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Two-sided messages and double-bind communication in war reporting¹

War-reporting often has to deal with contradictory information: there might especially be some good news about the enemy-side, its actions or intentions, and there might be some criticism about one's own side, its actions or intentions.

Even war-reporting that can be characterized as war-propaganda cannot ignore this information, but has to ward it off by other means: by using two-sided messages or double-bind communication. By incorporating the contradictory information, war-propaganda may even increase its effect on the reader: it shows that in the end the enemy-side is "bad" (though not as dangerous to be able to threaten our confidence to win the war), and that one's own side is "good" (though it sometimes may make some mistakes). Thereby the reporting looks much more like well-balanced news-coverage, and it doesn't 'smell' like propaganda.

In the present paper some exemplary analyses of two-sided messages and of double-bind communication from the German media coverage of the Gulf-War and an attempt to systemize them will be presented.

1. Introduction

"So great are the psychological resistances to war in modern times, that every war must appear to be a war of defence against a menacing, murderous aggressor." (Lasswell, 1927). In the attempt to overcome these resistances, the mass-media play an important role, using different kinds of measures to control information (cp. Luostarinen, 1986):

- Restrictive measures aim at minimizing information that might have a negative effect on the population's readiness for war.
- Supportive measures aim at maximizing the amount and quality of information that might have a positive effect.

This distinction is useful especially when studying war propaganda in total wars, when more or less perfect control of the media is possible. However, nowadays 'perfect control' becomes more and more difficult for different reasons: even the only super-power left after the Cold War, the USA, which aimed at total media control during the Gulf War, somehow had to handle information that might have had an undesired, unfunctional effect on its public.

As the Gulf War experience has shown, today's war reporting often has to deal with different kinds of 'subversive', contradictory information: on the one hand good news about the enemy, its actions or intentions, and on the other hand criticism about one's own side, its actions or intentions. Even war reporting that can be characterized as propaganda cannot ignore such 'subversive' information or possible criticisms, but has to ward them off by other means.

Two-sided messages and double bind communication are such means. Both of them consist of rather complex patterns of argumentation: they include some kind of critical or 'subversive' information, and some means to take the edge off of its 'subversiveness'. A central role within this framework plays social identification:

- in two-sided messages incentives for social identification are very often given to either support one's own standpoint or to devaluate another point of view;

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- in double-bind communication incentives for social identification are used to drag the audience into an emotionally confusing situation. Incentives for social identification with the carriers of two contradictory messages are given, and as a result it becomes difficult for the audience to query either of them.

Thereby, and by ways of other means that will be presented later on, critical information is functionalized or devaluated. With regards to the image that is produced of one's own side, criticisms are made harmless, and they are warded off before they can develop any critical sharpness.

When talking about 'warding off' or 'keeping off' 'subversive' information we do not mean to suggest that there is someone with certain intentions behind it or that there is someone intentionally 'constructing' news following certain guide-lines. All we are doing is analysing a given product, given texts, news-articles, independently of and in fact not knowing about the intentions that may hide behind the text. We are simply using certain analytical tools that allow us to ask the text very specified questions which aim at finding out how reality is reconstructed by (or within) the text. And we then sometimes may come to the conclusion that the reconstruction of reality given by the text takes on the form of a two-sided message or a double-bind communication.

In the present paper I will attempt to systemize the two concepts and give some examples from the media-coverage of the gulf-war.

2. Method

Quantitative media-analyses of whatever kind may only serve to describe *what* is reported by the media, which information is given by them, and which arguments are corroborated or questioned by them. Qualitative content analysis is therefore needed in order to unveil *how* this information is presented, which arguments are put to the foreground and which are devaluated by stylistic or other means etc. Especially more complex patterns of argumentation like those used in two-sided messages or in double-bind communication can only be detected by a very close look at the material, that is to say by a qualitative content analysis. Where quantitative content analysis only states that critical arguments are mentioned in a text, qualitative content analysis can be used to unveil whether these possible criticisms are taken up by the text or whether they instead are woven into a two-sided message or a double-bind communication, and thereby are functionalized or devaluated. As Kempf (1997) puts it: "It might as well be the case that quantitative content analysis just paints a too optimistic picture".

The present study is based on a combined quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the Gulf war coverage in American, Scandinavian and German media. Quantitative analysis applied Latent Class Analysis (LCA) (cp. Kempf, 1996) which is appropriate for uncovering latent styles of news-coverage, each of which consists of a certain combination of style characteristics. One major advantage of LCA in comparison to other statistical procedures therefore is that it can break up an over-all distribution of style characteristics into the underlying 'latent' patterns of style characteristics - the styles. As it also makes it possible to identify precisely those texts that represent the different latent styles of news-coverage most clearly, it may as well serve as the basis for sampling texts for a subsequent qualitative content analysis. The ever prominent difficulty of qualitative content analyses, the problem of representativity, can thereby be solved by performing a quantitative content analysis of representatively chosen material, employing an LCA, computing the underlying latent styles, and by then identifying those texts that are most typical for each style.

