

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT ESCALATION: THE CASE  
OF THE “ARMENIAN CONFERENCE” IN TURKEY**

**by**

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**AN ANALYSIS OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT ESCALATION: THE CASE OF  
“ARMENIAN CONFERENCE” IN TURKEY**

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## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT ESCALATION: THE CASE OF THE “ARMENIAN CONFERENCE” IN TURKEY

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Program of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, M.A. Thesis, 2006

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**Key Words:** media, conflict, Armenian conference

In 25-27 May 2005, a conference entitled “Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy,” referred to as the “Armenian conference” in this thesis, was scheduled to be held at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey. There were two conflict escalation periods, in May and September 2005 about the conference. Such conflict escalation periods strengthen the parties’ own understanding of the issue and context of conflict; thus, further demarcates the adversaries by increasing the number of issues and parties to the conflict.

The purpose of this endeavor is to question a possible link between the media rhetoric and newspapers’ ideological positioning in Turkey in a conflict escalation period and to identify whether the media rhetoric in the Armenian conference was escalation-oriented or de-escalation oriented. The main aim for such an exploration is to emphasize the role of media in conflict escalation processes and the need to develop a constructive conflict environment with conflict analysis and resolution perspective in Turkey.

The results of the research suggest that in both escalation periods, escalation-oriented rhetoric was used more by the media. Moreover, it was found that there is a link between the media rhetoric and newspapers’ ideological positioning. Consequently, in Turkey more attention should be paid to the roles of media in conflict situation and most importantly new constructive media policies should be developed by considering the other structural factors that create such a media environment.

## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONFLICT ESCALATION: THE CASE OF THE “ARMENIAN CONFERENCE” IN TURKEY

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Uyuşmazlık Analizi ve Çözümü Programı, Yüksek Lisans Tezi 2006

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**Key Words:** medya, uyuşmazlık, Ermeni konferansı

25-27 Mayıs 2005’te “İmparatorluğun Çöküş Döneminde Ermeniler: Bilimsel Sorumluluk ve Demokrasi” başlıklı bir konferans, bu tezde “Ermeni konferansı” olarak sözü geçmektedir, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye’de düzenlenmek istendi. Mayıs ve Eylül 2005 dönemlerinde konferans ile ilgili uyuşmazlığın arttığı iki dönem oldu. Bu gibi uyuşmazlığın arttığı dönemler uyuşmazlık taraflarının uyuşmazlık konusuyla ve uyuşmazlığın bağlamı ile ilgili kendilerine ait anlayışlarını güçlendirir. Böylece uyuşmazlık konularının ve taraflarının sayıca artmasına yol açarak, uyuşmazlığa konu olan partilerin sınırlarını daha belirgin kılar.

Bu çalışmanın gayesi uyuşmazlığın arttığı bir dönemde medya retoriği ile gazetelerin Türkiye’deki ideolojik konumlanmaları arasında bir bağlantı olup olmadığının değerlendirilmesidir. Böyle bir sorgulamanın amacı medyanın uyuşmazlığın arttığı dönemdeki rolünü ve Türkiye’de uyuşmazlık analizi ve çözümü perspektifi ile yapıcı uyuşmazlık ortamı geliştirme ihtiyacını vurgulamaktır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları göstermektedir ki medya uyuşmazlığın arttığı iki dönemde de uyuşmazlığı arttırma odaklı retorik kullanmıştır. Bunun yanında medya retoriği ile gazetelerin ideolojik konumları arasında bir bağ olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Dolayısıyla Türkiye’de medyanın uyuşmazlıkta oynadığı rollerin önemi daha dikkatle incelenmeli ve en önemlisi bu medya ortamını ortaya çıkaran diğer yapısal faktörler de göz önüne alınarak yeni, yapıcı medya politikaları geliştirilmelidir.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope and Aim of the Study

On 25-27 May 2005, a conference entitled “Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy,” here after referred as the “Armenian conference,” was meant to be held at a public university, Bogazici University, in Istanbul, Turkey. However, the conference was cancelled after the Minister of Justice of the time accused those associated with the conference of “treason” and “stabbing Turkey in the back.” After a heavy public reaction, the Prime Minister of the time stepped in and said the conference should be held; thus, it was rescheduled for 23-25 September 2005 at Boğazici University. But, this time, in response to a petition by a lawyers’ organization, on 23 September, the first day of the conference, the Fourth Administrative Court of Istanbul issued an order. According to the Court’s order, a legal investigation about the conference’s validity would take place and Boğazici University could no longer play host to the conference without being held in contempt of the court’s ruling. However, the organizers moved the conference to a second venue, private Bilgi University and squeezed their program into two days and so the conference was held 24-25 September 2005. There were diverse reactions to the court’s order from both the public and authorities. While the conference was being held at Bilgi University, outside of the conference a group of protestors from the nationalist Great Unity Party (BBP) and the left-nationalist Workers' Party (IP) protested, chanting nationalist slogans, waving flags, and throwing eggs and tomatoes at the participants. At the same time, some groups were defending the right to freely organize an academic meeting and arguing that scientific activities were being restricted<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The summary of the event is written from personal knowledge developed by the information from news agencies, conference attendees, speeches of the organizers, and opinions of members of the society.

In both May and September 2005 the intensity rose between different groups around the issue of the Armenian conference. Accordingly, those against the conference had been claiming that the official discourse about the Armenian issue<sup>2</sup> should not be questioned and especially not in a state university. On the other hand, for the organizers of the Armenian conference, it was felt that the diversity in thinking about the Armenian issue would be to the benefit of Turkey because an open academic discussion about such a sensitive topic would be fruitful in developing a solution to the problem in the domestic and international arena<sup>3</sup>.

However, not only the organizers and the people defending the official discourse around the Armenian issue were parties to the conflict. Since the conference triggered an extension of a protracted conflict about the Armenian issue, tensions escalated between various parties. Although, it is hard to name the dyads, the parties can be categorized in a broad sense. (See Chapter Four for the discussion of the parties.) The way in which the events and discussions around the Armenian conference in public places and in the media were articulated led to an opposition between parties defending the official discourse, extreme nationalists, those who had not been invited to the conference, those who were against the European Union versus the organizers of the Armenian conference, participants of the conference, those who supported the conference because of the fatigue of the official discourse, those who supported the accession of Turkey to the European Union, and those who were against the attempts to suspend the conference and defending that conference issues can be discussed freely. Apparently, adversaries of this conflict were many in number, including official and non-official factions in Turkey, and the polarization of the objectives were shaped by being against convening of the Armenian conference and supporting the convening of the conference. The arguments of these factions in Turkey were also represented in the public media.

In this study, related to the abovementioned controversy over the Armenian conference, I take the May and September conflict episodes as extensions of an

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<sup>2</sup> While the official discourse in Turkey suggests that there was a “so-called” Armenian genocide; some segments of the society, including various professionals from different fields, think that genocide happened. This issue is a long-lasting question in Turkey, as well as in Turkey’s relations with some European countries and the US.

<sup>3</sup> In the international arena, parliaments of some countries accepted the existence of a genocide, such as France in 30 May 1998 ( Tınç, 2001), which resulted in tense relations between Turkey and France.

intractable conflict that exists about a hotly disputed historical question of the Armenian plight, which has remained unresolved for a long period of time. According to Kriesberg “a conflict between adversaries varies in intensity over time. Particular disputes may lie dormant for years, then emerge into awareness, escalate in intensity, begin to de-escalate, and be settled or resolved, perhaps to emerge in a different form years later” (Kriesberg, 1982 Cf. Kriesberg and Thorson eds. 1991: 5). Thus, the controversion of being against the convening of the Armenian conference and supporting the convening of the conference in May and September 2005 in Turkey is an escalation in the intensity of an intractable conflict.

For the resolution of intractable conflicts, it is very important to change the conflicting parties’ beliefs, as well as changing the adversaries’ understanding of the conditions of the conflict’s context (Burton, 1990, Fisher, 1997, Kelman, 1997, Kriesberg, 1992). Therefore, the rise in the intensity of a conflict as an extension of an intractable conflict should also be important because such a conflict escalation period strengthens the parties’ own understanding of the issue and context of conflict; thus, further demarcates the factions by increasing the number of issues and parties to the conflict.

This study is concerned with the conflict escalation periods in May and September 2005 regarding the Armenian conference in Turkey and it analyzes and questions the role of media in these conflict escalation stages. According to Melone, Terzis and Beleli(2002) simply by reporting on a conflict, the media changes the communication environment and as a result inherently involved in conflicts. Therefore, not only the attitudes of the conflicting parties are important in the study of conflict analysis and resolution, but also the factors at play in the context of a conflict. That is why the main objective of this study is to conduct a content analysis of five newspapers in Turkey to identify whether the media rhetoric in the Armenian conference was escalation-oriented or de-escalation oriented regarding their ideological positioning in the Turkish political context.

Thus, this study should not be interpreted as a sociological analysis of the intractable conflict about the Armenian issue in Turkey, but rather as an exploratory study with a limited objective that aims to question if there is a link between the media

rhetoric and newspapers' ideological positioning in Turkey in a conflict escalation period. Such a study may have the potential to influence the course of conflict by strengthening the concept of 'the other' through different cognitive frames offered by media rhetoric.

The conflict escalation stage is especially important for media because they pay more attention to a conflict when the scope and the intensity of conflict increases. Not only the media pay more attention but also strengthen the perception of 'the other' in conflict escalation by emphasizing the polarization of the parties in conflict. According to Tılıç (2001), in order to strengthen one party in a conflict, there is a need to develop a united identity and offer an 'other' as the source of danger and threat. In the process of identifying 'the other,' according to Tılıç, the role of media to identify 'the other' is noteworthy (2001: 160). Similarly, Kempf et.al. by referring to Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory (1979, 1986) indicate that while individuals attempt to maintain the positive distinctiveness of his or her in-group as opposed to relevant out-groups, propaganda profits from this process and provides frameworks of social categories and offers proofs of the suitability of judging the social environment according to the given categories ( Kempf et. al. , 2003). Parallel to Kempf et. al.'s arguments, this study argues that different media have different frameworks of social categories depending on their ideological positions in a related political context. A medium's ideological position is a result of the medium's owner transferred by the journalists who offer frameworks of social categories by their rhetoric.

Being one of the major sources of communication and information, the media intervene in conflict processes by offering cognitive frameworks through using various types of rhetoric. In this sense, the news media may vary in selecting definitions and interpretations of problems in conflict processes while putting others aside.

Beginning with the remarkable effect of the role of information in our social life, this study considers news media as a collection of communication channels that have the power to inform through interpreting the social dynamics of the world. Since news from media are the main source of information in order to perceive and interpret the dynamics of the socio-political environment we are in, the manner of a medium transferring information must be analyzed. As Gilboa suggests "...the mass media play a powerful

role in creating public perceptions and portraying conflict ... in a light that may give rise to a ‘spiral of violence’”(Gilboa, 2002 :46).

Consequently, this thesis reviews the literature on communication, media and conflict in order to draw a clear linkage between media rhetoric, ideological positioning and conflict escalation.

## **1.2. Research Question**

The main research question is: “How closely tied are the newspapers’ ideologies to Turkey’s political space depending on their differences in patterns of escalation-oriented rhetoric and de-escalation oriented rhetoric in the conflict escalation over convening the Armenian conference.” Therefore, this study attempts to find potential patterns of rhetoric in different media according to their ideological positions. That is why two conflict escalation episodes, in May 2005 and September 2005, are subject to the content analysis.

However, there are some sub-questions discussed throughout the study in order to analyze the influence of media rhetoric. What is the relationship between communication and the media in conflict processes? How does the media intervene in a conflict? What is the nature of media intervention in a conflict?

### **1.2.1 Methodology**

There are two important studies that I adopted my methodology from, which discuss the escalation and de-escalation oriented aspects of media constructions of conflicts. Wilhelm Kempf, as a professor of social psychology at the University of Konstanz, constructed the categorization of “escalation oriented and de-escalation oriented aspects of media coverage,” together with Michael Reimann and Heikki Luostarinen, through the basic conceptual distinction between *war discourse* and *peace discourse* in 1996. In his work in 1999, Kempf analyzed the media construction of the



Bosnian conflict, but mainly questioned the existent relationship between the newspaper rhetoric and reality. He found out that although the existence of great animosity with which the propaganda war was fought among Western journalists, the day-to-day coverage of the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina seems to be surprisingly little tendentious (Kempf, 1999).

Another important study in this area is done by Ute Annabring, Burkhard Blasi & Jutta Möckel. While Kempf's study is related to the role of media in the Bosnian war period, Annabring, Blasi & Möckel present the German press coverage of former Yugoslavia from the fall of Milosevic to identify the constructive coverage of the post-conflict era. (Annabring, Blasi & Möckel, 2004).

Similarly, this study uses newspapers as sources of data to explore the role of media rhetoric through a content analysis. The coding frame of the analysis is adopted from (See Appendix) the categorization of "escalation oriented and de-escalation oriented aspects of media coverage" by Kempf, Reimann and Luostarinen (1996, cf. Kempf et.al, 2003). The main reasons to use newspapers are the difference between written versus oral information and the practicality. The time and access to subjects necessary for recorded oral information were unavailable. Different than Kempf et al.'s and Annabring, Blasi & Möckel's studies, this work analyzes the role of media in the conflict escalation phase, and tries to study the link between newspapers' ideological positions and their escalatory and de-escalatory rhetoric.

On the other hand, although newspaper rhetoric as a whole is the main concern, the units of analysis of this research are the columns where opinion and interpretation of reality in a certain pattern can easily be identified because columnists are those who depend on the editorial choices of the newspaper, as well as being the closest ones to the owner of the medium. Thus, the ideological positioning of newspapers is decided regarding the newspapers' permanent columnists.

Some might say that by depending on the columns, newspaper rhetoric as a whole can not be identified; however, permanent columnists are especially important to reflect the newspapers' ideological positioning in the Turkish journalism context. As Tunç clearly indicates, "the columnists... do not necessarily have the same opinions as their

fellow columnists at the same newspaper, but they have to agree with the newspaper's political stance. The media owner has the last word in Turkey" (Tunç, 2003: p.4). In addition, Tunç states that there are chief editors who serve as ideological gatekeepers (2003). Therefore, it is apparent that each newspaper, as a medium, has a leading political position designated by the owner through the columnists. Similarly Tılıç indicates that in Turkey, internal hierarchy in a medium is so decisive that journalists cannot influence the decision making process and find a cooperative relation with the medium structure more helpful to publish the news prepared by them (Tılıç, 2001).

On the other hand, in the Turkish media context, discussing sensitive topics such as historical conflictual cases ranging from the role of Islam to Atatürk's legacy, the military, the Armenian question, the Kurdish issue or any argument that conflicts with the official discourse creates internal and external problems for those newspapers (Tunç, 2003). This means that when the issue is sensitive in a political context, distinct ideological positioning of media may become more apparent because external opposition is developed by other media to give a reply to the medium defending the sensitive issue or to strengthen their own ideological position.

### **1.2.2 Sampling**

Newspapers are the main data sources of this research because there are two main assumptions grounded in the research:

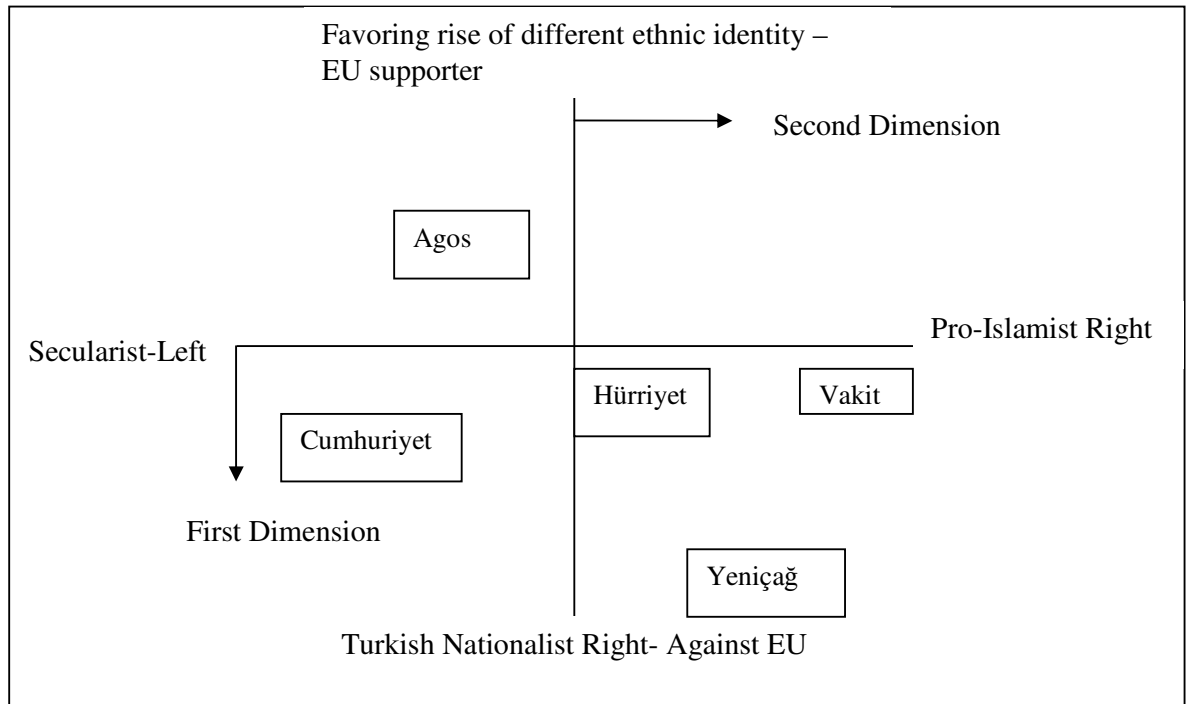
- 1 - Print media in Turkey is one of the many media capable of reflecting the ideological competition in Turkey by the existence of permanent columnists.
- 2 - There exists a variation of newspaper rhetoric as a result of their ideological positioning because while interpreting the same events columnists are the ones that often take sides.

Thus, existing variation of rhetoric must be captured to analyze their distinct potential to penetrate the escalation phases of conflict.

There are thirty-seven newspapers in total in Turkey, five of which are going to be analyzed in this study. The five newspapers are sampled according to an estimated map providing the nature of the ideological competitions in the Turkish political scene, which is adopted from Çarkoğlu and Hinich's analysis of the emerging ideological space in Turkey (2005).

Çarkoğlu and Hinich (2005) suggest a framework of spatial voting model by analyzing the emerging ideological space in Turkey. Therefore, the spatial model specifies a two-dimensional ideological map to reflect the Turkish ideological competition. One of the two dimensions of ideological competition in Turkey reflects the competition between the pro-Islamists and secularists; the latter dimension appears as the debate of ethnically defined nationalistic perspective; a debate over identity that shapes the agenda of the EU reform in the country. Therefore, the second dimension can be defined as including Turkish extreme nationalists on the one hand, while including any ethnic minority having a historical conflict with Turkey's official discourse being placed opposite of rising Turkish nationalism. In addition, although, Çarkoğlu and Hinich (2005) suggest in their study that the spatial analysis is a tool to diagnose party positions and voters' preferences of political parties in Turkey, they argue that their model is also convenient in reflecting the ideological structure in Turkey.

In in this study, I used 'the spatial map of issue dimensions in Turkish politics' to estimate the theoretical ideological positions of five newspapers in Turkey in order to explore escalatory or de-escalatory pattern of rhetoric. Five newspapers are chosen according to the varying positioning in the spatial map. Four newspapers are chosen because they are the closest ones to the ends of the two dimensions and one from the center has been chosen as a representative of a centrist view.



**Figure 1.1 Variation of newspapers according to their positioning in the spatial map of Turkish ideological competition**

In the ideological sample shown above, in Figure 1, *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) represents the ideology on the left, however, in the Turkish political context, “left” should not be taken as what western literature suggests, but having a secularist nature. Emphasizing Turkish national unity without emphasizing Turkish national identity as those at the end of Turkish nationalist dimension. Similarly, Open Source database defines *Cumhuriyet* as a Left-wing Kemalist daily that targets social-democratic intellectuals (<https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway>).

*Vakit* (Time) represents the right because of its emphasis on practices of Islamic ideology and the historical roots of the Turkish population. *Vakit* is defined as an Islamic fundamentalist daily by Open Source website.

In between this spectrum, although there are many other dailies in the center; *Hürriyet* (Freedom), the oldest, having a more developed and a static ideological position. *Hürriyet* is situated at the center-right. It is a mass appeal daily, which has the country's top circulation, according to Open Source database, and is owned by Aydın Dogan.

*Yeniçağ* (New Era) is at the end of the Turkish nationalism dimension because it is defined as a daily reflecting the views of hard-line nationalists inside the Nationalist Action Party.

Lastly, *Agos* (an irrigation trench) is a bilingual weekly newspaper in Turkey published by the Armenian minority. Therefore, *Agos* focuses on the need for accession to the EU for Turkey in order to develop European Union values such as democracy, human rights, and peace as well as publishing news about Armenian society in Turkey. *Agos* can easily be located at the closest to end of the EU supporters dimension when I rank the places of newspapers according to their ideological positions.

*Yeniçağ*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* are closer to the nationalist right end of the second dimension and often describe the opponent as the conference organizers and supporters. While *Vakit* does not have a clear position in the Armenian conflict, *Agos* is apparently on the conference supporters' side since the aim of the newspaper is to make the voice of the Armenians heard in Turkey.

For this research I searched through the related newspapers' columns from 16 May 2005 through 5 June 2005 and 19 September through 5 October. 16 May 2005 is the starting date of my preliminary search because according to the information from the organizers, the press release about the conference was sent to the media around mid-May. However, there were no columns related to the Armenian conference until 22 May 2005.

Thus the beginning date of the content analysis for the May period is 22 May 2005. On the other hand, 3 June 2005 is the day no columns about the Armenian conference were represented because the intensity of conflict was lower. However, according to the information from the organizers, there was not a specific press release document in the September conference, therefore, for the September period the beginning of the analysis is the day that the Turkish print media first covered the Armenian conference and continued until the day no columns about the conference were present. Thus, the content analysis is conducted in between 22 September 2005

through- 5 October 2005. For practical reasons these two periods are conceptualized as the “May period” and “September period” in the data analysis section.

### **1.2.3 Coding Procedure**

In order to explain the whole process of the coding unit and coding frame are explained below to give a guide to the reader of this study.

#### **1.2.3.1 Coding Unit**

Newspaper columns are coded through the coding units of ‘quasi-sentences’ or ‘arguments.’ Volkens indicates that “an argument is the verbal expression of one political idea or issue. In its simplest form, a sentence is the basic unit of meaning. Therefore, punctuation can be used as a guideline for identifying arguments. The starting point of coding is the sentence, but what we are aiming for is an argument. In its shortest form, a sentence contains a subject, a verb and an attribute or an adjective” (Volkens, 2006). Therefore, if a sentence contains many statements through the help of punctuation, the sentence is broken into different arguments. The arguments that fit into the coding schedule are coded; the other arguments coded as “0” (zero) in order to reveal the frequency of the coded arguments.

#### **1.2.3.2 Coding Frame**

Adopting the coding schedule developed by Kempf, Reimann and Luostarinen (1996 cf. Kempf et. al. 2003)<sup>4</sup>, the coding schedule is established to analyze the rhetoric of newspapers. Being a simplified and modified version, after searching the literature on escalation and media coverage and pre-testing the coding schedule on ten articles, below is the coding frame to identify the escalation-oriented rhetoric and de-escalation oriented rhetoric of different newspapers. There are 26 subcategories under 4 main categories (See, Chapter Four) for the coding frame of this study.

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<sup>4</sup> The original work of Kempf, Reimann and Luostarinen (1996) can be found in Appendix.

One of the reason not to use the original version of Kempf et al's coding frame is that after the pretest of the coding frame on a number of column's arguments, I found that some of the categories were not suitable to the nature of the conflict about the Armenian conference such as "a focus on violence" or "focus on victims and sacrifices of the population." The controversy over the Armenian conference was a conflict escalation episode but not a war. Thus, the intensity of the words in the original categorization of Kempf et.al. did not meet the wording of journalists during the discussions over the Armenian conference. Another reason is that two categories (social identification and motivational logic) in the original version were for the coding of various aspects about the military leaders, soldiers, victims, civil population and motivation about war that the nature of the Armenian conference and it is not suitable to code those categories because there was not any war possibility or existence of war.

