Journalism in War and Peace I

Joice Biazotto

Peace journalism where there is no war. Conflict-sensitive reporting on urban violence and public security in Brazil and its potential role in conflict transformation

Elie Friedman

Talking back in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Rational dialogue or emotional shouting match?

Markus Maurer & Wilhelm Kempf

Criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. A comparative analysis of the German press coverage of the 2nd Intifada and the Gaza War

Book reviews

Joice Biazoto
Friedensjournalismus, wo es keinen Krieg gibt. Konflikt sensible Berichterstattung über urbane Gewalt und öffentliche Sicherheit in Brasilien und ihre potenzielle Rolle für die Konflikttransformation


Zur Autorin:
Joice Biazoto ist eine brasilianische Journalistin, die ihre Laufbahn in den USA begann. Sie erwarb ihren M.A. in Journalismus an der Indiana University and ihren M.P.S. (Master in Peace and Security) am Institut für Frieden und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg. Ihr Interesseengebiet ist die Rolle, welcher der Journalismus und die Medien bei der Konstruktion gerechterer und friedlicher Gesellschaften spielen.

Adresse: Lessingstraße 6, 69115 Heidelberg, Deutschland.
Email: joicecris@gmail.com
Joice Biazoto
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The absence of war in a country like Brazil does not mean peace for its population. High murder rates, police killings, and violent urban conflict (in the favelas and beyond) are part of Brazilians’ daily lives. The national media helps construct the discourses of violence which contribute to maintain the status quo – but can the media play a positive role in the conflict and become a force for peace? In attempting to determine whether Peace Journalism is a useful tool for reporting about urban violence in Brazil, this qualitative case study analyzes a special series in Rio de Janeiro newspaper O Globo about a novel public security model in the city – the Pacifier Police Units (UPP) – by employing adapted De-Escalation-Oriented Conflict Coverage (DEOCC) criteria. The analysis reveals a combination of escalation and de-escalation elements in the series, and while this particular example does not prove to be conflict sensitive, the Peace Journalism framework itself shows great potential if implemented to improve coverage of urban violence in Brazil.

On the author:
Joice Biazoto is a Brazilian journalist who started her career in the United States. She has an M.A. in Journalism from Indiana University and an M.P.S. (Master in Peace and Security) from the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg. She is interested in the role that journalism and media play in constructing more just and peaceful societies.

Address: Lessingstraße 6, 69115 Heidelberg, Deutschland.
eMail: joicecris@gmail.com
Joice Albernaz

**Peace journalism where there is no war.**

**Conflict-sensitive reporting on urban violence and public security in Brazil and its potential role in conflict transformation**

**Abstract.** The absence of war in a country like Brazil does not mean peace for its population. High murder rates, police killings, and violent urban conflict (in the favelas and beyond) are part of Brazilians' daily lives. The national media helps construct the discourses of violence which contribute to maintain the status quo — but can the media play a positive role in the conflict and become a force for peace? In attempting to determine whether Peace Journalism is a useful tool for reporting about urban violence in Brazil, this qualitative case study analyzes a special series in Rio de Janeiro newspaper O Globo about a novel public security model in the city — the Pacifier Police Units (UPP) — by employing adapted De-Escalation-Oriented Conflict Coverage (DEOCC) criteria. The analysis reveals a combination of escalation and de-escalation elements in the series, and while this particular example does not prove to be conflict sensitive, the Peace Journalism framework itself shows great potential if implemented to improve coverage of urban violence in Brazil.

1. **Introduction**

By most definitions, Brazil is considered a country at peace. According to one of the most respected indicators in Europe, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research’s Conflict Barometer of 2009, there were 31 high-intensity violent conflicts in the world during that year, including 7 wars, but none of them were in Brazil. Yet, almost 50,000 people have died every year in Brazil for the past decade as a result of violence (Waiselisz, 2010). These numbers make the casualties in the Afghanistan war, for instance, pale in comparison. For the millions of Brazilians who are daily exposed to and confronted with such levels of violence, "peace" has a very different meaning than the simple absence of war. Peace in Brazil is a matter of public security, and the insecurity of daily life is one of the population's greatest concerns. Needless to say, reducing violence in the country, and attempting to address its underlying causes in order to prevent violent conflict, is one of the top priorities for both the government and civil society.

In light of this prioritization, the dialogue about violence and public security in Brazil has occupied a central stage in the public sphere. At the macro-level, this dialogue is mediated, shaped, and amplified by the media. As such, the media in general, and especially the news media in particular, has the power to influence public opinion and, thus, the potential to influence actions taken with regards to violence and public security in Brazil, be it legislation or political processes, private initiatives or individual reactions. It follows that the Brazilian media can exert its influence so as to be a part of the solution and a force for peace; on the other hand, its influence can have disastrous consequences and serve to perpetuate and aggravate the problem.

The news media in Brazil, just as in any other country with at least a relative amount of press freedom, is guided by certain...
journalistic standards. These standards, especially in the so-called "quality" press, are employed in the pursuit of "good journalism": accuracy, objectivity, neutrality, impartiality and detachment are some that are often named (cf. Howard, 2003; Kempf, 2007). But to what extent are these journalistic standards contributing to the reporting about violence in Brazil, so that it becomes part of the solution and not of the problem? Can journalists be guided by the ethical norms and values of their profession and still contribute to the alleviation of violent conflicts? In other words, if "bad journalism" can incite more violence, how can "good journalism" promote peace?

A number of scholars have devoted themselves to answering this question, and some of them have come up with what they believe is an answer: Peace Journalism. This approach attempts to maximize the media's potential to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution. However, these scholars have, up to date, only described and analyzed Peace Journalism as opposed to War Journalism, that is, they have proposed it as an alternative when reporting about high-intensity, political, ethnic and/or religious violent conflicts, which involve armies and military interventions. As already mentioned, however, the absence of war in Brazil does not guarantee peace for its people. Therefore, Peace Journalism could potentially be beneficial as an alternative to "mainstream" reporting about social conflicts, violence and public security in Brazil. It is my intent to explore that possibility.

1.1 Starting point: Problem diagnosis

This work attempts to address the role of the Brazilian media in perpetuating violent discourses which feed into societal insecurities and, in turn, intensify societal tensions and divisions which are themselves contributing factors to violence. This vicious cycle of fear and violence has been discussed at length by scholars (cf. Caldeira and Holston, 1999; Leite, 2000; Caldeira, 2000, 2002; Oliveira, 2003; Penglase, 2007); however, the debate as to the way in which this cycle can be broken is still open, and many possibilities are still unexplored.

As a result of the elevated levels of violence, many citizens and government officials have called for authoritative, and sometimes brutal, measures to combat crime in Brazil's large urban areas. This has led to the wide acceptance of systematic human rights violations, including a disproportionately high number of police killings (HRW, 2009; Ahnen, 2007; Caldeira, 2002). These demands for "eye for an eye" security policies are triggered in part by actual violence, but in part also because of the perception of violence created by violent discourses. However, such heavy-handed strategies have done little to tackle the root causes of violence in Brazil. Combating the high levels of violence in Brazil cannot be achieved single-handedly through force, but must invariably comprise cooperation and dialogue involving all layers of society.

The Brazilian media could play a vital role in stimulating this dialogue and providing a space for investigation, analysis and reflection on the causes of violence and possible solutions for the problem, as well as evaluating the current security policies pursued by the government and acting as a watchdog while denouncing human rights violations. However, media analysts have concluded that the Brazilian media has currently not fulfilled its potential when it comes to the coverage of public security matters (Ramos and Paiva, 2007), and may even work against conflict resolution by disseminating stereotypes, simplifying the complexity of the problem and helping to widen the gap in between different societal groups based on class and the spatial divisions of urban areas (Lissovsky and Vaz, 2009; Varjão, 2009).

No other place has been more associated with violence and societal divisions in Brazil than the city of Rio de Janeiro. The city has famously been stage to some of the bloodiest "battles" between (real or supposed) drug traffickers and the police, leading the press to constantly refer to the city as being in a "war" (Leite, 2000; Leu, 2004; Penglase, 2007). Rio is also a city of contrasts: while the wealthier populations live in expensive beachfront neighborhoods, hundreds of thousands of poor residents live in illegal squatter settlements up on the hills surrounding the city – the favelas, places which are generally associated with violence and criminality (Lissovsky and Vaz, 2009; Penglase, 2007; Machado da Silva, 2008). For this reason, Rio has been called "The Divided City".

However, a new model of public security has been implemented in Rio de Janeiro which, according to its proponents, attempts to approximate the police to the favela residents and aims to support social initiatives and promote the inclusion of the populations: these are the Pacifier Police Units (UPP), first inaugurated in December of 2008 and now present in 13 of the city's favelas. These units permanently occupy areas previously "controlled" by drug trafficking groups in order to "pacify" them. This new policing method has received extensive – overwhelmingly positive – coverage in the press, thus opening new possibilities for debate about security policy in the city.

But are news media channels truly taking advantage of this opportunity in order to produce critical, in-depth, analytical coverage of public security in Rio de Janeiro? Is the press merely echoing police reports, or is it digging deeper and looking for the bigger picture? Are journalists shaping the debate so that it addresses the roots of violence and conflict in the city? Are they weighing the UPP approach against other possible solutions to the security problem? In summary, are they pursuing journalism which is oriented towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict?

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Answering these questions is not a simple task, especially because of the immense diversity in journalistic standards and approaches, from medium to medium (newspapers, television, internet), from publication to publication, and even from one individual reporter to the next. This work will examine closely one example of how the UPP concept is being approached in the media – a special, award-winning series of articles in the newspaper O Globo – with the full awareness that this represents a fraction of the recent UPP coverage, and the results are in no way to be generalized. In doing so, it will attempt to shed some light on the issue through a relevant case as well as provide a starting point for broader analyses.

1.2 Theories and methods

This study is guided by the theoretical foundations and framework of Peace Journalism. Underlying it are Johan Galtung’s concepts of structural and cultural violence, in which violence is not seen as merely direct and physical, but also the result of societal and institutional mechanisms which prohibit a person from fulfilling his or her potential, such as racism, poverty, gender and religious discrimination (cf. Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005). While war reporting focuses mostly on individual, isolated events of physical violence, Galtung and the proponents of Peace Journalism argue that news reports should contextualize the violence and expose the structural and cultural roots of the conflict. It adopts a “win-win” orientation as opposed to the classic portrayal of conflict as a zero-sum, “win-lose” scenario. It avoids simplifying the conflict into two sides and polarizing them into an “us” versus “them” perspective, arguing that there are always many sides to conflict (Galtung, 1998). Thus, it attempts to give readers and viewers a more truthful account of the conflict by presenting a more complete and complex picture that de-stigmatizes the “enemy” and shows violence as only one way of responding to conflict among many others.

Just as Peace Journalism, this work also relies on theories of Psychology, Communication and Media Studies, especially in the basic (and well-established) assumption that the Media not only reflects reality, but also actively contributes to the shaping of reality (cf. Kempf, 2003). This constructivist approach provides the foundation as well as the underlying argument for the crucial role that media plays when reporting about conflict (cf. Howard, 2003). Two important theories derived from this approach are “Agenda-Setting” and “Framing”. Agenda-setting theory states that, although journalists don’t necessarily tell their audiences what to think, they certainly tell them what to think about (Cohen, 1963). In addition, Framing theory states that the way the media uses language and presents certain topics can alter the perception of audiences and subconsciously encourage certain interpretations of the facts (cf. Boaz, 2005); these selective procedures shape the societal discourse and thus have very practical social, cultural, economical and political implications.

To determine whether Peace Journalism is a useful tool for reporting about violence in Brazil, this work “zooms in” to a specific context, a specific medium and a specific situation which present all of the right conditions for this illustrative, qualitative case study. The city of Rio de Janeiro was chosen as the geographical location, both for its high levels of violence and criminality and its high-profile coverage of conflict in between the police and drug gangs in the favelas, as well as for being the place with some of the most controversial security policies in the country. The particular topic to be analyzed, the Pacifier Police Units (UPP), was selected because of receiving high visibility and intense coverage from the press in the past year, for being an innovative public security approach which is not without its controversies, and for marking an apparent shift in the framing of the conflict (which will be further explored in this study). The medium chosen was the newspaper O Globo, for being the quality newspaper with the highest circulation in Rio and the second highest circulation in the country, and having a web portal with free access to most articles, further increasing its reach. Finally, the special multimedia series produced by O Globo regarding the implementation of UPPs, named “Democracy in the Favelas”, was chosen because of its critical acclaim (it won the Regional category of the most important Journalism award in the country, the Esso Prize for Journalism, in 2009) and because it provides a consistent and self-contained unit for analysis. The series, “Democracy in the Favelas”, contains 24 articles and an online multimedia presentation with photos of the “pacified” favelas, maps showing their locations, music and videos. Although the multimedia aspects will be mentioned to provide context, the analysis will focus mainly on the text of the articles. The texts will be analyzed qualitatively employing the De-Escalation-Oriented Conflict Coverage (DEOCC) criteria developed by Kempf (2003) and updated in Kempf (2010). These criteria, which expand on the characteristics of Peace vs. War Journalism developed by Galtung, help determine ways in which the framing of a conflict in the news can contribute to a perception of escalation or de-escalation of the conflict. The criteria were adapted to fit the particular context of urban violence and conflict as opposed to the context of war and military force (see Tables 1.1-1.6) and new ones were added which are based on the precepts of Peace Journalism but take the specific problems of conflict reporting in Brazil into consideration (see Tables 2.1-2.4).

1. "Rio de Janeiro has been considered an exemplary case, almost an ideal type, of metropolis affected by the question of public (in)security. ... The city presents, in high doses, all of the ingredients... which make it ... a good case for thinking about these questions" (Machado da Silva, Leite and Fridman, 2005).

2. Brazil’s National Association of Newspapers reported O Globo had a daily circulation of 257,262 issues in 2009, only behind the tabloid Super Notícia (289,436), from Belo Horizonte, and the quality newspaper Folha de S. Paulo (295,558).

3. Brazil has the largest online population in Latin America, with 42.6 million internet users (Herscovitz, 2009).
This study will focus specifically in answering the following question:

- To what extent, if at all, is the coverage of the Pacifier Police Units in the series "Democracy in the Favelas" from newspaper O Globo conflict-sensitive? Is it escalation-oriented or de-escalation-oriented?

In answering that specific question, the author intends to arrive at a conclusion regarding the following broader, contextual questions:

- To what extent, if at all, is the Peace Journalism framework applicable to coverage about urban violence and conflict in Brazilian large urban areas?
- To what extent, if at all, can conflict-sensitive reporting play a role in transforming the conflict at hand?

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 will explore the public security issues in Brazil and in Rio which must be considered in order to understand the current societal conflict which leads to increased levels of violence in the city and country. Section 3 will present how the Brazilian media has reported on violence, criminality and public security so far, against the backdrop of which the articles to be analyzed should be contextualized. Section 4 will present the new UPP approach. Section 5 contains the analysis of the O Globo series "Democracy in the Favelas". In the conclusion, the results will be presented, as well as recommendations for further research.

2. **Public security in Brazil: Issues, perceptions, discourses**

Brazil is a democratic country, but has not been one for long. The first popular elections after 20 years of military dictatorship happened in 1985; the Brazilian Constitution was adopted in 1988. Yet it was also about that time that urban violence started increasing alarmingly and creating a generalized sense of insecurity in large Brazilian cities, and with it the call for a repressive State apparatus. Authors have called this the paradox of democratization in Brazil (cf. Holston, 2008). Brazil operates largely as a 'disjunctive democracy', in which democratic elections are successful and all are granted equal rights on paper, yet in practice only a few privileged citizens have access to civil and legal rights (Holston and Caldeira, 1999). This disjunction in the Brazilian democratization process is directly related to the social conflict from which the urban violence also originates.

The rise in violence in Brazilian cities is generally attributed to the appearance and establishment of the drug trade. Several gang factions, formed in the prisons in the 90s to demand better conditions for prisoners (Holston, 2008), took charge of drug trafficking operations, settled in the favelas, divided their territories, armed themselves heavily and fought against each other and the police to maintain control over drug sales locations. Despite the popular belief that drug traffickers replace the State in the favelas, both the gangs and the State (to a greater or lesser degree) exert influence in these areas; even those "controlled" by certain factions which impose their own rule of law count on sporadic and weak public presence through social projects and other state-sponsored organs (Machado da Silva, 2008). Although drug traffickers provide the residents with services they lack because of the absence of the state in order to gain acceptance and recruit new members, they also routinely use violence as a symbolic demonstration of power, threatening those who deny them assistance or who collaborate with the police and other drug factions, carrying out torture and executions and causing for widespread fear (Penglase, 2005).

Recently, a new dimension to the conflict has emerged. As a response to calls for "justice with one's hands", militias, or paramilitary groups, have been forming in the past decade, usually by former or off-duty police officers and sympathizers. These armed groups fight against the drug traffickers but also attempt to take control of the "occupied" territories under pretext of offering security to the population and keeping drug gangs away. They charge for their security services, as well as monopolize additional local services which would otherwise be offered by the traffickers, such as transportation and illegal cable (Machado da Silva, 2008). This is further evidence that urban violence is intrinsically connected to economic factors: in the same way that violence has become an integral part of the drug trade's business model, those who present themselves as countering that violence have adopted that same model, which depends on violence for its existence. In addition, the government and its agents are also involved in these violent economies through extortion and corruption – police officers are regularly caught transacting with drug dealers, taking fees for looking the other way and supplying them with weapons.

Although the victims of violence in Brazil and Rio are overwhelmingly poor, and homicide rates are highly influenced by race, gender and age, to say that poverty and social inequality are the only causes for the higher levels of violence would be to simplify a very complex problem (Zaluar, 2002, 2007; Oliveira, 2003), which also involves a desire by young males...

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1. The homicide rate for 22 to 24-year-old black males from the state of Rio in 2006 was 380 per 100,000 inhabitants, significantly above the average rate for the whole state (47,5 per 100,000) – Brazil's average homicide rate for that year was 26,6 per 100,000 (Ramos 2009).
who join drug trafficking gangs to have a sensation of power by owning a weapon and to be able to attract women (Ramos, 2009). Nevertheless, the fact that favela residents are stereotyped, ostracized and discriminated against cannot be disassociated from the causes of violence. Although only a small fraction of favela residents have direct connections to drug trafficking, there is a common assumption in Brazilian popular culture that favelas are dangerous places and its residents are all either potential or actual criminals (Penglase, 2007; Machado da Silva, 2008; OMCT, 2009). The criminalization of poverty has dire consequences in the shape of public security policies that target the favelas and the poor (cf. Caldeira and Houston, 1999; Espinheira, 2008; OMCT, 2009), as discussed in greater detail in the following section.

2.1 Police violence

According to a Human Rights Watch report, more than 11,000 people have been killed by the Rio and São Paulo state polices since 2003; in the state of Rio, a record 1,330 police killings, allegedly self-defense acts, took place in 2007 (HRW, 2009). A substantial portion of these so-called "resistance" killings have been found to be extrajudicial executions (HRW, 2009: 2). Authoritarian police practices in Brazil are not new, as they stem from the times of the dictatorship, when national defense was intertwined with the maintenance of internal order (Zaverucha, 2008). The constitution of 1988 preserved the previous divisions of the police into two sections: the civil police and the military police – the latter, as the name indicates, incorporating the structures and training techniques of the army. The constitution also preserved the law created under the dictatorship that military police crimes can only be judged by a military court, thus maintaining a system which assures impunity for extra-legal actions (Holston and Caldeira, 1999).

The early 90s brought violent police actions to the public spotlight. In Rio, in 1993, two police killing events which were highly publicized by the media took place: the Candelária1 and the Vigário Geral2 massacres. Although these episodes were responsible for intense civil society mobilization, including the creation of two of the most important of Rio's anti-violence NGOs – Afro-Reggae and Viva Rio – violent acts committed by police officers have endured, with the latest police massacre as recent as 2005.3 Violent force is not just a recourse used by "rogue" or off-duty police officers, however, but as an integral part of police strategies which mostly target the favelas for harboring drug traffickers. Prime examples of that are the so-called "mega-operations", which involve both civil and military police as well as the armed forces. A particularly high-profile mega-operation, which took place in the favela cluster "Complexo do Alemão" in 2007, involved a force of 1,350 officers/troops; 19 people were killed and 44 were injured, even though only 14 rifles and a small amount of drugs were seized, as well as a disproportionately low number of arrests were made (Soares e Souza and Pedrinhas, 2009). Another symbol of the militarization of police and the abuse of force in Rio is the "caveirão" ("big skull"),4 an armored tank the military police's Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE, also known as the "Elite Squad") uses since 2005 to enter the favelas and intimidate the population (Amnesty International, 2006), announcing through its speakers "we will roll over [you], we will get your soul!" (Machado da Silva, Leite and Fridman, 2005: 18). The "caveirão" has not only caused traumas and psychological problems among the favela residents and been responsible for the "accidental" deaths of several civilians, including an 11-year-old child, but has also provoked the escalation of violence through an arms race with drug traffickers, who started investing in heavier artillery items after its introduction (Amnesty International, 2006).