Ten different topics of news-coverage during the gulf-war were analysed by Kempf (1996); one of these was the coverage on "Alternative ways to settle the war". For this topic nine

different latent styles were identified by the LCA, and for each of those styles a highly representative text was chosen for qualitative content analysis².

The quantitative analysis of "Alternative ways to settle the war" included the coding of the following elements: Allegation (+) or query (-) of

- 1 Force against Iraq is the only possible or most effective way to settle the conflict.
- 2 Economic embargo on trade with Iraq should be given or should have been given more time to be effective.
- 3 Iraqi initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.
- 4 Alliance's or member state's (excl.UN) initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.
- 5 UN initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.
- 6 Third party or neutral initiatives for negotiations or peace talks.

It is obvious that the occurrence of more or less 'critical' arguments - with respect to the war policy of the USA and its allies - should be expected. All of these elements in fact occurred empirically, and all of the nine styles identified by using the LCA, at least with some minor probability, contained one or more possibly critical arguments with regards to war policy.

Still, qualitative content analyses showed that in most of the identified nine latent styles critical arguments were made part of two-sided messages or double-bind communication, and thereby were warded off and lost their critical or 'subversive' input³.

3. Two-sided messages

3.1 Definition

The concept "two-sided propaganda presentation" derives from a classic study in media research by Lumsdaine & Janis (1952), which showed that propaganda can be made more effective, when possible criticism is taken up and refuted. "Two-sided messages" as defined in our project contain two separate features (cp. Kempf, Reimann, Luostarinen, 1996):

- The anticipation of (possible) criticism of one's own side and/or of arguments that may question one's own point of view,
- and the rejection of the anticipated information (criticism, argumentation) - not by counter-arguments, but
 - by "turning the tables", by turning the criticism etc. into a reason to believe and to be confident in one's own side, in its strength, correctness, leadership etc.,
 - or by turning the criticism of one's own side into criticism of the other side,
 - or by devaluating the "subversive" information and/or conclusions to be derived from it.

For clarification this definition can be translated into the following 'formulas' (cp. Table 1):

Part of definition:	'Formula':
(Possible) Criticism:	"We might be to blame for this or that."
Counter-argumentation:	"We are not to blame, for this or that reason."
Rejection: - by "turning the tables":	"We are not to blame, we are good (strong,

² The theoretical basis as well as the procedure of qualitative content analysis are described by Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen (1996)

³ For details see Reimann (1997) and Kempf (1997)

- by turning the criticism of one's own side into criticism of the other side:	to be trusted in etc.)."
- by devaluating the "subversive" information and/or conclusions:	"We are not to blame, but they are."
	"We are not to blame, because blaming us is inappropriate (bad, only a minority's point of view etc.)."

Table 1: Translation of different parts of the definition of two-sided messages into 'formulas'

3.2 Examples and systemization

Two-sided messages may vary in form, but not in function. Their invariable function is to make one's own position 'water-proof', to avoid possible criticism or doubt, and to reject possible criticisms before they intrude on the center of public interest.

Following this line I will present an attempt to systemize the phenomenon of two-sided messages in its various forms, that is to systemize the different means that are used in order to achieve the goal of making one's own position water-proof.

The first suggested distinction is whether the (possible) criticism is made explicit or whether it is presented in an implicit form.

Implicit criticism

When performing the qualitative analyses it came to me as a surprise that again and again I had to relate to one specific part of the definition of two-sided messages, the one referring to "the anticipation of *possible*" criticisms. From time to time the news articles reported facts that may have possibly had a critical content with regard to the Allies' position; yet, this anticipation was incomplete. The critical content was not made explicit, but was only hinted at. In order to recognise facts as 'critical facts' or, at least, as a basis for critical argumentation, the facts reported needed extra conclusions.

In the following example from the German regional paper "Südkurier" criticism is partly made explicit and partly left implicit:

"Even though 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, pressure is mounting within the government. Although only four ministers have come out in favor of military action against Iraq so far, this number will increase sharply if the fighting is discontinued now." (Südkurier, February 23, 1991)

On the surface, critical facts are explicitly mentioned: a large majority of the Israelis are against an Israeli involvement in the conflict with Iraq, and only a minority of the members of the Israeli government supports 'military action against Iraq'. These facts actually contain critical potential with respect to the promotion of military action against Iraq; yet, these facts do not develop any critical sharpness, as the reasoning behind these facts is not made clear: Why is a large majority of the Israeli population and of the government against military involvement? What are their reasons for this point of view? Taken for granted that the greatest part of them are aware of the arguments *for* a military involvement: why are they still against it?

