

(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:



THE ROLE OF MEDIA
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

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JOURNALISTIC TRANSFORMATION IN VIOLENT CONFLICT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR WP7

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JOURNALISTIC TRANSFORMATION IN VIOLENT CONFLICT**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In violent conflict, journalism plays an exalted role as information provider, which cannot be explained solely based on its role as conveyor of contents offered by other sources. Rather, journalism subjects source information to a sequence of transformative practices that endow it with particular qualities, thereby transforming information into news: Journalists collect and select information from a variety of sources (notably, PR material, newswires, archival material, original reporting) and then edit it into news articles that may range from close reproductions of obtained source materials to far-reaching reconstructions of the available content: They render information relevant culturally to their audiences, they provide political-ideological orientation, and communicate its conformity to professional ethics and standards; they qualify information for its relevance and epistemic certainty, manipulate the emotive content of information and adjust it to the structural constraints of news media production. In order to do so, journalists apply micro-selections (e.g., highlighting specific passages from selected source texts and using them for headlines), add contextual and background information, and add their own prose and commentary to the texts. WP7 minutely traces the transformative practices by comparing resulting news articles to the available input materials used for their construction, specifically assessing the application of the six abovementioned transformations to the reported information (evidential claims), the constructed interpretative frames, and the advanced agendas for action.

At the same time, WP7 also assesses the patterns and over-time dynamics in how journalists apply and prioritize different transformations when producing news content: As journalists are aware of the news discourse surrounding their own news production and respond to developments in both news discourse and conflict events in similar ways, the reflexive, interactive transformations applied by journalists can give rise to a range of important dynamics at the discourse level – most notably, polarization and radicalization: On the one hand, journalists' responsiveness to embedding news discourse can lead to a process wherein few selected views are iteratively reaffirmed while others are marginalized, possibly leading to the emergence of different consensual views in different publics (polarization); on the other hand, the establishment of polarized views can lead also to a creeping normalization of increasingly radical viewpoints. Both dynamics can be captured from characteristic over-time shifts in the way journalists apply the characteristic transformations.

JOURNALISTIC TRANSFORMATION IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

(Conceptual Framework for WP7)

Specifically in crises and violent conflict, various societal actors turn to professional news media for current, relevant information. The exalted role of journalism derives from its functioning not only as conveyor of information originating from other actors and sources, but especially from journalists' practices of subjecting information to numerous professional routines of selection, corroboration and contextualization: Transforming source information into news which is made relevant to a news audience, embedded within news discourse and produced according to transparent ethical and professional standards, journalism occupies a unique position in societies' ability to follow and understand events over the life cycle of a conflict. WP7 focuses on conflict news content – in particular evidential claims, interpretive frames and agendas for action¹ – as it is selected and molded by the professional news media, and as it evolves over time. Using INFOCORE's innovative design and methods, it aims to contribute to the large body of literature on conflict news coverage, by focusing on the unique contribution of the news media to conflict discourse as achieved by two main types of transformations: a) Intertextual transformation: the ways in which journalists mold other available source texts into news; and b) Discourse level transformation: the ways in which conflict news discourse changes over time – as an effect of journalists responding to evolving news discourse and adapting their practices and news-production in a self-reflexive manner. This working paper lays the conceptual groundwork for addressing these two types of interrelated journalistic transformations.