Breaking the pattern of police violence in Brazil has proved to be particularly difficult because, despite general disapproval of the police as a corrupt, inefficient institution, there is still wide public support for a police that kills. Caldeira argues that this paradox is justified not only by the history of disrespect for civil rights in the country, particularly when they apply to poor people, but by "a deep disbelief in the fairness of the justice system and its biased functioning" (Caldeira, 2002: 236). Surprisingly, the approval for violent policing practices comes even from those who most suffer from them. Although favela residents reportedly feel discriminated by the police, because they do not differentiate in between "good people" and the actual criminals, many are not against violent policing methods per se; their complaint is that these are directed at the wrong persons (Machado da Silva, 2008).

1. On July 23, 1993, off-duty cops opened fire against more than 50 street children and teenagers, who were asleep in front of the Candelária church in downtown Rio, in retribution for an earlier episode in which some of the children threw stones at a police vehicle. Eight children were killed and two were severely wounded.
2. On August 29, 1993, 21 residents of the Vigário Geral favela in Rio were murdered. Investigations showed the killers were around 50 off-duty police officers wearing masks. The killings were in retribution to the murder of four police officers by drug traffickers who operate in the favela (Ramos and Paiva, 2007). The officers shot randomly and none of the victims were drug traffickers (Arias and Rodrigues, 2006).
3. On March 31, 2005, 29 people from two small municipalities in Rio state were murdered by police officers in retaliation for the arrest of 8 colleagues, who had been accused of murder.
4. The name of the tank is an allusion to BOPE's emblem, a skull impaled by a dagger over two crossed golden guns.

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2.2 Fear and war narratives

Brazilians live in a society of fear (Espinheira, 2008). This fear is derived in part from the actual, real-life phenomenon of violence, which interrupts the routine and affects the everyday lives of Brazilians. However, this fear is fed and amplified by the so-called "talk of crime", discourse narratives about crime and violence which, in attempting to make sense of and counteract the problem, end up creating and establishing stereotypes which help reinforce the violence cycle (Cadeira and Holston, 1999; Caldeira, 2000).

The perception of a "state of war" in the streets of Rio and the failure and inefficiency of public safety measures to protect its citizens gave rise to a culture of fear in the 90s which redefined the relationship Rio residents have with its public spaces and fellow citizens. This started cementing the dichotomies "hill vs. asphalt"\(^1\) and "bandits vs. police" as two aspects of the same "war", in which the bandits come from the hills and the police defends the asphalt (Leite, 2000). When confronted with the killing of innocent bystanders in favelas, police officers allude to the need to defend themselves in "war". As Espinheira states, "by using the concept of 'civil war', the police officer shields himself in the justification that, in every war, there's a record of losses, and that everything hangs on killing to not get killed, which implies shooting first" (2008: 46).

The social construction of the "dangerous classes" (cf. Leite, 2000; Machado da Silva, 2008; Espinheira, 2008), that is, the created common-sense understanding that the poor favela-dwellers are potential criminals and should therefore be treated with suspicion, gave rise to a security discourse by the middle-class and elites which focused mostly on heavy-handed policies as the solution for urban violence. Along with it came the argument that such war-like conditions as those being experienced at the time did not allow for the consideration of human or civil rights when dealing with dangerous zones (Leite, 2000). It has become part of the national discourse to state that defending human rights is equivalent to granting "privileges for bandits" (Caldeira, 2000, 2002; Holston, 2008). This has reinforced the relativization of civil and human rights based on "merit": as rights are seen as scarce resources in Brazilian society, they should only be given to those who "deserve" it (Leite, 2000). More often than not, however, those who "deserve" these rights are the ones who can afford to buy them, that is, those with "power and resources to manipulate the legal system" (Holston, 2008: 14).


3.1 Media discourses of violence and criminality

Previously, we have observed how discourses of violence can have a tremendous impact on how violence is perceived, dealt with, and propagated. In this chapter, the central role of the news media as a driver of these discourses will be analyzed. Although the media does not create discourse in a vacuum and is a vehicle for a variety of discourses which exist on their own – the political, academic and civil society discourses, for instance – the news media is itself a creator of meaning which selects, consolidates and amplifies all of these different discourses into one large collective narrative. The press reflects common stereotypes which are intrinsic to the national discourse about crime and violence and have been elevated to the status of "common sense". Thus, there is a close exchange between the micro and macro dimensions of the violence discourses, in which individual experiences, behaviors, and prejudices feed into news production, and the news media, in turn, affects the way individuals perceive violence and form their preconceived notions on the issue.

As levels of violence have risen over the years, so has the media attention to crime and security increased. This correlation is not necessarily always proportional, however. In the 80s, when violence was mostly restricted to the favela territories, it did not feature prominently in the news. The coverage of violence only became more intense when it happened in "middle class" neighborhoods. This focus of the press not as much on the violence itself, but on the transgression of violence into "civilized" territories was observed in the 90s, as press reports on two key events - coordinated beachside muggings by favela teenagers in 1992 popularly known as the "arrastão", or "dragnet", and the Brazilian army's invasion of several of Rio's favelas in 1994, in what became known as "Operation Rio" - marked a key shift in the discourse about crime and violence in Rio, in which crime reports formed a neo-racist narrative of spatial stigmatization, using imageries of the dangers of "invasion" and "infection" which must be controlled (Penglase, 2007). The almost exclusive concern of the press with the repercussion of violence within Rio's "middle" neighborhoods consequently led to an increase in spectacularized violence in those areas. Indeed, drug traffickers, aware of its higher newsworthiness, orchestrated attacks in the "asphalt", using fear and insecurity as symbolic weapons in order to make themselves visible outside the favelas and gain media and public attention (Leu, 2004; Penglase, 2005).

The militarized approach to public security in Rio reflects the mood created by the press, which in turn accepts this military

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1. "Hill" is a nickname used to identify the favelas, which are usually but not exclusively located on the city's hills. "Asphalt" refers to the more "civilized" areas of the city where middle and upper classes live, asphalted streets being one of many public services they enjoy which are not always (but nowadays more often than not) present in the favelas.
logic almost without question. This is illustrated by the insistence of the press in referring to Rio in news reports as being in a state of "war", even nicknaming a dangerous part of the city "Gaza Strip", which has helped construct the image of Rio as a city torn by conflict (Pengelise, 2007). The alarmist, polarized language in post-9/11 international news of war and terrorism, good and evil was adopted by the Rio press for its local violence discourses. During the Iraq War in 2003, a different war dominated the pages of Rio newspapers: the war in the city's streets. Considering the attacks in question were, as discussed above, mostly symbolic, Leu argues that "what the newspapers have been calling the 'War in Rio', therefore, is more accurately a 'War on Rio', on the dominant representation, perception and occupation of the city by its ruling classes" (2004: 351).

Needless to say, not all violent acts by drug traffickers and criminals are purely symbolic in nature, and their cruelty has also been highlighted by the press – especially when the victim is someone journalists and their audiences can identify or empathize with. One case in particular gained special relevance through its proximity: the brutal murder of prominent television journalist Tim Lopes in 2002, as he investigated the sexual exploitation of minors at a drug-trafficker-sponsored "baike funk" (dance party with funk music) in a Rio favela. This and other cases which outraged society have given rise to the representation of drug dealers as monstrous and irrational (Leu, 2004). However, taking the common lack of differentiation in between drug traffickers, criminals, suspects, and merely poor favela residents – both by the police and the press – the dehumanization of the "other" becomes generalized, the categories diffuse, the "enemy" unclear. This has been evidenced by the labeling in the press of people as "bandidos" (bandits), even when no clear indication exists that the individuals in question committed a criminal act.

If the " anonymization" and dehumanization of the criminal is commonplace in the Brazilian press, the opposite process happens to the victims of crime and their loved ones. Stories are written so as to generate an emotional response from the reader as well as an association with the victim, making the reader a "virtual victim": "it could have happened to me!" (Lissovski and Vaz, 2009: 35). However, in order to produce that identification effect on the reader (who is predominantly from the middle to upper-class layers of society), there is an inversion in the profile of preferential vs. occasional victims in the news; whereas, statistically, poor favela residents are much more likely to be a victim of violent crime, news about violent crimes portray predominantly middle- to upper-class victims (Varjão, 2009). Therefore, as the news value of an event is determined by how much interest it generates among its readers, priority is given to the coverage of violence that affects the wealthier layers of the population, helping create the common belief that these groups, and not the poor, are the greatest victims of violence.

3.2 The current state of newspaper coverage of crime and violence

Ramos and Paiva (2007) claim that the coverage of violence in the Brazilian press has greatly evolved over the decades. Journalists have gradually refrained from employing sensationalist language and started adopting a more serious approach. In their study, the authors found that only 0.4% of the articles suggested limitations on the rights of criminals as a solution for the violence. 1 In addition, starting in the 90s, newspapers started giving more attention to public safety issues instead of simply covering violent incidents. However, there are still only a relatively small number of articles dealing mainly with security policy (3.6% in national and 4.2% in Rio newspapers). In addition, the majority of news stories in the sector, both nationally and in Rio (63.8% and 77.7% respectively), only present factual information, without offering either context or analysis. The percentage of articles dedicated to individual events (murder, thefts, accidents, etc.) was even higher: in both cases over 80%. These numbers show that there is still very little initiative from the press to pursue investigative and analytical stories instead of just reacting to day-to-day happenings (Ramos and Paiva, 2007).

Another challenge is the diversification of the news sources. The study shows police are still the main voices in crime and security coverage, being the main source of 32.5% of news articles in the national sample, analyzed in 2004; when articles with no sources were excluded (such as columns), the percentage increased to 43.2%. In addition, more than 50% of the articles with the police as its main source were single-sourced, that is, presented one person or institution as the only source of information. This dependence on police reports indicates that journalists often simply transmit information given by official sources without questioning their actions or the reasoning behind them. Journalists have attributed this problem to the difficulty in finding reliable sources of information, including their lack of trust in residents’ associations in the favelas, saying they are often spokespersons for drug traffickers (Ramos and Paiva, 2007).

While Brazilian journalists rely excessively on police officers as sources, the other side – those who are suspected or convicted of committing a crime – are ignored, or, as Ramos and Paiva state, "have gained the status of enemy troops" (2007: 57). While interviews with drug traffickers used to be more common in the past, today many journalists have adopted "not

1. Conducted for the Center for Security and Citizenship Studies, the study was divided in two parts: The first phase, in 2004, analyzed 2,514 texts in nine major national newspapers, while in the second phase, in 2006, 2,651 texts from the eight largest newspapers in Rio de Janeiro were analyzed. All of the information contained in this section is derived from this study.
giving voice to bandits" as a moral code. On the one hand, journalists are afraid of assigning a leadership position to drug dealers and, in doing so, increasing their power; on the other hand, they fear inciting more violence, as, depending on how revealing interviews are, they could provide crucial information to enemies from other factions and the police wanting re­venge or retribution.

Finally, a controversial issue in the current coverage of criminality is the blaming of suspects. Of the national sample, only 12.7% of all articles in the Ramos and Paiva study contained the word “suspect”. However, many of those involved in a crime are automatically labeled “traffickers” based on police accounts, even though this information cannot be verified.

4. Pacifier Police Units (UPP)

Despite being less than two years old, the UPP program is already being hailed as a great success. Having had great repercussion nationally and internationally, news reports have sung praises to Rio's new policing method, such as an article in the Economist which claims the city is experiencing a "renaissance" and a "magic moment" as a result of an "ambitious strategy... to restore law and order" (Economist, 2010).

The UPP method is described in its official news website as "a new model of Public Security and policing that intends to bring police and population closer together, as well as to strengthen social policies inside communities. By reestablishing control over areas that for decades were occupied by traffic and, recently, also by militias, the UPPs bring peace to communities" (UPP Repórter, 2010). Based on the precepts of communitarian policing, in which the population works together with public security institutions, posts have been created to establish a permanent police force in 9 of Rio's favelas, and new police officers have received special training to take part in the UPPs. Rio's government is investing US$ 8 million in the training of 60,000 officers until the end of 2016. The "occupation" of the favelas by the UPP is usually preceded by an operation conducted by BOPE units to clear the way and prepare the grounds; the focus, however, is not to combat the drug traffickers by apprehending drugs and weapons, but to force them to either leave the area or go undercover. Adopting a typical "Hearts and Minds" strategy, the goal is to win the trust and support of the population by providing them with services which would usually be provided by drug traffickers, hoping they will switch their allegiance from the illegal armed groups to the police.

The attempt to win the hearts of the population takes place not only in the favelas, but in the media as well. Rio's Security Department has developed a significant Public Relations campaign for UPPs. The UPP Repórter website publishes Portuguese- and English-language news on a regular basis, shows videos of celebrities, such as singer Alicia Keys, visiting the "pacified" favelas, and contains a counter which constantly states how many people have been "freed from the traffic's oppression". News articles, complete with photo slideshows, emphasize the good-natured attitude of the UPP officers: one article focuses on a female Captain, who leads the newest UPP, in the Morro da Formiga favela, with a "mother's tenderness", using the "tough love" way of disciplining her sons to lead her officers (Lopes, 2010b). The site also highlights new infrastructure and services either provided directly by the UPP or brought to the favelas by third parties after the "occupation": repairing and installing street lighting (Araújo, 2010), providing sports classes at a favela's UPP headquarters (Lopes, 2010a), and even a tree-planting event with the Reforestation Batallion (Marotti, 2010). Photos of police officers surround­ed by smiling children abound.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive response the UPP policies have elicited, the troubled history of police intervention in the favelas has caused a few observers and scholars to express apprehension. Firstly, since the authorities have issued alerts to the communities before establishing the UPPs in them, and so causing the traffickers to leave before the actual "occupation", many worry that the UPPs do not actually deal with the problem, but simply push criminals to anywhere of the hundreds of favelas which still do not have a police presence, giving the impression of an "out of sight, out of mind" solution (cf. Machado da Silva, 2010). Secondly, there are fears that the model is just another display of authoritarianism by Rio's police and that the reasoning behind such occupations is militaristic in nature (cf. Souza e Silva, 2010). In addition, the intense control and vigilance of the population restricts privacy and freedom (cf. Tristão, 2010).

However, even in face of those concerns, experts regard the UPP project as promising – with caveats. According to Machado da Silva, the UPPs could eliminate some of the fear in public discourses, improving social relations and reducing calls for repressive measures: "even if the UPPs serve merely to push violent crime away from socially visible areas and further away from the big media, that in itself may be a good thing; it may release some of the tension and thus allow for more sober discussions of the public order enforcement policies and by so doing include the perspective of the... underprivileged in the debate" (2010). Furthermore, he adds, if the UPP is successful in training more democratic police officers, it could change the culture of Rio's police forces to be more respectful of favela residents. The concern with excessive militarism and authoritarian practices remains, but some scholars argue the initial military interventionist strategy can be overcome through

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1. At the time of writing, the counter claimed 140,000 people had been "freed" from the oppression of drug trafficking.
partnerships with other state, civil society and private actors in the economic, social, environmental and cultural areas (Souza e Silva, 2010).

Nevertheless, all of the initial optimism regarding UPPs has already been marred by a few reality checks. In one favela where a UPP was implemented, Santa Marta, complaints about abuses by UPP officers have prompted the creation of a "Rights Handbook" by human rights organizations and local NGOs, in order to inform favela residents of what the police is allowed and not allowed to do. Reports of abuses range from sexual abuse of females during searches by male cops, disproportionate persecution of certain residents, and arbitrary prohibitions such as not allowing families to play funk music at private parties (Tristão, 2010). In addition, officers have also abused their power by arresting some residents under pretense of "disrespect to authority" (Machado da Silva, 2010). This points to the creation of a police state which severely limits democracy in the area; as Tristão states, "Peace without voice is not peace. It is fear" (2010).

Rio's largest newspaper, O Globo, has been one of the most enthusiastic followers of the UPP implementation; a search for the term on its website produces hundreds of results, showing the publication has reported almost daily on the topic. In addition, its special series on the five favelas where UPPs were first implemented is named "Democracy In the Favelas", which already evidences the newspaper's first assumption: that the installation of UPPs in the favelas brings democracy to them. The following analysis of the series will evaluate how much of the newspaper's optimism can be verified through its reporting.

5. **O Globo Series "Democracy in the Favelas": Themes and patterns**

The series "Democracia nas Favelas" was published by Rio newspaper O Globo in August 2009 both in print and electronic formats, whereas special emphasis was given to the latter medium: a home page was created for the series, which employs visual effects to create an interactive "favela complex", where the user can click on five different housing clusters, each representing a favela occupied by the UPPs: Tavares Bastos, Cidade de Deus, Santa Marta, Batam, and Bablilônia/Chapéu Mangueira. The introductory text tells readers they will be taken not merely on a touristic visit, but on a journey with details, photos, and historical facts. Their locations were pinpointed in maps of the city, along with information on their development index, area and population. Photos showed scenes of daily life along with panoramic shots of some of the favelas' privileged views of the city. Captions pointed to facts such as the use of some of the favelas, such as Cidade de Deus ("City of God") as film locations, which gave them notoriety.

While the title of the series displayed on the special home page is the general "Democracy in the Favelas", the page containing the written articles has a more specific title: "The Challenges of Democracy in the Favelas". The four journalists who worked on the series, Carla Rocha, Fábio Vasconcellos, Selma Schmidt and Vera Araújo, spent four months visiting the favelas for the articles. They report, in the introductory article of the series, that the UPPs sent away the traffickers' parallel power and made way for the state's retaking of their public spaces. But they also state that "the police occupation does not guarantee full democracy yet," as residents complain of abuses and interferences by the police, and point to the risk of establishing a police state. The series, they write, will follow the transformations brought by the UPPs and depict the "delicate and tense" relationship of residents with the "military-style" occupations. This suggests a balanced and critical treatment of the topic. However, by deconstructing the elements of the articles, both escalation and de-escalation patterns can be observed.

The first aspect to be analyzed is the conceptualization of the conflict situation, that is, whether the articles focus on polarization and the use of violent force as appropriate in conflict resolution, or question militaristic values and allow perspectives for peaceful alternatives (see Table 1.1). In this aspect, while reports showed awareness that the militaristic approach of UPP occupations created restrictions on residents' rights, there was an unquestioning acceptance that the military-style occupation was necessary to establish order: "the action, however, is considered, in this first instance, a fundamental step to guarantee control of the territory". On the one hand, the conflict was still portrayed mostly in a win-win orientation in between police and the residents; although some residents report abuses of power, others are quoted as manifesting themselves positively towards the police, and officers are described as talking to residents and playing with children. Violent force is not portrayed as an accepted solution to problems in those instances. On the other hand, the conflict has a definite win-lose orientation when considering the drug traffickers and other "criminals" as the opposing party. There is no mentioning of cooperative efforts to demobilize current "criminals" or reintegration of former traffickers into society. A few ac-

1. All citations and references in this section refer to the series, which can be found online at http://oglobo.globo.com/rio/favelas/default.asp. The series is published entirely in the Portuguese language. All translations of terms and direct quotations are provided exclusively by the author.

2. However, as the reader later finds out from the articles, the favela Tavares Bastos does not actually have an UPP. It was included in the special series because BOPE has occupied the area for nine years. At the time the series was published, those were the only favelas occupied by the UPP.
counts of police killings of traffickers go unexamined, as if it were the regular procedure. Moreover, cooperative efforts are sometimes downgraded: one article stated, “The camaraderie politics of the PM [military police] with residents was not enough to overcome difficulties”, saying shootouts and threats from criminals have persisted – implying such an approach was too soft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1 Polarization (or respectively support of “war”) &amp; confrontationist (or respectively violent/military) logic</td>
<td>D1 Query of polarization (or respectively &quot;warfare&quot;) &amp; confrontationist (or respectively violent/military) logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 1.1 Zero-sum or at least win-lose orientation (construction of conflict as competitive process); conflict resolution is regarded as impossible; agreements are interpreted as “giving in”, compromise is devalued</td>
<td>D 1.1 Win-win orientation (or at least questioning win-lose) and/or presentation of structures for possible cooperation (construction of conflict as cooperative process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 1.2 Emphasis on military values</td>
<td>D 1.2 Cooperative values and/or questioning militarism or military values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 1.3 Designation of military/police force as an appropriate means of conflict resolution and/or downgrading of doubt in its appropriateness</td>
<td>D 1.3 Emphasis on negative effects of (military/police) force and/or questioning its appropriateness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 1.4 Refutation, questioning or downgrading peaceful alternatives; focus on violence reduces prospect of peace and/or obstacles to peace are emphasized or portrayed as overwhelming</td>
<td>D 1.4 Perspectives on, demands for and/or agreement with peaceful alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 1.5 Emphasis on antagonism</td>
<td>D 1.5 Emphasis on openness to all sides or at least abandonment of dividing the protagonists into two camps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1: Conceptualization of the (conflict) situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E2 Antagonism</td>
<td>D2 Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 2.1 Demonization of the opponent, denial of his rights and/or demonization of his intentions</td>
<td>D 2.1 Respecting the opponent’s rights and/or unbiased description of his intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 2.2 Idealization of one’s own rights and intentions</td>
<td>D 2.2 Realistic and self-critical evaluation of one’s own rights and intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 2.3 Denial of common interests or emphasis on incompatibility of interests, culture, etc.</td>
<td>D 2.3 Emphasis on common interests and/or description of the (concrete) benefits that both sides could gain from ending the violent conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2: Evaluation of the conflict parties’ rights and intentions

A closer look at the second aspect, the evaluation of the conflict parties’ rights and intentions (see Table 1.2), shows both antagonism and balance being portrayed in the articles. While some recognition of the rights of favela residents is present in the reports, and violations of those rights by police are reported, those violations are depicted as a “necessary evil” in order to bring order to the occupied areas, even though officers only have the best of intentions. Instances of police officers disregarding the safety of the favela population are reported matter-of-factly and without questioning, such as a woman who had her face grazed by a bullet while sitting at a church service at Cidade de Deus, which was interrupted “by shots from PMs, who chased a minor”. This is reported in the same article that states that the police occupation increased the sensation of security in the favelas by guaranteeing “the right to privacy, freedom of movement and the end of tortures and homicides practiced by bandits”. There is a double standard in reporting rights violations: while the police is blamed only for minor violations, such as restricting freedom of expression by not allowing residents to play loud funk music – they must “learn to dance to [the police’s] tune” – drug traffickers are blamed for imposing “harsh” limitations, such as intimidating residents and causing fear of stray bullets by shooting towards the favela after being expelled. The shots and stray bullets from the police officers, on the other hand, are not portrayed as contributing to violence or rights violations; they are simply a side effect of the maintenance of order.

