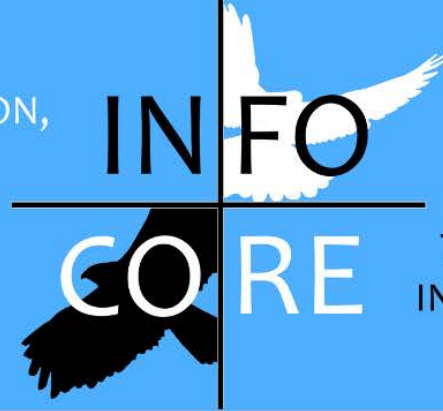(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:

INFO
CORE

THE ROLE OF MEDIA
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

18 November 2014

INFOCORE Working Paper
WP6 (01/2014)

Strategic Communication's Contributions and Roles in the Media's Dynamic Construction and Contestation of Conflict Discourse.

Theoretical/conceptual framework for Work Package 6: "Strategic Communication"

Romy Fröhlich
Ludwig Maximilians University Munich

www.infocore.eu/results/

The contribution and role of strategic communication in the media's dynamic construction and contest of conflict discourse.
Theoretical/conceptual framework for Work Package 6: "Strategic Communication"

1. Introduction

The journalistic framing[1] of the phenomenon 'war' has two roots. The first refers to what can be called 'bottom-up framing' (in keeping with information processing). According to this explanation, actual war events and factual (security) policy activities possibly suggest a certain framing to journalists on a(n) (inter)national level. Here, it would be important to consider, for instance, that the EU's global political role in international security policy has become much more active in recent years. It can also be assumed that the political and military elites in the EU have supported these efforts – also with respect to the media. Journalists then simply adopt and integrate these frames of reference, which originate from political and military actors, into their imaginations. In line with the concept of 'agenda building' (cf. Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007), such efforts on the part of (political and strategic) actors to establish their frames of reference or perspectives in the public sphere and in the media can be referred to as 'frame building'. In political science research, these processes are discussed generally as political public relations (cf. e.g. Bennett et al., 2007; Fröhlich & Rüdiger, 2006; Hänggli, 2011; Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011; Wirth et al., 2010). The second root points to what can be referred to as 'top down framing'. According to this, journalists have their own perspectives on the phenomenon of war – mostly independent from factual events and perspectives suggested by politicians, the military, and so on. Top-down and bottom-up processes occur together.

Thus, the media are not merely sheer brokers of information, and their content is not solely the outcomes of some journalists' skillful decisions. Instead, the media's content is produced as a complex interplay between various interacting factors such as journalists' personal preferences, particular professional newsroom routines, a wide range of different legal and organizational constraints, the (supposed) audience's demands, the availability and status of sources, the nature of events, etc. (cf. Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), as well as the power and influence of PR and strategic communication. Therefore, to better understand the ways in which the media shape and constitute reality on war and conflict, it is not sufficient to only analyze news content. Instead, one must also focus on the actions and strategies of other key actors involved in the production of conflict news —particularly the (communicative) actions and strategies of politicians, political leaders, important sources and primary actors/players in war and conflict, including combatants. Within this scope, INFOCORE's Work Package 6 (WP6) focuses on the *professional strategic communication content* of these actors, sources and players including the professional communication experts hired by them.

In a conflict environment, public acceptance is crucial for actors in the public sphere (e.g. politicians, the leaders of social movements or NGOs), because this might lead to a legitimization of one's cause and, as a result, to a mobilization as well as desired policy changes (Fröhlich & Rüdiger 2006; Kellner, 1992; Kepplinger, Brosius & Staab 1991).[2] Since it is not until the media begins reporting on wars that wars become a topic of public discourse, actors and their communication experts partly direct their strategic communication towards the media and try to push strategically designed content into media coverage (Hallahan et al., 2007). Thus, actors seek to insert their perspectives, interpretations, and agenda into the public discourse. To this end, they also hire professional communication experts and PR consultants.

Within the scope of the so-called First (1990 to 1991) and Second (2003 to 2011) Persian Gulf Wars and the (emerging) conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, professional strategic communication methods increasingly gained media attention[3] (cf. Donsbach et al., 2005; Drentwett, 2008; Esser, 2009; Legge, 2013; MacArthur, 2004; Pfau et al., 2004; Tiede 2014). Still, in the field of conflict research, compared to the large

---

[1] For the framing concept see the INFOCORE working paper "*Constructions of violent conflict in public discourse …*" by Christian Baden.

[2] The important role of public relations (and propaganda) in warfare is nothing new. From, for instance the American War of Independence, World War I, and II to the so-called Persian Gulf War in 1991, the War in Iraq and the Georgian-Russian conflict in 2008 strategic communication as PR and/or sheer propaganda has always played a major role (cf. Bamford, 2004; Brewer, 2009; Fearn-Banks, 2004; Finnegan, 2007; Grunig, 1993; Jowett & O'Donnell, 2006; Smith, 2004, Sorenson, 1968, Stauber & Rampton, 1995).

