the conflict, demonization of "their" intentions and/or justification of "our" behavior jeopardize empathy with "their" situation: if they behave well, they have nothing to fear	D 4.4	Empathy for "their" situation opens up a new perspective: if we can find a solution (together) that takes all sides' needs into account, reconciliation will become possible
E 4.5	Denial of possibilities for cooperation and/or blaming the opponent for the failure of cooperation jeopardizes rebuilding of trust	D 4.5	Emphasis on cooperative experiences (also in the past) rebuilds trust

Escalation-oriented-aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
E 5	Confrontationist social commitment	D 5	Cooperative social commitment
E 5.1	Humanizes "our" political or military leaders an/or dehumanizes "their" leaders	D 5.1	Refrains from identification with escalation-oriented political or military leaders on all sides
E 5.2	Humanizes "our" soldiers and/or dehumanizes "their" soldiers	D 5.2	Refrains from identification with military personnel on all sides
E 5.3	Humanizes "our" victims and/or ignores or dehumanizes "their" victims	D 5.3	Humanizes or at least respects victims of the war on all sides
E 5.4	Humanizes "our" civil population for its loyalty and sacrifice and/or ignores or dehumanizes "their" civil population for its nationalism, etc.	D 5.4	Humanizes or at least respects members of civil society and/or refrains from identification with supporters of the war on all sides
E 5.5	Humanizes "their" anti-war opposition and/or ignores or dehumanizes "our" anti-war opposition	D 5.5	Humanizes or at least respects those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution on all sides
E 5.6	Devalorizes positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace	D 5.6	Emphasizes positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace

Table 6.5: Social identification and personal entanglement (Distance/dehumanization vs. social identification)

Table 6.6: Motivational logic

Escalation-oriented-aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
E 6	Motivation for war	D 6	Motivation for peace
E 6.1	War as a bulwark against destruction and/or peace as a risk	D 6.1	Peace as an alternative to destruction and/or war as a risk
E 6.2	War as a bridge to a brighter future and/or peace as a risk	D 6.2	Peace as a bridge to a brighter future and/or war as a risk

Table 6.7: Manipulative propaganda techniques

Harmonization of referential levels	
1	Repetition of the same content on different referential levels
2	Circularity of the "proof"
Double-bind communication	
1	Inherent contradictions
2	Emotional involvement with both contradictory messages
Two-sided messages	
1	Anticipation of criticism
2	Rejection of the anticipated information

Examples of applications

In the following chapters the application of the checklist will first be practiced on the basis of three different texts: on the basis of a war speech by the US President at the beginning of the Gulf War (January 1991), on the basis of a newspaper report on the start of the war (January 1991) and on the basis of an editorial on European monetary policy (November 1997). On this basis it will be considered how constructive reportage of the same events could be made, and strategies will be developed for reducing the escalation-oriented bias of conventional conflict reporting.

On the basis of two further text examples dealing with Israeli reactions to Saddam Hussein’s readiness to accept the Soviet peace plan shortly before the start of the ground offensive in the Gulf War (February 1991) and an Egyptian-Jordanian peace plan for settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (May 2001), we will finally discuss whether and how former students managed to rewrite the articles and to reduce their escalation-oriented bias.

Analyzing the media¹

7.1 "Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis" – Analysis of a propaganda speech

"Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis" is a transcript of statements made by the American President on the morning of the 17th of January 1991, two hours after the start of the Allied military action against Iraq. The purpose of the speech is to justify commencing hostilities against Iraq.² Overview of contents

George Bush begins with an accusation against Iraq: He maintains that the conflict had begun on August 2,

"...when the dictator of Iraq invaded a small and helpless neighbor" (P1/S4)³ and describes various attempts to end the conflict by economic or diplomatic means. These had all failed due to Iraq's intransigence.

"... the 28 countries with forces in the Gulf area have exhausted all reasonable efforts to reach a peaceful resolution, and have no choice but to drive Saddam from Kuwait by force" (P5/S1).

Continuing, he first describes the military and political goals of the Alliance, especially the destruction of Iraq's nuclear and chemical weapons potential, forcing Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and restoring its legitimate government, and even the reintegration of Iraq into the "family of peace loving nations" (P20/S3).

In answer to the question, "Why not wait?" (P8/S2), the President lists in paragraphs 9 to 13 - which all use the same formula – the wrongful actions undertaken by Saddam Hussein "while the world waited". Conclusion:

-
1. Parts of this chapter are based on preliminary work by Michael Reimann. Responsibility for the present text is solely that of the author.
 2. For the complete text of the speech, see work sheet W02 on the accompanying CD ROM.
 3. The abbreviation Px/Sy means: Paragraph x, sentence y.

"While the world prayed for peace, Saddam prepared for war" P(13/S2).

Furthermore, repeated warnings and the "resolute action" of the US Congress had not changed Saddam's attitude, and he had instead tried to turn the conflict into a "dispute between Iraq and the United States of America" (P15/S3). "Well he failed" (P16/S1), and now force is the only alternative.

Furthermore, President Bush promises the greatest possible support for the troops, the shortest possible conflict, the lowest possible casualty rate and

"... the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations" (P18/S3).

He turns briefly to the Iraqi people and affirms that he has no quarrel with them. He expresses the hope that they can still persuade their dictator to cooperate, he promises to pray for innocent victims and stresses his conviction:

"... not only that we will prevail, but that out of the horror of combat will come the recognition that no nation can stand against a world united" (P21/S4).

Then he praises the training and motivation of the American soldiers and invites a number of them to speak. The comments of the soldiers and officers again justify the war: It is needed to protect international freedom, protect the world from becoming lawless and brutal, build a new future, make amends for crimes committed by Saddam and prevent future crimes.

In conclusion, Bush thanks his soldiers, promises to bring them home as soon as possible and calls on God to protect them and the entire nation.

"May God bless each and every one of them and the coalition of forces at our side in the Gulf, and may He continue to bless our nation, the United States of America." (P28/S1).

Standardization of
the mind

In terms of an analysis of propaganda viewpoint, it is a rather simple text essentially constructed on a principle that Lasswell (1927) recognized long ago: the mind is standardized through the continual repetition of the same simple ideas. Bush's speech is marked not only by simple ideas, but also by simple sentences, each of them practically a short, bold slogan capable of standing on its own.

7.1 "Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis" – Analysis of a propaganda speech

Bush uses the entire palette of escalation-oriented stylistic devices, from the cognitive representation of the conflict and its emotional counterpart (cf. Figure 7.1) to polarized identification alternatives (33x) and the development of a motivational logic which promises a new world order and makes the Gulf war appear as a bridge to a better future (5x).¹

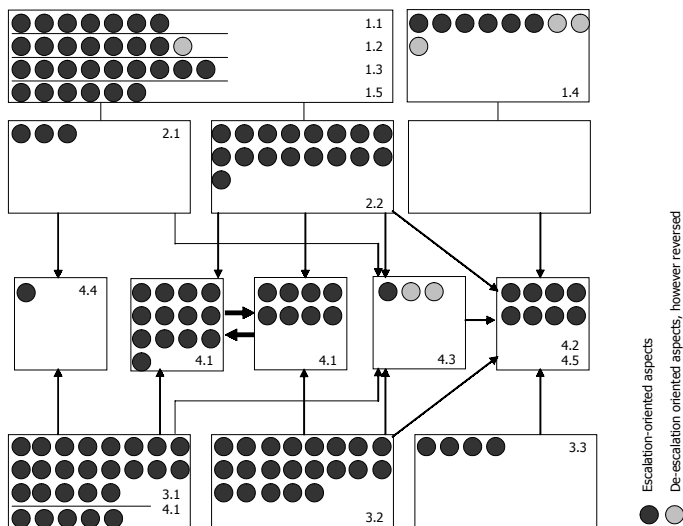


Figure 7.1: Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects of Bush's comments on the air strikes against the Iraqis

The conceptualization of the conflict is marked by a zero-sum orientation (7x), emphasis on military values (7x), representation of military force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution (9x), denial of peaceful alternatives (5x), a focus on war and minimizing the prospects of peace (1x) and an emphasis on antagonism (6x).

