The 2014 Israel–Gaza Conflict:

Exploring the representation of 'Israel' in the Israeli media using a triangulation of corpus-based critical discourse analysis and discourse-based interviews

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Abstract

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is one of the most intractable conflicts in the Middle East. In recent years, the conflict has centred on the Gaza Strip and between Israel and the Palestinian movement Hamas, and has included several rounds of violence, the longest and deadliest one occurring in 2014. With the media having the power to influence audiences' perceptions of any conflict, including its causes, its events, its participants and the possibilities of its resolution, this research provides an analysis of the reporting of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict.

The focus of the study was on reporting of the conflict from the Israeli side, with an exploration of its coverage in three English-language Israeli news websites, each representing a distinctive political orientation. Using methods of linguistic analysis, and particularly collocational analysis, the study has looked specifically at how the entity 'Israel' was variously represented in a substantial corpus of articles from these sites. Such a focus, it was reasoned, would provide insights into how Israel was represented both as an 'actor' in the conflict and as a 'recipient' of the actions of others. An additional component to the study, one that to date has been pursued to only a limited extent in corpus-based research, was to explore via interviews with news producers the factors and motivations that lay behind some of the lexical and content patterns identified.

The textual analysis has revealed that while, as one would expect, there were notable differences between these publications' portrayals of Israel, there was also significant convergence in these representations across the three outlets. As a 'recipient' in the conflict, Israel was framed in all three publications typically as a victim, but also as a participant that is supported in the conflict, particularly by the US. The linguistic analysis has also revealed that, as an 'actor' in the conflict, Israel was constructed in all the news outlets as a combatant that acts in self-defence and also as a conciliatory participant that is willing to resolve the conflict diplomatically. These findings, I argue, resonate with certain central societal beliefs which have been identified by Bar-Tal (1998, 2000, 2007,

2013) as 'conflict-supporting beliefs'. As such, they feed into the intractability of the conflict and pose an obstacle to conflict resolution.

The discourse-based interviews with journalists and editors have revealed that while news production processes are complex ones, influenced by a variety of factors (e.g. news values, commercial imperatives), national ideologies and news producers' identities as members of the national community are found to play significant roles in news producers' content and lexical choices. Such findings suggest a weakening of one of the traditional missions of mainstream journalism – to play a critical and challenging role as a corrective to the prerogatives of state power.

Acknowledgements

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma.

To the best of the candidate's knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome.

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Introduction

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict (henceforth IPC) is one of the most intractable conflicts in the Middle East. In recent years, the conflict has centred on the Gaza Strip and between Israel and the Palestinian movement Hamas and, at the time of writing, had included three rounds of violence.[1] The one occurring in 2014 – the Israel–Gaza conflict – is the focus of this research. This was not only longer than the preceding rounds, lasting for 50 days, but far deadlier than all the previous rounds of fighting combined (Filiu, 2014a).

As a social and cultural institution, the mass media plays a central role in communicating beliefs, values and ideologies that both reflect and shape the public's understanding of and engagement with the world (Fowler, 1991; Happer & Philo, 2013; McCombs, 2014). In any society engulfed in an intractable conflict, the media actively participates in the formation, dissemination and maintenance of beliefs about the conflict's causes, the unfolding events, the participants involved and, most importantly, the possibilities of its resolution (Sharvit & Bar-Tal, 2007). Understanding the ways in which intractable conflicts are constructed in the media is a primary concern of social research in this area.

The current project focuses on the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in the Israeli media. It specifically explores the representation of 'Israel' in three English-language Israeli news websites, each representing a distinctive political orientation. It does so by conducting a corpus-based critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) of three corpora of news articles, one for each of these three sites. It also explores the motivations and factors that lay behind this representation of Israel by conducting interviews with news producers and probing them about some of the most prominent lexical and content patterns identified.

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[1] Another round of violence erupted on 10 May 2021 and lasted for 11 days until a ceasefire came into effect on 21 May 2021.

There are several reasons why the project was embarked on and why the particular methods pursued were adopted. The project was initially motivated by my personal engagement with the issue as an Israeli who has been a consumer of Israeli news outlets, first when living in Israel and then when living abroad and reading Israeli English-language accounts. I had been living outside of Israel for four years when the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict broke out and was interested in how Israel was presenting to the wider world. When I began reading the research literature on the representation of the IPC in the media, I realised that the majority of studies to date explored the issue using mainly qualitative methods of analysis (e.g. content analysis, CDA, narrative analysis). Few studies, in contrast, relied on the quantitative method of corpus linguistics (henceforth CL). It also became clear that, although texts are never stand-alone products but are produced in particular ways for particular audiences, the analysis in the majority of studies has been primarily text-based. Few scholars extended such research to include analysis of news production (i.e. how news stories are produced) or news reception (i.e. what audiences make of these stories). Addressing this methodological gap was the main motivation for the way the project has been designed and carried out.

This research explores the representation of Israel in the media coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in three English-language Israeli news websites. These are *Ynetnews*, *Haaretz* and the *Jerusalem Post* (*JP*), broadly representing a centrist, a left-leaning and a right-leaning orientation on Israeli politics, respectively. In particular, this research seeks to do two things:

(i) examine *how* Israel was represented in the Israeli media by focusing on a *textual* analysis of news stories; this involved answering the first research question:

> 1. What can a collocation analysis of the term 'Israel' reveal about the construction of this entity?

(ii) examine some of the *factors* and *motivations* underpinning news producers' linguistic choices by analysing *text production processes*; this involved answering the second research question:

2. What can discourse-based interviews with journalists and editors reveal about some of the factors and motivations that lie behind the linguistic patterns identified in the reporting?

Overview of methodology

This research employs mixed methods to explore the representation of 'Israel' in the Israeli media's coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict. For the *textual* analysis, a combination of CL and CDA was used. CDA is a problem-oriented, qualitative approach to the study of language (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It is primarily interested in uncovering relationships between language and the social world to which it refers, particularly what might *not* be immediately obvious in the discourse. According to Stubbs (1997), CDA provides a means for probing what is not explicitly said but which can be 'read out' of texts through the close examination of linguistic choices (words, grammar, etc.) and the discursive contexts of those choices. As such, it is a powerful methodology to study socially constructed phenomena such as the production of news.

CL is a largely quantitative approach which uses corpora (large bodies of texts) and computer software to analyse real-life language use. As a methodology, CL has two major strengths for studying discourse (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1994). One strength relates to the size of corpora and to their tendency to be carefully constructed. Because corpora typically comprise large volumes of data which are collected using principled approaches, it is suggested that corpora can act as representative samples on the basis of which generalisations about language use can be made (Baker, 2010a). In addition, CL, with its semi-automatic computational tools, enables the researcher to describe the syntactic and semantic properties of linguistic items *exhaustively* rather than selectively (Hardt-Mautner, 1995), thereby contributing to a study's validity.

Recent research has seen a fruitful combining of CL and CDA approaches. It has been argued that the application of corpus methodologies in CDA is an effective way of

responding to some of the limitations of both approaches (Baker at al., 2008; Nartey & Mwinlaaru, 2019; Wright & Brookes, 2019). Critiques of CDA tend to focus on the methodological weakness of the approach, arguing for example that CDA analysts often analyse a small number of arbitrarily selected texts, thereby undermining the 'generalizability, replicability and reliability' of findings (Nartey & Mwinlaaru, 2019:4). CL, with its focus on analysing a large and principled collection of natural texts, can accommodate such criticism. On the other hand, a pure corpus analysis, it is suggested, can lack the explanatory power of CDA (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008); in this sense then, CDA can bolster CL by providing the interpretative framework for making sense of the data.

For the analysis of news production processes, I have used the methodology known as discourse-based interviews (Odell, Goswami & Herrington, 1983). In a discourse-based interview, participants are required to respond, as writers (or as readers), to linguistic features that were found in the discourse. In the case of the current research, discourse-based interviews could thus tap into news producers' practical consciousness about the media texts they have been engaged in producing by querying them about writing choices and judgements that were made.

Overview of theoretical framework

The continuation of any conflict relies on its legitimation by the parties and entities involved in the conflict. In understanding this phenomenon, Van Leeuwen's (2007) idea of legitimation strategies, primarily associated with CDA, proved a useful explanatory perspective to draw upon in the research. Van Leeuwen (2007) identifies a variety of strategy types: (i) *authorisation* – legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law and people who are vested with institutional authority; (ii) *moral evaluation* – legitimation by appeals to value systems; (iii) *rationalisation* – legitimation by reference to practices' goals, uses and effects, and to 'a natural order of things' (p.101); and (iv) *mythopoesis* – legitimation through the construction of narratives in which protagonists are rewarded for engaging in legitimate social practices and are punished when they do not

conform to such practices. These legitimation strategies, particularly authorisation and moral evaluation, are drawn on in the research as a way of interpreting the media texts and interviews considered in the study.