Intertextual journalistic transformation

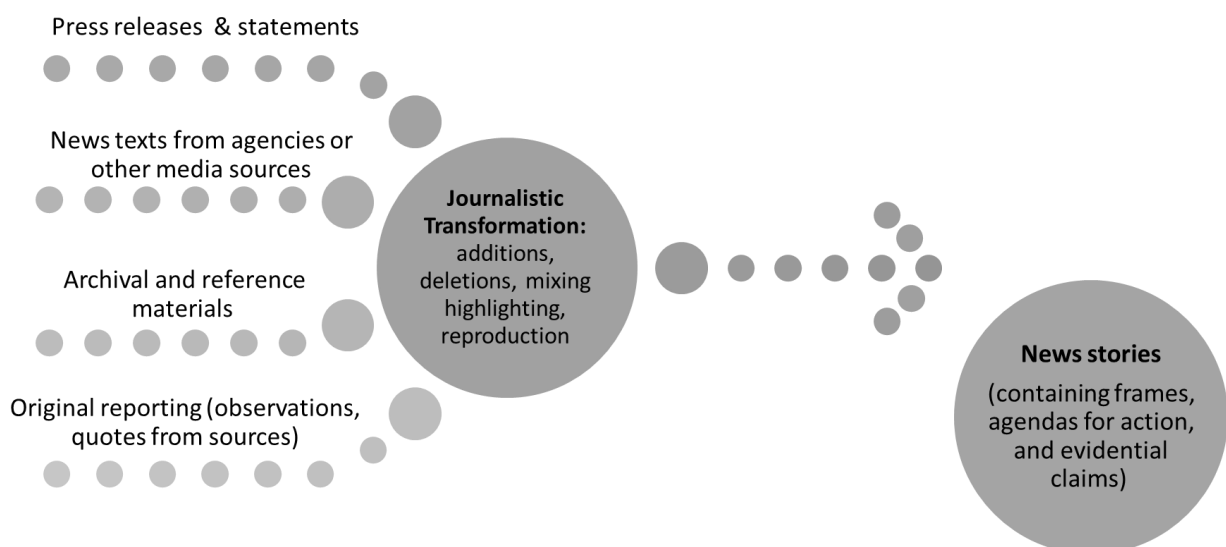
In analyzing discourse, including news discourse, we can distinguish between internal and external relations of texts (Fairclough, 2003). Whereas internal relations refer to semantic or grammatical relations between elements within a specific text, external relations refer to the text's relations with other elements in the social world, among them other texts. The text's relation to these external texts is captured by the notion of intertextuality (Ibid. see also Fiske, 1987; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2009). In this paper, we develop a conceptual framework for intertextual journalistic transformation as referring to the various content-based practices in which journalists incorporate, adapt and reconstruct other texts in news stories – focusing in particular on conflict news – in ways that fit specific constraints, interests, values and norms.

News texts, as other types of media texts in the contemporary information environment, are not created in isolation from the wider textual environment in which a particular news organization is located. Rather, journalism centrally includes the collection and selection of relevant source texts, which alert journalists to relevant events or ideas, and provide the raw material for much, if not most news stories. As a result of rising time pressures (the need to produce more news in less time), recent technological developments

¹ See Baden's INFOCORE working paper 2014/1 for a detailed discussion of these three building blocks of INFOCORE's content analytic perspective (interpretative frames, agendas for action, and evidential claims).

(allowing access at any point in time to a vast universe of digital content), and ongoing attempts to cut costs (resulting in less original reporting), journalists' reliance on other available texts to produce news is widely seen to increase. Notably public relations materials and texts arriving from news agencies or published by other news media constitute the lion's share of journalist's information diet (Boczkowski, 2010; Davies, 2008; Lewis, Williams and Franklin, 2008). The raw materials of news production thus range from the dwindling category of original reporting and actively collecting commentary or expertise from sources; through archival and reference materials (used primarily for the provision of context); to press releases and other news texts (see Figure 1). In the context of conflict coverage, the category of press releases/press statements is particularly interesting in relation to strategic actors that attempt to shape conflict discourse (see WP6's conceptual working paper by Fröhlich and Jungblut), while the category of other news texts is particularly relevant in the context of transcultural intertextual transformations, such as the use of materials originating from the news media of the other side to the conflict (see Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2011), or the localization of transnational news content (Clausen, 2004; Cohen et al., 1995). These two categories, with particular emphasis on materials originating from strategic actors, are the focus of WP7's investigation of intertextual journalistic transformations.

Figure 1: The process and sources of intertextual journalistic transformation



In transforming these raw materials into news, discursive elements in the original texts are added or excluded, amended or replaced, truncated or elaborated, foregrounded or downplayed, fused, juxtaposed or separated, to create reconstructed claims, interpretations, and agendas. While multiple devices can be included in a single transformation of a specific content, transformation can also be minimal (e.g., an almost exact reproduction of a press release). The resulted news stories contain frames, agendas and claims that may faithfully convey sources' constructions, contextualize them in more or less selective and critical manner, or reconstruct them to serve different constructions entirely. Typically, we would expect to find both replications and new textual elements in news stories that rely on other available texts.

Such transformative practices generally follow the stage of selection in the process of formulating news stories, with selection referring to what inputs get picked up by the news media (what to cover? which available texts to use?), whereas transformation refers to the molding and reconstruction of the selected content (how to cover?). Selection processes, based on criteria of newsworthiness (see Galtung & Ruge, 1965; O'Neill and Harcup, 2009), thus precede the transformation process presented in Figure 1. However, as selection is one of the primary mechanisms of framing (Entman, 1993), there are also many selection decisions within the stage of transformation, such as the selection of specific elements for the headlines and lead, or the exclusion of often major parts of selected source texts. Furthermore, news selection criteria are not always associated with the intrinsic qualities of the original content, but with how the story can be covered (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001), or the role of information for contextualizing other content selected as the focus of a news story. Thus, selection and transformation are not fully independent processes.