[3] This refers to the phenomenon of so called meta-coverage (media coverage on the circumstances of the production of media content) (cf. D'Angelo, 2008).

body of studies on media coverage of conflicts (e.g. Bahador, 2011; Eilders et al.,. 2000; Evans, 2010; Fröhlich et al., 2007), to date very little elaborate empirical work has been published on the roles and influences of strategic communicators and PR (cf. Taylor, 1992). Thus, the overall objective of INFOCORE's WP6 "Strategic Communication" is to analyze if and how different actors have (strategically) inserted their evidential claims, frames, and agendas[4] into the news coverage on selected war/conflict cases, depending on various contextual factors. This paper presents the research concept of WP6 by focusing on previous research on strategic communication, defining key concepts, discussing available research material, and outlining the work package's research strategy and general objectives.

2. Research on Strategic Communication in Violent Conflict and War

With Habermas (2006, p. 415), particularly with reference to his "communication model for democratic legitimation", we assume that "(…), the dynamics of mass communication are driven by the power of the media to select, and shape the presentation of messages, and by the strategic use of political and social power to influence the agendas as well as the triggering and framing of public issues." Here, we understand *strategic communication* as one of several particular implementations and manifestations of the "strategic use of political and social power". The analysis of strategic communication can be rooted within the area of propaganda research. Especially in the scope of both world wars, many studies have been focused on different methods governments use to mobilize the masses (Shah, 2005; Sproule 1987). After the end of the Cold War, the U.S. reduced its investments in public diplomacy and, consequently, its efforts to influence its public image. As a result, the amount of scientific research focusing on propaganda and strategic communication also decreased. Meanwhile, however, "(i)nformation technology is so important in war today, that it overwhelms everything else," as Berkowitz (2003, p. 3) claims. Particularly after 9/11, and partly due to the U.S. strategy of justifying a war in Iraq by using false information, research on strategic communication, PR, and propaganda regained importance in the social sciences (Snow & Talyor, 2006). As a result, the recent peak of sophisticated research on strategic communication in conflict environments dates back to the 2003 Iraq war (Hiebert, 2003)[5]. Among others, Chambers (2003), Hiebert (2003), Kumar (2006), as well as Snow and Taylor (2006) qualitatively analyze the U.S. government's efforts to justify the war in Iraq, the related discussion on possible weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and the suggested connection between the Iraqi regime and Al-Qaeda. The most recent profound qualitative study is by Kutz (2014), who analyzed the legitimizing character of strategic communication and PR in Germany and the U.S. for the wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. While these studies deliver valuable insights and can be seen as sophisticated descriptions of strategic communication during an emerging conflict, they still are bound to the restrictions of approaches that employ only qualitative analysis: The instances can be described in depth and detail, but the perspective remains restricted to a limited number of conflict cases, events, news articles and/or PR material (Kutz, 2014). However, to fully grasp the impacts and roles of strategic communication and PR for and within the process of war coverage through media, it is necessary to analyze the intertwined dynamics of PR on a broader basis.

To date, there have been very few quantitative measurements of strategic communication and PR in a conflict environment. Glazier and Boydstun (2012) focus on the government's and news media's framing(s) of the war on terror and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In their analysis, the authors point out that both the media's and the president's frames only align during periods, where the nation seems to be united in a common crisis but diverge again once the solidarity fades away. As a result, the media do not play their watchdog role during such times (e.g. the justification of the Iraq War). Even though Glazier and Boydstun offer some insights into strategic communication's influences on the media and certain time dynamics, their perspective is restricted to only one case and only one strategic communicator, namely the U.S.-government. Compared to the present state of research INFOCORE goes beyond a case-based research and pursues a systematically comparative approach that focuses on strategic communicators in six conflict cases. Thus, it is possible to consider specific influence by systematically varying contextual factors for different strategic content kinds inserted into different media kinds, for different audience kinds in different conflict environments.

---

[4] For a definition of evidential claims, frames, and agendas see the INFOCORE working paper *"Constructions of violent conflict in public discourse …"* by Christian Baden.

[5] See also Hiebert's earlier work on PR as a weapon of modern warfare (Hiebert, 1991).

Additionally, while the present state of research resembles a static, outcome-focused or instance-focused view of conflict that neglects developments over-time within as well as across conflicts, IN-FOCORE provides a direct analysis that factors in the temporal dynamics of conflicts and news production, taking a genuinely dynamic perspective on ongoing conflict cycles in case sampling, theory, measurement, and analysis to trace developments, within conflicts (media/conflict dynamics) and across conflicts (changing roles of media, rise of social media, diminishing gatekeeping power).