Another perspective that proved useful for interpreting the representation of 'Israel' in the Israeli media's coverage of the 2014 round of violence is the socio-psychological theory of intractable conflicts proposed by one of the most influential social and political psychologists, Daniel Bar-Tal. At the heart of this theory is the idea of the 'ethos of a conflict'. This ethos refers to the societal beliefs held by members of a society immersed in an intractable conflict. These include, for example, beliefs about the *justness of one's own goals*, beliefs about *self-victimhood* and beliefs about *opponent delegitimisation.* Significantly, one of the most important functions of such beliefs is the moral function they fulfil in legitimising controversial acts of violence, such as those that have occurred in the Israel–Gaza conflict. According to Bar-Tal, the ethos of conflict which is embodied in discourses around a conflict – including media discourses – typically supports the maintenance of the conflict, thereby fuelling its intractability and creating obstacles to its peaceful resolution. This theory is used in the research in analysing media texts and interview claims.

Overview of significance

There are a number of significant outcomes from this study. The first one is methodological. While corpus-based CDA studies have gained some momentum in the past decade, Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019:15) point to the relatively small body of corpus-based CDA studies which specifically deal with the topic of conflict. To date, there appear to have been only two corpus-based CDA studies which focused on the media coverage of the IPC (Kandil, 2009; Almeida, 2011). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge there is no other study which has triangulated corpus-based CDA with an analysis of news production processes to explore the media representation of the IPC. The significance of

such a triangulation is in its ability to increase the validity of the results by testing the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments.

Second, this research extends the current body of knowledge in the field of conflict journalism. In the study of news coverage of war and conflict, two broadly different perspectives have informed findings (Livio & Cohen-Yechezkely, 2019). One has tended to recognise the complexity of the reporting, with news producers bringing in multiple perspectives on the conflict, for example representing the adversary's viewpoints and being more critical of the government and the military (Liebes & Kampf, 2009; Neiger, Zandberg & Meyers, 2010; Kampf & bLiebes, 2013; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch and Nagar, 2016; Lavie-Dinur, Yarchi & Karniel, 2018). Another perspective has been to note the way that news producers' national aspiration for solidarity can override their professional aspirations for criticism and objectivity, resulting in a 'rallying round the flag' type of coverage (e.g. Nir & Roeh, 1992; Dor, 2004; Korn, 2004; Wolsfeld, 2004; Frosh & Awabdy, 2008; Orgad, 2009; Livio & Cohen-Yechezkely, 2019).

In relation to the reporting of the Gaza conflict, this research notes both tendencies in the data examined. However, the study does provide some evidence for a skewing towards the latter position, with journalists and editors across the three outlets showing pronounced tendencies to assimilate and promote dominant national narratives. This has been noted in both the reporting in each outlet as well as in informants' commentaries on this reporting. Such findings suggest a weakening of one the traditional missions of mainstream journalism – to play a critical and challenging role as a corrective to the prerogatives of state power. In this way, the findings do not suggest strong grounds for optimism regarding the intractability of the IPC and the prospects of its resolution.

Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One, Literature Review, provides the context for this research. It begins with a brief historical background to the IPC, with the

focus being on key historical junctions. The social construction of news is discussed next, followed by a review of some of the literature on conflict journalism. Moving closer to this research, the chapter goes on to provide an overview of some of the key studies which have explored the coverage of the IPC in the media. It concludes with a discussion of some of the theoretical frameworks that can help explain this research's findings.

Chapter Two, Methodological Framework, outlines the methods used to explore the representation of 'Israel' in the Israeli media coverage of the 2014 Israeli–Gaza round of violence. It provides an overview of two approaches to the study of discourse – CDA and CL – and explains why combining the two is best suited to exploring the discourses around the term Israel in the Israeli media's reporting on the conflict. This is followed by a discussion of the discourse-based interview methodology used to explore some of the motivations and factors that lie behind news producers' linguistic choices.

Chapter Three, Research Design, explains the research design process. It discusses in detail the processes of data collection and data analysis for each of the two phases of the research. Here the focus is on reviewing the methodological choices that were involved in both types of analysis: the linguistic/textual analysis and the analysis of news production processes. Section 3.1 explains the process of collecting news articles and the decisions that were involved in conducting a collocational analysis. Section 3.2 discusses the process of recruiting and interviewing Israeli journalists and editors.

Chapters Four, Five and Six explore how Israel was represented in the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in *Ynetnews*, *Haaretz* and the *JP*, respectively. The findings on *Ynetnews* are discussed first as this news outlet is the online English presence of the Hebrew news portal *Ynet* and of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, the most popular Hebrew news site in Israel (www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/IL) and one of the most circulated national dailies in Israel (Beckerman, 2005), respectively. Unlike *Ynetnews*, which is associated with a centrist political stance, *Haaretz* is known for its left-leaning view of politics, while the *JP* has a reputation for embracing views which are more right-wing in nature. Each of these chapters

explores the representation of Israel as: (i) one of two participants in a conflict; (ii) a 'recipient' in the conflict; and (iii) an 'actor' in the conflict.

In Chapter 7, Discussion, the findings from Chapters Four, Five and Six are brought together. It begins with a review of some of the differences in the publications' portrayal of Israel. This is followed by a discussion of what has emerged as a key finding – that is, the high level of convergence in the way Israel was represented across the three outlets. The findings that have emerged from the interviews with my informants are also discussed here. On this matter, I argue that while the news production process is a complex one influenced by a variety of factors, national ideologies and journalists' identity as members of the national community played a significant role in news producers' content and lexical choices.

In Chapter 8, Conclusion, I briefly summarise the main findings of the research. I discuss the significance of the project and outline some of its key limitations. I conclude the chapter with a personal reflection on the findings of the research and on its future implications.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Historical background

The 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict is part of the wider IPC – an ongoing, seemingly intractable conflict revolving around issues of land, borders and rights. The IPC involves violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, two regions that comprise the Palestinian Territories (separated from each other by Israeli territories) and that have been under Israeli occupation since 1967. In recent years (2005–present), the IPC has centred around the Gaza Strip, a small territory of 360 square kilometres wedged between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Home to nearly two million Palestinians living under Israeli siege, Gaza ranks as 'the sixth most densely populated polity on earth' (Spence, 2011:25).

Israel borders the south, east and north of Gaza and, although it unilaterally withdrew its civilian and military presence from the Gaza Strip in September 2005 and although the Strip has been governed by the Palestinian movement Hamas since June 2007, Israel retains control of Gaza's borders, coastline, airspace, telecommunications, water, electricity, sewage networks and population registry. Together with Egypt, which borders the south-west of Gaza, Israel also controls the movement of people and flow of property in and out of the Gaza Strip, making it, as described by French president Nicolas Sarkozy, 'the largest open-air prison in the world' (Filiu, 2014b). Since, in practice, Israel continues to control many aspects of the lives of the population in Gaza, a million of whom the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) considers refugees, it remains an occupying power as designated by international law.

Although the Gaza Strip acquired its current northern and eastern boundaries with Israel in 1948 and although the beginning of the Israel–Gaza conflict could probably be traced back to 2005, a historical background of the 2014 Israel–Gaza clashes must go further back to include the roots of the IPC. As Bunton (2013:xiii) says about the conflict: 'there can be no assessment of the present, nor discussion of the future, without an understanding of

how the conflict unfolded from the beginning'. History is inevitably interpretational and subjective, with multiple coexisting narratives revolving around the same events. The history of the IPC is no exception. The Israeli and the Palestinian narratives are highly contested and involve many complexities. Thus, in producing a historical account of the IPC, as is the case with the theme of this research, one immediately faces issues of linguistic selection and potential ideological bias in the constructing of events. With every word potentially entering a field of contention, it is probably impossible to write an entirely even-handed account of the conflict. Some would find the concept of neutrality unacceptable altogether. Nevertheless, the following is my attempt to set out the two contesting narratives of some of the key historical junctures in the IPC and to outline the main core arguments that have cumulatively shaped the trajectory of the conflict's intractability.

In their narratives, both parties typically reach back to their ancient past in order to make claims about sovereignty over land. For example, Jewish Zionists claim that their ancestors occupied the area first and that the land was promised to them by God. The indigenous Arab population, on the other hand, claims that their descendants controlled the area for extended periods of time. More recently, the origins of the IPC can be more directly traced to the late 19th century (Bunton, 2013). In this way, the conflict can be viewed as a struggle between immigrating Zionist Jews and the indigenous Arab population over a small but strategically important and religiously sensitive territory of the Ottoman Empire.