Figure 2: Types of intertextual journalistic transformation



It is also useful to distinguish between different types of intertextual transformations, based on their different functions. Based on a qualitative pilot study, we have distinguished and validated six types of intertextual transformation – cultural, political-ideological, professional, structural, evaluative, and emotive (see Figure 2) – which address central constraints and functions defining journalistic practice. While each kind of transformation relates to rich research traditions in journalism, they have normally been addressed as objectives or outcomes of journalistic news production, disregarding the underlying transformative practices. Appraising journalism's contribution through the prism of journalistic transformations allows us to focus on the multifaceted, unique roles played by journalism within the complex, highly interactive process of conflict discourse. Following is a description of each of these six categories and their particular relevance for conflict coverage.

Cultural Transformation

Cultural transformation refers to the (re)constructions of interpretive frames and agendas for action in ways that connect to a culture's myths, values, symbols and collective memories, or through other manifestations of national/ethnic identities. Transforming information culturally, journalists render the news relevant and relatable to their audiences, appealing to and simultaneously re-affirming shared identity and community.

Culture, by one definition, refers to the "tool kit" of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems" (Swidler, 1986, p. 273). Journalists rely on this toolkit in formulating news stories, with conflict and war situations being one of the most important contexts in which journalists draw on cultural resources (Zelizer, 2005). Scholarship that focuses on cultural dimensions of news suggests that the news media do not merely convey information but also contribute to community building by reproducing and constructing shared narratives, myths and memories that reflect and reinforce the group's view of the world (Bird and Dardenne, 1988; Carey, 1989; Lule, 2001; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2008). Scholars have also started to incorporate cultural dimensions into framing analysis, acknowledging the cultural dependency of framing processes: Frames both refer to cultural knowledge and can become part of society's cultural knowledge, serving as available reference for subsequent frame constructions in news discourse (Baden, 2010; van Gorp, 2007; see also the discourse-level transformations below).

The functioning of journalists as agents of collective memory (see Zelizer & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2014) is particularly important in the context of conflict coverage: Constructing rivals' conflicting versions of the past and present, collective memory is one of the main social elements that underlie prolonged conflicts (see Bar-Tal, 2013). Scholarship on journalism and memory has started to account for the various uses of collective memories in news coverage – from commemoration to making sense of current events, most notably through the use of historical analogies and the provision of historical context (Edy, 1999; Schudson, 2014). Whether one chooses to frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of the Holocaust, the Nakba, or the 1967 Occupation the West Bank and Gaza Strip, is highly significant in shaping conflict discourse, specifically in the constrained environment of the news story. Furthermore, the news media are not only agents of retrospective memory, but also of agents of prospective memory: They not only remind the public and decision maker what happened but also what still needs to be done, constructing, shaping and legitimizing future agendas for action based on shared memories (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2013).

Given that journalists are not only external observers but also "part of the culture to which they report" (Zelizer, 2005, p. 208), conflict situations present difficult challenges and dilemmas for journalists who culturally belong to one of the sides in the conflict. As suggested by Zandberg and Neiger (2005), journalists can be viewed as members of "contradicting communities" – the professional and the national. While the professional community adheres to values such as objectivity, neutrality, balance, and criticism, the national community demands solidarity. In times of crisis and war, the pendulum often swings toward a more

patriotic-ethnocentric mode of coverage, which foregrounds national identity, at the expense of professional values (see also Hutcheson et al., 2004; Schudson, 2002). Within the ethnocentric mode of coverage, media on each side of the conflict tend to positively represent the ethno-national group to which they belong, and marginalize or demonize the rival group (Wolfsfeld, Frosh, & Awabdy, 2008).

The favorable representation of one's own ethnic/cultural group (the ingroup), alongside negative stereotyping and dehumanizing of other ethnic/cultural groups (the outgroups), has been widely documented in conflict news coverage (e.g., Carter, Thomas & Ross, 2011; Liebes, 1997; Steuter & Wills, 2010; Wolfsfeld, Frosh, & Awabdy, 2008). Drawing on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this trend is commonly explained as a result of social identification mechanisms, where the ingroup tends to define its identity in relation to other groups, in particular rival groups. These cultural identification and counter-identification mechanisms are at the basis of the more general Us-Them distinction, which constitutes one of the most prevalent and potentially destructive elements in conflict coverage (Galtung, 1998, 2006). It is manifested through a wide range of discursive mechanisms (see van-Dijk, 1998, 2009), which include, among others, different lexical choices for "our" and "their" actors and actions (e.g., 'targeted killing' versus 'terrorism'). However, not all cultural transformations are necessarily aimed at positively representing the ingroup: Specific cultural references or the use of the first person plural in news discourse can also be made from a critical, counter-hegemonic perspective.