Throughout the whole text, reasons for supporting an Israeli military action are being developed, or explicitly repeated again and again; but, as the text reports on the public discussion about this matter, one should expect that the reasoning of those who are against would at some point be mentioned - but it is not. Therefore, although the article in fact does explicitly mention criticism, its critical input is cut off and left implicit, as the criticism is depicted as a mere standpoint, which seems to have no reasonable argumentation behind it.

As the example shows, the recognition of a single utterance as an implicit criticism is dependent on different factors: it is more or less time-consuming, it requires the ability and the willingness to think things over and not only let them pass by, and it also is sometimes dependent on contextual knowledge. The more one knows about the context of the situation, the more utterances he is able to detect as possible implicit criticisms, and, vice versa, the less one knows, the more he is dependent on explicit verbalization of possible criticisms.

The example also shows that, of course, the distinction between implicit and explicit criticisms is not an absolutely strict one, but should rather be seen as a continuum between two poles. The 'implicit' pole is constituted by utterances made within an article, that can only be recognised as criticisms by 'experts', by people who have a lot of contextual knowledge about the matter etc. The 'explicit' pole is constituted by utterances that explicitly define a fact or an argument as critical to one's own position, or that in some other way are obviously meant as criticisms, like in:

"... criticizing the UN alliance for giving the boycott against trade with Iraq ... an insufficient period of time to work." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18.1.1991),

or in

"... called the Gulf War a 'crime against humanity'." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 18.1.1991).

Inbetween these two poles, of course, there are a lot of variants, and the determination of one single utterance as implicit or explicit criticism might sometimes be a case of controversy; still, it is a useful analytical distinction, as it points to different strategies used within the media to keep off possible criticisms or 'subversive' arguments.

Summarizing one could say that leaving possible criticisms in an implicit form seems to be a highly effective way of keeping off information that might be able to crack the firm image of one's own side.

- Readers who do not have the time or the will to reflect on specific utterances made within an article, or who do not have enough contextual knowledge about the conflict at their disposal, will not even recognise that critical arguments concerning one's own side have been mentioned.
- On the other hand, those readers who have enough time, ability and will to think things over and who have contextual knowledge at their disposal, will possibly recognise the critical argument, and they might even appreciate the seemingly 'balanced' style of news-reporting. Still, in most cases these criticisms will be warded off by other means of rejection.

Recognising critical facts by making them explicit therefore very often will not help a lot. Implicit criticisms in most cases are warded off by the same means as explicit criticisms. Hence, even readers who are able to turn implicit criticisms into explicit ones are still in danger of tapping into the prepared mechanisms of a two-sided message.

Explicit Criticism

As already mentioned, the following means used to ward off criticisms may apply to both, implicit as well as explicit criticisms. In order to make the presentation clearer I will demonstrate these means by using examples of explicit criticisms⁴.

Means used to reject critical or 'subversive' information can be classified into:

- choice of context, and
- sequence.

The two 'classes' are not basically different from another. They both require the analysis of context that surrounds the possibly critical news.

⁴ For examples of implicit criticisms I first would have to make them explicit, and only then could I demonstrate the various means of warding off the criticism.

- 'Choice of context' relates to the selection of material that forms the context of criticisms: it refers to what information is given as context information and how it is presented⁵. Its focus most often is on single expressions, single sentences or paragraphs, but sometimes it includes the analysis of larger units, like several paragraphs or whole articles.
- 'Sequence', on the other hand, relates to the order in which the information is presented: it refers to what information is given first, what information follows, what argumentation is built up, and where and how critical information is built into it. Therefore, it most often requires to analyse larger units of analysis, like several paragraphs of an article or an article as a whole, but sometimes the sequence of information within one single sentence is crucial as well.

'Choice of context' in particular covers several methods that make use of social identification. The context of a criticism can either be chosen in a way that the criticised standpoint is backed by incentives for social identification. Or it can be chosen in a way that social identification with the criticism or its promoters is warded off. Moreover, 'choice of context' includes purely linguistic means also, concerning word-usage or the construction of sentences. 'Sequence' covers the 'framing' of critical information with information that rejects it, 'shifts' from one level of argumentation to another, and the 'embedding' of critical information into chains of argumentation that, as a whole, make the critical content harmless.

1) Choice of context

'Choice of context' relates to means by which a critical or 'subversive' information is put into a context that makes the critical content vanish: It is a strategy that consists of redirecting attention away from critical facts or argumentations, and towards anything that may support one's own point of view. As we will see, very often this may be achieved within just one single statement, within one single sentence, sometimes even by simply using one single expression and not another.