2.1 Focus on Impact: Persuasion

The aim of strategic communication is – again following Habermas (2006, p. 415) – "to influence the agendas as well as the triggering and framing of public issues." According to our understanding/definition, 'persuasion' is a particular tactic of strategic communication. Along with O'Donnell and Kable (1982, p. 9), we define persuasion as "… a complex, continuing, interactive process, in which a sender and a receiver are linked by symbols, verbal and nonverbal, through which the persuader attempts to influence the persuadee to adopt a change in a given attitude or behavior (…)." Furthermore, with Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, p. 6-7), we understand 'propaganda' and 'public relations' as subcategories of persuasion[6]. Thus, 'propaganda' and 'public relations' are understood as further particular (sub)tactics of strategic communication. Different from Jowett and O'Donnell, we do not understand 'information' as another subcategory of persuasion, but instead as another particular *tactic* of strategic communication (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Categories and Tactics of Strategic Communication
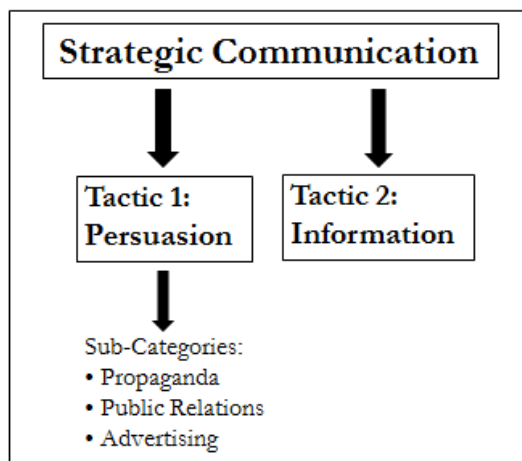
Our research question does not focus on the analysis of differences between particular subcategories of persuasion or of specific tactics of strategic communication. This is why we dispense with definitions of 'propaganda', 'persuasion' and/or 'PR'. WP6 instead looks at 'agendas'[7] of strategic communication/communicators in general and at the dynamics of those agendas.

2.2 Focus on Actors: Strategic Communicators and Political Actors

Our analytic strategy focuses on the phenomenon of strategic communication which is produced and disseminated by actors of the public sphere who seek to influence the public debate. However, these actors often do not follow their own agenda(s) but are hired to fulfill others' communication goals. Thus, to be able to effectively analyze strategic communication, it is crucial to differentiate between the (1) persons involved in the production and distribution of strategic communication content and (2) their clients. . As a result, it is necessary to focus on the concepts of 'strategic communicators' and 'political actors' (see IN-FOCORE's definition of 'political actor').

---

[6] In addition to Jowett and O'Donnell, we also consider advertising as a subcategory of persuasion.
[7] For a definition of 'agenda(s)' see the INFOCORE working paper "Constructions of violent conflict in public discourse …" by Christian Baden.

Within conflict news coverage, a 'strategic communicator' can be seen as an advocate who speaks to the media to ensure that a message enters the public discourse. Thus, strategic communicators can be connected to push-communication. In this sense, every communicator who actively influences the public debate on conflict/war can be seen as a *strategic* communicator: politicians, military leaders, lobbyists, PR-experts, public authorities (officials), members of a parliament, and other political actors.

However, within the analytic strategy presented here, the main focus is on *organizational* and *institutional* strategic communicators who represent the official standpoint of the whole organization, institution, or (political) entity they belong to, and who speak in its name. Strategic communicators in this narrower sense can be part of political spheres, NGOs, (social) movements, the military, think tanks, or PR organizations and/or campaigns. They can be described as communicators who (per definition) represent the official perspective of an organization or corporation (e.g. "public relations/press officer" or "spokesperson") or represent a political institution such as a political party/parliamentary fraction (e.g. party/fraction leader), or a ministry (ministers as well as its official spokespersons or press officers), or a political committee (e.g. speaker/leader of a parliamentary defense committee). The professional function of these strategic communicators is to publicly distribute professionally planned and designed messages/content on behalf of their client/employer. Lobbyists are a special type of strategic communicator since their professional (and often explicit) function is to distribute professionally planned and designed messages/content non-publicly.

Strategic communication, then, is the planned (not by accident) and publicly spoken words of strategic communicators and official press releases published/distributed by an organization, institution, corporation, political entity, etc., as well as statements posted on its official web page. Press releases in principle represent an official standpoint of the sender. Additionally, if an entity is quoted without being personalized, its message can be seen as the outcome of the whole organization. In this case, the organization as a whole is a strategic communicator.

Furthermore, our analytic strategy also focuses on publicly delivered speeches of political actors as strategic communication (non-spontaneous, planned communication), while political actors are not necessarily considered as 'strategic communicators' in the narrower sense of this definition. Even though every political actor communicates strategically, he or she is not automatically a 'strategic communicator' in the work package's sense (organizational/institutional), because political actors do not always perform acts of intentional advocacy or actions directed specifically at the media/public. Furthermore, although they can represent a certain entity (e.g. political party), political actors might only follow their own interests. And finally, political actors do not communicate on behalf of a client/employer as part of their professional function. Thus, it is important to point out that there is an intersection between the categories 'political actor' and 'strategic communicator'.