In the Israeli narrative, Zionism was founded in response to growing persecution of Jews in Europe. Out of this movement emerged the idea of the creation of an independent Jewish state where Jews would constitute a majority and be able to exercise national self-determination. Palestine, as the Jews' holy land, became strongly identified as the land in which to build a national home. A rallying slogan at the time was 'a land without people for a people without land', leading to the beginning of a flow of settlers out of Europe into the region. The problem, however, was that Palestine was not uninhabited. According to the official Ottoman census of 1878, the Jewish population in Palestine stood at 15,011 while the combined Muslim/Christian population the Jews were living among numbered 447,454

(McCarthy, 1990). Thus, in the Palestinian narrative Zionism is perceived as an expression of colonialist expansion and immigrating Jews as intruders or invaders (Caplan, 2009).

The gradual creation of Israel as a state and the establishment of entrenched conflict between the two groups can be linked to two diplomatic initiatives, ones that were imposed upon the region by external parties. One of these was the British Balfour Declaration in 1917, described as a 'declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations'. For the Jews, the Balfour Declaration provided a legal basis for Jewish immigration and an official recognition in relation to establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The problem, however, was that the Declaration failed to speak of any equivalent political rights of the local Arab inhabitants, who constituted 89 per cent of the population in Palestine (Berry et al., 2006). For the Arabs, this was perceived as a direct violation of earlier British assurances of Arab independence after the defeat of the Central Powers in WWI. Thus, for Palestinians the Balfour Declaration was a promise by Britain to hand over land that it did not own.

The other diplomatic initiative was that of the UN which emerged out of the catastrophe of the Holocaust that befell European Jewry during WWII. In 1947, the UN proposed to partition Palestine into two independent states, a Jewish one and an Arab one (and to have the Jerusalem–Bethlehem region under international administration). The areas proposed for the Jewish community, which to that point occupied less than 10 per cent of the total land area and constituted one-third of Palestine's population (660,000 out of 2,000,000), comprised 55 per cent of Palestine's territory. This included the fertile coastal regions and the largely unpopulated Negev Desert. The Arab community, which constituted the majority of Palestine's population, was allotted 45 per cent of Palestine's territory, comprising mostly the hilly areas and the Jaffa enclave (Bunton, 2013). Perceiving it as a landmark in efforts to secure a Jewish state,[2] the Zionist movement accepted the proposal. However, for Palestinian Arabs who viewed all of mandated Palestine as their

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[2] This is illustrated in future-first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion's words: 'I know of no greater achievement by the Jewish people … in its long history since it became a people'.

national patrimony, the 1947 UN partition plan was seen simply as a giving away of their lands and was therefore rejected.

The 1948 war for Palestine, known to Israelis as the War of Independence/Liberation and to Palestinians as the Nakba (Arabic for 'catastrophe'), was a key development in the IPC. Following the creation of an Israeli state with Israel's declaration of independence, the armies of Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq invaded Palestine, thereby marking the beginning of a regional conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours. By the time the war was over, Israel held 78 per cent of mandated Palestine, including the western part of Jerusalem. On the other side of the conflict, more than half of the Palestinian Arab society (approximately 750,000 people) became refugees after fleeing or being evicted from their homes. Of these, approximately 200,000 fled to the Gaza Strip. With Jordan moving to annex the West Bank and Egypt moving to occupy the Gaza Strip, Palestinian Arabs were left unable to exercise self-determination in a state of their own.

The next key moment in the conflict was the 1967 war. Lasting for six days, this was a brief war between Israel and the armies of neighbouring Egypt, Syria and Jordan. For the Israeli side, the 1967 war was a military triumph: in addition to defeating three Arab armies, Israel managed to capture the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan. In the Palestinian narrative, the 1967 war was a disaster marking the beginning of repressive military rule, land expropriation and economic exploitation.

The simmering tensions over the following two decades erupted in a Palestinian uprising in 1987, the First Intifada. This was followed by a Second Intifada in 2000. These were both significant events in the intensification of the conflict. The First Intifada was a largely spontaneous uprising which lasted six years and saw the deaths of 1962 Palestinians and 277 Israelis (Kober, 2005:231). The Second Intifada grew out of the collapse of the attempted peace process in 2000 and is widely seen as marking the end of an era of negotiations and a new, darker phase in Israeli–Palestinian relations. Lasting for four years, it claimed the lives of some 4000 Palestinians and 1300 Israelis (Morris, 2009:151-2).

A whole new phase of the conflict – and the one to which this research relates – emerged with Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza in 2005. This coincided with the emergence of Hamas, a Sunni-based organisation, as the ruling party in Gaza first in elections in 2006 and then in 2007 after staging a pre-emptive coup. Perceiving the Hamas takeover as proof that Palestinians were not interested in negotiating the creation of a new state (Philo & Berry, 2011), Israel imposed an economic blockade on the Gaza Strip. While the Israeli economic blockade failed to topple Hamas, it did result in dire consequences for the lives of Gazans. Severe food, fuel and water shortages and rapid deterioration in medical care crippled Gaza's economy. Assessing the humanitarian impact of Israel's blockade on Gaza, OCHA (2016:1) notes that 'more than 70% of Gaza's population receives some form of international aid, the bulk of which is food assistance'. The hostilities that followed signified a new, deadly phase in the conflict. This phase was characterised by Hamas rocket fire and mortar attacks on Israel, and Israeli airstrikes on Gaza.

This phase of hostilities involving mainly air attacks from both sides has played out continuously over the last decade and half, and has been punctuated by intermittent periods of intense escalation. Two earlier episodes, preceding the specific conflict analysed in this research, were two Israeli offensives launched in 2008/9 and 2012, dubbed respectively Operation Cast Lead and Operation Pillar of Defense. In the Israeli narrative, Israel launched these offensives in order to stop increasing rocket fire from Gaza. According to the Palestinian narrative, rockets were fired into Israel in response to Israeli attacks leading up to the operations and to Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip. Operation Cast Lead lasted for 22 days and, by the time it ended, more than 1500 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed. Operation Pillar of Defense lasted for 8 days and claimed the lives of 133 Palestinians and 6 Israelis (Bregman, 2016:321).

Israel–Hamas hostilities reached a climax in 2014 with the launching of a third Israeli offensive, dubbed Operation Protective Edge. Tensions between Israel and Hamas rose after the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank resulting in the arrest of hundreds of Palestinians in the West Bank suspected of having militant ties

with Hamas. Among these were some of Hamas's West Bank leaders who had only recently been freed under the terms of a prisoner exchange agreement. The atmosphere of heightened tension in Gaza led to an increase in rocket attacks, which very soon transformed into a daily occurrence. While Hamas, as the ruling party in Gaza, was leading the Palestinian resistance, other Palestinian movements including Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) were also active in opposing Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip. On 8 July 2014, Israel launched its offensive on Gaza. This comprised two phases – the first involving aerial strikes and the second a ground incursion. Hostilities between the two sides were ended finally on 26 August after an Egyptian ceasefire came into force.

Lasting for 50 days, this round of violence was not only longer but far deadlier than Cast Lead (2008/9) and Pillar of Defense (2012) combined. By the end of the 2014 clashes, as many as 1900 Palestinians – mostly civilians, of whom 450 were children – were killed, 9500 Palestinians were injured and over 475,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes. The offensive also left Gaza on the brink of a humanitarian crisis. On the Israeli side, 67 soldiers and 6 civilians were killed, and 469 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and 261 Israeli civilians were injured.

The conflict, throughout its duration, was reported intensively by media in Israel, in Arab/Palestinian media and also widely in media around the world. Reporting in all these channels was concerned with detailing the actual events of the conflict, but also with issues of the conflict's causes and consequences and also, more controversially, who should be most held to account for the violence and whose responsibility it chiefly is/was to end it. This research is concerned with exploring one frame of reporting of the conflict, namely, that of three of the major Israeli news outlets.

1.2 The construction of news

The media industry claims to be professional, with the work of journalists traditionally characterised as a process of collecting facts and reporting them fairly and objectively (Fowler, 1991:1). This ethos of journalism being a simple transmission process relaying a natural and impartial reflection of reality, however, has long been challenged (Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995b). An alternative approach to news practices is that news is socially constructed and is at heart a socially manufactured product, both reflecting and shaping the values of a society (Fowler, 1991). With its institutions being socially, economically and politically situated, all news, according to this view, is considered to be reported from a particular vantage point or some ideological position (Hall, 1974; Vallone et al., 1985; Fowler, 1991; Hartley, 1993). As White (2006:37) explains it, the reporting of news can be seen as 'a mode of rhetoric ... a value laden, ideologically determined discourse with a clear potential to influence the media audience's assumptions and beliefs about the way the world is and the way it ought to be'.