A) Social obligation to one's own point of view

As already mentioned, 'choice of context' particularly contains methods that make use of social identification. In this framework, one way to reject criticisms is to give incentives for social identification with people or institutions that represent one's own standpoint, and thereby to oblige the audience to it.

The following example will clearly show how this might work. In his speech on the night the Gulf War started, President George Bush gave a series of incentives for social identification with politicians of the Western and the Arab World, and with institutions like the UN or the Arab League, and thereby tried to oblige the public to his point of view of the conflict and its roots:

"This military action ... follows months of constant and virtually endless diplomatic activity on the part of the United Nations, the United States and many, many other countries. ... Our secretary of State, James Baker, held an historic meeting in Geneva, ... the Secretary General of the United Nations went to the Middle East with peace in his heart ..." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, January 18, 1991; quoted from New York Times, January 17, 1991).

⁵ It may also refer to the external context of the text, as 'choice of context' takes into account, that certain information is *not* given by the text.

In these few lines, a bundle of incentives for social identification with institutions and representatives of the anti-Iraq-coalition and of more or less neutral parties can be observed: "virtually endless diplomatic activity", "many, many other countries", "our secretary of state", "peace in his heart". Taking the latter two: who, as an American, as "one of us", would dare to criticise "our" man, James Baker? If someone did so, wouldn't he actually risk placing himself outside of the community of all Americans? And, who would want to criticise a man "with peace in his heart"? Would someone really doubt the intentions of a man "with peace in his heart", or would someone dare to criticise - if not his intentions - the actual policy he had been pursuing?

The purpose of all these incentives for social identification is obvious: it is to keep off critical questions concerning the actual content and the pursuit of all these diplomatic efforts. Bush is obliging the reader (or the listener) to his point of view by implicitly stating: "We (including me and you, "our" Secretary of State, the UN and "many, many other nations") have good intentions ("peace in the heart"), and we did everything ("virtually endlessly") to avoid this war." Thereby he is preparing the conclusion he will draw some lines later on: "The world could wait no longer."

B) Warding off social identification with the carriers of the critical information and/or the 'enemy's point of view

This method used to reject critical argumentations can be seen as the counterpart of the first one: On the one hand you try to oblige people to your point of view, on the other hand you try to ward off any attempt to oblige people to a different point of view. This may be achieved by using different strategies: marginalisation, devaluation and allocation of guilt.

a) Marginalisation

"Marginalisation" marks the attempt to classify a different point of view or a critical argumentation as the standpoint of a (more or less) small minority. The following example may clarify this strategy.

"Only a few believe that the disfigured faces of the prisoners were the result of bailing out of their aircrafts with ejector seats" (Die Welt, January 23, 1991; cp. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996).

Here, a reasonable supposition, let's call it the "ejector-seat-supposition", that on the same day was also transmitted by other media (cp. Kempf, 1995), is rejected by labelling it the "belief" of "only a few".

Another example comes from the German tabloid "Bild" (January 19, 1991), where an article reported about critical remarks directed towards both parties in the conflict. Yet, these critical argumentations came from Muslims living in Germany, and as they mostly used religious arguments against war-policy (like "There is no 'Holy War', only 'Holy Peace'", or "Islam wants to solve problems through negotiation"), their point of view was classified as one of a religious minority. As such, it lost its importance for the large majority of the people living in Germany, and thereby it was made harmless.

b) Devaluation

'Marginalisation' is confined to one specific aspect, to whether the criticism or its promoters are in the majority, or whether they are in the minority. 'Devaluation' marks the attempt to press back the criticisms or their promoters by attributing any other negative connotations to them.

In an article of the German regional paper "Südkurier", published right before the outbreak of the Gulf war (January 14, 1991), last-minute efforts to avoid the war were depicted. Among other news, speculations about a meeting of the Iraqi Parliament were reproduced by the text:

"Baghdad gave no reason for the meeting of 250 members of parliament, who have, to date, followed all of Saddam's recommendations. Diplomats in the region considered discussion of peace initiative possible, even though there were no signs ... of a readiness to compromise on Iraq's part." (Südkurier, January 14, 1991)

The information, that "diplomats in the region considered discussion of peace initiative possible" could in fact question the standpoint that Iraq in any case is heading for war. Even if there was only a minor chance to avoid this war, which was indicated by this information, it should have been taken more seriously than it actually was. Yet, this possible last chance for peace is devaluated beforehand, as the members of the parliament are depicted as not being fit for discussion, or as not politically "mature" and not accustomed to democratic procedures, as it is said that they 'to date, followed all of Saddam's recommendations'. Furthermore, this information is rather described as a rumor, spread by unnamed "diplomats in the region", whereas it is presented as a fact that "there were no signs ... of a readiness to compromise on Iraq's part".

