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### **Peace Journalism through the Lense of Conflict Theory: Analysis and Practice**

*Kurzfassung:* Friedensjournalismus stellt einen mutigen Versuch dar, die Rolle von Journalisten, die über Konflikte berichten, neu zu definieren und sie zu rekonstruieren. Als neues Forum des Wissens baut Friedensjournalismus auf verschiedenen Theorien und Disziplinen auf, um seine Gültigkeit und Anwendbarkeit zu stärken. Eine Hauptquelle, auf die sich Friedensjournalismus stützen kann, um sowohl seinen analytischen als auch seine normativen Anspruch abzusichern, ist die Konflikttheorie. Dieser Artikel zeigt, wie verschiedene Erkenntnisse der Konflikttheorie Friedensjournalismus transparenter und zu einem wirkungsvollen Werkzeug in der Hand von Reportern und ihren Lesern machen können, um die Sinnlosigkeit von Konflikten zu realisieren und deren Lösung herbeizuführen. Noch spezifischer behandelt dieser Artikel die Vorstellung der Medien als dritte Partei in Konflikten. Die dritte Partei fungiert als Moderator der Kommunikation bzw. als Vermittler oder Schlichter zwischen den zwei rivalisierenden Parteien. Wir behaupten, dass Friedensjournalismus als dritte Partei die Chancen für Lösung und Versöhnung am besten erhöhen kann, indem er die Normen und Gewohnheiten der Konfliktberichterstattung ändert. Dies wird kurz und bündig anhand dreier Fallstudien langwieriger Konflikte dargestellt, welche aus der Sicht der Konflikttheorie beschrieben werden. Indem reguläre Zeitungsberichterstattung Friedensjournalismus gegenübergestellt wird, werden die Vorzüge des letzteren aufgedeckt.

*Abstract:* Peace Journalism is a bold attempt to redefine and reconstruct the role of journalists who cover conflicts. As a new arena of knowledge, Peace Journalism draws upon several theories and disciplines to enrich its validity and applicability. A major source which peace journalism can rely on to bolster its analytical as well as its normative rigor is conflict theory. This article demonstrates how several insights from conflict theory can advance the lucidity of peace journalism and render it a powerful tool in the hands of reporters and their readers to realize the futility of conflict and to bring about its resolution. More specifically, the article introduces the notion of the media as a third party to a conflict. The third party is the facilitator of communication, the mediator or the arbitrator between the two rivaling sides. It is our contention that Peace Journalism as a third side can best enhance prospects for resolution and reconciliation by changing the norms and habits of reporting conflicts. This is succinctly illustrated in three case studies of protracted conflicts, which are described through the lenses of conflict theory. By contrasting regular newspaper coverage with peace journalism coverage, the merits of the latter are revealed..

## 1. The Rationale: Peace Journalism as the Third Party

Conflict is a human interaction, which involves parties with incompatible interests. What renders such incongruity an overt and explicit strife is the awareness of the unsuitability and the ensuing choice of confrontation. Awareness is raised by communication, either with the environment or with the rivaling party. Communication produces information, which affects each side's decision whether to hash out the differences or shun them. Thus, communication becomes a crucial determinant in conflict and conflict resolution: it creates consciousness of, and attentiveness to, the other. Destructive and debilitating communication, which promotes noises, distortions, interruptions, deceptions, ploys, and false clues, promotes and expedites conflict. In contrast, constructive or beneficial communication relies on honesty, open channels and the effort to align the sent message with the received one. Such a pattern of interaction strives for accommodation and the relaxation of tensions and hostilities (Tillett, 1999; Lederach and Jenner, 2002; Pruitt and Kim, 2004).

Peace Journalism (henceforth- PJ) has the characteristics and capabilities of encouraging constructive communication. This paper illustrates how the introduction of PJ into conflict theory can advance the theoretical understanding and actual practice of conflict transformation. Peace journalism, as a motivator of peace and as a promoter of depolarization and de-escalation, (Galtung, in Hackett and Zhao, 2005) can accomplish a significant role by inspiring journalists to portray disputes in a different manner than that to which they usually ascribe. A successful conflict resolution process must be based on genuine and honest interaction between antagonists, whereby unmet human needs are frankly discussed and interests and motivations rather than positions are candidly aired. Interests such as the fulfillment of basic needs motivate parties to pursue conflicts in earnest. The continuing ignorance of such grievances turns conflicts into deep-rooted or protracted ones (Azar, 1985; Burton, 1987; Montville, 1990; Peleg, 1999). Peace journalism, with its keen eye for causes and stimuli and with its commitment to a broader and fairer depiction (Galtung, 1996; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005), can and should bring such unattended human needs to the fore and alleviate intractable conflicts.

Protracted social conflicts, or apparently irresolvable disputes (Fisher, 1997), usually require a third party to mediate between the rivaling parties, or at least, to facilitate their interaction. On-going conflicts generate hostility, animosity, and consequently mistrust to the extent that no direct communication is feasible. This predicament is further exacerbated when the issues in contention are intangible and cannot be compromised (Burton 1979; Mitchell, 1981; Peleg, 2002). The idea of a third party ameliorating dialogue between intransigent belligerents was enthusiastically pursued in various methods and approaches. Third party consultation (Walton, 1987) emphasized the facilitation of productive confrontations, in which rivals openly discuss their incompatibilities. The third party's role is to stimulate mutual positive motivation to reduce conflict. Similarly, techniques such as controlled communication workshops (Burton, 1969) and problem-solving interactions (Kelman, 1972; Doob, 1981) were tried in small group fashion and in interpersonal orientations. The strategic functions of the third party in these endeavors were described by a leading scholar in the field, as follows: "balancing the situational power of parties, synchronizing confrontation efforts, pacing the phases of the dialogue, promoting openness [and] enhancing communication" (Fisher, 1997:143). These are precisely the tasks that peace journalism attempts to pursue.

I suggest, therefore, that peace journalism will assume the role of the third party in its facilitation capacity: allowing for the rivaling sides to get to know one another, to uphold understanding and empathy, to focus on creativity and human ingenuity to resolve conflicts and to emphasize truth-oriented, people-oriented and solution-oriented journalism to expedite peace. The relationship between conflict theory and peace journalism is reciprocal and contributive in both directions. Therefore, the research question in the heart of this concept paper can be presented as "what insights does conflict theory offer into how the media can serve as a third party to conflicts." To answer this question and to elucidate the potential nexus between conflict theory and PJ, I will approach this issue from two complementary directions: the triangular construction of conflict and the spatial escalation model of conflict. These two perspectives in conjunction, a structural one and a dynamic one, will demonstrate the putative merit of PJ as a third party in conflict resolution processes.

## 2. The Structural Dimension: the Triangle of Conflict

Conflict, in many respects, can be perceived as a unitary phenomenon. It has a similar structure and the same dynamics of escalation and de-escalation in spite of its numerous disparate spheres of occurrence. Thus, family feuds, office turf battles, intra-state clashes between vying factions or international war share common features. The structure that can best describe all types of conflict is the triangle of situation-attitude-behavior (Mitchell, 1981) or the ABC triangle of Attitude, Behavior and Contradiction (Galtung, 1969).

The situation of conflict is the initial state of incongruent interests, or the controversy. In other words, these are the circumstances that galvanized the parties to confrontation. The attitude connotes the psychological dimension: all the stigmata, prejudice, labeling, demonizing and de-legitimizing processes each side confers on the other. This mutual practice of disparagement and vilification is the crux of conflict and a major source of its worsening: stimuli for escalation are mostly psychological and subjective. Finally, behavior is how parties act and what they do with regard to the situation they are in

and following the attitude they develop towards the other. PJ can mitigate tensions and exert favorable influence in all three dimensions:

1. *Situation*: Recounting the initial interests in contention in contextual manner, whereby all circumstances, environmental conditions, spectrum of availabilities and sequential background are disclosed. Such a description does not present the parties to the conflict as hungry contenders vying for ascendancy and eager for the other's defeat. Describing the complexity of the scene: not two rivals trapped in an ultimate zero-sum-game of winning or dying but a complex arena of multiple players and options (Tannen, 1999).
2. *Attitude*: Laying out the gamut of psychological feelings and outlooks that are involved. Concentrating not just on the denigrating and condescending aspects of the dialogue between the sides, but also emphasizing fears, concerns, insecurities, mistrust, miscommunication, and ignorance to make the repertoire of dehumanization more human. Abandoning false and excessive polarization (Mnookin and Ross, 1995; Bar-Tal and Teichman, 2005) for a more reasonable and impartial study of mindsets under tension and duress.
3. *Behavior*: Calling attention to the fact that violence is not the only form of activity in conflict. Most conflict accounts are fighting or aggression-oriented. They are formulated in competition parlance and underscored by images of vanquish or subjugation. But violence is not the only performance in conflict, and certainly must not be the obvious one. Attempts to negotiate or create contacts can be depicted alongside with the more palpable belligerency descriptions.