Political-Ideological Transformation

Political-ideological transformation refers to the (re)structuring of information in ways that advance a particular ideological or political perspective. Journalists may endorse specific stances by simply reproducing frames and agendas provided by external actors, add/highlighting textual elements that fit a particular political viewpoint, or excluding/modifying elements that are not consistent with a specific editorial line. By transforming information in a political-ideological fashion, journalists endow the news with a capacity to provide political orientation to their audiences.

At the broad level of social power relations, which has been the focus of Critical Discourse Analysis (see Kuo & Nakamura, 2005; van Dijk, 2003) as well as earlier linguistic investigations of ideology in the news (e.g., Fowler, 1991), the category of political-ideological transformation refers to the ways in which news discourse enacts, confirms, legitimates, reproduces, or challenges relations of power and dominance in society. At this level, the category of political-ideological transformation partially overlaps with the preceding cultural category, as it focuses on ideologies such as racism and nationalism (van Dijk, 2009), thereby connecting to the enactment of national identities and ethnocentric frames in the news. However, it also applies to other broad ideological structures, such as sexism (e.g., Caldas-Coulthard, 1993). Indeed, research on conflict news has pointed to the marginalization of women in conflict coverage and their portrayal within a limited set of roles in relation to violent conflicts (Fröhlich, 2010; Lahav, 2010). Gender-oriented transformations will be part of the ideological transformations examined by WP7.

At a second level, on which political communication scholars mostly focus, the category of political-ideological transformation can be examined in relation to internal divisions within a country's political system or debate. On the one hand, based on the dominant indexing hypothesis, according to which the news media tend to index/tie its interpretive frames to the range of viewpoints within official decision making circles (Bennett, 1990; Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston, 2006), we can expect a significant level of reproducing the frames and agendas provided by official strategic actors. However, particularly in media systems with marks of political parallelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) or in journalism cultures with more interventionist tendencies (Hanitzsch, 2007), we would also expect to find an adaptation of news stories to the news outlet's editorial line. While broad ideological systems, such as nationalism, are often internalized in culture to a degree that journalists incorporate them into news stories in an unconscious manner, more specific political perspectives are applied consciously. For example, in a recent study on the factors shaping the journalistic coverage of the Israeli 2011-2012 social protest (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, forthcoming), editors in Israeli news outlets that had clear editorial lines (supporting or opposing the protest) described how their framing of protest news stories was shaped by these ideological constraints, such as through the selection of which sources to quote in the headline.² Both specific political alignments and wider, shared ideological assumptions have been consistently found to influence the media's framing of conflict (e.g., see Dor, 2005, for Israeli and Gonen, 2013, for Palestinian media coverage of the Middle East conflict). In addition to political-ideological influences at the organizational level, there is also evidence that political-ideological beliefs of individual journalists can have influence on the formulation of news stories (Patterson & Donsbach, 1996; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, forthcoming).

Of course, not all ideological transformations in the news are necessarily ideologically motivated. Transformations with political-ideological consequences can also result from particular routines, norms, actors and constraints involved in news production, biasing news coverage toward a reproduction of a limited set of ideologies without deliberate intention (van Dijk, 1998). For example, Wolfsfeld (2004) argues that the inherent contradiction between peace-related issues and journalistic norms, routines and newsworthiness criteria, results in the media being structurally less supportive to peace processes than to escalation and the advocacy of violence.

Professional-Normative Transformation

Professional-normative transformation is defined as the journalistic (re)formulation of information and claims in accordance with professional standards and norms. The application of professional-normative transformations is instrumental for asserting and justifying the trustworthiness and relevance of news, distinguishing media content from partisan, uncorroborated, or otherwise doubtful information. It refers to three primary dimensions of journalistic professionalism (see Hallin & Mancini, 2004): a) distinct professional norms of journalism, such as accuracy, impartiality, balance, or multi-perspectivity; b)

² Headlines, in general, have a particularly significant role in ideological transformation, derived from their power for selectively highlighting key aspects and framing audience expectations for the article; see Dor, 2003; van Dijk, 1991.

journalistic autonomy, which lies at the heart of journalism's "watchdog" role and entails a critical approach to the actions of the government actors and other social institutions/actors; and c) a public-service orientation, which suggests, among other things, an orientation toward informing citizens on the important issues on the public agenda and facilitating informed debate on these issues. Transformations based on these professional-normative dimensions include practices such as addition of viewpoints (by either original reporting or the mixing of existing materials), including perspectives that challenge the dominant/official perspective; corrections of inaccurate facts and evidential claims; providing context and background; shifting the perspective from first to third person; and eliminating/mitigating prejudicial language or terms that carry a heavy ideological baggage (replacing them with more neutral terms).