1. Tables 1.1-1.6: Escalation and De-escalation aspects of conflict coverage adapted from Kempf (2010)

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Table 1.3: Evaluation of the conflict parties’ actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>D3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E 3.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>D 3.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification of one’s own side’s actions and underlining of one’s own righteousness</td>
<td>Self-critical evaluation of one’s own side’s actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of uniformity and/or downgrading differences within one’s own party</td>
<td>Focus on plurality of behavioral options within one’s own party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E 3.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>D 3.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemnation of the opponent’s actions</td>
<td>Less confrontationist or unbiased evaluation of the opponent’s actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disregarding plurality on “their” side</td>
<td>Focus on plurality of “their” behavioral options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E 3.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>D 3.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonistic behavior is emphasized, possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the violent conflict are denied, cooperation between conflict parties is not taken seriously and/or</td>
<td>(Supporting) description of cooperative behavior, of possibilities for cooperation or common gain from ending the violent conflict and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of third parties is interpreted more as exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose) than as mediating (win-win)</td>
<td>The role of third parties is interpreted as mediating (win-win) rather than exerting (moral, economic or military) pressure (win-lose)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar pattern is observed regarding the third aspect, or the evaluation of the conflict parties’ actions (see Table 1.3). Even though emphasis is given to the cooperative actions of the police and favela residents, such as the partnership of the leaders of AMs (“associação de moradores”, or residents’ associations) with the UPPs in Chapéu Mangueira and Babilônia, the writers tend to justify the actions of the police and attempt to demonstrate their “rightness” even though they may seem like an abuse of power. For instance, in Batam, before the UPP was installed, police officers simply took over residents’ associations: the president of the AM is a BOPE officer (who, granted, has also been a resident in the community for more than 28 years), but reporters do not question the conflict of interest or how that could lead to a stifling of the opposition when said officer states that, despite being AM president, he is a police officer 24 hours a day, “inspecting good manners” while distributing food to residents. Moreover, there is an effort to idealize the transformation of the favelas after the UPPs and to play down any occurrences which do not fit the image of the “pacified” favela. In one story, the writers report, “the absence of the parallel power [of drug traffickers] has caused a turnaround in habits and relations inside the favelas. Children play in the streets until late at night. The joy and lack of worry about violence are evident”. One paragraph later, they state that even with a shootout happening days earlier in the Chapéu Mangueira favela, the children still have a great image of the police occupation. In an article about a different favela, Santa Marca, the sub-headline reads: “Fear of stray bullets over”, in a sweeping generalization which belies the danger still present in the areas, as demonstrated by several examples throughout the series.

When it comes to the emotional involvement in the conflict (see Table 1.4), the series is generally de-escalation-oriented, in the sense that the reporters mostly attempt to remain neutral with regard to both favela residents and police officers and refrain from judgment of character and behavior. Only rarely do the articles try to sensitize the readers by telling about atrocities committed by drug traffickers. However, such atrocities are never attributed to “normal” favela residents; in one exception, the authors describe residents participating in acts of violence: as a police officer’s father told drug traffickers they could not hide drugs at his home in the favela, gang members incited dozens of residents, “accomplices of the group’s criminal acts… holding pieces of wood and stones, besides a plastic bottle filled with a liquid which looked like gasoline, walking down Cidade de Deus’ narrow pedestrian street”.

Joice Bizoto
Peace journalism where there is no war
Table 1.4: Emotional involvement in the conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>D4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4.1 A focus on &quot;their&quot; viciousness and dangerousness and accentuation of &quot;our&quot; strength create a balance between threat and confidence which promotes willingness to engage in struggle</td>
<td>D4.1 Unbiased assessment of &quot;their&quot; intentions &amp; behavior and emphasis on the price of victory deconstruct threat and confidence and promote &quot;our&quot; willingness for peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4.2 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.)</td>
<td>D4.2 Respect for &quot;their&quot; rights and unbiased assessment of &quot;their&quot; behavior reduce mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4.3 A focus on &quot;their&quot; atrocities and &quot;our&quot; justness transforms outrage at violent conflict into outrage at the enemy</td>
<td>D4.3 Empathy with both sides' victims, emphasis on both sides' casualties and unbiased evaluation of both sides' behavior redirects outrage at the violent conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4.4 Demonization of &quot;their&quot; intentions and/or justification of &quot;our&quot; behavior jeopardize empathy with &quot;their&quot; situation: if they behave well, they have nothing to fear</td>
<td>D4.4 Empathy for &quot;their&quot; situation opens up a new perspective: if we find a solution together that takes (all) sides' needs into account, reconciliation will become possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4.5 Denial of possibilities for cooperation and/or blaming the opponent for the failure of cooperation jeopardizes rebuilding of trust</td>
<td>D4.5 Emphasis on cooperative experiences (also in the past) rebuilds trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.5: Social identification and personal entanglement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>D5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5.1 Humanizes &quot;our&quot; political or military/police leaders and/or dehumanizes &quot;their&quot; leaders</td>
<td>D5.1 Refrains from identification with escalation-oriented political or military/police leaders on all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5.2 Humanizes &quot;our&quot; fighters (cops/soldiers) and/or dehumanizes &quot;their&quot; fighters</td>
<td>D5.2 Refrains from identification with perpetrators of violence on all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5.3 Humanizes &quot;our&quot; victims and/or ignores or dehumanizes &quot;their&quot; victims</td>
<td>D5.3 Humanizes or at least respects victims of the conflict on all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5.4 Humanizes &quot;our&quot; population (&quot;asphalt&quot; residents) for its loyalty and sacrifice and/or ignores or dehumanizes &quot;their&quot; population (favela residents) for its connivance, etc.</td>
<td>D5.4 Humanizes or at least respects members of civil society and/or refrains from identification with supporters of use of violent force on all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5.5 Humanizes &quot;their&quot; anti-violence opposition and/or ignores or dehumanizes &quot;our&quot; anti-violence opposition</td>
<td>D5.5 Humanizes or at least respects those who strive for a peaceful conflict resolution on all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5.6 Devalues positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace</td>
<td>D5.6 Emphasizes positive (emotional) reactions to the prospect of peace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aspects of social identification and personal entanglement (see Table 1.5) in the conflict are relevant both for their presence and for their absence in the reporting. Both police and favela residents are generally humanized, albeit in a superficial manner. Short stories are told of people who had to abandon their homes, obeying orders from drug traffickers, and now were trying to come back; of police officers who try to help solve family disputes which were previously negotiated by the old "bosses", such as helping a separated couple divide their house in two parts. A small profile told the story of a chef who had started selling warm meals for workers working at the UPP headquarters' construction site in Babilônia, and now has opened a restaurant which has been quite successful, while the owner of a pub in the neighboring favela complains that the UPP scared her night clients away. There is no attempt to identify with those who use violent force; as usual, however, drug traffickers, militias, and supposed "bandits" or "criminals" are dehumanized: although they are referred to several times in every article, they are merely a disembodied presence. Despite being concrete in stories of residents who were victims of violence, only six are called by name – three of whom were mentioned as historical figures of traffic. The dozens of references to criminals and traffickers which are not attributed to any individual make it close to impossible to know who the "enemy" really is. Who are the people who present such a threat to these communities? Are they just the...
powerful drug lords, or do they include the children and teenagers employed as lookouts in exchange for toys and treats? Do they include drug addicts, or lower gang members forced by the “boss” to carry out administrative tasks under penalty of death? This dismissal of an unknown section of the population follows previous press trends which are clearly escalation-oriented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>D6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent force as a bulwark against destruction and/or peace as a risk</td>
<td>Peace as an alternative to destruction and/or violent force as a risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent force as a bridge to a brighter future and/or peace as a risk</td>
<td>Peace as a bridge to a brighter future and/or violent force as a risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.6: Motivational logic

When analyzing the motivational logic (see Table 1.6), the articles seem to neither present a motivation for violent force nor a clear motivation for peace. While the series tended to present a de-escalation-oriented perspective on this regard — since it set out to examine how favelas and its population could be brought to enjoy democracy and citizenship, which would include the monopoly of force by the state, one of the prerequisites for peace — the reports seemed to stay mostly at the surface of the issues; as one article itself states, the UPPs, by themselves, do not guarantee democracy; nor can peace be achieved solely through state control and the maintenance of the order. However, the series does not discuss any real, long-term solutions to the violence, taking for granted that, as long as traffickers and criminals are expelled from the area, the problem disappears. Even when questioning the efficiency of the UPP solution, the reports do so only because traffickers still manage to somehow appear again, but not because the strategy fails to address the root causes of the conflict. In addition, several articles focused on economic gains brought by the UPPs — the real estate market receiving a boost in the “pacified” favelas; businesses going back to legal hands, thus bringing profits to electricity and cable/satellite television providers; dentists and tourist guides (from the “asphalt”) finding new clientele in the favelas; the neighborhoods surrounding the favelas attract new industry to the region; and a growth of R$90 million to Rio’s economy just from new taxes collected from the UPP favelas. Thus, the motivational logic for the series seems to be less focused on whether the UPP is able to bring democracy to the favelas, thus contributing to a more peaceful society, and more focused on how the occupation of the favelas can bring material advantages and serve the interests of Rio’s society at large.

The analysis of the context-specific (de)-escalation-oriented aspects reveals, once again, a divided picture: while a certain sensitivity to the use of language seems to be present, the series does not manage to completely avoid certain “bad habits” of violence coverage which are common in the Brazilian press. The use of war as metaphor (see Table 2.1), for instance, is not prevalent throughout the series; however, the word “war” appeared 9 times throughout the articles in connection with urban violence, two of which were in headlines. Although “war” was used mostly in connection with historical or past events, it also had a present connotation in one instance: the authors write about the existence of a “cold war” between the UPP communities and the expelled traffickers who threaten them. In addition, one article mentions the Complexo do Alemão, which has not received a UPP yet, as being “located in Rio’s ‘Gaza Strip’.”

Table 2.1: War as metaphor

The analysis of the context-specific (de)-escalation-oriented aspects reveals, once again, a divided picture: while a certain sensitivity to the use of language seems to be present, the series does not manage to completely avoid certain “bad habits” of violence coverage which are common in the Brazilian press. The use of war as metaphor (see Table 2.1), for instance, is not prevalent throughout the series; however, the word “war” appeared 9 times throughout the articles in connection with urban violence, two of which were in headlines. Although “war” was used mostly in connection with historical or past events, it also had a present connotation in one instance: the authors write about the existence of a “cold war” between the UPP communities and the expelled traffickers who threaten them. In addition, one article mentions the Complexo do Alemão, which has not received a UPP yet, as being “located in Rio’s ‘Gaza Strip’.”

1. Tables 2.1 – 2.4: Additional escalation and de-escalation aspects of conflict coverage
2. One time the word was used, however, was in reference to the title of a documentary film shot in the Santa Marta favela, “Notícias de uma guerra particular” (“News from a private war”) (O Globo 2009e)
Avoiding the use of polarizing language, there was still the aspect of blame attribution (see Table 2.2). The writers show carelessness with language in this regard, especially when it comes to the word "bandido" (bandit). This is a very loaded word in Brazilian discourses of violence: unlike "criminal", which refers (hopefully) specifically to someone who has committed a crime, or "trafficker", which should only connect to those who work in the drug trade, "bandit" is open-ended and vague, and has a connotation of "bad person" or "evildoer". Troublingly, the word appears 34 times in total throughout the series, three of which in headlines. Only three appear in direct quotations from sources, meaning that, the great majority of times, the word was chosen by the authors. They also never place the word in between quotation marks so as to signal distancing from the term. By contrast, the terms "suspect" and "accused" were never used, and the term "alleged" ("suposto") appeared only once in the entire series, when identifying a drug trafficker as the "alleged leader of traffic in the favela". This causes the critical reader to run into the same problem described with regards to social identification: who is the bandit, and what must one do to deserve this title? Even though the authors attempt to differentiate between favela residents and perpetrators of violence, the lines are blurred when it comes to individuals identified by such generalizing, stigmatizing terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E8</td>
<td>Loaded and/or generalizing language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 8.2</td>
<td>Discriminatory portrayal of favela residents and/or indiscriminate attribution of violence to population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 8.3</td>
<td>Using of labels such as &quot;marginals&quot;, &quot;bandits&quot;, &quot;delinquents&quot; or &quot;criminals&quot; without proper clarification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Blame attribution

Significantly more problematic is still the aspect of blame attribution (see Table 2.2). The writers show carelessness with language in this regard, especially when it comes to the word "bandido" (bandit). This is a very loaded word in Brazilian discourses of violence: unlike "criminal", which refers (hopefully) specifically to someone who has committed a crime, or "trafficker", which should only connect to those who work in the drug trade, "bandit" is open-ended and vague, and has a connotation of "bad person" or "evildoer". Troublingly, the word appears 34 times in total throughout the series, three of which in headlines. Only three appear in direct quotations from sources, meaning that, the great majority of times, the word was chosen by the authors. They also never place the word in between quotation marks so as to signal distancing from the term. By contrast, the terms "suspect" and "accused" were never used, and the term "alleged" ("suposto") appeared only once in the entire series, when identifying a drug trafficker as the "alleged leader of traffic in the favela". This causes the critical reader to run into the same problem described with regards to social identification: who is the bandit, and what must one do to deserve this title? Even though the authors attempt to differentiate between favela residents and perpetrators of violence, the lines are blurred when it comes to individuals identified by such generalizing, stigmatizing terms.

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<tr>
<td>E9</td>
<td>Elite-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 9.1</td>
<td>One-sided portrayal of conflict; single-sourced and/or only institutional/famous/powerful sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 9.2</td>
<td>Disproportional emphasis on the victimization of elites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: Diversity and balance of perspectives

With regards to the diversity and balance of perspectives (see Table 2.3), the series seems, at first glance, to be more de-escalation-oriented, but a closer look shows a more nuanced picture. The choice of sources is varied and includes several favela residents assuming a variety of roles: victims of drug traffickers, victims of police abuse (the former much more numerous than the latter), witnesses, workers, small business owners, and relatives of "criminals". Therefore, the articles do include voices expressing a variety of perspectives from people affected by the conflict in different ways, including those coming from the usually marginalized members of the population. Despite the variety of voices, however, they were all generally either condemning the drug traffickers or distancing themselves from them. This fact may seem self-evident, considering the drug traffickers comprised only a small part of the population; however, it is deceiving, as a part of the picture is lacking. It is hard to imagine that communities which partially depended on drug traffickers for income and protection have been able to sever all ties to such individuals. The traffickers established relationships in their communities in order to operate their businesses and maintain a certain level of acceptance for their permanence there. That these relationships are simply assumed to be gone and that all residents are portrayed as relieved with the expulsion of alleged criminals – although that may be true for the majority of the population – simplifies a complex picture of networks which join residents formally and informally in varying degrees of intimacy, dependence, and acceptance.

As for the portrayal of victims, the articles did not focus on the victimization of the elites as opposed to that of favela residents. Since the stories were about the favelas and told mostly from within, the elites played only minor roles. However, there was still a clear elite-orientation when it came to reporting some of the physical and financial benefits with the installation of the UPPs. For instance, the marketing manager of a luxury hotel chain who bought a hotel that had been shut down in the area is quoted as optimistic, saying, "to him, the pacification increases the value of the region. So much so that, in a year, he will re-inaugurate the hotel". Another article states that, while the cost of implementing UPPs in all of Rio's favelas would be about a thousandth of Rio's GDP, experts estimate the increase of GDP due to state control of trafficker-dominated areas could be 20 to 30%; an economist is quoted as saying, "The existing real estate stock will increase in value. There will be Paulistas [São Paulo residents] wanting to live here, retired Americans exchanging Miami for Rio".
The focus on economic benefits to companies and the middle class appear in stark contrast to losses for the favela residents, usually buried in stories about the benefits brought by legal service providers. Even though some small business owners in the favela are profiting from the occupation, others in the informal economy have been harmed, such as "moto-taxi" services which were no longer allowed and a reduction in sales at some shops and restaurants. This conveys to the reader a decidedly elitist understanding of the conflict, in which security is portrayed as creating a "favorable business environment" and violence as bad for tourism: "When there are actions with many left dead in the favelas, they go around the world and tarnish our image. We have lost conventions because of that. Tourism will grow if violence is not the background of the city".

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<tr>
<th>Escalation-oriented aspects</th>
<th>De-escalation-oriented aspects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E10 Superficial and uncritical portrayal of conflict</td>
<td>D10 Thoughtful and critical portrayal of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E10.1 Ignoring causes and context of conflict with simplifications, generalizations, and shallow portrayal of involved parties</td>
<td>D10.1 Contextualization and embedding the conflict in its wider social, cultural and historical roots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E10.2 Repeating of clichés and &quot;common-sense&quot; phrases/expressions without explanation or justification</td>
<td>D10.2 Deconstructing and questioning well-known clichés and &quot;common sense&quot; knowledge about conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4: Reflectivity and critical thinking

Finally, the most crucial aspects to be analyzed in the series – those regarding reflectivity and critical thinking (see Table 2.4) – seem to be the most disappointing of all. Superficiality seems to be a characteristic of almost every article in the series. The causes of violence, the reasons why one would turn to criminal activities, and solutions for the drug trade problem were all but completely ignored. Context was hardly ever provided; generalizing statements without explanation dot the pages, and questioning of police violence in any form was completely absent from the series. The authors claim that "the presence of the parallel power led to constant shootouts" in a favela, but fail to mention that, more often than not, police officers also took part in the shootouts, thus being partially responsible for the violence there. Also missing from the articles was a discussion on drug policy and drug use, which should be central in addressing drug trafficking. One article celebrates that, with the UPPs, "in place of squares filled with crack addicts, today it is possible to see children using the space to participate in a soccer school". The assumption is that, because the crack addicts were kicked out of public spaces, they no longer represent a nuisance and are therefore no longer society's problem. Removing drug addicts from sight will not solve the problem of drug consumption, however, and as long as there is consumption, there will be trafficking.

What the stories lack in terms of context, however, they make up for in clichés and references to the favelas' exoticism. Several articles mentioned the fact that the favelas occupied by the UPPs and BOPE were used as locations for films, videos and soap operas. Two short articles about the history of the favelas Babilônia and Santa Marta highlight the following interesting facts: the former was stage to traffic wars as well as three films (Elite Squad, Babilônia 2000, and Black Orpheus) and the latter became famous for its traffic wars as well as the recording of a Michael Jackson video. The authors thus rely on the combination of violence and entertainment to make their stories interesting. The same pattern can be seen in an article about BOPE-occupied favela, Tavares Bastos: the text starts with a battle scene, with masked enemies shooting each other and running; one ends up executed. Later, the writer explains the scene is part of a paintball game which takes place at the favela – even though paintball is not legal, BOPE authorized it; the game is too expensive for "favela standards", but it "attracts people from the outside" – middle and upper-class youth, that is. Not once does the author question the fact that there is a police-approved, illegal game in a favela, which attracts wealthy "tourists" so they can pretend to be drug traffickers in a battle zone. This favela, she states, is scenic, like a movie set, where "shacks have porches with plants and... sidewalks with small Portuguese stones. Precious details which can be admired in television series, soap operas and movies like Hulk".