Within NGOs and (social) movements institutional and organizational strategic communicators speak for the organization as a whole. Hence, all communicators that are official spokespersons or representatives of an NGO or a (social) movement are considered 'strategic communicators'. An ordinary member of an NGO/movement (incidentally) picked by a journalist for a brief statement is not considered a 'strategic communicator'. Strategic communicators that belong to the PR sphere are persons mandated by an organization to perform professionalized communicational tasks therefor. This is why all communicators within the PR sphere are also organizational/institutional strategic communicators. An example of this group is a PR agency such as *Aspect Consulting* or *GPlus*. Think tanks can also be seen as organizational and institutional strategic communicators; they communicate a joint message and publish their research results as a collective product – usually not by accident but on the basis of planned (= strategic) communication.

Finally, persons that belong to the military can be identified as strategic communicators if they represent the official military standpoint. That is the case for official military spokespersons or individual soldiers on duty or in the battle zone, because while the former (per definition) represents the official perspective of an organization, the latter presumably received a briefing by the military's PR department before being interviewed. Additionally, these members of the military also represent advocates that perform push-communication. A military person who is not on duty or in the battle zone can be considered a source that is questioned by the media, and is therefore part of pull-communication and consequently not considered a strategic communicator.

Political actors, on the other hand, are individuals who have obtained at least some measure of *political* power, authority, and/or leadership within a group, organization, institution, or society and engage in activities that can potentially have a significant influence on decisions, policies, media coverage, and outcomes associated with a given conflict. Thus, as noted, there is an intersection between these two groups of people,

because some political actors also communicate an agenda strategically and represent the official perspective of an entity.

Still, PR professionals, regardless of whether they are considered part of tan organization or whether they belong to external consulting PR-firms, are not considered political actors since they usually are not the 'owners' of a political agenda. According to our understanding, the 'owner' of a political agenda is a political actor (= principal) while the PR professional (= agent) is employed (external consultant) or tasked (internal member of the respective organization) to speak for this principal. Thus, we consider PR professionals, press officers, PR firms, etc. as agents of political actors and, therefore, as strategic communicators. A brief overview of the two concepts is provided in Figure 2 (object of investigation of WP6, in the red frame).

Figure 2: Political Actors and Strategic Communicators
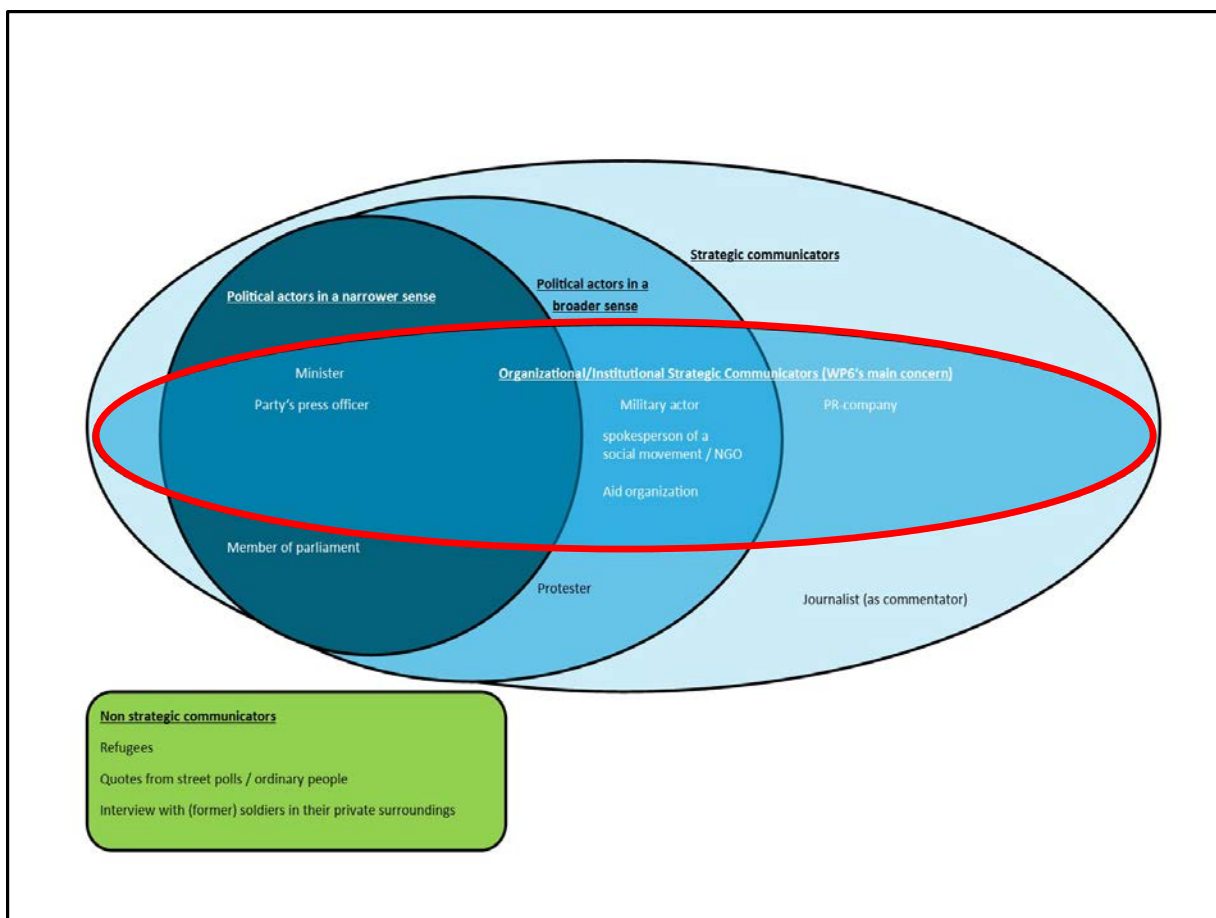
2.3 Focus on Roles: Source vs. Advocates