The evaluation of the war parties' rights and intentions is characterized by demonizing Saddam Hussein and his aims (3x), while the USA's rights and intentions are idealized (17x).

The assessment of the war parties' actions is marked by a condemnation of Saddam Hussein's actions (21x), while US behavior is idealized (1x) or justified by underlining its rightness (17x). The USA's unity is emphasized (3x), and possibilities for cooperation with Iraq are minimized (4x).

1. Cf. on this as well the sentence-by-sentence analysis A02 on the accompanying CD ROM.

Encouraging mistrust of Saddam Hussein (8x), President Bush claims that the former would have nothing to fear if he behaved justly and withdrew from Kuwait in compliance with the United Nations resolutions (1x). While focusing on Saddam's dangerous and malevolent character and demonstrating "our" strength and confidence encourages listeners to prepare themselves for war (26x), the imbalance between "their" atrocities and "our" rightful actions transforms outrage at war into outrage at the enemy (1x).

Potentially de-escalation-oriented aspects – such as the question of peaceful alternatives (1x) or the unrenounceability of immediate action (1x) are dealt with only rhetorically:

"Why not wait?" (P8/S2),

to which a negative reply is immediately given:

"The answer is clear. The world could wait no longer" (P8/S3-4).

The mention of peaceful alternatives is a clear case of merely paying lip service to peace (1x):

"... even as the planes of the multi-national forces attack Iraq, I prefer to think of peace, not war" (P21/S3),

or merely gives expression to the hope of quick victory (1x), whereby empathy with the war victims also receives little more than lip service:

"I'm hopeful that this fighting will not go on for long and that casualties will be held to an absolute minimum" (P17/S4).

As well the positive reference to the Iraqi civilian population (1x) suggests merely potential future allies against Saddam:

"It is my hope that somehow the Iraqi people can, even now, convince their dictator that he must lay down his arms ..." (P20/S3).

The repeatedly expressed respect for those who – e.g., the General Secretary of the United Nations – had striven for peaceful conflict resolution (4x), serves as further proof of Saddam Hussein's defiant attitude.

Chief Topics

Three escalation-oriented chief themes permeate the President's comments from start to finish (cf. Figure 7.2): a confrontational assessment of the war parties' actions (E3), support for the war and military logic (E1) and encouraging emotional involvement in the conflict (E4). Only somewhat later (starting at paragraph 5) is an antagonistic evaluation of the rights and intentions of the

war parties (E3) begun, which as a whole does not achieve the same density as the previously-named topics. Only after the justification of the war following this line of argumentation does the President develop his comments on the motivational logic of the New World Order in the last third of the speech (E6). Finally, his speech shifts into a patriotic celebration of "our" brave soldiers, whose sense of historical mission is no less profound than that of their President, and he includes them in his prayers.

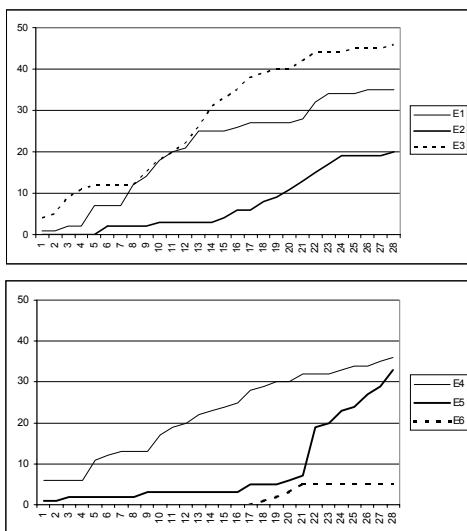


Figure 7.2: Escalation-oriented themes in Bush's comments on the air strikes against the Iraqis

7.2 "Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein" – Analysis of an article on the Gulf war

The same theme, the justification of commencing hostilities, is also central to the article "Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein", which appeared on 18 January 1991 in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Unlike the speech by the US president, the article can, however, not employ the same simple and straightforward propaganda strategy, but must also permit critical voices to be heard.¹

Content overview

The text juxtaposes the various reactions of politicians and states (except the USA) to the commencement of the Gulf War. These are summarized as international consternation linked with sup-

1. For the complete text of the article, see work sheet W03 on the accompanying CD ROM.

port, ranging from reserved to unreserved, for the actions of the multinational forces, while no sympathy at all for Iraq is expressed.

Furthermore, the "last minute" reactions and mediation attempts of Soviet diplomats are portrayed, in the context of which Gorbachev blames the war on Saddam Hussein. Finally, the reactions of various Western, especially European, states and politicians are cited. The tenor of these reactions is that:

- the commencement of hostilities was tragic,
- but unavoidable,
- because Iraq had refused to cooperate;
- responsibility for starting the war and also for the further development of the conflict is attributed to the Iraqi leadership, and especially to Saddam Hussein;
- most of these states accordingly support the (war) policies of the USA.

Criticism of US actions came from Cuba, Yemen, North Korea, Jordan, Iran and Libya; UN General Secretary Perez de Cuellar voiced his regrets about the war, and the Pope lamented the beginning of the war as a grave setback for international law and the world community. He expressed mourning, sympathy with the victims and doubts as to the suitability of military means to solve international problems.

Finally, the article ends by the Gulf Cooperation Council welcoming the commencement of military operations and further condemning Saddam Hussein. This time it is King Fahd of Saudi Arabia who accuses Saddam Hussein of provoking the war.

At first glance the article appears to present no more than a loosely-connected collection of escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects (cf. Figure 7.3). Particularly with respect to the conceptualization of the conflict, a zero-sum orientation (4x) and an emphasis on military values (1x) are contrasted with cooperative values (4x). The designation of military force as an appropriate means for conflict resolution (11x) is set against an emphasis on the negative effects of using force and doubts about its suitability (14x), and while a focus on force reduces the prospects of peace (1x), demands for peaceful alternatives are repeatedly articulated (14x). As regards the audience's emotional involvement, outrage at war and empathy with both sides' vic-

tims (2x) are contrasted with the conversion of outrage at war into outrage at Saddam Hussein (2x).¹

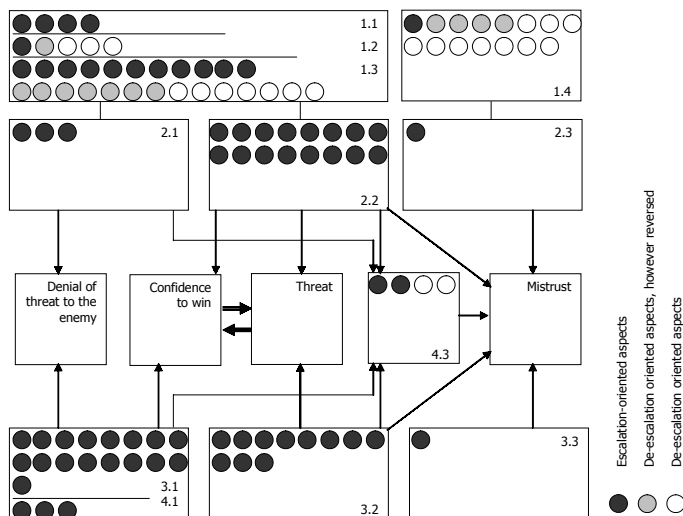


Figure 7.3: Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in the article "Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein"

