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Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage? The Northern Ireland and Israeli-Palestinian peace processes in the German press[1]

1. Introduction

Various scholars and media researchers have adopted the view, that due to the Cold War, war discourse has become the dominant discourse in Western media and popular culture. We live in a deeply militarized culture in which for instance many ordinary metaphors have their roots in war and popular culture is full of war material. Consuming war as a natural part of everyday entertainment, the "war logic" has become a naturalized way of outlining social reality and international life (Luostarinen, 2000a).

As the previous "classical" war with clear phases - like preparations, fight and demilitarization - was replaced with continious arms race and low intensity warfare during the Cold War, both, the military and the civilian population had to be maintained in military preparedness for decades, and a permanent atmosphere of crisis was created (Luostarinen & Ottosen, 2000).

The boundaries between war and peace became unclear and vague, and penetration of militarized logic into journalism was one of the consequences. Almost every single piece of news could be used for the purposes of the Cold War, and even innocent looking entertainment had potential ideological background (Whitfield, 1996).

As a consequence of the Cold War culture the media and national defence organisations integrated in a way which compromised journalistic independence, and the dominance of military thinking distorted cultural and political perspectives in the media content (Luostarinen & Ottosen, 2000).

While the governmental rhetoric of power and violence was adopted by the media as the official discourse, "peace talk" was tagged Communist, and got low entry into the general audience media. According to Dov Shinar (1998), this preference of war discourses resulted in a far reaching absence of a peace discourse in the media professional repertoire, and Dov Shinar, finally, comes to the conclusion that the invention of a media peace discourse should be included in the current research agenda.

2. War culture vs. peace culture

In order to find out, what the elements of a media peace discouse might be, I will first try to define some of the differences between war culture and peace culture:
In my understanding, which is strongly influenced by the works of Morton Deutsch (1976) and by theories of conflict management (cf. Mitchell, 1981; Fisher & Ury, 1984; Glasl, 1992), *war culture* is a competitive environment in which conflicts are dealt with in the framework of a win-lose model according to which any of the conflict parties can achieve their goals only on the expense of their opponents.

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War culture is conflict oriented. It is based on dualistic thinking, which constructs an antagonism between "us" und "them", between ingroup and outgroup, between "good" and "evil".

- Towards the outgroup, war culture applies strategies of threat and violence and it justifies them by idealizing own rights, intentions and behavior and - at the same time - demonizing those of the opponent.
- Towards the ingroup, war culture is based on obedience and applies strategies of (social) pressure in order to unify the society and to enforce loyality with the own leadership.

Vice versa, *peace culture* may be defined as a cooperative environment in which conflicts can be dealt with in the framework of a win-win model that aims at a resolution of the conflict which serves the needs of all parties involved.

Peace culture is solution oriented. It is based on diversified thinking which deconstructs the antagonism. According to Gutierrez (1999), diversified thinking "is supposed to foster mutual knowledge and understanding of more sides through the highlight and respect for differences, the acknowledgement, inclusion and respect for diversity, as well as equality".

- Towards the outgroup, peace culture is characterized by mutual respect, and it applies creative strategies in order to make conflicting needs compatible.
- Towards the ingroup, peace culture is based on democracy, diversity and pluralism.

3. War discourse

Based on this distinction we may now define *peace discourse* as a form of discourse which is apt to transform a polarized, competitive environment into a less antagonistic and finally cooperative one. At the present stage of research we are still far away from having identified every single element that might be included in a media peace discourse. Nor do we know much about the methodological order in which these elements might be implemented. We do know quite a lot about the war culture, however, which has to be deconstructed. And this knowledge can serve as a starting point:

Escalation-oriented discourse

War culture produces a form of discourse which creates a distorted view of conflicts and thus stimulates the dynamics of conflict escalation. This distorted view is not just the result of war propaganda. It is due to social psychological processes that take place whenever a person, group or society is involved in escalating conflict (Kempf, 1996, 2000a). Starting with a self-centered focusing of "our" rights and "our" benefit, these processes finally culminate in the construction of the conflict as a zero-sum game, where "right" fights "wrong", where the enemy must be forced to give in, and where violence is designated as the only possible way to conflict resolution (cf. Table 1).

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Level of conflict escalation	Cooperation	Egoism	Competition	Struggle	War
Conceptualisation of the conflict	win-win orientation	bias towards win-lose orientation; win-win still possible	win-lose orientation; controlled by rules of fairness	win-lose orientation; employing strategies of threat	win-lose turns into zero-sum orientation (to win becomes a super-goal and to win means not to be the loser); designation of force as an appropriate means to conflict resolution; emphasis on military values & rejection of peaceful alternatives
Evaluation of rights and goals	mutual respect for all sides' rights and needs & accentuation of common interests	focus on "our rights and needs (including common interests); "their" rights and needs get out of sight	focus on "our rights and needs; common interests get out of sight	idealization of "our" rights and needs & demonization of "their" intentions	idealization of "our" rights and needs; demonization of "their" intentions & denial of common interests
Evaluation of actions	taking all sides' benefit into account	focus on "our benefit (also from mutual relationship)	focus on "our benefit	justification of "our" actions & condemnation of "their" behavior	justification of "our" actions & condemnation of "their" behavior
Emotional involvement	mutual trust and empathy	ambivalence between perceived threat to "our" goal-achievement and trust in "their" readiness fo cooperation	accentuation of threat to "our" goal-achievement; trust gets lost	the opponent is mistrusted & emphasis on "our" strength and "their" dangerousness create a balance between threat to "our" goals and values and confidence to win the struggle;	not only the enemy but also neutral third parties who try to mediate in the conflict are mistrusted; focus on "their" viciousness and dangerousness is counterbalanced by accentuation of "our" strength and reinterpretation of small losses as wins; win-lose is graduall transformed into lose-lose
Identification suggestions	all-sided	self-centered	dualistic	antagonistic	polarized