This paper examines three cases of seemingly intractable, on-going conflicts--The Northern Ireland, the Basque, and the Palestinian-Israeli--to exhibit structure and escalation of conflict, and then, by introducing elements of PJ to each case, it demonstrates the potential capacity of the peace journalism perspective and understanding to pacify contention and reverse its deadly course.

## 2.1 Three Protracted Conflicts

Protracted conflicts display enduring features such as multiple reinforcing cleavages, perpetuated grievances and intolerable inequality and injustice. Such conflicts are usually not discrete and hence, cannot be studied in isolation. A first step toward trying to understand them is to become familiarized with their background and the motivations that spawn them. This section, however, displays the complexities and sensitivities of PJ: admittedly, the contextualization of these conflicts will always seem to different readers value-laden and biased. The following descriptions will not be totally immune to such criticism but an effort has been made to minimize partiality.

### a) Northern Ireland

The rift of the Irish Island is almost a century old and it is a corollary of a millennium of struggle between the indigenous population and the English who subdue them. The origins of the conflict go all the way back to the eleventh-century Norman takeover of England and the following subordination of the Irish by successive English kings. But it was only in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century that English colonization really took root. It took shape in the relocation and resettlement of thousands of Englishmen and Scotsmen, mainly in Ulster, the nine northernmost counties in Ireland (Tilly, 2003). The national and ethnic schism matured and stabilized over the years into religious cleavage as well, when the two rivaling factions of Christianity consolidated as the Catholic Irish patriots versus the pro-English Protestants, the descendants of the English and Scottish settlers, in Ireland.

On the heels of WWI a civil war broke out, which brought about English military control. Within two years a partition agreement was signed between the King and the Irish leadership: an Irish Free State, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland composed of six counties as an integral part of England. Hard-line Irish Republicans refused to accept the treaty and initiated the resurrection of 1922. Tensions were mainly concentrated in Ulster, or Northern Ireland with its Protestant majority and Catholic minority. An uneasy *modus vivendi* was kept, interrupted by occasional outbursts of violence. In 1969 hostilities erupted again and commenced a new cycle of conflict heightened by the *Bloody Sunday* of 1972, the massacre of civilians by British soldiers. This escalation triggered the British government to resume direct rule over the province, which lasted roughly 20 years. The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed some attempts to resolve the situation with the bilateral cease-fire agreement of 1994 and the Good Friday agreement of 1998. However, anxieties and animosities remain until this very day. The disagreements and misunderstandings between the two sides linger and the mistrust remains intact (Miller, 1994).

### b) Israel/Palestine

The seeds of the Arab-Israeli conflict, or in its more concise and contemporary version, the Palestinian-Israeli strife, were planted in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Jews began immigrating to their perceived homeland to find the place already inhabited by indigenous Arabs. The birth of the Zionist movement in 1897 galvanized waves of newcomers from Europe and other corners of the world, who began settling and resettling Palestine. National institutions and organi-

zations were founded as an infrastructure for a prospective Jewish sovereignty. Foundations were laid to establish a safe haven for persecuted Jews all over the world by creating the State of Israel in May 1948 in defiance of the British Mandate. The irony, and indeed, the tragedy of the ensuing conflict was that the Jewish national movement stimulated and inspired an Arab national movement, which protested and rebelled against the dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs by the overflow of Jewish immigration.

The two incompatible paths collided, at first in an unpremeditated way and in a form of riots, dispersed clashes and sporadic violence. The years 1920-1921 and 1929 in particular experienced occasional massacres and bloody assaults against Jews, which triggered retaliatory attacks and the establishment of Jewish defense forces. In 1936, the Arabs of Palestine demonstrated for the first time, signs of cohesion and organization. Their leadership launched what became to be known as the Great Arab Rebellion, which paralyzed the economy of the land and convinced the British rulers of Palestine to take heed of the Arab demands (Bickerton and Klausner, 2002). The escalating confrontation between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, with the British as the incompetent and reluctant third side, came to a head during the WWII years. Between 1939 and 1945, while the UK was preoccupied with fighting the Nazis, both claimants of the Holy Land were jockeying for possession for the day after. The UN declaration of November 1947 partitioning the land between the two sides did not ease the tension because it was rejected by the Arabs. Hostilities peaked and an atmosphere of an imminent war took over. This scenario was realized in 1948, when hours after the British evacuation, the Jewish leadership declared Israel an independent sovereign State. The next morning, invading Arab armies from the neighboring states of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon invaded and the Arab Israeli conflict entered its full-fledged military phase. The peak of this phase has been the 1967 war, in which Israel took control of the Gaza peninsula in the south, the Golan Heights in the North, and the West Bank of the Jordan River to its East. To this day, approximately 2 million Palestinians live under Israeli military rule. Five wars and two centuries after the point of departure, the two sides are still at odds despite some high points along the way such as the Israel-Egypt peace treaty (1979), the (Israel-Jordan peace agreement (1994) and some brave attempts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli dispute.

### **c) The Basque Country**

Euskadi, or Basque is the name most commonly used to refer to the people located on the shores of the Bay of Biscay and on the two sides of the western Pyrenees that separate the Spain and France. The Basque people have maintained their own unique identity throughout the centuries, while at the same time keeping their association with Spain as part of the republic. Following the coup d'état that overthrew the Republican Government and the bloody civil war of 1936-9, General Franco established a dictatorship that was to last for forty years. The standardized idea of the State applied by Franco, together with the fact that Basque nationalist forces fought on the side of the Republic, meant that the Basque Country suffered strong repression and the total inhibition of systems of self-government (Shabad and Ramo, 1995).

The death of Franco in 1975 led to the monarchy of Juan Carlos I. The new king took upon himself to transform Spain into a thriving democracy. The Basque nationalists and some left-wing formations wanted a break with the previous regime, but in practice it was replaced by a transition process from dictatorship to democracy. The challenges faced by this process were to deal with claims for basic democratic freedoms, amnesty for political prisoners, and the claims for sovereignty of the nations that made up the State, especially Catalonia and the Basque Country, the vanguard of political struggle during Franco's regime. The new Spanish Constitution of 1978 acknowledged and guaranteed the right to autonomy of all its provinces. However, the Constitution did not satisfy the claims of the Basque nationalists for independence and self-determination (Kurlanski, 1999).

ETA, the Basque armed national liberation movement, emerged in December 1958, half-way through the period of Franco. The group was born of the dissatisfaction of certain nationalist sectors who considered the moderate nationalists too passive in their defense of Basque culture and against the dictatorship. Initially it was a political group that limited its operations to propaganda. The move to the armed struggle started with occasional bombs, hold-ups and sabotage that only caused material damage. During the first decade of activity, the police detained members of ETA but there were no human casualties as a result of its operations. The first fatalities occurred on 2nd August 1968, and from then until Franco's death the action that had the greatest impact was the attack on Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, President of the Spanish government and the designated successor of Franco. For the next two decades, ETA and the Spanish police would engage in a merciless struggle, which exacted hundreds of casualties.

In March 1992 the leadership of ETA was detained in a single military operation, which handed the organization its biggest setback ever. Until then, ETA's strategy was based on the demand for political negotiations with the Madrid government. Following the detentions in 1992, ETA's policy changed considerably. They adopted a two-phase path: one with the Spanish State and then an inner Basque venue. In the first stage, if the Spanish government would recognize the right to self-determination and the territorial unity of Euskal Herria, ETA would declare a ceasefire. That would allow a democratic process for the Basque citizens to decide their own future. This shift brought some tranquility to the area but differences between the rivaling sides persisted. The current phase of the conflict began in 1998 when ETA opened direct dialogue with

the Basque nationalist parties without going through the government in Madrid. From that moment on, ETA stipulated ending violence by getting a nationalist agreement. Intermittent flare-ups of violence were justified by failure to sign an agreement on sovereignty in the terms proposed by this organization. That was the longest truce by ETA. In the last two years, out of frustration and dwindling supporters, violence against politicians, journalists, members of the judiciary and armed forces resumed. The incongruence of interests between ETA and the Spanish authorities were never dealt with.