On closer analysis, the text can be broken down into five sequences, which can be understood as the five steps of an argument which transforms outrage at the war into outrage at the enemy (cf. Reimann, 1997). (1) First, the reader is placed in an emotionally-confusing double-bind situation which creates a need for possible responses, e.g., naming a "guilty party". (2) This is realized in the next step: It is the Iraqi leadership, especially Saddam Hussein, that is blamed for the war, since it rejected Gorbachev's mediation efforts, which are portrayed in detail. Here the initial double-bind situation is resolved into a "two-sided message", whereby the argumentation figure of conversion is used to transform possible critique of one's side into critique of the opponent. (3) Next the article turns to the US side and portrays in detail the international support it has received. Here the possibility of criticizing America is used as an occasion to portray the rightness and solidarity of the US side. (4) In a fourth step, critique is also made of the US side using de-escalation-oriented aspects, which is, however, softened, because the critics are presented as belonging to a very small minority and consisting large-

Transformation of outrage at the war into outrage at the enemy

1. See on this, as well, the detailed sentence-by-sentence analysis A03 on the accompanying CD ROM.

ly of political outsiders (Cuba, Yemen, North Korea, Iran, Libya, Perez de Cuellar (!), the Pope). (5) In the fifth step, the now seemingly only possible answer is finally offered, freed of disturbing doubts, critical reservations or other "ambivalent feelings": Saddam Hussein is the guilty party, and an "inevitable" war must be waged.

Double bind

Sequence 1 (Headings 1 to 3 and paragraph 1): The article begins with "emotional confusion", or more precisely: a double-bind situation: The use of military force is questioned, and consternation at the war is expressed, as well as criticism of actions by both sides. Yet in the same breath responsibility for the outbreak of war is assigned to Saddam Hussein – and in fact by Gorbachev, who (as the article goes on to show) in some sense appears justified in making such a judgment. At the same time, however, the international community is accused of having failed.

Resolution of the double-bind in a two-sided message

Sequence 2 (Paragraph 2 to Paragraph 5): Below, the "last minute" Soviet mediation efforts are presented, whereby clearly de-escalation-oriented aspects receive attention. Particular attention is paid to focusing on mediation efforts and demands for peaceful alternatives and to incentives for social identification with Gorbachev and those striving for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

In connection with the previously given information, according to which Gorbachev blames Saddam Hussein for the outbreak of war, a first argumentation figure for resolving the initial double-bind situation into a two-sided message can be recognized which ultimately characterizes the whole article:

- Gorbachev's mediation attempts contain, clearly, an element of criticism of the US (non-military solutions would have been possible and feasible up to the end).
- Through a one-sided attribution of responsibility for the war to Saddam Hussein, this possible critique is, however, transformed into criticism of the other side.

More than that: the greater the efforts of the Soviet Union, the greater is Saddam Hussein's guilt. Possible outrage at the war is transformed into outrage at the enemy.

Conversion of critique into confidence of victory

Sequence 3 (Heading 4 to Paragraph 10): Continuing, the article focuses on the "full support" the Allies promise the USA, whereby the whole spectrum of an escalation-oriented conceptualization

of the conflict is revealed: zero-sum orientation, emphasis on military values, portrayal of military force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution and rejection of peaceful alternatives.

Further escalation-oriented aspects in this part of the article are: support for the attack and a demonstration of one's own side's unity, condemnation of Saddam Hussein's actions, accentuation of "our" strength, conversion of outrage at war into outrage at Iraq and humanization of one's own side's political and military elites.

Only in very isolated cases are de-escalation-oriented aspects included, which in part remain very unspecific and can also be read as a justification of the attack and/or as condemnation of Saddam Hussein. These are: emphasis on the negative effects of military force, demands for peaceful alternatives, respect for the anti-war opposition and/or incentives for identification with critical voices.

The function of these paragraphs can be described as a second argumentation figure of the two-sided message which characterizes the article as a whole: After possible critique of one's own side is transformed into critique of the other side (Sequence 2), it is possible to transform the critique into grounds for confidence, confidence in one's own side, its strengths, rightness, leadership qualities, etc.: Iraq's wrongful intentions make war inevitable. Therefore the USA and its allies cannot act otherwise, i.e., they are acting rightly, in accord with the demands of the world community, which unanimously condemns Iraq's policies.

Sequence 4 (Paragraph 11 to Paragraph 13): Then there is a shift to reportage largely characterized by de-escalation-oriented aspects which, however, (with reservations) can also be viewed as a continuation of the two-sided message by other means:

Marginalizing critics

A number of states (Cuba, Yemen, North Korea, Jordan, Iran and Libya) have criticized the USA's actions. UN General Secretary Perez de Cuellar likewise questions military means and is presented as a "man of peace" who can "only be saddened by the war". On the other side, he makes a clear attribution of guilt by assigning responsibility for the failure of his efforts to the Iraqi leadership. The Pope consistently and as a matter of principle questions the use of military means, offers incentives for social identification with the victims on both sides and expresses outrage at the war. The Pope as a person is strongly humanized, and incentives

are provided for identifying with him "as a person", as well as with his efforts to end the conflict peacefully.

Despite the dominance of de-escalation-oriented aspects in this sequence of the article, it can be seen that a third form of warding off possible critique is being used:

Criticism by Cuba, Yemen, North Korea, etc. is neither explicitly rejected nor otherwise commented on. The countries identified as a mouthpiece for critique can be regarded from the start, however – either as the last bastions of orthodox communism (e.g., Cuba and North Korea), or as supporters of international terrorism (Gaddafi and Iran), as marginalized. Perez de Cuellar swings from possible critique of the US to critique of the opponent and accuses Baghdad of not having listened to him. And the critique by the Pope remains very general and rather abstract. He withdraws into himself, his feelings and faith and places his hopes on the effects of the first day of the war or the "understanding of all". He thereby fails to recognize the causes of the conflict – which do not consist in "not understanding" one's own actions, but rather in concrete interests – or possible countermeasures which are not based on the desirable "understanding" of various (elite) persons, but rather would have to include concrete political, diplomatic, economic, etc. policies and initiatives.

The possible critique of the USA and its allies is thus warded off through social obligations to take the standpoint of one's own side or through the social marginalization of critics: Critics are either (international) policy outsiders, a "sad 'man of peace,'" who in any case assigns guilt to the opponent, or a naive "man of faith", who in his grief withdraws into inwardness.

Sequence 5 (Paragraph 14): After the reader has in this way been freed from initial emotional confusion, the opponent has been labeled the guilty party, the rightness of one's side been supported and the remaining critics marginalized, a concise statement like the following is possible:

"The Gulf Cooperation Council welcomed the attack" (P14/S1).

There is no longer any trace of "concern and perplexity" or of "ambivalent feelings", but rather the attack is "welcomed", just as one, for example, welcomes a friend or a rise in the discount rate. The article ends with a shift to unadulterated war propaganda marked by: portraying military force as an appropriate means

Unconditional
support for
commencing
hostilities

of conflict resolution, supporting the attack, demonstrating unity and condemning the opponent's actions.