### **1.3. Design of the Study**

Concerning the aforementioned context, the following chapter provides an explanation of the relationship between media and communication, the influence of the nature of communication in conflict, the nature of conflict processes in order to clarify the role of media in conflict. The main role media carries out in a conflict situation is intervention. Thus, the process of media intervention and tools for the media intervention are discussed in the second chapter. As a result, the rhetoric used by media is taken as one of the important factors influencing the course of conflicts.

In the third chapter, the intervention time of media is analyzed in order to give emphasis to the importance of media intervention in conflict escalation. In this manner, the nature of conflict escalation is also scrutinized, and thus, the reason for scrutinizing the May period and September period of conflict escalation about the Armenian conference is discussed.

The Fourth chapter reveals the findings of the content analysis. First of all, findings from each newspaper are analyzed in terms of frequency and intensity of the

categories. Secondly, their pattern is searched for by comparing the May and September period of conflict escalation.

Chapter Five is the conclusion, which includes the comparison of the newspapers according to their ideological positions and their rhetorical patterns. Also, the concluding chapter focuses on the use of this study for theory, practice and future research.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE ROLE OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT**

The role of media and communication in conflict will be presented in this chapter, before presenting the assessment of the timing of media intervention in conflict that affects the conflict processes. While presenting the general picture of the firm relationship between media and communication and their role in conflict, the aim is to discuss the nature of media intervention in conflicts including the description of communication and conflict processes. Subsequently, the nature of communication, media intervention in conflict, and cognitive frameworks as the major function of media intervention will be evaluated after indicating the relationship of media and communication.

The main objectives of this chapter are to construct the general picture of the relation of the media and communication; describe the nature of communication that affects the process of conflict; to provide the groundwork that will help to determine the place of media intervention within conflict processes; to present an understanding of the operation of media and to demonstrate that the intervention of media mainly operates within cognitive frameworks that are being presented by different rhetoric in the media.

#### **2.1 Media and Communication**

Media or mass communication can be conceptualized as the channels that have power to collectively inform, influence, and affect societies through transference and assessment of the dynamics of events, thus shaping reality. Questioning the role of media in conflict is crucial because, especially in the situation of conflict, communication plays a central role in shaping perceptions and it has a firm relationship with media. The relationship between media and communication is firm because media is one of the massive members of innumerable communication processes with a wide area network.

Katz and Lawyer describe communication as anything that involves an exchange of meaning between people in which information is sent and received, so that the thoughts, opinions, information or feelings of each person are appropriately exchanged (Katz and Lawyer, 1992). In parallel with the description of Katz and Lawyer, in this study, communication is defined as the process of the transfer of formulated information from one agent to the other. However, communication should not be understood as a process that occurs between individuals. Communication should be understood as the collective transfer of formulated information from media agents to the society as a whole. Thus, a communication process is fulfilled through information sent by the journalists to the society.

The media, as the sender of information to society, use language and visuals as the main tools of portraying and interpreting the reality. Katz and Lawyer determine that the use of language “is a way of communicating your model, or representation, of the world as you view it, to another” (Katz and Lawyer, 1992: 11). Therefore, it is apparent that media is not a monolithic structure because it is impossible to receive information of reality in the same manner from every media unit. That is why there are numerous media units, such as different TV channels, and various newspapers, that are sending the same information with distinct use of language. Therefore, sending information might be the basic act of media in communication; however, the way of using language and visuals might differ in sending information, which means the information sent by the media include diverse opinions, viewpoints and feelings.

On the other hand, media are not only the sender of information and society is not only the receiver. First of all, it should be noted that members of a certain media are also members of that certain society, which means media are always in interaction with the public. Therefore, the information portrayed by the media is a partial or sometimes full representation of the public views, which connotes that the given information by the media also represents the information sent at first to the media by the society. Therefore, although the communication between media and society is not as apparent as a face to face communication of individuals, it is a constant process that influences masses.

## **2.2 Nature of Communication Process and Its Influence in Conflict**

In order to display a link between communication and conflict, there is a need for a clear understanding of the nature of communication. In this way, the functions and problems of communication in conflict can be evaluated.

The communication literature suggests four main paradigms of communication that are apparent to identify how the nature of the communication process is effective in conflict processes. Krauss and Morsella (cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000) describe these four paradigms to understand the relation between communication and conflict.

### **2.2.1 Encoding-decoding paradigm**

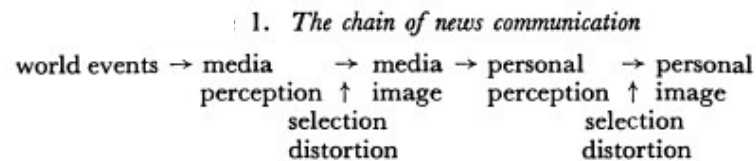
According to Krauss and Morsella's categorization of paradigms, the first category is encoding-decoding paradigm. In the encoding-decoding paradigm, communication begins with an encoded message, continues with the transmission of the encoded message through a channel, and ends with the decoding of the receiver. However, in this process the message decoded by the receiver may not be the same message as it was in the beginning which was encoded by the sender because noises might distort the meaning of the message. Noise forces the recipient to "fill in" the information distorted (Krauss and Morsella, cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000).

Galtung and Ruge explain the existence of noise as the existence of ambiguity (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Morton Deutsch, as an example of noise, uses the Telegraph game to display the possible results of using third parties to transmit messages where misunderstanding is likely to occur because of the distorted message transmitted by using multiple channels rather than a direct communication (cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000). Apparently, the media have the potential to distort messages during transmission because media are composition of multiple channels.

In parallel, according to Mitchell, in conflict situations, another difficulty that should be considered in the relation of communication and conflict is the complexity of the process of signaling to multiple audiences because it is difficult to separate the

signals intended for different audiences (Mitchell, 1981). Since media are addressing various members of a society, it is hard for the media to designate different information and interpretations for each individual; therefore, the intended signals sent by the media might be decoded by unintended audiences in numerous ways.

Similarly, Galtung and Ruge suggest there is a ‘chain of news communication’ from the events that took place to the personal image about that event. In the process of being informed about an event, messages are exposed to distortions as the figure below demonstrates (Galtung and Ruge, 1965: 65) :



**Figure 2.1 Chain of news communication**

In the first half of the chain above, the events become news with the selected distortion and create the media image; in the second half personal image is developed after receiving the media image as news; then, shaped by the personal perception. Both paths of the chain are exposed to selection distortion depending on what strikes attention of the receivers. However, as Galtung and Ruge state that personal image about world events is not only shaped by the media but equally affected by the personal impressions, political dispatches and professional relations so on and so forth, determine the intensity of attention to be given to different news.

The selection distortion in the chain of news communication might not always be a harmful factor. However, in a situation of conflict, selected distortions have the potential to worsen the conflict because adversaries and the audience who have a certain point of view about the conflict are prone to select the information and interpretation that are appropriate to their own point of view, which as a result, strengthen their goals, behaviors and the psychological conditions that support those goals and behaviors. Thus, the conflict over the Armenian conference can be strengthened by the news communication because the anti-conference and pro-conference parties are prone to

select opinions similar to their own group's interpretations and, as a result, feel themselves more attached to their own groups.

### **2.2.2 Intentionalist paradigm**

The intentionalist paradigm emphasizes the importance of “distinction between a message's literal meaning and its intended meaning.” (Krauss and Morsella cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000). In conflict situations, adversaries are inclined to interpret the meaning of the sender's message according to their own goals and values; thus communication is likely to fail because conflicts are the results of incompatible differences in goal, value, interest and ideology (Krauss and Morsella cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000). Similarly, Rubenstein suggests that “the potential of conflict exists whenever individuals or groups pursue goals that they perceive to be incompatible” (Rubenstein, cf. Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast(eds.), 2003: 55), therefore it is not so likely for the receiver to easily perceive the literal meaning of the message. For example, when there is an argument in a newspaper stating that “the pro-conference parties' in the conflict over the Armenian conference should also respect the rights of the anti-conference parties,” the intended meaning of the journalist might be to offer an alternative for cooperation , however, anti-conference parties may perceive that statement as “pro-conference parties are not respecting our own group's rights, thus they should be blamed more.” Therefore, a causal relationship with the statement and the situation of the parties' own group has been built. Thus, the communication process would be fulfilled but the intended messages of communication could not be received. As a result, the process of communication would be poor.

When poor communication occurs as a result of different interpretations of meanings, the desire of the parties for their own goals and values become rigid and the number of availability of perceived alternatives for a joint outcome lessen. What follows, according to Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, is a more severe conflict (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994:12). Thus, when the intended meaning cannot be perceived by its literal meaning, communication fails and the potential of failure of communication is high in conflict situations.

### **2.2.3 Perspective-taking paradigm**

While the intentionalist paradigm emphasizes the importance of a sender's intentions, the perspective-taking paradigm emphasizes the receiver's intentions by assuming differences between individual world perceptions. According to the perspective taking paradigm, the experiences of an individual would shape different views. Although, adversaries should take into account each other's perspectives, often in conflict situations it is more difficult to take the perspective of the other into account accurately because the other seems more unlike oneself (Krauss and Morsella cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000).

In addition, conflict is encouraged by zero-sum thinking, in which a party assumes that the more he/she gets the less for his/her adversary. Thus, in zero-sum thinking the main aim would be harming the other adversary (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994), which is a condition that discourages considering the perspective of the other.

The three categorizations of communication done by Krauss and Morsella until now stresses the importance of the nature of the individual in the communication process. However, communication, similar to conflict processes, are not only the result of individual's interaction with each other but also the interaction of individuals with social situations. Therefore, the fourth paradigm emphasizes external factors influencing the process of communication.

### **2.2.4 Dialogic Paradigm**

Dialogic paradigm claims that the parties in conflict should be in collaborative communication to create meaning and set some similar conceptions as a first step to reduce their differences. Subsequently, participants to communication are given an interactive role where they respond to each other jointly but the meanings in their message transmissions are perceived as socially constructed. Thus, for the dialogic paradigm, the context of the communication process is crucial to construct similar

meanings from each other's messages (Krauss and Morsella, cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000).

According to Rubenstein, in order to have a richer understanding of conflict, both the influence of human nature and the social situations or structures should be considered (Rubenstein, cf. Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast, 2003). In the same manner, dialogic paradigm suggests that communication is a result of an individual's interaction as well as the socially constructed meanings. However, it is so hard for the parties in conflict to perceive the created meanings as socially constructed; thus it is not so likely to create a joint meaning because often social constructions such as culture, politics and socioeconomic conditions are the result of long established patterns of thought and behavior that parties cannot easily be aware of their effect in their conflict. In addition, even if the adversaries are aware of the situational factors affecting the conflict, there is not an apparent line between human nature and social situations to pinpoint for the adversaries because humans are social beings. In sum, it is not an easy task to perceive the meanings exchanged in communication as socially constructed as the dialogic paradigm suggests.

The paradigms summarized by Krauss and Morsella (cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000) in the section above suggest that communication process has inherent problems. Even if one of the participants has been put in the role of passive recipient, as in the case of the encoding-decoding paradigm, there is the problem of distortion of message. When participants are put in active but separate roles, as the cases in intentionalist and perspective taking-paradigm, individuals' possible misconstruction of speakers' intentions of the words and possible incorrect assumptions of the addressee's point of view or frame of reference are other problems inherent to communication. Even though communication is formulated by depending on the interaction of the participants rather than an individualistic process, as in the case of the dialogic paradigm, context of their circumstances is the diagnostic factor for them to achieve similar understanding of meanings of each other's messages.

Until now, in the first two sections of this chapter, media are described as one of the establishers of communication processes; therefore, the inherent dynamics of communication are analyzed to indicate that communication through media is

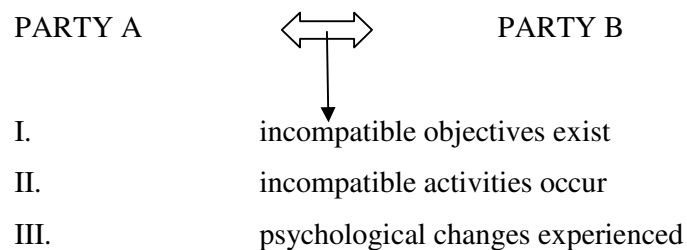
influenced by inherent problems of any communication process. Although, some features of the nature of communication processes are described to emphasize the difficulties of communication in conflict situations, in the next part of this chapter, the nature of conflict is analyzed in detail to specifically determine the role of media in conflict.

### 2.3 Nature of Conflict Processes

In order to suggest a stronger link between conflict and communication through media, there is a need for conceptualization of the concept of ‘conflict.’ There are various frames of reference describing ‘conflict’ in conflict analysis and resolution literature.

According to Kriesberg, “social conflict exists when two or more persons or groups manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives”( Kriesberg, 1998: 2). Similarly, Deutsch defines conflict as "incompatible activities occur. . . . (which) may reflect differences in interests, desires, or values . . . or a rivalry in which one person tries to outdo the other" (Deutsch, 1973, Cf. Sweeney et.al. 1996: 156).

Mitchell claims that conflict is the interrelation of three components “(i) a situation of incompatible goals; (ii) a range of psychological conditions experienced by the parties involved; (iii) a set of related behaviors used to achieve the disputed goals” (Mitchell, 1981: 32). Thus, deriving from Kriesberg, Deutsch and Mitchell’s descriptions, conflict is the existence of incompatible objectives and activities in a relationship of at least two parties, in which simultaneous psychological changes exist and new psychological conditions emerge for the relation, which I can illustrate as:



**Figure 2.2 Dynamics of conflict**



In parallel to the conceptualization of conflict for this study, Kempf agrees that there are three major inter-dependent aspects of conflict as issues (or objectives), positions (or activities) and cognitive frames (affecting psychological conditions) and that any change in any of the aspects may cause a change in the others. However, he emphasizes that “both issues and positions result from an interpretation of conflict, i.e. from a complex co-construction of meaning embedded in some sort of cognitive framework” (Kempf et. al. ed., 2000: 16).

Therefore, the existence of conflict at the beginning is lead by having a perception and establishing an accurate interpretation of conflict, such as a meaning emerges from a cognitive framework. Kempf et al. (ed., 2003) define cognitive frameworks as including a variety of factors affecting the course of conflict such as conceptualization of conflict, interpretation of social norms, interpretation of conflicting parties’ hierarchy of values, and interpretation of attitudes toward each other. Therefore, deriving from the explanations of Kempf et. al., the cognitive framework can be conceptualized as the constantly renewed interpretation of realities.

Owing to usage of cognitive frameworks, media, while constituting a communication process, can attach different meanings to the same phenomenon. For example, the meaning of conflict can vary for individuals when they receive different cognitive frameworks through media channels. Therefore if “both issues and positions result from an interpretation of conflict” (Kempf et. al. ed., 2003:16), the course of conflict as a whole is affected.

In sum, cognitive frameworks are products of different perceptions and interpretations that have a capacity to influence the course of conflict. Although, this study does not claim that all conflicts exist and perpetuate only because of interpretations, the social psychological approach to conflict analysis and resolution is taken up as a reference for this study. Since social psychologists are “...accustomed to thinking in terms of the impact of mental status on social behavior” (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994: 5), the road of approach in this study emphasizes the influences on mental status by also taking the complexity of the nature of conflict into account.

Believing that an analysis of the nature of communication and conflict is very important for identifying the role of media in conflict, in the next part of this chapter, I will indicate the position of media in conflict situations, role of media in conflict processes, and operation of media to carry out their role by scrutinizing the main theoretical explanations derived from communications literature as well as from the social psychological approaches in conflict analysis and resolution literature.

## **2.4 The role of media in conflict**

Basic argument of this study is inspired from a common argument about the role of media, which claims that:

“media, being in between the segments of the society, have a certain influence in the construction of social reality. Media put issues on the agenda, provide information about facts and events, and offer a cognitive framework for society’s interpretation” (Kempf et.al.ed., 2003:18-19).

Thereby, this study mainly suggests that media have power to portray conflict processes by cognitive frameworks, which influence the conflict interpretation and perception of the public. In addition, media suggest cognitive frameworks by communicating with the public through the rhetoric. Simply put, the process of communication carried out by media put into operation through language. However, in a conflict process, not only the rhetoric is a crucial factor in the operation of media, but also the parties confronted with the media rhetoric are deeply important.

Similarly, paradigms in communication literature indicate different intentions and world views of the senders and receivers of communication, selection distortion as a result of human nature or external factors, and the context of communication are central points to evaluate the flow of communication. Adversaries of a conflict use media channels to indirectly communicate with each other, and through media channels they send signals to each other and their target audiences. Media members, who are also members of the society, use media channels to communicate with adversaries, their target audiences as well as the rest of the public. In addition, Mitchell states that in

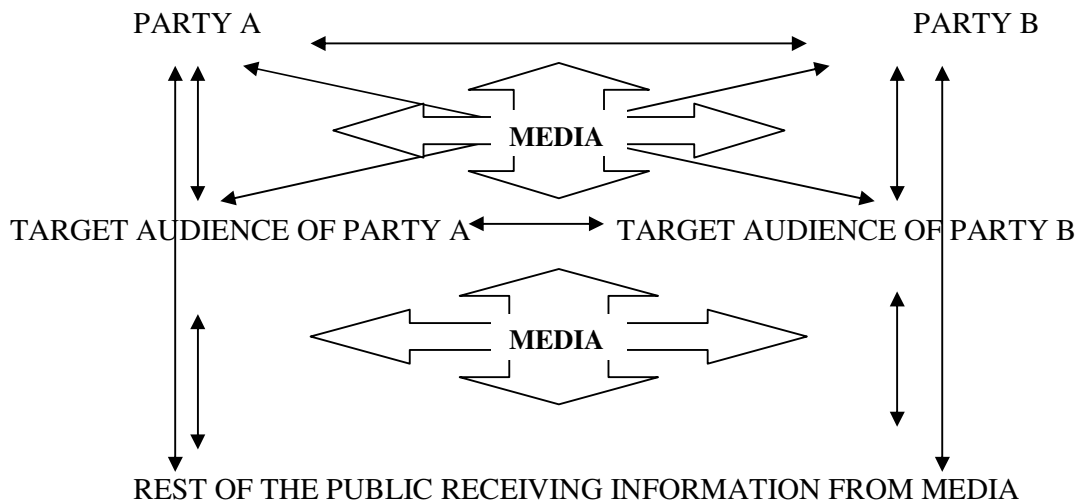
conflict situations, communication is used by parties to influence or change each other's positions and behaviors as well as to shape the view of adversaries' targeted audience. However, at this point, multiple audiences create another complexity because it is hard to separate the target audience from the others (Mitchell, 1981), which might result in the involvement of different audiences to conflict or change in the perception of different audiences.

As a matter of fact, there is a complexity to list all of the senders and receivers of the communication processes established by the media because at large it is impossible to exactly identify the receivers, very difficult to specify the individual senders of information dispatched through media channels and the amount of effect that media received from the society while sending the messages. Indeed, it is impossible to identify the receivers because for example, although some companies search for circulation of newspapers and some search for ratings of TV and radio channels, the amount of circulation and ratings only indicate the number of people who sourced the newspaper or turned on their TV or radio but do not confirm if people read the news, watched or heard the information. In addition, the difficulty of specifying the individual senders of information comes from the number of media members and the amount of information and interpretation. For example, the information might be sent by a journalist who witnessed the real event or the information might also be second hand for media members. In any case, the dynamism of media network and the social world as the source of huge amounts of information constraint determining the exact senders. Additionally, the amount of effect of the media by the society is indefinite because the individual members of media are social beings. In this sense, the main constraint of this study is analyzing the media in general as the senders, but not pinpointing the exact receivers of message sent through the media and the way the rhetoric is constructed in media.

Having this constraint in mind, the major objective of this study is to analyze the media rhetoric in transferring messages about a conflict escalation situation. At the same time, the additional objective is to identify how conflict processes are interpreted by different media. The point of reference that leads this study is that good communication is not a guarantee for a conflict to be resolved, but poor communication most possibly increases the likelihood of the continuation of conflict or worsening of the

conflict situation (Krauss and Morsella, cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000). Thus, media as the channels that have power to collectively inform and influence the societies by transferring messages including their assessment of the dynamics of conflict situations are to be questioned.

For this reason, media is considered as an intervener to a conflict because media intervene in the relations between the adversaries' and influences their inter-communication by offering designed interpretations. In this process, the relations of adversaries with their target audience, and the rest of the society are also paying attention to information and interpretation offered by the media. Therefore, I illustrate a hypothetical communication and relational processes under media intervention in order to identify the position of media in conflicts as below:



**Figure 2.3 Communication Processes - Media Intervention**

Arrows between different actors are to illustrate the communication processes and relations where media might intervene in any of them by influencing incompatible objectives, activities and psychological changes, which occur in conflict.

It is clear from the illustration that media have a place in between different groups in the society. In addition to being between them, the position of media is influencing the relations and inter-communications of the receivers as illustrated above, then media have a role that should be taken into consideration, especially when media offer

cognitive frameworks in conflict processes because interpretation is one of the keys of a conflict's development.

In sum, there are basic acknowledgements needed in order to clarify the aim of questioning the media rhetoric and the variation of rhetoric in conflict situations. One is that the inherent difficulties of communication processes in conflict situations do not change the fact that communication is a central part of conflict. Secondly, media have a potential for worsening the conflict through shaping perception by the use of rhetoric. Thus, fourthly, media is assumed to be an intervener to a conflict by offering cognitive frameworks, which shape perceptions of adversaries', target audience of adversaries and the rest of the public. Therefore, lastly, media's influence is assumed to be more on the cognitive level because the basic role of media is to inform the masses and cognition is developed through information. However, since media are not monolithic but composed of various channels, the way of intervention of each medium is different. Therefore, cognitive frameworks helping to shape the perceptions are various.

In the next part of this chapter, in order to analyze the nature of media intervention by rhetoric, there are four questions to be answered: How can the intervention of media be conceptualized? What type of intervention do the media manifest in conflict? How does the media intervention operate? Why is one of the functions of media intervention going to be analyzed in this study?

## **2.5 Nature of Media Intervention in Conflict Processes**

In order to have a clear understanding of what media intervention in a conflict means, firstly, there is a need for conceptualization of 'intervention.' There are various frames of reference describing 'conflict intervention' in conflict analysis and resolution literature. After analyzing conflict intervention, the operation of media is scrutinized in order to evaluate the nature of media intervention in conflict processes.

### **2.5.1 Conflict Intervention**

According to James Laue, “conflict intervention occurs when an outside or semi-outside party self-consciously enters into a conflict situation with the objective of influencing the conflict in a direction the intervener defines as desirable” (Laue, 1987:20 Cf. Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast eds., 2003). So, Laue claims that the conflict intervener is the one altering the conflict and it can be an insider-partial intervener or an outside party. In a similar way, Kriesberg defines intermediaries as the actors intervening in the conflict. Accordingly, intermediaries often contribute to alter the conflict from a destructive situation to a constructive one but with the risk of failure and hamper the success of the agreements. According to Kriesberg, intermediaries are to provide a space for communication and information, and generate pressures for agreement (1998).

On the other hand, Princen claims that the intervention of intermediaries are done by “third parties who intercede for the purpose of influencing or facilitating the settlement of a dispute but who do not impose a solution. They are actors with incentives to be involved but without direct interests in the disputed issues” ( Princen, 1992: 3). Thus, by deriving from the descriptions from the literature above it is apparent that conflict intervention can be implemented by an outside figure as well as by a semi-outsider or insider-partial party, who is aware of being an interceder. At the same time, the reasons of intervention can vary. The intervention might be to offer space for communication and information, motivate parties to come to an agreement by exerting some pressure, or facilitating the dispute. In any ways, the result of the intervention is the alteration of conflict.

In order to weigh the general nature of media intervention subsequently, interested secondary party intervention to a conflict should be explained as well. While the primary parties are those who are directly related with the issues of a conflict, third parties are often outsiders to a conflict and facilitate the disputes without imposing a solution. Interested secondary parties, however, are those “who have an indirect stake in the outcome of the dispute but who do not feel themselves to be directly involved” (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001: 202). Ohlson and Söderberg describe secondary parties as an actor that supports in some way a primary party who is one of the parties in direct

disagreement (2002). Thus, as Kriesberg warns, there is a risk of failure and worsening the conflict in interventions. When the intervener is an interested secondary party, who is an actual supporter of one of the adversaries, the risk of failure is more likely to rise because the trust between the intervener is more likely to be damaged. Therefore, in conflict intervention, in addition to the figure of the intervener, reasons to intervene and the outcome of the intervention, the point of view of the intervener about the conflict situation is crucial.

Since, in this study, media is the central figure under consideration as an intervener to conflict processes, to understand the reasons and outcome as well as the point of views of media interventions, it is exceedingly important to understand how media perform the intervention.