Table 1: Distortion of conflict perception during the process of escalation

Comparative studies on the Gulf War discourse (Kempf, 1999; Kempf & Reimann, 2000) and on the coverage of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Kempf, 2000b) have demonstrated, that this form of discourse is the dominant form of war reporting in American and European mainstream media. Still there are variations, and the escalation-oriented bias in the national news discourses is increasing
- the more a society is involved in the conflict itself,
- the closer it is to the conflict region (on historical, political, economical or ideological terms), and
- the stronger the dominance of war culture in the society is.

Societal beliefs

In societies, which have to endure intractible conflict over a long period of time, the distorted view of the conflict solidifies into societal beliefs which become part of society's ethos and motivate society members to act on behalf of the society (Bar-Tal, 1998, 1999). Constructing positive self image, justness of own goals and own victimization, these beliefs frame societal life within a security discourse which designates peace as the ultimate desire of the society and refers to patriotism and unity as an indispensible basis on which the values of the society must be defended against a deligitimized enemy. Still, these beliefs are not just an ideology which is imposed on society from outside or by its political leaders. They are part of the psychological infrastructure which helps society members to cope with the burdens of war, they result from a long history of experience with concrete conflicts at a high level of escalation and can be understood as a generalized interpretation of such conflicts. Once, these beliefs have emerged in a society, they provide a framework that interprets litarally every interaction with the opponent as another scene in the big drama of "good" vs. "evil". And once an event has been interpreted in this way, it seemingly gives proof to the stereotypes and prejudices that created this interpretation.

Propaganda

It can be assumed that these beliefs can be found in any society which is engaged in intractible conflict, especially in those societies that successfully cope with it. These beliefs are far from being sufficient to win a conflict. Other conditions of military, political and economic nature must also be fulfilled. But they are necessary for enduring intractible conflict, and any warfaring nation, therefore, tries to produce and maintain these beliefs by means of propaganda which aims at maximizing society memers' willingness for war by means of persuasion.
Though truth is only raw material for the propagandist (and if you have to lie, that is only a technical and operational question, not a moral one), it is better if no lies are needed. This can be achieved if the propagandist succeeds to manipulate the society members' entanglement in the conflict and to influence their interpretation in a way that is apt to reorganize their hierarchy of values so that winning the conflict is on top, and all other values (like truth, ethnical considerations or individual rights) are only subservient to this goal. In order to get people entangled, propaganda exploits the psychological processes described above
- by offering polarized identification suggestions,

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- by providing a motivation logic which designates warfare as a wall against destruction and/or as a bridge into a brighter future, and
- by harmonization of referential levels which links day to day events (like heroic stories and stories of atrocity) together with an antagonistic interpretation of the conflict context (what are the roots of the conflict, why it was unavoidable, what we are defending and why the enemy did attack) and hikes of own goals and values based on political, historical, religious or ethnic myths (Luostarinen, 2000b).

Privatization of propaganda

Though still existent, traditional state propaganda as characteristic during the World Wars has been partly delegated to professional PR-agencies in recent conflicts. Both, during the Gulf War (cf. MacArthur, 1993), and during the Bosnia-Conflict (cf. Beham, 1996) the role of PR-agencies, finally, became so massive, and filters used to sort out virtual PR-reality from real facts were so few, that it became extremely difficult to assess the situation without knowing what the PR firms had transmitted. But this was only a first step in what may be called the privatization of propaganda (Luostarinen & Kempf, 1999). Based on the assumption that reporters must not remain detached or neutral in the face of modern evils like genocide in Bosnia, journalists have deliberately thrown away professional standards of truth and replaced them by the rules of propaganda. The coverage of the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts is full of examples, how journalists served their moral impetus by means of information control and fabrication of news. Journalists supressed news stories which didn't fit into the enemy image (cf. Hume, 1997), journalists faked empirical evidence (cf. Deichmann, 1997), and - maybe even more symptomatic - journalists openly justified the forgery by claiming that it served the goal of opening the eyes of the public (cf. Kempf, 2000b).