Professional norms always compete with other types of influences and impulses in shaping the work of journalists (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, forthcoming; Zelizer, 2005). However, in wartime and conflict situations, where demands for solidarity, patriotism or authoritative (i.e., official) information move to the forefront, professional standards (in all three dimensions) often lose ground in relation to other types of influences and loyalties, particularly in the first stages of war or other violent escalation (see Zandberg & Neiger, 2005; Robinson, 2004; Schudson, 2002). Yet, these normative-professional impulses do not evaporate in conflict situations. For example, Brown and Vincent (1995) suggest that during the Irangate crisis, concern among American journalists for being a watchdog was greater than the pressure to support the administration's viewpoint of its foreign policy toward Iran, while Althaus (2003) has shown that US television news during the Persian Gulf crisis was more critical than is commonly predicted by the literature on press independence, with journalists exercising "considerable discretion in locating and airing oppositional voices" (p. 381). Other scholars have also demonstrated that under conditions such as lack of consensus among elites or unexpected events, dependency on the establishment decreases, while the proportion of alternative-critical voices grows (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston, 2007; Entman, 2004; Hallin, 1989; Wolfsfeld, 1997). In relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is growing evidence that during the 21st century, the Israeli media have started giving more visibility and voice to Palestinian actors (Balmas, Sheafer, & Wolfsfeld, forthcoming; Kampf & Liebes, 2013). A related trend has also been found in the incorporation of non-domestic critical voices more generally in conflict coverage (Hayes & Guardino, 2010). Kampf and Liebes (2013), as well as Balmas, Sheafer and Wolfsfeld (forthcoming), interpret these trends as reflecting a substantial change in the norms and practices of conflict coverage – particularly in connection with press independence and the "rally around the flag" effect – which can be attributed to factors such as the globalization and commercialization of the news media. While it remains uncertain how durable and generalizable these trends may be, the transparent communication of professionalism through the visible adherence to professional norms and practices is critical to enabling journalism's specific roles in reporting conflict.

Evaluative-Epistemic Transformation

Evaluative transformation can be defined as additions or amendments that establish the authority and credibility of the information presented in the news, or its importance. This category of transformation serves to structure the public agenda and direct the attention of news audiences toward critical events that have important bearings on the affairs of the community. It thus includes journalistic evaluation of two primary dimensions: a) the epistemic truth status of evidential claims presented in the news; and b) the significance of the news story, as it connects to various news values. The former is achieved through discursive strategies such as the use of different epistemic modalities, while the latter is manifested through various discursive measures which highlight the newsworthiness of the story.

Epistemic evaluation is particularly important in the context of evidential claims, defined as ontological claims about some aspect of the world, backed by some epistemic justification (see Baden, 2014). The evidential claims presented in the news are at times people's only source of knowledge or beliefs about what happened or what is about to happen, and thus, particularly in situations of conflict, their depicted and perceived level of credibility can be highly significant. One of the ways in which journalists establish the authority of the claims presented in the news is through the reliance on official sources, which provide non-costly information with an aura of credibility by virtue of its "officialness" (Davies, 2008; Herman and Chomsky, 1988). It is also one of the reasons that in conflict situations, where there is increased demand for authoritative information, the media relies even more heavily than usual on official sources (Robinson, 2004). However, it is not only the identity of the sources that establishes the credibility of the represented claim, but also more or less explicit linguistic evaluations of the credibility of this claim. An important discursive category in this context is that of epistemic modality, formally defined as "(the linguistic expression of) an evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring, or has occurred in a possible world which serves as the universe of interpretation for the evaluation process" (Nuyts, 2001, p. 21; see also Palmer, 2001). This includes, among other modalities, the prevalent use of reporting verbs in news reports (e.g., claim, declare, admit, speculate, hope, doubt, concede, predict, announce), each denoting a different level of confidence in the content of the claim (see Bonyadi, 2011).³ When journalists mold other textual sources they can decrease, increase or maintain the level of credibility attributed to evidential claims in the original texts. On the one hand, as they constantly need to negotiate and establish their social authority as narrators of public events (Zelizer, 1992), journalists may be inclined to raise the level of certainty of reported claims. As suggested by Struckmann, Steinle, Biedermann, Koch and Baden (2012), journalists tend to present information as relatively certain, even if it is often not. On the other hand, cultural and ideological considerations can lead journalists to decrease the level of confidence in the claims of particular actors (e.g., using the reporting verb "claim" when referring to information provided by Palestinians in the Israeli

³ Two other important modalities identified by Bonyadi in journalistic discourse include modal auxiliaries (prediction: will, would; possibility: can, could, may, might; necessity: must, should) and modal adverbs (e.g., unlikely, less likely, undeniably, apparently, clearly, truly, accurately, unacceptably, grandly, surely).

media). Yet, a decreased epistemic status can also be associated with professional norms, when specific information cannot be verified.