### **2.5.2 How do Media Operate?**

Although, until now, the attempt to define the nature of the media intervention in a conflict is driven by describing and weighing the conflict intervention process, it is also necessary to point out the functions of the media. Taking Mitchell's conceptualization of conflict as a milestone and incorporating other studies, this study considers four ways of media to perform intervention. Thus, four ways of operation of media are analyzed to suggest that the media influence on incompatible goal orientations, psychological conditions and behaviors of the parties in conflict is carried out by cognitive frameworks that might be altering the public perception about the conflict..

First of all, news media are one of the sources that give an individual some information about the events that occur, so media are *sources of limited information*. Nonetheless the media also portray conflict by adding interpretation, so media are *sources of evaluated reality*. Thirdly, often media are the only link of the public to the conflict process where different media units indicate different critiques of the process of conflict and parties involved, thus, media are *an indirect intervention mechanism of the society over conflicts*. Lastly, the media function on a competitive profit-making market that the amount of profit depends on how much they address the positions of the society, so media are *a space of competition of different world views*.

### **2.5.2.1 Media as sources of limited information**

By being *a source of limited information*, the media cover the news about conflicts but do not offer a detailed picture of their background or reasons behind the behaviors of the parties but only give the information about a conflict situation which is newsworthy. Thus, the limited information about conflict transmitted through media to the public might be distorted because each medium might have different priority when choosing a conflict situation to be on the news, or various journalists transmit the information, which means various messages from the media are loaded with various perceptions since journalists are members of a society.

In addition, it should be kept in mind that media not only use reports to cover the news. For example, newspapers are not only composed of consecutive paragraphs but there are opinion editorials, columns, news stories, in different shape such as titles and subtitles of different size, illustration of pictures and symbols. Also, TV news are not only composed of news segments by speakers but also have scenes from the conflict situation and different critiques are being done through various types of programs. Therefore, when we consider the occurrence of one event, it is not surprising to see the media covering the event through distinct pieces of information by distinct tools. In sum, the media only give us a partial view of the world because events are becoming 'news' when they are found newsworthy and selected for inclusion in reports (Fowler, 1991: 11). Therefore, as stated by Cohen, the press is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about if not in telling people what to think (McCombs and Shaw, Cf. Boyd-Barrett and Newbold, 1995: 154).

### **2.5.2.2 Media as a source of Evaluated Reality**

By being *a source of evaluated reality*, the media influence the cognitive reality of the individuals by selecting the pieces of information to be transformed according to distinct editorial choices. Often this transformation of information through different priorities has been studied under the 'theory of framing.'



According to Entman:

“Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993: 52).

Therefore, the notion of framing indicates a specific way in which influence over a human consciousness is performed by the transfer of information from one location—such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel — to that consciousness (Entman, 1993). By framing particular definitions and interpretations of situations that are used, media professionals package the information in such a way to represent the reality that can influence the public opinion (Beaudoin and Thorson, Cf. Gilboa ed., 2002:154). Thus, frames are a kind of evaluated reality that have the power to shift or modify the values of the individuals. However, the important question is what might be a result of a shift in the values and opinions of the individuals.

Rothman et.al. think of frames as helpful to organize conflict theory because according to them frames can signify different perspectives, which provide lens to the world of conflict (Rothman et. al., 2001). Similarly, Bolman and Deal (1984) and Friedman and Lipshitz (1994) argue that by frames, theorists and practitioners focus their attention to particular aspects of the conflict situation, formulate the problem, and guide conflict (Cf. Rothman et. al. 2001). However, as Dearborn and Simon (1958) suggest, frames may also be limiting and lead to selective perception (Cf. Rothman et. al. 2001).

On the other hand, although the media influences the values of opinions by choosing which evaluation is newsworthy, people who work in the media to select the best evaluation are also influenced by their own characteristics and the social processes. Thus, Deutsch claims that:

“everyone has been a participant and observer in many conflicts from childhood, thus has implicit knowledge, preconceptions, attitudes, and modes of behavior toward conflict. Thus, a person’s preexisting orientations to conflict, and behavior might be reflecting those salient in his or her culture, but some reflect individual knowledge acquired from unique

experiences in the context of family, school, watching TV, and the like” (Deutsch and Coleman eds. , 2000: 37).

The same process is valid for the people who transmit or evaluate the news about conflicts. So, if journalists are also the ones who are influenced by distinct experiences, the evaluated reality transmitted by the media should vary not only by usage of different frames but also personal orientations of media members to a conflict. The members of media may not be aware of cognitive frameworks they offer, however, although they actually transfer their own pattern of interpretation to the society through the mechanical tools of media such as TV, radio, journals, newspapers and this transference occurs through medium’s rhetorical patterns.

#### **2.5.2.3 Media as an Indirect Intervention Mechanism of Society in Conflicts**

The media as a prominent critique to the process of conflict and parties involved serve as *an indirect intervention mechanism of society to conflicts*. Not only the media influence the public and adversaries’ opinion formation but they are also influenced by the parties of conflict and public. Therefore, when the media send messages and offer evaluated realities, the message and evaluations indirectly include intervention by existent social cognition. On the other hand, the political position of mediums are important in order to understand the nature of indirect intervention. For example, if the owner and members of the medium are more prone to support one political segment in the society, it is more likely that the direction of intervention to be close to a group’s position.

#### **2.5.2.4 Media as a Space for Competition of Different World Views**

There are two prominent approaches leading the scholarly attention that describe the media space. Some agree that the media contain different competitions, while some others think that the media as a whole serve one world view. Major debate is between liberal-pluralist and Marxist theoretical accounts on how media work. Keynes briefly explains that the pluralist track see media in control in the hands of an autonomous managerial elite who allow a degree of flexibility to professionals and there is symmetry between the audience and media institutions where audiences are capable of

manipulating the media according to their priorities. Marxist tradition on the other hand, see media professionals as internalizing the norms of the hegemonic culture and their interpretive works are for the interests of dominant classes and audiences are unable to reject the accepted definitions offered by media (Cf .Curran, Gurevitch 1998). Suggesting a space of competition for media, this study is more close to the liberal-pluralist view of the media.

Thus, the competition space of media is argued to be composed of managerial elites and some flexibility of their professionals, which allows a certain diversity of frameworks offered by the media. Therefore, the media represent distinct ideas; thus, distinct cognitive frameworks. Apparently, media intervene with abovementioned four operational actions all of which have link to one major tool of media in intervention and that is cognitive framework carried out by rhetorical patterns of media.

### **2.5.3. Major Tools of Media Intervention: Cognitive Framework and Rhetoric**

The major argument of this study is inspired from a common argument in the literature about media:

“Media, being in between the segments of the society, have a certain influence in the construction of social reality. Media put issues on the agenda, provide information about facts and events, and offer a cognitive framework for society’s interpretation” (Kempf et.al.ed., 2003:18-19).

Similarly, Davis (1990) presents a summary of the social construction of reality approach to the news media, which is the broader theoretical explanation to suggest that the media have partial influence in the social reality construction. According to social construction of reality theory:

“we live in a fundamentally ambiguous social world – a world in which persons, objects, and actions have no inherent or essential meaning. If meaning is not inherent, then it must be created – imposed on action, events, or things through human action” (Davis, 1990 Cf. Wolsfeld, 1997: 32).

Fowler refers to Chomsky's starting sentence in his volume called *Language and Mind*, which states "the particular branch of cognitive psychology known as linguistics." Furthermore, Fowler claims that although the product of the linguist's analysis is a property of a speaker's cognitive system, there is a reciprocity for example between writers and readers of a newspaper. Fowler explains this reciprocity with the existent of level of consensus between readers and writer, and the establishment of a familiar style is fundamental to the building of consensus, which has been identified as the centre of ideological practice of newspapers. Thus according to Fowler there is an ideology of consensus in the media to manage the relations with government and capital as well as with the individual readers (Fowler, 1991).

Similarly, Stuart Hall proposes 'mode of address' to explain different rhetoric of mediums. According to Hall mode of address:

"means that the same topic, sources and inferential structures will appear differently even in papers with a similar outlook, since the different rhetoric of address will have an important effect in inflecting the original item. Of special importance in determining the particular mode of address adopted will be the particular parts of readership spectrum the paper sees itself as customarily addressing. The language employed will thus be the newspaper's own version of the language of the public to whom it is principally addressed: its version of rhetoric, imagery and underlying common stock of knowledge which it assumes its audience shares and which thus forms the basis of the reciprocity of producer/reader" (Hall, 1980 cf. Fowler, 1991: 48).

Thereby, it is convenient to offer that a medium with its power to portray conflict processes according to its own cognitive frameworks has its own version of language which is equal to its rhetorical pattern to achieve a tacit consensus in its relation with its readers. Therefore, each medium has a particular 'political motive for conveying approval of a stable, familiar ideology' (Fowler, 1991: 49) and 'its own version of the language' (Hall, cf. Fowler 1991: 48). Until now the help of rhetoric to transfer cognitive frameworks has been discussed; yet, the influence of cognitive frames on the meaning of conflict situation is the question waiting to be answered.

### 2.5.3.1 Operation of Cognitive Frameworks

According to Heider, an individual organizes attitudes toward people and objects in relation to one another within that individual's own cognitive structure (Cf. Severin and Tankard, 1997:160). Thus, the first step for an individual to change his or her attitude is to come into contact with information that differs from his or her own attitudes.

Severin and Tankard refer to Osgood's congruity theory in order to analyze the role of cognitive changes by media messages on the attitudes of people. According to Osgood's congruity model:

“for an attitude change to take place, a person must come into contact with information that differs from his or her present attitudes... a person (P) receives an assertion from a source (S) toward which he or she has an attitude, about an object (O) toward which he or she has an attitude...and how much P likes S and O will determine is a state of congruity or consistency exists... Incongruity occurs when the attitudes toward the source and the object are similar and the assertion is negative or when they are dissimilar and the assertion is positive” (Cf. Severin and Tankard, 1997: 162).

The major importance of incongruity or inconsistency is that people who received information about a conflict situation tend to use the information according to their own position. As Severin and Tankard warn “if we do receive a message that causes incongruity, we may misperceive the message to make it fit our view of reality” (1997: 164). This means that a medium must pay more attention to the rhetorical patterns of transmission of information in conflict situations.

Another theory, which has a major role in conflict processes is the ‘cognitive dissonance theory’ by Festinger (Festinger 1957 Cf. Barker 2003). The cognitive dissonance theory explains the idea of cognitions as bits of knowledge that can pertain to any variety of thoughts, values, facts, or emotions (Barker, 2003). Moreover, a summary of cognitive dissonance theory is as follows:

“The basic idea behind cognitive dissonance theory is that people do not like to have dissonant cognitions. In fact, many people argue that the desire to have consonant cognitions is as strong as our basic desires for food and

shelter. As a result, when someone does experience two or more dissonant cognitions (or conflicting thoughts), they will attempt to do away with the dissonance” (Barker, 2003).

Thus, the media’s cognitive frames for conflicts are often used to rationalize a receiver’s existent perception and the data sent by the media used to be fit in the existing variety of information about the conflict situation. Therefore, the media has the influence to change this cognition by using different frames. However, selecting to establish a conciliatory rhetoric depends on a medium’s ideological practice and versions of language they choose to use.

#### **2.5.4 Summary of the Nature of Media Intervention in Conflict**

Concerning all the characteristics of conflict and media intervention separately, the type and aim of the media intervention do not definitely have the same nature with third or interested secondary parties in conflict intervention literature. The results of the media intervention have the potential to influence perception of conflict conceptualization by the receivers; and therefore might possibly cause cognitive changes in parties because an individual organizes attitudes toward people and objects in relation to one another within that individual’s own cognitive structure and when an individual comes into contact with information that differs from his or her own attitudes (Haider, Cf. Severin and Tankard, 1997:160). Therefore, the result of media intervention, although sometimes it might not be self consciously, is an alteration in conflict.

On the other hand, it is possible to argue, in general, that sometimes medium might have a direct interest in the disputed issue because there is a certain ideological practice to address the medium’s readers and a convenient rhetoric to that ideological practice. Therefore, some media might be closer to one segment of the society by being far away from the other segment. In this sense, it is also possible to be self conscious for a medium to achieve the alteration in conflict as a result.

Although, this study suggested that third party roles defined in the conflict literature are not similar and often cannot be generalized for the media intervention, it is possible to claim that media intervention explores knowledge and suggest a cognitive

representation of a problem through transference of cognitive frameworks. Thus, the media, by interpreting the relational indicators between conflicting parties play a role in changing the relational climate of the parties, which means media have their incentive to facilitate the settlement of a dispute by generating diverse options for the relation of the parties. However, again playing a role in change in thinking and relations does not provide clear evidence that the media are third party. However, it suggests that media definitely intervenes in the relations of adversaries and the way of thinking about conflict processes by transferring diverse frameworks for the use of parties. In addition, being an indirect intervener to conflict situations and without a clear approval from the parties to a conflict are the differences of the media from a third party. Also, mostly, media is an indirect monitor over the parties in conflict but it does not guarantee an agreement or bind any agreement. As Ross claims:

“A reliable, diverse and independent news media has an almost innate potential for contributing to conflict. It functions as a channel of communication that counteracts misperceptions. It frames and analyzes the conflict, identifies the interests, defuses mistrust, provides safe emotional outlets, and more... The media thus becomes a facilitator of positive social change rather than a professional, disinterested observer/reporter. Under no circumstances, however, is the promotion of biased information or viewpoints masquerading as journalism a valid approach” (Ross, 2002: 3-4).

However, media have the ability to be a third party, and often do not directly contribute to conflicts as a third party as Ross would like media to do. As mentioned before, sometimes media can play the role of an interested secondary party with its ideological practices when a conflict is related to the audience that is addressed by the medium. Therefore, the greater importance in this study is given to the variation of medium’s rhetoric depending on its ideological practices. Thus, the main focus is distinct rhetoric shaped by different cognitive frameworks and intervening in the conflict. Thus, in the data analysis chapter of this study, each newspaper is defined as an interested secondary party intervening in the Armenian conference conflict offering distinct cognitive frameworks by using different patterns of rhetoric.

However, before evaluating the application of media intervention by diverse rhetoric, I wish to denote the importance of timing of the media intervention in a conflict

in the next chapter that would provide a promising step towards evaluating the level of influence of media intervention conflict.

## **2.6 Timing of Media Intervention to Conflict**

Timing of intervention most often is a focus of conflict prevention literature. Among all questions, “When should the international community intervene in conflicts?” has initiated a great debate between scholars focusing on conflict prevention. It is because “...the concept of timing is based on preferences and also on conventional beliefs about when de-escalation efforts are likely to be effective” (Kriesberg, cf. Kriesberg and Thorson ed., 1991:1). Jentleson, Nicolaidis, Stedman and Zartman are some of the leading scholars emphasizing the crucial importance of “timing” in intervention (Jentleson, 1998; Nicolaidis, 1996; Stedman, 1995; Zartman, 2001). While Jentleson argues that the international community should intervene “early” to prevent disputes from escalating (1998), Nicolaidis argues that although an early intervention can sometimes save greater costs, the early interventions must take into account the risk of “pervasive” effect. According to her, before the early intervention, the need for the prevention should be well identified by distinguishing between the situations where conflicts are likely or unlikely to erupt into violence (Nicolaidis, 1996).

In addition to the need for prevention, Zartman claims that to identify the time for intervention there must be some definable opportunity for the external parties to seize, which may enable the beginning of new course of events (2001). Stedman indicates that conflicts must be intensified before they are resolved (1995) and Zartman adds that the condition of ‘ripeness’ should force the parties to seek or accept help in order to find a way out of the conflict. The debates in conflict prevention literature show that timing of intervention is crucial because the time of intervention is influential in determining the existent intensity of the conflict, opportunities of the intervener for the intervention, and the future development of a conflict. Besides, the development of a conflict is always dynamic and changing.



Although there are different approaches to when to intervene in a conflict, this study has used a more descriptive approach and explained the influences of timing of media intervention on conflict dynamics. Also, this study does not discuss a right timing of media intervention but explains the existent intervention time of the media that influence the dynamics of conflict. Below is a description of conflict stages underlining the changing character of conflict dynamics by time trajectory to indicate the exact timing of media intervention in the following sections of this chapter.

## 2.7 Conflict Stages

According to Kriesberg “a conflict between adversaries varies in intensity over time. Particular disputes may lie dormant for years, then emerge into awareness, escalate in intensity, begin to de-escalate, and be settled or resolved, perhaps to emerge in a different form years later” (Kriesberg, 1982 Cf. Kriesberg and Thorson eds. 1991: 5).

However, it is common to depict a hypothetical continuum of conflict as passing through distinct stages, which indicates that conflict is a process with a life history depending on two dimensions as time and intensity as below:

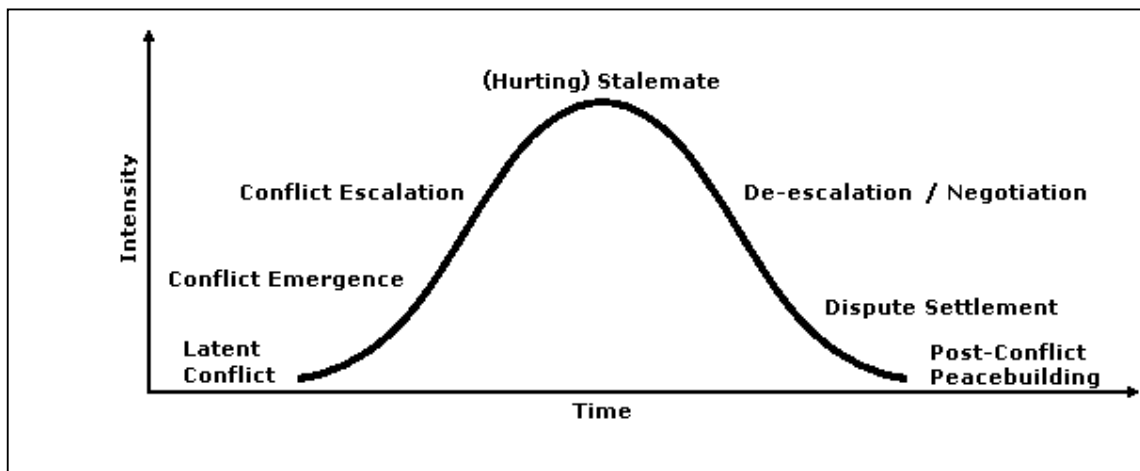


Figure 2.4 Continuum of conflict. (Kriesberg, 2003)

As it is apparent from the illustration above, a conflict between adversaries might change toward a state of heightened tension and hostilities and more contentious tactics, or toward a state where this is reduced ( Pearson desire, Cf. Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast ed., 2003). Although the life continuum of conflict represents consecutive stages of conflict, conflict stages may not develop consecutively. For example, a conflict may escalate and without reaching a stalemate may directly become subject to negotiation. On the other hand, the differences between stages are blurred when we analyze real conflict cases. For example, categorizing an event as a stalemate may not be obvious for parties inside and outside the conflict. Yet, all stages in the continuum of conflict are briefly described to subsequently clarify the unique feature of the escalation phase for media intervention.

Mitchell describes latent conflict stage as “the existence of situation of conflict...conflict behavior do not occur” (1981: 32) and suggests three sets of conditions for a conflict to be latent. First of all, according to Mitchell, conditions are that when a conflict situation is not recognized by one or both parties, but who have mutually incompatible goals and values. Secondly, when both parties recognize the conflict situation but there is an existence of too many other goals to be sacrificed for the pursuit of mutually incompatible goals. Lastly, when the conflict situation is recognized by parties but potential costs of actual conflict behavior in pursuit of desired goals perceived as too high or impossible to achieve (Mitchell, 1981).

In addition, Kempf underlines that latent conflicts are those that consist of incompatible goals not apparent to adversaries, which “at any moment might produce unintended negative consequences for the other party that the other party will probably experience as an unjustified attack (Kempf et. al. ed., 2003:15).

According to Kriesberg, “a conflict emerges when members of one or more potential conflict parties develop a shared identity, generate a sense of grievance, for a goal that another party, being responsible for the grievance, be changed, and come to believe that they can bring about that change” (Kriesberg, 1998: 91).

Escalation stage is when there is manifest opposition that adversaries attempt to attain their goals and intensify the means used and rally support for their cause (Kriesberg, 1998). According to Kriesberg, “escalation is driven by changes within each of the conflict parties, by evolving patterns of interaction between adversaries, and by developments affecting previously uninvolved parties who join the struggle” (Kriesberg, 1998: 152). This means escalation is a very dynamic process and always subject to rapid further escalation because interactions between adversaries are often affected from many outside and domestic factors. “Each step in escalation may be traced to changes in perceptions, in patterns of behavior, and in structures” (Pearson d’estrée, Cf. Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast ed., 2003: 86). The changes that drive the escalation are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Once conflicts escalate for a while, they often reach a stalemate: a situation in which neither side can win, but neither side wants to back down or accept loss either. Stalemates emerge for a number of reasons: failed tactics, depletion of available resources to fuel the conflict, a reduction in support of the conflict by group members or allies, or costs becoming too high to continue (Brahm, 2003).

The concept of ‘hurting stalemate,’ on the other hand, is suggested by Zartman, who argued settlement for negotiation can be successful when a conflict is ripe for ‘settlement’ where both sides should realize that they cannot achieve their aims by violence any more and it is costly to go on attempting to achieve their aims (Zartman ed. 1996, Cf. Miall, Rambotsham and Woodhouse, 1999).

Kriesberg and Thorson refer to de-escalation as a reduction in one more dimensions of the intensity in conflict behavior between adversaries (1991). Additionally, “conflicts ... de-escalate through changes in perceptions, patterns of behavior, and structures, and these changes can be consciously directed using various intervention strategies” (Pearson d’estrée, Cf. Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast ed., 2003: 86).

Dispute settlement refers to the working on a mutually satisfactory agreement between the parties involved in conflict. Dispute settlement is primarily aimed at

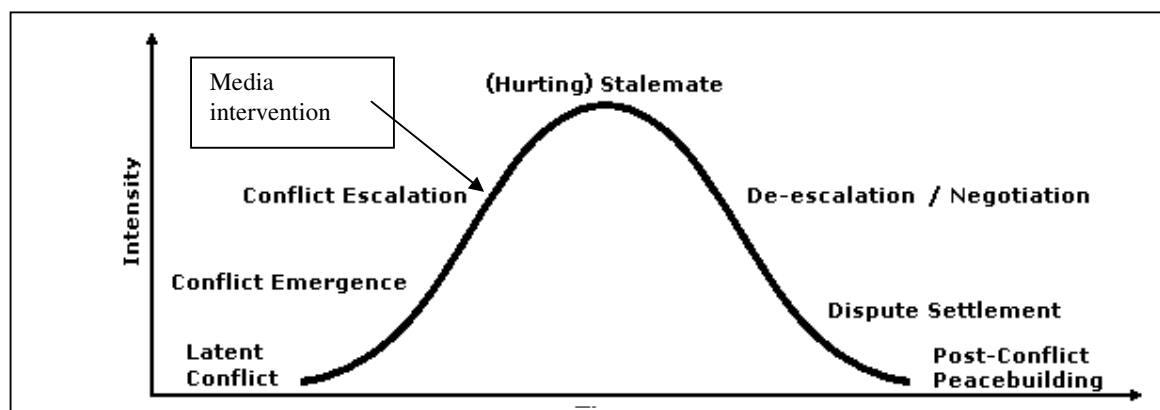
bringing the dispute to an end, without necessarily dealing with its fundamental causes, which often are perceived as the beginning of negotiations (Spangler, 2003).

Peace building means intensifying efforts to establish lasting peace and to resolve conflicts peacefully in societies marked by conflict (Ross, 2002: 5). In parallel, Galtung suggest that “peace building tries to overcome the contradictions which lie at the root of conflict” (Galtung, 1996 Cf. Miall, Rambotsham and Woodhouse, 1999: 22). The affect of media intervention has often been studied for this period.

## **2.8 Timing of Media Intervention in a Conflict**

This study argues that media intervention to a conflict in conflict escalation stage is crucial to analyze the media rhetoric of that stage because “the media are rarely interested in a conflict before it erupts” (Rupesinghe and Anderlini, 1998: 72) because people are interested more when media give news about a conflict. Therefore, when a conflict erupts, media sell more news and gain more profit. Similarly, this study argues that the public is more dependent on media sources when there is an escalation in an existing - often protracted - conflict because media are inclined to report conflict news more than before when there is an escalation in conflict. Also, public attention seeks more information flow because of the possibility of further escalation that often make them worry or more curious about the Armenian conference. Secondly, when consensus is strong in the prevailing pattern of political debate, media tend to stay within the limits of the political discussion; when it breaks down, coverage becomes increasingly critical and diverse in the viewpoints it represents (Tumber, 1994 Cf. Gilboa ed. 2002). Lastly, Entman et. al. argue, during an international crisis, the ability of the media to influence public opinion is precise because the public is highly dependent on media as a main source for information (Lehman and Wilzig Cf. Gilboa, 2002 : 157).