4. Peace discourse

Journalists exercise a certain influence. This influence may be for better or worse, and journalists need to know that. Journalists also need to know, however, that war discourse tells only half of the truth. In order to create a peace discourse, the other half needs to be told as well.
War discourse and peace discourse approach reality from opposite perspectives (cf. Table 2). While war discourse is about the questions
- "Who is the aggressor?", and
- "How can he be stopped?",
peace discourse would rather ask
- "What are the issues?", and
- "How can they be transformed in order to find a solution of the conflict which serves the needs of all parties involved?
As a logical consequence, war discourse produces divides the world into "us" and "them" and produces polarized identification suggestions that humanize "our political and military leaders, "our" soldiers, "our" victims and "our" civil population for their loyalty and sacrifice. At the same time, war discourse dehumanizes "their

	War discourse	Peace discourse
Main questions	Who is the aggressor? How can he be stopped?	What are the issues? How can they be transformed?
Identification suggestions	Polarized - humanizes "our" political and military leaders & dehumanizes "their" political and military leaders - humanizes "our" soldiers & dehumanizes "their" soldiers - humanizes "our" victims & disregards or dehumanizes "their" victims - humanizes "our" civil population for its loyalty and sacrifice & disregards o dehumanizes "their" civil population for its nationalism - humanizes "their" anti-war opposition & disregards or dehumanizes "our" anti-wa opposition	All-sided - keeps aloof from identification with political and military leaders on any side - keeps aloof from identification with military personell on any side - humanizes or at least respects victims of the war on any side - humanizes or at least respects members of the civil society and keeps aloof from identification with supporters of the war on any side - humanizes or at least respects those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution on any side
Truth orientation	Truth is only raw material & referential levels are harmonized - tells stories about "our" heroism "their" atrocities - explains the conflict context as an unresolvable antagonism - tells stories about the roots of antagonism and "our" victories - bases "our" values on political, historical or ethnic myths	Follows unconditional standards of truth & makes contradictions visible - tells also stories about "their" suffering and "our" evils - explores possibilities for transformation of the conflict - tells stories about sucessful cooperation and the overcoming of antagonism - deconstructs mythical interpretations and searches for common values
Motivation logic	Designates warfare as a wall against destruction and/or as a bridge into a brighter future	Points at the price of victory, on the damage to culture, economy and social relations etc. and explores the perspectives for peace and reconciliation
Conflict coverage	Escalation-oriented, with respect to - Conceptualization of the conflict - Evaluation of rights and goals - Evaluation of actions - Emotional involvement	Deescalation-oriented, with respect to - Conceptualization of the conflict - Evaluation of rights and goals - Evaluation of actions - Emotional involvement

Table 2: War discourse vs. peace discourse

political and military leaders and "the ir" soldiers", and it disregards "their" victims as "collateral casualitie s" and deh umanizes "their" civil population for its nationalism.
While war culture humanizes members of the enemy's internal anti-war opposition, it disregards or even dehumanizes own society members who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution. The whole world is to be divid ed into "us" and "them" and even third parties, who try to stay neutral or to mediate in the conflict are re jected: "If you are not on "our" side, you are on "their's".
Peace discourse needs to deconstruct this polarity by keeping aloof fro identification with political and military leaders, and from military personell and supporters of the war on any side. It may reconstruct the relation between the warfaring societies by all-sided humanizing or at least respecting of victims,

members of the civil society and those who strive for a peaceful transformation of the conflict.

For war discourse, truth is only raw material, and referential levels are harmonized in order to make the polarity between "us" and "them" plausible. War discourse tells stories about "our" heroism and "their" atrocities, it explains the conflict context as an unresolvable antagonism, it tells stories about "our" victories and about the roots of the antagonism and it bases "our" values on political, historical or ethnic myths. Peace discourse needs to deconstruct this simplifying ideology by following unconditional standards of truth and making contradictions visible. Peace discourse will also tell stories about "their" suffering and about "our" evils, it will explore possibilities for transformation of the conflict, it will tell stories about successful cooperation and the overcoming of antagonism, it will deconstruct myths and emphasize common values.

While war discourse produces a motivation logic which supports society member's willingness for war by designating war as a wall against destruction and a bridge into a brighter future, peace discourse needs to deconstruct this motivation logic by pointing at the price of victory, on the damage to culture, economy and social relations etc. and by exploring the perspectives of peace and reconciliation.

War discourse frames virtually any single event within the antagonism between "good" and "evil" and thus produces a form of conflict coverage which is escalation-oriented with respect to any of the four dimensions of conceptualization of the conflict, evaluation of the counterparts' rights and goals, the evaluation of their actions, and the stimulation of emotional involvement of the audience. Peace discourse needs to deconstruct these distortions of conflict perception as well.

5. Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage

War discourse conceptualizes conflicts within the framework of a zero-sum (or at least win-lose) orientation that focuses on antagonism, emphasises military values, and designates force as an appropriate means to conflict resolution. Even agreements between the counterparts are interpreted as yielding, and peaceful alternatives are rejected (cf. Table 3).

In order to deconstruct this logic of war, deescalation-oriented conflict coverage needs to reframe the conflicts within a logic of peace which emphasises all-sidedness or at least avoids to split the protagonists into two camps. Win-lose orientation needs to be replaced by win-win or at least to be queried, and structures for possible cooperation between the counterparts need to be emphasised. Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage needs to keep distance from militarism and military values, to emphasize the negative effects of force and to query its appropriateness, demanding peaceful alternatives.