The concluding sentence returns to the chief headline and summarizes the tenor of the article:

"King Fahd of Saudi Arabia blamed Saddam Hussein for having made the outbreak of war 'inevitable'."

7.3 "Absurd" – Analysis of an editorial on European monetary policy

Unlike the texts analyzed above, the text examined here is neither a propaganda speech nor war reportage, but rather a commentary on the front page of a Southwest German regional newspaper, the *Südkurier*, of 6 November 1997 which deals with the nomination of the President of the Bank of France, Claude Trichet, for the office of President of the European Central Bank.¹ This was controversial from the German viewpoint, as France was thereby backing a counter-candidate to the Dutch candidate, Wim Duisenberg, favored by the German government. At the same time, the nomination of a French candidate involved an entirely normal, democratic process and not France's violating a rule or breaking an agreement.² All the more apparent is – before the background of functioning German-French relations – the unfriendly undertone of the commentary, which already stands out at the first reading of the text.

Open hostility

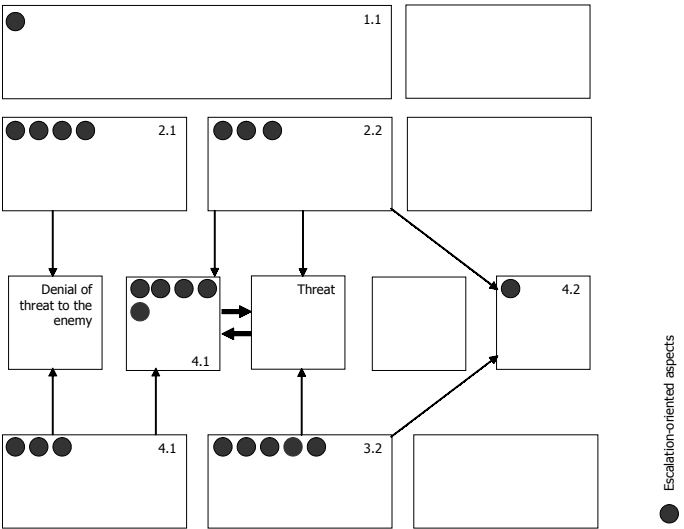
Whatever may have motivated the author of the commentary, long-time *Südkurier* Paris correspondent Alfred Frisch, the text hardly takes second place behind the above-analyzed propaganda texts in terms of its escalation orientation. The author needs no more than three paragraphs (with a total of 10 short sentences) to escalate the conflict, so to speak, "from a starting position"

Escalation-oriented
stylistic devices

1. For a complete text of the commentary, see work sheet W04 on the accompanying CD ROM.
2. To the contrary, France's claim could be seen as quite legitimate, not only in regard to the great number of monetary policy technical and prestige decisions which had already been made consonant with German interests, so that France deserved its turn, but also in view of the agreements between Kohl and Chirac in connection with the transfer of the seat of the ECB to Frankfurt am Main. These agreements were, however, obviously ambivalent. While on the German side they were merely interpreted as waiving the appointment of a German candidate to the top position in the ECB, France could hope that the prestigious office of ECB President would be filled with a French candidate.

to the stage of a bitter power struggle for the domination of Europe (cf. Figure 7.4).¹

Figure 7.4: Escalation-oriented aspects in the editorial "Absurd"



The author's preferred stylistic devices are:

- Construction of the conflict as a lose-lose process (1x): By preventing Duisenberg's election France will not necessarily smoothe the way for a more compliant candidate (P3/S2).
- De-legitimization of France and its intentions (4x): Paris "once again" fears something (P2/S1), the goal of its offensive is "imaginary" (P3/S1), it wants to guarantee a more compliant candidate (P3/S2) and is guided by vanity and national ego-centric pride (P3/S5).
- Idealization of (German) rights and intentions (3x): the predominance of Germany is only "apparently oppressive" (P2/S1), the imputation that Duisenberg is a tool of the German National Bank is unfounded (P2/S2), and German predominance is anyway merely "imaginary" (P3/S1).
- Condemnation of French actions (5x): as absurd (H1), as an inept and illusory "push" (P1/S1), as based on groundless fears (P2/S1), as unjustified imputations (P2/S2) and offensives (P3/S1).

1. See on this also the sentence-by-sentence analysis A04 on the accompanying CD ROM.

- Accentuation of own strength (3x), since the French candidate cannot be elected against "our" vote (P1/S2), "our" allies will make use of their veto power (P1/S3), and European public opinion is on our side (P3/S5).
- Confidence of winning the conflict (5x), because France's advance is illusory (P1/S1), since France has not the least prospect of success (P3/S1) and cannot be certain of achieving its goal (P3/S2), and – last but not least – since Paris could encounter difficulties (P3/S3) and is endangering its international reputation (P3/S4).

7.4 Conclusions

If we compare the texts analyzed above, it is apparent that all three texts have very limited information content.

Information
suppression and
propaganda

Thus in his speech the US President does state that air raids by Allied forces against targets in Iraq and Kuwait had begun two hours before (P1/S1), they were still going on (P1/S2), no ground troops were involved (P1/S3), and the military operations were progressing according to plan (P6/S1). The rest of the speech consists, however, only of a stereotypical repetition of all the reasons which had already been offered in previous months to legitimize the anticipated war and burden Saddam Hussein with responsibility. That the USA had made Saddam Hussein's unconditional capitulation the only alternative to war and had made its refraining from military intervention dependent on conditions that would obviously not be met by Iraq (immediate unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, no negotiations and no face-saving concessions to Saddam Hussein) is to the contrary left out, just as are earlier comments by the President and leading US politicians who had committed themselves to war aims going far beyond merely implementing the UN resolutions and intended to increase America's influence in the Gulf region (cf. Kempf, 1994).

The article "Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein" is, to be sure, not quite as one-sided as the speech by the US President and also reports on critical voices, but these remain rather abstract and hypothetical. There is no mention that Gorbachev had asked the USA the day before to delay the attack for a few hours to urge Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, nor is there any mention that this last-minute peace initiative failed not because of Saddam Hussein, but because of the refusal of the US President. Only in this

way can Gorbachev's attribution of guilt to Saddam Hussein be made to look as though the Soviet Union was now also on the side of the 'hawks'.

While the escalation-oriented aspects of the conflict's portrayal in the President's speech are largely located on the surface of the text, i.e., explicitly formulated and recognizable already in the sentence-by-sentence analysis of the text (cf. Figure 7.1), this is only partly the case with the two other texts. These two text examples transmit their message in part between the lines. The escalatory potential of such texts can thus only be grasped to the full extent if one goes beyond the sentence-by-sentence analysis and places the various text elements in relationship to each other. Even the encouragement of emotional involvement in the conflict is often implicit (cf. Figures 7.3 and 7.4), and the conceptualization of the conflict (as a win-win, win-lose or lose-lose situation), can likewise only be inferred from the relationship between the evaluations of own and opponent's rights, aims and actions, as they are expressly stated. That more sophisticated propaganda techniques like double-bind communication and two-sided messages can only be inferred from complex relations among various text components is characteristic and needs no further explanation here.

That war speeches like that of President Bush on the air strikes against the Iraqis make use of the technique of information suppression is a common practice and not especially surprising. Journalists should, however, be aware that such speeches are not simple descriptions of facts, but are rather intended to convince the public of something and that they use all the available propaganda and persuasion techniques in order to achieve this goal. Accordingly critical journalism should not simply reproduce such speeches without commentary, as if they were simple factual reports.