When it comes to the analysis and evaluation of the UPPs themselves, and their contextualization in a wider public security policy agenda for Rio, the series fails to provide any significant contribution. The deeper question, that of the "pacification", that is, whether they truly contribute to peace, does not come to the surface. The police terminology is adopted without question: throughout the articles, the words "pacification" and "pacified" were used eight times, without quotation marks, to refer to the presence of UPPs in the favelas. Even though that number is not high, and the word "occupation" was used a lot more often, the concept itself and the meaning behind the words were never analyzed. The authors failed to ask themselves very important questions: "To what extent do the residents see in the police a potential for pacification? To what extent do the police have, in fact, that potential? To what extent is that the way for the reduction of violence in the favelas? And, much beyond violence, to what extent is that the way to democracy?" (Tavares et al., 2010). The fact that the series treated the 9-year BOPE occupation of a favela in the same way as the new UPP occupations, making hardly any differentiation in between the two policing systems, reveals the superficiality of the reports.
6. Conclusion

Before addressing the specific question which this analysis set out to answer, that is, to what extent the UPP coverage in "Democracy in the Favelas" is conflict-sensitive, it is necessary to note that the DEOCC criteria employed to determine whether the reports are escalation-oriented or de-escalation-oriented are highly subjective, and thus open to interpretation. However, I believe therein also lies the strength of the model. Simply counting escalation vs. de-escalation "points" in a black-and-white manner would be less successful in accounting for nuanced and subtle uses of language and the difference in weight and importance in between separate aspects. With that considered, the series contained both escalation and de-escalation aspects throughout its articles. Elements from both sides were found in almost every single article, meaning that no article was entirely de-escalation or escalation oriented. While some aspects, such as emotional involvement in the conflict and diversity and balance of perspectives, displayed a tendency to de-escalation orientation, other aspects, such as the use of war as metaphor, blame attribution, and reflectivity and critical thinking showed a more pronounced escalation-orientation. Aspects such as the conceptualization of the conflict situation, evaluation of the conflict parties' rights and intentions, evaluation of the conflict parties' actions, social identification and personal entanglement, and motivational logic displayed both escalation and de-escalation orientation in a relatively balanced way. Thus, it is fair to say that, while the series does not contribute entirely to an escalated perception of the conflict, it also does not contribute significantly to break down pre-conceived antagonisms and polarized perceptions.

However, to assume that the presence of de-escalation-oriented aspects automatically makes the series conflict-sensitive would mean not seeing the forest for the trees. When looking at the bigger picture, the reports fail to address the root causes of conflict and to consider opportunities for a real, lasting, non-violent public security solution to urban violence. Thus, the series is unlikely to contribute to conflict transformation, as it helps maintain the status quo and does not lead to the questioning of social relations and the structural and cultural aspects of society which are responsible for violence.

Nevertheless, the analysis shows that it is possible to think in terms of conflict-sensitive reporting with regards to urban violence in Brazil. The Peace Journalism framework helped identify patterns which have contributed to perpetuate violent discourses in Brazilian society, allowed to question misrepresentations commonly regarded as common sense in the journalists' understanding of the urban conflict, and provides clear guidelines which Brazilian journalists could follow in order to conduct reporting which contributes to a demystification of violence and a destigmatization of conflict parties, thus increasing its potential to contribute to a constructive societal dialogue which can help transform and overcome the conflict. Further employing this framework, and further developing it and adapting it to the realities of press coverage and urban violence in Brazil, is thus encouraged both to theoretical scholars and professional journalists alike. As Kempf states, good conflict journalism goes beyond knowing how to employ the tools of the trade: "In order to produce good journalism, journalists need knowledge, competencies and qualifications that go beyond traditional journalistic training and enable them to counteract the escalation-prone misperceptions of reality" (2007: 5). Training Brazilian journalists in conflict-sensitive reporting would empower them to be more self-aware of the role they play in the conflict, thus allowing them to shape that influence (which they inevitably have, whether they want it or not) to be a positive one. This does not mean, however, that they would have to throw their previously learned journalistic values out the window; Peace Journalism does not stand in contrast to the so-called "quality journalism", but is complementary to it, taking the ethical guidelines of the profession one step further: "good journalism = responsible journalism = peace journalism" (Kempf, 2007: 3).

In the practical reality of Brazilian newsrooms, however, where journalists are mostly overworked and underpaid, this may not be necessarily an easy task. The fact that the reports analyzed are taken from a special series, and not from regular, every-day reports, also must be taken into account; normally, journalists have a lot more time and resources and less restrictions when working on this kind of "special" material. If the O Globo series is already so simplified, regular news would, as a rule, be even more factual and less contextualized. Thus, there are concrete structural hurdles which can make implementing peace journalistic strategies into the coverage of crime and violence a real challenge.

Given its value as a conflict transformation tool, however, there is no reason why journalists committed to a positive social impact should shy away from that challenge. The potential is already there, and has been steadily increasing with the democratization of media channels through the internet. "Since the essence of conflict transformation is the transformation of mentalities, both within the society and the individual, societies have to be involved from the top-down and the bottom-up. The media have the potential to be a gateway through which to reach the largest possible number of people" (Melone, Terzis and Beleli, 2002: 4). The introduction of the Peace Journalism framework into the Brazilian media landscape will inevitably have to happen from the bottom of the media "food chain", that is, with small, independent media channels dedicated to such goals. Examples of similar approaches already exist: the NGO Viva Rio, which advocates against violence and works for the improvement of public security in the city, has several projects in the communications area, including a web news portal for the coverage of public security, called Comunidade Segura ("Safe Community"). The portal, which is now four years old, produces content which aims to stimulate the public security debate, highlighting good practices in the field and tackling issues such as human security, arms control, youth violence, drug policy, and more. In an e-mail message
to the author, the news portal’s editor, Shelley de Botton, wrote that, since its creation, the site has already received 70,000 unique visitors, is visited on average 90,000 times monthly, and has 5,000 registered users. Such projects have the potential to open up the debate to new perspectives and approaches, and so evaluating the possibilities for the incorporation of peace journalistic standards in this context may be an enlightening endeavor for future studies.

Other mediums and communication models should also be explored for their conflict-sensitivity and potential for conflict transformation. Because the present study focused on a “mainstream” print/online publication whose audience is made up mostly of middle and upper-class Brazilians, its focus and scope is invariably limited mainly to those who fit those demographics. However, there are infinite new possibilities when analyzing television content, for instance, for its immense reach in every layer of Brazilian society. Here, it is important to note that a crucial factor in implementing conflict-sensitive reporting and breaking down communication barriers which promote conflict is not only that it should be intended for the marginalized classes as well, having all social groups in mind as their audience, but also that the marginalized should have an active involvement in the production of news and give input on the coverage as well. Another Viva Rio project, for instance, is a website called Viva Favela, which employs a number of favela residents as “community correspondents” and thus provides a true “insider look” into their realities. While such projects are still mostly “underground”, a closer analysis of their potential and how they can contribute to the societal dialogue would provide very valuable insight.

In sum, the possibilities for the media’s contribution to a more peaceful society in Brazil are endless; just as the media has proven itself an invaluable tool in the transformation of ethnic conflicts throughout the world (cf. Melone, Terzis and Beilin, 2002; Bratic and Schirch, 2007), exploring its use as an integral part of addressing urban violence in Brazil and elsewhere should be a top priority in both peace researchers’ and communication scholars’ agenda.

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Perspectives, © 2011 by OMCT.


OMCT. See World Organization Against Torture.


Soares and Souza, Taiguara L., and Roberta Pedrinha. (2009). Biopolítica e militarização da vida social: Uma análise da Operação Rio à mega-


On the author. Joice Biazoto is a Brazilian journalist who started her career in the United States. She has an M.A. in Journalism from Indiana University and an M.P.S. (Master in Peace and Security) from the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg. She is interested in the role that journalism and media play in constructing more just and peaceful societies.

Address: Lessingstraße 6, 69115 Heidelberg, Deutschland.

eMail: joicecris@gmail.com
Elie Friedman
„Talkback“-Diskurse im israelisch-palästinensischen Konflikt: Rationaler Dialog oder emotionales Geschrei?


Zum Autor:

Adresse: S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College, 1 University St., Netanya, 42365, Israel.
eMail: friedman@netanya.ac.il
Elie Friedman
Talking back in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Rational dialogue or emotional shouting match?

The Internet has facilitated a broad global conversation among citizens, enabling cross-cultural dialogue on a range of issues, in particular through Web 2.0 tools. This study analyzes the nature of the talkback discourse on news web sites within the framework of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The study's findings demonstrated that several talkback writers engage in rational-critical discussion of issues essential to the conflict, although they often use rational arguments to de-legitimize conflicting opinions. Talkback dialogue is characterized by engaged discussion, though the majority of respondents engage in dialogue with the article, rather than with other talkback writers. The findings showed that talkback discourse enables a lively, eclectic, and inclusive version of a public sphere, which facilitates the exchange of heterogeneous opinions, though favoring exhibitionism over engagement.

On the author:
Elie Friedman is a doctoral candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in the Department of Communication and Journalism. He completed his MA degree with high distinction in 2009, at Bar-Ilan University in the Political Studies Department. He is a research associate at the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College. His current interests include discourse analysis of the Middle East conflict and New Media.

Address: S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College, 1 University St., Netanya, 42365, Israel.
eMail: friedman@netanya.ac.il
Elie Friedman

Talking back in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Rational dialogue or emotional shouting match?1

Abstract: The Internet has facilitated a broad global conversation among citizens, enabling cross-cultural dialogue on a range of issues, in particular through Web 2.0 tools. This study analyzes the nature of the talkback discourse on news web sites within the framework of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The study's findings demonstrated that several talkback writers engage in rational-critical discussion of issues essential to the conflict, although they often use rational arguments to de-legitimize conflicting opinions. Talkback dialogue is characterized by engaged discussion, though the majority of respondents engage in dialogue with the article, rather than with other talkback writers. The findings showed that talkback discourse enables a lively, eclectic, and inclusive version of a public sphere, which facilitates the exchange of heterogeneous opinions, though favoring exhibitionism over engagement.

1. Introduction

The Internet, in particular the collaborative, participatory frameworks enabled by Web 2.0 tools, has decentralized content creation, and allowed anybody with access to the required technology to present his or her message to over a billion Internet users. Within the context of ethnic conflicts, the Internet, as a 'public sphere' for the democratic, critical-rational discussion, has potential for breaking down the barriers of misunderstanding that exist between conflicting nations. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict provides an excellent case study of this phenomenon. In a conflict that is so complex, and seemingly intractable, the question of how the Internet could enable a public sphere of critical-rational dialogue is all the more intriguing.

While dialogue among citizens exists within several Internet frameworks, I will examine reader responses or 'talkbacks' on Internet news sites, as this type of content creates a meeting ground for individuals of disparate opinions within a specific framework. The talkback framework enables a potentially heterogeneous group of users to engage in debate on issues that are of concern to an audience that reads mainstream news websites.

Contribution of research to the field

While a number of studies have been devoted to the Internet's role in enabling a public sphere, almost no literature exists on the role of talkbacks regarding this issue. The talkback framework represents a distinctive way in which various national groups within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which are likely prevented from discussing the conflict due to geographical and security restrictions, can engage in a discussion.

2. Literature review

The literature review will first study the role of rational dialogue in modern society, focusing on Habermas’ ‘public sphere’, and its disintegration in the 20th century. I will then discuss theoretical approaches towards the Internet as a possible medium for the revitalization of the public sphere. Last, I will review the limited amount of literature that has been written about the phenomenon of talkbacks on news web sites.

2.1 The public sphere, its denigration, and possible reinvigoration through the Internet

Habermas placed reason within interpersonal communication, within a ‘public sphere’ in which bourgeois Enlightenment

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1. This study is based, in part, on research conducted for the author's M.A. thesis, which was supervised by Dr. Yehudit Auerbach and Dr. Atara Frenkel-Faran. The author is indebted to his supervisors for their input during the study.
society engaged in rational debate on matters of political importance in coffeehouses and literary salons. He views the public sphere as a key component in the functioning of a democracy, arguing that 'the public sphere as a functional element in the political realm was given the normative status of an organ for the self-articulation of civil society with a state authority corresponding to its needs' (Habermas, 1989: 74). Habermas defined the public sphere as a domain of un-coerced conversation oriented towards pragmatic accord and consensus. While within the print-culture dominated enlightenment, newspapers played a central role in informing the public debate, the growth of a commercial mass media resulted in a situation in which media became a commodity, rather than a tool for public discourse, bringing about a deterioration of the public sphere (Habermas, 1989).

Curran continues Habermas' argument, claiming that the public sphere allows for public interests to interact with one another to establish an agreement about the direction of society. He explains that the media must generate a pluralistic and informed public dialogue. Curran advances Habermas' claim regarding the disintegration of the mass media's role, arguing that the media has established power relations with organized interests, thus, increasingly excluding the public from media discourse. He claims that the media have ceased acting as an agent of empowerment, thus 'sidelining' the public (Curran, 1991).

2.1.1 The Internet as a re-invigoration of the public sphere

Theorists have posited that the decline of the public sphere has been reversed by recent developments in Internet communications. These techno-utopists view the Internet as a type of 21st century coffee house, that enables rational debate on matters of importance.

In one of most revolutionary publications about the Internet – *The Cluetrain Manifesto* – Levine, Locke, Searls, and Weinberger argue that the Internet represents 'a powerful global conversation' (Levine, Locke, Searls, and Weinberger, 2001: 9). They claim that Internet markets are essentially discourse among individuals. Indeed, their concept of the basic notion of the Internet as *conversation* is an essential concept connected to the notion of the Internet as a public sphere (Levine, Locke, Searls, and Weinberger, 2001).

Dahlberg argues that the Internet enables a 'deliberative democracy', in which free, open, and rational debate among Internet users builds strong citizens by enabling them to act publicly. This 'deliberation' enables a movement towards understanding between disparate groups, resulting in consensus. Dahlberg believes that the participatory and deliberative nature of the Internet activates the type of public sphere that Habermas envisioned in Enlightenment era coffee houses and intellectual and literary salons (Dahlberg, 2001).

When reviewing this stream of literature, it is essential to understand the meaning of the most recent trends in Internet development – Web 2.0 tools. In essence, Web 2.0, while not defined by a specific technology revolution, is comprised of the development and evolution of web culture communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, tagging and social bookmarking sites, multimedia sharing sites, wikis, aggregation services such as RSS feeds, and blogs, enabling a more socially connected Web in which individuals can co-create and publish any type of content quickly and efficiently within recognized environments (Anderson, 2007; O'Reilly, 2005). Trends of Web 2.0 are reflected by the choice of Time Magazine to grant its person of the year award in 2006 to 'you' – for 'seizing the reins of the global media, for founding and framing the new digital democracy, for working for nothing and beating the pros at their own game' (Grossman, 2006). Time magazine celebrates the collaborative projects of Web 2.0, as follows:

„It’s a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before...It’s about the many wrestling power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes....This is an opportunity to build a new kind of international understanding, not politician to politician, great man to great man, but citizen to citizen, person to person. It’s a chance for people to look at a computer screen and really, genuinely wonder who’s out there looking back at them” (Grossman, 2006).

As described by Time magazine, platforms enabled by Web 2.0 placed the focus of power on the individual, rather than on traditional hegemonic conglomerates.

Furthermore, Anderson argues that Web 2.0 enables 'the crowd' with a new level of power, facilitating the rise of the amateur and challenging conventional thinking about status and hierarchy (Anderson, 2007). However, this praise of the role of the amateur in the creation of content within these environments (Anderson, 2007) serves as the very crux of certain theorists scathing criticism of Web 2.0 (see below).

At the level of individual political involvement, Best and Wade argue that the Internet can allow people to better determine their position on issues because of its extraordinary capacity to gather information. Furthermore, they argue that the Internet can teach people how to organize to collectively effect change around the world, while contributing to the rise of more multi-centric world structure in which nation-states have lost power to nongovernment actors, allowing people to define their identities more freely, choosing among collectives and social groups, in addition to their nation-state (Best and
Wade, 2009). On a similar note, Rohlinger and Brown conclude, from their study of MoveOn.org, that the Internet provides citizens an opportunity to lodge democratic challenges against the state during hostile political climates (Rohlinger and Brown, 2009).

The above literature presents an extensively hopeful vision of the potential prospects of the Internet in the fields of democratic participation, deliberation and dialogue, participatory culture, and increased understanding between various peoples and cultures. Perhaps their most significant claim is the thesis that Internet users are viewed as citizens of a participatory global culture. However, according to the analysis of several theorists discussed above, it would appear that Internet users are primarily interesting in engaging in rational discussion, confronting social and political problems, learning about diverse points of view, and engaging in joint development projects—a claim that is challenged by a number of critical theorists in the following section.

2.1.2 Criticism of Internet as a public sphere

The above literature presents a hopeful vision of the potential of the Internet in the fields of democratic participation, and increased understanding between various peoples. However, there can be no question that, as Habermas' public sphere is conceptualized as an ideal type, the Internet cannot be expected to recapture a lost golden age, which never actually existed. As Calhoun argues, the public sphere was not only a framework for making rational argumentation, but also based on a set of power relations that determined who was included or excluded in this discussion, and whose opinion would carry more weight. In addition, Calhoun extracts from Habermas the notion that a more inclusive public sphere ultimately results in a degeneration of its quality, a concept echoed by Internet theorists, below (Calhoun, 1992).

Furthermore, the vision presented by the techno-utopists presented above is contested by theorists who question whether Internet discussions with little moderation can result in a rational, inclusive dialogue. Streck claims that unmonitored message-results in chaos that 'is about as interactive as a shouting match' (Streck, 1998: 45). He argues that the major problem of cyberspace is that 'the right to speak is elevated above all others, while the responsibility of listening is ignored' (Streck, 1998: 45).

Keen engages in a scathing criticism of the results of Web 2.0 revolution. He claims, 'It is ignorance meets egoism meets bad taste meets mob rule...on steroids' (Keen, 2007: 1). Keen argues that Web 2.0 is the 'cult of the amateur' in which 'the monkeys are running the show' (Keen, 2007: 9). He claims that the 'democratization' of the Internet undermines truth, sours civic discourse, and belittles expertise, experience and talent. Thus, in contrast with other theorists, Keen believes that the Internet is 'outrightly corrupting our national civic conversation' (Keen, 2007: 27).

Bauerlein's watershed publication, The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future, takes Keen's criticism a step further, claiming, as his unambiguous title would suggest, that digital culture are not broadening the horizon of the younger generation, but are narrowing it to a self-absorbed social universe that hampers intellectual development and rightful citizenship. He engages in numerous studies that examine the knowledge, skills and intellectual habits of teenagers, which illustrate that youths use technology for self-obsessive purposes of exchanging personal, pictures, video, and songs, while they have closed themselves off from political or cultural knowledge that extends beyond their immediate social circle and interests (Bauerlein, 2008).

Gerhards and Schafer continue this critical perspective, as they examine the notion that the Internet has re-invigorated the public sphere. In their study, they found a lack of popular inclusion and heterogeneity of opinions, as search engines provide established, institutionalized actors with an obvious advantage (Gerhards and Schafer, 2010).

2.2 The nature of talkback discourse

The final sphere of the literature review includes literature dealing specifically with talkbacks, a highly underdeveloped topic. Kohn and Neiger conducted a ground-breaking study of the Israeli talkback discourse, using as a case study an article written by Haaretz journalist Ari Shavit during Gaza "disengagement". They found that talkbacks illustrated the journalistic preference of the dramas of confrontation over the mechanical nature of peace-making and reconciliation reflecting "a particularly violent and aggressive discourse" (Kohn and Neiger, 2006: 2).

Furthermore, Kohn and Neiger found that talkback writers engage with both the journalist and other respondents, primarily by attempting to undermine their rhetoric by constructing counter-rhetoric to their rhetoric. According to Kohn and Neiger, while the journalists use Aristotelian rhetoric of logos, pathos, and ethos, talkback writers try to "undermine the rhetoric of the journalists and build a counter-rhetoric (termed anti-logos, anti-pathos, and anti-ethos) in order to confront the claims suggested by a journalist or by a respondent" (Kohn and Neiger, 2006: 2).

Abdul-Mageed conducted a quantitative study of talkbacks on the Arabic Al-Jazeera web site, attempting to determine the extent to which the web site was interactive. Abdul-Mageed found that there was a regular use of talkbacks in response to
stories, but that they were distributed unevenly across articles. He found that articles focusing on violent conflict, foreign relations, and events related to the Arab world enjoyed a higher level of talkback response than other articles. This result contributes to the claim that talkback writers prefer to engage in emotional, violent content. In addition, Abdul-Mageed found that the position of the story on the web page contributed to the number of talkbacks received (Abdul-Mageed, 2008).

Gillmor argues that talkbacks may offer valuable insights, but that it is doubtful whether many of the posts are actually read by authors of the article. Thus, talkback discourse consists inevitably of posters talking among themselves, meaning that there is no actual interaction between the journalist and the posters. The article written by the journalist serves only as a catalyst for conversation among posters (Gillmor, 2009). However, it should be noted that the conversation initiated by talkbacks is not exclusively limited to other posters – even if the journalists themselves rarely read talkbacks, they are read by a broad audience and are considered to reflect, to a certain extent, public opinion. Thus, talkbacks can serve as raw material for the public relations needs of various interest parties in their attempts at agenda setting for the public discourse.

In general, the limited literature that exists on talkbacks illustrates trends of heated dialogue between various respondents and with the article itself, as well as a tendency for respondents to prefer reacting to content that involves conflict, and expressing themselves aggressively.