While war dicourse idealizes "our" rights and needs, it disregards common interests, denies "their" rights and demonizes "their" intentions. Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage needs to replace this antagonistic style of evaluation by a more balanced one which is more realistic and self critical about "our" rights, which shows respect for "their" rights and gives an unbiased description of "their" intentions. It needs to emphasize common interests and to describe the benefit that all sides could gain from ending the war.

	Escalation-oriented coverage	Deescalation-oriented coverage
Conceptualization of the conflict	Logic of war - Emphasises antagonism - Zero-sum or at least win-lose orientation (agreements are interpreted as "giving in") - Emphasis on military values - Designation of force as an appropriate means - Rejection of peaceful alternatives	Logic of peace - Emphasis all-sidedness or at least avoidance of splitting the protagonists into two camps - Win-win orientation and/or query of win-lose and/or presentation of structures for possible cooperation - Query or at least distance to militarism and military values - Emphasis on negative effects of force and/ or query of its appropriateness - Demands for peaceful alternatives
Evaluation of rights and goals	Antagonistic: - Idealization of "our" rights and needs - Denial of "their" rights and demonization of "their" intentions - Denial of common interests	Balanced: - Realistic and self-critical assessment of "our" rights - Respect for "their" rights and unbiased description of "their" intentions - Emphasis on common interests and description of the benefit that both sides could gain from ending the wa
Evaluation of actions	Confrontative: - Justification of "our" actions and underlining of "our" correctness - Condemnation of "their" behavior - Possibilities for cooperation are denied and/or cooperation between conflict parties is not taken serious - the role of third parties is interpreted rathe as executing (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose) than as mediating (win-win)	Cooperative: - Realistic and self-critical assessment of "our" actions - Unbiased assessment of "their" behavio - Emphasis on cooperative behavio - the role of third parties is interpreted as mediating (win-win) rather than executing (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose)
Stimulation of emotional involvement	Destructive: - Focus on "their" viciousness and dangerousness & accentuation of "our" strength create a balance between threat and confidence which promotes "our" willingness for wa - Not only the enemy but also neutral third parties who try to mediate in the conflict are mistrusted - Focus on "their" atrocities and "our" correctness converts indignation with the war into indignation with the enem - Demonization of "their" intentions and justification of "our" behavior jeopardize empathy with "their" situation: if the behave well, they have nothing to fea - Denial of possibilities for cooperation avoids rebuilding of trust	Constructive: - While unbiased assessment of "their" intentions & behavior reduces the threat "we" experience, emphasis on the price of victory promotes "our" willingness fo peace - Respect for "their" rights and unbiased assessment of "their" behavior reduce mistrust - Empathy with both sides victims, emphasis on both sides casualties and unbiased evaluation of both sides behavior redirects the indignation against the wa - Empathy for "their" situation opens a ne perspective: if together we find a solution that takes all sides' needs into account, reconciliation will become possible - Emphasis on cooperative experiences (also from the past) rebuilds trust

Table 3: Escalation- vs. deescalation-oriented coverage

War discourse evaluates the counterparts' actions in a confrontative framework. While it justifies "ou r" actions and underlines "our" correctness, it condemns "their" behavior and denies possibilities for cooperation with "them". Examples of successful cooperation are not taken serious, or attributed to the impact of third parties, whose role is interpreted rather as executing moral, economic or military pressure on the counterparts than as mediating between them.

Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage needs to reframe the evaluation of actions in a cooperative perspective, which is based on a more realistic and self-critical assessment of "ou r" actions and an unbiased assessment of "their" behavior. It would emphasize cooperative behavor and interpret the role of third parties as mediators following a win-win model.

As a result of its distorted evaluations, war discourse stimulates an emotional involvement of the audience which is highly destructive:

-   Focus on "their" viciousness and dangerous ness and accentuation of "ou r (military and moral) strength create a balance between threat and confidence which promotes "ou r" willingness for war.
-   Both, the enemy and neutral third parties who try to mediate in the conflict are mistrusted.
-   Focus on "their" atrocities and "our" correctness converts (possible) indignation with the war into indignation with the enemy.
-   Demonization of "th eir" intentions and justif ica tion of "our" behavior jeopardize empathy with "their" situati on: "If they behave well, they have nothing to fear".
-   Denial of possibilities for cooperation avoids rebuilding of trust.

Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage will avoid to support these destructive emotions and gradually transform them into more constructive ones:

-   While unbiased asses s ment o f "their" intentions a nd behavior reduces the threat "we" experience, emphasis on the price which has to be paid for war - even in case of victory - will prom ote "our" willingness for peace.
-   Respect fo r "the ir" rights and unbiase d asses s ment of "their" behavior will reduce mistrust.
-   Empathy with both sides' victims, empasis on both sides' casualities and unbiased evaluation of both sides' behavior will redirect the indignation against the war.
-   Empathy for "their" situation will open a ne w perspective: "If together we find a solution that takes all sides' needs into account, reconciliation will become possible.
-   Empasis on cooperative experiences, finally, will help to rebuild trust.

6. The escalation-oriented bias of mainstream media

Deescalation-oriented conflict coverage is not yet a peace discourse. But it is an indispensible element of any media discourse which aims at avoiding to contribute to the distortions of conflict perception which are brought about by war discourses. In many aspects, deescalation-oriented conflict coverage is nothing else than quality journalism which is aware of its influence and responsibility, and which avoids to be misused by war propaganda.