The role of the media in sustaining the conflict and preserving the acrimonious atmosphere of suspicion and abhorrence has been substantial in all three cases. This was the routine and customary manner in which disputes were habitually covered. But such a routine is not a matter of course and should not be taken for granted. As Kempf points out:

"[J]ournalists always have two options: either to take sides and to incite one party against the other, or to play the role of moderating third party in order to improve the communication between them and contribute to constructive conflict transformation" (2003, p. 83).

The following will be an attempt to demonstrate the use of the media as a third party in those conflicts. A third side, in the terms of conflict resolution theory, serves as a container of escalation. One of the field's leading theorists likens the role of the third side to "a social immune system preventing the spread of the virus of violence" (Ury, 2000). Since this clearly wasn't the way the media treatment of conflicts functioned so far, our emphasis here is on transforming the approach by which journalists depict their stories.

## 2.2 The Peace Journalism Model and the Conflict Triangle

The peace journalism model (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005) originally formulated by Johan Galtung, posits some dichotomies to differentiate the concept of PJ from regular, or war-oriented journalism. These are only some of the model's features. Others are displayed later in section F:

Peace/Conflict Journalism	War/Violence Journalism
<p><i>Peace-Orientated</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore conflict <i>formation</i>, x parties, y goals, z issues, 'win-win' orientation.</li> <li>2. Open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture.</li> <li>3. Making conflicts transparent.</li> <li>4. Giving voice to all parties, empathy, understanding.</li> <li>5. See conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity.</li> <li>6. Humanization of all sides; more so the worse the weapon.</li> <li>7. Proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs.</li> <li>8. Focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma, damage to structure/culture).</li> </ol>	<p><i>War-Orientated</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on conflict <i>arena</i>, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war, zero-sum orientation.</li> <li>2. Closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone.</li> <li>3. Making wars opaque/secret.</li> <li>4. 'Us-them' journalism, propaganda, voice, for 'us'.</li> <li>5. See 'them' as the problem, focus on who prevails in war.</li> <li>6. Dehumanization of 'them'; more so the worse the weapon.</li> <li>7. Reactive: waiting or violence before reporting.</li> <li>8. Focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage).</li> </ol>

These distinctions will help demonstrate the value of peace journalism to conflict resolution processes. If we associate the first three items with the *situation* dimension of conflict, the next three items with the *attitude* dimension and the last two items with the *behavior* dimension, we get criteria with which to assess the nature and orientation of media messages. Equipped with these analytical tools, the actual media discourse about the conflicts can be examined.

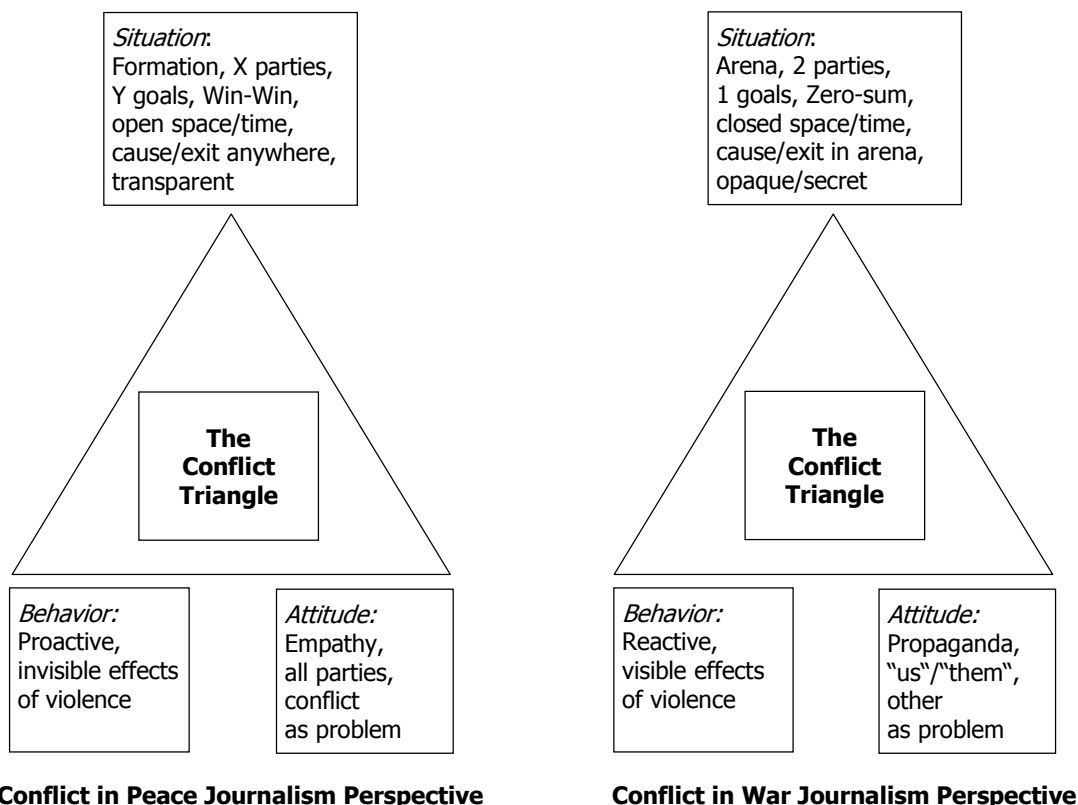


Figure 1: PJ and WJ Attributes within Conflict Dimensions

### 2.3 The Conflict Triangle in Conventional Journalism

The *situation* is the first dimension of conflict to tackle. It illuminates the dispute's historical foundations and the original discrepancies between the parties. The media, as the conveyer of stories, can deliver such an account in more than one fashion, with differing emphases and nuances. History as a concept can be tricky, for it is not what has actually happened in the past, but what certain observers saw, understood and recounted. Thus, several contending, even contradictory, versions of the same events might emerge. Here, the more attractive storyteller prevails. Describing roots of conflicts adheres to the same rule-of-thumb: subjectivity of the relaters rather than objectivity of "reality".

The media as storytellers, wishing to attract audience in an era of multi-channel, rating obsessed and commercial time-span mindsets, opt for a more dramatic, more emotional, more provocative and more sensational mode of telling. Their natural choice would be the war/violence perspective, which is strewn with the ample amounts of blood and guts, heroes and villains, righteousness and wickedness (Shinar, 2000). The next session analyzes *situation* press descriptions of the three conflicts. It detects the features of traditional journalism and then attempt to demonstrate the impression of the same accounts had they been painted in PJ colors. The media citations represent various sources, with disparate proximity to the conflict: some are directly involved (Loyalist and Republican press in Northern Ireland); others are less directly involved (Spanish press in the Basque conflict) and some are utterly extraneous to the conflict (CNN and TIME magazine). This is done to demonstrate the ubiquity of PJ, and on the other hand, the temptation of the WJ coverage regardless of how involved the reporter is.

#### 1. The Situation Vertex:

(Arena, 2 parties 1 goal, Zero-sum, closed space/time, opaque/secret).

##### *Northern Ireland:*

The reports of the clashes in Northern Ireland usually focus on the *arena* of hostilities rather than on the origins of the strife. When the location of the conflict is described, each newspaper, the Catholic *Irish News* and the Protestant *News Letter*, tries to paint the scene with its own colors and substantiate its side of the story as 'real'. For example, the *Irish News* constantly refers to Northern Ireland as The North to connote the irrefutable relationship between the two parts. The *News Letter*, on the other hand, routinely refers to Northern Ireland as Ulster to emphasize the historic nine-county prov-

ince of England, and thus to perpetuate the linkage with the UK. The relevant parties to the conflict and their prospective national and religious affiliations are given special weight in the Irish war journalism. For years, the Catholic *Irish News* stubbornly bracketed under Home News all the events that occurred in both north and south Ireland. The World News section covered, among others, events in Britain. The rival *News Letter* used different titles, assuming the UK under local events and the Republic of Ireland as 'abroad' (Wilson, 1997).

The two newspapers unremittingly uphold, however, the rigid dichotomy between the belligerent communities. They assiduously align the Protestant with Unionist and Catholic with Nationalist. Thus, they contract the arena of discord into two participants, two main camps that are pitted one against the other. By lumping together all Catholics within the political position of Nationalists, i.e., Irish patriots advocating the unification of North and South into one nation, and identifying all Protestants as unequivocally Unionists who crave the kinship with Britain, the media distort the understanding of the conflict. The news reports flatten out the diversity within each religious community between moderates and extremists and nullify the existence of other groups in Northern Ireland, such as Chinese or Muslims. The polemic is unreasonably accentuated and heightened and the antagonists are solidified against each other to the point Giddens calls "the degenerate spirals of communication" (1994).