While the epistemic qualification of the news serves to endow audiences with an understanding of the certitude of advanced claims and ideas, the evaluative transformations also need to convey a sense of importance and novelty to direct audiences' attention. Predominantly, news is understood to only cover issues of a certain importance: Journalists legitimize their selection of presented news stories by emphasizing in which ways their contents are remarkable or extraordinary, adding specific markers such as "historic", "exclusive", or "for the first time since..." (e.g., "For first time since Gulf War: Rockets fired at Tel Aviv area"). This dimension of news discourse can be captured by the notion of "evaluation" in Labov's (1972) narrative model, referring to the means by which the significance of the story is established. Bell (1991), who applied Labov's model to news discourse, suggests that the function of evaluation in news stories is similar to its function in personal narratives: "to establish the significance of what is being told, to focus the event, and to justify claiming the audience's attention" (p. 151). The lead, which focuses the story in a particular direction is where much of this evaluative discursive work takes place (Bell, 1991). At the same time, evaluative transformation also serves to put the relevance of specific events into perspective: They may be presented as continuations of familiar past developments, likened to other moments in collective memory, or more generally located within a trans-temporal narrative that extends from the shared past into the common future (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2013). In this context, reported events may also be transformed to diminish their importance, acknowledging their occurrence (and possibly, their salient presentation by other media or sources) but challenging their alleged uniqueness, surprise, or criticality. Both the qualification as important, and the contextualization among other, equally or possibly more important events contributes to the news' role for structuring the public's agenda. In the context of conflict coverage, evaluative strategies and transformations are significant in identifying what conflict-related evidential claims are marked by the media as worthy of the audience's attention, as well as the focal concerns around which interpretative frames are constructed by the news media (see Entman, 1993; Baden, 2014).

Emotive Transformation

Emotive transformation is defined as tuning the level of affect or appeal to audiences' emotions in news texts. By transforming information to gain some emotive charging, journalism involves audiences in the news and contributes to motivating them to participate in the community's affairs.

While affective dimensions were traditionally discussed mainly in the context of tabloids and sensationalism, there has been a growing interest in recent years in the representation of emotions in mainstream news (e.g., Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Peters, 2011; Richards & Rees, 2011). Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) has suggested that the same way that journalists have a "strategic ritual of objectivity" (Tuchman, 1972), there is also a "strategic ritual of emotionality", defined as "an institutionalized and systematic practice of journalists narrating and infusing their reporting with emotion" (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013, p. 129). This infusion of emotion into news stories can be done either through textual additions by

the journalists themselves or through selecting and highlighting emotional dimensions in others' discourse. Discursive strategies in this domain can include the use of emotionally-loaded descriptors, such as crisis, catastrophe, disaster, devastation or slaughter (Bryant and Barton, 2011), a focus on personalized stories (Bas & Grabe, 2013; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2012), connection to past collective traumas and grief (Kitch & Hume, 2008; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2013), or future-oriented arousal of fear and hope (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2008).

All of these strategies are particularly significant in the construction of interpretative frames and agendas for action, and can play a destructive or constructive role in conflict coverage. On the one hand, emotive language has been viewed as associated with war-journalism frames, in contrast to peace journalism (Lee & Maslog, 2005), as well as with ethnocentric practices (Wolfsfeld, Frosh, & Awabdy, 2008). In particular, Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy suggest that a high level of emotionalism is associated with "a victims mode of reporting", which is dominant in situations where the major event concerns a nation's own victims. When the casualties are on the other side, the news media tend to adopt a "defensive mode of reporting", which is marked by low level of emotionalism. On the other hand, a growing tendency to focus on personalized stories of lay people involved in the conflict, including victims on all sides of conflicts (Kampf & Liebes, 2013), can be constructive in provoking identification and empathy that extend beyond one's own side of the conflict. Both views support an understanding of journalism that cannot be reduced to the dispassionate, distanced recording or "objective facts" but needs to also involve its audiences – pursuing both objectives of civic engagement and empowerment, and boosting reader loyalty and sales.

Structural Transformation

Finally, structural transformation refers to the adjustment of news texts to conventional journalistic storytelling formats, as well as to spatial and temporal constraints. Transforming information structurally, journalists address the most basic function of the news to reduce the immense complexity of the world to a limited set of graspable, addressable issues and events.