If to the contrary journalists themselves make use of the techniques of information suppression or (as in the case of the text example "Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein") critical information is weakened through playing with double binds and two-sided messages, the journalistic duty of objectivity is clearly violated, or stated differently: good (professional) propaganda produces poor (unprofessional) journalism.

The same criticism holds for the text example "Absurd" that instead of providing factual information on the events commented on, focuses on stirring up anti-French sentiments. The conflict, which could easily be deprived of its threatening aspect at the factual level,¹ is shifted to the prestige level and escalated into a German-French power struggle typical of the lose-lose model.²

Creating moods as a substitute for factual reporting

As early as the headline, and even before the reader knows the topic, France's behavior is condemned as "absurd".

The first sentence of the editorial makes this judgment more precise by naming the factual content which is about: the appointment of a French candidate to the office of the President of the European Central Bank, and, on the other side, explaining the nature of the absurdity:

"The push by the French President and his head of government ... is just as inept as it is illusory" (P1/S1).

This implies a threat arising from France's (presumably) wrong actions, without having to explicitly state this, and simultaneously justifies confidence that "they" will not get away with it and that "we" will win the conflict. At any rate the monetary policy questions are at issue, and obviously France is not acting very competently.

While the content of this (apparent) threat remains unstated till the end of the text and is likewise not stated in the title story of the *Südkurier*, to which the commentary refers, the confidence of victory is supported in the two following sentences (P1/S2+3) by factual information on the resources available to Germany in the conflict (EU law and coalition partners).

The resulting balance between nameless threat and well-founded confidence of victory encourages an aggressive spirit and introduces the next phase of conflict escalation, which puts France in the wrong, not only in regard to its behavior (P2/S1+2; P3/S1), but also in regard to its intentions (P2/S1; P3/S1+2), and Germa-

1. In a factual regard it can be assumed that Claude Trichet was a competent candidate who supported the same monetary policy line as Wim Duisenberg and the then President of the German National Bank, Hans Tietmeyer. A monetary-policy catastrophe would thus also not have been to be feared from the German perspective and actually the EU finally agreed on a solution according to which Wim Duisenberg had to turn the post over to Claude Trichet at half time.
2. To visualize the escalation dynamic see as well Powerpoint Presentation P09 on the accompanying CD ROM.

ny's good will is made to appear beyond doubt (P2/S1+2; P3/S1). While continually bolstering confidence of victory (P3/S1-4), the conflict is transformed into a lose-lose situation in which it is no longer important to win, but only that the opponent must not win:

"It (France, W.K.) is preventing the election of Duisenberg, but it is not certain of thereby smoothing the way for a more cooperative candidate" (P3/S2).

In this lose-lose model the German-French relationship is further polarized through provoking mistrust of France (P3/S3) and making its motives appear contemptible (P3/S5). Finally, it becomes clear what the author means, as early as his reference to France's "push" as "inept" (P1/S1): France's uncertain prospects of success are contrasted with the threat of serious consequences:

"France is endangering its international reputation" (P3/S4).

Rewriting the news¹

8.1 Approaches and strategies

Three factors in particular have produced the escalation-oriented bias of the above-discussed text examples:

- Lack of journalistic neutrality,
- Information suppression and
- Inadequate research on the background information necessary for understanding the reported events.

Just on this basis we already have clues as to how constructive reporting on the same events can be structured and what strategic requirements are involved. The goal of the present chapter is to clarify these approaches and strategies on the basis of text examples and to report on initial experiences with their application by students in previous training courses.

A primary requirement of constructive conflict reporting is a change of perspective from the internal perspective of one or the other of the parties to the conflict to the external perspective of a third party who is open to the aspects of reality which cannot be recognized by someone personally involved in the conflict – or at least not correctly viewed. Perspective shift

This means a changed focus in conflict reportage, which is usually apparent as early as the headlines and places the reported events in a different frame. For example, instead of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* headlines of 18 January 1991:

Worldwide shock at the outbreak of war

Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein

In the opinion of many, the international community has failed

the headlines might be rewritten:

1. Parts of this chapter are based on preliminary work by Bettina Bucher and Michael Reimann. Responsibility for the present text is solely that of the author.

Last-minute peace initiative ignored

US, Allies launch attack on Iraq

No longer is the impression made that Gorbachev has legitimated the commencement of hostilities, but rather his efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully provide a frame in which the reported events are interpreted.

Key questions

Such a changed focus in reportage necessarily also produces a reevaluation of themes, sources and reporting styles. Key questions are:

1. What are the chief themes reported on?
2. How reliable are the sources of such reportage?
3. What additional themes must be researched in order to avoid one-sided reportage?
4. How can the available information be presented to reduce the escalation-oriented bias of the reportage?

8.2 "The Worst Possible Solution" – Analyzing and re-writing an article from the Gulf War

"The Worst Possible Solution" is a report from Tel Aviv by *Südkurier* reporter Charles A. Landmann. Published on 23 February 1991, immediately before the start of the Allied ground offensive, the article presents the mood of Israeli politicians and commentators at a point in time when Saddam Hussein appeared on the verge of accepting the Soviet peace plan for an immediate truce and Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.¹

Content overview

Similar to articles that appeared in other European daily newspapers at the time (cf. Kempf & Reimann, 2002), the report offers a polemic against a truce and pleads for an expansion of the war aims beyond the UN mandate to liberate Kuwait. An immediate truce is viewed as the worst possible resolution of the conflict, and the fear is expressed that in this case Saddam Hussein could stay in power and turn his remaining military potential against Israel. Called for as a war aim – and as a challenge to the USA – is Saddam Hussein's elimination and the destruction of the Iraqi war machine. The majority of the Israeli population was apparently still against Israeli military involvement, and Palestinian politicians supported accepting the peace plan.

1. For the complete text of the article, see work sheet W05 on the accompanying CD ROM.

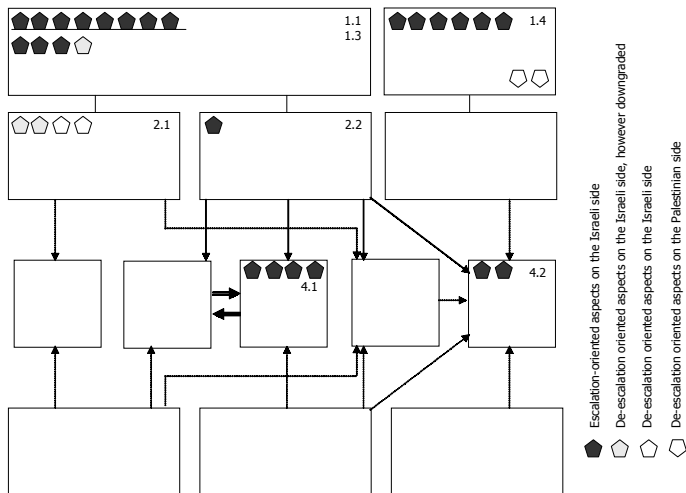


Figure 8.1: Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects of the article "The Worst Possible Solution"

The construction of conflict¹ is thereby marked on the Israeli side by a zero-sum orientation (8x), designation of military force as a means of conflict resolution (3x), rejection of peaceful alternatives (6x), idealization of own rights (1x), focus on threat from Iraq (4x), mistrust of the enemy (2x) and dehumanization of Saddam Hussein (3x) (cf. Figure 8.1). The author does report Iraq's acceptance of the Soviet peace plan and the fact that Iraq refrained from linking the Kuwaiti and Palestinian issues, but these points are downplayed or hidden in subordinate clauses, as are the reservations of the Israeli public against military involvement. Although the author does mention de-escalation-oriented behavior on the Palestinian side, he gives it little emphasis.

Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects

The main thematic issues of the article are (1) the headlines, which give the thematic focus of the article, (2) Israeli evaluations of a possible cease-fire, (3) Israeli demands for the continuation of the Gulf War and interpretations of the aims of the war, (4) Israeli fears, (5) Iraq's agreement not to link the Kuwaiti and Palestinian problems any more, (6) public opinions about (possible) Israeli involvement in the war, (7) the opinions of Israeli members of parliament about Israeli involvement in the war, (8) Israeli post-cease-fire perspectives and (9) Palestinian evalua-

Thematic issues

1. Cf. On this see also sentence-by-sentence Analysis A05 on the accompanying CD ROM.

tions of a possible cease-fire and of Palestinian post-war perspectives.¹

Documentary sources The sources of the article are very imprecisely documented and (obviously) polemically distorted. Only Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir (P1/S1) and ex-Foreign Minister Abba Eban (P4/S1) are named – but without giving the time and place of the statements attributed to them. The other sources are cited in such ways as

- "*almost all commentators* rate the possibility of an immediate cease-fire as 'the worst possible solution for Israel'" (P2/S1),
- "*83.6 percent of all Israelis* are against military intervention at the present time, and *62.7 percent* even believe that Israel should refrain from future involvement in the war" (P5/S1)
- "*only four ministers* have come out in favor of military action against Iraq so far" (P5/S2), and:
- "In contrast, *every Palestinian politician in the occupied territories* welcomed the Soviet peace plan and its acceptance by Iraq. *They* said that the fact that Baghdad has, for the first time, given up a linkage with the Palestinian problem is of no political consequence. *They* added that when the Gulf War is over, the issue of Palestine will be discussed" (P6/S1-3)

which immediately suggest the questions which must always be asked in every type of quality journalism:

Necessary research

- Who are the commentators? For which media do they work? What is the range of these media? What spectrum of the Israeli public do they reach? What is their political orientation?
- What conception(s) are favored by the minority of commentators who do not regard an immediate truce as the worst possible solution? How large is this minority? Which commentators belong to this minority, etc. (see above)?
- What is the source of the opinion surveys cited by the author? Which opinion polling institution made them? What is the political background and professional reputation of this institution? How large and representative was the sample of persons interviewed?
- Who are the four ministers who spoke out in favor of military intervention? Which parties do they belong to and what political orientation do they represent? When and where did they express this orientation?

1. Cf. on this and the following as well the results of Group project G05 on the accompanying CD ROM.

- Which Palestinian politicians in the occupied territories welcomed the Soviet peace plan and its acceptance by Iraq? Who said that the fact that Baghdad has, for the first time, rejected a linkage with the Palestinian problem would have no political consequences? Who expressed his or her confidence that the issue of Palestine would be discussed after the Gulf War? Who are these politicians? How much influence do they have? When and where did they express this orientation?
- What alternative conceptions are favored, and by which Palestinian politicians? Who are these politicians, etc. (see above)?

A detailed account of the creative tools used by participants of earlier training courses to reduce the escalation-oriented bias of the text can be found in the evaluation of group work G05 on the accompanying CD ROM. The greatest challenge for the course participants was to retain the manifest content of the text (i.e., its factual information) without distortions. Only one of seven student working groups that dealt with this text committed the cardinal sin of transforming the available information into the opposite and formulated, e.g., the headline:

Reducing escalation-oriented bias

Cease-fire a possible solution

Israelis view an immediate cease-fire with Iraq as a possible solution.

In contrast, the other working groups managed to constructively transform the thematic focus of the article without falsifying its information content. Already in their headlines they steered the perspective of their report toward peaceful alternatives, without suppressing their ambivalent evaluation. For example:

Thematic focus

Expected cease-fire in the Gulf war

Immediate cease-fire creates mixed feelings

or

Possible cease-fire in Kuwait

What does it mean for Israelis and Palestinians?

In contrast to the original headline of the 23 February 1991 Südkurier article, which adopted and passed on a specific attitude toward the Gulf War which could be found in Israel

Distance from conflict parties

"The Worst Possible Solution"

Israeli politicians see increased danger to their country in an immediate cease-fire

these headlines maintain a distance from the conflict parties and their polarized interpretations of reality.

Empathy instead of
enmification

Maintaining distance from the conflict parties, as advocated here, definitely does *not* mean being insensitive to the concerns and fears, interests and needs of the affected parties. It does, however, mean refraining from identification with only one of the conflict parties and refraining from imposing a pre-given interpretation on the facts. It means expressing empathy for the concerns of all participants, but also makes the subjectivity of their viewpoints transparent. Student working group formulations such as

"The news of a possible ceasefire ... has been accepted with disappointment by many Israeli commentators."

or

"Commentators in Israel believe that an immediate cease-fire would endanger the country's security."

clearly satisfy this requirement much better than the corresponding text passages of the original article, which simply equate the viewpoints of a few commentators with the Israeli consensus and focus on their positions rather than the (security) interests to which they are only one possible answer among others:

"In Israel, an immediate cease-fire is being described as the worst of all solutions" (P1/S1).

and

"Almost all commentators rate the possibility of an immediate cease-fire as 'the worst possible solution' for Israel" (P2/S1).

Making subjectivity
transparent

Making subjectivity transparent is particularly urgent where positions must be reported which violate or ignore international law. A commentary-free adoption of such positions as in the following text passage from the 23 February 1991 *Südkurier* article is not only incompatible with constructive conflict reportage, but simply poor, because irresponsible, journalism:

"Ex-Foreign Minister Abba Eban summarized the Israeli view of an immediate ceasefire with the following observation: The US may have won the war, but it missed the goal of the war. For this goal was not, as declared in the UN resolutions, an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait alone, but also the elimination of Saddam Hussein and the destruction of the Iraqi war machine" (P4/S1-2).

Emphasized here as a quasi-objective observation and thereby as a correct perception of reality is in fact nothing less than disregard for the sole legitimization of the Gulf War in international law,

the UN resolutions, which are presented as mere declarations, irrelevant to the real situation.

For constructive conflict reportage there are at least two possibilities for dealing with such positions.

- One possibility consists in a committed defense of the principles of international law and an explicit rejection of incompatible positions. Since journalism thereby leaves the field of mere reporting, the realization of this possibility is left to editorials and commentaries, however.
- The other possibility is – as in the following text example by a student working group – not to explicitly reject the questionable position (and its proponents), but at least to make the subjectivity of this position clear and to confront it with the international legal facts:

"Ex-Foreign Minister Abba Eban claims that the United States should go beyond the UN resolutions that legitimate the Gulf War as a means to force the withdrawal of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. He wants Saddam Hussein to be removed from power and Iraq's military force destroyed."

By avoiding a direct assault on the incriminated position, this strategy is also suitable as a means of constructive conflict reporting, if – as in the concrete case of anti-Semitism, which is still widespread – there is a danger of transforming critique into support of existing prejudices against the adherents of a questionable position.