From this constructionist perspective, news thus is always a representation and the end result of a range of selective processes (Fowler, 1991). W*hat* events get reported and *how* these are framed linguistically and semiotically are not considered to be the result of the intrinsic properties of the events themselves; rather, they are the outcomes of journalistic and editorial decisions which are determined by a wide array of considerations. More specifically, media theorists understand news producers' selections as being unavoidably guided by references to conscious and/or unconscious ideas and beliefs about 'news values', by stylistic or rhetorical considerations which inform the writing of news stories and by a wide range of other factors that are related to the news production process. Such factors include commercial imperatives, news producers' tendency to observe the coverage of other outlets, and the specific nature and ideological leanings of a particular news outlet, as well as news producers' own identities, not only as professionals but as members of a specific community. These considerations will be particularly relevant in the analysis of news producers' comments about prominent linguistic patterns in the reporting.

News producers' ideas and beliefs about news values play an important role in determining what among the flow of events in the world actually constitutes news. News values have largely been defined as a set of criteria that determine what is newsworthy (Bednarek & Caple, 2014:136). The notion of news values can be traced back to Galtung and Ruge's (1965) seminal study on news factors. As Caple and Bednarek (2013:3) point out, '[t]he approach to news values posited by Galtung & Ruge is firmly centred on how **events** [original emphasis] become news'.

For the most part, the term 'news values' has generally been understood to pertain to a set of criteria and principles that make events and stories newsworthy (Bednarek & Caple, 2014:136). These were dubbed by Bell (1991) 'values in news actors and events' and they include but are not limited to values such as proximity, impact, novelty and eliteness. Proximity, which has also been glossed as meaningfulness (e.g. Galtung & Ruge, 1965) and relevance (e.g. Harcup & O'Neill, 2001), refers to geographical or cultural 'nearness'. To illustrate this point, Bednarek and Caple (2012) argue that events that take place in Britain and/or involve British actors are more likely to be perceived as newsworthy in Australia because of the countries' shared history and cultural similarities. The impact of an event refers to the significance of its consequences – the greater the impact, the more likely the event will be perceived as newsworthy.

The news value of novelty – also known by some scholars as unexpectedness (e.g. Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Bell, 1991), surprise (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001) or the unusual (Conley & Lamble, 2006) – relates to the unpredictable aspect of an event, with unusual/out-of-the-ordinary events more likely to be judged newsworthy. Eliteness (Bell, 1991:158; Bednarek, 2016:29), also dubbed prominence (Conley & Lamble, 2006), power (Montgomery 2007:7–8) or the power elite (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001:279), refers to the status of actors. Thus, stories about 'elite' individuals such as celebrities and politicians and 'elite' nations are generally considered newsworthy.

It is important to note, however, that while some scholars perceive the events themselves to possess epistemological properties that infuse them with newsworthiness

(e.g. Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Cotter, 2010; Rössler et al., 2011), the notion that the news values of events and actors are objective criteria of newsworthiness has not gone unchallenged. Bednarek and Caple (2017: 31), for instance, state that talking about events as being endowed with newsworthiness qualities is problematic for three reasons: '(i) it treats events as monolithic; (ii) it assumes newsworthiness can easily be objectively determined and that events are either newsworthy or not; and (iii) it seemingly ignores human intervention (social cognition and discursive mediation)'.

Other researchers have pointed to the ideological nature of news values. Fowler (1991), for example, argues that news values are, to a large extent, '"cultural" rather than "natural"' (p.13). Bell (1991:156) states that 'these are values. They are not neutral, but reflect ideologies and priorities held in society'. Scholars such as Curran and Seaton (2003:336), Hall (1973:184) and Herman and Chomsky (1994:298) perceive news values as ideological constructs. Cotter (2010:67) explains that news values are 'ideological factors' in the sense that they establish or reinforce 'an "ideology" about what counts as news'.

A quite different set of factors that guide news producers' content and linguistic selections refer not to events (their significance etc.), but to principles associated with being a journalist and which inform best-practice writing of news stories. As Bednarek and Caple (2017:41) note, such rhetorical considerations pertain to 'general linguistic characteristics expected of a news story'. They include principles such as balance, clarity (of expression), neutrality and brevity (Bell, 1991; Richardson, 2007; Cotter, 2010; Bednarek & Caple, 2012). While stylistic/rhetorical considerations have been perceived by some scholars as news values related to the text (e.g. Bell, 1991), such factors, as Caple and Bednarek (2016) note, are qualitatively different from news values that relate to aspects of events and actors. For this reason, this research follows Caple and Bednarek (2016), who point to the need to distinguish these factors from news values and treat them as *news-writing objectives*.

In addition to news producers' beliefs about news values and about stylistic considerations that meet news-writing objectives, news reporting has been found to also be influenced by commercial imperatives (for more information about the influence of commercial imperatives on news selection, see Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Fowler, 1991; Lee-Wright, 2010; Allern, 2011). These constitute different types of considerations, ones that pertain to the more practical imperatives of news reporting. Fowler (1991:20) highlights the economic factors involved in the production of news:

> What is overwhelmingly important is the fact that newspaper publication is an industry and a business, with a definite place in the nation's and the world's economic affairs. It is to be expected, then, that the activities and the output of the Press will be partially determined by considerations related to this fact: by the need to make a profit; by the economic organization of the industry ... All of these commercial and industrial structures and relationships are bound to have an effect on what is published as news, and on how it is presented.

An example of commercial pressures which influence the reporting and editing of news (particularly story selection) is news producers' awareness of and concern for audience preferences. This phenomenon has been identified by McManus (1994) as market-driven journalism, a model of journalism which postulates that consumers, together with investors, advertisers and sources, drive news production processes. As Cohen (2002:533) explains, market forces in the McManus model 'are seen at the micro-level when journalists are forced to respond to the pressures of the general public (consumer decision-making)'. To illustrate this point, in a study of women's sports coverage Sherwood, Osborne, Nicholson and Sherry (2017:655) found that newsworkers aligned their justification of news selection with notions of audience interest; these notions were 'based on personal beliefs and assumptions [that] prioritized the coverage of men's professional sports'. Similarly, Allern (2011:150) argues that 'journalistic news values ... assume meaning only when placed in the context of the medium's orientation to its

readership or audience or, in other words, its market orientation and editorial market strategy'.

In the current digital age, considerations of audience preferences are bound up more and more in outlets now having access to vast arrays of data related to consumer use of news websites. Search engine optimisation (SEO) practices where news producers use organic search engine results to increase the quantity of traffic to their news websites, have found their way into newsrooms around the world (Currah, 2009; Dick, 2011; Karyotakis et al., 2019). Furst (2020:272), for example, notes how expanding digitalisation as well as the scarcity of resources in newsrooms has led to the emergence of new newsroom job profiles:

> The emergence of new job profiles and new areas of responsibility is even more striking. One of these new profiles and tasks is the analysis and optimisation of audience metrics, with job titles such as 'social media,' 'audience,' 'traffic' or 'growth' editor ... These editors are responsible for increasing the overall traffic of the editorial content and identifying trending topics that are likely to drive traffic, often by means of search engine optimisation (SEO) and social media optimisation (SMO). They identify 'popular' terms and topics and make recommendations to their colleagues as to which of these should be included in their reporting.

Another factor that has been found to play a role in shaping the reporting of news relates to the journalistic practice of observing how other news outlets cover the same story. To illustrate this point, in a study exploring how conflict news comes into being, Hoxa and Hanitzsch (2018) found that the news production cycle of a media outlet is always partly bound up by consideration of the news coverage and practices of other media outlets. Hoxa and Hanitzsch (2018:62) warn us against this journalistic practice:

> [J]ournalists often start out by digesting other media outlets' coverage of conflicts and take their cues from there ... Journalists' habits of screening the media for breaking news ... inevitably produce less and not more diversity of narratives and story angles. Conflict coverage thus runs the danger of becoming narrow, producing

a limited range of potential and desirable political action in public discourse. This is the reason why certain political responses to conflicts (such as military intervention) often seem to be without alternative in the public conversation.

As has been suggested, underlying the selection and shaping of all new stories are the political and ideological contexts of the reporting. Clearly, the nature (e.g. broadsheet versus tabloid) and the political leanings of news outlets shape their reporting (Caple & Bednarek, 2013; Caple, 2018) – both what is chosen to be reported and how it is reported – resulting in diverse coverage of events. Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2017:6) thus note:

> At the level of news organizations, the similarity and dissimilarity of news depends primarily on the specific type and editorial mission of an outlet. Business papers, tabloids, and broadsheets are liable to select and frame news differently. Further differences can be expected between outlets of different political leaning.