As noted, strategic communicators try to push their messages into the media discourse. They want their agendas, frames, and beliefs to be taken up in the news content. The media, on the other hand, often follow their own agenda and approach people that might support and underline it (cf. Hagen, 1992). Thus, it is important to also focus on the different roles that people who offer information to journalists (through push- or pull-communication) can perform. The term 'source/advocate' describes two roles an informing/speaking actor can hold in the process of content production for the news media, social media, and semi-public intelligence/expert analysis: A 'source' tends to be relatively passive, and can be connected to pull-communication. This means that a journalist actively approaches a source in order to receive information. Additionally, a source is someone whose frames and agendas (if they existing) are brought into public debate by someone other than themselves (e.g. journalists) in pursuit of their own agendas. An example of a source is an individual eyewitness that is interviewed about an event that occurred.

An advocate can be seen as a pro-actively communicating person who is interested in getting his or her provided information/spoken word published and who actively tries to get heard (via professional PR, or through organizing pseudo-events, for instance). He or she engages in push-communication, meaning that an advocate sends out her or his message without first being asked for it. An advocate always has a clear agenda that can be identified within his or her statement. She or he actively brings frames and agendas into the public debate and thus into a public sphere, in pursuit of a discernable agenda for action. An example of an advocate is a politician, who hands out his interpretation of an event as a press release or during a press conference. Another example is an official representative of an NGO makiong a speech during an organized event. Consequently, one can be a source and an advocate at the same time, because this status is relative to a public sphere. While one can, for instance, actively advocate an agenda in the online public sphere, one can also simultaneously function as a source for offline media coverage that follows a journalist's own agenda. Hence, publishing messages on the Internet makes you an advocate as far as the online public sphere is concerned, but if someone links this material online or uses it for an offline purpose then you are also a source for this advocate's communication. Finally, it is noteworthy that you are not an advocate if you do not yourself insert your texts into a sphere of debate or if you do so without a discernable agenda (e.g. a statistics office publishing routine data generally does so without following a political agenda). One cannot be considered an advocate if you do not have a discernable agenda. In this case, the person can still be a source, because someone could quote him or her to support that person's agenda. Finally, someone who is never cited, linked to, or imported into a public sphere by a third person cannot be a source but may still be an advocate.

The concept of 'advocate' is much closer to the concept of advocacy/PR/strategic communication than the concept of 'source'. An advocate (in the sense of an interceder or proponent) 'pleads', and/or 'campaigns' for and/or 'endorses' something, while a 'source' behaves more in a fact oriented way and acts or is used (by journalists) more as a reference. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that neither a source nor an advocate behaves in unbiased or neutral ways. The most important difference between these two roles concerns the initiative. A source is approached by the journalist, who chooses which questions to ask, thereby determining the agenda of the interview. An advocate approaches journalists on his or her own initiative. This means that an advocate determines the questions she or he is answering and thus also sets the agenda and frames her or his statements. As a result, an advocate is an actor who processes and articulates specific information for the media, while a source is an actor who provides information to the media or others in public discourse. However, this definition contains its practical obstacles. It is possible that one might not be able to formally distinguish between an advocated statement – as the result of an advocate that approached a journalist and communicated a strategically designed message - and a statement that can be related back to a source that was approached by the journalist.

Thus, our research goal is to analyze how strategic communicators influence the dynamics of conflict related news discourses as well as the public discourse (represented by the social media) and political debates in their roles as sources and advocates. While an advocate actively tries to shape discourse by strategically inserting frames, agendas for action, and evidential beliefs into news coverage, a source can affect coverage by providing additional pieces of information that might feed into evidential beliefs (see this paper's chapter on persuasion).