In these senses, timing of media intervention can be illustrated as below:



**Figure 2.5 Timing of media intervention**

Since the intervention of media in conflict escalation stage is more apparent and influential, the analysis of this study will have a validity problem since media begins to intervene only in the escalation period, the pattern of rhetoric may be driven from the nature of escalation and the second problem is that media is not analyzed in other stages of the conflict. However, the prior issue of validity comes from the nature and timing of media functions so that there is not much to do about it.

Social psychological dynamics are explained in the next section, resulting from the nature of conflict escalation process to argue that media are often most influential on these dynamics in escalation stage by its rhetoric.

## **2.9. Social Psychological Nature of Conflict Escalation**

While explaining the stages of conflict, it is mentioned that escalation stage is the existence of manifest opposition and adversaries' attempt to attain their goals by intensifying the means to gain support (Kriesberg, 1998). However, the phase of escalation has a dynamic nature, which is argued to be influenced more by the intervention of media because the timing of media intervention occurs often in the escalation period. Therefore, evaluating social psychological nature of escalation has a great importance since media often influence people's image by offering cognitive

frameworks through rhetoric. Therefore, media influence the inherent social psychological changes occurring in conflict escalation.

Kriesberg (1998: 153) summarizes the social psychological conditions of conflict escalation:

- *Justification in the mind*: One of the explanations is the remark of cognitive dissonance theory. This theory claims that people's commitment to an action is often sought to be justified by their minds, therefore, when the cause of an action is valued more, more harmful, acts can be justified.

- *Entrapment*: Another process that contributes to continuation of the escalation of struggles is increasing commitment to the goal because of investing beyond the value of the goals. This is called entrapment in social psychological analysis of conflict.

- *Selective perception* is another process that contributes to conflict escalation where people are inclined to pay attention to the phenomena fitting their expectations that might lead to mutual complaints of adversaries since they will avoid other party's notices.

- *Threat* makes adversaries feel more pressure where parties are inclined to perceive few alternatives for the resolution of conflict and they tend to repeat their previous conduct.

- *Emotions* such as fear and anger arise when people feel attacked and to express those emotions on the presumed attacker contributes to conflict escalation because the perceived attacker would be emotionally harmed as a result. Not acknowledging such feelings prevents developing constructive ways to wage conflict.

Rubin, Pruitt and Kim (1994) define escalation and state that in escalation the intensity of the conflict as a whole might be increasing. More clearly than their definition, they establish a 'structural change model' to indicate the processes when escalation takes place.

According to their structural model, perceived divergence of interest causes heavier tactics against the other party and tends to produce changes, which encourages the heavier tactics by the other party that again cause the first party to use more pressure and start this cycle. These structural changes in Rubin, Pruitt and Kim's (1994) model are as follows:

- *Psychological changes* including change in hostile and competitive goals, negative attitudes and perception, de-individuation and dehumanization that have a nature of persistence and often develop zero-sum thinking
- *Changes in groups or collectivities* such as group polarization, development of strengthened norms, development of contentious group goals, increase in the group cohesiveness, militant leaders might take over, and militant subgroups might develop
- *Changes in the community* occur by community polarization, which indicates the affiliation of community members with adversarial groups.

Each of these conditions are subject to media intervention since adversaries have many interactions in the escalation process through media.

### **2.9.1 Persistence of Conflict Escalation**

Rubin, Pruitt and Kim discuss the confirmatory mechanisms that lead escalation to be persistent and they focus on the persistence of the abovementioned structural changes. Rubin, Pruitt and Kim's psychological confirmatory mechanisms are:

(1) *Self-fulfilling prophecy* where one party's view of the other party encourages one to behave in a way that annoys the other, thus other parties response to that behavior confirms the primary view;

(2) *Rationalization of behavior*, which adversaries' hostile actions are reaffirmed the views that creates those actions;

(3) *Selective perception* might exist such as:

(3.1) *selective evaluation* of behavior when evaluation of same event differs when there are the strong views,

(3.2) *preconceptions* are confirmed through selecting evidences of information about the behaviors of the other party,

(3.3) *attributional bias* where "...information in keeping Party's expectations is seen as reflecting Other's enduring characteristic, whereas information that violates Party's expectations is attributed to temporary environmental pressures on the Other."(p.105);

(4) *Autistic hostility* means that parties stop communicating each other.

On the other hand, there are mechanisms that lead to perpetuation of structural changes – sometimes further escalation – in the group. One is the social pressure that is mainly based on constructed norms leading to encouragement of contentious goals by labeling the ones who do not obey those norms as traitors. Another mechanism is the existence of vested interests or benefits conducted to motivate the group member to defend their pre-designed contentious goals (Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994). Similarly, Mitchell emphasizes the psychological dimensions of conflict and claims that “inter-related cluster of emotions, attitudes, prejudices and perceptual distortions accompany most forms of conflict, and lead to its continuation and exacerbation” (1981:71).

According to Mitchell, there are many underlying protective inter-connected psychological processes that shape conflict attitudes of the parties where those shaped attitudes result in perpetuation of the conflict and often escalate them. However, the basis of Mitchell’s arguments is that parties are attempting to avoid the unacceptable level of stress of the conflict through simplifying the process and cognitive categories and both of these attempts are to achieve cognitive consistency.

Some of the common processes to achieve this consistency are *selective recall*, as a sub-process of selective perception, which is the use of past events to fit in with current images of the conflict or adversary; stereotyping, which means selecting particular attributes shared by the out-group, thinking that each member of that group has the same *stereotyped characteristics* and avoiding to see the out-group members’ differences.

Being in parallel with Rubin, Pruitt and Kim’s, Mitchell’s study has an important argument that the abovementioned activated psychological processes leads to *images of self and enemy, perceptions* and evaluations that re-occur in conflict and shapes conflict attitudes of the parties (Mitchell, 1981).

Therefore, the major argument leading this paper is that the members of media may not be aware of their own cognitive frameworks, however, although they actually



transfer the pattern of interpretation in relation to their ideological preferences; thus trigger or perpetuate the social psychological processes of conflict escalation.

## **2.10 Media Intervention in Conflict Escalation**

Society is communicated to through the mechanical tools of media such as TV, radio, journals, newspapers; they basically transfer by rhetorical patterns. According to Kempf, rhetorical patterns are established by conception of the past, conception of the situation and conception of the future and the influence of people's intentions (Kempf et.al. ed, 2003). Thus, rhetorical patterns can exist in any suggestion that is linked to an ideological position.

Therefore, rhetorical patterns are conceptualized, for this study, as repeated ways of interpretation of the past, current situation and future of conflicts and adversary relations, limiting alternative ways of interpretations. That is why it is suggested that media's rhetorical patterns influence by shaping of the cognitive frameworks; thus influence psychological changes of the adversaries as well as the other members of the community. Therefore, using an escalation-oriented or de-escalation oriented rhetoric matter when the media interpret a conflict escalation process.

### **2.10.1 Escalation Oriented Media Rhetoric & De-escalation Oriented Rhetoric**

Derived from the nature of escalation process, media's escalation oriented rhetoric can be conceptualized as the art of attributing and transferring packaged meanings and specifying certain causes of conflict, which influence all parties in the cognitive framework as well as the impartial audience by limiting their cognitive choices; therefore triggering and strengthening the social-psychological changes leading to escalation.

Conceptualization of de-escalation oriented rhetoric is derived from Kempf et.al.'s explanation of de-escalation oriented conflict coverage described as the analysis of

conflict that investigates the causes and possible peaceful alternatives of conflict, which is marked by critical distance toward all conflict parties (Kempf et.al. ed., 2003). Therefore, de-escalation oriented rhetoric is the art of attributing and transferring positive meanings, specifying alternative solutions of conflict, and questioning the conflict process rather than judging it. The difference between escalation oriented rhetoric and de-escalation oriented rhetoric is that the nature of de-escalation is not the major tool in order to build a de-escalation oriented rhetoric because rather than offering cognitive frameworks for de-escalation, first the media should eliminate escalation-oriented rhetoric to have a de-escalation oriented rhetoric. As Kempf suggests de-escalation orientation for media is a primary step from seeing “them” as the problem and from focusing on the question of who will prevail in the fight (Kempf et.al. ed., 2003).

In the next chapter of this study, the results of the content analysis of five newspapers in Turkey to identify whether the media rhetoric about the Armenian conference conflict were escalation oriented or de-escalation oriented regarding their ideological positioning in the Turkish political context are represented. Being one of the major sources of communication and information, the media intervenes in conflict processes by offering cognitive frameworks by using various types of rhetoric. In this sense, the news media may vary in selecting definitions and interpretations of problems in conflict processes while putting others aside.

Before the data analysis, it should be stated that some results of the content analysis are expected. Accordingly, the rhetoric of newspapers are not only affected by their ideological positions but also affected from the nature of conflict escalation. Thus, the difference between the May and September period conflict phases are also influential in the rhetoric of newspapers. On the other hand, the context of Turkey’s political space in 2005 includes many political events that are especially related to the EU accession talks as well as domestic problems. Therefore, the attention of daily newspapers on the Armenian conference would be low. The conflict escalation intensity in the Armenian conference issue is not as high as a war period, which means the attention paid by the media would be influenced by this fact. Lastly, the escalation-oriented rhetoric of newspapers are expected to be higher since media are argued to be influenced by their ideological positioning in a related political context and acting as a secondary party in a conflict escalation, in a related political context.

It should also be noted that the reason to conduct this study is not only to explore evidence that media are non-neutral in their rhetoric depending on their ideological positioning. The main reason for such an exploration is to emphasize the role of media in conflict escalation processes and the need to develop a conflict environment with a conflict analysis and resolution perspective. Reljic suggest that

“If reports about tension and conflict are issued in a genuinely free and independent manner and presented in a fair and balanced way, they can indeed help to overcome conflict in that they will serve to educate the public, allowing their readers and listeners to form independent opinions. On the other hand, biased and manipulative reports can all too easily accelerate and intensify the crisis.” (Reljic, 2004).

Thus, the members of media should be aware that although there are certain conditions for them to use non-neutral rhetoric, the potential influence on the perception of the situation by the audience is to be considered while reporting and interpreting the news related to conflict processes. Simply put, there is a need for quality journalism in the context of conflict situations. Reljic defines quality journalism as “critical and analytical reportings”(2004), while Tunç defines quality journalism, by referring to Meyer’s quality model, as “balanced reporting on a responsible and fair approach to issue, and keeping the same distance from every political figure in power” (2003). However, when the Turkey’s media environment is under question, the approach of quality journalism is not considered by media. That is why in the next chapter the question of how close the media are to an ideological position will be explored. However, after the link between media and the political environment is found out, the suggestions for the development of a more analytical media are going to be made. Thus another reason of this study is to reach some suggestions to improve the approach of media in conflict escalation processes by beginning with an analysis of the media context in Turkey in a conflict escalation.

### CHAPTER 3

#### DATA ANALYSIS

The conflict escalation over the ‘Armenian Conference’ emerged at the end of May 2005 because the conference was originally planned to be held 25-27 May 2005 at Boğaziçi University. When the Minister of Justice of the time accused those associated with the conference of “treason” and “stabbing Turkey in the back,” the administration of Boğaziçi University announced the delay of the conference. Accordingly, the conference was postponed to 24-25 September 2005 and convened, but in private Bilgi University, although the planned venue was Boğaziçi University, because of the order of Administrative Court of Istanbul. In both the May period and September period media in Turkey were interested because there was a conflict escalating due to the controversy between various binary oppositions. The parties in the conflict were introduced in the introduction chapter. However, I prepared Table 3.1 in order to show the differences of the parties.

<b>PARTIES AGAINST CONVENING OF THE ARMENIAN CONFERENCE (Anti-conference)</b>	<b>PARTIES WHO SUPPORT CONVENING OF THE ARMENIAN CONFERENCE (Pro-conference)</b>
Those defending the official discourse	Those who supported the conference because of the fatigue of the official discourse
Extreme nationalists	Organizers of the Armenian conference
Those not invited to the conference	Conference participants
Those against the European Union	Those supporting the accession of Turkey to the European Union
	Those against the attempts to suspend the conference

**Table 3.1 Parties to the conflict over the Armenian Conference**

As in Table 3.1, there are four parties on the anti-conference side but five parties on the pro-conference side. In particular, during the September period the parties categorized as those who were opposed to suspending the conference increased their voice because of the Court's order. However, in the May period, the parties against suspending the conference were the conference organizers and the parties, in the September period, people who do not have a direct relationship with the conference organization argued that the conference should be held because there is freedom of speech in Turkey. Simultaneously, the controversies between the adversaries were being discussed in the public media in Turkey, in particular, columnists were commenting on the Armenian conference. The reason to include the controversy between EU supporters and the people against the EU is the context of 2005. On 3 October 2005, the EU and Turkey were scheduled to meet to discuss the beginning of entry negotiations that would allow formal talks and screening processes of Turkish membership of the European Union. According to some EU countries, there have been few developments within Turkey that have highlighted the paradoxes of the Turkish mindset on freedom of thought; thus the human rights issues. Also, according to some EU countries, especially France, the Armenian issue was ignored and denied by Turkey for years. When the negotiation talks were on the agenda in 2005, Orhan Pamuk gave an interview, in February 2005, stating that Turkey was responsible for the deaths of a million Armenians during WWI, but that nobody within the country dared speak about this genocide. For this reason a trial began about Pamuk's comments in Turkey in 2005, gave rise to the discussions about the Armenian issue between the EU and Turkey. As a result, the groups who have controversies about the EU negotiations began to discuss Turkey's accession to the EU over the Armenian issue. When the Armenian conference was postponed in May 2005, similar discussions appeared between EU supporters and those who were against the EU. Since 3 October, the date for the entry talks was in the very near future, during the September period the opposition between EU supporters and those who were against the EU were claiming opposite ideas about the convening of the conference became more apparent.

In order to give a clear picture of the newspapers' interest on the Armenian conference, thus the conflict escalation between various groups, the frequency of the

arguments in each newspaper is analyzed. In the second step the intensity of escalation-oriented rhetoric and de-escalation-oriented rhetoric are analyzed for the May period and September period in order to search for a pattern in the rhetoric of newspapers by including the distribution of use categories by each newspaper. The second coder of the content analysis is a student studying Media and Communication Systems at the Faculty of Communication at Bilgi University. Inter-coder reliability for the analysis is 91% but the second coder of the data has coded five samples in total, one from each newspaper. Before beginning the analysis the categories of our coding frame it should kept in mind and the abbreviations for the categories are displayed in Table 3.2. In addition, qualitative observations developed during the coding are included in the analysis of each newspaper.

	<b>ESCALATION-ORIENTED RHETORIC</b>	<b>DE-ESCALATION-ORIENTED RHETORIC</b>
<b>Category 1:</b> Conceptualization of the nature of conflict	<b>E1</b> : Polarization: emphasis on the difference between "us" and "them"	<b>D1</b> : Query of polarization
	<b>E2</b> : Zero-sum or win-lose orientation	<b>D2</b> : Win-win orientation or existence of cooperation as a possibility
	<b>E3</b> : Attributing the causes of conflict to one group (destructive)	<b>D3</b> : Attributing the cause of conflict to both groups and the context (constructive)
	<b>E4</b> : Obstacles to conflict resolution are emphasized	<b>D4</b> : Evaluation of resolution alternatives
<b>Category 2</b> Evaluation of parties' goals and objectives	<b>E5</b> : Demonizing the opponent and denial of his goals and objectives	<b>D5</b> : Respecting the opponent's rights and unbiased description of his goals and objectives

<b>Category 2</b> Evaluation of parties' goals and objectives (continued)	<b>E6:</b> Idealization of one group's goals and objectives	<b>D6:</b> Self-critical evaluation of own goals and objectives
	<b>E7:</b> Denial of common interests, emphasis on incompatibility of interests	<b>D7:</b> Emphasis on common interests or benefits both sides could gain by resolution of conflict
<b>Category 3:</b> Evaluation of the parties' actions	<b>E8:</b> Justification of one's own side's actions	<b>D8:</b> Self-critical evaluation of one's own side's actions
	<b>E9:</b> Condemnation of the opponent's actions	<b>D9:</b> Balanced evaluation of both sides' actions
	<b>E10:</b> Possibilities for cooperation are denied	<b>D10:</b> Description and/or support for possibilities for cooperation
<b>Category 4:</b> Emotional involvement in the conflict	<b>E11:</b> A focus on "their" dangerousness (threat) and "our" confidence promotes to engage in conflict	<b>D11:</b> Emphasis on deconstructing the perception of threat from the "other" and our confidence will promote willingness for peace
	<b>E12:</b> Depicting the other party as untrustworthy	<b>D12:</b> Evaluations of reasons to reduce mistrust
	<b>E13:</b> Jeopardizing empathy through demonizing "their" intentions and/or justifying "our" behavior: if they behave well they have nothing to fear	<b>D13:</b> Empathy for "their" situation creates a new perspective: we can find solutions together that takes all sides' needs into account

**Table 3.2 Coding Frame with abbreviations of categories**

Newspapers have different types of columns about current events, politics, economics, arts and culture, magazine and sports. This paper, on the other hand, uses columns on current events, politics, and economics and excludes arts, culture, magazine and sports related columns because the conflict over the implementation of the Armenian conference is not related to cultural events, magazine news or sports.

It is important to illustrate the frequency of the Armenian conference related arguments because the rhetoric of the whole newspaper will be judged through the use of columns. Therefore, the proportion of the coded arguments to the total number of arguments in columns about politics, current events and economy in *Özgür Gündem*, *Agos*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Yeniçağ* and *Vakit* in the May and September periods would give the frequency of the coded arguments in the newspapers.

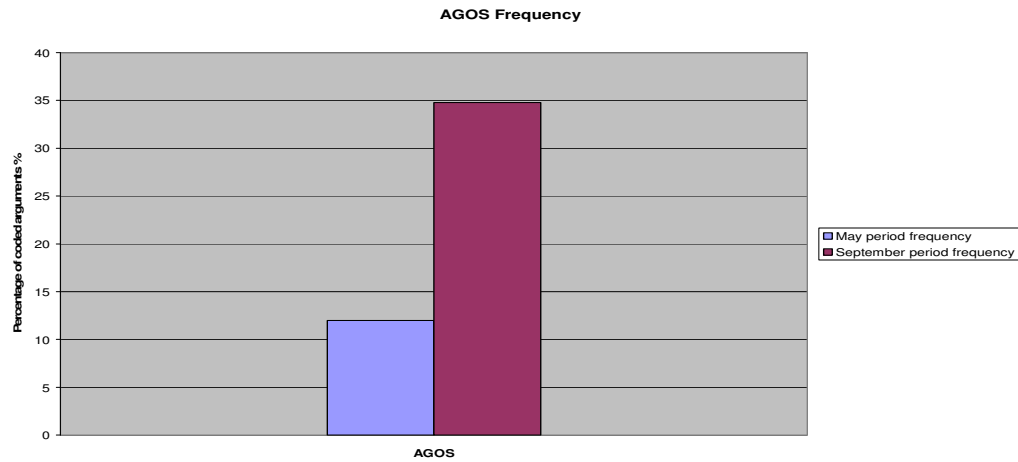
Between the above-mentioned five newspapers, only *Agos* is a weekly newspaper. One of the problems in comparability is solved by coding the arguments rather than coding the columns with one category. However, still there is a comparability problem because weekly newspapers attempt to write about the whole week's socio-political discussions and when there was a conflict escalation about the Armenian conference which is analyzed as the most prominent issue of the week according to *Agos*, it can be discussed in more detail in *Agos*.

### **3.1. AGOS**

*Agos* is a weekly newspaper published every Friday in Turkey since 1996. There are six permanent columnists writing on socio-economic and socio-political context: Hrant Dink, Taner Akçam, Baskın Oran, Aydın Engin, Karin Karakaşlı. The chief editor of *Agos*, Hrant Dink, was invited as a participant in the Armenian conference. Therefore, the attention to the conflict over the Armenian conference by *Agos* is likely to be high. In total, there were 600 arguments in the May period while in the September period there were 450 arguments. The number of arguments in *Agos* is few since it is weekly newspaper. In the May period, four columns were related to the Armenian conference, and in the September period, six columns covered the conflict over the Armenian



conference. Thus, percentages of the attention paid to the conflict over the Armenian conference by *Agos* are found as below:

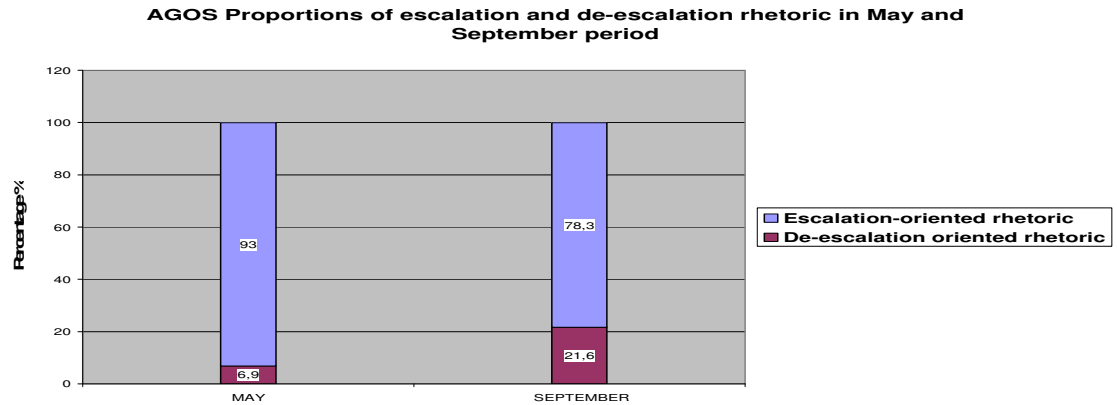


**Figure 3.1 Frequency of coded arguments in Agos weekly**

As illustrated in Figure 3.1 above, the frequency of conflict escalation about the Armenian conference arguments are 12% for May period, whereas 34,8% in the September period. The percentage of frequency reveals that *Agos*' attention to the conflict escalation was high. Considering the ideological position of *Agos*, high attention is a result of it being a newspaper addressing the Armenian minority in Turkey. However, the increase in the frequency in the September period might be a result of the nature of conflict escalation in September since the period is most importantly influenced from the May period's numerous discussions. The number of discussions increased in the September period because the ideas of the May period were elaborated on again in the media. Similarly, the increase of the frequency in the September period is seen in the analysis of other newspapers in the following sections of this chapter.

Newspapers have different types of columns about current events, politics, economics, arts and culture, magazine and sports. This paper, though, will use columns on current events, politics, and economics and exclude arts, culture, magazine and sports related columns because the conflict over the implementation of the Armenian conference is not related to cultural events, magazine news or sports.

It is important to illustrate the frequency of the Armenian conference related arguments because the rhetoric of the whole newspaper will be judged through the use of columns. Therefore, the total number of arguments in columns about politics, current events and economy in *Özgür Gündem*, *Agos*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Yeniçağ* and *Vakit* newspapers are units of analysis that will give the frequency of the coded arguments in the newspapers.



**Figure 3.2 AGOS - Percentage of escalation rhetoric and de-escalation in the May and September periods**

When we analyze the proportion of escalation and de-escalation rhetoric in the May and September periods, it is found that while escalation oriented rhetoric is 93% and de-escalation oriented rhetoric is 6,9% in the May period; in the September period escalation oriented rhetoric is 78% and de-escalation oriented rhetoric is 21,6 %. Thus, there is a significant change between May rhetoric and September rhetoric in *Agos* newspaper. Accordingly, there is a significant decrease in the escalation-oriented rhetoric of *Agos* newspaper and a rise in de-escalation-oriented rhetoric. *Agos* has chosen to use more de-escalation-oriented rhetoric in the September period. One of the reasons for this choice may be the implication that in the May period the conference was postponed because, for example, the emphasis of the arguments was based on “understanding each other” in *Agos*.