Emphatic distance and making subjectivity transparent are at the same time also means of reporting about escalation-oriented positions without adopting their military logic. E.g. one of the student working groups paraphrased the fears of the Israeli prime minister with the words

"Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir described a possible cease-fire as 'very bad' and warned that Saddam's army still posed a threat to Israel which might even increase",

and thus managed to report about Shamir's concern without adopting the military logic of the original *Südkurier* article:

"'Very bad and dangerous' for Israel were the words used by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in describing the possibility that Saddam Hussein would remain in power after the end of the Gulf War and that 'a substantial part of his powerful army would remain intact' (P1/S3) ... An immediate cessation of hostilities would not only expose Israel to a continued

Refraining from the use of military logic

Making progress explicit

risk of missile attacks, but would even increase it. Firstly, the Jewish state would have to fend for itself and, secondly, Iraq could direct its entire offensive potential against Israel" (P3/S1-2).

Another tool of constructive conflict coverage that was applied by the student working groups is making progress explicit. Thus, e.g., one of the student working groups formulated the following:

"By accepting the Soviet peace plan, Baghdad for the first time agreed that the Palestine issue would no longer be linked to the Gulf War."

In the original *Südkurier* article, on the other hand, by hiding the information in subordinate clauses, this progress was ignored as much as by the cited Israeli commentators themselves:

"The fact that Iraq renounced the linkage of the Kuwaiti and Palestinian problems was mentioned, but not assessed as a political success" (P2/S2).

8.3 "Sharon Blames Arafat" – Analyzing and rewriting an article on the Second Intifada

"Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence" is an article from *The Associated Press*, published on 3 May 2001 on the *New York Times* website.¹ Dated seven months after the start of the Second Intifada, the article was published in the period of the initial construction of the "Arafat" enemy image by the government of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Content overview

The topic of the article is a meeting of the Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres, with US President George W. Bush in Washington, at which they discussed an Egyptian-Jordanian peace plan for Palestine. At the center of the article is, however, the question of whether and how far to make Yasser Arafat responsible for violence in the Middle East. In addition, Sharon and Peres are quoted as holding different views. While Sharon accuses Arafat of having given the "green light" for Palestinian suicide attacks (P1/S1), Peres at first still considers the possibility that "some dissident groups and some forces under Arafat participated in the killings without the knowledge of Arafat" (P2/S). But then he shifts completely to the Prime Minister's line, attributes responsibility for the attacks to Arafat and asserts that in this regard there are no differences of opinion between him and Sharon. One receives the least imaginable amount of information about the Egyptian-

1. For the complete text of the article, see work sheet W06 on the accompanying CD ROM.

Jordanian peace plan. Only that Arafat "is fully committed to the Egyptian-Jordanian plan" (P14/S1), while "Israel has said that several proposals are one-sided" (P15/S1).

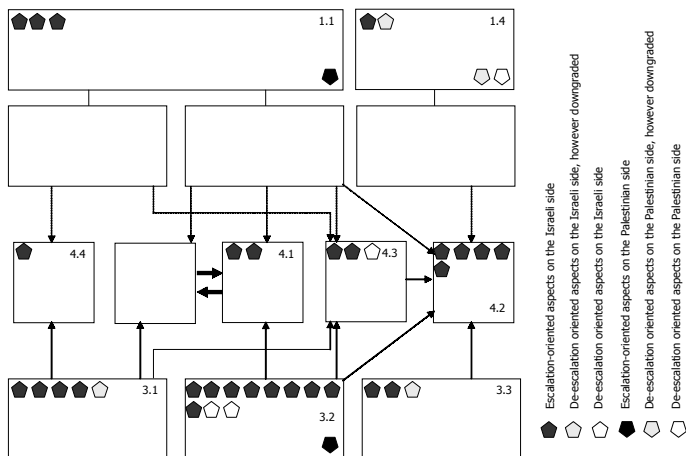


Figure 8.2: Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects of the article "Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence"

The construction of the conflict¹ is marked by condemnation of Arafat's actions (8x) and those of the Palestinians in general (1x), as well as by encouragement of mistrust of Arafat (5x) and a transformation of outrage at the war into outrage at Arafat (2x) (cf. Figure 8.2). Further escalation-oriented aspects are the win-lose orientation (3x on the part of Israel, 1x on the Palestinian side), as well as Israel's rejection of the peace plan (1x) and its condemnation by the Palestinians (2x), demonstrating Israeli unity and downplaying differences between Peres and Sharon (4x), emphasizing antagonistic behavior and denying possibilities for cooperation with the Palestinians (2x), focusing on Palestinian viciousness (2x) and rejection of empathy with the Palestinians (1x).

Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects

De-escalation-oriented aspects are the agreement of the Palestinians with the peace plan (2x), which is, however, weakened by their unwillingness to compromise (1x), as well as the presentation of the plurality of Israeli behavioral options (1x) and the description of cooperative behavior on the side of Peres (1x). These, however, are weakened through the context, according to

1. Cf. on this also the sentence-by-sentence analysis A06 on the accompanying CD ROM.

which Peres has in the meantime adopted Sharon's viewpoint without reservation. The prospect of a peaceful solution suggested in the conversation between Bush and Peres (1x) is downplayed, since the obstacles to peace are made to seem overwhelming.

Emphasis on both sides' casualties in the concluding statement of the article appears suitable for turning the outrage aroused by Sharon against Arafat against the war itself (1x). The gross difference in the number of victims (431 people killed on the Palestinian side and 72 on the Israeli side) and the self-portrayal of the Israeli leadership as hardliners opposed to the truce plan might also direct outrage against Israel, however.

Thematic issues

The main thematic issues of the article are (1) the headlines, which give the thematic focus of the article; (2) the condemnation of Arafat, including (a) background information, (b) the Israeli point of view, (c) statements by Sharon and (d) statements by Peres; (3) extenuating facts and statements in defense of Arafat, including (a) background information and (b) statements by Peres; (4) the disagreement between Sharon and Peres, either (a) focusing on differences or (b) downgrading differences; (5) the meeting of Bush and Peres in Washington; (6) the Egyptian-Jordanian truce plan, including (a) contents, (b) prospects, (c) Israeli and (d) Palestinian reactions; and (7) casualties of the ongoing violence.

Overall direction of the article

Although Sharon's accusations against Arafat in the article are extensive and are cited word for word by the author, he avoids becoming the spokesman for the cheap propaganda against Arafat. Instead he contrasts the accusations against Arafat with background information which reduces their weight, as well as with Peres' more moderate statements, but the latter's vacillating attitude tends more to confuse the reader than to counter efforts to create an enemy image of "Arafat": Repeated references to the willingness of the Palestinians to accept the peace plan, as well as to the high price in blood which the Palestinians had already had to pay oppose a division of the world into "good" and "evil", in which the roles of perpetrator and victim are clearly assigned.

Rewriting the news

The escalation-oriented elements of the presented text are therefore less the fault of the journalistic presentation than of the events or political positions reported on. Nevertheless, the ques-

tion arises of how the escalation-orientation of the text can be further reduced and the report constructively revised.