3. Strategic Communication: Research Agenda

Building on these concepts, we will analyze how strategic communication influences discourses on conflict in the media, the public (as represented by the social media), and political debates. We will therefore focus on strategic communication's role in the *construction, contestation* and *dynamics* of conflict-related discourses.[8] In terms of discourse CONSTRUCTION, we will analyze how strategic communication influences the creation of a conflict's social world within discourse. Thus, we will closely examine strategic communication's contributions to the *creation of concepts as characterizations of actors and events* as well as their *labeling and connected evaluative charge*. We will also focus on the ways strategic communication shapes *the construction of a conflict related discourse in terms of evidential claims*. Here, we will analyze the *selection of facts* deriving from strategic communication that are transformed into evidential claims, and how they are qualified and warranted. Then, we will closely examine how strategic communication contributes to the *interpretations of the social reality in terms of frames*. Here, our main concern is how frames within strategic communication *resonate within the conflict-*

---

[8] For more details on the theoretical concept concerning *construction, contest and dynamics of conflict related discourses* see the INFOCORE working paper "Constructions of violent conflict in public discourse …" by Christian Baden.

related discourse. Finally, we will look at strategic communication's contribution to the *construction of narratives*. To evaluate these impacts we will consider the *identities, values, and agendas for action* that are presented in strategic communication material. We will analyze what part of this material enters the news discourse and how it is transformed.

In the next step, we will consider how strategic communication can CONTEST the *existing construction of a social reality* of a conflict in the news discourse. Again, we will focus on concepts, evidential claims, frames, and narratives within the strategic content and how they contest existing constructs in the conflict-related discourse. Finally, we will also consider the DYNAMICS of the *construction and contestation* of conflict discourse. Therefore, we will examine the *processes of transformation, radicalization, polarization, consensus formation and the establishment and erosion of widely accepted meaning* and closely point out strategic communication's (possible) contribution to and role in these processes.

As a result, WP6 pursue the following primary objectives: The overall objective of WP6 is to analyze how different actors can strategically insert their evidential claims, frames, and agendas, into news coverage, depending on various contextual factors. Its results feed primarily into creating the knowledge necessary to process the following research questions of the overall INFOCORE project: (1) What information is provided by sources/eyewitnesses or advocated by strategic communicators? (2) What information is taken up, contextualized, elaborated, and disseminated by the media? What information is received by key media audiences and influences their conflict perceptions? In doing so, WP6 seeks to develop evidence-based strategies for communicating to/via media in ways that assist mediation and dialogue, reach out to conflict parties, and combat escalatory content. The overall aim is to provide EU policy makers with profound knowledge and improved strategies for devising and implementing external communication policies. This reinforces existing communication efforts for raising visibility and building public support/legitimacy for European policy solutions. It also details strategies for inserting specific contents into conflict zone media.

To research news content dynamics and mutual diffusion, we cooperate with the work packages analyze news media content, political debates, and social media content. We seek to advance existing knowledge on how media content shapes political actors' and lay audiences' (as represented by the social media) perspectives on and perceptions of conflicts. Therefore, our findings will advance academic research in agenda setting, framing, mobilization, early warning, policy formation, and crisis management. In practice, this knowledge will enable media professionals and regulators to combat inflammatory content such as hate speech and will promote dialogue. Likewise, it will clarify why the media fails to pick up information (e.g. early warning content, gender-related content). Thus, it will enable journalists and media organizations to improve existing media practice. Finally, raising public awareness of biases in conflict news reporting facilitates background reporting and critical news coverage. In this context, WP6 pursues the following specific sub-objectives:

- to assess the backgrounds and motivations of strategic communication contents inserted into the dynamic evolution of conflict news content
- to analyze the information contents of strategic communication inserted into conflict news, focusing on evidential beliefs, interpretative frames, and agendas for action
- to establish shared patterns of transforming strategically communicated information into journalistic news within the dynamic dissemination process of conflict news (with WP7)
- to establish shared dynamics in the evolution of strategic communication of conflict news and reconstruct processes of frame building and agenda building over time
- to delineate strategic communication contents' primary impacts on the evolution of conflict news, and to evaluate the potential for affecting conflict dynamics (with WP7)
- to determine the influences of contextual factors, the news environment, and content dynamics on the roles of strategic communication for the evolution of news content
- to define the key roles – both constructive and destructive – that strategic communication plays, under specific circumstances, in shaping the dynamics of conflict news
- to define suitable strategies for the use of strategic communication within conflict prevention and conflict resolution

4. On Research Material

In our research strategy, we analyze organizational/institutional strategic communication as intentionally advocated communication that is specifically directed at the media representing the official standpoint of a certain entity (political, activist, etc.). Thus, examples of strategic communication in an organizational/in-

stitutional sense include planned public speeches, official press releases distributed by an organization, institution, corporation, political entity (etc.), statements posted on its web page, and other communication means strategically directed towards a restricted sample of people in the media or the political sphere.

Access to and the selection of research material in the area of strategic communication (as we understand it) is not easy. Partly, this communication is not directed towards the general public but towards journalists/media, politicians, or combatants. We identify two major groups of research material:

(1) Classic PR material directed/sent to the media/journalists, such as press releases published/archived on a website or archived and accessible at the respective institutions/organizations, interviews and other kinds of more or less public statements, such as speeches during election campaigns, etc. It is noteworthy that this group of sources always has a clearly identifiable author, whether attributed to a single person or an entity.