*Agos* used escalation-oriented arguments in both the May and September periods. For example, in the week of 27 May 2005, Baskın Oran dedicated his column “to ‘the

nationalists' who should be ashamed" (aşağıdaki yazıyı utanması gereken milliyetçilerimize ithaf ediyorum), which is coded as E1 - emphasis on differences between 'us' and 'them.' Also, in the same week, Markar Esayan questioned the reasons of miscommunication and argued that "those who are against the dictated text of the official discourse are announced as traitors by the most competent authorities" (dikte edilen metin dışında görüşte olanlar, bizzat en yetkili merciler tarafından hain ilan ediliyorlar), which is coded as E9 - condemnation of opponent's actions.

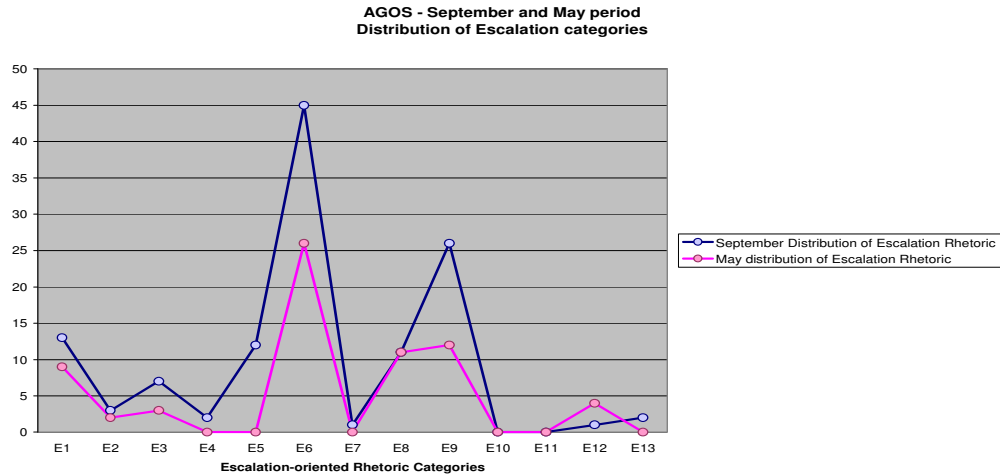
On the other hand, during the week of 30 September, the arguments of Hrant Dink emphasized the de-escalation. The title of Dink's column was "*Let's First Understand Each Other*" (Gelin önce birbirimizi anlayalım), which was coded as D4 - evaluation of resolution alternatives. Also, Dink's column included arguments coded by D2 - existence of cooperation as possibility - such as "the rapprochement of the adversaries is not impossible" (karşı tarafların birbirine yakınlaşmaları gayri mümkün hiç değil).

Since the chief editor of *Agos* newspaper was one of the participants of the conference and the ideological position of *Agos* is on the conference supporters' side, the increase in the de-escalation-oriented rhetoric of *Agos* in the September period can be the lessons learnt in the May period. That is to say, the delay of the conference in May and the high tension created by both sides caused a delay of the conference, however in the September period, the conference was convened and pro-conference parties achieved their goal; thus, there was no need for an escalation in tension for the pro-conference parties.

Although the frequency and the distribution of escalation-oriented rhetoric and de-escalation-oriented rhetoric is helpful to identify a certain attitude of a newspaper, the use of the categories in the coding frame is much more crucial to indicate an existence of a pattern in the rhetoric.

In order to analyze how escalation-oriented rhetoric and de-escalation oriented rhetoric are used, I need to analyze the intensity of the use of categories in the coding frame. Therefore, according to the data analysis, the intensity of the usage of escalation-

oriented rhetoric categories in May and September are not identical, but very similar in escalation-oriented rhetoric.



**Figure 3.3 The graphic reveals Agos’ different usage of the rhetorical categories in the codebook by indicating the difference between the May and September rhetoric**

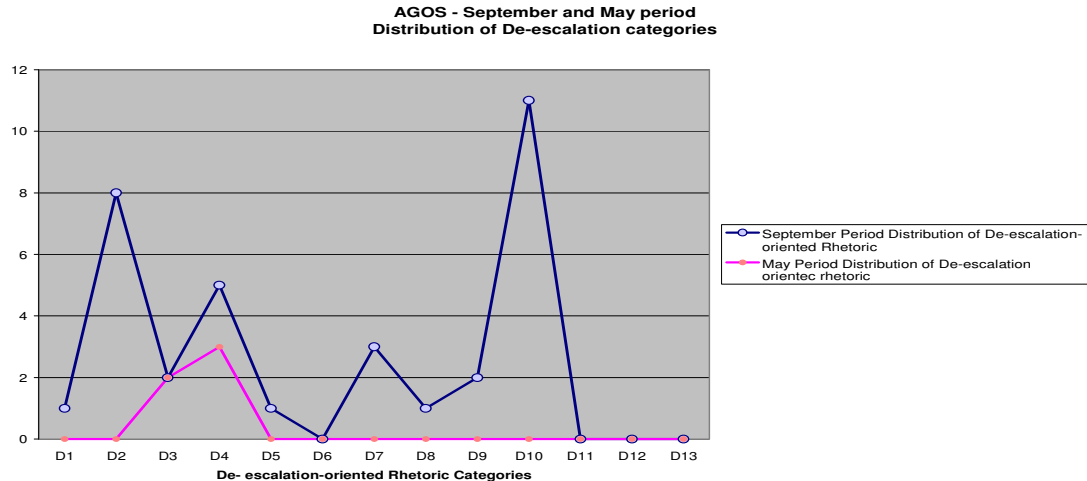
As it is apparent from the graph above, there is a difference between the amount of usage of one category, E13 - jeopardizing empathy. In May, Category E13 – jeopardizing empathy through demonizing ‘their’ intentions and/or justifying ‘our’ behavior - is used two times in the September period, but never used in the May period. This is because even the idea of empathy was not often considered by the pro-conference parties in September. However, this deviation is a slight difference when we consider the similar usage of each category in both May and September periods.

The pro-conference parties in May stressed the unjust actions of the anti-conference parties. Except for E13, there seems to be a pattern in the escalation rhetoric because first of all, category E6 - idealization of one groups’ goals and objectives - and category E9 - condemnation of opponent actions - are used to the maximum level in both periods. For example, in May Aydın Engin stated “even before the beginning of the conference they ‘boiled a witch’s cauldron’” (daha konferans başlamadan cadı kazanı kaynattılar), which means anti-conference parties presented the pro-conference parties as a threat; and “achieved their goals” (ve muratlarına erdiler). Both of the arguments of Aydın Engin are

coded as E9 - condemnation of the opponent's actions. Also the categories from E1 – polarization - to E11 -a focus on “their” dangerousness - are used a similar amount in both periods, which shows that there is a pattern of rhetoric. For example, when E3 - attributing the cause of conflict to one group – was used three times in May, the same category was used seven times in September, while category E10 - possibilities for cooperation are denied - and E11- a focus on ‘their’ dangerousness and ‘our’ confidence promote to engage in conflict - are never used in these periods. This means that *Agos*, although using an escalation-oriented rhetoric does not choose to emphasize an emotional involvement to the conflict, but chooses to underline the importance of evaluating the goals and actions of the anti-conference parties.

As the above-mentioned results reveal, considering the ideological position of *Agos*, and identifying closer to the pro-conference parties, the goals of the conference supporters’ are idealized highly and the adversaries’ actions against the conference are presented as harming the idealized objectives of the conference supporters. Simply put, the people against the conference are blamed and presented as the source of conflict, while conference supporters are presented as victims. Actually, when we consider the ideological position of *Agos* newspaper in our ideological map, the result is not surprising and reveals that the position of a newspaper influences the rhetoric of a newspaper.

As a second step, I also question if there is a pattern as such in the de-escalation rhetoric of *Agos* by analyzing the usage of de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories in September and May and Figure 2.4 analyzes the intensity of usage of categories on the next page.



**Figure 3.4 The intensity of usage of the de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories of the coding frame in *Agos* newspaper in September and May**

Different from the escalation-oriented rhetorical pattern, in the de-escalation-oriented rhetoric, only categories that are used in a similar amount in the May and September periods are D3 - attributing the cause of conflict to both groups and the context - and D4 - evaluation of resolution alternatives. Therefore, in the de-escalation-oriented pattern, *Agos* questions the existence of resolution alternatives and attributes the cause of conflict to the context in both periods. *Agos*' ideological positioning favors the rise of different ethnic identity, which means in nature there is a critique of the political context and search for alternatives in general. In the September period the variety in de-escalation-oriented rhetoric is higher, which again can be attributed to the nature of the September period.

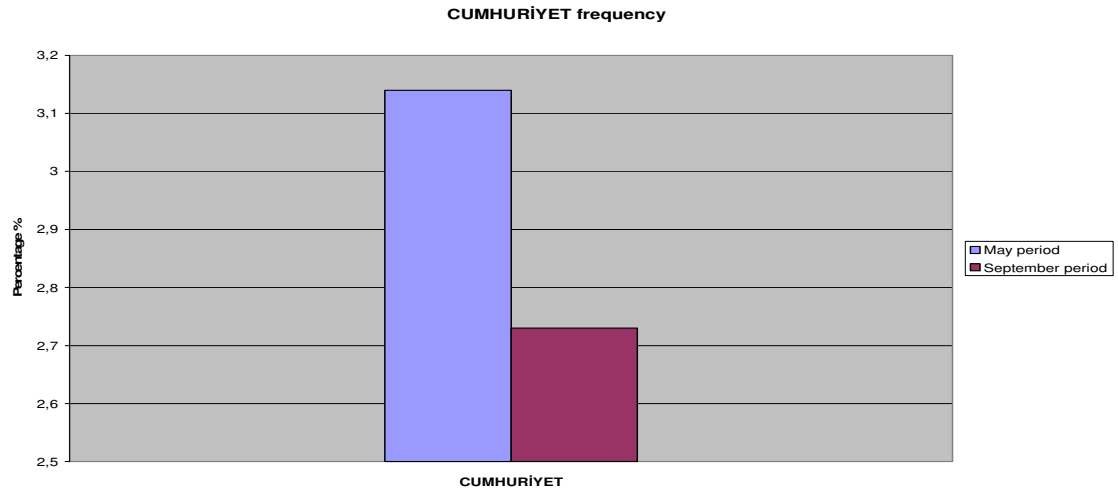
On the other hand, a significant finding of the content analysis is that *Agos* weekly never applied D12 - evaluations of reasons to reduce mistrust - and D13 - empathy for 'their' situation creates a new perspective - categories to their rhetoric. This result can again be attributed to the ideological positioning of the newspaper. Thus, being away from the center on the second dimension of our map; and being close to favoring the rise of different ethnic identities in the political context, *Agos* newspaper has a deeply rooted mistrust of the political context as well as the adversaries defending the official discourses. This means building empathy with adversaries is not easy because empathy is

not seen as a tool to create a new perspective. Similarly, the most used category E9 - condemnation of opponent actions - can also be explained by the unique position of *Agos*. Since *Agos* is a minority newspaper often criticizing the status quo in the political context, the actions of the adversaries believed to be supporting the status quo are criticized as well.

### **3.2. CUMHURİYET**

As it was mentioned in the first chapter, *Cumhuriyet* is a left-wing, Kemalist daily that targets social-democratic intellectuals, which has a closer ideological position to the main opposition party in the parliament at the time in question. The average number of columns in *Cumhuriyet* is thirteen per day. Columnists who contribute often in *Cumhuriyet* are Mustafa Balbay, Cüneyt Arcayürek, Oktay Akbal, Toktamış Ateş, Ali Sirmen, Hikmet Çetinkaya, Orhan Bursalı, Orhan Birgit, Yakup Kepenek, Bekir Coşkun, Oral Çalışlar, Bedri Baykam, İlhan Selçuk, Mümtaz Soysal, Emre Kongar, Deniz Kovukçuoğlu, Deniz Som and Nilgün Cerrahoğlu. Also there are other columnists, who write once or twice every fifteen days.

*Cumhuriyet's* circulation between 23 and 29 May 2005 was 58,263 and 19-25 September 2005 was 57,612. The total arguments in *Cumhuriyet* in the May period is 6902 and in the September period 8222 arguments exist in the columns. The number of arguments in *Cumhuriyet* is very high when we compare it with *Agos* because *Cumhuriyet* is a daily newspaper. While 217 arguments in the May period are related to the conflict over the Armenian conference, in the September period 225 arguments are coded according to the categories in the coding frame. Therefore, the attention paid by *Cumhuriyet* daily to conflict escalation over the Armenian conference is as below:



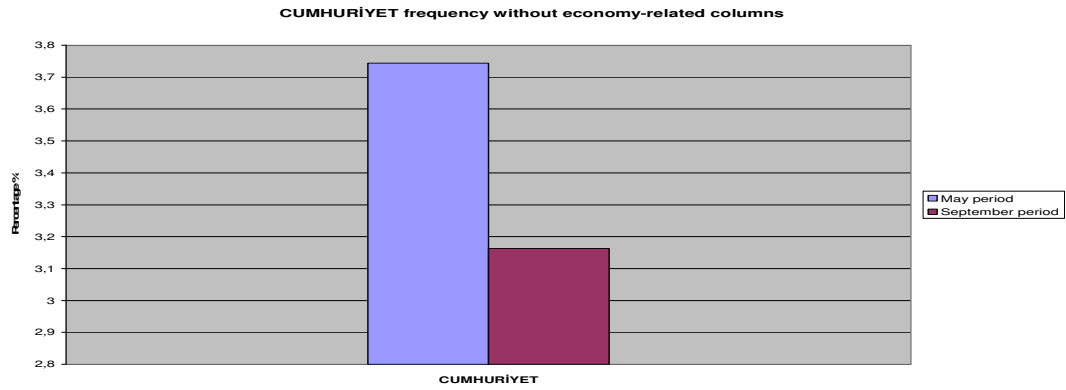
**Figure 3.5 Frequency of coded arguments in *Cumhuriyet* daily**

Figure 3.5 displays the frequency of arguments on conflict escalation about the Armenian conference. According to the graph, 3,13 % for the May period, whereas 2,73% in the September period. The percentage of the frequency reveals that *Cumhuriyet* did not pay a considerable amount of attention to the conflict escalation of the Armenian conference in both periods. However, since it is a daily newspaper, *Cumhuriyet* is following a wide range of news, in the socio-political context, from domestic and international political affairs to economy. Thus, it would be hard to expect all the columnists to dedicate their columns to one conflict issue. On the other hand, when the difference of frequency between the May and September periods is analyzed, the results in *Cumhuriyet*'s frequency depict the effect of the nature of the September period, which is not highly affected by the May period's dynamics and arguments, as in *Agos* newspaper. On the other hand, as a result of being a daily, *Cumhuriyet* arguments in the September period were emphasizing more on Turkey and EU talks. Since there are a lot of other social and political events to consider in Turkey's accession to the EU and in the political context, the Armenian conference did not receive too much attention in the September period.

However, the low frequency in *Cumhuriyet* about the Armenian conference above might be a result of including economy related columns in the content analysis. Although there are columns related to economy discussing the Armenian conference, the number of



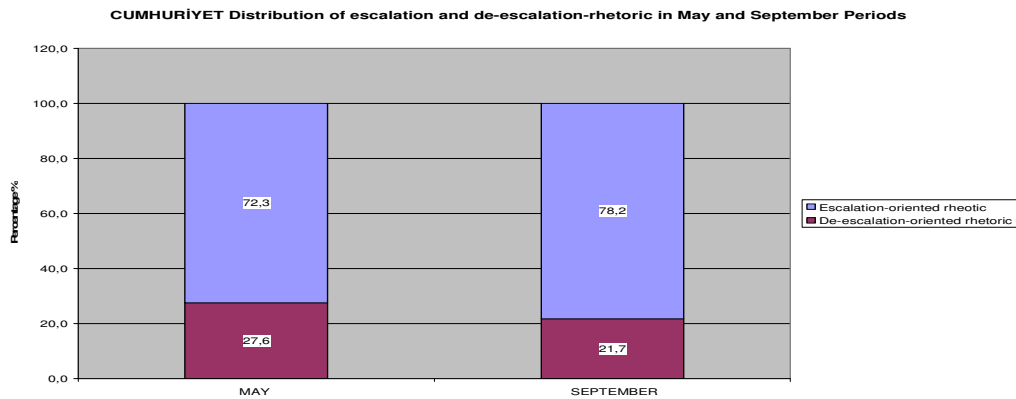
economy columns was few. Therefore, the frequency, without including the economy related columns, should be analyzed.



**Figure 3.6 Frequency without economy – related columns in *Cumhuriyet* daily**

As the figure above displays, the frequency in May rose to 3,74% and 3,16% in the September period. Although the frequencies are still low in both periods for *Cumhuriyet*, the effect of excluding the economy related columns are apparent.

In addition, the proportion of escalation to de-escalation-oriented rhetoric can be displayed as below:

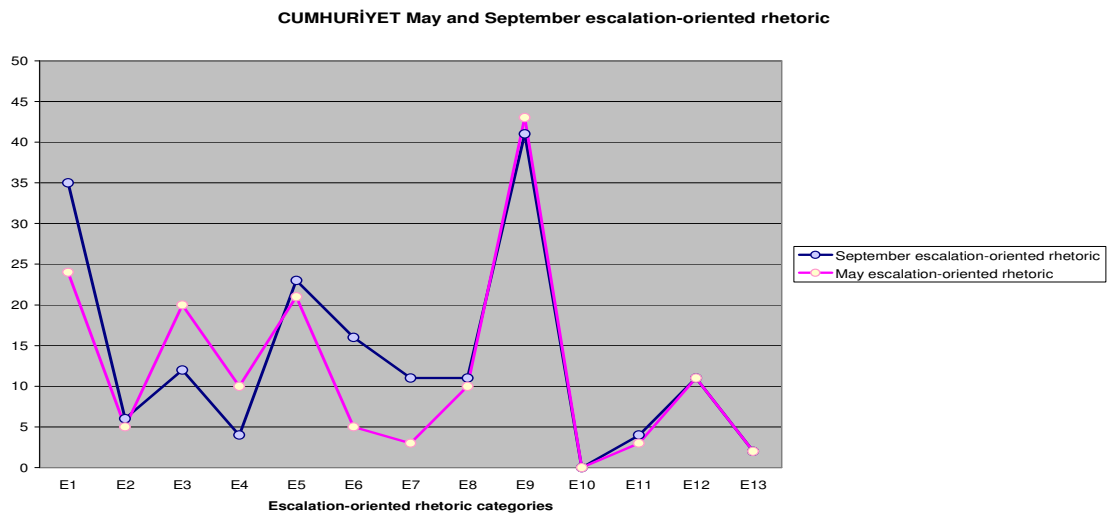


**Figure 3.7 Comparing May and September period’s distribution of rhetoric according to being escalation-oriented and de-escalation oriented**

Figure 3.7 displays that in the May period escalation-oriented rhetoric of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper is 72,3%, while de-escalation oriented rhetoric is 27,6%. In the September period, on the other hand, *Cumhuriyet* focused of escalation-oriented rhetoric with 78,2%, while de-escalation oriented rhetoric decreased to 21,7%. The change in *Cumhuriyet*'s rhetoric between the two periods is 5,9%. Thus, when we consider *Cumhuriyet*'s ideological position, the rise of the escalation-oriented rhetoric in the September period can be attributed to its place, especially on the second dimension, which is closer to Turkish nationalism on the second dimension in the ideological map that means more possibility to support the official discourse supporters. However, although *Cumhuriyet* has an escalation-orientated rhetoric, "the other" of each columnist is different. For example, while Bedri Baykam and Oktay Akbal are on the anti-conference side because they thought the aim of the conference was one-sided, Deniz Kavukçuoğlu and Oral Çalışlar are supporting pro-conference parties. On the other hand, Toktamış Ateş criticized the aim and the organization of the conference, but supported the convening of the Armenian conference. Thus, the escalation-oriented rhetoric is not against one side, but the supported parties differ depending on the columnist. Although, some can argue that the variety in the rhetoric of the columnists is proving that there is not an influence of the ideological position, the variety of the columnists attempt to balance the controversies between the adversaries and attributing the cause of the conflict to the political authorities. No de-escalatory rhetoric about the objectives of one group or the actions of the opponent is used. The de-escalation-oriented rhetorical pattern of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper indicates that even using the de-escalation-oriented rhetoric categories, the ideological position affects which category to use without emphasizing the possibilities for self-critical evaluation of one sides' goals and actions or common interests or cooperation of the adversaries. Therefore, due to the attempt by *Cumhuriyet* to give both parties' arguments a balanced viewpoint in the newspaper, the ideological position is highly effective. Since *Cumhuriyet* is close to the main opposition party in the parliament, acting to criticize the status quo is a result of its ideological position. Thus, especially in the May period, *Cumhuriyet* supported more the pro-conference parties because the speech by the Minister of Justice was highly criticized. Thus, although *Cumhuriyet* is close to the nationalist end of the second dimension, it is away from the center-right on the first dimension. In

addition, it is targeting the intellectuals, which means extreme nationalists as well as the political authority are criticized. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the ideological position influences the type of rhetoric used by newspapers.

In order to analyze how escalation-oriented rhetoric and de-escalation oriented rhetoric are used by *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and elaborate on the existence of a pattern in rhetoric, I need to analyze the intensity of the use of categories in the coding frame for *Cumhuriyet* as well. As a result, it can be decided whether the ideological position influences the rhetorical pattern.



**Figure 3.8 The intensity of usage of the de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories of the coding frame in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in September and May**

In *Cumhuriyet*'s escalation-oriented rhetoric, there is certainly a pattern when I compare the May period and the September period. The amount of usage of E2 - zero-sum orientation, E5 - denial of the opponent's goals and objectives, E8 - justification of one side's actions, E9 - condemnation of the opponent's action, E11 - a focus on "their" dangerousness and "our" confidence, E12 - depicting the other party as untrustworthy and E13 - jeopardizing empathy, are very close to each other. On the other hand, category E10 - possibilities for cooperation are denied - is never used in either period. The deviances in categories E1 - polarization, E6 - idealization of one's own group and E7 - denial of common interests are probably because of the more frequent escalation oriented

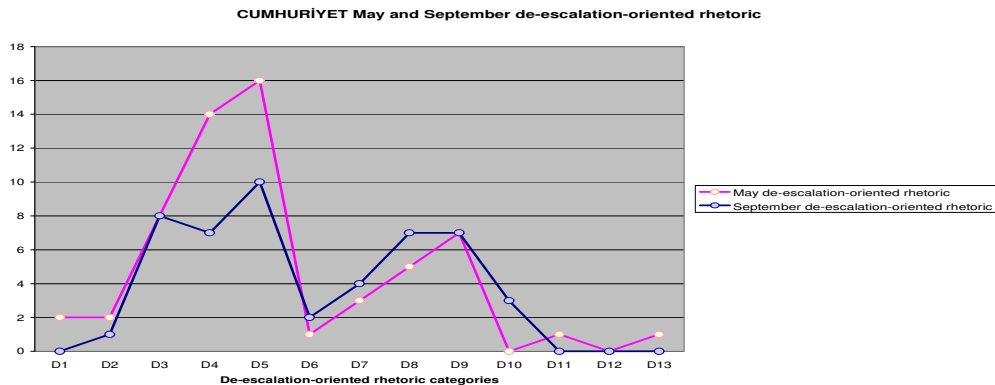
rhetoric in the September period in comparison to the May period. While E3, E4 and E9 were applied more in the May period, they were applied less in the September period.

According to the ideological map, the position of *Cumhuriyet* is closer to the nationalist end of the second dimension and away from the center right on the first dimension. In the May period the use of E3 - attributing the cause of conflict to one group, E4 - obstacles to conflict resolution - are emphasized to conceptualize the conflict, and E9 - demonizing the opponent's actions - are in parallel with the attitude of the both parties. For example, while Hikmet Çetinkaya, on 26 May 2005, states that "according to them Turks cut off the Armenians in Anatolia" (onlara göre Türkler Anadolu'da Ermenileri kesmişlerdi). The statement of Hikmet Çetinkaya is coded as E5 - demonizing the opponent, denial of his goals and objectives - where the opponent in his arguments are pro-conference side. On the other hand, for example, Deniz Kavukçuoğlu argues "the prohibitives are doing wrong" (yasakçılar bir yanlışa düşüyorlar) which is coded as E1 - emphasis between "us" and "them" - where the opponent is against the conference. Although this argument can also be coded as E9 -condemnation of opponent's actions, the emphasis throughout the paragraph is on polarization. However, it must be noted that Deniz Kavukçuoğlu changes her opponent and balances the arguments against each adversary throughout her articles. Many columnists follow the same way and end up criticizing the political authority such as in Oral Çalışlar's column, on 27 May 2005, which only questions the political ideas of the Minister of Justice and his speech about the Armenian conference.