To exemplify the influence of a newspaper's nature on news selection, Esser et al. (2016) note that tabloid outlets – which are often criticised for being sensationalist, oversimplified and populist (Ornebring & Jonsson, 2004) – tend to attribute a higher news value to prominence when compared to broadsheets. In other words, stories about elite people and/or nations are likely to feature more prominently in tabloids than in broadsheets. As previously mentioned, a news organisation's political affiliation also influences the coverage of news. Hallin and Mancini (2004), for example, note how journalists and other media personnel typically 'work for media organisations whose politics coincide with their own'. On this point, in a study exploring how American newspapers covered the Bush administration, Peake (2007:52) found that 'newspapers that endorsed Bush's reelection in 2004 tended to write more favorable headlines [while] newspapers in states where Democrats are strong politically tended to write less favorable

headlines'. His conclusion was that newspaper coverage is largely governed by the political leanings of a newspaper and its audience.

A practical manifestation of how a news organisation's political affiliations and ideological leanings find expression in its reporting is the outlet's style guide. A news organisation's style guide reflects the publication's political stance and thus impacts on its news coverage. Thus, for example, Cameron (1996:316) notes:

> Style policies are ... ideological themselves. Though they are framed as purely functional or aesthetic judgements, and the commonest criteria offered are 'apolitical' ones such as clarity, brevity, consistency, liveliness and vigour, as well as linguistic 'correctness' and (occasionally) 'purity', on examination it turns out that these stylistic values are not timeless and neutral, but have a history and a politics. They play a role in constructing a relationship with a specific imagined audience, and also in sustaining a particular ideology of news reporting.

The influences of these ideological factors are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the reporting of war and conflict (Haarman & Lombardo, 2009). Patriotic mythologies and news producers' identities as members of their national community have also been identified as contributing powerfully to the shaping of news coverage. To use Schudson's (2011) words, 'journalism ... never stands entirely outside the community it reports on' (p.51). This is particularly the case when journalists report on their own country's conflict or war. For example, Shamir (1988) examined journalists' views on press freedom and social responsibility in the Israeli context and found that 'Israeli elite journalists are willing to submerge basic professional values to considerations of national morale, national image, and a sweeping definition of national interest' (p.594). In another study comparing coverage of the Intifadeh and the Gulf War on US and Israeli television, Liebes (1992:54) concludes that 'the luxury of the detachment offered by the ideology of "objectivity", "neutrality", and "balance" is reserved for reporting other people's troubles, rather than one own's'. Similarly, Zandberg and Neiger (2005) state that when faced with events which are

perceived as threatening, journalists' 'belonging to the national community overpowers their membership in the professional one' (p.132).

1.3 Conflict journalism

The issue of news coverage of war and conflict in mainstream media has received considerable scholarly attention. The abundance of research exploring media coverage of conflict/war suggests that the reporting of any conflict is complex. Some scholars point to 'some relatively stable general trends' in media coverage of conflict/war (Livio & Cohen-Yechezkely, 2019:697). These include the media's tendency to portray the in-group favourably while delegitimising the out-group, a general inclination to disseminate and naturalise consensual views aligned with those of the government, heavy reliance on official sources and an orientation towards the interests of the state. Against this more state-aligned reporting, there are also notable traditions of dissident reporting of war which include dissident views that would be marginalised by the mainstream press. By uncovering the Israeli's media coverage of the IPC, this thesis will address issues around the lack of consensus around news coverage of war and conflict.

As previously mentioned, a common trend relating to news coverage of war and conflict is the media's tendency to delineate the parties involved in the conflict in dichotomous terms: to construct news stories about 'us' and centre on how news about 'others' affect 'us'. While every news medium operates within a particular political and cultural context and therefore fosters an ethnocentric view of the world, Wolsfeld (2004) notes that this ethnocentrism becomes especially blatant in times of conflict. This is reflected in the media's tendency to portray the in-group in a positive light and in victimhood terms while at the same time demonising the out-group and framing it as a belligerent actor. Wolsfeld (2004:23) thus argues:

> [I]n times of crisis, the news media of both sides emphasize their own righteousness and the other's evilness. Such breakdowns are often accompanied by violence and the news media are easily mobilized for the vilification of the enemy. News stories

provide graphic descriptions of the other side's brutality and our people's suffering … Claims about our own acts of aggression and the other's suffering are either ignored, underplayed, or discounted. We are always the victims, they are always the aggressors.

Carter, Thomas and Ross (2011:459) point us in the same direction:

Journalists who deploy conflict narratives often reduce reporting to a binary of good-and-bad or black-and-white, ignoring the subtle shades of gray that often surround complicated issues … [and as such they] reinforce the socially-constructed cultural divide between ingroup and outgroup.

The media's binary conceptualisations of in-groups and out-groups in times of conflict often include the issue of blame and/or responsibility. More specifically, the out-group is typically depicted as the perpetrator that is responsible for the eruption of the conflict and the in-group as the victim that is not to blame. As an example of this phenomenon, Ariyanto et al. (2008) examined media reports of Christian–Muslim conflict on the Indonesian island of Ambon and found that 'both Christian and Muslim newspapers were more likely to explicitly name the religious outgroup as perpetrators of intergroup conflict than they were to attribute responsibility to their own group' (p.16). As another example, exploring the coverage of an explosion which killed eight members of a Gazan family in 2006, Keshev and Miftah (2009:40) found that 'the Israeli media gave prominence in headlines to points of view that absolved the army of responsibility for the explosion, framing the exculpatory evidence as undisputed fact'.

As mentioned previously, another stable trend in the media's reporting of conflicts is its inclination towards the distribution of governmental narratives and frames (e.g. Waisbord, 2002). Robinson et al. (2013:13) thus note:

[T]he prevailing academic orthodoxy sees news media as lacking independence when covering war, producing instead coverage that favours their own side and privileges the viewpoints of their own governments.

Along similar lines, Cottle (2006:80) states:

Study after study of the media at war concludes that national media generally fall in line behind their national governments … While the technical parameters and media forms of mainstream war coverage may change through time, the broad political alignment of media in support of state and military power appears to be generally constant.

The idea that the media tends to advance government war objectives and propaganda has been illustrated in the work of numerous scholars. In a seminal study of US media coverage of the Vietnam War, Hallin (1986) 'disputes the common notion that negative media coverage of Vietnam helped turn the American public against U.S. efforts … [arguing instead that] newspaper and television journalists … tended throughout the Vietnam years to report the war from a perspective largely consistent with official American policy'; according to Hallin (1986), then, the shift in American media coverage – from supportive coverage over 1965–1968 to critical reporting over 1968–1973 – mirrored a shift in US political administration thinking. In the first years, the war enjoyed a high level of political consensus and this was reflected in coverage which mobilised for battle; the second phase of the war saw the US political administration arguing publicly over the course of the war and this debate was mirrored in the media's critical reporting. Similarly, Lewis and Brookes (2004), who explored how British television news covered the war in Iraq, found that 'the wartime coverage was generally fairly sympathetic to the government's case' (p.298).

Closely related to the media's inclination in wartime to serve as the mouthpiece of the government is a feature which relates to an ongoing concern in both academic and practitioner analysis: whose voices dominate reporting of warfare. Conflict/war reporting, as has already been stated, tends to be characterised by heavy reliance on official sources (e.g. Gans, 1979; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Bennett, 1990; Dickson, 1994; Waisbord, 2002; Bennet et al., 2007; Hayes & Guardino, 2010). These sources, Bennett et al. (2007:3) note, 'often control the terms of journalistic access, along with the allotment of information upon which the careers of journalists and the political success of the officials themselves converge'.

The media's tendency to rely on official sources and on their 'definition of the situation' has been explored extensively in the literature. For example, in a study examining the extent to which *New York Times* journalists relied on official sources in their coverage of the 1989 US invasion of Panama, Dickson (1994) found that the *Times* relied heavily on US officials and government themes to tell the story, while nongovernment themes were rarely mentioned. To give another example, Hayes and Guardino (2010:80) analysed the coverage of Iraq-related news stories on ABC, CBS and NBC in the run-up to the Iraq war, finding that 'Bush administration officials were the most frequently quoted sources, the voices of anti-war groups and opposition Democrats were barely audible, and the overall thrust of coverage favored a pro-war perspective' (p.59). Also relevant here is a study conducted by Thumber and Palmer (2004:103). The scholars analysed British media coverage of the Second Gulf War and found that official Coalition spokespersons and representatives of government and the armed forces dominated across all the news outlets.