Nonetheless, international comparative studies of the media coverage, both, of the Gulf War and of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina have demonstrated a far-reaching absence of deescalation-oriented coverage in Western mainstream media.

During the Gulf War, for instance, even reports about peace initiatives and readiness for negotiations were rather used in order

- to add to the justification of warfare,
- to explain the necessity of ist continuation, and
- to give plausibility to the extension of war aims beyond the liberation of Kuwait (cf. Kempf, 1997, 1998; Kempf & Reimann, 2000).

During the war at Bosnia-Herzegovina, third party mediation efforts were framed within military logic, and international mediators got little support by the mainstrea media as long as they managed to stay neutral between the three ethnic groups of Serbs, Croats and Muslims. The Muslims were portrayed as victims, the irreconsilable attitude of the Croats was justified, and the Serbs were depicted as the sole aggressors. The concept of peace was linked to military intervention, and the media executed moral pressure on the public opinion in order to get its consent with peace inforcement by military means (Kempf, 2000b).

This escalation-oriented bias of war coverage does not necessarily imply, that deescalation-oriented coverage is not part of journalists' professional repertoire, however. Alternative hypotheses would be:

1. Professional journalists have both, the capacity of escalation-oriented coverage, and the capacity of deescalation-oriented coverage.
2. As long as war is on the political agenda, however, the mainstream media will follow this agenda by reporting in an escalation-oriented style.
3. This situation may change however, after a ceasefire or peace treaty has been settled. If peace is put on the political agenda, and if the media follow this ne agenda,[2] deescalation-oriented coverage will come into play.
4. Even if peace is put on the political agenda, however, the prevailance of war culture will put limits on deescalation-oriented coverage, particularly in the local media.
   a. Journalists are society members themselves, and they share the societal beliefs of their society. Moreover, their reports will not be plausible to the public, if they contradict these societal beliefs too overtly.
   b. International journalists, on the other hand, are subject to these restrictions to a much lesser amount only, and deescalation-oriented coverage will be much easier for international media than for the local media.
5. The dominance of war culture resulting from the Cold War experience, however, will put limits on deescalation-oriented coverage in the international media, as well.
   a. The more a nation was on the forefront of the Cold War[3] the stronger will be the dominance of war culture and the stronger will be the bias towards escalalation-oriented coverage in its media, even when reporting about a conflict abroad.

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[2] As the example of former Yugoslavia demonstrates, none of these conditions is an automatic result of peace agreements. In many cases, peace treaties - like the Dayton agreements - do not yet put peace on the political agenda, but only move the conflict arena from one region to another - like from Bosnia to the Kosovo.

[3] Like the U.S. or the Federal Republic of Germany.

b. The more continuously a nation was involved in low intensity military conflicts during the Cold War era,[4] the more it was involved in mid intensity military conflicts after the end of the Cold War,[5] and the less it disregarded of warfare as a political means during the Cold War era,[6] the stronger will be the dominance of war culture and the stronger will be the bias towards escalalation-oriented coverage.

7. The Northern Ireland and Israeli-Palestinian peace processes - a study outline

In order to test these hypotheses, a little project was started by the *Peace Research Unit* at the University of Konstanz, which studies the coverage the Northern Ireland and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, both, in the local and in the international quality press.
- In case of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the international papers that are studied are the *New York Times* and the German dayly *Frankfurter Rundschau.*
- The local papers are the Israeli *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition) and the Palestinian weekly *Jerusalem Times*, both of which are published in English.[7]
- In case of the Northern Ireland peace process, the papers to be analysed still have to be decided. So far we have started a little pilot study, analysing some articles and commentaries from the German *Berliner Zeitung*.

With regard to both peace processes, news stories and commentaries dealing with three types of events will be analysed:
1. Peace agreements, like the Oslo accords or the Gaza-Jericho-agreeme nt in the Israeli-Palestinian case, for instance.
2. Delays and complications of the peace processes, and conflicts about their implementation.
3. Violent incidents which are in danger to disturb or to jeopardize the peace processes.

8. Some first results

The results available so far are analyses comparing the coverage of two violent incidents during the first phase of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process:
1. The - so called - Goldstein massacre at Hebron on February 25, 1994, when a Jewish settler killed more than 50 people who were praying at a mosque. After the massacre it came to riots in which further Palestinians were killed.
2. The suicide attack of a Palestinian in the center of the Israeli town Afula on April 6, 1994, where 9 people were killed and another 50 severely wounded.[8]

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[4] Like the U.S. in Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua or Panama etc.
[5] Like the U.S. at the Persian Gulf, in Somalia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
[6] As the Federal Republic of Germany had done before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German Reunion.
[7] Via cooperation with researchers at the University of Tel-Aviv, we hope to get access to Hebre and Arab material as well.
[8] The author wishes to thank Bettina Bucher for her assistance in analysing the material.