Similarly, in the September period, the use of E7 - denial of common interests , E6 - idealization of one group's goals and objectives, and E1 - emphasis on the difference between 'us' and 'them'- suggest that *Cumhuriyet* is prone to defend both parties against in the September period because neither the opponent nor their own side while using E7, E6 and E1 are clear in the rhetoric but apparently the acts of the government members and structural issues are criticized by referring to the Court's decision of suspension of the Armenian conference in September.

On the other hand, as Figure 3.9 below indicates, in terms of de-escalation oriented rhetoric, *Cumhuriyet* has a pattern, too. However, only in categories D1 - query of polarization, D4 - evaluation of resolution alternatives, D11 - emphasis on deconstructing the perception of threat and D13 - empathy for their situation - are considerably higher in the May period. The ideological position of *Cumhuriyet* is closer to the nationalist end of the second dimension and away from the center right on the first dimension, thus there is an attempt to balance the conflicting parties' arguments while criticizing the government.

When the conference was postponed in May, the de-escalation-oriented rhetoric was high so was the conceptualization of the conflict and the emotional involvement to the conflict was emphasized by de-escalation oriented rhetoric. On the one hand, being away from the center-right causes *Cumhuriyet* to criticize the government members who are against the conference, thus *Cumhuriyet* presents itself partially supporting the pro-conference side. On the other hand, on the second dimension, *Cumhuriyet* is closer to the nationalist end, which makes *Cumhuriyet* columnists support the ideas of the anti-conference parties.



**Figure 3.9 The intensity of usage of the de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories of the coding frame in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in September and May**

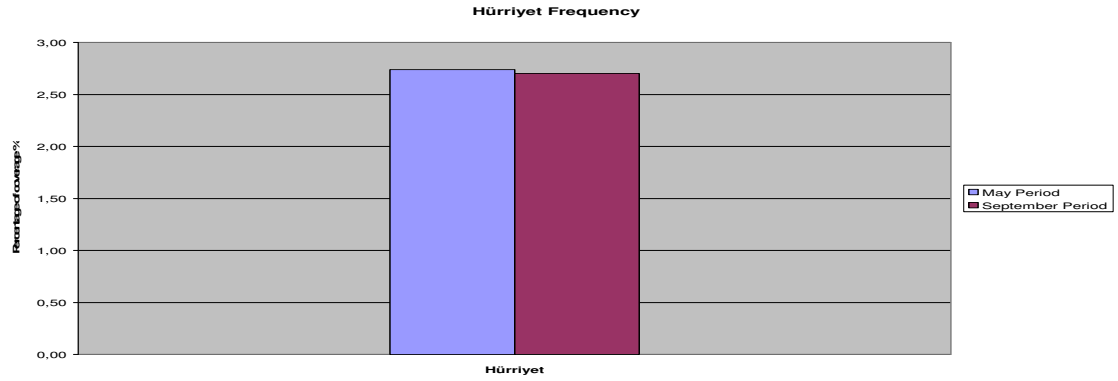
In sum, *Cumhuriyet* has a certain escalation-oriented rhetorical pattern depending on its ideological positioning and also has a certain de-escalation pattern according to its position in the political context.

### 3.3 HÜRRİYET

As indicated in the introductory chapter, *Hürriyet* is situated at the center-right in the ideological map representing the political context of Turkey. The average number of columnists in *Hürriyet* is thirteen. The columnists who often covered the conflict escalation over the Armenian conference in their columns are Emin Çölaşan, Hadi Ulengin, Oktay Ekşi, Yalçın Doğan, Murat Bardakçı, Ertuğrul Özkök, Özdemir İnce and Ferai Tınç. The circulation of *Hürriyet* between 23-29 May 2005 was 497,981 and between 19-25 September 2005 was 531,788.

While in the May period there were 10,803 arguments, in the September period the total number of arguments was 9703. In most of the arguments about the Armenian conference, *Hürriyet* columnists perceived themselves as those against the conference, thus the opponents were the pro-conference parties. Oktay Ekşi, on 27 May 2005 criticized the conference organizers by defining them as “you, who say Armenian genocide is truth” (Ermeni soykırımını gerçektir diyen sizler..), and differentiating himself from the conference organizers, coded as E1 - polarization, clearly indicates that he is supporting the anti-conference arguments. Another example can be given from Emin Çölaşan’s column on 27 September 2005. Emin Çölaşan emphasized “the other” as the conference organizers and interpreted the convening of the Armenian conference in September by arguing that “this time their speed was lowered” (bu sefer hızları biraz kesilmişti), coded as E1 - emphasizing “them.”

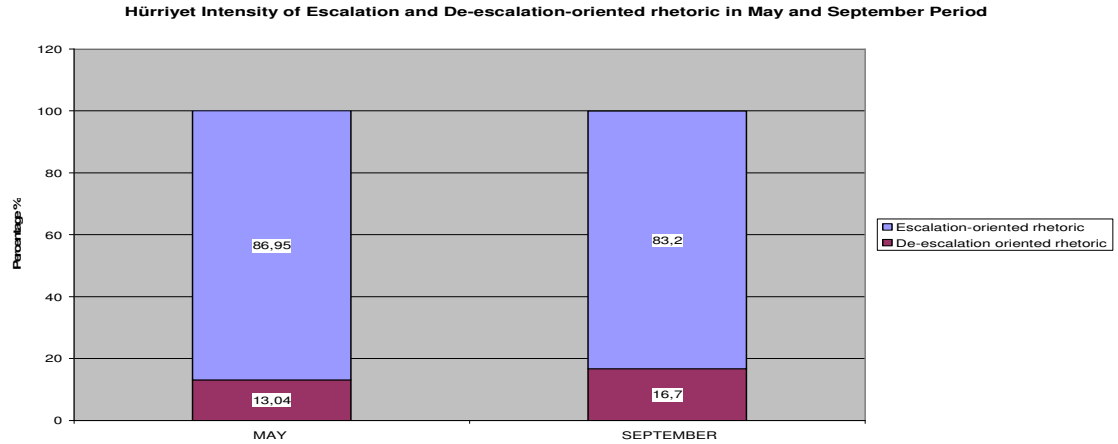
On the other hand, the attention to conflict escalation over the Armenian conference of *Hürriyet* is illustrated below:



**Figure 3.10** Frequency of coded arguments in *Hürriyet* daily

Figure 3.10 displays the frequency of arguments on conflict escalation about the Armenian conference. According to the graph, 2,74% frequency for the May period, whereas 2,70% in the September period. The percentage of the frequency reveals that *Hürriyet* did not pay high attention to the conflict escalation in either period. Although the frequency is low, similar to *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet* is a daily newspaper covering a wide range of news that did not cover the Armenian issue in all of its columns. When the differences of the frequencies between the May and the September periods are analyzed it is found that there is an decrease in frequency by 0,04% in the September period. However, an increase of 0,04% is definitely not an important difference. Therefore, as a center-right newspaper *Hürriyet* is consistent with its amount of coverage in both periods. When we do not consider the arguments in economy columns, the frequency in May rose to 3,07% and 3,88% in the September period, which caused a rise by 0,33% for the May period and 1,18% for the September period. Thus, not considering economy related arguments changes the frequencies in *Hürriyet*, but not a considerable amount.

Additionally, the intensity of escalation and de-escalation-oriented rhetoric are also approximately the same in the May and September periods and can be displayed as below:

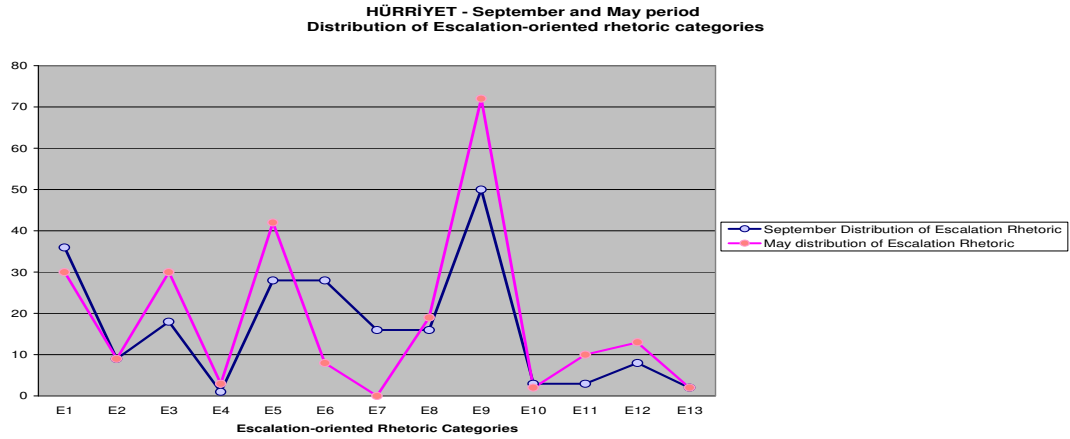


**Figure 3.11 Comparing May and September period’s distribution of rhetoric according to being escalation-oriented and de-escalation oriented in *Hürriyet***

Figure 3.11 above displays that in the May period escalation-oriented of *Hürriyet* is 86,95% while de-escalation oriented rhetoric is 13,04%. In the September period, on the other hand, *Hürriyet* focused more on de-escalation-oriented rhetoric with 16,7%, while escalation oriented rhetoric decreased to 83,2%. There is an increase in *Hürriyet*’s de-escalation-oriented rhetoric in the September period by 3,75%, which is not an apparent change.

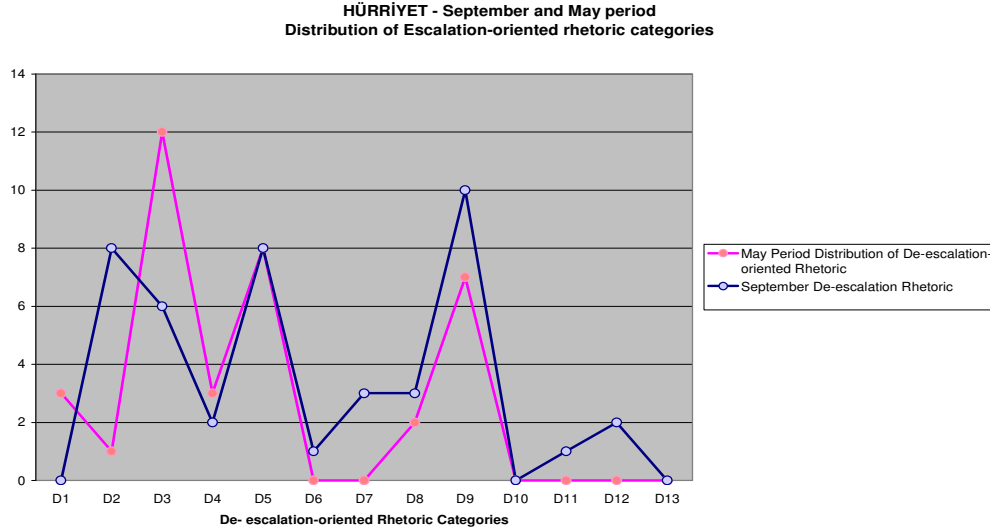
Since *Hürriyet* is a newspaper at the center of the spatial map, the ideological position of the newspaper is shaped without being close to the ends of both dimensions of the Turkish ideological context. The reason for the rise in the de-escalation rhetoric, 3%, in the September period is a result of the government member’s, such as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, statements about the right to organize such a meeting in Turkey. Thus, it can be argued that the newspapers at the center are more prone to be in parallel with the official interpretations of conflict and the rise in the de-escalation- oriented rhetoric of *Hürriyet* in the September period can be attributed to statements of the government members.





**Figure 3.12 The intensity of usage of the escalation oriented rhetoric categories in *Hürriyet* newspaper in the September and May periods**

From the analysis in Figure 3.12, there is a clear pattern in *Hürriyet* newspaper’s usage of escalation rhetoric except the categories of E6 - idealization of one group’s goals and objectives and E7 - denial of common interests, which were used less in the May period and used more in the September period. Categories E5 - demonizing the opponent and denial of his goals and objectives and E9 - condemnation of the opponent’s actions are used more often than the other categories in both periods. For example, on 29 May, Murat Bardakçı in his column argues that “they are busy giving press ethic lessons to their environment” (onlar etrafa basın etiği dersleri vermekle meşguller), which is coded as E9 - condemnation of opponent’s actions. In addition, on 27 May, Emin Çölaşan argues that “they are going to work on the ‘genocide happened’ and ‘we cut off the Armenians’ thesis” (‘soykırım olmuştur,’ ‘ermenileri kestik’ tezini işleyecekler), which is coded as E5 - demonizing the opponent and denial of his goals and objectives.



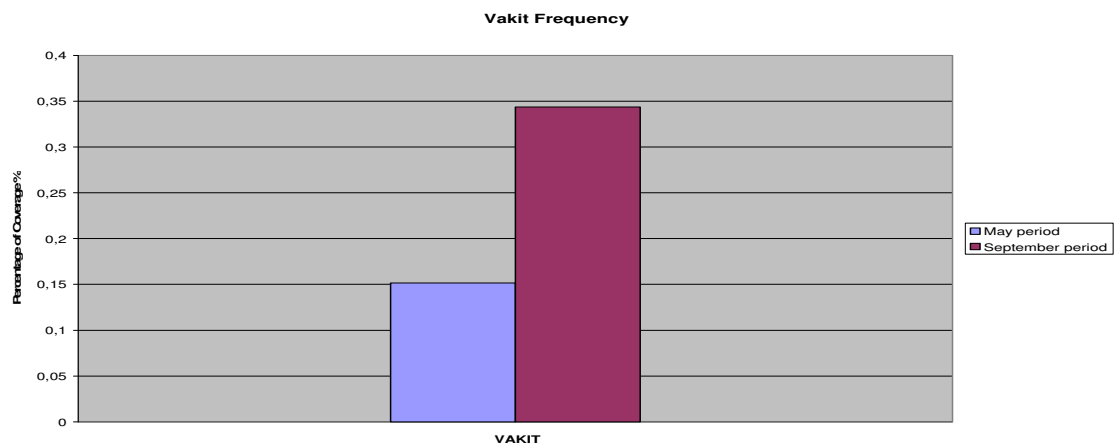
**Figure 3.13 The intensity of usage of the de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories in *Hürriyet* newspaper in the September and May periods**

On the other hand, as Figure 3.13 reveals, de-escalation oriented rhetoric patterns can be said to exist in between categories D4 to D10. D10 - description or possibilities for cooperation, and D13 - empathy for ‘their’ intention creates a new perspective, are never used in either period. This is because the power to defend a centralist view often does not lead to an aim of change. However, the status-quo is criticized by using the D9 - balanced evaluations of both sides’ actions, most often in the September period, and by using D3 - attributing the cause of conflict to both parties and the context - at the maximum level in the May period. For example on 26 May, Oktay Ekşi defined the situation by stating that “the conference was not convened as a result of Turkey’s underdeveloped democracy” (Türkiye’nin yeterince demokratikleşmiş olmaması yüzünden yapılamayan toplantı..). Thus, having more of a centralist view *Hürriyet* criticizes the actions and the context but these critiques are very limited. *Hürriyet* does not search for the resolution alternatives, or emphasize the possibility for cooperation. Since the newspaper is not close to the ends of the dimensions at the estimated political map, there is no reason for it to attempt to identify alternatives because centralist views often perceive themselves to have a stable point at the political context without deepening the discussions and defending the status quo.

### 3.4 VAKIT

*Vakit* defined as an Islamic fundamentalist daily and placed at the pro-Islamist end of the first dimension and close to the center on the second dimension. This ideological position of *Vakit* means that when there are Islam-related discussions *Vakit* moves far away from the center-right, however, except for Islam-related discussions, the rhetoric of the newspaper is situated closer to the center. The average number of columnists in *Vakit* newspaper is eleven. There were 10,092 arguments in the May period and 10,890 arguments in the September period. There are only three columnists who have written about the Armenian conference in their columns and they are Abdurrahman Dilipak, Selahaddin Çakır and Abdurrahim Karakoç. Between 23-29 May 2005 *Vakit*'s circulation was 67,543 while 69,142 between 19-25 September 2005.

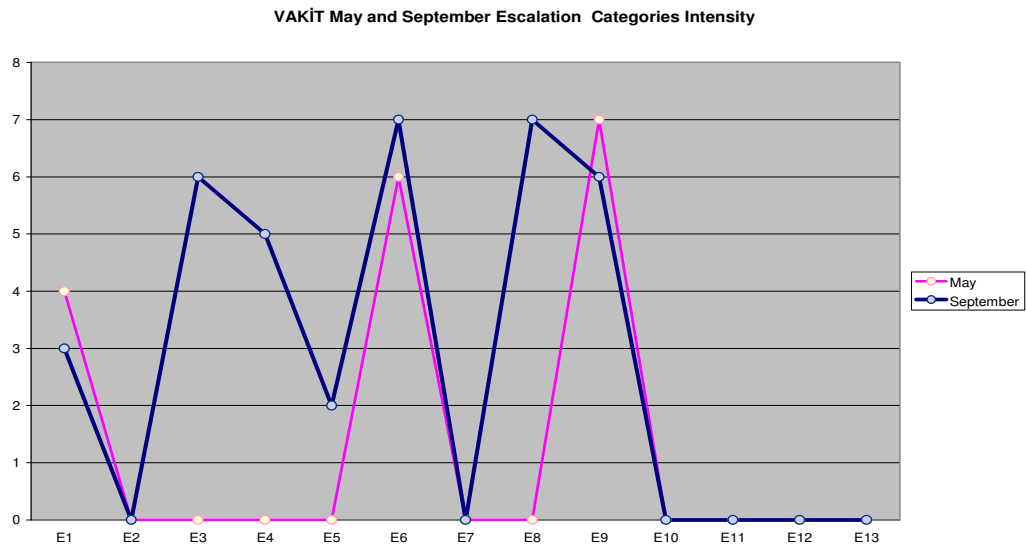
However, not very similar to the newspapers elaborated until now, the attention paid to the issue of conflict escalation about the Armenian conference is too low in the *Vakit* newspaper. While in May the frequency is 0,15%, in September the frequency increases so insignificantly to 0,34 % as shown in Figure 3.14 in the next page.



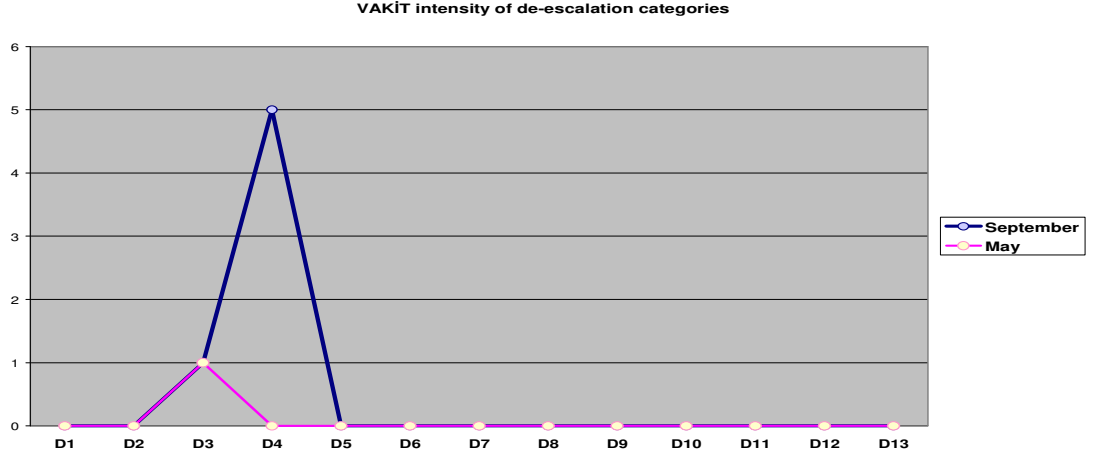
**Figure 3.14** Frequency of coded arguments in *Vakit* daily

When we exclude the economy related arguments in *Vakit* newspaper, the frequencies in the May and September periods rises by 0,25% in May and 0,18% in September. These differences are not considerable. The reasons for the very low change when economy related arguments are excluded is because *Vakit* newspaper’s columnists do not often write about economy, but emphasize the socio-political dynamics of Turkey’s political context.

In order to compare the intensity of escalation and de-escalation rhetorics, there is no need to draw a proportional graphic since the frequency is too low. However, it can be indicated that *Vakit* daily has used categories of E1, E6, E9, D3 and in total 17 escalation-oriented categories and 1 de-escalation oriented categories in the May period; on the other hand, in the September period E1, E3, E4, E5, E6, E8, E9 categories are used and in total 36 escalation-oriented rhetoric categories have been used, while in total 6 de-escalation oriented categories, including D3 and D4 have been used. Although the frequency is so insignificant to identify a certain escalation-oriented or de-escalation-oriented rhetorical pattern, the intensity of escalation-oriented and de-escalation oriented categories are shown in Figure 3.15 and 3.16.



**Figure 3.15 *Vakit* Distribution of Escalation Categories**



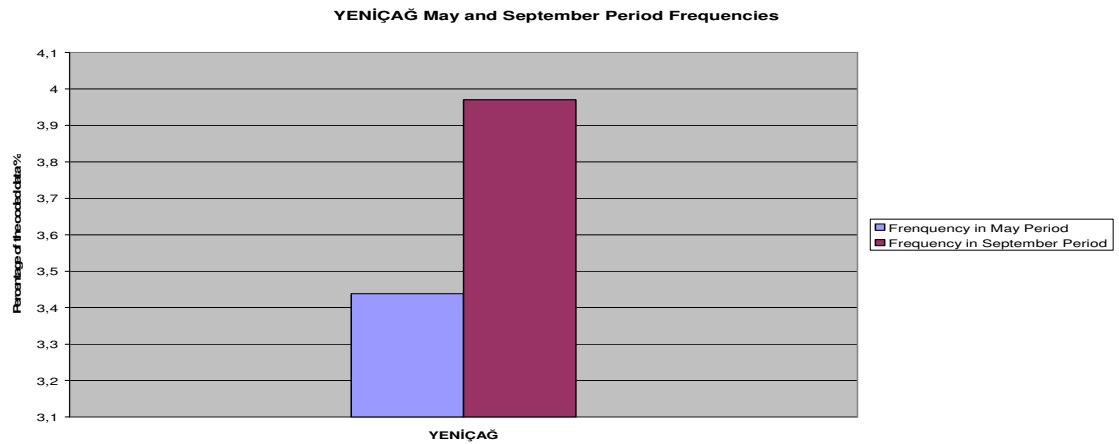
**Figure 3.16 Vakit Distribution of De-Escalation Categories**

All of the results of the data analysis indicate that the newspapers having a position closer to the pro-Islamist end of the first dimension are paying nearly no attention to an issue like the Armenian conflict. Indeed, it can be said that the newspapers closer to the pro-Islamist end are more likely to pay attention to a conflict related to a religion-based conflict. It can be even said that the newspapers closer to the pro-Islamist end specialize in discussing the religion based disagreements as well as religious narratives. Therefore, *Vakit* is a very crucial example to argue that the ideological position of newspapers influence the rhetorical pattern of a medium with its lowest frequency.

### **3.5 YENİÇAĞ**

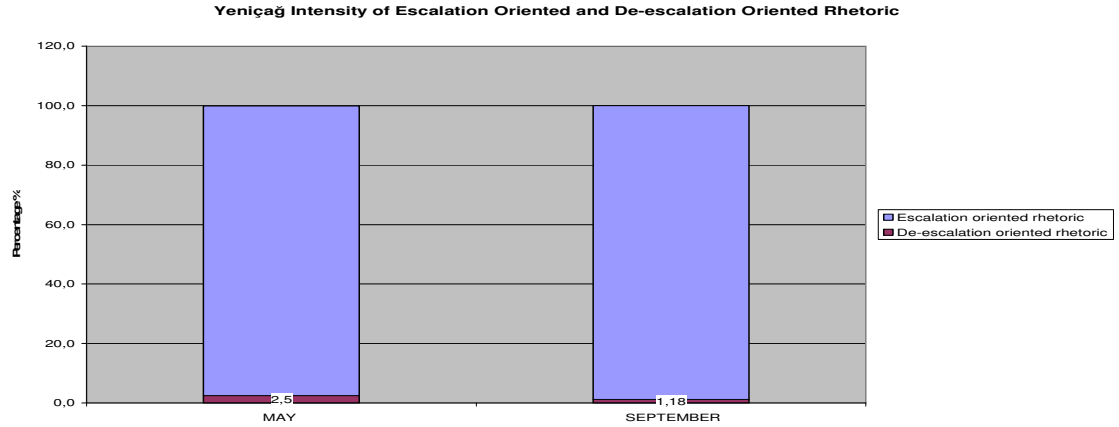
*Yeniçağ*, in the introduction was defined as a daily reflecting the views of hard-line nationalists inside the Nationalist Action Party. The average number of columnists is thirteen, and the columnists who often wrote about the Armenian conference are Lale Şıvgın, İsrafil K.Kumbasar, Arslan Tekin, Durmuş Hocaoğlu, Mustafa E.Erkal and Özcan Yeniçeri. The circulation numbers of *Yeniçağ* were 57,044 between 23-29 May and 56,

270 between 19 and 25 September 2005. The total number of arguments in the May period is 7259 and the total number of arguments in the September period is 6366. The arguments of *Yeniçağ* in both periods supported the parties on the anti-conference side and were against the pro-conference parties. Being nearest to the Turkish nationalist end of the second dimension, the frequency analysis of *Yeniçağ* daily shows that the attention paid to the conflict escalation about Armenian conference is more than the other dailies in question.