Of course, it is a journalist's task to report facts, and when reporting rumors, to unveil them as such. Still, in a serious matter such as an imminent war, any rumor should at least be taken as an occasion for further investigation - until it proves to be a fact or until it is falsified. As in some cases this might not be possible, the effect of the reported rumor is dependent on the journalist's decision on how to contextualize it. In the example above, however, the choice of context is clearly biased and in no way appropriate as a contribution to the deescalation of the conflict. It is rather taken as an occasion to devalue the enemy and its behavior by attributing negative characteristics to him.

c) Allocation of guilt

'Allocation of guilt', like 'marginalisation', focusses on one specific aspect: it is about the question of guilt. Emerging conflicts seem to raise a need for finding someone or something that can be called 'guilty' for what is happening. Let aside philosophical considerations about whether this is appropriate or not: the search for 'the guilty' very often is misused in order to reject possibly critical remarks about one's own side.

In the following example from the Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ, January 18, 1991), 'allocation of guilt' is embedded into a whole string of argumentation. Reporting on international reactions to the outbreak of war, the article among other elements allocates responsibility or guilt for the beginning of the air attack to Iraq, respectively to Saddam Hussein personally. The headline of the article already states:

"Gorbachev blames Saddam Hussein"

Only in that context are Soviet mediation efforts depicted by the article. With regards to the war policy of the Alliance, a possible critical argumentation based on the mere fact that there is a last-minute peace initiative of the Soviets might be: "Why not wait with military action, when the Soviets are still trying to mediate?" Questions like this are swept away by the allocation of guilt to Saddam Hussein. Actually, Saddam's guilt seems to become even

greater, the more the Soviets strived for peace, and Mikhail Gorbachev, who had done so much for peace, seems to be best legitimized to judge the Iraqi government by stating:

"The 'tragic turn of events' was ... caused by the refusal of the Iraqi leadership to accept the international community's demand that it withdraw from Kuwait."

- Compound forms

As is the case with implicit and explicit criticisms, the systemization suggested so far does not contain any idea of strict borders between the various forms. There might be compound forms, and as the forms discussed above are not mutually exclusive, one and the same statement within an article may belong to two or more forms.

In the following example, for instance, an allocation of guilt also transports a notion of marginalisation.

"French Minister of Foreign Affairs Roland Dumas also assigned the blame for the outbreak of hostilities to Saddam Hussein. Because of his 'intransigence', history would assign him 'grave responsibility for having exposed his country and its citizens to the misery of war', said Dumas ..." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, January 18, 1991)

Here, guilt is allocated to Saddam Hussein, and he is also marginalised with respect to "history" and within his country, respectively within the Iraqi population.

Also, "Social obligation to one's own point of view" and "Warding off social identification with the carriers of the critical information and/or the 'enemy's point of view" may both occur in combination with each other. One short and very pointed example, again from George Bush's speech, may be sufficient to clarify this point:

"While the world prayed for peace, Saddam prepared for war." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, January 18, 1991; quoted from New York Times, January 17, 1991)

Here, strong incentives for identifying with the Alliance's view of the conflict are given ("the whole world prayed for peace"), by which a potential reader or listener is socially obliged to this point of view; then, Saddam is made guilty for the war ("... prepared for war"), as well as being marginalised ("Saddam against 'the world'").

C) Linguistic means

a) Devaluating expressions

The rejection of criticisms can also be achieved by use of expressions that in some way devaluate either the criticism itself or those who express it. This method is not so different from the devaluation method described above⁶. Yet, the focus here is on single words, whereas the method described above rather relates to more complex argumentations.

The expressions used for Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War are a prominent example of this method: "dictator", "Saddam = Hitler" etc. The formula used by the "Voice of America" to describe the Gulf war is yet another example:

"Gulf Challenge - Good Versus Evil" (cp. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996).

The "Welt" article on the fate of captured allied airmen in Iraq gives another example. It qualifies the supposition that "the disfigured faces of the prisoners were the result of bailing out of their aircrafts with ejector seats" (Die Welt, January 23, 1991) as a "belief" of some

⁶ see "Warding off social identification with the carriers of the critical information and/or the 'enemy's point of view"

people; on the other hand it states that friends and relatives of the PoWs are "convinced" that they were mistreated by the Iraqis. The use of the word 'belief' clearly implies that it has less informational value and that it should be given less attention than the 'conviction' of the majority.

b) "Hiding" critical information in subordinate clauses

Critical or 'subversive' information may be hidden in subordinate clauses; one's own point of view, however, will be presented in the main clause. The following example is interesting as it makes use of this method twice, within two subsequent sentences.