(2) Content of strategic communication directed to a fairly restricted sample of people. This communication happens behind closed doors and contains messages that are supposed to influence coverage without transmitting authorship, or to lobby for particular agendas on political or editorial back-stages. These messages, material and contents are not easily accessible, but might lead to a much deeper understanding of an actor's communication strategies and intents.

INFOCORE's WP6 seeks to incorporate both groups of material of strategic communication. However, we might not be able to capture all essential 'behind the scenes' material, messages and content (research material group 2) that influenced news discourses. Still, by closely cooperating with INFOCORE's work packages that carry out interviews with the actors involved in the production and dynamic transformation of conflict discourses (especially the work packages that interview journalists, political actors, and members of NGOs) we will gain knowledge on how this kind of strategic communication occurs and what sort of messages are distributed behind closed doors. Here, we also aim to closely cooperate with INFOCORE's associated stakeholder network (see http://www.infocore.eu/consortium/associated-stakeholder-network/).

5. Gender Perspective

In accordance with traditional social perceptions of gender, media coverage on war tends to construct men as active participants in war and conflict (fighters, aggressors, offenders, active defenders, warrantors of security); moreover, men (particularly the military) are even considered as promoters of war (Fröhlich, 2010). In contrast to this, women are perceived (not only by the media) as a "pacifying influence" (Sjoberg et al., 2007, p. 2) (almost naturally opposed to war, peace-loving and resistant to violence, suffer from violence, need protection, etc.). This notion is criticized, particularly in feminist security studies, as a masculine, authoritarian idea, since the appeal for protection and/or shelter (of women and children) often serves as a political and/or humanitarian justification for military intervention and war (cf. Tickner 1992, 2001). The one-sided and stereotypical thematization and representation of women and men in coverage of wars and conflicts is substantiated in several theoretical works and supported purely by narrative single-case analysis (for a synopsis see Fröhlich, 2015). However, to date, nothing is available on gender stereotypes of respective political and military public relations. Hence, WP6 *theoretically* and *empirically* understands gender as an important analytical category within its particular research context.[9]

References

Bahador, B. (2011). Did the global War on Terror end the CNN effect? *Media, War & Conflict, 4*(1). 37-54.

Bamford, J. (2004). *A pretext for war: 9/11, Iraq, and the abuse of America's intelligence agencies.* New York: Random House.

Bennett, W. L., Lawrence, R., & Livingston, S. (2007). *When the press fails: Political power and the news media from Iraq to Katrina.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Berkowitz, B. (2003). *The new face of war. How war will be fought in the 21st century.* New York: Free Press.

[9] For more details on the gender-sensitive perspective of INFOCORE see "Conceptual Framework for the Gender-Sensitive Perspective of INFOCORE" by Romy Fröhlich.

Brewer, S. A. (2009). *Why America fights: Patriotism and war propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq*. Oxford University Press.

Chambers, R. (2003). The war of the words. The rhetoric of 'Operation Iraqi Freedom'. An informal survey. *Culture, Theory & Critique, 44*(2), 171-181.

D'Angelo, P. (2008). Metacoverage. In L. Kaid, & C. Holtz-Bacha, (eds.), *Encyclopedia of political communication* (pp. 452-454). Thousand Oaks, CA, etc.: Sage.

Donsbach, W., Jandura, O., & Müller, D. (2005). Kriegsberichterstatter oder willfährige Propagandisten? Wie deutsche und amerikanische Printmedien die "Embedded Journalists" im Irak-Krieg sahen [War reporters or compliant propagandists? How German and American print media view „embedded journalists" in the Iraq war]. *Medien und Kommunikationswissenschaft, 53*, 298-313.

Drentwett, C. (2008*). Metaberichterstattung im Krieg: Zeitungen über die Rolle der Medien und der politischen PR während der Irakkriege 1991 und 2003* [Meta coverage in war: Newspapers on the role of media and political PR during the Iraq wars 1991 and 2003]. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller

Eilders, C. & Lüter, A. (2000). Research note: Germany at war. Competing framing strategies in German public discourse. *European Journal for Communication* 15 (3). 415-428.

Esser, F. (2009). Metacoverage of mediated wars. How the press framed the role of the news media and of military news management in the Iraq wars of 1991 and 2003. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*, 709-734.

Evans, M. (2010). Framing international conflicts: Media coverage of fighting in the Middle Ease. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics, 6*(2). 209-233.

Fearn-Banks, K. (2004). Elmer Davis and the Office of War Information. In R.L. Heath (ed.), *The encyclopedia of public relations* (pp. 237-239). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Finnegan, L. (2007). *No questions asked: News coverage since 9/11*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Fröhlich, R. (2010). The coverage of war: Do women matter? A longitudinal content analysis of broadsheets in Germany. *European Journal of Communication, 25*(1) 1-10.