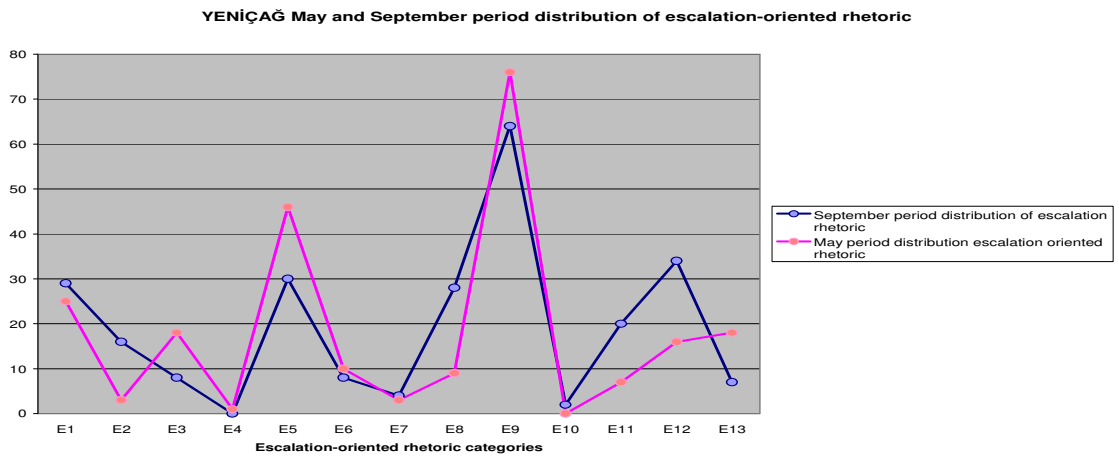
**Figure 3.17 *Yeniçağ* Frequencies**

According to the figure above, in May the frequency of the related arguments in *Yeniçağ* is 3,43%, while in the September period the frequency insignificantly increases to 3,97%. On the other hand, the intensity of escalation and de-escalation oriented rhetoric for the May period and September period can be illustrated as below, which displays the main rhetorical pattern of *Yeniçağ* as escalation-oriented. This can be the result of *Yeniçağ*'s ideological positioning because the conflict escalation about the Armenian conference is much more related to the discussion between Turkish nationalists and the groups favoring the rise of different ethnic identity than the discussion between secularists and pro-Islamists. Since *Yeniçağ* is the closest to the Turkish nationalist end of the second dimension in the estimated map, it defends the position of the groups against the conference but with a high emphasis to the threat of the opponent to Turkish identity.



**Figure 3.18 Comparing May and September period’s distribution of rhetoric according to being escalation-oriented and de-escalation oriented in *Yeniçağ***

According to the distribution of escalation-oriented rhetoric categories, *Yeniçağ* definitely follows a pattern except for the deviances in categories E2, E3 and E13 as displayed below:

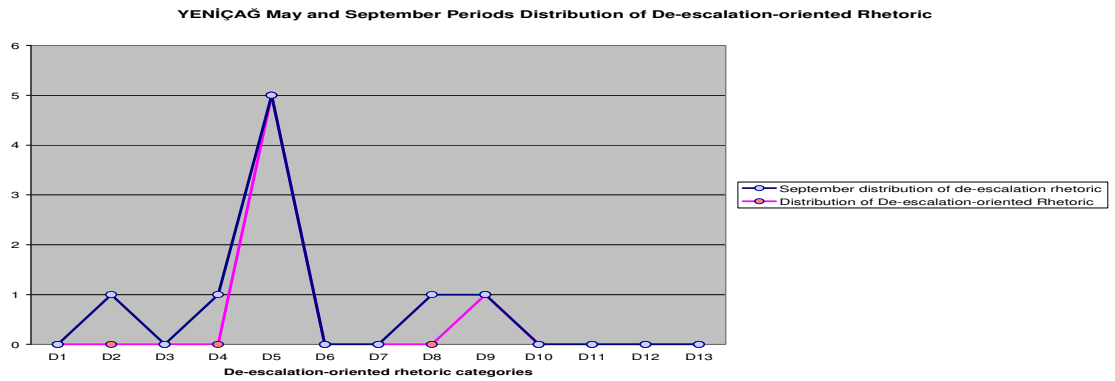


**Figure 3.19 The intensity of usage of the escalation oriented rhetoric categories in *Yeniçağ* newspaper in the September and May periods**

Being closest to the Turkish nationalist end of the second dimension, *Yeniçağ* used E5 - demonizing the opponent and denial of his goals and objectives and E9 - condemnation of opponents actions - the most. On the other hand E4 - obstacles to conflict resolution are emphasized and E10 - possibilities for cooperation are denied - are

nearly never used. *Yeniçağ* has the harshest rhetoric in terms of quality, the use of the words were sharper and more severe when we compare the rhetoric of other newspapers. For example of the conference organizers are defined as “Tashnak Committee” (Taşnakçı Komite), which was a committee defending the rights of the Armenian factions inside Turkey at the time of the war of liberation in 1920s or “traitors”(hainler). Thus, the reasons for the conflict are attributed to one side through the negative impressions of the past. Also, the conference was defined as ‘Turks cut off the Armenians’ conference’ or “traitors meetings.” On 27 May Arslan Tekin argues that “the organizers were going to complain about Turkey” (Türkiye’yi şikayet edeceklerdi) and uses E5 - demonize the opponent’s goals. Often the columnists were analyzing each organizer’s life history and pointing out that they might be coming from different ethnicities and originally might not be Turkish. For example, İsrail K. Kumbasar, on 24 May, specifically mentions two organizers, and emphasized that “there are assertions that those organizers are not coming from Turkish origin” (Türk asıllı olmadıkları yolunda iddialar var!” In addition, the quantitative results reveal that blaming the other is at its highest point in *Yeniçağ*’s rhetoric, while cooperation and conflict resolution are not mentioned even in an escalation-oriented rhetoric.

De-escalation rhetoric has a very insignificant part in the rhetoric of *Yeniçağ* daily. Indeed, *Yeniçağ* is the only newspaper which used such a low amount of de-escalation-oriented categories. The distribution of categories can be illustrated as below:



**Figure 3.20 The intensity of usage of the de- escalation oriented rhetoric categories in *Yeniçağ* newspaper in the September and May periods**



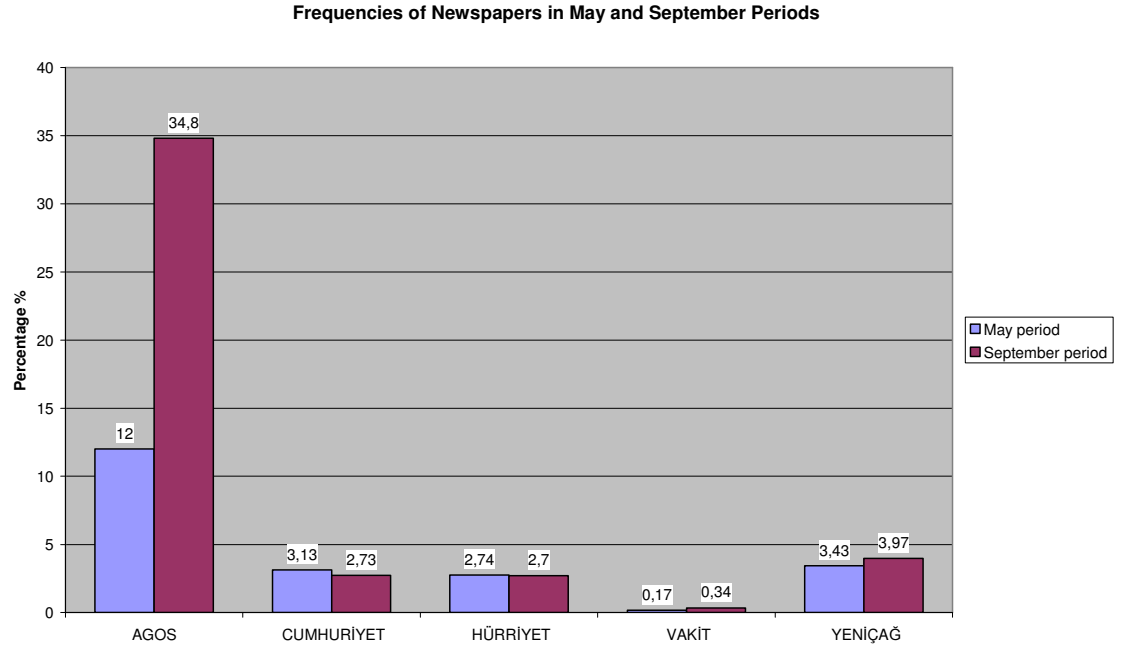
As it is apparent in Graph 18, D5 – respecting the opponent’s rights - is used the most, but the maximum usage is five times per period. This situation is a result of *Yeniçağ*’s ideological position, which is shaped by hard-line nationalists.

### **3.6 COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

In this section, the crucial results of the data analysis are summarized by comparing the frequencies, amount of escalation oriented and de-escalation oriented rhetorics of the newspapers in question, and usage of escalation oriented and de-escalation oriented categories by the related newspapers.

#### **3.6.1. Comparing the Frequencies**

Although, it was expected to find a high newspaper influence over the conflict about Armenian conference, except for the frequency of *Agos*, the other four newspapers *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Vakit* and *Yeniçağ*, did not pay high attention to the conflict. The low frequency might be a result of scrutinizing the columns and leaving the other sections of news aside. However, it is assumed that interpretation and ideological position of conflict can clearly be understood from the columns and other parts of the newspapers often do not interpret the news.



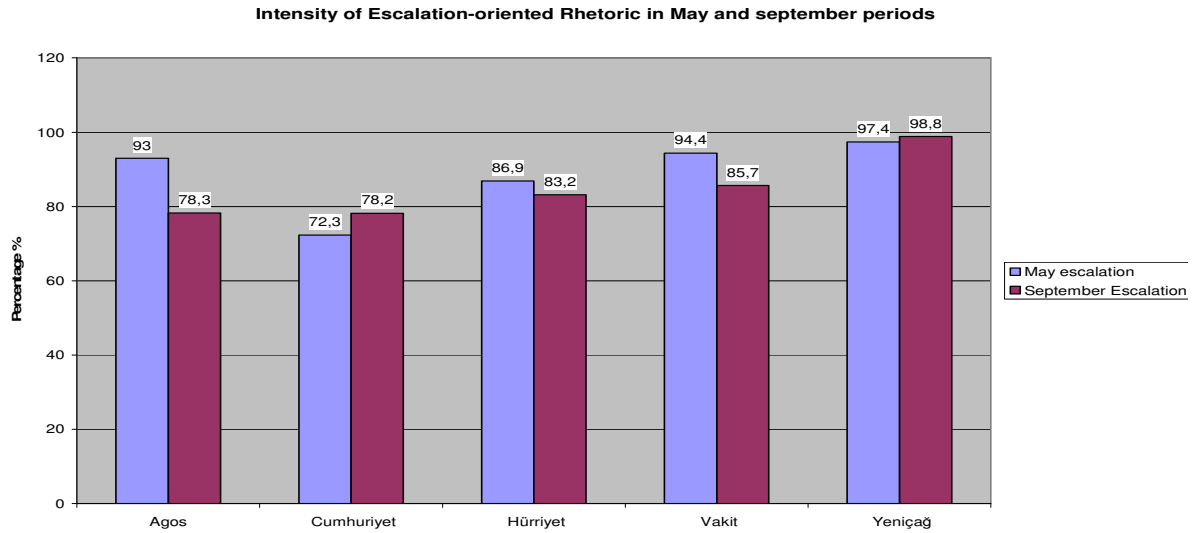
**Figure 3.21 Frequency comparison of five newspapers in question**

The graph above indicates that the newspapers such as *Agos* and *Yeniçağ* that are closer to the end of the second dimension in the spatial map are more prone to devote their rhetoric to the Armenian conference. However, *Agos* is the only newspaper which paid the highest attention to the Armenian conference because it is the only minority newspaper in the five newspapers in question. Moreover, *Agos* is targeting the Armenian society in Turkey. On the other hand, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, closer to the center on the second dimension, did not pay a considerable attention to the issue. *Yeniçağ* as a daily has the highest frequency as the closest newspaper to the nationalist right. In addition *Vakit*'s attention to the issue is too low, while *Cumhuriyet*'s attention is closer to *Hürriyet*'s frequency. Therefore, when we consider the first dimension that reveals the discussion between secularist-left and pro-Islamist right in the estimated political context, it can be argued that having a position to the pro-Islamist end does not affect the rhetoric of the newspaper when the issue of conflict escalation is about the Armenian conference. *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* are the newspapers closest to the ends of the first dimension in our estimated map. While *Cumhuriyet* is a left-wing Kemalist daily targeting social intellectuals, *Vakit* is defined as an Islamic fundamentalist daily. So, *Cumhuriyet* and

*Vakit* differentiate themselves from the center of the dimension. *Cumhuriyet* differentiates itself by targeting social intellectuals and emphasizing Kemalism on the first dimension. However, when we analyze the place of *Cumhuriyet* on the second dimension it is more closer to the nationalist right than *Hürriyet*. Therefore, when we move on the second dimension and arrange the newspapers according to their frequency it is definite that newspapers closer to the ends of the second dimension in the spatial map are more prone to devote their rhetoric to the Armenian conference.

### 3.6.2 Comparing the Intensity of Escalation-oriented Rhetorics

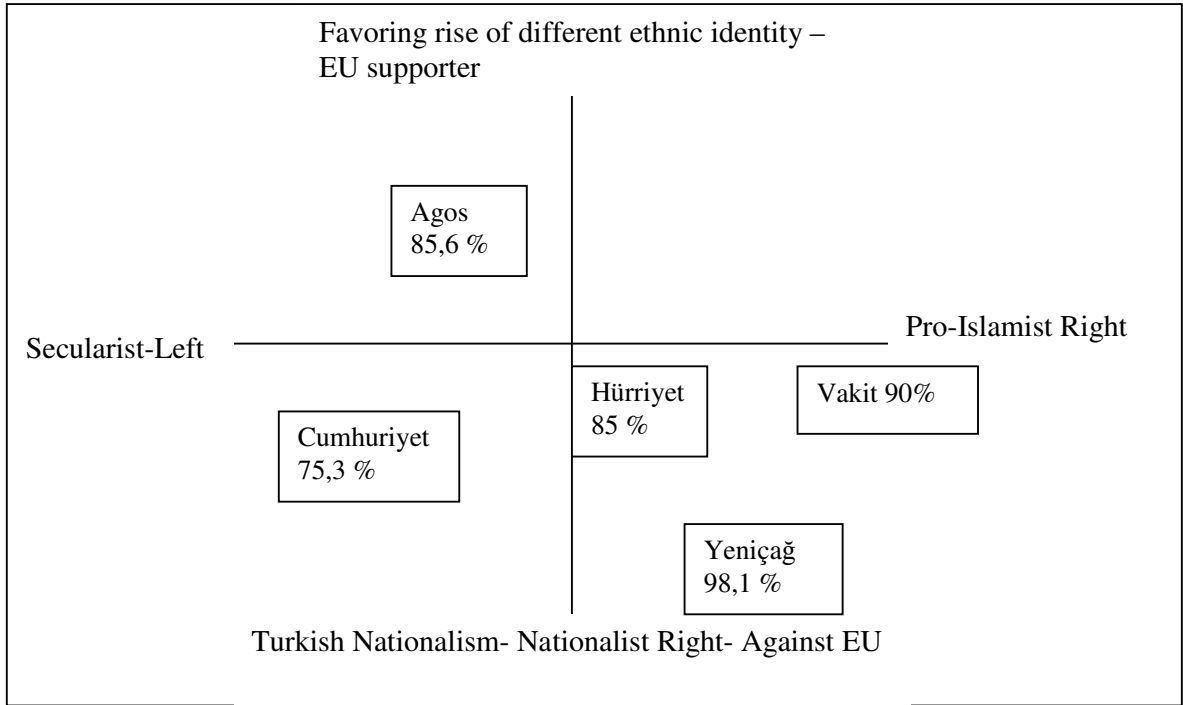
In order to enumerate the newspapers according to their escalation orientation, the average percentage of the September and May periods are calculated. At the end a figure is obtained that shows the intensity of escalation-oriented rhetoric in relation to the ideological positions of the newspapers.



**Figure 3.22 The amounts of usage of escalation oriented rhetoric in related newspapers**

According to Figure 3.22, *Agos*'s average escalation-oriented rhetoric was 85,6 %, *Cumhuriyet*'s average escalation-oriented rhetoric was 75,3 %, *Hürriyet*'s average escalation-oriented rhetoric was 85 %, *Vakit*'s average escalation-oriented rhetoric was 90

%, *Yeniçağ*'s average escalation-oriented rhetoric was 98,1%. If these values are put on the ideological map the result appears as in Figure 3.23.



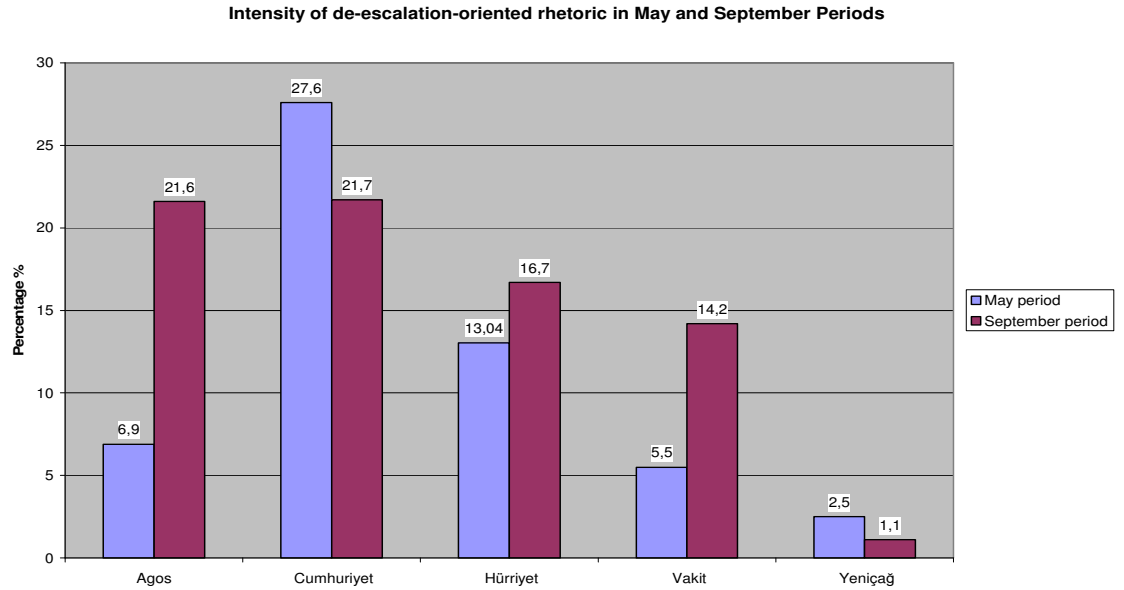
**Figure 3.23 Evaluating the escalation-oriented rhetoric of newspaper in relation to their ideological positions**

According to Figure 3.23, it is discovered that the newspapers that are closer to the ends of the second dimension have a more escalation oriented rhetoric. However, the highest intensity of escalation-oriented rhetoric can be found at the nationalist right end of the second dimension. On the other hand, newspapers that are closer to the center apply lesser amounts of escalation-oriented rhetoric than those closer to the ends of the second dimension. When the percentages are questioned, *Vakit's* high average frequency is deceiving because only fifty-three arguments are coded as escalation-oriented while there are sixty arguments in total related to the Armenian conference. Since the data from *Vakit* newspaper is not enough, its rhetoric can not be evaluated reasonably.

### 3.6.3 Comparing the Intensity of De-escalation-oriented Rhetoric

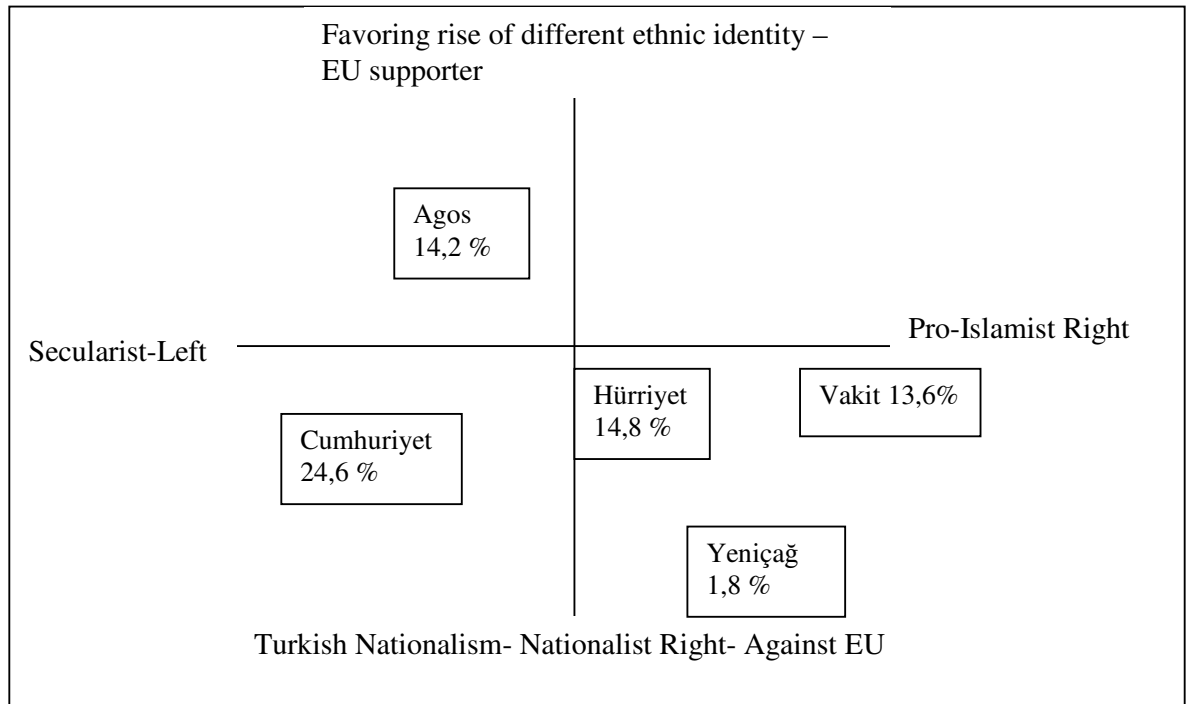
Although the intensity of de-escalation-oriented rhetoric can be extracted from the escalation-oriented rhetoric it is better to illustrate the picture of the intensity of de-escalation oriented rhetoric in order to calculate the average amount of the usage of de-escalation-oriented rhetoric.

According to Figure 3.24, *Agos*'s average de-escalation-oriented rhetoric was 14,2 %, *Cumhuriyet*'s average de-escalation-oriented rhetoric was 24,6 %, *Hürriyet*'s average de-escalation-oriented rhetoric was 14,8 %, *Vakit*'s average de-escalation-oriented rhetoric was 13,6 %, *Yeniçağ*'s average de-escalation-oriented rhetoric was 1,8 %.