As was noted earlier, there is a considerable amount of literature which suggests that the media tends to employ a patriotic framing of reporting when covering events that threaten the wellbeing of its nation (e.g. Waidbord, 2002; Nossek, 2004; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005). Waisbord (2002), for example, who explored US media coverage of September 11, argues that US news media resorted to patriotic journalism. To use the author's words, 'journalism fostered uncritical patriotism through endless coverage of "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995), that is, everyday reminders of the nation … [and] unwaveringly bec[a]me

wrapped in the flag' (p.278). Pointing us in the same direction, Robinson et al. (2013) studied British news media coverage of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and found that while 'Tumber and Webster (2006:163) may be correct in claiming that "heroic nationalism holds less of an appeal" today ... any decline in "blind", jingoistic patriotism did not undermine the primacy of the British perspective or the prevalence of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995) in the reporting of the Iraq invasion' (p.166).

Equally important when reviewing war coverage patterns is identifying what is generally absent from the reporting. Cottle (2006:80), for example, argues that 'in-depth discussion of the home country's geopolitical interests, enacted government controls and censorship, and scenes of casualties, horror and decimated bodies' are typically absent from war coverage. Boyd-Barrett (2004:25) further contends that 'the genre [of war reporting] ... often fail to capture both the deep-level and proximate causes of wars or explain their actual durations and aftermaths, and hide the extent of media manipulation by official monopolization of information flows'.

But as noted previously, alongside these tendencies for the media to rally around the flag, there are equally traditions of reporting that eschew this falling into line with the national interest. Summarising the experience of reporting in the Vietnam war, Delli Carpini (1990:127) points to the complexities and tensions that underlie the media's role:

> While the press has a tradition of national loyalty, it [also] has a competing role as 'watchdog' of government. While the press is constrained by economic interests, it is also motivated by a desire to inform the public as best it can. And finally, while the media traditionally stays close to the mainstream, it also thrives on the sensational, the dramatic, the controversial. The mixed message sent out by the press concerning Vietnam resulted from the interplay of these competing pressures.

Such observations have led some scholars to challenge the essentially propagandistic model of conflict and war reporting. This point is exemplified in Althaus' (2003) study of the pathways and processes by which critical voices entered ABC, CBS and

NBC evening news broadcasts aired during the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf crisis. The author found that journalists 'did not merely toe the "line in the sand" drawn by the Bush administration [but] exercised considerable discretion in locating and airing oppositional voices' and concluded that 'the press may be more independent from government sources than previously thought' (p.381). Along similar lines, in a study aimed at advancing a new model of the relationship between government and the media (i.e. the cascading activation model), Entman (2003) argues that although the attacks of September 11, 2001 revealed that 'media patrol the boundaries of culture and keep discord within conventional bounds ... inside those borders, even when government is promoting "war", media are not entirely passive receptacles for government propaganda, at least not always' (p.428).

Further research challenges the traditional, national-oriented argument about journalists' lack of independence in times of conflict. Kampf and Liebes (2013), for example, note that 'the drastic changes that have overtaken the media in recent decades, together with changes in the ways in which wars are fought, have transformed how armed conflicts are mediated, represented and publicly understood' (p.3). The authors point to a new trend according to which journalists do not necessarily rally around the flag but exhibit greater independence in their reporting. More specifically they argue that journalistic independence at war is evident now 'in extending media coverage beyond the national boundaries ... in devoting screen time to dissident actors' personalities even without direct relation to their subversive actions, and in allowing criticism to emerge at all stages of violent conflict' (p.159).

The following section attempts to locate this study among existing research that addresses the representation of Israel in the Israeli media. The section further aims to justify my methodological approach. As was mentioned earlier, this involves triangulating a corpus-based CDA with discourse-based interviews.

1.4 Media coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict

Media coverage of the IPC has drawn the attention of scholars from numerous disciplines, particularly within the fields of media and communication. A major theme in the literature is concerned with revealing how systematic bias operates in the international news media reporting of the conflict, towards either the Israeli or the Palestinian side. A closer look at the research shows that the American news media generally tends to sympathise with Israel more than media elsewhere in the world (Kandil, 2009:37). For example, Viser (2003) compared the portrayal of the IPC in the *New York Times* with that in *Haaretz* across three time periods: 1987–88, 2000–01 and post–September 11, 2001. Using content analysis, the author coded 280 *Times* stories and 221 *Haaretz* stories on the use of sources, end quotes (i.e. quotes used to close a story), topic and location of stories, and reporting on fatalities. The main finding was that '[c]ompared with *Ha'aretz*, the *Times'* coverage provides a more one-sided version of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict' (p.118).

Similar pro-Israeli tendencies have been documented in other US outlets. In a study examining how the American media framed key issues in the IPC over 2000–2004, Dunsky (2008) used qualitative content analysis to analyse approximately 350 media reports and transcripts from 30 major American print and broadcast news outlets. The analysis revealed significant pro-Israel bias in what was omitted from the coverage. According to Dunsky (2008), the coverage routinely omitted two key underlying contexts: 'the impact of US policy on the trajectory of the conflict; and the importance of international law and consensus regarding the key issues of Israeli settlement and annexation policies and the right of return of Palestinian refugees' (p.317).

Studies investigating the coverage of the IPC in the British media have noted more mixed tendencies (Kandil, 2009:37; Neureiter, 2017:68). Some studies point to a pro-Israel bias. For instance, in a major study by the University of Glasgow Media Group, Philo and Berry (2004) conducted a content analysis of 189 television reports broadcast over September–October 2000, October–December 2001 and March–April 2002. Audience reception was also explored in questionnaires and focus group interviews with more than

800 respondents. The results of the content analysis suggest that 'it was Israeli perspectives which predominated in TV news' (p.326). The analysis of news reception revealed that the UK audience understood little of the IPC's origin, its complexity or its problems; in other words, their exposure to British media coverage of the IPC did not enhance understanding.

Also pointing to a pro-Israel bias is a study by Barkho (2008). In this study examining the BBC's strategy and discursive practices with regards to the IPC, Barkho (2008) triangulated a textual analysis of the BBC's English and Arabic online reports with the results of extensive interviews with BBC editors, articles by mainstream media as well as the BBC's guidelines and the editors' blogs. A pro-Israel bias was detected in both the BBC's lexical and syntactic choices. For example, Palestinians and their actions fell invariably into the lexical category of 'militancy' (p.283) while terms such as 'settlements' and 'settlers' which Israel favours and Palestinians shun were commonly used in the reporting. And while the BBC used transitivity or nominal patterns to foreground Palestinian casualties, thereby diminishing Israel's responsibility, the practice was found to be reversed when reporting Israeli casualties. Significantly, the contextualisation of the textual analysis revealed that 'BBC language reflects to a large extent the views, assumptions and norms prevalent in the corporation as well as the unequal division of power and control between the two protagonists despite the corporation's insistence on impartiality, balance and neutrality in its coverage of the conflict' (p.278).

Other studies exploring the coverage of the IPC in the British media have pointed to more balanced reporting. In the study closest to the current research, Kandil (2009) draws on CL and CDA approaches to compare the representation of the IPC in British, American and Arab media as reflected in the reporting of the BBC, the CNN and Al-Jazeera, respectively. A major finding was that compared to CNN, the BBC appeared more balanced in its reporting. The author noted, for example, the BBC's tendency to be 'cautious' (p.155) about the use of evaluative words such as 'terrorism'. Also noted was the provision of 'appropriate background information' such as the fact that the violent clashes were taking places on Israeli *occupied* lands.

Literature on the ways in which the Israeli and Palestinian media report on the IPC suggests that the conflict is often covered by both sides in mirror images, with each side presenting an opposite story. Thus, it is noted that the Palestinian/Arab media tends to construct narratives which reflect more the perspective of the Palestinian side (e.g. Elmasry, Shamy, Manning, Mills & Auter, 2013) by focusing, for example, on Israeli occupation and aggression. On the Israeli side, the emphasis is on terrorism and a refusal to compromise. As Keshev and Miftah (2009:8) explain:

> The Palestinian media narrative emphasizes the occupation – whose victims are the Palestinians – and paints the government of Israel as aggressive, opposed to peace and responsible for violent events in the region. On the other side, Israeli media outlets emphasize the violent and terrorist foundations of the Palestinians' conduct and their unwillingness or inability to reach a solution. The Israelis, in this telling, are the victims of a conflict in which they are not to blame.

As has already been stated, this study explores how the Israeli media covered a specific episode in the IPC: the 2014 round of violence. The remainder of this section seeks to locate my study within research that has specifically explored the IPC in the Israeli media.

Israeli media coverage of the IPC has received a good deal of scholarly attention. A review of the abundant research on this topic offers various perspectives on the subject matter. Generally, two broad tendencies in the literature can be discerned. Some scholars note a more propagandistic orientation in the reporting of the conflict, as well as increasing convergence among outlets; other scholars challenge arguments about coverage patterns being in line with the salient features of war journalism and point to the more complex ways in which news producers adhere to professional routines such as balance and criticism.