In case of the Northern Ireland peace process, we have some results on the coverage of the peace agreement on April 11, 1998. [9]

Coverage of violent incidents during the Israeli-Palistinian peace process

As Table 4 shows, the four papers in our study gave quite different attention to the two violent incidents. The length of the main articles reporting about the incidents ranged from 4 to 43 paragraphs. While *Jerusalem Post* and *New York Times* published quite detailed news stories about both events, *Jerusalem Times* gave a detailed account in case of the Goldstein massacre only, but nearly disregarded of the other event for which a Palestinian was responsible. *Frankfurter Rundschau,* on the other hand, stayed quite detached in case of both violent incidents.

	Frankfurter Rundschau	New York Times	Jerusalem Post	Jerusalem Times
Hebron	Date: 02-26-1994 Title: "Israeli verübte Massaker in Moschee Length: 8 paragraphs	Date: 02-26-1994 Title: "At least 40 slain in West Bank as Israeli fires into Mosque. Clinton moves to rescue talks" Length: 25 paragraphs	Date: 02-26-1994 Title: "Wave of riots after Hebron massacre. Kiryat Arba doctor slays 39; over 20 Palestinians die in the aftermath" Length: 43 paragraphs	Date: 03-04-1994 Title: "Massacre in Hebron" Length: 36 paragraphs
Afula	Date: 04-07-1994 Title: "Hamas-Anschlag auf israelischen Bus. Mindestens neun Tote und über 50 Verletzte Length: 6 paragraphs	Date: 04-07-1994 Title: "Arab car bombe kills 8 in Israel; 44 are wounded" Length: 31 paragraphs	Date: 04-07-1994 Title: "Seven killed in Afula car-bomb-attack Length: 28 paragraphs	Date: 04-08-1994 Title: "Car bomb explosion in Afula" Length: 4 paragraphs

Table 4: Date, Headlines and length of the analysed articles.

In both articles, there are quite few escalation-oriented elements regarding the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. However, these are not so much due to the specific style of journalistic coverage, but rather to the facts that are reported: mainly escalation-oriented reactions by political leaders of the victimized party (cf. Table 5). The same holds for deescalation-oriented elements (cf. Table 6).
Although both articles try to avoid fueling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they do so by means that are still caught in the framework of a war discourse, however. In none of the articles there is the slightest attempt at diversified thinking, and in none of the articles there is any information about the issues behind the violent incidents.
Both articles protect the Israeli-Palestinian peace process by means of marginalizing the perpetrators (cf. Tables 7 and 8) and thus construct another antagonism with the Israeli state and the PLO on side of the "good", and the assailants and their social groups on side of the "evil".

	Hebron	Afula
Win-Lose orientation	Arafat announces that the massacre will have severe consequences (1,2)	Opposition leader Netanyahu demands immediate suspension of the peace process (5,1) -- Peres announces "security measures (5,4) which include sharper restrictions on travelling for Palestinians from the Westbank who work in Israel (5,5) -- Hamas justifies the attack as revenge fo the massacre in Hebron (2,3)
Demonization of "their" intentions	Arafat reproaches the Israeli army with being an accomplice of the settlers (6,1) -- Another PLO leader accuses Rabin of supporting massacres against Palestinians (6,3)	
Underlining of own correctness		The Israeli army is said to have sent troops to the Arab villages in order to protect the Palestinians who live there (4,2)
Condemnation of "their" actions	PLO accuses the Israeli army to have opened fire on Palestinians who were giving aid to wounded (4,3) -- A PLO leader accuses Rabin of doing nothing against assailants (6,3)	
Conversion of indignation about violence into indignation about "them"	Arafat calls for the UN security council in order to guarantee the security of his people (6,2)	

Table 5. Escalation-oriented elements in the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y)

In order not to be misunderstood: any peace discourse must be absolutely strict about the condemnation of violence. But marginalization of the perpetrators cannot explain the roots of violence. Both massacres are crimes that need to be condemned. But they did not result from the "radicalism" of the Israeli settlers, nor from the "extremism" of Hamas *per se*. They rather resulted from shortcomings of the peace process, which
- is mainly a process between the Israeli government and the PLO, and
- which excludes other social and political groups.

Marginalization of these groups is a dangerous move which may protect the peace process for the moment, but in the long run it may jeopardize it. To marginalize "them" implies to disregard "their" issues, which may produce even more radicalism, which may decrease the influence of the political leaders who promote the peace process, and which may increase the power of those who exploit the "victims of peace" for their own political carreer. [10]

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[10]   Cf. the victory of Netanyahu over Peres in the elections of 1996.

	Hebron	Afula
Demands for peaceful alternatives	Rabin summons Israelis and Palestinians to keep quiet and to resist provocation (7,3)	Both, Israel and the PLO assure that the will hold on to the peace process (1,4) -- Peres refuses to suspend the peace process (5,3) -- Minister of ecological affairs, Sarid, claims that suspension of the peace process would only serve the interests of the suiciders (5,6)
Positive refrence to cooperative behavio		A PLO official says that the Israelis have promised to continue negotiations via telephone and fax (6,3)
Critical evaluation of own sides' actions	Rabin condemns the massacre (1,3 and 7,2)	PLO leaders on the Westbank and in Gaza condemn the assault (5,1)
Reduction of mistrust		It is said that the actual interruption of the peace talks at Cairo was planned before (6,1), it was due to the holocaust memorial day (6,2) and the Israelis have promised to continue to negotiate via telephone and fax (6,3)
Humanization of both sides' victims	Rabin expresses his deep compassion with the families of the victims and with the Palestinian people (7,2)	It is said that among the (Israeli) victims, there were many school-children (1,2) -- The audience is reminded that 29 praying moslems had been shot dead at the Hebron massacre (2,4) -- The audience is reminded of the holocaust, when 6.000.000 Jews were killed by the German Nazis.