This crude and deliberate dichotomy spills over to the geographical parameters of the conflict. The BBC in its broadcasting routine refers to west Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, as mainly a "nationalist area" i.e., Catholic, whereas other areas are distinctly stamped as "loyalist," or Protestant. While it is true that the warring communities dwell together and concentrate in particular areas, it is still not a clear-cut division. Characterizing the geographical divide in such simplistic dyadic way heightens the perception of territoriality and fuels the tension further. The immediate corollary of such a formulation is the so called "parades controversy," of Catholics defiantly marching in Protestant turfs and vice versa. Had this rigid physical partition not been repeatedly stressed in the media, the parades would not have become such a volatile instigator of violence. The BBC North Ireland controller, Pat Loughery, acknowledged the problem of portraying strictly two sides to the conflict by admitting that "... there are many traditions, many backgrounds, and many identities and to easily succumb to an analysis that is simple dichotomy ... is to take the political polarization and to allow it to appropriate a far more diverse [situation]" (quoted in Wilson, 1997:17).

A lot of ambiguity is being kept in the media reports about the conflict. The vagueness has served to numb readers to the human tragedy involved and to implant the notion that nothing can be done. A keen observer noticed that describing the conflict as

"... a series of unconnected incidents helps promote in readers' minds the idea that the violence is mindless and has not grown out of specific economic, political and military causes" (Lundy, 1983).

Such a portrayal hardly encourages political activism or wide popular protest against the ongoing conflict due to its detached and isolated illustration of events. The consistently indistinct reporting affected the way people have viewed and understood the Northern Ireland situation. The regular lack of clarification and perspective and the omission of background created in the minds of readers a "procession of inexplicable events" (ibid.). The main theme became the illogical and unreasonable state of affairs, which was really a vacuous and inane umbrella expression to camouflage the complexities. As Elliott (1976) indicates: "the tendency of the media was to report violent events as simply irrational and horrid ... Such events were irrational *because* they were horrid" (original emphasis). Referring to the Northern Ireland events in the patronizing and haughty term of 'troubles' does not help either and leads to cynical reactions such as "the 'troubles' are like the weather: they appear completely beyond anyone's control" (Greensdale, 1993).

#### *Israel/Palestine:*

The gist of the quarrel between Israelis and Palestinians is captured in the mere title of the first all-out war between them in 1948. While the Israelis proudly call it the war of Independence, the Palestinians remember it as the Al Naqba, or the catastrophe. The media on each side reiterate and perpetuate these vying descriptions to revive the mythology of each party. As far as the Israeli newspapers are concerned, the conflict is between the Israelis and "the Arabs," the "Muslim world," or "the Palestinians". It is always a two-sided controversy, in which the just side, the Israelis, battle the monolithic anti-Israeli side. Any internal Arab or Palestinian differences are shunned in favor of the neat, bi-lateral illustration. Another habit is the description of the setting or location of events. The entire conflict is limited to the Middle East, and more precisely, to the jurisdiction of Mandatory Palestine and its neighbors. The relevance of occurrences in Europe or in the rest of the Arab and Muslim world is played down. The sequential references of history are ignored in a closed space-time paradigm. The dispute is regularly introduced as purely and unequivocally zero-sum: two peoples struggling for one state. There is no compromise: either bigger Israel or bigger Palestine. One denies the basic rights of the other and vice versa.

In most accounts in the Israeli media there is no serious and profound discussion about the historical roots of the dispute with the Arabs. There is a comfortable ambiguity hanging over any descriptions which relate to past events, chronologies, or sequential turns of events. The impervious narrative of modern Zionism regarding "who we are," "what are we doing here and why" and "why we are right and just and they are not", is tightly kept. Any attempt to challenge the narrative is

promptly and vigorously eschewed. The Israeli media has been very active in nurturing this storyline and backing up with "facts." Many unpleasant accounts or 'unfitting' details were ironed out. The Palestinian media did exactly the same and kept their exclusive narrative alive in a hapless mirror-image of their enemy's.

#### *The Basque Country:*

A CNN report on the Basque conflict boasts the following title: "Basque question: Spain's pressing problem." Then, in the subtitle, the network chief correspondent in Madrid, Al Goodman adds: "For Spaniards, hardly a day goes by when they are not confronted with the issue of Basque separatist violence" (Goodman, 2002). This is how, wryly and matter-of-factly, the complicated and sensitive controversy is presented to the readers of CNN. First, the title declares, it is a pressing problem for Spain, not for the Basques, thereby assuming that all Basques perceive themselves as Spaniards, or ignoring the Basques all together. Second, the issue is not a matter of sovereignty, autonomy, authority or power, but violence. The outcome is again mixed with the cause because it sounds more attractive.

The article continues in quoting Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar as saying: "We are not going to allow them to impose terror on our country. We will fight them with all the moral and material force of the state of law." (ibid). There are no counter citations in the text, and it concludes with the statement: "From bombs to peace marches, the problem of Basque violence is ever-present in Spanish society" (ibid). It is a one-sided and attributive account. There is no mentioning of the Spanish Army's violence, the cruelty of the Madrid secret police or the government-linked death squads of GAL (Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups). Conspicuously missing are the background and origins of the dispute, and the divergence of actors partaking in it: the Spaniards and the Basque Extremists are depicted as two monolithic camps without any reference to Moderate Basques, Catalans, Andalusians, or other ethnic minorities, who might not see eye-to-eye with the Madrid line.

On the other hand, the Basque newspaper Euskal Herria Journal adopts a similar fomenting viewpoint. A report from August 23, 2002 reads:

"Thousands of people marched behind a Basque nationalist flag during a demonstration in support of the Basque nationalist party Batasuna in Bilbao on August 23, 2002. Spain's public prosecutor approved on Friday the suspension of the party, backing a notorious Judge's allegations that the group supports and funds the Basque national liberation organization Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). A sign at the demonstration read in Basque 'Basque Country Arise! Stop fascism'."

Similarly to the previous report, the story concentrates on the arena of conflict, which is current in space and time, and underlines two parties to the confrontation. The descriptions are very one-dimensional: ETA is never a terrorist but a national liberation organization, and the Spanish judge is notorious. Such provocative portrayals are certain to promote agitation and incitement.

## **2. The Attitude Vertex:**

(Propaganda, "us"/"them", other as problem).

#### *Northern Ireland:*

The *News Letter* insists on naming the Republic of Ireland as Eire, thereby inculcating the impression of a foreign country in its unionists, or Protestant readers. This is done deliberately and consistently in order to underline the sense of anomaly and remoteness from the southern part of the island. Another point which is diligently stressed in the *News Letter* is referring to the IRA and its activists as terrorists. This catch-all term vilifies the Catholic organization regardless of their deeds and ignores the fact that only a minority of their actions in recent years have been purely of a terrorist nature. Such labeling "...decontextualizes the IRA from its conditions of existence in Northern Ireland and displaces it into the international arena of organizations deemed simply to be a threat" (Wilson, 1997). A mirror image is sustained for the same purpose of denigrating the enemy in the depiction of Protestant paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) or the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) in the pages of the *Irish News*.

The media are tempted to give voice to the extremists and to allow them easy access due to their vociferous prominence and stridency. Such characteristics are perceived as more alluring to readers and viewers. Consequently, communication channels are inundated with propaganda messages instead of a genuine discourse and exchange of views. Abandoning the media front to extremists might bear serious consequences, as a prominent analyst admonished with evidence from another conflict:

"... decent people and their activities are hardly ever news; nationalist demagogues are. There have been ten interviews with marginal fascists psychopaths in Serbia and Croatia for every interview with a human rights or peace activist. Thus the media have helped the bad guys" (Denitch, 1996).

In the same vein, media have a penchant toward elites as their source of information. Elites sense that weakness and exploit it to disseminate their own propaganda. This proclivity, again, does not propel dialogue or present a fair and balanced illustration but tends to reduce coverage to "routinist reportage of well-rehearsed adversarial positions of political spokespeople" (Wilson, 1996) to the detriment of authentic and fresh ideas and actors.