According to the government-control propaganda model of reporting, Israeli news outlets tend to frame the Israeli and the Palestinian sides in oppositional terms by

promoting the righteousness of the Israeli struggle while at the same time delegitimising Palestinian voices. Keshev and Miftah (2009) thus note:

> Israeli media outlets emphasize the violent and terrorist foundations of the Palestinians' conduct and their unwillingness or inability to reach a solution. The Israelis, in this telling, are the victims of a conflict in which they are not to blame.

Studies have also noted how coverage of the IPC in the Israeli media tends to be patriotic and state-oriented. For example, Nir and Roeh (1992:47) compared the reporting of the First Intifada in two Israeli dailies – one 'popular' and the other 'quality'. Their analysis of linguistic/rhetorical phrasing (which was restricted mainly to the headlines) and of non-linguistic variables such as graphics and photography revealed that the differences in the coverage were rather 'meagre'. This led the authors to conclude that 'consensus and widely shared national ideology override professional norms and practices'.

Along similar lines, Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy (2008:401) explored the coverage of two events from the Second Intifada on two television news channels – one Israeli and one Palestinian. The focus of their analysis was on the ethnic background of journalists and their sources, the level of emotionalism conveyed in the broadcast and the extent to which the day's events were contextualised. In considering how these features differed across the channels, they note that 'journalistic routines for covering violent conflict lead to the construction of ethnocentric news'. The broad conclusion drawn was that 'while some citizens may occasionally be able to look beyond their national ethnocentrism, most of what they see, hear, and read in the news provides constant reminders of their own nobility and the enemy's barbarity' (p.416).

The Israeli media's tendency to articulate ethnocentric narratives has been further noted in the work of other scholars. For instance, using a mix of discursive, linguistic and communicative parameters (e.g. positioning, headline selection, visual semiotics), Dor (2004) analysed the coverage of the Second Intifada in three Israeli dailies. The author found that 'the papers provided their readers with a one-sided, partial, censored, and biased

picture of reality' (p.5). Aimed at understanding what might underlie the reporting, Dor (2004) explored the news production process by conducting interviews with Israeli news producers. Significantly, the interviews revealed that although editors knew far less of the intricacies of the general picture than senior reporters, they tended to '[adopt] the political and military establishment's judgements ... [in order to] minimize friction with the establishment and the public' (p.161).

Similarly, in a study exploring how the Israeli quality daily newspaper *Haaretz* reported Palestinian casualties during the first year of the Second Intifada, Korn (2004) found that while *Haaretz* reported the number of Palestinian casualties consistently and reliably and did not share the propaganda tone of the tabloids *Ma'ariv* and *Yediot*, it '[constructed] the uprising as an armed confrontation justifiably oppressed by military means ... accepted the definitions regarding the militarisation of the conflict, emphasised the events in which Palestinians used firearms, and adopted, almost without reservation, the narrative claiming that the IDF reacts to the escalation of Palestinian violence' (p.259–260).

A very different focus of studies has been on how the Israeli media report on international coverage of the IPC. In a study aimed at examining how national broadcast media in Israel reported on the international coverage of Israel's first offensive on Gaza in 2008/9, Orgad (2009) analysed 12 news items broadcast on two Israeli television stations. Findings suggested that although international coverage used discursive and visual techniques that invited 'estrangement' (i.e. offered an opportunity to cast doubt on commonsensical national discourses and encourage more critical, reflexive reporting), in the reporting of these international stories Israeli media typically saw them as tools of anti-Israel propaganda. According to Orgad (2009), this particular reporting on the reporting (as it were) served to reproduce a consensual narrative of self-righteousness.

A similar reproducing of narratives was also found in a study by Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely (2019) that compared the coverage of the 2014 Gaza war in three Israeli online newspapers to posts on the IDF's official social media page. Using CDA tools (e.g.

legitimation strategies, the use of reported speech, modality), the authors analysed all the news reports published between 5 July and 27 August 2014, finding that 'media discourses … were mostly congruent ideologically with the messages broadcast on the IDF's official channels' (p.709). The only notable difference observed in the reporting was the journalists' transforming of the IDF's formal and authoritative voice into the more personalised and emotional voice of media discourse.

The issue of convergence in the reporting of the conflict was taken up in a major longitudinal study by Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2017). Here the focus was not only on Israeli coverage, but also on Palestinian and international reporting. Exploring whether and when conflict news in different media become more similar or dissimilar, Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2017) analysed the coverage of the IPC in 13 leading Israeli, Palestinian and international media over almost 10 years. The analysis revealed that while '[f]ears of a universal convergence of news … appear overblown' (p. 21), there was a marked trend towards convergence *within* countries, with greater synchronisation among news outlets during periods of acute violence.

Against these studies pointing to the Israeli media's echoing of hegemonic perspectives during wartime, other studies have noted tendencies beyond the propagandistic model of 'rallying around the flag', pointing to more complex ways in which Israeli journalists have engaged with the conflict. Here the focus has been on how reporting has maintained independence and critique. For example, Neiger, Zandberg and Meyers (2010) explored ways in which two Israeli daily newspapers shaped representations of criticism in their coverage of the Second Lebanon War. The study involved analysis of a total of 172 news items, focusing on markers of criticism in headlines, subheadlines, opening paragraphs or highlighted portions of the text. The authors argue that journalists' use of 'reaffirming criticism' – criticism which supports the logic and necessity of military action (e.g. criticism of too little action) – enabled journalists 'to express fierce criticism as professionals, without challenging the establishment's basic assumptions' (p.377). In another study examining how the Israeli media covered Palestinians during the Second Intifada, Liebes and Kampf (2009) analysed news photos and television representations

over 2000–2005. The main finding was that, unlike in the First Intifada, 'the Israeli public was exposed to [Palestinians'] human side – as political leaders, victims, witnesses and even terrorists' (p.434).

Further research that challenges the propagandistic model of Israeli coverage of the IPC includes the work of Kampf and Liebes (2013). Drawing on a plethora of case studies, interview analyses and other qualitative findings, Kampf and Liebes (2013:161) attempted to identify how media coverage of war and terror had changed over time. They found that the more recent trend in reporting was for journalists to give greater voice to the other side of the conflict (e.g. interviewing the enemy, acknowledging the other side's victims) and expose moral transgressions of 'our' soldiers.

In a study on the deconstruction and reclassification of conflict narratives in the Israeli news media, Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch and Nagar (2016) challenge arguments about the Israeli media's tendency to adopt an ethnocentric reporting style that implements an 'us versus them' frame. Aimed at capturing a broad spectrum of conflict coverage as a basis for classification, Tenenboim-Weinblatt et al. (2016) used quantitative content analysis to examine the Israeli media's coverage of three Middle Eastern conflicts – the IPC, the conflict surrounding Iran's nuclear program and the Syrian civil war – over a period of six months (July–December 2012). The authors found that while establishment actors were the most dominant subgroup in violence-oriented narratives, they were also most dominant in news stories with a frame of peace. This finding challenges arguments about the presence of elite/official actors being an indicator of war reporting. The authors further found that although the representation of out-group actors was more negative than that of in-group actors, the latter was 'still slightly negative on average' (p.162), suggesting that journalists do not abandon a critical stance. The conclusion drawn was that '"[r]allying around the flag" and loyalty to the national group … [were] … apparent … only to a limited degree' (p.162).

Similarly, Lavie-Dinur, Yarchi and Karniel (2018) used content analysis to explore the portrayal of 'lone wolf terror attacks' (those conducted by individual Palestinian actors)

in Israel in 2015 in three Israeli news media outlets – *Ynet, Walla* and *Haaretz*, representing mainstream, more conservative right-wing and more liberal left-wing views, respectively. Their analysis focused on a sample comprising 1832 news stories and aimed at finding out whether the Israeli media coverage tended towards a single pro-Israel narrative or showed variation in line with the different outlets. Their conclusion was that 'the coverage [was] influenced by the ideology and political bias of the media outlet and did not conscript on behalf of a national and hegemonic narrative' (p.196).

To conclude this section, it is worth noting some of the disciplinary and methodological features of the various studies into the reporting on the IPC in the Israeli media. First, it is interesting to note that few studies have focused on language as the main unit of analysis. This is probably related to the fact that the topic has received the attention of mainly media and communication scholars, with limited studies coming specifically out of the field of linguistics. Furthermore, when linguistic variables were examined, the analysis was often restricted to specific parts of the news text (e.g. headlines) rather than to whole texts (e.g. Nir & Roeh, 1992; Neiger et al., 2010).