**Figure 3.24 The amounts of usage of de-escalation oriented rhetoric in related newspapers**

If the above-mentioned average values of de-escalation oriented rhetoric are put on the ideological map the result appears as in Figure 3.25 on the next page:



**Figure 3.25 Evaluating the escalation-oriented rhetoric of newspaper in relation to their ideological positions**

Accordingly, the newspapers closer to the center on the second dimension of the map use more de-escalation oriented rhetoric such as *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* (Vakit's frequency is not significant enough to make an interpretation). On the other hand newspapers closer to the ends of the second dimension use less de-escalation oriented rhetoric such as *Agos* and *Yeniçağ*. In addition, the lowest de-escalation oriented rhetoric usage can be seen by moving to the nationalist end of the dimension.

Since *Cumhuriyet* as being secularist-left targets the social democratic intellectuals and criticizing the government, in a conflict escalation related to the Armenian conference *Cumhuriyet* used the highest de-escalation rhetoric. According to *Cumhuriyet* the main argument was the right to convene an academic conference but without being one-sided as the conference organizers did. On the one hand, *Cumhuriyet* was criticizing the level of democracy and understanding of the government members, but on the other hand

*Cumhuriyet* supported the anti-conference ideals and emphasized the right of those who were against the conference balanced it by addressing democratic intellectuals who were more prone to question the sources of conflict escalation and respecting the right of both parties in the period of escalation. Thus, the attempt of *Cumhuriyet* to have a balanced evaluation of both sides resulted in 24,6% de-escalation rhetoric, which actually is a result of its ideological position.

### 3.6.4. Comparing the Usage of Rhetoric Categories by Newspapers in Question

Comparing the escalation- oriented rhetoric categories, the patterns in the May period and the September period, I have to analyze the most used escalation oriented categories that can be found for each newspaper and interpreted accordingly.

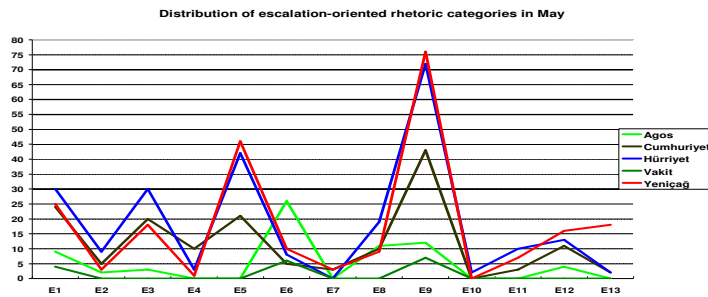


Figure 3.26 Usage of escalation oriented rhetoric categories in the May period

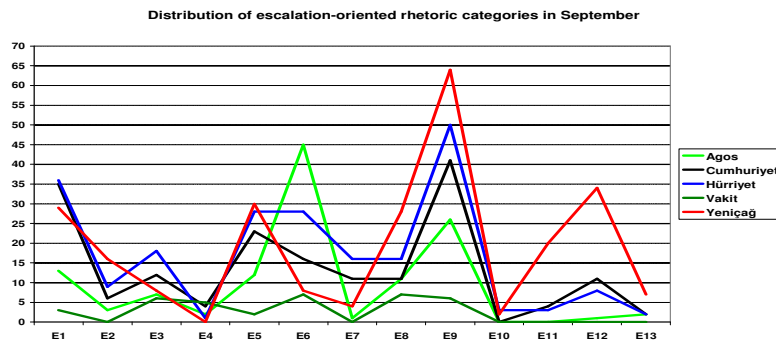


Figure 3.27 Usage of escalation oriented rhetoric categories in the September period

According to Figure 3.26 and 3.27, it is apparent that category E9 - condemnation of the opponent's actions - is used most by all newspapers. However, it should be kept in

mind that the opponents of all newspapers are not for all. For example, while *Agos* perceives the opponent as the ones against the Armenian conference, *Yeniçağ* describes the opponent as the conference organizers and supporters. In any case, E9 is used by all newspapers in their escalation rhetoric.

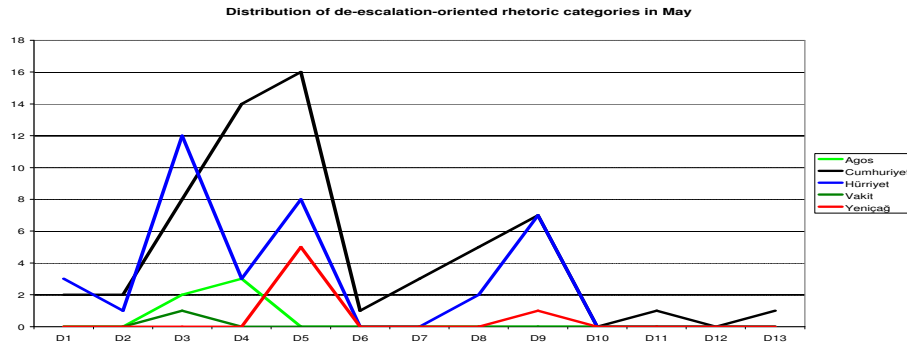
On the other hand, for *Agos*' usage of E6 - idealization of one group's own goals and objectives - is also frequent in both periods. *Agos* emphasizes the pro-conference side often by arguing that conference supporters are the ones who respect democracy and wish for a flourishing democracy; thus, actually in comparison to anti-conference parties, pro-conference parties present themselves as more democratic. According to the pro-conference parties, if the conference could be convened, the democracy level of Turkey would pass a threshold and develop more. Therefore, the emphasis was not only on demonizing the opponent's actions but also on pro-conference parties' idealization of their own group's goals and objectives. Since *Agos* is closer to the conference supporters' side usage of 'idealizing own group's goals' rhetoric proves once more the existence of a link between the ideological position and rhetoric of a newspaper.

In addition, category E5 - demonizing the opponent and denial of his goals and objectives - is often used by *Yeniçağ* and *Hürriyet* in both periods and also by *Cumhuriyet* in the September period. As mentioned before, *Yeniçağ*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* are closer to the nationalist right of the second dimension and often describe the opponent as the conference organizers and supporters. Since conference organizers and supporters were emphasizing their own group's objectives and goals, anti-conference parties appeared to be the people at the nationalist right wing blaming the opponent's emphasis on the objectives of the conference. That is why *Yeniçağ*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* often used 'demonizing the opponent rhetoric' in their arguments.

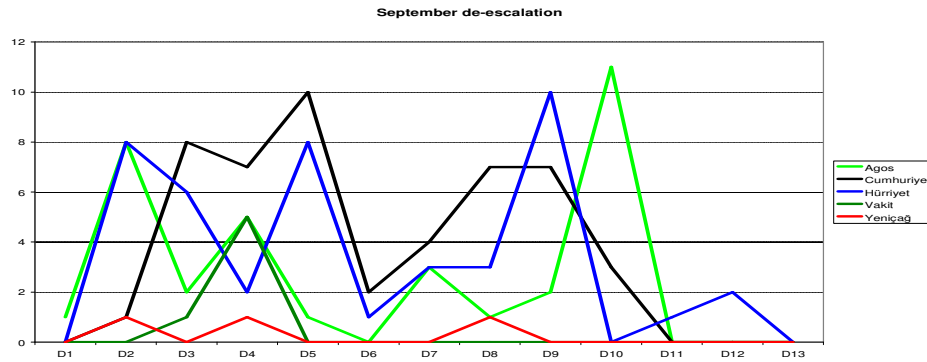
As a last step, usages of de-escalation categories are scrutinized to clearly indicate the link between the ideological position of newspapers and their rhetoric. However, as it was mentioned in the first part of this chapter, de-escalation oriented rhetoric do not have as clear a pattern as escalation-oriented rhetoric. Therefore, only very significant usages of some de-escalation categories in both periods are interpreted in the last section.



In comparing the escalation-oriented rhetoric categories, I look at the patterns in the May period and the September period.



**Figure 3.28 Usage of de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories in the May period**



**Figure 3.29 Usage of de-escalation oriented rhetoric categories in the September period**

As Figure 3.29 shows, the most used de-escalation-oriented rhetoric category was D5 -respecting the opponents rights - in the May period. While *Cumhuriyet* used D5 mostly, *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* newspapers also used D5 a significant amount. The reason for *Cumhuriyet* can be explained by its address to the democratic intellectuals who would like to respect any parties' rights in the conflict. On the other hand, in the May period the reason for *Yeniçağ* and *Hürriyet* to use category D5 can be attributed to the outcome of the discussions over the conference. When the Armenian conference was postponed, the groups who were against the conference achieved their goals and attempted to decrease

the tension by referring to the rights of their opponents because the result was in their interest. Therefore, again being closer to the nationalist right, thus being closer to the groups of people who are against the conference, *Hürriyet* and *Yeniçağ* used D5.

In the September period, *Hürriyet* used D9 - balanced evaluation of both sides' actions - because the second attempt to suspend the conference was not welcomed by the majority of the public and by the officials. *Hürriyet* is described as a center-right mass appeal daily that often responds to the common rhetoric of the public. That is why it began to use D9 in the September period, which resulted in a self critical evaluation of own side's actions as well as criticizing the opponent.

Lastly, *Agos* in the September period often used D10 - description or support for possibilities for cooperation. Therefore, similar to the attitude of *Yeniçağ*, *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet*, after its own side achieved the goal, the rhetoric of *Agos* began to be prone to decrease the tension by referring to cooperation.

From all these results, it can be concluded that there is a link between the media rhetoric and their ideological positioning in Turkey. According to their ideological positions, newspapers have various patterns of escalation and de-escalation rhetoric in the conflict escalation in September and May 2005 over convening a conference entitled "Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy." Moreover, the newspapers that are closer to the ends of the second dimension have a more escalation oriented rhetoric. However, the highest intensity of escalation-oriented rhetoric can be found at the nationalist right end of the second dimension. On the other hand, newspapers that are closer to the center on the second dimension apply lesser amount of escalation-oriented rhetoric than those closer to the ends of the dimension. However, the insignificant results obtained from *Vakit* newspaper suggest that the first dimension is not as important as the second dimension of the estimated map for the Armenian conference conflict escalation. Yet, in another conflict escalation subject it might be better to identify a pattern of a newspaper closer to the pro-Islamist right. In addition, the usages of escalation and de-escalation categories are interpreted as depending on the ideological positioning of newspapers as well.

On the other hand, it should be noted that although the names of the columnists who wrote more about the Armenian conference in each newspaper are indicated throughout the analysis, it should also be noted that the columnists are not identical in terms of their readers. Some columnists do take more attention by their readers in each newspaper and therefore those columnists' rhetoric become more important because they have more power to influence the readers by their rhetoric. However, the measurement of how much they are affecting their readers is not in the spectrum of this study. The last chapter of this study reveals the results of the literature review combined with the data analysis.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

The main aspiration of this study was to find out whether newspapers, depending on their ideological positioning in Turkey's political space, have different patterns of escalation-oriented rhetoric or de-escalation oriented rhetoric in the conflict escalation over convening a conference entitled 'Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy.' Arguing that media have the ability to be a third party, often they do not directly contribute to conflicts as a third party. As mentioned in the second chapter, sometimes media can play the role of an interested secondary party with its ideological practices when a conflict is related to the audience that is addressed by the medium. Similarly, in this study the media are defined as interested secondary parties to the conflict over the Armenian conference. Therefore, the greater importance is given to the variation of a medium's rhetoric depending on its ideological practices. Also, it is noted that the importance of timing of the media intervention in a conflict escalation provided a basis to evaluate the level of influence of media intervention conflict.

From the general findings of the content analysis it can be concluded that according to their ideological positions, newspapers have various patterns of escalation and de-escalation rhetoric in the conflict escalation in September and May 2005 over convening a conference entitled "Ottoman Armenians During the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy." Moreover, the newspapers that are closer to the ends of the second dimension, which indicates the controversy between nationalist right and groups favoring the rise of a different ethnic identity, have a more escalation-oriented rhetoric. Thus, the highest intensity of escalation-oriented rhetoric can be found at the nationalist right end of the second dimension. On the other hand, newspapers that are closer to the center on the second dimension apply a lesser amount of escalation-oriented rhetoric than those closer to the ends of the dimension. However, the insignificant results obtained from *Vakit* newspaper suggest that the pro-Islamist end of

the first dimension is not as important as the second dimension of the estimated map for the Armenian conference conflict. In this sense, conflict escalation about the Armenian conference appears more at the crossroads of the power relationship between EU supporters and the nationalist right in Turkey, but is not under much influence from the pro-Islamist discussion. Yet, at the secularist end of the first dimension, *Cumhuriyet* proves that being a medium that is neither an extreme nationalist nor center-right results in using a more de-escalation oriented rhetoric. So, attempts to keep the balance of the discussions when there is not a direct interest it is easier for a medium to use de-escalation-oriented rhetoric. Yet, in another conflict escalation subject, the results of a such a content analysis will be different because as Wolsfeld claims “editors and reporters all come with certain predispositions and expectations that clearly influence the way they process information, but their reactions are also affected by the nature of information they confront” (1997: 35).

Lastly, the usage of escalation and de-escalation categories are interpreted as depending on the ideological positioning of newspapers. *Agos* was the only newspaper which was apparently on the side of pro-conference parties, as the weekly newspaper targeting the Armenian society Turkey. Since the issue of the conflict was convening the Armenian conference, *Agos* defended the pro-conference parties by idealizing the objectives and protected the goals of the organizers. However, the other four newspapers used E9 - condemnation of the opponent’s actions - in order to blame the anti-conference parties. While the other four newspapers stressed category E9 - condemnation of the opponent’s actions - more often, *Agos*’ usage of E6 - idealization of one group’s own goals and objectives - is prominent to prove the strong link between the ideological position and the rhetorical patterns.

Therefore, this study emphasizes that different conflict escalation periods might develop different patterns of newspaper rhetoric, but for a unique conflict escalation period the ideological position of newspaper in a related political context is a crucial factor that can influence the course of conflict escalation. Since being one of the major sources of communication and information, the media intervenes in conflict processes by offering cognitive frameworks using various types of rhetoric the course of conflict

escalation can be influenced by the rhetorical patterns developed through the ideological difference of the medium.

The findings of the theoretical evaluation of the role of media and the content analysis demonstrate major implications of this study for conflict analysis in general. In addition, this thesis questioned the role of media rhetoric in conflict escalation in particular.

First of all, the inherent dynamics of communication are elaborated. Then, it is argued that media are influenced by the inherent problems of communication processes. The point of reference leading this study is that good communication is not a guarantee for a conflict to be resolved, but poor communication most possibly increases the likelihood of the continuation of conflict or worsening of the conflict situation (Krauss and Morsella, cf. Deutsch and Coleman eds., 2000). Thus, media as the channels that have power to collectively inform and influence the societies by transferring messages including various assessments of conflict situations are questioned. It is found that the main role media carry out in a conflict situation is intervention. Additionally, media in Turkey elaborated the conflict process about the Armenian conference presumed to be interested secondary parties because journalists often take sides during the interpretation of the conflict situation.

Secondly, the media's cognitive frames offered by columnists are often used to rationalize receiver's existent perception and the data sent by the media used to be fit in the existing variety of information that the receiver already has about the conflict situation. Therefore, the media has an influence to strengthen adversaries and public's cognition of conflict by using different frames developed by certain ideological preferences. In sum, the result of media intervention, although sometimes might not be self consciously done by the journalists, is an alteration in conflict. Therefore, selecting to establish a conciliatory rhetoric to wage the conflict situation constructively depends on medium's ideological practices and versions of language chosen to be used.

The intervention of media in conflict escalation stage is more apparent and since the nature of conflict escalation as a stage is subject to be easily triggered or perpetuated by the social psychological processes. On the other hand, media are inclined to report news about conflict more than before when there is an escalation in the intensity of a conflict because when a conflict erupts, the public pays more attention to the media; media sell more news; and gain more profit. Therefore, the members of media may not be aware of their own cognitive frameworks, however, they actually transfer the pattern of their own interpretation in parallel with the ideological preferences of the medium they belong to. This can further escalate the conflict easily because adversaries are subject to selective perception, entrapment, justifications, threat, emotions and psychological changes when conflict erupts. However, the ideological preferences of different mediums in Turkey are not criticized by this study because even though a medium has a certain ideological position, media can use de-escalation-oriented rhetoric when interpreting a conflict to prevent a further escalation in the course of conflict. While, Frederick (1993) believes it is the responsibility of media to “play a positive role in education and enlightening the public toward peace” (cf. Gilboa, 2002:239), I believe the responsibility of media is to eliminate the escalation-oriented rhetoric by questioning the conflict process rather than judging it by its own rhetorical frameworks. Similar to this point of view, Melone, Terzis and Beleli argues that although often media run for profit, and even conflict sells better than cooperation, journalists should ensure balanced reporting with an approach to prevent the escalation of tensions (2002). However, this approach can only be developed through an understanding and application of quality journalism. Moreover, for the existence of such a quality in journalism is linked to some factors in the political context. As Reljic emphasizes, political context, economic conditions, quality journalism and public attitude are inter-related. Therefore, while analyzing the approach of media in conflict escalation, other elements also needs attention.

In sum, rhetorical patterns can exist in any suggestion that is linked to an ideological position. It is argued that media’s rhetorical patterns influence by shaping the cognitive frameworks; thus influence psychological changes of the adversaries as well as the other members of the community. Thus, it is prominently suggested in this study that using an

escalation-oriented or de-escalation-oriented rhetoric is important when the media interpret a conflict escalation process.

However, by content analysis five newspapers in Turkey are questioned by their rhetorical patterns but it is found that the attention paid by the newspapers to the conflict over the Armenian conference was considerably low. Although often the media use an escalation-oriented rhetoric and there is a strong link identified between the rhetoric and the ideological position, the low frequencies indicate that the influence of media is not as crucial as it was argued.

In conclusion, this study is an attempt to analyze the role of media in conflict escalation. Although, it is not found out that the media is highly influencing the course of conflict, it is still questionable for other studies because the generalizability of this study is weak because only one conflict issue is analyzed in two time periods. Also, the level of escalation in the Armenian conference conflict might not be intense enough to take the attention of media. This means, for further research higher levels of escalation in more than two periods can be analyzed to scrutinize the influence of media's rhetorical patterns over a course of conflict.

Lastly, the policy makers in Turkey should pay more attention to the role of media in conflict and should attempt to develop quality journalism, which requires more neutral interpretations of socio-political dynamics that can be achieved through improving the elements of the political environment, economic conditions and developing an appropriate public attitude. As a first step for such a future project, the role of analysis to understand the roots of the problems should constantly be on the agenda of policy makers.



## APPENDIX

### THE ORIGINAL CODING FRAME OF KEMPF, REIMANN AND LUOSTARINEN (1996) (Taken from *Conflict and Communication Online* www.regener-online.de)

#### Checklist for escalation- and de-escalation-oriented aspects of conflict coverage

Escalation-oriented aspects:		De-escalation-oriented aspects:	
<b>1. Conceptualization of the (conflict-) situation</b>			
E 1	Polarization (or respectively support of war) & confrontationist (or respectively military) logic	D 1	Query of polarization (or respectively warfare) & confrontationist (or respectively military) logic
E 1.1	Zero-sum or at least win-lose orientation (construction of conflict as a competitive process); conflict resolution is regarded as impossible; agreements are interpreted as "giving in"; compromise is devalORIZED	D 1.1	Win-win orientation (or at least questioning win-lose) and/ or presentation of structures for possible cooperation (construction of the conflict as a cooperative process)
E 1.2	Emphasis on military values	D 1.2	Cooperative values and/or questioning militarism and military values
E 1.3	Designation of (military) force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution and/or downgrading of doubt in its appropriateness	D 1.3	Emphasis on negative effects of (military) force and/or questioning its appropriateness
E 1.4	Refutation, questioning or downgrading peaceful alternatives; focus on violence reduces the prospect of peace and/or obstacles to peace are emphasized or portrayed as overwhelming	D 1.4	Perspectives on, demands for and/or agreement with peaceful alternatives
E 1.5	Emphasis on antagonism	D 1.5	Emphasis on openness to all sides or at least abandonment of dividing the protagonists into two camps
<b>2. Evaluation of the war parties' rights and intentions</b>			
E 2	Antagonism	D 2	Balance
E 2.1	Demonization of the opponent, denial of his rights and/or demonization of his intentions	D 2.1	Respecting of opponent's rights and/or unbiased description of his intentions
E 2.2	Idealization of one's own rights and intentions	D 2.2	Realistic and self-critical evaluation of one's own rights and intentions
E 2.3	Denial of common interests or emphasis on incompatibility of interests, culture etc.	D 2.3	Emphasis on common interests and/or description of the (concrete) benefits that both sides could gain from ending the war

3. Evaluation of the war parties' actions			
E 3	Confrontation	D 3	Cooperation
E 3.1	Justification of one's own side's actions and underlining of one's own rightness ----- demonstration of uniformity and /or downgrading differences within one's own party	D 3.1	Self-critical evaluation of one's own side's actions ----- focus on plurality of behavioral options within one's own party
E 3.2	Condemnation of the opponent's actions ----- disregarding plurality on "their" side	D 3.2	Less confrontative or unbiased evaluation of the opponent's actions ----- focus on plurality of "their" behavioral options
E 3.3	Antagonistic behavior is emphasized, possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the war are denied, cooperation between conflict parties is not taken serious and/or ----- the role of third parties is interpreted more as exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose) than as mediating (win-win)	D 3.3	(Supporting) description of cooperative behavior, of possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the war and/or ----- the role of third parties is interpreted as mediating (win-win) rather than exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose)

Escalation-oriented aspects:	De-escalation-oriented aspects:
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4. Emotional involvement in the conflict			
E 4	Destructive emotions	D 4	Constructive emotions
E 4.1	A focus on "their" viciousness and dangerousness & accentuation of "our" strength create a balance between threat and confidence which promotes willingness to engage in struggle (or war)	D 4.1	Unbiased assessment of "their" intentions & behavior and emphasis on the price of victory deconstruct threat and confidence and promote "our" willingness for peace
E 4.2	Mistrust of the opponent and/or neutral third parties who try to mediate in the conflict is encouraged (e.g. by depicting the party as untrustworthy, prone to violating treaties, etc.)	D 4.2	Respect for "their" rights and unbiased assessment of "their" behavior reduce mistrust
E 4.3	A focus on "their" atrocities and "our" justness transforms outrage at war into outrage at the enemy	D 4.3	Empathy with both sides victims, emphasis on both sides casualties and unbiased evaluation of both sides behavior redirects outrage at the war
E 4.4	Interpunctuation of the conflict, demonization of "their" intentions and/or justification of "our" behavior jeopardize empathy with "their" situation: if they behave well, they have nothing to fear	D 4.4	Empathy for "their" situation opens up a new perspective: if we can find a solution (together) that takes all sides' needs into account, reconciliation will become possible
E 4.5	Denial of possibilities for cooperation and/or blaming the opponent for the failure of cooperation jeopardizes rebuilding of trust	D 4.5	Emphasis on cooperative experiences (also in the past) rebuilds trust

**5. Social identification and personal entanglement (Distance / dehumanization vs. social identification)**

E 5	Confrontative social commitment	D 5	Cooperative social commitment
E 5.1	Humanizes "our" political or military leaders an/or dehumanizes "their" leaders	D 5.1	Refrains from identification with escalation-oriented political or military leaders on all sides
E 5.2	Humanizes "our" soldiers and/or dehumanizes "their" soldiers	D 5.2	Refrains from identification with military personnel on all sides
E 5.3	Humanizes "our" victims and/or ignores or dehumanizes "their" victims	D 5.3	Humanizes or at least respects victims of the war on all sides
E 5.4	Humanizes "our" civil population for its loyalty and sacrifice and/or ignores or dehumanizes "their" civil population for its nationalism etc	D 5.4	Humanizes or at least respects members of civil society and/or refrains from identification with supporters of the war on all sides
E 5.5	Humanizes "their" anti-war opposition and/or ignores or dehumanizes "our" anti-war opposition	D 5.5	Humanizes or at least respects those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution on all sides
E 5.6	Devalorizes positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace	D 5.6	Emphasizes positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace

**6. Motivational logic**

E 6	Motivation for war	D 6	Motivation for peace
E 6.1	War as a bulwark against destruction and/or peace as a risk	D 6.1	Peace as an alternative to destruction and/or war as a risk
E 6.2	War as a bridge to a brighter future and/or peace as a risk	D 6.2	Peace as a bridge to a brighter future and/or war as a risk

**Manipulative propaganda techniques**

<b>Harmonization of referential levels</b>	
1	Repetition of the same content on different referential levels
2	Circularity of the "proof"

<b>Double-bind communication</b>	
1	Inherent contradictions
2	Emotional involvement with both contradictory messages

<b>Two-sided messages</b>	
1	Anticipation of criticism
2	Rejection of the anticipated information

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