"Even though 83.6 percent of all Israelis are against military intervention at the present time ..., pressure is mounting within the government. Although only four ministers have come out in favor of military action against Iraq so far, this number will increase sharply ..." (Südkurier, February 23, 1991)

II) Sequence

Since the succession of arguments, into which a criticism is put, may also be considered as its context, "sequence" is not basically different from "choice of context". Yet, this differentiation is useful. It facilitates the recognition of certain forms of two-sided messages by redirecting analytical awareness to questions like: What is the over-all sequence of arguments presented by a certain text? Is a certain statement made part of a greater string of argumentation, and thereby acquires a certain function? By what kind of statements is a certain statement preceded, what kind of statements follow? Thus, the notion "sequence" broadens the focus of attention from the context within a certain statement up to the more general context formed by strings of arguments. So far, three different forms of "sequence" have been detected: "framing" critical information, shifting from one level of argumentation to another, and embedding critical information into chains of argumentation

A) Framing

Framing can be seen as midway inbetween "choice of context" and "sequence". Here, strings of arguments and their succession must be observed; yet, these strings are very short, so only the near context of a specific statement must be taken into account.

Example: "Canada as well as the United States considered the Soviet peace plan to be inadequate. President Mikhail Gorbachev acted with good intentions, said Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. However, he added that as far as he could tell, the plan fulfilled 'few of the requirements of the UN resolutions'..." (Süddeutsche Zeitung, February 21, 1991).

The string of argumentation within these lines can be summarized as follows: The Soviet peace plan is inadequate. Gorbachev acted with good intentions. Still, his peace plan is inadequate, as it only fulfills few of the requirements of the UN resolutions.

Framing therefore consists of a repetition of one's own point of view, by which a potentially critical information is surrounded or framed by statements that reject it.

B) "Shift" from one level of argumentation to another

According to Luostarinen (1994) argumentations used in conflict-coverage can be roughly classified into three different levels:

- argumentations on the level of day-to-day events ([D]) contain e.g. descriptions of battles, heroic stories, atrocity stories, description of support from other countries etc.;
- argumentations on the level of the conflict context ([C]) refer to explanations of the roots of the conflict, why it was unavoidable, what we are defending and why the enemy did attack, previsions on the future development of the conflict etc.;
- argumentations on the level of myths ([M]) contain comprehensive interpretations of the logic of history, the meaning of life etc. (i.e. the vision of a New World Order).

In the context of two-sided messages these levels can play an important role. In case an article mainly refers to just one level of argumentation⁷, abrupt and inexplicable 'shifts' to another level will appear like being out of place or not connected to the rest. The level of argumentation mainly used within an article sets the framework, it defines which arguments seem to be appropriate in that context and which do not. Some criticism expressed on another level of argumentation will then fail to develop any critical power. The point is that the criticism will look like having no consequence for what is said in the rest of the text, and therefore it somehow 'rejects itself', as it doesn't meet the predominant level of argumentation. The paragraph from the Südkurier, which I already used as an example for implicit criticism, is mainly located on the level of day-to-day events. It refers to a public opinion poll in Israel:

"Even though 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, pressure is mounting within the government ... (Südkurier, February 23, 1991)

Yet, in the context of the article, this is the only paragraph that is located on that level of day-to-day events; with some minor exceptions the whole rest of the article refers to the level of conflict context. On that level, the possibility of an imminent peaceful conflict resolution or an immediate ceasefire is rejected and called "the worst possible solution" for Israel. Arguments on the level of conflict context are predominant throughout the article, and the paragraph reporting on the public opinion poll thereby looks like an argumentation on a 'wrong' level. The implicit argumentation behind it is: public opinion in Israel may change, so politicians have to base their decisions on long-term considerations, that is on argumentations on the conflict context level. The fact that the majority of the Israelis may also base its opinion on long term considerations is not taken into account.

The method used here can be summarized as follows: the predominant level of argumentation of an article sets the agenda, it defines which arguments are appropriate and which are not. Argumentations on another level look like 'not quite right' in that context, and they are thereby rejected.

C) Embedding critical information into chains of argumentation

Potentially critical argumentations sometimes are depicted with detail and without the use of any of the other means to reject possible criticism described so far. They thereby support the

⁷ The levels of argumentation can appear in various forms. In particular, there are also articles in which the levels are constantly mixed and interdependent.

image of well balanced news reporting in the media. Still, even these detailed descriptions of facts that may question one's own point of view can be taken the edge off. This can be achieved by "embedding" them into a string of arguments that, at the end, supports one's own standpoint.

In the following example, the string of argumentation covers a whole article, and only at the end of it one can realize that critical information mentioned during its course was embedded into a string of argumentation and thereby rejected. In an article of the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" (SZ, January 18, 1991) Soviet mediation efforts are depicted with great detail, and there are even incentives for social identification with Gorbachev who is depicted as the one who strives for peace even during the last minutes before the war. Yet, the whole article can be broken down into five sequences, which can be identified as five argumentative steps within a string of argumentation⁸.