### *Israel/Palestine:*

It is difficult to find today a more psychologically charged and a more value-laden feud than the Israeli-Palestinian. Its protracted nature allowed the conflict to stockpile repertoires of negative images and prejudice on both sides. There is an abyss of mistrust between the belligerents, which feeds fears and hostilities. The media heat these emotions to a boiling point. In October 2000 the second Palestinian Intifadah (uprising) broke out against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Some Israeli-Palestinians (the Arab minority within the state of Israel) spontaneously joined the riots to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the way Israel treats its Arab citizens. Two weeks later, a poll was taken among the residents of the Jewish-Arab city of Jaffa to track any changes in the interfaith relations in the wake of the riots. To one of the questions, 40% of the Jewish residents answered that they believed that in times of war, their Arab neighbors might attack them. This datum was taken up by an Israeli local paper and published on the front page as: "In War Time the Jaffa Arabs will Attack Tel Aviv" in giant bold letters (Dor, 2001). This was a manipulative and scheming report intended to cause fear and disruption in its readers, or in other words, sheer propaganda that was fanned by panic and suspicion.

During the delicate negotiations to resume normalcy and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis, the media on both sides consistently accredited "the other" with the burden of accountability. In the bloody October 2000, Israeli press headlines competed in pinpointing the Palestinians, and especially their leader, as a hindrance to pacifying the violence. They read: "Arafat's Test," "Arafat Has 48 Hours to Achieve Cease-Fire," and "Arafat is not in a Hurry" (ibid, 2001, 30). That "us versus them" depiction, with "us" being on the clear and "them" carrying all the blame and responsibility, is typical of war journalism and of biased coverage. The "blame-the-other" theme is very prominent as well. Even in the heydays of optimism, skepticism was looming as hope and doom were bitterly mixed. On the morning of the historic treaty with the PLO on September 13, 1993, another terrorist attack killed four Israelis. The headlines of the Israeli press read: "Peace in the Shadow of Terrorism," "Israel-PLO agreement will be signed today, a wave of attacks in the country" (Wolfsfeld, 1997:111). Linking the two frames, the peace one and the violence one, together implies that the process and our (the Israelis) goodwill and sacrifice hinge upon the deeds of the Palestinians. The clear message is that terrorism jeopardizes the peace and the Palestinians must do something about it lest it would all crumble. The most common and persistent thesis in that matter became the incompetence, or unwillingness, of Arafat to carry out his obligations, as specified in the Oslo Accords: "Arafat is not keeping his commitment to operate against extremists" was the headline of Haaretz after the Beit Lid terrorist attack on Israeli soldiers and civilians in January 1995 (Wolfsfeld, 2004: 69).

### *The Basque Country:*

The CNN 2002 special report on the "Basque question" rather than the Spanish question had other attributive features. The major theme is the distinction between the 'trouble makers' and the regular folk, who merely want normal life. This division is underlined in the article not only between Basques and others but among Basques themselves in order to accentuate even further the extremism and fanaticism of the activists. This citation is typical:

"The region has even attracted a famous museum, The Guggenheim in Bilbao, whose modern, dynamic image is precisely the image the Basque people want to project of themselves. None of this, however, is enough for ETA and the other Basque nationalist political parties, with the result that the region's streets continue to simmer with tension, fear and a lot of anger" (Goodman, 2002).

This is an expressly judgmental account, which under the guise of an evenhanded description, puts an indisputable blame on one party.

Another favorite technique to underscore the us/them attitude is comparison, which resembles dichotomies and labeling. An eye-catching comparison is usually an outrageous one. In the Basque context, it must involve Generalissimo Franco, as in this Time Magazine report:

"Since it aborted a 14-month cease-fire in November 1999, ETA has broadened its threats to include thousands of judges, journalists, politicians and businessmen, who are under constant guard. 'It's like the hardest days of the Franco dictatorship, when police informers were everywhere,' says [a resident]. 'But now we don't know who the informers are'" (Graff, 2003).

Some of the leading Basque newspapers conceal a great deal of nationalist propaganda in their reports. This camouflage comes to the fore especially when contrasted with the other party, the enemy. The *Euskal Herria Journal* demonstrates this trend in its August 2002 account of the outlawing of the Basque national political party Batasuna:

Tens of thousands of Basques marched on Sunday to protest against the Spanish government's moves to ban the Basque radical party Batasuna. Marchers shouted "Long live ETA military!" and "Independence!" Reporters estimated that thousands participated in the peaceful march. On Saturday, Spain's two leading parties agreed on plans to use a controversial new law to ban Batasuna, a party which shares the same Basque independence goal as ETA and denies links to the armed group. The ruling and main opposition parties called a session of parliament for later this month to mandate the government to ask the Supreme Court to ban the party under the law. The law holds that any party which supports, justifies or excuses terrorism can be banned. Batasuna's leader Arnaldo Otegi said last week Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar was trying to turn the clock back to the days of military dictatorship under Miguel Primo de Rivera.

Cloaked as a neutral report, the journalist emphasizes the peaceful nature of the event and the goals of the marchers. On the other hand, the opponents' move is described as "controversial" and their methods are estimated by an interviewee as dictatorial.

### 3. The Behavior Vertex:

(Reactive, Visible effects of violence).

#### *Northern Ireland:*

The press on each side depicted "its" activists as merely reacting to the aggressiveness of the other. This partisan perspective created a 'tunnel vision', in which escalation was expedited in light of the intransigence of the enemy vis-a-vis the innocence of one's own side. The British media habitually praised its soldiers in Northern-Ireland as peace-keepers, claiming further, that their army is "... merely reacting stoically to the inflammatory Irish with a restraint no other force would show" (quoted in Wilson, 1997:37). The adulation for the British soldier picked in such accounts of poetic heroism as "a great defender of civilization against chaos, of order against the apostles of violence. He is the most patient, decent, military man in the world" (McCann, 1992).

The British army, in general, appeared "above the fray--brave, tormented, but largely inactive except as a rather superior kind of Boy Scout Troop" (Elliott, 1976:355). All newspapers established the axiom that the source of violence and evil is terrorism, which is destructive, asocial and inexplicable. Of course, each side had a different felon to put in the terrorist role; nevertheless, the press on both sides excels in savory and flavorful descriptions of that evil. The October 1974 Guilford pub bombing and the August 1998 Omagh market atrocity were given prominence in all the media channels. They were markedly covered and blatantly posits as the kernel of the Northern Irish "problem." Causes and consequences were muddled up and confounded, but by the profligacy and extravagance of their coverage, the reports set off an atmosphere of fury and vehemence.

#### *Israel/Palestine:*

When it comes to terrorism, especially in its most arbitrary and painful mode--suicide bombing--it is very hard not to concentrate on reaction to the atrocity and to underline its sheer brutality. The callousness of the act obscures the grievances which propel it. Thus, to return again to the Beit Lid massacre, in which 20 Israelis were killed, the captions under bloody pictures of the event in the Israeli newspapers contended with each other in their hysterical and uproarious tones: "The Children that won't Return," "With Tears of Rage" in huge letters and flaming red colors (Wolfsfeld, 2004:64). Again, the focus on the reactive depiction of the terrorist deed and its harsh consequences totally eclipse the despair that provoked it in the first place. Those invisible sources of suffering are mute and inaccessible to media scrutiny. Such descriptions are rampant in Israeli media in every terrorist incident. The effect of indiscriminate violence is so mesmerizing that it silences every other aspect of the conflict. Analyzed from this perspective, Palestinian extremists are counter-productive to their cause.

A similar reactionary coverage is prevalent in other patterns of behavior between Israelis and Palestinians. Wars and other acts of violence naturally shoulder the major brunt of the conventional reporting but failure of diplomatic efforts or cessation of peace endeavors get a similar treatment. They are unceremoniously conveyed in an after-the-fact vein and seldom as forewarning or admonition in an effort to salvage resolution. When the first Intifadah broke out, the headline in *Yediot Aharonot* read: "The Uprising Began: A Dialogue through the Stone, the Sling and the Molotov Cocktail" (*Yediot Aharonot*, 9/12/1987). When the Oslo process began and the treaty between the PLO and Israel was signed, a series of terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Islamic extremists shook the country. The headline in one of the leading Israeli newspaper was: " Hamas is Sabotaging the Peace Process" (*Ma'ariv*, 9/10/1994). This is just a tiny sample of the general attitude of the Israeli press toward Palestinian violence. The more obvious and conventional manner of reporting is not necessarily the most conscientious and accountable one. As far as encouraging conflict resolution, it was certainly not the optimal way. Relaying the horrors of terrorism, as appalling as they are, extract fury and ferocity which intensify conflicts.