The student working groups given this assignment at the spring 2001 IPT Seminar chose very different approaches. Two of the group results are contrasted and discussed below:¹

- The student text version "Peace on the Agenda in Pretoria and Washington",² in which the de-escalation-oriented aspects dominate with a ratio of 2:1 (cf. Figure 8.3),³ as well as
- The student text version "Bush and Peres Discussed the Egyptian-Jordanian truce plan",⁴ which is admittedly more moderate than the original text (cf. Figure 8.2), but is still clearly dominated by escalation-oriented aspects (cf. Figure 8.4).⁵

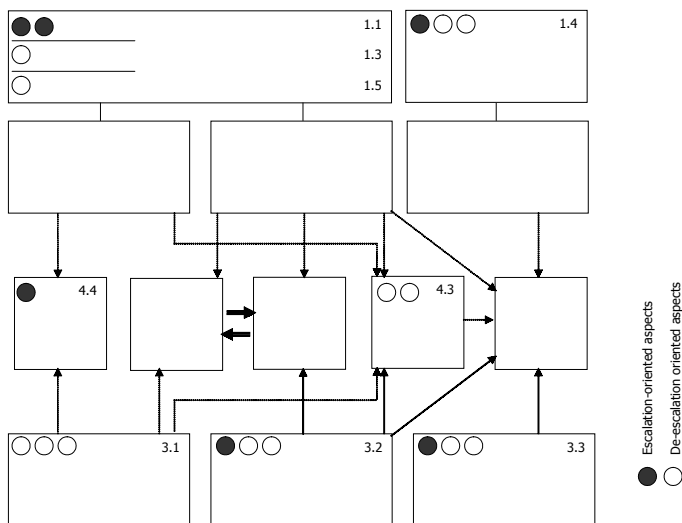
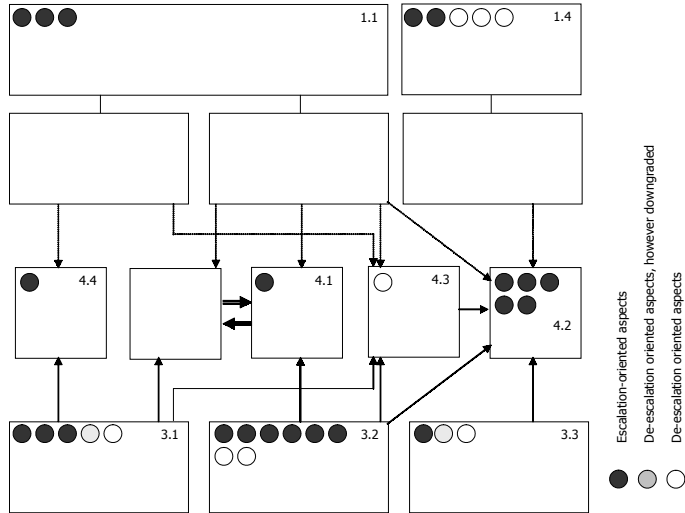


Figure 8.3: Escalation- and de-escalation oriented aspects in the students' version "Peace on the agenda in Pretoria and Washington"

1. Cf. On this also the evaluation of group work G06 on the accompanying CD ROM
2. For the complete text, see work sheet W07 on the accompanying CD ROM.
3. See as well sentence-by-sentence analysis A07 on the accompanying CD ROM.
4. For the complete text see work sheet W08 on the accompanying CD ROM.
5. See as well sentence-by-sentence analysis A08 on the accompanying CD ROM.

Figure 8.4: Escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects in the students’ version "Bush and Peres discussed the Egypt-Jordanian truce plan"



Focus on peaceful alternatives

Both student text versions have in common that already in the headlines they point to the perspective of a peaceful solution. Likewise already apparent in the headlines are the different strategies chosen by the two working groups.

Avoidance of premature hopes and illusions

While the first group is content to substitute a de-escalation-oriented headline, "Peace on the Agenda in Pretoria and Washington", for the escalation-oriented headline of the original article, "Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence", the second group tries to avoid encouraging premature hopes and illusions. Accordingly a further headline is added to the headline "Bush and Peres Discussed the Egypt-Jordanian Truce Plan" which makes apparent the evaluation of the peace plan as controversial: "Plan viewed differently by the Palestinian and Israeli governments".

Avoidance of campaigning

Likewise, the second group also repeats the accusations against Arafat in the original article in almost the same words.¹ Only minor changes in formulations, such as "Israel claims ..." rather than "Israel has said ... ," make the subjectivity of the Israeli viewpoint more transparent and avoid campaigning against Arafat.

1. The only exceptions are P1/S1 and P8/S1.

The other group's version avoids campaigning against Arafat by more radical means. Sharon's accusations against Arafat are reduced to a single statement hidden in subordinate clauses and downplayed by leaving out background information:

"Although Sharon has repeatedly held Arafat responsible for militant attacks, the fact remains that while Arafat heads the Fatah movement, the other three radical Islamic organizations, which have consistently opposed Israeli/Palestinian peace negotiations, are not under his control" (P3).

This approach is admittedly depolarizing and creates greater distance from the conflict events, but it is ultimately achieved at the price of suppressing information, which can boomerang. Lacking information on the precise contents of the accusations against Arafat, the reader can form no judgment of his own about their justification.

Danger of suppressing information

Harmonizing texts by leaving out problematical information is an approach that this working group also uses in other cases.

Danger of harmonization

While the original text confuses the reader through an unclear presentation of Shimon Peres' s vacillating positions, while it downplays the constructive aspects of Peres's approach and gives the impression of Sharon and Peres forming a united front against Arafat, the working group disposes of this problem by saying nothing about Peres's criticism of Arafat and thereby giving the opposite impression, which is just as inadequate to the complexity of the Israeli position(s):

"There appears to be a disagreement between Israel's foreign minister, S. Peres, and Prime Minister Sharon on the question of how far Arafat can be held responsible for the recent violence. Until the formation of Israel's Unity government two months ago, the two had taken different approaches to the issue. While Peres often speaks of the need to resume peace talks, Sharon insists there will be no negotiations until the violence ends" (P2).

In contrast, the first paragraph of the text can be regarded as very successful, as the working group emphasizes concern for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and thereby gives the entire text an orientation which does not involve dividing the perpetrator and victim roles between Israelis and Palestinians:

Concern for peaceful settlement of the conflict

"Failure to arrive at a peaceful settlement has led to much suffering in the Middle East. Since fighting began last September, 431 Palestinians and 72 Israelis have been killed" (P1).

Relevance to all sides That all sides have an interest in ending the violence and finding a viable peace solution remains the basic tone of the text:

"In Washington on Thursday Peres and Bush discussed the truce plan proposed by Egypt and Jordan, and on the same day in Pretoria, South Africa, Arafat, in a speech to the Non-Aligned Movement nations, declared his full commitment to the truce plan (P4). However, the current Israeli government views the E-J plan as one-sided" (P5).

Even in view of the limited hope that the breakthrough could succeed this time, the conflict is kept open for further peace efforts, and neither of the two conflict parties is used as a scapegoat.

Sequence and
contextualization

A similar effect is achieved by the second working group, likewise without using the problematical means of harmonizing contradictions. Its text version differs from the original text (except for the above-named exceptions) only in the sequence in which the various contents are reported, in minor changes in formulations which make transparent the subjectivity of escalation-encouraging comments and/or avoid over-simplified polarizations, as well as by relating the various text passages more clearly to one another and to the concern for a peace solution for the Middle East. In this way the constructive efforts of the Israeli foreign minister are also more clearly acknowledged than in the original text.

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Appendix

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About the editor

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In 1995 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conferred the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education on the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) and the European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU).

The founder of the ASPR and the EPU is Gerald Mader. Since 2003 the ASPR is being directed by a three-member Board including Gerald Mader (President and Chairman), Evelyn Messner (Vice-president) and Arno Truger (Director).

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5. Sentence by Sentence Analyses

A02_ "Comments by Bush on the Air Strikes Against the Iraqis"
A03_ "Gorbachev Blames Saddam Hussein"
A04_ "Absurd"
A05_ "The Worst Possible Solution"
A06_ "Sharon Blames Arafat for Violence"
A07_ "Peace on the Agenda in Pretoria and Washington"
A08_ "Bush and Peres Discussed the Egypt-Jordanian Truce Plan"

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