Fröhlich, R. (2015, in press). Gender, media, and security. In P. Robinson, p. Seib, & R. Fröhlich (eds.), *Media, conflict and security*. London and New York: Routledge

Fröhlich, R., & Rüdiger, B. (2006). Framing political public relations: Measuring success of political communication strategies in Germany. *Public Relations Review, 32*, 18-25.

Fröhlich, R., Scherer, H., & Scheufele, B. (2007). Kriegsberichterstattung in deutschen Qualitätszeitungen. Eine inhaltsanalytische Langzeitstudie zu Framingprozessen [War coverage in German broadsheets. A longitudinal content analysis on framing processes]. *Publizistik, 52,* 11-32.

Glazier, R., & Boydstun, A.(2012). The President, the press, and the war: A tale of two framing agendas. *Political Communication, 29*. 428-446.

Grunig, J. E. (1993). Public relations and international affairs: Effects, ethics and responsibility. *Journal of International Affairs, 47*(1), 137-163.

Habermas, J. (2006). Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research. *Communication Theory, 16,* 411–426.

Hänggli, R. (2011). Key factors in frame building: How strategic political actors shape news media coverage. *American Behavioral Scientist, 56*, 300–317. DOI: 10.1177/0002764211426327

Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Rulerc, B. van, Verčičd, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 1*(1), 3-35. DOI:10.1080/15531180701285244

Hiebert, R. E. (1991). Public relations as a weapon of modern warfare. *Public Relations Review 17*, 107-116.

Hiebert, R. E. (2003). Public relations and propaganda in framing the Iraq war: a preliminary review. *Public Relations Review, 29*, 243-255.

Jowett, G. S., & O'Donnell, V. (2006). *Propaganda and persuasion* (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kellner, D. (1992). *The Persian Gulf TV war*. Boulder, CO: Westview

Kepplinger, H. M., Brosius, H., & Staab, J. F. (1991). Instrumental actualization: A theory of mediated conflicts. *European Journal of Communication, 6*(3). 263-290.

Kumar, D. (2006). Media, war, and propaganda: strategies of information management during the 2003 Iraq War. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, 3*(1), 48-69.

Kutz, M.-S. (2014). *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit in Kriegen. Legitimation von Kosovo-, Afghanistan- und Irakkrieg in Deutschland und den USA* [Public relations in wars. The legitimation in Germany and the US of the wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq]. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Legge, J. (2013): Syria's president Bashar al-Assad joins Instagram in propaganda move. The Independent (30.07.2013). http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syrias-president-bashar-alassad-joins-instagram-in-propaganda-move-8737735.html. Last Access: 20.05.2014.

MacArthur, J. R. (2004). *Second front: Censorship and propaganda in the 1991 Gulf War* (updated 2nd edition). Berkeley: University of California Press.

O'Donnell, V., & Kable, J. (1982). *Persuasion: An interactive dependency approach*. New York, NY: Random House.

Pfau, M., Haigh, M., Gettle, M., Donnelly, M., Scott, G., Warr, D., et al. (2004). Embedding journalists in military combat units: Impact on newspaper story frames and tone. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 81*, 74-88.

Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication, 57*, 9–20.

Shah, A. (2005). War, propaganda and the media. *Global Issues*. http://www.globalissues.org/article/157/war-propaganda-and-the-media. Last Access: 20.05.2014.

Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Sjoberg, L., & Gentry, C. E. (2007). *Mothers, monsters, whores. Women's violence in global, politics*. London: Zed Books.

Smith, M. F. (2004). Warfare and public relations. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Public Relations* (pp. 893-897). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Snow, N., & Talyor, P. M. (2006). The revival of the propaganda state. US propaganda at home and abroad since 9/11. *The International Communication Gazette, 68*, 389-407.

Sorenson, T. C. (1968). *The word war: The story of American propaganda*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Sproule, J. M.(1987). Propaganda studies in American social science: The rise and fall of the critical paradigm. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 73*(1), 50-78.

Strömbäck, J., & Kiousis, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Political public relations. Principles and applications*. New York: Routledge.

Stauber, J. C., & Rampton, S. (1995). *Toxic sludge is good for you*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Taylor, P. M. (1992). *War and the media: Propaganda and persuasion in the Gulf War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Tickner, J. A, (1992). *Gender in international relations: Feminist perspectives on achieving international security*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tickner, J. A. (2001). *Gendering world politics: Issues and approaches in the post–cold war era*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tiede, P. (2014). Facebook-fake und shitstorm für den Westen. Putins propaganda-parade. BILD.de (06.05.2014). http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/wladimir-putin/popaganda-krieg-ukraine-krise-35834438.bild.html. Last access: 20.05.2014.

Wirth, W., Matthes, J., Schemer, C., Wettstein, M., Friemel, T., Hänggli, R., & Siegert, G. (2010). Agenda building and setting in a referendum campaign. Investigating the flow of arguments among campaigners, the media, and the public. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 87*, 328-345.