News stories constitute a storytelling genre with its own structural conventions (Bell, 1991), or what van Dijk (1986) described as a conventional schema, consisting of a number of hierarchically ordered categories which organize, top down, the production of news reports: Following van Dijk, abstracted categories used to structure news stories include general summary, main events, historical and contextual background, consequences, verbal reactions, and comments by journalists. Although the structural characteristics of news stories are not interesting in their own right in the context of journalistic transformation of conflict discourse, they can interact with other dimensions discussed above to advance specific frames, agendas and claims, while excluding others. For example, in cutting existing materials in order to create a coherent story or fit space limitations (whether due to actual spatial limitations or audiences' assumed attention span), journalists need to prioritize certain claims, frames and agendas over others (based on professional, cultural, ideological or evaluative criteria). In a similar vein, in filling in missing customary elements in available materials, particularly those that correspond to the structural elements of interpretive frames (i.e., concern

definition, causal attribution, future projection, and evaluation; based on Baden's [2014] adaptation of Entman's [1993] model), journalists develop and adjust the frames provided by external actors.

Time constraints constitute another structural factor that shapes news content (Patterson, 1998; Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Neiger, 2014). Research suggests that increasing time pressures involved in the production of news negatively affect the quality of news and the ability of the news media to adequately inform the public. According to this view, time pressures lead to shortsightedness and to preference of timeliness, novelty and breaking news over accuracy, multi-sourcing and enduring issues (Patterson, 1998; Plasser, 2005; Reich & Godler, 2014). In transforming conflict information into news, the extreme time pressure characterizing conflict situations profoundly limit journalists' ability to verify evidential claims provided by external sources, add additional perspectives to existing materials, or put the reported events in an appropriate context. Time constraints, in combination with financial considerations, are also a main factor leading to the practice of "Churnalism", where journalists simply repackage press releases or materials from news agencies, with little transformation, if any (see Davies, 2008). In conflict news, this practice can result in the uncritical journalistic adoption of the claims, frames and agendas advanced by strategic actors.

Discourse-level journalistic transformation

Not all transformative practices applied by journalists can be limited to changes made in the re-construction of specific, well-identified source texts. Simultaneously to the intertextual construction of specific news stories based on available input material, journalists also operate within, and are acutely aware of, a wider, constantly evolving news discourse. Situating their stories within this news discourse and reacting to its dynamics, journalists thus engage in intertextual practices referring not to specific, concretely identifiable texts, but to a latent sense of news as ongoing discourse. Accordingly, the second major set of transformations investigated by WP7 concerns the ways in which conflict news discourse changes and evolves in a self-reflexive manner over time – partly as a result of the over-time aggregation of multiple individual journalistic decisions regarding intertextual transformations, and partly in effect of journalists being aware of their peers' practices and constructions, and reacting to these in characteristic ways. Two complementary dynamics are of special interest in this context, relating to the evolution of journalistic practices/loyalties themselves during the life course of conflicts, and the dynamics of evolving conflict-related frames and agendas for action.

The first set of discourse-level transformations addresses changes in the nature of journalistic content-based practices, in particular the evolution of the different types of journalistic intertextual transformations over the life cycle of conflicts. News stories, as suggested above, are shaped by different and often contradicting impulses and loyalties, and nowhere is the tension between these different orientations become more pronounced than in conflict situations (see also Zelizer, 2005). According to a dominant line of argument in scholarship on media and conflict, early stages of violent conflicts are marked by "rallying around the flag" tendencies, while professional impulses regain force in later stages of the conflict, particularly when political consensus breaks down (e.g., Hallin, 1989; Neiger & Zandberg, 2005; Wolfsfeld,

1997). Comprehending the dynamics of news in relation to synchronized biases and patterns in the way how journalists apply the above intertextual transformations – specifically in relation to common phases of conflict – thus adds further insight beyond the investigation of concrete transformative practices.

The second set of discourse-level transformations concerns the evolution of interpretive frames and agendas for action in news discourse (see Motta & Baden, 2013), in particular the interconnected processes of polarization and radicalization.⁴ Polarization occurs if increasingly disconnected views of some conflictual issue are held by different groups within a society (e.g., religious/ethnic groups, political factions, majority and minority), or between different societies that have a common object of concern (such as two societies in conflict with one another). Radicalization is a process whereby individuals and groups increasingly adopt uncompromising, absolute views upon social reality, including the construction of the social environment in increasingly essentialist, Manichean terms (Sageman, 2007). Polarization is considered a prerequisite for the escalation of conflict (Sunstein, 2003; Shmueli et al., 2006), while radicalization is by definition conflict-oriented. It should be emphasized, however, that although radicalization goes hand in hand with polarization, these are not identical processes: first, whereas polarization is relational, in that it concerns the distribution of beliefs and stances among different groups, radicalization can also occur within one group/individual. Second, polarization does not necessarily involve radical positions on each side.