Table 6. Deescalation-oriented elements in the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y)

Escalation-oriented		Deescalation-oriented
Deligitimation of the enemy	The assailant is marginalized as an individual perpetrator (H2)	Allocating the guilt to an individual perpetrator avoids to stimulate outrage against *the Israelis*
Condemnation or demonization of his actions	Rabin condemns the horrible massacre (1,3; 7,2) -- The international community condemns the massacre (8,1) and is alarmed about it (8,2)	Condemnation of his actions dericts the outrage against an *individual person*

Table 7. Deescalation by escalation-oriented means in the coverage of the Hebron massacre (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y; Hx = headline No. x)

Escalation-oriented		Deescalation-oriented
Deligitimation of the enemy	The assailant is marginalized as an individual perpetrator (3,4)	Allocating the guilt to an individual perpetrator avoids to stimulate outrage against *the Palestinians*
	The assailant is deligitimized as a well-known extremist (2,1)	
	Hamas is made responsible for the attack (H1; 2,3)	Allocating the responsibility to Hamas focuses the outrage on a minority group which is *not representative* for the Palestinians
	Hamas is deligitimized as an extremist organization (1,3)	

Table 8. Deescalation by escalation-oriented means in the coverage of the Afula massacre (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y; Hx = headline No. x)

Escalation-oriented	
Disregarding of "their" rights by dehumanization of "their" victims	The article *simply lists* further Palestinian victims, 4 of which were killed by Israeli soldiers in Hebron (4,2), 2 of which were killed, and another 65 wounded - 5 of them severely - by Israeli soldiers during riots at Gaza (4,4) while another one was killed by an Israeli settler near Bethlehem (5,1)
Condemnation of "their" actions	The palestinians are accused of *riots* in the occupied territories as a reaction to the massacre (4,1)
Justification o downplaying of "our" actions	The killing is described as a (quite natural) result of these riots, as is the *sending of support* by the Israeli army (5,3) described as a (quite natural) consequence of violent encounters between Palestinian demonstrants and Israeli policemen (5,2)

Table 9. Deescalation by escalation-oriented means in the coverage of Palestinians killed by the Israeli arm during the riots following the Hebron massacre (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y)

This danger becomes even more serious, when the presumptive defence of the peace prosess, resorts to the downplaying of evils committed by one of the peacemaking partners, as was done by *Frankfurter Rundschau* when reporting about Palestinians killed by the Israeli army during the riots following the Hebron massacre (cf. Table 9).

Downplaying of violent incidents by keeping detached from the victims and framing the events in a security discourse is a quite insufficient means of not fueling the conflict, and it can easily turn out to be a boomerang. The ammount of violence becomes visible, anyways, and as deescalation-oriented elements are missing, it might easily reanimate the old antagonism between the peace making partners, as is suggested by Arafat's reaction which reproaches the Israeli army with being an accomplice of the settlers. Reporting about Palestinian victims and - at the same time - taking Israeli beliefs of security for granted, the article fro *Frankfurter Rundschau* implies competing needs of security which raise doubt in the prospectives of peace.

A similar pattern is found in the article about the Afula car-bombing (cf. Table 10), where the Israeli government's (partial) yielding to escalation-oriented demands of the opposition is made unvisible by means of a framing technique, which puts Shimon Peres' announcement of "security measures" which include sharper

Escalation-oriented	
Disregarding of "their" rights	The article does not refer to the consequences, which the restrictions on travelling from the Westbank to Israel have for the Palestinian people who need to earn their living there
Justification o downplaying of "our" actions	The restrictions are referred to as a "security measure

Table 10. Deescalation by escalation-oriented means in the coverage of political reactions to the Afula car-bombing (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y)

restrictions on travelling for Palestinians from the Westbank who work in Israel (5,4-5,5) inbetween deescalation-oriented elements like Peres' refutation to suspend the peace process (5,3) and Minister Jossi Sarid's statement, according to which the suspension of the peace process would only serve the interests of the suiciders (5,6).

Summarizing so far, we may say that both articles follow a style of detached reporting, which does not fuel the conflict. Nonetheless, they are still far away from a peace discurse, however. The avoidance of critical issues results in a lack of all-sidedness

- which ignores essential rights, both, of the Palestinian and of the Israeli polulation,
- which does not conceptualize the peace process as a social process, and
- which depicts it merely as a political process in which society members come into play only if they are an obstacle to peace.

Though there are attempts to support this political process, they mainly do so by escalation-oriented means, like

- the construction of a new antagonism between the peace process and its enemies, and
- the downplaying of evils committed by the peacemaking partners themselves.