3. Methodology
This section presents the methodology used during the study, describing the study’s research question and method.

3.1 Research question
The research question and sub-questions are as follows:

Within the realm of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to what extent do talkbacks constitute a public sphere?

- To what extent do talkback writers use rationally-based arguments?
- To what extent do talkback writers engage in a dialogue with one another's talkbacks and with the article itself?

3.2 Research method
The primary research method used in this study is a combined quantitative/qualitative content analysis of talkback discourse from two web sites, described below. Content analysis is the preferred research method for two reasons. First, content analysis constitutes a study of data as it appears in its context, enabling an analysis of text as it is presented (Krippendorff, 1980). User-generated content comprises a defined context within which a discussion can be evaluated, meaning there is no need to know who the participants are to evaluate the discussion (Wilhelm, 2000). Thus, the "text" of the study is the content itself, eliminating the problem of not knowing the identity of generators of content in Internet studies. Second, in contrast to other research methods, in which the subject is apt to feel pressure to present acceptable responses, the creators of the messages are unaware that they are being analyzed, and thus the examined text is more authentic (Weber, 1990). By analyzing the content of talkbacks, the study has direct access to the content itself, without the need to make reference to a mediator who describes talkback content through a survey or questionnaire.

An emphasis on qualitative content analysis has been chosen, as it has the capability to provide a discourse comprised of "authentic voices" (Lincoln and Guba, 2003), producing "a bricolage – that is, a pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Thus, I have opted to attempt a discourse analysis that will attempt to arrive at "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of the content. The qualitative aspect of the content analysis will utilize a Critical Discourse Analysis inspired approach, by attempting to uncover, or disclose that which is implicit or not immediately obvious in texts used to enact the dominance of a particular ideology (Van Dijk, 1995). Within this context, the discourse analysis will focus on social problems and political issues, analyzing the link between discourse and the power relations of society (Van Dijk, 2001), as well as focusing on the discursive construction of national identity (Cilla, Reisigl, and Wodak, 1999).

The two web sites chosen are in English to enable the study of discussion across international borders. However, the decision of focusing exclusively on English language web sites creates a built-in limitation to the study: several Middle Eastern talkback writers who write on Arabic or Hebrew web sites are excluded from the study. Thus, in attempting to focus on international dialogue, it must be accepted that the Arabic or Hebrew speaking talkback writers studied will represent an educated, international, non-representational sample population.
I opted to choose specific web sites rather than to randomly sample the Internet, as generalizations about user-generated content on the Internet on the basis of random sampling are impossible, since there is no clear finite universe of materials that can be sampled (Keren, 2006).

I chose one Israeli news web site, the English edition of Haaretz, and one Arab news web site, the English edition of Al-Jazeera. I limited my study to two news web sites, as including a larger range of web sites would add additional variables to the study.

Sampling of articles and talkbacks

The analysis of talkback discourse focused on the following types of news items:

- A major peace event, such as a breakthrough in negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track.
- A setback in the negotiating process.
- An act of Palestinian use of force against Israelis.
- An act of Israeli use of force against Palestinians.

The articles chosen were not selected randomly, but were chosen specifically to reflect the topics mentioned above. Within the articles chosen, specific talkbacks were selected using an interval sampling method, in which every fifth talkback was chosen for analysis. Using this method, 300 talkbacks were chosen from the Haaretz English language web site and 300 talkbacks were chosen from the Al-Jazeera English language web site.

Only talkbacks that were actually published — that is, talkbacks that entered the public sphere — were analyzed. Numerous submitted talkbacks are not published, as they do not conform to the censorship policy of the web sites (see Appendix II). The methodology assumes that the results obtained only reflect trends of talkbacks that enter the public sphere — results cannot be assumed to reflect the general character of talkbacks submitted.

3.3 Content categories and discourse analysis

In attempting to ascertain the extent to which talkback discourse constitutes a public sphere, two aspects were studied:

- The rationality of talkbacks, determined by the uses of established rhetorical tools including deductive logic and inductive logic, making use of statistics, historical texts, concrete examples, and observable materials (Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik, 1979; Ross, 1994). Each talkback studied was allocated to one of the following nominal classifications within the categories of rationality of content and dialogue, for the purpose of quantitative analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rational/non-rational aspect of content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Message presented as an argument, using previously discussed rhetorical tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Message is primarily a non-rational claim, with no validating reasons for claim provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| a. It should be noted that arguments that used rational arguments to support non-rational claims were coded in this category. |

| Table 1: Quantitative Analysis - Rationality |

- The extent to which talkback discourse is characterized by dialogue — between the various talkback writers, and between talkback writers and the article to which the writers are reacting. The types of dialogue were categorized into various trends and analyzed. Within the context of this study, the term dialogue must be understood in the most basic sense of the word, and can be considered to be synonym for engagement. Dialogue does not delineate any specific type of discussion with a talkback writer or journalist, but indicates that the talkback writer has engaged with the content of the article or of another post. Each talkback studied was allocated to one of the following nominal classifications within the categories of rationality of content and dialogue, for the purpose of quantitative analysis:

1. For purposes of parallelism between the web sites, it would have been preferable to choose a Palestinian news web site rather than a Pan-Arab news web site. However, none of the Palestinian news web sites have a well-developed talkback feature.
Dialogue with original article and other respondents

1. Dialogue with both original article and other respondents.
2. Dialogue with other respondents.
3. Dialogue with original article.

Table 2: Quantitative Analysis - Dialogue

The intercoder reliability test was used to verify the reliability of my coding of variables in my quantitative content analysis. According to Tinsley and Weiss, intercoder agreement is needed in content analysis because it measures the extent to which the different judges tend to assign the same rating to each object (Tinsley and Weiss, 2000). See Appendix IV for an explanation of how the intercoder reliability test was conducted.

3.4 In-depth interviews of web site editors

In addition to content analysis, my study engaged in in-depth interviews with the editor of the Haaretz English language web site. This interview provided insight into the editor's opinion regarding the possibility of the talkback framework enabling a public sphere within the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (see Appendix I for the questionnaire). In addition, this interview facilitated a greater understanding of the principles used for moderating talkback content and the way in which censorship affects talkback discourse. While my intention was to interview the editors of both web sites studied, unfortunately, my request to interview the editor of the Al-Jazeera web site was rejected.

3.5 Time frame of the study

Talkbacks for this study were studied from the beginning of November, 2007, until the end of January, 2009. This period was chosen to begin with the onset of the ‘Annapolis Process’, as the Annapolis Conference took place on November 27, 2009, and end at the conclusion of Operation ‘Cast Lead’, the Israel-Gaza conflict, which ended on January 21, 2009, with the complete withdrawal of Israel's ground troops from Gaza.

4. Findings

This section presents the results of my study, which include a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of 600 talkbacks: 300 talkbacks taken from the Haaretz English language web site and 300 talkbacks taken from the Al-Jazeera English language web site.

4.1 Rationality of arguments

In determining the extent to which talkback discourse constitutes a public sphere, the question of the rationality of the arguments presented is essential. While the question of defining the essence of a rational argument is complex, for the purposes of this discussion, rational arguments are defined as those which support the validity of their positions by using rhetorical tools such as deductive logic and inductive argumentation, making use of statistics, historical texts, concrete and hypothetical examples, and observable materials. In this section, I first provide a quantitative analysis of the rationality of talkbacks and then a qualitative talkback analysis, which examines various uses of rational argumentation among talkback writers.

4.1.1 Rationality of arguments - Quantitative analysis

As was discussed in the methodology, a quantitative analysis of rationality of talkbacks was conducted, according to the following two nominal categories:

- Rational talkbacks (R): talkbacks that present reasons to support the validity of their positions.
- Non-Rational talkbacks (NR): talkbacks that do not present reasons to support the validity of their positions.
For 300 talkbacks from the Haaretz English language web site, the following results were found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Rationality on Haaretz

For 300 talkbacks from the Al-Jazeera English language web site, the following results were found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Rationality on Al-Jazeera

The combined results of the two web sites are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Combined Rationality Results

These results illustrate that for each web site, a small majority of talkbacks analyzed were categorized as rational. The non-significant difference between the two sites of 3% illustrates that both web sites analyzed show similar trends. The combined result of the two web sites, in which 52.8% of analyzed talkbacks were categorized as rational, attests to the potential for the talkback platform to constitute a public sphere.

4.1.2 Rationality of arguments – Qualitative analysis

From the 600 talkbacks analyzed, certain trends regarding the use of rationality became apparent. The following section will trace some of the major trends in talkback discourse with respect to the use of rational arguments, through the use of specific examples.

4.1.2.1 The use of syllogistic logic

Several talkback writers make use of simple syllogisms to impart a certain argument regarding Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, in response to the article, ‘PA rejects Olmert’s offer to withdraw from 93% of West Bank’, ‘Elias Khoury’, who claims to reside in ‘Jerusalem, Palestine’, makes the following argument in support of why the Palestinian leadership has rejected Israel’s offer on borders:

„Most Palestinians, if Israel offered a free, sovereign, and contiguous Palestinian state in Gaza, WB, and E. Jerusalem would have accepted with an agreed upon solution (compensation) for the refugee issue. The reality is that Israel continues to create ‘facts’ on the ground furnishing its true intentions of making a Palestinian state non-existent. This is why the movement grows for a 1 state solution” (Elias Khoury, 2008).

Elias Khoury’s argument can be summed up as follows:

- Most Palestinians would agree to a sovereign, contiguous state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with compensation provided for the Palestinian refugees.
- Israel is not making such an offer, but is instead destroying this possibility by expanding settlements.
- Therefore, many Palestinians have abandoned the two-state solution, and the movement for a one-state solution is growing.
In this example, the writer provides a logical syllogism in support of his claim, exploiting accepted and clearly understood rhetorical techniques in order to illustrate why the Palestinians do not take Israeli peace overtures seriously.

### 4.1.2.2 Arguments that use historical documents

There are certain rational arguments used in talkbacks that attempt to make use of historical documents to justify positions. For instance, in response to the article, 'PA rejects Olmert’s offer to withdraw from 93% of West Bank’, ‘R’Fael Moshe’ makes an attempted rational argument against Israel being required to return all the land conquered in 1967, basing his argument on United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. He quotes an author of the resolution, as follows:

> „From the actual author of the text, Prof. Eugene Rostow, former US Undersecretary of State, a key author of UN Resolution 242, international law authority, Yale University: ‘UN SC 242 calls on Israel to withdraw only from territories occupied in the course of the Six Day War - that is, from 'all' the territories or even from 'the' territories. Repeated attempts to amend this sentence by inserting the word 'the' failed in the Security Council... Ingeniously drafted resolutions calling for withdrawal from 'all' the territory were defeated in the Security Council and the General Assembly one after another. Speaker after speaker made it explicit that Israel was not to be forced back to the 'fragile and vulnerable' [1949/1967] Armistice Demarcation Lines’ “ (R’Fael Moshe’, 2008).

In this example, the writer makes use of the rhetorical device of quoting a historical document, exploiting the well-known use of the word 'territories' rather than 'the territories' or 'all the territories' used in UN Security Council Resolution 242. The writer uses this quotation to argue that the international community never expected Israel to return to the 1967 lines in exchange for peace agreements, but merely to return 'territories'.

### 4.1.2.3 Claims with no rational validation

While talkback writers utilize a spectrum of uses of rationality, there are certain types of emotional talkbacks that make no attempts to use reason, and constitute a type of shouting match. These posts often have a violent character, which are offensive to certain groups. For example, in a post written by 'Efox', entitled 'Blaming God when it is Arabs Who Will Chop Up Your Son', he makes the cryptic forecast, 'There will be no peace, not because of God, but because of Allah... No Peace, ever, for anyone. Fight or Die at their hands' ('Efox, 2007). In another example, 'Rozz' asks how Israel’s leaders can 'LITERALLY SELL OUT THE COUNTRY TO FILTHY MURDERING ARABS' ('Rozz', 2008).

There are similar types of posts on the other side of the conflict axis. A common discourse is the comparison of Israel to Nazis, as writers often ask rhetorical question of how Jews could act like Nazis, after having undergone the Holocaust. In response to the article 'Gazans: 'We are living a nightmare’'; 'Will' writes:

> „Does Israel represent the new Nazis? The Germans were good instructors and the Israelis seem to have learned well. It is strange that the Israeli government doesn’t see the reality of their inhumanity. Did they learn nothing from the holocaust?’ “ (Will, 2009).

Other trends of emotional types of posts include the personal insult of other talkback writers. Talkback writers often refer to one another as 'idiots', 'morons', and 'Fascists'. These types of emotionally-driven comments, while perhaps giving the writer a platform to release anger and frustration, do not contribute to a public sphere.

### 4.1.2.4 Summary of the use of rationality

In general, over 50% of the talkbacks analyzed from the two web sites make rationally-based claims, offering reasons to validate their claims. However, rational tools are often used for the sake of de-legitimizing opposing claims, rather than for the sake of proposing practical solutions. Furthermore, some talkback writers make emotional claims that bring down the discussion to a type of shouting match.

The editor of the Haaretz English web site, Sara Miller, confirmed my results, estimating that approximately 50% of the published talkbacks could be considered rational, and that the last year showed an increase in 'civilized debate and discussion.' However, she estimated that approximately 50% of talkbacks submitted were not published, as they did not conform to the web site's censorship standards. Since almost none of the censored talkbacks could be considered rational, of the total talkbacks submitted, approximately 25% could be considered to be rational (Miller, 2009). Thus, there is a significant difference between the rationality of talkbacks accepted into the public sphere, and the rationality of talkbacks submitted.

### 4.1.3 Dialogue in talkback discoures

In determining the extent to which talkback discourse constitutes a public sphere, the nature of the dialogue that occurs is essential. In this section, I first provide a quantitative analysis of the four general categories of dialogue, and then a qualitative talkback analysis, which examines certain dialogue trends within talkback discourse.
4.1.3.1 Nature of dialogue – Quantitative results

As explained in the Methodology, a quantitative analysis of the talkbacks was conducted in order to measure the dialogue component of talkback discourse. The four nominal categories are as follows:

- Dialogue with both original article and other respondents (symbol = DAR).
- Dialogue with other respondents (symbol = DR).
- Dialogue with original article (symbol = DA).
- Absence of dialogue (symbol = ND).

For the Haaretz English language site, the results obtained for these four categories for 300 talkbacks studied were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAR</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Dialogue on Haaretz

For the Al-Jazeera English language site, the results obtained for these four categories for 300 talkbacks studied were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAR</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Dialogue on Al-Jazeera

The combined results for these four categories are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAR</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Dialogue Combined Results

The quantitative analysis of both web sites illustrates that the majority of talkback writers engage in a dialogue with the main article itself. A smaller percentage of talkback writers engaged in dialogue with other respondents exclusively, or with other respondents and with the article itself. Among the talkbacks for the Haaretz English language web site, a larger percentage of writers engage in dialogue with other respondents and with other respondents and the main article, than do talkbacks on the Al-Jazeera English language web site. While there could be several factors that contribute to this phenomenon, this difference likely attests to a more developed and integrated talkback community at Haaretz’s web site than Al-Jazeera, as the Haaretz talkback feature has existed for a much longer time that Al-Jazeera’s and is used with greater frequency. Thus, talkback writers know one another to a greater extent, and respond more actively to one another’s posts.
In addition, a small percentage of writers did not engage in dialogue with the article or other respondents. These posts are both unrelated to the topic of the main article or to the ensuing talkback dialogue; they reflect talkback writers' desire to express a certain position, even if it is totally irrelevant.

4.1.3.2 Types of dialogue – Qualitative analysis

Of the 600 talkbacks analyzed, various types of dialogue, both with the main article, and among talkback users were apparent. The following section will trace some of these trends, through the use of specific examples.

4.1.3.3 Dialogue with the article

The type of engagement that talkback writers have with the main article can be divided into three general categories, described in the following sections:

- Response to the content of the article.
- Response to the coverage of the event, journalist, or media organization.
- Disregard of the article in the content of the post.

4.1.3.3.1 Response to the content of the article

Talkback writers generally respond directly to the item presented in the main article, particularly in news pieces. They frequently take a specific opinion of the events and portray the events as being typical of a certain trend or regular behavior of one side or the other. For example, in response to the article 'Israel PM casts doubt on 2008 deal', 'Sam' who claims to reside in the United States reacts directly to the article's content, complaining the American presidents seem to only seriously attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict just before they leave office ("Sam", 2008).

4.1.3.3.2 Response to the coverage of the event, journalist, or media organization

There are examples in which talkbacks extend beyond the mere events presented in the article, but respond to the coverage of the events, the journalist him or herself, or the media organization. Op-ed pieces and editorials often elicit a personal response to the writer. For example, in the article 'The IAF, bullies of the clear blue skies', Gideon Levy paints a particularly gruesome picture of the destruction caused by Israel Air Forces bombing during the operation in Gaza, portraying the pilots as little more than glorified murderers. Personal responses to the author include the following talkbacks:

"You are not a peacemaker, Gideon. You are a propagandist. If you don't like killing, use your column to call on both sides for a cease fire and stop your vicious propaganda" (Tzfonit', 2008).

"I feel ashamed of a guy like you to be Jewish, but more of a paper called Ha'aretz which publishes your trash....Because of people like you research has shown anti-Semitism finds an excuse to be considered 'salon fahig'. You did not bother even once to go to Jewish victims, probably because you are too scared to be lynched by your own people as they will show what they think of you" (Zebra', 2008).

These types of accusations, in essence, accuse the journalist both as serving as a traitor to his own people and as failing to advance the interests of peace.

Other talkback writers express personal appreciation to the journalists. For example, in response to the op-ed piece entitled, 'Lucky my parents aren't alive to see this', in which Amira Hass expresses thanks that her parents are not alive to see the ruin that Israel has caused in Gaza during the Gaza operation, 'D.S.', who claims to reside in East Jerusalem, writes:

"You - and Israelis like you - are a source of comfort that not all is lost and that peace might one day be possible. It's hard to hold on to that hope these days, especially when it seems abundantly clear that our lives are officially not worth anything in Israel" (D.S', 2009).

This talkback illustrates that Amira Hass' approach provides hope for this talkback writer, serving as a type of exception to general Israeli discourse.

A similar type of response involves, the talkback writer commenting on the media organization's perceived ideological approach. In a talkback written for the same article, 'Michael N. Landis' thanks Al-Jazeera, writing, "Thank you, Al Jazeera, for bringing us the story of what is happening in Gaza. As usual, the media here are not telling us about Israeli holocaust against the Palestinians of Gaza" (Michael N. Landis', 2009).

4.1.3.4 Dialogue between talkback writers

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the talkback phenomenon is not the content of each individual talkback, but the dialogue between talkback writers themselves. While many talkbacks studied reacted only to the article itself, there are several forms of dialogue and debate that take place among talkback writers.
4.1.3.4.1 The dialogue of developed personal relations

Several talkback writers engage in a dialogue of acquaintances, which clearly depicts a relationship which has developed over time. Writers attribute characteristics to one another, attesting to previous acquaintance via talkback discussions. For example, in reaction to the article entitled 'People who hate the very idea of peace', 'Margie in Tel Aviv' writes that there are several examples of such individuals (people who hate the very idea of peace) among talkback writers. She claims that 'Clickfool', 'Ballistic', and 'Durson' would hate to see any diplomatic progress, as this would disprove their thesis that Jews do not want peace ('Margie in Tel Aviv', 2007). 'Yonathan', who claims to reside in Kfar Saba, Israel, adds to this discourse the notion that there exists a symmetry of extremism on both sides of the conflict both in the realm of politics and equally in the realm of talkbacks. He writes:

"As for symmetry, yes it exists. BB has given several examples in his column. Zvi Hendel = Fawzi Barhoum, Mahmoud Zahar = Shaul Goldstein. The parallels are legion. And for every Clickfool, there is a Yishai Cohen. For every Natalie Durson, there is an Absolute Sweden. For every Indrajaya, there is a VOICE OF MOSHIACH (Yonathan', 2007)

These talkbacks exemplify a type of meta-discourse, in which writers describe the discussion enabled by other talkback writers, indicating long-standing acquaintance with these writers' views.

4.1.3.4.2 A debate of de-legitimization

In response to the article, 'People who hate the very idea of peace', a dialogue develops in which two participants, 'Omar' and 'Peter', engage in a point-counter-point argument. 'Omar', who states that he is from Ramallah, opens this thread with the following argument, in a post entitled 'The problem with peace':

"As I've argued in the past, this talk of 'peace', while important, has overshadowed the true requirement to end the conflict: freedom. We Palestinians desire freedom just like any other nation on earth (here come the 'you're not a nation' comments). Okay, just like any other human beings on earth. You cannot have peace between occupier and occupied, peace must be between two free peoples. Freedom is a basic human right, and is not something that is 'earned'. If one thinks that freedom is something a human being needs to 'earn', that someone is a racist. As for peace, the equation is very very simple: Do not demand of us that which you would not accept for yourselves. This goes both ways. In 2000, Shlomo Ben-Ami said that if he were Palestinian, he wouldn't have accepted Barak's offer (which he helped draw up) either" ('Omar', 2007a).