Both polarization and radicalization have two main forms: positional and interpretive. Positional polarization/radicalization refers to the agendas advanced by different groups and subgroups, whereas interpretative polarization/radicalization refers to the contextualizations of specific claims/objects (i.e., the construction of interpretative frames). The news media can contribute to interpretive and positional processes of polarization and radicalization not only by disseminating the agendas and frames advanced by specific individuals and groups to the larger group/public, but also by reshaping and reinforcing these agendas and frames through practices of journalistic transformation. The three types of intertextual transformations that we would expect to be at play in these processes are the cultural, ideological and emotive transformations (for examples of discursive strategies in news that mark polarized, radicalized discourse, particularly in the context of “us-them” constructions, see Ruud, 2003; Steuter & Wills, 2010). The disseminated agendas and frames are then appropriated by the public and political actors and reinserted into the news, resulting in a process through which news discourse itself can become increasingly polarized and radicalized over time. This pattern is specifically exacerbated by the “echo chamber effect”, which is characteristic of the new information environment (Jamieson & Cappella, 2008; Sunstein, 2003) and can be considered a major driver of polarization and radicalization processes. In this environment, as an effect of highly diversified, fragmented and audience-specific information diets, people are increasingly exposed primarily to information, arguments and sub-communities that support their views. As a consequence, these views receive disproportionate confirmation, solidify and become more extreme, while deviant views appear increasingly invalid. The news media then reflects and at times reinforces these polarized and radicalized

⁴ For the detailed definitions of polarization and radicalization within INFOCORE, see Baden’s working definitions of these terms. The brief presentation in this paper is largely based on these definitions.

interpretations of the social reality. Also in in polarized pluralist media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), where the news media tend to be aligned with and predominantly consumed by different political groups to begin with, polarization and radicalization processes in news discourse should be quicker and more pronounced than in less fragmented, more internally plural media environments.

Research agenda

Building on the shared agenda for the content-analytic Work Packages, focusing in its first stages on various dimensions of the building blocks of conflict discourse (i.e., interpretive frames, agendas for action, and evidential claims) across different domains of conflict-related public discourse (see Baden, 2014), WP7 aims to examine the particular contribution of the news media to this discourse. Focusing specifically on the transformative practices distinguishing journalistic news production from the communications of other societal actors, WP7 analyzes the patterns of intertextual and discourse-level journalistic transformation over the life course of different conflicts. While specific elements of these transformations were examined to greater and lesser degrees in scholarship on journalism and on media coverage of conflict, investigations have not considered the various journalistic practices of (cultural, political-ideological, professional-normative, evaluative-epistemic, emotive and structural) transformations within an integrative framework. Furthermore, unlike previous studies that inferred transformations solely based on the analysis of the final journalistic product, this analysis systematically compares resulting news outputs to the available, transformed information used as input for the news. Finally, while existing studies mostly focused on a few Western media systems within limited time frames, WP7 applies a more widely comparative approach. Drawing upon INFOCORE's relational, longitudinal and comparative design within the integrative framework presented in this paper, WP7 will thus focus on the following main areas of investigation:

- 1) Identifying the range of journalistic practices associated with intertextual transformations in conflict coverage, with a primary focus on the transformation of statement and press releases by strategic actors. In addition to identifying the various dimensions and attributes of different kinds of transformations, we will also examine the relative dominance of different transformations and their interrelationships (e.g., typical constellations of transformations in news stories). This stage is also aimed to refine and develop the initial framework presented in this paper, in order to create a comprehensive, grounded model of intertextual journalistic transformation.
- 2) Identifying the contextual conditions that contribute to the identified journalistic practices, based on a systematic comparative analysis of the manifestations of the various journalistic transformations in different kinds and stages of conflicts, within different media and political systems, and across different types of media located within and outside conflict areas.
- 3) Identifying patterns in the evolution of interpretive frames and agendas for action in conflict news discourse over time, focusing in particular on polarization and depolarization processes within and across national/ethnic groups, as well as processes of radicalization. Both polarization and radicalization processes will be examined in relation to escalation and de-escalation processes in the

conflict itself, in order to theorize the relationship between the evolution of news discourse and the evolution of conflicts: how, on the one hand, interpretive frames and agendas for action in news discourse are changing in reaction to developments in the conflict, and how, on the other hand, news discourse contributes to- or forebodes these developments.

Finally, at later stages of the project, the content-based practices of journalistic transformation will be linked to the overall process of news dissemination (as investigated by the content-analytic and audiences WPs), as well as to the actors who produce the news and provide the materials for journalistic transformation (as investigated by Work Packages 1, 2 and 3). We will address journalists' views and explanations of transformation practices in the production of conflict news, as well as political actors' perceptions and strategies in relation to these practices.

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