#### *The Basque Country:*

In their reports on the Basque conflict, most journalists opt for recounting observable violence--the highest attention-grabbing technique. By so doing, they often omit invisible consequences of aggression and brutality, which cause more damage and suffering than the visible ones. By concealing the more severe horrors of conflict, journalists actually condone the spirit of dispute. When finally the CNN reporter mentions cease-fire efforts, he immediately deserts them with this more typical kind of depiction:

"They were shattered more than a year later, however, by a car bomb in Madrid, with both the government and ETA blaming each other for wrecking the cease-fire. Now, hundreds of local officials who oppose ETA must go everywhere with bodyguards" (Goodman, 2002).

Many media accounts are passively and reactively describing rather than preemptively raising and discussing a point. A 2004 BBC Monitoring report depicts the critical issue of outlawing a Basque newspaper in a reticent, *post-facto* manner:

"[The] Madrid government of Prime Minister José María Aznar ... regards the shuttering of *Egunkaria* — like last year's banning of the political party Batasuna for alleged close ties to ETA — a necessary step in its war on terrorism."

A Time Magazine reporter relates to a previous time the Basque newspaper was closed, in a similar reactive, though more vivid, fashion:

"First came the predawn trip, blindfolded in the back of a Spanish paramilitary van, from his home in Tolosa to a police cell in Madrid. It was there, claims Martxelo Otamendi — the last managing editor of the now banned Basque-language daily *Egunkaria* — that his ordeal began. While police interrogated him about his newspaper's alleged links to the Basque separatist terror organization ETA, he claims they had him stand naked in his cell for three days, with a chance to sit down only every five hours" (Graff, 2003).

No discussion follows this report and no profound deliberation of the implications and connotations of such a radical step by the government ensue. The same dry and unreflective manner is discerned in this *Euskal Herria Journal* description of a violent attack in the summer of 2002:

"A car-bomb blamed on Euskadi Ta Askatasuna ripped through a police barracks killing two, including a six-year old girl. The explosion in the tiny Spanish resort of Santa Pola on Sunday night also injured about 25 according to local media. It was the first lethal attack blamed on ETA since Socialist politician Juan Priede, 69, was shot dead in a bar in March. The force of the blast tore the facade off a four-story building in the barracks, exposing the staircase and the inside of the flats. The girl killed in the blast was the daughter of a paramilitary Civil Guard police officer. A 50-year-old man identified as Cecilio Gallego was also killed. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. ETA usually gives a warning about the bomb, but on this occasion it did not."

The details of this gruesome attack are calmly and painstakingly relayed in an almost ceremonial regularity, although the nuances of empathy are not relinquished: "a car-bomb *blamed on* ETA," instead of an ETA car-bomb, and the conspicuous absence of the word terrorism in this paragraph despite its content. The reactive, visible-violence oriented character of War Journalism is aptly caught in this short summation of the CNN report on the Basque Question: "There is continued so-called low-level violence throughout the region, with pro-independence Basque youths attacking businesses, city buses, even homes on both sides of the border" (Goodman, 2002). What are the reasons and motivations of these youngsters to commit such violent deeds? What are the consequences and prospective implications of their delinquency? Who is going to face them and how? These essential questions remain unanswered.

One final note to conclude this section: there are more features to the distinction between war and peace journalism. They are surveyed here briefly. A very important difference is truth-oriented writing versus propaganda-oriented. The former is the exposure of cover-ups and schemes on all sides whereas the latter is selective disclosure, or 'cherry-picking' of the other's deceptions while concealing our secrets. Another disparity is the emphasis on elites in conventional news stories as opposed to PJ's people-centered stories. Finally, while regular conflict journalism is biased toward victory or defeat tales, peace journalism concentrates on resolution and peace initiatives. Whereas the former anticipates and predicts reemergence of discord, the latter seeks reconciliation and prevention of future hostilities (Galtung, 1996). All the newspaper articles read for this paper stood up to conflict journalism standards. The Catholic, Protestant, Israeli, Spanish and Basque newspaper constantly blamed the 'other side' for being deceiving, unreliable and conniving. By contrast, their side was just and honest except for times when deception was required due to unexpected circumstances. In most descriptions, reports focus on leaders, political or military, their decisions, their actions, their comments. The plight of the common people was rarely mentioned in spite of its vast scope and rate of recurrence. Lastly, most reports in all three cases aimed at the ultimate "score": who wins, who loses, and by how much. Excruciating depictions of misery and failure always conquer over stories of resolution and settlement.

### 3. The Dynamic Dimension: Escalation of Conflict

An additional way that conflict theory demonstrates the rigor and necessity of PJ is through escalation theory. There are several contending explanations for conflict dynamics but amongst them Schattschneider's contagion model, originally composed in 1960, still stands apart from all its successors. In his spatial model, the direct partners to the feud are less interested in one another. They are preoccupied with communicating to the environment and fortify their relative position by attracting other parties to join forces with them to outweigh the opponent. The media are the communication channels, and reporters carry the messages the rivaling sides transmit. The messages are molded and constructed by journalists and pertain to their reporting talent and style. If the tone they set is vehement and ardent, accentuating the zeal of combat and the spoils of war, other parties might be enthused and drawn into the cycle of violence, thus expanding it. If, on the other hand, the tone is reticent and composed, underlying the anguish of battle and the affliction of warfare, then other parties would refrain from intervening or would interfere to discontinue the conflict. PJ fits the second scenario. In the Irish case, if British public opinion is the observing crowd, bloody descriptions of the clashes between the IRA and British forces, laden with allegations and demonization, will encourage a hawkish mood and public support for an assertive policy in Ulster. In the Palestine/Israel conflict, if world public opinion is to be swayed, harsh depictions of violence devoid of background and circumstances will prop up hostility and anger to further the spiral of confrontation. If the Spanish populace is the critical mass, reports that accentuate cruelty and indiscriminate ETA violence without mentioning government reprisal or political restriction will foment resentment and readiness to sustain the struggle against Basque nationalism until submission. By contrast, fair and balanced reporting, which advances origins and not only symptoms of strife, multilateral relations

and not inescapably dyadic ones, dehumanizes and de-objectifies mutual images instead of de-humanizing and objectifying (Manoff, 2005), and supplies warnings as to the vagaries of war, will significantly alleviate the adversity of contention.

Schattschneider's metaphor of contagion emphasizes how more and more actors and issues join the conflict and exacerbate the escalation process whereby hostilities spread and infect others. The gist of his model, which suggests two direct protagonists who compete for the attention and support of the observing crowd, confers a lot of responsibility on the media. Each side hopes to lure the critical mass and gain sufficient muscle to outweigh the other. The expansion or contraction of conflict hinges, therefore, upon the success or failure to draw more parties into the fray. This endeavor, again, relies on communication. This time, the interaction is not between the two antagonists but between each of them and their environment. PJ as a conveyer of views and ideas, has the potential of favorably affecting the scope and direction of external involvement in the conflict. By presenting a balanced, well informed picture, and by supplying the onlookers with ample evidence and opportunity to intervene and deescalate the conflict, PJ utilizes the practices and patterns of conflict dynamics to advance peace.