The over-all argumentation of the article is designed to convert possible indignation with the outbreak of war into indignation with the enemy, and with Saddam Hussein in particular. Within this string of argumentation, the description of the Soviet peace initiative acquires a certain function. The existence of a last-minute peace initiative is not taken as a point to question the Allied war policy, but on the contrary. It is taken as an occasion for reproaching the Iraqi president with responsibility and guilt for the failure of these efforts. Thereby, Gorbachev's peace efforts are turned against Saddam Hussein. The detailed description of the Soviet mediation efforts only serves to reinforce outrage at Saddam Hussein. And the more the Soviets had strived for peace, and the more this is appreciated by the article, the more it is justified to blame Saddam Hussein and to fall back on military means of conflict resolution.

3.3 Summary

The systemization of means used in two-sided messages includes so far (cp. Table 2):

I) Choice of context

- A) Social obligation to one's own point of view
- B) Warding off social identification with the carriers of the critical information and/or the 'enemy's point of view
 - a) Marginalisation
 - b) Devaluation
 - c) Allocation of guilt
- C) Linguistic means
 - a) Devaluating expressions
 - b) Hiding critical information in subordinate clauses

II) Sequence

- A) "Framing"
 - B) Shift from one level of argumentation to another
 - C) Embedding critical information into chains of argumentation
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⁸ For details see Reimann (1997)

Table 2: Overview on means used in two-sided messages

As the systemization and the examples above show, methods to reject possible criticisms cover a large variety: they may range from criticisms that can only be recognised by people who have a lot of time, willingness and knowledge at their disposal, up to explicit criticisms. Means to reject implicit as well as explicit criticisms may vary from the usage of single devaluating expressions up to the construction of strings of argumentation that cover a whole article. Commonly used means to reject criticisms in particular include attempts to socially oblige the reader to one's own point of view, and different methods to ward off social identification with a different point of view.

4. Double-bind communication

4.1 Definition

Whereas "two-sided messages" are a phenomenon that mainly occurs on a rhetorical level, "double-bind communication" takes up perceptions and emotions that already exist in societies involved in escalating conflicts: the "other side" may in fact (partly) be perceived as threatening one's own rights, whilst the "own side" may be perceived as strong enough to overcome the situation and the "enemy". People or societies caught in such a situation experience conflicting emotions: They are torn between fear and hope. Exactly this situation is reproduced by "double-bind communication".

The term "double-bind" refers to a sort of communication disorder, that had first been described in the context of clinical psychology (Bateson et al., 1956), and was introduced into propaganda studies by Kempf (1986). It is defined by:

1. A relationship to another person or institution that is so intensive, that it becomes crucial to exactly understand his or its messages in order to be able to react in an appropriate manner.
2. An utterance by the other person or institution that simultaneously carries two contradictory messages.
3. The person concerned is not given the possibility to react to both contradictory messages, nor can he or she withdraw from the situation.

The occurrence of double-bind communication in war reporting is caused by three analogous factors:

1. The need to get information about what's happening, and the actual use of media become greater in times of armed conflicts (Kempf & Reimann, 1994). For the most part of the public (especially for people living outside the war zone), the only access to information and the only possibility to get this need fulfilled is via the media, so it becomes crucial for the public to exactly understand what it is told by the media.
2. Inherent contradictions of propaganda messages.
3. The social identification and personal entanglement of the public that is produced by the media.

Since the close relationship between public and media in times of war is a constant background feature of war reporting rather than a feature of actual news items, the empirical assessment of "double-bind communication" in war-reporting involves the latter two factors only:

- Logical inconsistency or inherent contradictions of the message, and
- Incentives for social identification and/or personal entanglement with both contradictory parts of the message.

As an effect, it will become more difficult for the audience to keep at a distance from the sender and/or the content of the contradictory messages, and it will be harder to come to an independent opinion or to decide independently which of the contradicting messages is to be believed. At the same time it will be nearly impossible to withdraw from the situation, as it is crucial to fully understand what is said in the media.

4.2 Basic form

In comparison to two-sided messages, double-bind communication occurred rather seldom within the analysed news articles. A comparable systemization can therefore not yet be achieved. Nevertheless it is possible to distinguish two different classes of double-bind communication:

- double-bind communication in a 'simple' or 'basic' form, and

- double-bind communication in a 'compound' form, in which it is dissolved into a two-sided message.

The 'basic' form of double-bind communication relates to the above mentioned definition, and its effects will be as described above: emotional confusion based on personal entanglement with contradictory messages, combined with inability to withdraw from the situation. In that moment the audience will long for a way out, and it will be prepared to take over any solution that is offered. The following example will demonstrate this clearly.