'Omar' makes two central arguments:

- While peace between Israelis and Palestinians is important, the true requirement to end the conflict is Palestinian freedom. Peace cannot exist between occupier and occupied, but only between two free peoples.
- The end-of-conflict agreement proposed at Camp David in 2000 was unacceptable to the Palestinians, as illustrated by Shlomo Ben-Ami's comment.

'Omar's rhetoric involves an anticipation of counter-claims. He anticipates claims that deny Palestinian nationhood (here come the 'you're not a nation' comments' – an argument which is, in fact purported by 'Peter' – see below), as well as the common claim that Palestinians have not 'earned' their freedom. Thus, 'Omar' illustrates an acute awareness of the types of the arguments made in talkback discourse, and even has the ability to accurately predict a counter-argument.

In the counter-post, entitled 'Omar on imaginary nationalism', 'Peter', who claims to reside in Montreal, Canada, makes a number of claims discounting the claims of Palestinian nationhood. He asks several rhetorical questions which ask for proof that Palestine is a nation-state, equating symbols of sovereignty (borders, money, a flag, etc.) with nationhood, as follows:

"Last I heard coming from a city isn't a nationality, so while you lay claim to being from Ramallah...so what? This means holding some imaginary nationality of Palestinian???? When did this nationality exist? Stating you aren't free in your own country is a neat party trick, but which country are you referring to? Surely you aren't talking about the imaginary country of Palestine. If you are then tell us where the borders are? Where is the capital? Some stamps, money, passports, a flag, a national anthem would be nice to see" ('Peter', 2007a).

In this post, 'Peter' does not actually confront the claims for the need for freedom made by Omar, but instead negates 'Omar's right to request freedom by denying his right to nationhood.

'Omar' replies to 'Peter's post, claiming that 'Peter's argument can be applied to any nation that has not yet achieved independence. He informs 'Peter' that as a Canadian foreigner, he 'has no right to inform me about my own identity'. 'Omar' then kindly requests that 'Peter' go hunt seals in the arctic or something and leave issues in the Middle East to those who know something about it' ('Omar', 2007b). This post illustrates a complete lack of respect for the argument made by Peter. In addition, this post shows how stated geographic location can influence the discourse. 'Omar' claims that as a Canadian, 'Peter' has no right to comment on Palestinian nationalism, and that as an ill-informed outsider, he best not get involved
in issues related to the Middle East conflict. 'Peter' closes his post by claiming, 'Typical response from you Omar,... ignoring the fact that you're unable to live up to your own revisionism' ('Peter', 2007b). This conclusion attests to the fact that 'Omar' and 'Peter' have a previous online relationship, which is likely characterized by the same style of back-and-forth point and counter-point argument of de-legitimization. The argument between 'Omar' and 'Peter' consist of each writer, not only reacting to one another's posts, but attempting to use one another's arguments as rhetorical tool against his combatant.

4.1.3.4.3 No dialogue with article or other talkback writers

Though it is rare, there are certain talkback writers whose posts do not directly relate to the topic presented in the article, nor do they relate to the posts of other talkback writers. These talkbacks seek to make a statement, often with little connection to the main article or to the ensuing talkback discourse. For example, in response to the article, 'Rice: Annapolis Mideast peace push was no failure', in which Secretary of State Rice suggests that the Annapolis Process must develop in 2009, a talkback writer who identifies himself as 'The Midwestern', and claims to reside in Ann Arbor Michigan, writes a list of features that a single state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan river must encompass; a democratic state for all of its citizens, one person – one vote, the return of refugees, and no religious or ethnic definition of the state ('The Midwestern', 2008). These types of talkbacks attest to an infrequent phenomenon of talkback writers using the talkback platform to stage their ideas, without any sense of the context or relevance of their comments to the general discussion.

4.1.3.5 Summary of types of dialogue

This section has provided an overview of the types of dialogue used by talkback writers, including both dialogue between talkback writers and the main articles, and among talkback writers themselves. The editor of the Haaretz English web site, Sara Miller, confirmed in an interview that talkback writers respond primarily to the content of the article, but also to the journalists themselves, as well as to Haaretz as an organization with a specific ideological perspective. She argued that certain op-ed writers elicit talkbacks aimed specifically towards the writers themselves, often addressing the journalist as if they have developed a long-standing relationship (Miller, 2009). Miller confirmed that talkback writers frequently respond to one another's posts, though often in the form of an attack. She argued that the dialogue between talkback writers could be considered to be a debate in which neither side shows flexibility or attempts to understand or accept the opposing point of view (Miller, 2009).

4.1.3.6 Summary of results

The range of uses of rationality as well as dialogue which tends to be characterized, at times, by de-legitimization of the other side and insults, attests to the fact that talkback discourse facilitates a complex and colorful discourse in which a highly egalitarian platform may compromise the quality of the deliberation. As the editor of the Haaretz English web site argued, the talkback platform has great potential to enable broader participation in public debate; however, this potential was often not properly utilized, as talkback discourse often took the form of a shouting match (Miller, 2009). With this in mind, a more realistic version of a lively, colorful, often personal public sphere does exist in talkback discourse within the framework of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as individuals representing a range of viewpoints and opinions engage in a fruitful exchange of views.

5. Discussion

This section will discuss the implications of the findings of this study by making reference to the various spheres of the literature review, as well as broader ramifications of this study.

5.1 The nature of talkback discourse

The results of my study offered a varied and mixed picture regarding talkback discourse within the framework of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While talkback writers frequently used rationally based arguments, rationality was often used as a tool of delegitimizing counter-claims. Furthermore, talkback writers often engaged in dialogue with the article, though they less frequently related to posts made by other talkback writers. In a sense, Kohn and Neiger's claim that talkbacks reflected 'a particularly violent and aggressive discourse' (Kohn and Neiger, 2006: 2), was proven to be correct, as even rational claims attempted to attack opposing points of view. This claim was supported by the editor of the Haaretz English edition web site, who noted that talkback discourse on the web site is 'uncompromising, rigid, and hostile.' She argued that the majority of talkbacks could be categorized as either staunchly pro-Israel or staunchly anti-Israel, with few talkbacks occupying a 'gray area' (Miller, 2009). In addition, as Kohn and Neiger claimed, talkback writers engaged with both journalist and other respondents, primarily by attempting to undermine their rhetoric by constructing counter-rhetoric to their rhetoric (Kohn and Neiger, 2006).
5.2 Talkbacks as a potential public sphere

These results of this study lead to the essential question – do talkbacks constitute a public sphere? This study indicates that the answer to this question cannot be unequivocal, but instead requires a layered and multi-faceted response, as described below.

5.2.1 Talkbacks as a decentralized and egalitarian framework

There can be no doubt that the development of talkbacks as an accepted means of expression on news web sites constitutes an important democratization of mainstream medium. The talkback feature enables traditional news web sites to compete with blogs, claiming that they too enable a democratic forum for user participation.

In essence, decentralization on the Internet results in very specific groupings according to topics, attitudes, or political ideologies, preventing users from facing diversity and opposing opinions. The talkback framework on news web sites facilitates a meeting point of heterogeneous opinions, thus avoiding this problem posed by more decentralized Internet frameworks. Heterogeneity is perhaps maintained to the greatest extent within frameworks that do not ardently subscribe to a specific ideology or stance, but, to a certain extent, serve as a platform for the expression of a range of opinions. Thus, while the range of opinions expressed in talkback discourse dictates that the discussion will often be confrontational and oppositional, at the very least, a heterogeneous range of opinions become acquainted with each other through this framework. In addition, as Calhoun argues, a more inclusive framework, such as talkbacks, may ultimately result in a lower quality of deliberation (Calhoun, 1992).

5.2.2 Talkbacks as a framework for critical-rational dialogue

Within the framework of talkback discourse, there is little evidence that rational debate advances to the stage of constructive discussion, in which writers are truly interested in finding pragmatic solutions that are acceptable to a consensus. Often the back-and-forth rational talkback debate results simply in each side further ‘digging into’ their stance. Thus, according to the results of my study, Dahlberg’s claim of the Internet enabling concrete consensual solutions to social and political problems through deliberative debate (Dahlberg, 2000) is overly optimistic. While deliberation within the talkback framework allows for exposure to opposing opinions, there is little evidence that this deliberation enables a practical movement towards consensus-building.

5.2.3 Censorship of talkbacks and the public sphere

Most, if not all, news web sites employ a form of censorship to filter the submitted talkbacks before posting. The censorship policy is often published by the web site (see Appendix II). There can be no question that censorship alters the nature of the talkback discourse as a public sphere, as it defines the limits of acceptable discourse. For example, as stated above, while approximately 50% of the talkbacks studied were categorized as rational, this does not take into account the talkbacks that were censored. In general, the nature of the public sphere is significantly affected by the web site’s censorship policy. However, when studying the platform as a public sphere, only the material published can be dealt with, as only this is accepted into the ‘town square’ and becomes a part of the public discourse.

5.3 Summary

In this study, I found that the use of rationality and engaged dialogue attests to the concept of the talkback framework serving as a version of a public sphere. However, the talkback framework obviously differs from the ideal type public sphere concept in several ways, as talkback discourse includes several non-rational elements that promote hatred, negation of the other, and monologue rather than dialogue. Furthermore, the accepted speech act within the realm of talkbacks, and within a range of participatory Internet frameworks, is significantly different from that perceived in Habermas’ concept of the public sphere. The combination of an open platform for expression, coupled with the lack of actual face-to-face contact and user’s abilities to create cyber-identities, creates a situation in which Internet users feel free to express their uncensored selves in a way that they would not feel comfortable doing in face-to-face meeting in a Habermasian coffee house or literary salon.

Indeed, the Internet has not resulted in resurgence of rationality within the public sphere. I would agree, to a certain extent with Keen (2007) and Bauerlein’s (2008) assessment of the low quality of content posted on the Web, as the Internet, and particularly Web 2.0 tools, by serving as an open, highly democratic platform for expression and communication, cannot be considered a platform that encourages rational discourse. In a sense, the Internet has traded rationality for inclusive

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1. While every mainstream news provider has its own ideological viewpoint, they, to a certain extent, attempt to engage in balanced reporting. This is not the case for more specialized Internet frameworks.
democracy. Furthermore, the use of Internet-based social networks for organizing social activity against corrupt governments (Best and Wade, 2009; Rohlinger and Brown, 2009), does not extend to the talkback framework, as talkbacks are essentially used as a platform for reactions and debate, rather than for organizing social action.

The notion of a rational-critical public sphere perhaps needs to be updated to the notion of an inclusive-eclectic public sphere. The concept of participants attempting to advance concrete solutions to issues often takes a ‘back seat’ to exhibitionism and rhetorical muscle-flexing, even if often couched in rational arguments and dialogue. Indeed, Internet discourse, and in particular frameworks enabled by Web 2.0, facilitates different, perhaps more honest types of personal relations among participants, fueled by anonymity and control of level of engagement with other participants.

Despite limitations of the talkback framework, which may be more related to the limitations of human nature when dealing with deeply-rooted identity conflict than a problem with the Internet platform itself, many of the stigmas related to the talkback framework were found to be inaccurate in this study. While the talkback forum is often thought of as one of the lowest forms of communication of the Internet, often characterized by insults, immature and uneducated positions, and emotional shouting matches, this study illustrated several examples of informed dialogue that utilizes a range of rhetorical tools. Perhaps the most appropriate metaphor in describing talkback discourse is that of a ‘tossed salad’ – a colorful, eclectic discussion that takes several forms, including critical-rational debate, extremist demagoguery, friendly teasing, exhibitionism, and emotional pleas.

References


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talkback references


Appendix I: In-depth interview questions with website editor

1. Why was the talkback feature added to the web site?
2. How would you characterize the nature of the discourse in talkbacks?
3. To what extent would you consider the arguments made in talkbacks to be rational?
4. To what extend do authors actually respond to one another's posts?
5. How do the authors relate to the main article?
6. Could the discussion among authors be called a debate?
7. How would you describe the heterogeneity of the opinions expressed?
8. To what extent do talkbacks on your web site contribute to a broader participation in the public debate regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
9. To what extent are talkbacks moderated? What is your censorship policy?
10. What is the purpose of the guidelines and term to posting talkbacks?
11. How does your censorship policy affect the heterogeneity of opinions expressed?

Appendix II: Guidelines for talkback publication

Only a certain percentage of talkbacks submitted are actually published on news web sites. Each news web site has a specific method for determining which talkbacks are to be published. The Haaretz English web site posts guidelines for publication in its talkback form. These guidelines are as follows:

The Talkback feature is intended to enable our readers to respond to articles, voice their opinions, and discuss them with other readers.

Political orientation will have absolutely no bearing on whether a comment is posted or rejected.

Comments containing the following will be automatically disqualified:

1. Personal attacks, vulgarities and profanities directed at other respondents.
2. Statements terming Israelis or Palestinians and their leaders Nazis, or accusing them of genocide or ethnic cleansing.
3. Statements which may be construed as urging attacks on Israeli or Palestinian leaders, officials, security forces or civilians.
4. Comments of an anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab or other racist nature.

There are no such guidelines published on Al-Jazeera's English web site. Instead, the phrase, 'Your feedback may be published online' appears on the talkback window. This indicates to the talkback writer that a decision will be made as to whether or not the talkback will be published; however, it offers no information as to the criteria for such a decision.

Appendix IV: Intercoder reliability test of quantitative results

The intercoder reliability test was used to verify the reliability of my coding of variables in my quantitative content analysis. To conduct the intercoder reliability test, ten percent of the talkbacks studied, selected randomly, were given to a graduate student, who was instructed to code the talkbacks according to the nominal categories in the quantitative content analysis. Following the coding, chi-square tests were run for each of the variables in each of the nominal categories. Each chi-square test illustrated non-significant differences between the coding that I performed and that performed by the external judge. Thus, the quantitative content analysis was shown to be reliable.

The following sections present my coding ('study') followed by the coding conducted by the external judge ('test') for each of the variables.

1. Rationality of talkbacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
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<td>54.3</td>
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<td>NR</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>45.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Rationality - Haaretz Study
Elie Friedman
Talking back in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>NR</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Table 10: Rationality - Haaretz Test

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Table 11: Rationality - Al-Jazeera Study

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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Table 12: Rationality - Al-Jazeera Test

2. The nature of dialogue

Dialogue with both original article and other respondents (symbol = DAR).
Dialogue with other respondents (symbol = DR).
Dialogue with original article (symbol = DA).
Absence of dialogue (symbol = ND).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>DR</td>
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<td>DA</td>
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Table 13: Dialogue - Haaretz Study

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<td>10.0</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.7</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table 14: Dialogue - Haaretz Test

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### Category Number of Talkbacks Expressed as a Percentage

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
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</table>

Table 15: Dialogue - Al-Jazeera Study

### Category Number of Talkbacks Expressed as a Percentage

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<th>Number of Talkbacks</th>
<th>Expressed as a Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>ND</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Dialogue - Al-Jazeera Test

*On the author:* Elie Friedman is a doctoral candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in the Department of Communication and Journalism. He completed his MA degree with high distinction in 2009, at Bar-Ilan University in the Political Studies Department. He is a research associate at the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College. His current interests include discourse analysis of the Middle East conflict and New Media.

*Address:* S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College, 1 University St., Netanya, 42365, Israel.

*eMail:* friedman@netanya.ac.il
Markus Maurer & Wilhelm Kempf


Die deutsche Medienberichterstattung über den Nahost-Konflikt wurde verschiedentlich dahingehend kritisiert, einen anti-israelische Bias zu haben, der die alten, gebräuchlichen Vorurteile und Stereotype gegenüber Juden stärke und die Anschuldigung unterstützen, die Juden würden die Tragik des Holocaust missbrauchen um die israelische Palästina-Politik zu rechtfertigen: Insbesondere während des Gaza-Krieges sei Israel als Aggressor dargestellt, der palästinensische Terrorismus dagegen heruntergespielt worden.


Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigen, dass die Darstellung beider Konflikte weit differenzierter war als von ihren Kritikern angenommen. Auch während des Gaza-Krieges hat die deutsche Qualitätspresse ihr Bestes getan, sich nicht auf die Seite der Palästinenser zu schlagen. Falls sie tatsächlich zur Stärkung anti-israelischer oder sogar antisemitischer Einstellungen beigetragen hat, so war dies eher der Erzeugung von Reaktanz geschuldet als einem anti-israelischen Bias der Berichterstattung.


Zu den Autoren:
Adresse: Geissbergstrasse 30, CH - 5408 Ennetbaden, Schweiz
eMail: markus_maurer@gmx.ch

Adresse: Fachbereich Psychologie, Universität Konstanz, D-78457 Konstanz.
Website: http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/SozWiss/fg-psy/ag-meth/
eMail: Wilhelm.Kempf@uni-konstanz.de
Criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. A comparative analysis of the German press coverage of the 2nd Intifada and the Gaza War

In recent years German media coverage of the Middle East conflict has been accused of an anti-Israeli bias that reinforces old, widely held prejudices and stereotypes about Jews and supports the common accusation that Israel misuses the tragedy of the Holocaust to justify anti-Palestinian policies. In particular, there is the accusation that during and after the Gaza War the media portrayed Israel as the aggressor while minimizing Palestinian terrorism.

There is still no systematic research on this topic, however. The present paper is intended to help correct this deficiency by presenting the results of a content analytical study comparing the coverage of the Gaza War and the Second Intifada by a group of highly regarded national German quality newspapers: Die Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau and Tageszeitung.

We analyzed a representative sample of 396 articles from these papers, covering the entire political spectrum from right to left, using the following dimensions: (1) portrayal of the conflict parties’ behavior, (2) evaluation of their aims and actions, and (3) punctuation of the conflict and portrayal of victims.

We found that the media coverage of both conflicts was much more complex and differentiated than assumed by critics. As well during the Gaza War the German quality press did its best to avoid shifting to the Palestinian side. If the German press stimulated anti-Israeli or even anti-Semitic attitudes, this was rather due to the production of reactance than to an anti-Israel bias in news coverage.

A prior English version of this paper, called „Coverage of the Second Intifada and the Gaza War in the German quality press“, was presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) in Istanbul, July 9-12, 2011, and can be downloaded from here.

On the authors:
Markus Maurer erwarb sein Diplom in Psychologie an der Universität Konstanz. Derzeit arbeitet er als Dozent und Seminarleiter im Bereich der gewaltfreien Kommunikation. Interessengebiete: Gewaltfreie Kommunikation, Konfliktbewältigung und -vermittlung
Address: Geissbergstrasse 30, 5408 Ennetbaden, Schweiz.
eMail: markus_maurer@gmx.ch


Fachbereich Psychologie, Universität Konstanz, 78457 Konstanz, Deutschland.
Website:http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/SozWiss/fg-psv/ag-meth/
eMail: Wilhelm.Kempf@uni-konstanz.de
Markus Maurer & Wilhelm Kempf


Abstract: In recent years German media coverage of the Middle East conflict has been accused of an anti-Israeli bias that reinforces old, widely held prejudices and stereotypes about Jews and supports the common accusation that Israel misuses the tragedy of the Holocaust to justify anti-Palestinian policies. In particular, there is the accusation that during and after the Gaza War the media portrayed Israel as the aggressor while minimizing Palestinian terrorism.

There is still no systematic research on this topic, however. The present paper is intended to help correct this deficiency by presenting the results of a content analytical study comparing the coverage of the Gaza War and the Second Intifada by a group of highly regarded national German quality newspapers: Die Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau and Tageszeitung.

We analyzed a representative sample of 396 articles from these papers, covering the entire political spectrum from right to left, using the following dimensions: (1) portrayal of the conflict parties' behavior, (2) evaluation of their aims and actions, and (3) punctuation of the conflict and portrayal of victims.

We found that the media coverage of both conflicts was much more complex and differentiated than assumed by critics. As well during the Gaza War the German quality press did its best to avoid shifting to the Palestinian side. If the German press stimulated anti-Israel or even anti-Semitic attitudes, this was rather due to the production of reactance than to an anti-Israel bias in news coverage.

Kurzfassung: Die deutsche Medienberichterstattung über den Nahost-Konflikt wurde verschiedentlich dahingehend kritisiert, einen anti-israelischen Bias zu haben, der die alten, gebräuchlichen Vorurteile und Stereotype gegenüber Juden stärke und die Anschuldigung unterstüze, die Juden würden die Tragik des Holocaust missbrauchen um die israelische Palästina-Politik zu rechtfertigen. Insbesondere während des Gaza-Krieges sei Israel als Aggressor dargestellt, der palästinensische Terrorismus dagegen heruntergespielt worden.


Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigen, dass die Darstellung beider Konflikte weit differenzierter war als von ihren Kritikern angenommen. Auch während des Gaza-Krieges hat die deutsche Qualitätspresse ihr Bestes getan, sich nicht auf die Seite der Palästinenser zu schlagen. Falls sie tatsächlich zur Stärkung anti-israelischer oder sogar antisemitischer Einstellungen beigetragen hat, so war dies eher der Erzeugung von Reaktanz geschuldet als einem anti-israelischen Bias der Berichterstattung.