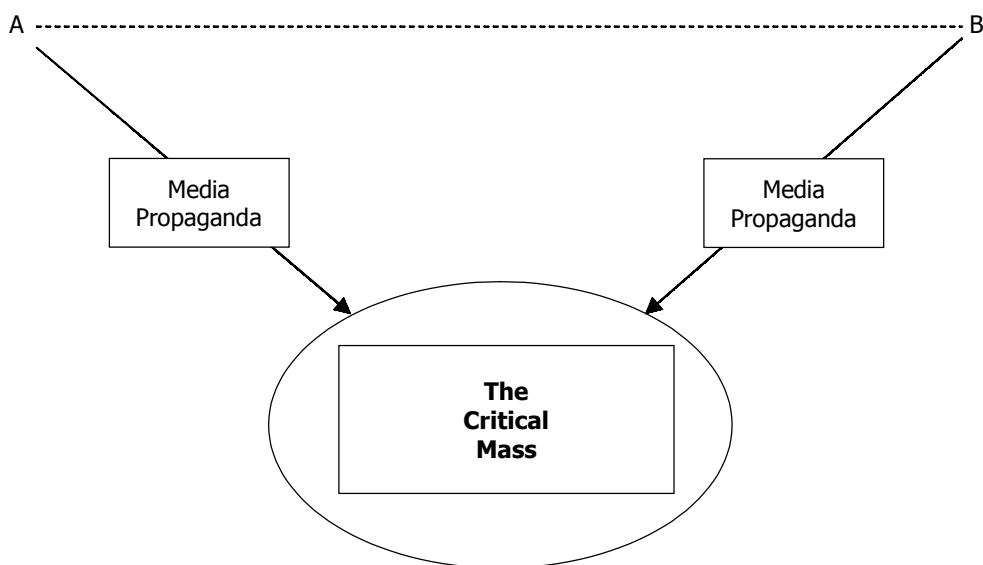


Figure 2: Schattschneider's Model of Conflict Escalation

The importance of the media role in the containment or contraction of conflict cannot be exaggerated. A major component of conflict is the environment that hosts it. Confrontation between sides at odds never occurs in a vacuum. There is always a context, a setting which confers the feud with perspective and circumstances. The parties to the conflict establish connections with the surroundings to sense the atmosphere and to detect sympathetic dispositions that might tip the balance in their favor. The conflict milieu is not merely the physical or geographical location of the disagreement but also the psychological, cultural or sociopolitical background. By conversing with the environment, the actors really construct the meaning of the conflict. This spatial interaction is the incubator of terminology, images, labels, categorizations and stigmata. These, in turn, portray and piece together the discourse of conflict (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Inter-personal quarrel takes place in a small environment and the interaction between the actors is direct. Beyond that, the construction of reality through decoding the environment requires the mediation of the media. Thus, in larger conflicts, it is the media which supplies the images, the characterization, the classification and the direction of the conflict discourse. The media sets the agenda, pits the rivaling camps one against the other, and draws the fault-lines of the ensuing battles. This is how the observing crowd learns of the dispute and makes up its mind. Furthermore, this is how the involved parties themselves formulate and reformulate their positions and consequent moves. Thus the contribution of the media to the escalation or de-escalation of conflict is crucial and this is where the transformation from regular, sensational and contention-prone journalism to the accountable, evenhanded and rigorous peace journalism, is most desired.

#### 4. Protracted Conflicts in Peace Journalism

The perspective of peace journalism demands a major philosophical and ethical shift. It literally entails a fundamental conversion of professional etiquette and of work habits – not an easy task by any standard. Essential observations regarding conflicts are revised and discarded. Some convenient “truths” must be cast off to make room for innovative and daring

thinking. For example, the vision of conflict as inevitably a zero-sum-game is replaced by the possibility of a win-win orientation. The excited anticipation for the thrill of victory or the drama of defeat is substituted by the eagerness for resolution, and the ambiguity of tension and suspense is exchanged for the clarity of relief and hope.

Accordingly, at its situation vertex, PJ's responsibility is to equally present all sides and to allow common people, not elites or leaders to express genuine thoughts and ambitions. Equal access must be permitted not only to fanatics, who bomb their way into the news but to other sides to the conflict as well. Conventional journalism highlights the militants and their conduct and thereby paints the entire conflict in belligerent colors. Consequently, the actual foundations of the controversy are disregarded. PJ would cover all involved to expose the sincerity of incompatible interests. Thus, in PJ reporting, the IRA, the Islamic Jihad, ETA or any other violent players, would not automatically gain central stage despite their added value of sensationalism. Moreover, PJ would grant more weight to the historical circumstances of the Irish conflict. It would expand the scope of time and place to include not only the current arena but also Scotland, Wales and England and their relation to the Irish Isles in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. PJ would try to avoid volatile labeling such as Ulster on the one hand or the IRA terrorists on the other hand. It would use Northern Ireland to connote geography and the neutral term IRA radicals to indicate a non-compromising political views. A PJ coverage would introduce the multiplicity of actors on each side, and familiarize the readers with the nuances and sensitivities of everyone involved. The connection between the grievances and desires of all participants and their respective behavior would be clearly illustrated to prevent obscurity and confusion. Similarly, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute must be presented with lucidity and perspicuity. The Arab camp should be dissected into its various components as well as that of the Israelis. Both sides have hawks and doves and a variety of ideological and political stands regarding the conflict. There is more than one way, and not necessarily the zero-sum way, to get out of the Middle East predicament. PJ would shift the overemphasis on the arena of conflict by tracing down the sources of the strife to Europe and to other Arab countries in the region, stretching back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of Jewish and Arab national revival. Finally, the Basque question ought to be presented as a Spanish question, thereby moving the onus to the Spaniards at large. Thus the issue of terrorism is not attributed to Basques as such, but to disagreements within the Spanish sociopolitical system. Such an approach does not alienate anyone and hence, does not promote conflict. Here, as in the other cases, elucidating the historical origins of the struggle and the incompatible interests of each side would help disassociate readers from the harsh and immediate impression of terrorism and lead them more profoundly into the nature of the contention. PJ would persistently distinguish between militant and moderate Basques, independence and autonomy exponents.

In the attitude vertex, PJ reporting circumvents propaganda messages. Peace reporters serve nobody's cause but peace, and thus, won't avail themselves for anyone's particular agenda. Conflict journalism carries propaganda message occasionally if they are 'newsworthy' in their attractiveness. PJ exponents would not compromise their quest of representing a fare picture for the allure of the 'us versus them' spectacle. In the Irish case, PJ would not point a finger at the IRA as 'saboteurs' of reconciliation, nor to the Ulster paramilitary units as jeopardizing stability. They would describe the conflict as "a fly on the wall" (Fisher and Ury, 1981), bringing forth the claims and woes of all. In the Middle Eastern struggle, PJ exponents must work around the abyss of mistrust and hatred on both sides and not be carried away by the torrent of accusations. Instead of indicating who started the conflict or who has more justified claim on the Holy Land, emphasis should be put on the responsibility the two sides share for the future of that cherished area. As for terrorism, although it is spine-tingling, PJ would avoid the exhibitionism usually associated with the publicizing of these atrocities. The customary labels and generalizations such as 'killers', 'Jihadists', 'Zionists' or 'occupiers' would be toned down, for they serve no purpose but fueling the discourse. In the Basque example, PJ could start by presenting the Basque nationalists and the Madrid government as two accessories to the conflict, who evenly share not the blame, but the responsibility to resolve the differences between them. Perceiving only the Basques as the 'trouble-makers' and holding them as liable for the quandary, is erroneous and counter-productive. All the analogies with the dictatorship of Franco on the one hand and with other terrorist movements around the globe are useless and self-defeating. PJ comparisons would be with positive historical examples, those who promoted peace and the good of the community. Lastly, neither the propaganda of the Madrid government nor the Basque nationalists' would be carried by PJ reports. No defamation of the other or misinformation would be allowed by peace journalism. Only an accurate account of each side's claims and interests would be described.

The behavior vertex in the PJ mode concentrates on the proactive: it endeavors to raise awareness of cores and hubs of potential violence in order to prevent them before they erupt. There is also a strong emphasis on invisible or 'silent' effects of violence such as trauma, damage to structure or culture, grievances, and various insecurities. Accordingly, peace journalists covering the Irish conflict ought not wait for another IRA assault or British troops' curbing of civil liberties, but rather, through an in-depth investigation and a prudent use of sources, discover impending focal points of intensification or nucleuses of discontent and call attention to them before they burst. Similarly with the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Suicide bombers can be detected in advance. They are recruited in the most wretched places and their zeal is stimulated by ignorance, poverty and religious fervor. PJ can surface these elements and bring them to the attentiveness and understanding of Westerners and Israelis. Once the roots of this intolerable behavior are explicated, it can be approached in a more sophisticated way, and ultimately, be worked out. The same quest into the motivations and stimuli of extremism can be

launched in the case of the ETA activists. An exploration into 'what makes them tick' is a proactive move, which would bear more fruits for conflict de-escalation than the most vivid and flamboyant account of a terrorist act. Finally, bringing the outcomes of violence into the fore can be a double-edged sword. If the depiction focuses on killings and destruction, the tangible and observable impact of aggression, it might elicit counter-violence, reprisal and enhancement of the conflict. If, on the other hand, the indiscernible aspects, the psychological damages and waste of resources are elucidated, then the futility of war becomes evident and de-escalation might pursue. This assumption is valid in all three cases.

#### 4.1 PJ in Action: Search for Common Ground

Let us turn now to a concrete example of how peace journalism works. The Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is a non governmental organization, which attempts to transform the way the world deals with conflict since 1982. It has endeavored to shift away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative problem solving. Its activists engage in projects in various parts of the globe to understand the differences and to act upon the commonalities. Search for Common Ground relies in earnest on a "long-term process of incremental transformation, pursued on a realistic scale and with practical means" ([http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg\\_intro.html#1](http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg_intro.html#1)). In their credo, which is specified in their homepage website, they present a PJ approach to the media coverage of conflicts:

"The cost of dealing with conflict from an adversarial, win/lose mind set is apparent on the evening news every night. There are the obvious consequences where thousands of lives are lost to armed combat or neighborhood crime. Billions of dollars are spent on military expenditures and humanitarian aid after wars. Then there are the less obvious consequences, such as thousands of lives lost to hunger, poverty and preventable diseases, and the billions of dollars spent in legal battles. By transforming how people deal with conflict, we can make significant strides in addressing the major issues facing the world."