Only the article about the car-bombing attack, applies more constructive means of trustbuilding also:

- By framing Netanyahus demand to suspend the peace process (5,1-5,2) inbetween deescalation-oriented statements, both from PLO leaders (5,1) and from the Israeli government (5,3 and 5,6), the audience is assured that the attack will not put an end to the peace process; and
- doubt in the continuation of the process - which might result from the actual interruption of the peace talks at Cairo - is cleared out by explaining the interruption as planned before (6,1), and framing it inbetween deescalation-oriented reactions by Egypt, which regrets the assault (5,7), and by a PLO official, who states that the Israelis have promised to continue the negotiations (6,3).

Coverage of the Northern Ireland peace agreement

This mixture of detached reporting, positive attitude towards the peace process and captivity in war culture seems to be a typical pattern of peace coverage in the

German press. Though in a different form, it was also found in the news story about the Northern Ireland peace agreement in *Berliner Zeitung,* April 11, 1998.[11]
Although this article gives a rather brief account of the events only (8 paragraphs), and although its undertone is clearly positive about the peace process, it contains quite a number of ambivalent interpretations in which deescalation-oriented elements are counterbalanced by escalation oriented ones.

Win-win orientation	The article describes the process of conflict resolution as a cooperative process to which all parties have contributed (1,3-1,4; 2,2), it outlines the institutions for future cooperation between the former enemies (4,1-4,3), and it refers to the next steps of their implementation (7,1-7,2).
Emphasis on all-sidedness	The article emphasizes the all-sidedness of the agreement (1,1) which was achieved by concessions on both sides (5,3), it describes the future division of power between them (4,3), and it portrays the negotiators rather as partners than as antagonists (3,1-3,2).
Evaluation rights and intentions	The termination of violence is described as a common goal (1,1) of all parties.
Emphasis on cooperative behavior	The article describes cooperative behavior of the negotiators like coming to an understanding (1,1), achieving an agreement (H1), making up issues of quarrel (H2), and making joint efforts in order to get there (2,2).
Incentives for social identification	Representatives of both, the conflict parties and the US as mediating third party are portrayed as released and happy about the peace agreement (1,3-1,4; 2,1) and their personal efforts are honored (2,1)
Motivation logic	The article describes the peace agreement, both, as an alternative to destruction (1,1), and as a bridge into a brighter future (1,3-1,4)

Table 11. Deescalation-oriented aspects in the coverage of the Northern Ireland peace agreement (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y)

Win-lose orientation	The negotiations are described as a tough power struggle (5,1) involving severe differences of opinion (5,3, 6,1).
Emphasis on antagonism	The article emphazises the antagonism between the conflict parties (H1) and splits them into two camps (H2; 2,2; 5,2).
Downplaying of cooperative behavior	The article attributes the success of the peace negotiations to the intervention of the US-President (H2, 3,1-3,2) and of the prime ministers of Britain and Ireland (5,3), and it also links the further progress of the peace process to person of the Bill Clinton (8,1)

Table 12. Escalation-oriented aspects in the coverage of the Northern Ireland peace agreement (x,y = paragraph No. x, sentence No. y; Hx = headline No. x)

On the deescalation-oriented side, the article describes the peace agreement as a cooperative process to which all parties have contributed, it outlines the institutions for further cooperation between the former enemies and it refers to the next steps of their implementation. It emphasizes the all-sidedness of the agreement which was achieved by concessions on both sides, it describes the future division of power between them, and it portrays the negotiators rather as partners than as antagonists. It emphasises the termination of violence as a common interest of all parties

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[11] ” Konfliktparteien einigen sich über Friedensabko mmen für Nordirland”. *Berliner Zeitung*, 11./12. April 1998.

involved, and it humanizes the negotiators who worked so hard in order to achieve a peace agreement. It even offers a motivation logic, which describes the peace process as an alternative to violence and as a new beginning which will lead into a brighter future (cf. Table 11).

However, it is third party political leaders, who give expression to this logic, the sucess of the peace negotiations is attributed to third party intervention, and also the further progress of the process is linked to the Person of the US-President. Already the headlines of the article emphasize the antagonism between the Northern Ireland conflict parties, and while the negotiations themselves are described as a tough power struggle, involving severe differences of opinion (cf. Table 12), the audience learns little about the issues at conflict and how they could be resolved.

9. Conclusions

Comparison of the present results with those of prior studies on the coverage of peace proposals during the Gulf War (Kempf, 1997, 1998; Kempf & Reimann, 2000) supports our hypotheses No. 2 and 3, according to which it is mainly the political agenda which makes journalists report in a more escalation-oriented or in a more deescalation-oriented style. The articles in the present study make use of various deescalation-oriented elements and thus give proof to hypothesis No. 1 also, according to which journalists do have – at least some – capacity for deescalation oriented coverage. Due to the dominance of war culture in Western society (cf. hypothesis No. 5), however, this capacity is quite limited, and journalists' attempts to support peace processes tend to use inappropriate means, like

1. detached reporting,
2. downplaying of evils,
3. marginalization of perpetrators,
4. emphasizing antagonism,
5. interpreting agreements as "giving in", and
6. focussing on the influence of third party èlites.

As a consequence, the issues of the conflict remain unvisible, civil society is ignored, the achievement of the peacemakers is downgraded, and a solution oriented discourse cannot arise.

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