1. Einleitung

Die Ablehnung und feindliche Einstellung gegenüber Juden hat eine weit reichende historische Verankerung in verschiedenen Gesellschaften und äußerte sich zu allen Zeiten seit der Abspaltung der frühen Christen im ersten Jahrhundert n. Chr. in sehr unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen bis sie in einen beispiellosen Vernichtungsantisemitismus zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus mündete (Bergmann, 2002). Obwohl manche antisemitische Einstellungen nach 1945 kontinuierlich abgenommen haben, zeigen vor allem aktuelle Untersuchungen, dass es Hinweise auf die Existenz latenter antisemitischer Einstellungen unter Deutschen gibt (Frintde, 2006).

Bezugnehmend auf das Konzept der Kommunikationslatenz nach Bergmann & Erb (1991a) erklären Heyder at al. (2005) die teilweise hohe Zustimmung zu antisemitischen Einstellungen mit der Verbreitung antisemitischer Stereotype im europäischen Mediendiskurs. Die Kritik an Israel biete einen Umweg, das Kommunikationstabu für antisemitische Einstellungen zu umgehen.


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- "Alle jüdischen Gaskammer einsperren und vergiften!!! Mein Idol ist Adolf HItLER" (zit. n. Der Standard vom 1.6.2010),
- "SCHADE DAS ADOLF HITLER DIE JUDEN NICHT ALLE UMGEBRACHT HAT" (zit. n. Spiegel Online vom 4.6.2010) oder
- "SCHEiß JUDEN SIEG HEILLLL." (zit. n. Spiegel Online vom 4.6.2010).

Und solche antisemitischen Hetzkommentare wurden nicht nur anonym ins Netz gestellt, sondern oft sogar von Usern mit Realnamen und Foto.

Aber sind es wirklich die Medien, die für diese besorgniserregende Entwicklung verantwortlich zu machen sind? Hat die deutsche Medienberichterstattung über den Nahost-Konflikt tatsächlich einen Israel-feindlichen Bias? Und, wenn dem so ist: Was sind die Entwicklungstendenzen dieses Bias? Hat er seit der 2. Intifada noch weiter zugenommen?

Die vorliegende Studie versucht eine Teillantwort auf die oben aufgeworfenen Fragen zu geben, indem sie anhand einer repräsentativen Stichprobe von Zeitungsartikeln aus der überregionalen deutschen Qualitätspresse eine vergleichende Inhaltsanalyse der Berichterstattung über die 2. Intifada und den Gaza-Krieg unternimmt.

2. Untersuchungsdesign

2.1 Inhaltsanalytische Variablen

Nach dem heutigen Stand der Medienwirkungsforschung leisten die Medien ihren Beitrag zur sozialen Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit zum einen darüber, dass sie bestimmte Themen in den öffentlichen Diskurs einbringen (Agenda Setting, Mc Combs & Shaw, 1972), und zum anderen darüber, wie sie über diese Themen sprechen (Framing), d.h. wie sie "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" (Entmann, 1993, 52).

1. Darstellung des Verhaltens der Konfliktparteien

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Israel</th>
<th>2. Palästina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Kooperatives Verhalten</td>
<td>2.1 Kooperatives Verhalten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Kooperationsangebote (Ankündigung kooperativer Schritte)</td>
<td>2.2 Kooperationsangebote (Ankündigung kooperativer Schritte)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3Politische Forderungen</td>
<td>2.3 Politische Forderungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Konkurrenzlogik</td>
<td>2.4 Konkurrenzlogik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Drohverhalten (Ankündigung konfrontativer Schritte)</td>
<td>2.5 Drohverhalten (Ankündigung konfrontativer Schritte)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Konfrontatives Verhalten</td>
<td>2.6 Konfrontatives Verhalten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Anwendung von Gewalt</td>
<td>2.7 Anwendung von Gewalt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Beurteilung der Intentionen und Handlungen der Konfliktparteien

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Israel</th>
<th>4. Palästina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Unterstützung durch 3. Partei</td>
<td>4.1 Unterstützung durch 3. Partei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Legitimierung der Intentionen (Unterstellung „guter Absichten“)</td>
<td>4.2 Legitimierung der Intentionen (Unterstellung „guter Absichten“)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Rechtfertigung des Verhaltens</td>
<td>4.3 Rechtfertigung des Verhaltens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Selbstkritik aus eigenen Reihen</td>
<td>4.4 Selbstkritik aus eigenen Reihen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Kritik des Verhaltens</td>
<td>4.5 Kritik des Verhaltens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Delegitimierung der Intentionen (Absprechen von Rechten)</td>
<td>4.6 Delegitimierung der Intentionen (Absprechen von Rechten)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Interpunktion des Konflikts und Darstellung seiner Opfer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Israel</th>
<th>6. Palästina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Verteidigungsposition</td>
<td>6.1 Verteidigungsposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Stärke und Siegeszuversicht</td>
<td>6.2 Stärke und Siegeszuversicht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Bedrohtsein und Misstrauen</td>
<td>6.3 Bedrohtsein und Misstrauen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Opfer</td>
<td>6.4 Opfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Aufrechnen von Opferzahlen

Tabelle 1: Inhaltsanalytische Variablen

2.2 Stichprobe

Gegenstand der Untersuchung war die Berichterstattung über 2. Intifada und Gaza-Krieg in den fünf überregionalen deutschen Qualitätszeitungen Die Welt (DW), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), Frankfurter Rundschau (FR) und Die Tageszeitung (taz). Die Wahl dieser fünf Zeitungen hat sich in einer Vielzahl inhaltsanalytischer Medienuntersuchungen bewährt, wobei davon ausgegangen werden kann, dass diese fünf Zeitungen das gesamte politische Spektrum abdecken (Wilke, 1999). Da nicht von allen diesen Zeitungen Sonntags- und Feiertagsausgaben erscheinen, wurde diese generell nicht berücksichtigt.1

Als Grundgesamtheit wurden für die 2. Intifada alle Zeitungsartikel im Zeitraum vom 28. September 2000 bis zum 08. Fe-

1. Da in keiner Datenbank alle ausgewählten Zeitungen zur Verfügung standen, wurden unterschiedliche Quellen verwendet: Auf die Zeitungsartikel der Zeitungen taz und DW wurde über die Datenbank Lexis Nexis zugreifen. Zugang zu den Zeitungsartikeln der FAZ ließ das via Internet erreichbare Frankfurter Allgemeine Archiv BiblioNet. Um Zugang zu den Zeitungsartikeln der SZ zu erhalten, wurde das online verfügbare Archiv der SZ LibraryNet genutzt. Auf die Zeitungsartikel der FR wurde über zwei Datenban-

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bruar 2005 definiert, die das Kriterium „Israel“ und Palästin* erfüllen. Um die Vergleichbarkeit der Suchergebnisse für die unterschiedlichen Datenbanken sicherzustellen, wurden keine weiteren Einschränkungen vorgenommen. Für die Stichprobenziehung wurde dieser Zeitraum in 18 Zeitabschnitte (Quartale) unterteilt. Die Gesamtzahl der identifizierten Zeitungsartikel pro Zeitung und Zeitabschnitt ist in Abbildung 1 dargestellt.

Abbildung 1: Gesamtzahl der identifizierten Zeitungsartikel zur 2. Intifada pro Zeitung und Zeitabschnitt.


Abbildung 2: Gesamtzahl der identifizierten Zeitungsartikel zum Gaza-Krieg pro Zeitung und Zeitabschnitt.


Die Stichprobenauswahl erfolgte nach dem Zufallsprinzip. Zielvorgabe war es, für jeden der beiden Kriege 40 Zeitungsartikel pro Zeitung auszuwählen (mindestens 2 pro Zeitabschnitt und Zeitung). Für den Gaza-Krieg konnte dies jedoch nicht in jedem Fall realisiert werden, weshalb schließlich 78 Zeitungsartikel aus DW, 79 Artikel aus der FAZ, 80 Texte aus der SZ, 80 Artikel aus der FR und 79 Texte aus der lbe in die Analyse eingingen, was eine Gesamtstichprobengröße von N = 396 Zeitungsartikeln ergibt.1

2.3 Datenanalyse


Bereits Krakauer (1952) hat jedoch darauf hingewiesen, dass die zählenden Verfahren der quantitativen Inhaltsanalyse die Interdependenzen der verschiedenen Teile eines Textes und die Beziehungen zwischen den Variablen vernachlässigen. Für die Richtung eines Textes relevant seien nicht die Häufigkeiten, mit denen die verschiedenen Textmerkmale auftreten, sondern die Muster, welche sie bilden. Berücksichtigt man darüber hinaus, dass die analysierten Texte aus verschiedenen Tageszeitungen stammen, die ein sehr breites politisches Spektrum repräsentieren, so kann nicht davon ausgegangen werden, dass alle diese Texte die gleiche Berichterstattungstendenz darstellen. Auch kann sich der Berichterstattungsstil einer Zeitung über die Zeit hin und wieder ändern, und es ist nicht abzuleiten, dass zwischen den jeweiligen Stilmerkmalen genau die selben Zusammenhänge bestehen, die in Schritt 1 und 2 dargestellt wurden. Folglich ist anzunehmen, dass die in Schritt 1 und 2 dargestellten Häufigkeitsverteilungen der Textmerkmale (= Variablen), eine Vermischung verschiedener (latenten) Berichterstattungsstile darstellen, in denen die Textmerkmale zu charakteristischen Mustern kombiniert sind (Kempf & Reimann, 1993).


2.4 Interpretationsfolie


1. Um die Vergleichbarkeit der Zeitungsartikel sicherzustellen und gleichzeitig die Stichprobe so wenig wie möglich einzuschränken, wurden aus den zur Verfügung stehenden Zeitungsartikeln jeweils zufällig Artikel ausgewählt, die zwischen 300 und 600 Wörtern umfassten. Nach der Auswahl wurden sie auf ihre Relevanz hin geprüft. Ein Artikel wurde dann als relevant erachtet, wenn er den jeweiligen Konflikt zumindest überwegend thematisierte bzw. zum Gegenstand hatte. Wurde ein Artikel als nicht relevant beurteilt, wurde er von der Stichprobe ausgeschlossen und es wurde nach dem beschriebenen Vorgehen ein anderer Artikel ausgewählt. Für den Fall, dass innerhalb des Intervalls von 300 bis 600 Wörtern nicht genügend relevante Artikel gefunden werden konnten, wurde die Wortspanne zunächst um 100 Worte nach oben und unten erweitert. Konnten auch auf diese Weise nicht genügend relevante Zeitungsartikel identifiziert werden, wurden die Wortspanne sukzessive um 100 Worte nach oben erweitert bis genügend relevante Zeitungsartikel identifiziert werden konnten.


3. Von latenten Stilen wird dabei deshalb gesprochen, weil diese nicht unmittelbar aus der Häufigkeitsverteilung der Stilmerkmale abzulesen sind.


Schließlich muss auch die befürchtete Stärkung antisemitischer Vorurteile durch die Medien nicht notwendigerweise einer Israel-feindlichen Berichterstattung geschuldet sein. Sie kann auch daraus resultieren, dass die berichteten Ereignisse und deren Interpretation Anschlussmöglichkeiten für latent vorhandene Vorurteile und Stereotype (z.B. die Annahme einer jüdischen Weltverschwörung) bieten und so dazu beitragen, dass die Vorurteile salient werden.

3. Ergebnisse

3.1 Vergleich der Berichterstattung über die beiden Konfliktparteien

Betrachtet man die Gesamtverteilung der analysierten Textmerkmale über beide Konflikte hinweg (vgl. Abb. 3, Tab. 2), so zeigt sich, dass über die Israelis insgesamt mehr berichtet wird, als über die Palästinenser (Chi-Quadrat = 176.81, df = 1, p < 0.0001). Dem Nachrichtenfaktor „soziale, kulturelle, historische Nähe“ geschuldet, spricht dies zunächst nur für eine größere Nähe der deutschen Qualitätspresse zu Israel. Ob die Berichterstattung eher Israel-freundlich oder Israel-feindlich ist, kann daraus jedoch nicht geschlossen werden.

Abbildung 3: Vergleich der Berichterstattung über die beiden Konfliktparteien

Lediglich über israelische Opfer wird seltener berichtet als über palästinensische Opfer. Auch dies ist aber (noch) kein Hinweis auf eine Israel-feindliche Verzerrung der Berichterstattung, sondern entspricht zunächst einmal nur den tatsächlichen Opferzahlen.
Insgesamt ist die Berichterstattung von negativen Nachrichten dominiert. Im Zentrum der Berichterstattung stehen die Anwendung von Gewalt, die Opfer der Gewaltanwendung sowie konfrontatives Verhalten und Drohverhalten der Konfliktparteien. Dem Nachrichtenfaktor „Negativismus“ geschuldet, lässt dies sowohl die Palästinenser als auch Israel in einem schlechten Lichte erscheinen, wird aber durch die häufige Rechtfertigung israelischen Verhaltens und die häufige Darstellung kooperativer Schritte Israels konterkariert, wodurch Israel unter dem Strich besser abschneidet als die Palästinenser.


Signifikant häufiger thematisiert wird die Verteidigungsposition der Israelis, die Bedrohung Israels und/oder Misstrauen gegen die Palästinenser, die Rechtfertigung israelischer Handlungen, „Gute Absichten“ der Israelis und/oder die Anerkennung ihrer Rechte, Kooperatives Verhalten der Israelis und ihre Kooperationsbereitschaft, worin ein gewisses Maß an Verständnis für die Handlungsweise Israels spricht.

Signifikant häufiger thematisiert wird aber auch Kritik an israelischen Handlungen. Die deutsche Qualitätspresse steht der Politik Israels somit durchaus kritisch gegenüber.

Ebenfalls signifikant häufiger thematisiert werden Konkurrenzlogik auf Seiten Israels, konfrontatives Verhalten der Israelis und dessen Androhung, was die die israelische Politik als kompromisslos erscheinen lässt, sowie Israels Stärke und Siegeszuversicht, was Israel als übermächtig erscheinen lässt, und möglicherweise einen David-Goliath-Effekt bedingen kann.
3.2 Vergleich der Berichterstattung über die beiden Kriege

Unterschiede in der Berichterstattung über die beiden Kriege (vgl. Tab. 3), sind einerseits dem unterschiedlichen Charakter der beiden Konflikte geschuldet, lassen aber zugleich auch die Tendenz erkennen, eine für Israel ungünstige Berichtslage zu entschärfen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Palästina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koopeatives Verhalten</td>
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<td>9.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kooperationsangebote</td>
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<td>6.378</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politische Forderungen</td>
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<td>1.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konkurrenzlogik</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drohverhalten</td>
<td>6.777</td>
<td>7.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konfrontatives Verhalten</td>
<td>18.428</td>
<td>18.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<table>
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<td>2.210</td>
<td>1.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.157</td>
<td>21.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selbstkritik aus eigenen Reihen</td>
<td>7.231</td>
<td>0.560</td>
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<td>Kritik des Verhaltens</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegitimierung der Intentionen</td>
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<td>1.726</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpunktion des Konflikts und Darstellung seiner Opfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verteidigungsposition</td>
<td>8.100</td>
<td>9.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stärke und Siegeszuversicht</td>
<td>35.051</td>
<td>17.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedrohtsein und Misstrauen</td>
<td>3.762</td>
<td>3.857</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opfer</td>
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<td>1.679</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aufrechnung von Opferzahlen</td>
<td>4.336</td>
<td>1.037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabelle 3: Signifikanz der Unterschiede in der Berichterstattung über die beiden Kriege

Darstellung des Verhaltens der Konfliktparteien


Dem unterschiedlichen Charakter der beiden Konflikte geschuldet, vermittelt dies den Eindruck einer zunehmenden Asymmetrie zwischen israelischer Gewalt und politischer Konfrontation der Palästinenser.
Beurteilung der Intentionen und Handlungen der Konfliktparteien


Die darin zum Ausdruck kommende Asymmetrie zwischen vermehrter Darstellung israelischer Gewalt einerseits und (relativ zum Verhalten der Palästinenser) verstärkter Rechtfertigung israelischen Verhaltens andererseits spricht für eine Israel- freundliche Berichterstattung, die jedoch die Gefahr in sich trägt, Reaktanz zu erzeugen, bereits bestehende Israel-kritische Einstellungen zu verstärken und deren Generalisierung auf „die Israelis“ schlechthin zu begünstigen. Letzteres umso mehr, als Israel während des Gaza-Krieges zunehmend als monolithischer Block erscheint (vgl. Abnahme der Selbstkritik).

Interpunktion des Konflikts und Darstellung seiner Opfer

Ähnliches zeigt sich auch bezüglich der Interpunktion des Konflikts und der Darstellung seiner Opfer (vgl. Abb. 6). Während sich die Berichterstattung über Bedrohtsein, Opfer und Opferzahlen während des Gaza-Krieges zugunsten der Palästinenser...
verschiebt, wird dies dadurch konterkariert, dass Israel (relativ zu den Palästinensern) vermehrt in einer Verteidigungsposition dargestellt und die Übermacht Israels (relativ) seltener thematisiert wird.

- Während die Darstellung der Bedrohung Israels unverändert bleibt, wird die Bedrohung der Palästinenser während des Gaza-Krieges deutlich häufiger thematisiert als während der 2. Intifada. Wurde Israel während der 2. Intifada fast fünfmal so häufig als bedroht dargestellt als die Palästinenser (I : P = 5,4 : 1) so reduziert sich dieses Verhältnis auf nur noch das zweifache (I : P = 2,1 : 1).
- Stärke und Siegeszuversicht wurden während des Gaza-Krieges zwar auf beiden Seiten häufiger thematisiert als während der 2. Intifada. Das Verhältnis zwischen ihnen verschob sich jedoch in einer Richtung, die Israel als weniger übermächtig erscheinen lässt. Wurde Israel während der 2. Intifada fast zweieinhalb mal so häufig dargestellt als jene der Palästinenser (I : P = 2,4 : 1), so geschah dies während des Gaza-Krieges nur zweimal so häufig (I : P = 2 : 1).

Abbildung 6: Interpunktion des Konflikts und Darstellung seiner Opfer während der beiden Kriege

3.3 Latente Stile der Berichterstattung über die beiden Parteien


3.3.1 Darstellung des Verhaltens der Konfliktparteien

Kontextarme Fokussierung von Gewalt

Die kontextarme Fokussierung von Gewalt (vgl. Abb. 7) ist für beide Konfliktparteien der häufigste Stil der Darstellung ihres Verhaltens. Sie ist im Falle Israels für 33.7%, im Falle der Palästinenser für 49.6% der analysierten Texte charakteristisch.

- Israel, Klasse 1 (33.7%): Oft (und häufiger als in allen anderen Klassen) explizit thematisiert, kommt die Konkurrenzlogik in der ausnahmslosen Androhung von konfrontativem Verhalten, die in der Regel auch mit der Darstellung konfrontativen Verhaltens und meist auch mit der Darstellung israelischer Gewaltanwendung einhergeht, zum Ausdruck, wird aber relativ häufig durch die Darstellung von kooperativen Schritten und manchmal durch deren Ankündigung abgemildert.
- Palästina, Klasse 2 (22.4%): Zwar kaum explizit thematisiert, kommt die Konkurrenzlogik hier in der so gut wie ausnahmslosen Darstellung von konfrontativem Verhalten und palästinensischer Gewalt zum Ausdruck, die oft auch mit der Androhung von konfrontativem Verhalten und nicht selten mit politischen Forderungen einhergeht und nur gelegentlich durch die Darstellung von kooperativen Schritten und manchmal durch deren Ankündigung abgemildert.
gentlich durch die Ankündigung von kooperativen Schritten abgeschwächt wird.

- Palästina, Klasse 4 (12.6%): thematisiert (so gut wie ausnahmslos) konfrontatives Verhalten der Palästinenser, sehr häufig in Verbindung mit Gewalt, und nur gelegentlich durch die Ankündigung von Kooperativen Schritten abgeschwächt.

Die Dialektik von Konfrontation und Kooperation (vgl. Abb. 9) ist für 41.9% der Darstellung des israelischen aber nur für 15.4% der Darstellung palästinensischen Verhaltens typisch. Einem palästinensischen Stil stehen dabei zwei israelische Stile gegenüber, die sich in der Intensität der Thematisierung unterscheiden.

- Israel, Klasse 2 (22.2%) thematisiert (so gut wie ausnahmslos) sowohl konfrontatives als auch kooperatives Verhalten, häufig in Verbindung mit deren Androhung bzw. Ankündigung, meist in Verbindung mit der Darstellung israelischer Gewaltanwendung und oft in Verbindung mit politischen Forderungen.
- Palästina, Klasse 3 (15.4%) stellt der (so gut wie ausnahmslosen) Darstellung von kooperativem Verhalten und (relativ häufig) seiner Ankündigung, sehr häufig die Darstellung von konfrontativem Verhalten der Palästinenser und/oder palästinensischer Gewalt gegenüber, relativ häufig verbunden mit politischen Forderungen und nicht selten mit der Androhung konfrontativer Schritte.
Abbildung 9: Darstellung des Verhaltens der Konfliktparteien – Dialektik von Konfrontation und Kooperation

**Fokussierung kooperativen Verhaltens**

Abbildung 10: Darstellung des Verhaltens der Konfliktparteien - Fokussierung kooperativen Verhaltens

Ein Stil, der kooperatives Verhalten fokussiert findet sich nur bei der Darstellung des israelischen Verhaltens und ist dort für 4.4% der Berichterstattung charakteristisch.
• Israel, Klasse 5 (4.4%): ist in der Regel durch die Darstellung und/oder die Ankündigung von kooperativem Verhalten geprägt, das allerdings relativ häufig mit der Darstellung von konfrontativem Verhalten und/oder israelischer Gewaltanwendung, gelegentlich auch mit der Androhung von konfrontativen Schritten, einher geht.