The following presents three articles from the Common Ground News Service (CGNews), which publishes balanced and solution-oriented articles by local and international experts in order to promote constructive perspectives and encourage dialogue. The insights from conflict theory will be highlighted as they were used in the CGNews authentic attempt at PJ coverage. The articles were randomly chosen with the common denominator of describing volatile and highly conflictual political issues, which are the stuff conventional media prosper on.

The first article is titled " Hamas' Victory " and it was written by Gwynne Dyer, a London-based independent journalist, for *The Jordan Times* on January 27, 2006. The reporter takes on the delicate issue of the extremist Hamas victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections and attempts to illustrate its implications in a more evenhanded manner. He posits the seemingly earth-shattering development within an evolutionary and gradual framework, which might have been obscured in most conventional reports lest sensationalism would be hampered:

" Hamas did not win its surprise victory because a majority of Palestinians are religious fanatics, nor because they believe that Israel must be destroyed. It won because the old mainstream liberation movement, Fatah, had squandered its credibility in ten years of corrupt and incompetent rule in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and because after 39 year of Israeli military occupation, there is still no sign of a genuinely independent Palestinian state...In fact, most Palestinians do want peace. They would quite like it if Israel were to vanish, of course, just as most Israelis would be happy if the Palestinians vanished. But as much the weaker party in the conflict, Palestinians have long been more realistic about what they would have to give up in a final peace settlement."

Such a description disarms the temptation for a rant-and-rave writing, which Hamas and its declarations so comfortably allow. This is a PJ style of reporting, which barter the gusto of confrontational accounts for the responsibility and conscientiousness of fairness. Such journalism evidently leads to hope and de-escalation of conflict. Owing to the way it is structured – the broad perspective it illustrates and the transparency of motivations and interests of all sides – the expectations from such an account is not for a clear winner or more bloodshed, but for a genuine resolution, as the summation of this piece demonstrates:

"So is the 'peace process' finally, legally dead? It certainly is for the moment. Hamas has reaffirmed that it has no intention of giving up the armed struggle against Israeli occupation. And yet there is always hope, because having genuine political power and responsibility for the results of exercising that power is a crash course in realism. Fatah made the journey from rejectionism to negotiation; it is not inconceivable that Hamas can do the same."

The second article is called "Targeting the innocent" and it was written by MJ Rosenberg, a Capitol Hill staffer, for the *Israel Policy Forum* on April 21, 2006. The author reacts to Prime Minister Tony Blair's remarks about Hamas terrorism and Islamic terror in general. His insights put such violence within broader and less simplistic context:

"As evidenced by Blair's remark, sometimes this whole issue of terrorism gets way too abstract. Take the phrase 'war on terrorism'. Instead of producing an image of actual civilians slaughtered by killers, we think about policy and battle fronts."

Then the author specifies names of Israeli victims who were murdered by a Hamas suicide bomber the day before. However, he follows through with an unexpected addition:

"Of course, we cannot continue to pretend that the only innocent people killed in this conflict are Israelis and Jews. In the last few weeks, six Palestinian children died as a result of Israeli shelling in Gaza and the West Bank."

A detailed list of the Palestinian victims follows. Outlining such a juxtaposition in the aftermath of a Hamas terrorist act is a rare and valiant writing, well worthy of the PJ endeavor. The concluding remarks go even farther:

"Some readers will, I am afraid, view these Palestinian kids as not in the same category as the Israelis. They will view them as collateral damage, just people who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. And, of course, the Israelis do not target innocent civilians nor do they invite attacks by intentionally placing armor in the midst of neighborhoods. Unlike the terrorists, the IDF regrets the innocent loss of life. Nevertheless, a dead child is a dead child: Innocent by definition."

The third article is titled "Meanwhile: An Eerie Lull in an Unfinished Conflict" and it is co-written for *The International Herald Tribune* by Jerrold Kessel and Pierre Klochendler, Jerusalem-based reporters on July 1, 2004. They open by pointing out that "an eerie normalcy has settled over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict" and wonder whether that was an authentic state of affairs. When they describe the components of that normalcy, they supply a symmetric description:

"Anyone taking an Israeli bus these days from – say, from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv – is struck by the sense of normalcy. Not long ago, every hour, every half-hour, passengers would insist that the bus driver switch his radio on to catch the news headlines. Israelis made sure of being up to the second with the latest bombing, the latest political crisis, the latest proposals to tend the conflict ... Now constant cell phone conversations mixed with oriental pop on the radio swirl uninterrupted around the passengers. No one seems to feel a need for the news."

Eerier still, Ramallah, on the West Bank, seems more and more like a city that is less and less engaged in being the Ramallah of the Intifada. Take the wedding-gown store just off Manara Square where turnover is way down from pre-Intifada days and where the boutique owner can no longer provide custom-sewn gowns because his workshop, in a village outside Ramallah, lies on the other side of the Israeli wall. The store is bustling and the owner says that to circumvent the closures he now imports his extravagant party dresses from China – ,cheaper, too', he confides."

This piece vividly demonstrates the empathy toward both sides and the orientation of conflict, or in this case, violence and terrorism, as the problem and not one of the proponents. Such a balanced and composed account, devoid of the cutthroat anticipation for action does not serve the stimulation of readers toward supporting the escalation of conflict.

Furthermore, the reporters offer a bold analysis, which suggests future paths of action. Their concluding admonition fits the proactive philosophy of PJ by advocating a non-violent scenario before an escalation breaks out:

"On the one hand, the relative quiet does serve a salutary end – and not just because every moment of real quiet is a respite from death and mayhem. On the other hand, the apparent subsiding of tension could be lethal if it leads world leaders into accepting the lull as a prospect in itself, as a basis for resurrecting peace plans which have already proved illusory. The current quiet must not be allowed to become an end in itself. The world cannot afford to go on a summer holiday, to let the Israelis believe that their holiday can last even if they don't bring the occupation to an end. Sustaining the drive for disengagement requires constant international – and especially American – engagement."

## 5. Conclusion: the Useful Nexus of Theory and Practice

This article has probed how conflict theory can contribute to consolidate peace journalism as a valid and practical approach. Although PJ may sound promising and meritorious, it must be anchored to theoretical grounds. Such sustenance would credit PJ with sufficient explanatory power to become more pragmatic and programmatic in the face of structural, psychological, and professional hindrances. This is what Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) mean by the term anchorage: drawing distinctions and assigning meanings to peace journalism by supplying a theoretical frame of reference. Conflict theory, with its focus on the structure and dynamics of conflict and on the strategy of how disputes are captured and comprehended by their participants and their environment, is the ultimate candidate to "anchor" PJ to solid ground.

Conflict theory can assist peace journalism in more than one way. The brevity of this paper left room for only two, albeit of the more seminal and pertinent: 1) the three dimensions of conflict--situation, attitude and behavior--and 2) the contagious model of escalation. As for the former, the paper recommends the valuable PJ methodology in approaching each dimension, or each vertex of conflict, in the attempt to overcome the peril of destructive conflict. Only the PJ description, with all its elaborated features, would promote conflict de-escalation at the situation, attitude and behavior junctures. As for the latter, peace journalism is capable of influencing the wider population, represented in the readers' public, to dissuade the rivaling sides from escalating their feud rather than urging them on. A balanced account, an empathical approach to all parties and a broad contextual writing may reduce the penchant for "taking sides" and observing the conflict as a whole not as a match to be won but as a menace to be contained.

In that sense, as the communication channel between the warring sides and the attentive crowd, media have a heavy burden of responsibility to carry. The way they transmit the messages could decide the rate of acceleration or inhibition of hostilities. True to their mission as a third side to mitigate conflicts, peace journalists would meticulously choose their words and emphases to prevent the intensification and amplification of discord. Moreover, the nexus between peace journalism and conflict theory might be beneficial in both directions: while being strengthened theoretically, PJ could supply conflict

theory with new evidence or refutation "from-the-field". As a novel empirical endeavor, PJ could enrich conflict theory with hitherto unfamiliar knowledge and experience. Since the traditional coverage of conflict and war has been strongly marred by a confrontational and belligerent bias, the innovation and freshness of PJ should bring in original insights and perspectives. Such a fruitful collaboration between scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution would surely help alleviate the hazardous and ambitious challenge of conflict reduction.

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