"A former British hostage in Iraq, who spent months as a human shield at a chemicals plant near Baghdad, said yesterday that captured allied airmen had nothing to fear from the Iraqis. Joseph Wild, aged 59, a marine biologist, said that they were of such high propaganda value to Saddam that he would want to keep them alive and well. He added: 'Even his own people believe that the vanquished should be looked after. It's in their religion.'" (The Times, January 22, 1991, cp. Kempf, Reimann & Luostarinen, 1996)

The information given here is contradictory to what is said before in the same article. After having massively aroused feelings of threat and danger (e.g. in paragraph 1: "Iraqi threats to use prisoners of war as human shields"), the article now states "that captured allied airmen had nothing to fear from the Iraqis".

Both of these contradictory pieces of information are reinforced by incentives for social identification with those who carry the information:

- a) One information is attributed to an expert whose fate as a "human shield" had been reported comprehensively by the media⁹. He is someone who the reader already "knows", and who, at the same time, and due to his comparable experience as a "human shield", is capable to feel with the current victims. This makes it possible for us, the readers, to feel with them, too.
- b) The other information is linked to the relatives and friends of the PoWs, whose fears, sorrow, utterances, etc. are given a comprehensive and understandable description.

This double offer to social identification - with the "former British hostage in Iraq" on the one hand, with the PoWs' relatives and friends on the other - is leaving the reader helpless amidst contradictory messages, he cannot decide between hope and fear without rejecting any of the offered social identifications. Therefore the only solution to this dilemma would be to take over the solution being offered by the article: "outrage".

4.3 Compound form - Dissolution of a double-bind communication into a two-sided message

A compound form of two-sided messages and double-bind communication is possible as well. It consists of a double-bind communication which is then dissolved into a two-sided message. The inherent logic of this form is: first to create emotional confusion by giving incentives for social identification with contradictory information (which equals a double-bind communication), and then to dissolve this confusion by rejecting possible 'subversive' information and undesired emotions by means of a two-sided message.

A prototype of this was found in the article of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ, January 18, 1991) that I already presented as an example for embedding critical information into chains of argumentation. In this case the emotional confusion caused by contradictory information - the double-bind communication - was only the first part of this string of argumentation.

The headlines of the article state:

⁹ If not his own personal fate, then at least that of others who experienced to be used as "human shields".

"Shock worldwide over the outbreak of war.
Gorbachev blames Saddam Hussein.
In the opinion of many, the international community has failed."

Here, and in the following paragraph, the reader gets confronted with a whole variety of possible emotional reactions: "shock", "concern", "blame Saddam Hussein", "blame the international community", "support for the actions of the mutinational force" etc. The article itself summarizes them at some point with the expression "conflicting feelings".

This emotional confusion is followed by an argumentative step, in which the last-minute peace initiative of the Soviets is depicted with detail. Yet, as I already showed, the description of Soviet mediation efforts is made part of a two-sided message. Their initiative is not taken as a motive to question the allied war policy, but as an occasion to allocate guilt to Saddam Hussein. The initial emotional confusion is thereby dissolved into rage against Saddam Hussein.

The rest of the article either reports on support for the allied war policy or on criticism against it. Yet, the criticisms are only mentioned by 'political outsiders' like Cuba, Yemen, North Korea or the Pope - that is to say these criticisms are also built into a two-sided message. They are rejected by means of 'marginalisation'.

As this article was the only one I found as an example for a compound form of two-sided messages and double-bind communication, there are still some open questions, like: is this the only possibility to combine two-sided messages and double-bind communication? e.g., may the double-bind communication only stand first, or may a two-sided message as well be turned into a double-bind communication? etc.

Still, the example shows that compound forms are possible, and that it is important to observe the over-all sequence of arguments within an article.

5. Summary

Incorporating contradictory information by means of two-sided messages or of double-bind communication may increase the effect of propaganda on the reader. They offer a construction of social reality which shows that in the end the enemy side is "bad" (though not so dangerous to be able to threaten our confidence to win the war), and that one's own side is "good" (though it sometimes may make some mistakes). Thereby war reporting looks much more like well balanced news coverage, and it doesn't smell like propaganda.

The purpose of this paper was to deliver analytical tools that make it possible to detect how social reality is constructed by a text; possible effects on a reader caused by two-sided messages or double-bind communication were not in the focus of this paper. In fact, effects on the reader only occur, if he actually gets engaged in the "staging" of reality that is offered to him by the media. Yet, there might always be something like "resistant reading" of newspaper-articles, or "resistant watching" of news-reports on TV, that prevents or at least reduces these effects. The analytical tools provided in this paper may contribute to such "resistant reading and watching".

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