Vergleich zwischen 2. Intifada mit Gaza-Krieg

Vergleicht man die Häufigkeit der verschiedenen Stile während der beiden Kriege (vgl. Abb. 11), so zeigt sich, dass israelische Gewalt im Gaza-Krieg etwa doppelt so häufig fokussiert wurde (Israel, Klasse 1), während die Fokussierung palästinensischer Gewalt (Palästina, Klasse 1) zugunsten von Konkurrenzlogik und konfrontativem Verhalten (Palästina, Klassen 2 und 4) abnahm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anzahl der Klassen</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Palästina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klasse 1</td>
<td>ln(L)</td>
<td>n(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1114,45</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1103,34</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1096,97</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1092,22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Modell</td>
<td>-1081,03</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabelle 5: Beurteilung der Intentionen und Handlungen der Konfliktparteien. Goodness-of-Fit-Statistiken der Latent-Class-Analysen


Rechtfertigung vor Kritik

Die überwiegende Mehrheit der Texte (84.8%) war durch einen Stil geprägt, der zwar relativ häufig Kritik an israelischem Verhalten übt, dieses jedoch deutlich öfter rechtfertigt als kritisiert. Ein vergleichbarer Stil der Beurteilung palästinensischen Verhaltens ist weit seltener (29.6%) und etwas negativer gefärbt.

• Israel, Klasse 1 (84.8%): Rechtfertigung israelischen Verhaltens überwiegt die Kritik daran in Verhältnis R : K = 1.3 : 1. Relativ oft findet sich auch Selbstkritik.

Gleichgewicht von Rechtfertigung und Kritik

Eine Minderheit der Texte (Israel, Klasse 2: 15.2%) zeigt einen Stil, der der Beurteilung israelischer Intentionen und Handlungen große Aufmerksamkeit schenkt und durch ein ausgewogenes Verhältnis von Rechtfertigung und Kritik gekennzeichnet ist. Ein vergleichbarer Stil der Beurteilung palästinensischer Intentionen und Handlungen konnte nicht gefunden werden.

Kritik vor Rechtfertigung


Abbildung 12: Stile der Beurteilung der Intentionen und Handlungen der Konfliktparteien

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Vergleich zwischen 2. Intifada und Gaza-Krieg


Abbildung 13: Beurteilung der Intentionen und Handlungen der Konfliktparteien. Häufigkeit der verschiedenen Stile während der beiden Kriege

3.3.3 Interpunktion des Konflikts und Darstellung seiner Opfer

Die Latent-Class-Analyse der Interpunktion des Konfliktes und Darstellung seiner Opfer, identifizierte sechs verschiedene Stile (vgl. Tab. 6), die sich in drei Gruppen einteilen lassen: (1) Bedrohung Israels, (2) Opfer auf beiden Seiten und (3) Palästinensische Opfer und Asymmetrie des Konfliktes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anzahl der Klassen</th>
<th>ln(L)</th>
<th>n(P)</th>
<th>AIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1675,30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3368,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1605,62</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3249,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1591,70</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3241,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1578,06</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3234,12</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1567,25</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>-1556,90</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>-1549,58</td>
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<td>3237,16</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1543,55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3245,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Modell</td>
<td>-1494,02</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>4010,04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabelle 6: Interpunktion des Konflikts und Darstellung seiner Opfer: Goodness-of-Fit-Statistiken der Latent-Class-Analyse

Bedrohung Israels

Während zwar nur 12.3% der analysierten Texte die Bedrohung Israels fokussieren, bildet die Bedrohung Israels gleichsam den Unterton weiterer 23.7% der Texte, die der Interpunktion des Konfliktes jedoch wenig Aufmerksamkeit schenken (vgl. Abb. 14). Die Bedrohung, welcher die Palästinenser ausgesetzt sind, wird dagegen nie zum bestimmenden Stilmerkmal der Interpunktion des Konfliktes.

- Klasse 4 (12.3%) ist durch die ausnahmslose Darstellung der Bedrohung Israels gekennzeichnet, sieht Israel eher in einer Verteidigungsposition als die Palästinenser und thematisiert israelische Opfer häufiger als palästinensische. Die Bedrohung Israels wird jedoch relativ häufig durch die Darstellung der Stärke und Siegeszuversicht Israels abgemildert.
• Klasse 2 (23.7%) schenkt der Interpunktion des Konfliktes wenig Augenmerk, ist jedoch durch einen pro-israelischen Unterton charakterisiert, der in einer gelegentlichen Erwähnung israelischer Opfer und der Bedrohung Israels zum Ausdruck kommt. Israels Verteidigungsposition zwar nur in seltenen Fällen anspricht, die Bedrohung Israels aber durch gelegentliche Betonung der Stärke und Siegeszuversicht der Palästinenser unterstreicht und nur selten auch die Bedrohung der Palästinenser thematisiert.

Abbildung 14: Interpunktion des Konflikts - Bedrohung Israels

Opfer auf beiden Seiten

Insgesamt 20.3% der analysierten Texte sind durch die ausnahmslose Darstellung von Opfern auf beiden Seiten charakterisiert und gehen relativ häufig auch mit einer Aufrechnung von Opferzahlen einher.

• Klasse 6 (4.8%) ist durch die Interpunktion des Konfliktes im Sinne eines pro-israelischen War Frames gekennzeichnet. Sie sieht Israel häufig in einer Verteidigungsposition und betont die Stärke und Siegeszuversicht beider Parteien, insbesondere jene Israels (fast durchgehend), häufig aber auch jene der Palästinenser.

• Klasse 3 (15.5%) ist im Vergleich dazu mehr ausgewogen und interpunktiert den Konflikt eher im Sinne eines Peace Frames. Die Verteidigungsposition Israels wird etwas weniger oft thematisiert, und mitunter werden auch die Palästinenser in einer Verteidigungsposition dargestellt. Stärke und Siegeszuversicht der Parteien werden deutlich seltener thematisiert, jene der Israelis verschwindet völlig.

Abbildung 15: Interpunktion des Konflikts - Opfer auf beiden Seiten
Palästinensische Opfer und Asymmetrie des Konfliktes

Insgesamt 43.6% der analysierten Texte fokussieren entweder palästinensische Opfer (33.4%) oder die Asymmetrie des Konfliktes (10.2%).

- Klasse 1 (33.4%): Stellt zu allermeist palästinensische Opfer dar, nur selten auch israelische Opfer. Alle anderen Variablen fallen kaum ins Gewicht, sehen aber Israel etwas stärker bedroht und in einer Verteidigungsposition, aber auch stärker und siegeszuversichtlicher als die Palästinenser.
- Klasse 5 (10.2%): Legt den Fokus auf die Stärke und Siegeszuversicht der beiden Parteien und thematisiert die Opfer insgesamt weniger als Klasse 1. Während die Bedrohung und Verteidigungsposition Israels stärker hervorgehoben wird als in Klasse 1, wird die Bedrohung der Palästinenser weit seltener angesprochen und, dass sich die Palästinenser in einer Verteidigungsposition befinden, wird überhaupt nicht zum Thema. Indem auch die Stärke und Siegeszuversicht der Palästinenser relativ häufig thematisiert wird, wird die Gefährlichkeit der Palästinenser zwar unterstrichen, durch die ebenfalls recht häufige Darstellung palästinensischer Opfer, die nicht-Thematisierung der israelischen Opfer und die ausnahmslose Darstellung der Stärke und Siegeszuversicht Israels aber zugleich relativiert.

Abbildung 16: Interpunktion des Konflikts - Palästinensische Opfer und Asymmetrie des Konfliktes

Vergleich zwischen 2. Intifada und Gaza-Krieg

Vergleicht man die Häufigkeit der verschiedenen Stile während der beiden Kriege (vgl. Abb. 17), so zeigt sich eine Verschiebung der Opferdarstellung und Interpunktion des Konfliktes in einer Weise, welche geeignet ist, beim Leser einen Solidarisierungseffekt zugunsten der Palästinenser zu erzielen.

Abbildung 17: Interpunktion des Konflikts. Häufigkeit der verschiedenen Stile während der beiden Kriege
Der uninteressierte Stil mit pro-israelischem Unterton (Klasse 2) nimmt ab und die Fokussierung der Bedrohung Israels (Klasse 4) geht zurück. Der Stil, welcher die Asymmetrie des Konfliktes fokussiert (Klasse 5) nimmt dramatisch zu. Als Gegengewicht zu einem pro-palästinensischen Solidarisierungseffekt bleibt die Häufigkeit der Darstellung von Opfern auf beiden Seiten (Klasse 6 und 3) so gut wie unverändert (nimmt sogar um 2 Prozentpunkte ab), verschiebt sich jedoch zugunsten von Klasse 6 (pro-israelischer war-frame).

4. Zusammenfassung und Diskussion


Dem Nachrichtenfaktor „Negativismus“ geschuldet, ist die Berichterstattung jedoch insgesamt von negativen Nachrichten dominiert. Im Zentrum der Berichterstattung stehen die Anwendung von Gewalt, die Opfer der Gewaltanwendung sowie konfrontatives Verhalten und Drohverhalten beider Konfliktparteien.

Dadurch erscheinen sowohl die Palästinenser als auch Israel in einem schlechten Lichte, was aber durch ein gewisses Maß an Verständnis für die Handlungsweise Israels konterkarriert wird, so dass Israel unter dem Strich besser abschneidet als die Palästinenser. Israel wird häufiger als die Palästinenser in einer Verteidigungsposition gesehen, die Bedrohung Israels wird häufiger thematisiert, israelische Handlungen finden häufiger Rechtfertigung, Israels Rechte finden mehr Anerken- nung und sowohl kooperatives Verhalten als auch Kooperationsbereitschaft Israels werden häufiger thematisiert.


Ganz im Gegen teil lassen die Unterschiede der Berichterstattung über die beiden Kriege eine klare Tendenz erkennen, die für Israel ungünstige Berichtslage zu entschärfen.

Der vermehrte Darstellung israelischer Gewalt, wurde mit einer Israel-freundlichen Berichterstattung begegnet, welche das israelische Verhalten rechtfertigte, Israel (relativ zu den Palästinensern) vermehrt in einer Verteidigungsposition dar- stellte und die Übermacht Israels seltener thematisierte. Zwar nahm die Häufigkeit der Rechtfertigung des Verhaltens bei der Konfliktparteien im Gaza-Krieg ab, doch veränderte sich die Beurteilung Israelischer Intentionen und Handlungen gegenüber der 2. Intifada nicht und blieb auch während des Gaza-Krieges überwiegend positiv. Stattdessen wurde die Be-

Die darin zum Ausdruck kommende Asymmetrie zwischen vermehrter Darstellung israelischer Gewalt einerseits und (relativ zum Verhalten der Palästinenser) verstärkter Rechtfertigung israelischen Verhaltens andererseits spiegelt sich auch in der Interpunktion des Konfliktes und der Darstellung seiner Opfer wieder.

So verschob sich die Berichterstattung über Opfer und Opferzahlen während des Gaza-Krieges zwar zugunsten der Palästinenser, doch wurde dies dadurch konterkariert, dass Israel (relativ zu den Palästinensern) vermehrt in einer Verteidigungsposition dargestellt und die Übermacht Israels (relativ) seltener thematisiert wurde.

Zwar ist das Verhältnis nicht mehr ganz so krasse wie während der 2. Intifada, doch wurde die Bedrohung Israels auch während des Gaza-Krieges immer mehr als doppelt so häufig dargestellt als jene der Palästinenser. Und obwohl beide Parteien während des Gaza-Krieges seltener in einer Verteidigungsposition dargestellt wurden, verschob sich das Verhältnis zwischen den beiden Parteien zugunsten Israels. Wurde Israel während der 2. Intifada doppelt so häufig in einer Verteidigungsposition dargestellt, so geschah dies während des Gaza-Krieges mehr als drei mal so häufig.


Wenn die Berichterstattung über den Gaza-Krieg antisemitische Vorurteile gestärkt hat, dann nicht weil sie Israel-feindlich berichtet hat. Vielmehr ist es das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen einer Berichtslage, die beim Leser Distanz zu Israel provoziert, einerseits und einem Israel-freundlichen Framing der Berichterstattung andererseits, welches latent vorhandene antisemitische Vorurteile und Stereotype salient machen kann: Vorurteile aus dem Repertoire des latenten Antisemitismus – z.B. „Man (die deutsche Presse) darf ja nicht sagen, was sie über die Juden wirklich denkt“ – oder auch solche aus dem Repertoire des manifesten Antisemitismus – z.B. „Das internationale Judentum hat die deutsche Presse fest im Griff, und schreibt ihr vor, wie sie zu berichten hat“.


Literatur


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**Zu den Autoren:** Markus Maurer erwarb sein Diplom in Psychologie an der Universität Konstanz. Derzeit arbeitet er als Dozent und Seminarleiter im Bereich der gewaltfreien Kommunikation. 
Interessengebiete: Gewaltfreie Kommunikation, Konfliktbewältigung und -vermittlung

Adresse: Geissbergstrasse 30, CH - 5408 Ennetbaden, Schweiz

eMail: markus_maurer@gmx.ch


Fachbereich Psychologie, Universität Konstanz, D-78457 Konstanz.

Website: [http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/SozWiss/fg-pay/ag-meth/](http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/SozWiss/fg-pay/ag-meth/)
eMail: Wilhelm.Kempf@uni-konstanz.de

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung, indisputably the leading experts in peace journalism today, clearly define the focus group and the ultimate goal of their masterpiece, *Reporting conflict*, by dedicating it to peace journalists who report on the world in an effort to make it a better place. They cover the broad theoretical foundations of peace and war journalism, address controversies between such concepts as objectivity and balance, and reflect on the press coverage of major terror attacks and military responses in the 21st century. Thereby they go much deeper than just discussing ways of reporting conflicts to stop cycles of retaliation and start searching for solutions to conflict. Consequently, this text is recommended not only for those who are actively engaged in the social construction of reality, but also for those who want to reflect on personal judgments of past conflicts and what the media have told us about them. Readers who are searching for rational analyses of the relationship of US and Islamist fundamentalism that would explain the underlying processes and the roles of the media in 9/11 and the consequences for the 21st century would find this book especially enlightening.

The first of the book’s eight chapters lays a solid theoretical foundation for conflict reporting that can follow either the low road or the high road, depending on whether the focus is on violence and war or on conflict and its peaceful transformation. To illustrate the low road of conflict reporting, the authors metaphorically compare it with reporting on sports events, where in a competition between two teams there can be only one winner. The authors compare the high road with reporting on health, where in the struggle of the human body against different pathogens sometimes one side wins sometimes the other, but the task of journalism is to report on this struggle objectively. However, since conflicts with only two parties are abstractions and reality is different, Lynch and Galtung discuss the practical distinctions between war and peace journalism and elaborate the news filters of the four-factor news communication model.

The second chapter deals with the question of the emergence of peace journalism in theory and its implications for the practice of reporting conflict from the perspectives of communication and peace and conflict studies. Thus drawing on real-world examples, Lynch and Galtung discuss structural and cultural influences on the way journalists do their job; encoding and decoding mechanisms of news production and reception; framing as an analytical tool for operationalizing peace journalism; interconnections between violence, conflict causes and parties; and, finally, distinctions between structural and cultural violence.

The third chapter deals with controversies over the concepts of objectivity, balance, truth and ethics. Agreeing that objectivity refers to the factual basis of reporting, the authors admit that balance is more problematic. Comparing these concepts to ‘mom, the flag and apple pie’, the authors offer one possible formula for balance. Then they criticize it and conclude that it is more important and more positive to balance violent action with peaceful action, similar to balancing disease with health. In discussing ethics, Lynch and Galtung analyze the ethics of intention, that is, the actual consequences of a style of reporting, not what may have been intended. The conclusion? – ask the authors: “There is work to be done, some of it uphill. But the present situation, reinforcing violence by giving more celebrity to the violent than to the peaceful, is simply unethical.”

What work do they recommend to further peace journalism? Who should do it, and how shall they do it? Lynch and Galtung address such questions in the fourth chapter. They offer a manual for peace journalism, supported with three case studies of media reporting, Korea, Yugoslavia and the Gulf War. Starting almost every other paragraph with an imperative, the authors set milestones for peace journalism that are applicable to reporting on many kinds of conflicts. Focus not only on the differences, but also on the commonalities; focus on the obvious; tell the story from all sides; get access to events, people, issues; do not overuse elites as sources; seek out stories from ‘ordinary people’; also tell the ‘blood and guts’ stories; offer background stories; watch out for manipulation by newsmakers and news media; and, finally, report on and explore peace initiatives.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to deepening the analysis of media influence on political decisions. Thus, the authors explore reporting on the 9/11 and 10/07 terrorist attacks and explain the discourses of US and Islamist fundamentalism with a rational analysis of peace action based on two simple ideas. “Where there is violence there is an unresolved conflict underneath and, since violence introduces a new conflict between perpetrator and victim, violence breeds more violence in retaliation cycles.” Lynch and Galtung propose a remedy for terrorism and state terrorism with a focus on reconciliation which is the same as one approved by the overwhelming majority of people polled in 33 countries immediately after the 9/11 attacks – international courts – but also mobilization against fundamentalism, changes in policies and a rejection of violence.

How did US media respond? US mainstream journalism, driven by fundamentalist US discourse, was blind and incapable of contextualizing what was happening. The claims by Bin Laden that his nation had experienced this kind of humiliation for more than 80 years – subtracting these 80 years from 2001 would bring us to the
Sykes-Picot treachery of 1916 – attracted little or no detective work by journalists. If we consider the 3,000 killed in the 9/11 criminal outrage in the context of 67 US interventions after World War II (with Afghanistan 68, Iraq 69, Haiti 70) and 12-16 million killed, we can start to obtain a context for the violence of 9/11, but this discourse was also absent from the US media. To illustrate that the world press also focused on moralizing rather than on the well-informed commentary so necessary for peace journalism, Lynch and Galtung present a unique collection of 40 excerpts from highly-regarded newspapers from all continents that were published from September until November 2001 in regard to 9/11. Thus, a mega-event landed on top of the media, with no media on top of the event. Anticipating criticism, the authors emphasize that explaining is not justifying. Moreover, neither will the autistic US policy undergo any paradigm shift from security to peace nor will US journalism change from war to peace journalism, because change has to come from outside.

Discussing democracy, the war in Iraq and the British media in the sixth chapter, Lynch and Galtung refer to a number of empirical studies to illustrate how British media used the techniques of war journalism and propaganda to influence public opinion to favor the war in Iraq. Although the key pro-war arguments in the British media were mainly related to weapons of mass destruction and were not about the need to secure access to oil reserves, two opinion surveys made in late 2002 found that 22 to 44 per cent of the British respondents were convinced that it was all about oil. Even after British businessmen publicly aired their concerns about the British government’s failure to back the UK oil industry enough in the international scramble for Iraqi oil development, the British media failed to ‘get’ the point. With this and other examples, the authors demonstrate a serious democratic deficit in reporting on conflicts and illustrate how Tony Blair succeeded in ‘managing’ both public and political opinion.

In the seventh chapter, Lynch and Galtung focus on defining media monitoring as a public process that should improve media performance and provide feedback. Since research shows that conflict reporting tends to ‘disconnect’ audiences from an understanding of the wider world, it is vital for the authors to address the issue of moving media evaluation towards a global standard. In this regard, they offer a number of examples of empirical efforts to explore the potential for media monitoring with sufficient reliability to make and sustain useful distinctions across media milieus, through time and about any story.

Lynch and Galtung start their final chapter by quoting the popular author and journalist Mark Steyn, who repeated a familiar, cynical formula for the importance accorded to different disasters by American editors: “One dead American equals 10 dead Israelis equals 100 dead Russians equals 1000 dead Africans.” Demonstrating with this example that news about conflict has traditionally been aligned with national interests, the authors trace the history of this alignment to the emergence of the modern nation-state. They argue that its hold on the definition and representation of issues in conflicts has been gradually weakening. Offering many eye-opening examples from past conflicts, in this chapter the authors reinforce their main argument and underline the chief goal of the book: We must continue to advocate, debate, explore, practice, teach and train journalists in peace journalism, and peace must be given a chance to make the world a better place.

About the author: Irina Wolf earned the title of Dr. rer. Soc in Psychology at the University of Konstanz in Germany. Her areas of specialization include quantitative and qualitative methods of media content analysis, conflict research and political Islam.

Adresse: Wolf.Irina@gmail.com

zurück zum Inhaltsverzeichnis