The overview also shows that the analysis in the majority of studies was primarily qualitative (e.g. content analysis, narrative analysis, CDA), with few studies adopting quantitative methods and fewer again mixed-method approaches (i.e. integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods into their approach). A third point worth mentioning is that the studies described above have mainly been text-based, whether focused on written text (news reporting) or video (news broadcasts). What have not been considered in any systematic way are other dimensions of the media triangle model (Dick, 1989) – that is, the way such texts are produced (news production processes) and how they are received (audience reception).

It is important to note that the above examples should not be interpreted as criticism of these scholars, but as reflecting two things: (i) that the textual analysis of media representations of the IPC could benefit from the use of more systematic methods grounded in applied linguistics; and (ii) that the usefulness of this textual analysis could be

complemented by an analysis of news production and/or news reception. In an attempt to address some of the aforementioned methodological gaps, this study uses a combination of CL methods and CDA for the analysis of news texts. In this, we follow Kandil (2009), who was the first scholar, to the best of my knowledge, to conduct a corpus-based CDA study in the context of the IPC.

While the strength of this 'methodological synergy' (Baker et al., 2008) will be discussed in the next chapter, it is worth mentioning at this point that the use of corpus methods adds a quantitative dimension to discourse analysis. Furthermore, given that a textual analysis can only tell a partial story about the ways in which the Israeli media portrayed the 2014 Israel–Gaza clashes, the analysis also examines the production of this reporting by conducting discourse-based interviews with news producers. The rationale for adopting this methodological approach is elaborated on in the next chapter.

1.5 Theoretical explanations

This section sets out the theoretically grounded basis for my analysis of the 2014 Israel–Gaza clashes in the Israeli media. Adopting an eclectic approach, I synthesise a range of explanatory perspectives drawn from across the literature. Although I draw on Van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategies associated with CDA, I rely more heavily on Bar-Tal's (2007, 2013) socio-psychological theory of intractable conflicts and particularly his notion of 'ethos of conflict'. These perspectives are thought to be useful in shedding light on media coverage of conflicts. As will be revealed in the findings and discussion chapters, these perspectives are used in the analysis of media texts, as well as in the analysis of interview claims. Surrounding any consideration of the legitimacy and perpetuation of conflict is the key notion of 'ideology'. I shall begin with discussion of this major overarching – but always difficult - concept before looking at the more specific theories relevant to the study.

The legitimation of any conflict is crucial for its continuation. Such legitimation cannot be achieved without the spread and naturalisation of 'ideology'. Although ideology has been the focus of much research and is central to the understandings and the analyses of social practices, its definition remains rather elusive. This is because ideology does not have a single clear definition and is used in a variety of ways. The plethora of conceptual approaches to the term is illustrated in Van Dijk's (1998:307) words below:

> [W]e see ideologies defined as systems of ideas, especially those of dominant classes or other groups, as interpretation schemes for everyday life, as suffused with common sense or partisan interests, as strategies of legitimation, as hegemonic definitions of reality, as false consciousness inculcated by dominant discourse, and as dominant discourse itself.

The core definition of ideology, as Knight (2006:625) points out, is as 'a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values'. While this is a minimal and apolitical definition, ideologies are often associated with power structures. According to Croteaux and Hoynes (2018), the analysis of ideology can be traced back to Marx and particularly to 20th-century Marxism. For early Marxists, ideology was seen as a powerful mechanism of social control that was connected with the concept of 'false consciousness' and was understood in straightforward economic-class terms. Croteaux and Hoynes (2018:164) explain this system thus:

> [T]he subordinate classes who accepted the basic ideology of the ruling class were said to have false consciousness because their worldview served the interests of others. For Marx and early Marxists, social revolution depended on the working class breaking free of the ideas of the ruling class – moving beyond their false consciousness and developing a 'revolutionary' consciousness that represented their material interests as workers. This new way of thinking would then stand in opposition to the ruling ideology, which promoted the economic interests of the capitalist class.

In the neo-Marxist (Gramscian) traditions in sociology and political science, the analysis of ideology has moved away from a focus on economic-class relations towards a more general conceptualisation of the terrain of culture and is associated with concepts such as hegemony. According to Gramsci (1971), the power of ruling parties can be wielded at the level of culture or ideology and maintained through consent, not just through the use of force. In such a system, hegemony is not simply about ideological domination, but operates instead at the level of common sense. Gamson et al. (1992:381) thus argue:

> Gramsci's (1971) enduring contribution was to focus our attention beyond explicit beliefs and ideology to see how the routine, taken-for-granted structures of everyday thinking contribute to a structure of dominance. Gramsci urged us to expand our notion of ideology to include the world of common sense.

According to Croteau and Hoynes (2018), when analysts examine ideology in the media, they are not interested in making judgements about how 'realistic' media representations are as they generally perceive the term 'real' itself to be an ideological construction. What they *are* interested in is what such representations tell us about ourselves and our society. As Croteau and Hoynes (2018:163, emphasis in original) explain, '[t]he ideological work lies in the *patterns* within media texts. Ideas and attitudes that are routinely included in media become part of the legitimate public debate about issues. Ideas that are excluded from the popular media or appear in the media only to be ridiculed have little legitimacy'. Drawing on Croteau and Hoynes's (2018) understanding of ideology, this research does not use the terms 'ideology' and 'ideological' to make judgements about the truth value of media representations. Rather, such terms are used to refer to the set of beliefs, values and judgements which serve to legitimate a group's actions and which are formed, changed and reproduced largely through discourse.

CDA can provide a useful framework for exploring the spread and naturalisation of ideology in media texts about conflict. This is because CDA is primarily concerned with

identifying the ways in which ideologies are explicitly and implicitly disseminated through discourse (Van Dijk, 1998). Associated with the CDA paradigm is Van Leeuwen's (2007) conception of legitimation strategies. Van Leeuwen's (2007) framework for analysing the language of legitimation is useful for interpreting how patterns of language identified in media reporting of conflict are able to construct an ideology which then serves to legitimate controversial actions.

In his framework, Van Leeuwen (2007:92) sets out four general legitimation strategies. Of these, three are particularly relevant to the analysis of this research. These are: (i) *authorisation* – legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law and people who are vested with institutional authority; (ii) *moral evaluation* – legitimation by appeals to value systems; and (iii) *rationalisation* – legitimation by reference to practices' goals, uses and effects, and to 'a natural order of things' (p.101).

Legitimation strategies have been used to explore forms of legitimation in times of conflict/war. For example, Simonsen (2019) examined how legitimation of war in Israeli public diplomacy has evolved over time by analysing press releases from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) published one week before, during and one week after the three rounds of violence between Israel and Hamas. The analysis revealed that two legitimation strategies were recurrently used across all wars. The first one was legitimation by 'moral abstraction' – a particular type of moral evaluation which refers to practices in abstract ways and links them to discourses of moral values. For example, Simonsen (2019:509) notes that:

> [w]hen Israeli leaders refer to war and military activities in the Gaza Strip, they utilize the strategy of moral abstraction, avoiding the word 'war' and instead employ the euphemism 'defending our citizens'. Thus they foreground the legality of self-defense against violent aggression … actions of war become moralized by the use of the words 'responsibility' or 'obligation', where the implication is that war is morally necessary.

The second strategy identified by Simonsen (2019) in the discourse was legitimation by 'instrumental rationalisation', that is, legitimation through references to a war's goals, purposes and effects, that is to say, a utilitarian justification for actions. Simonsen (2019:510) describes the use of this strategy thus:

> [w]hen Israeli leaders explicitly refer to war or military actions without using moralizing euphemisms, they employ the strategy of instrumental rationalization, with the subordinating conjunction 'in order to' being a central component. A utilitarian logic enables the Israeli MFA to present war as a means to an end ... any action of war is legitimized by reference to the end it seeks to obtain.

A study particularly relevant to the current project is Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely (2019) with its similar focus on the Israeli media's reporting of the 2014 round of violence. In their research, Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely (2019) compared the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza round of violence in three Israeli online newspapers with posts on the IDF official social media pages. Their analysis focused on the use of legitimation strategies, along with a range of other discursive methods employed in these pages (ones identified in CDA) including referential strategies, the use of reported speech, transitivity, voice and modality. Regarding legitimation strategies, the authors identified three types of strategies used in both media discourse and official IDF channels – namely, authorisation, rationalisation and moral evaluation. As Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely (2019) explain, legitimation through authorisation was achieved through references to high-ranking officers in the IDF channels and a combination of IDF officers and political leaders in news media; legitimation through rationalisation was achieved by 'portraying the Israeli offensive as a necessary defensive response to violence initiated by Palestinians, and by highlighting the specific and focused goals of military operations' (p.701); and legitimation through moral evaluation was achieved by portraying Israelis as participants who are forced to respond to violence, by using the loaded term 'terrorists' to refer to the Palestinian side in the conflict and by framing the conflict as 'a battle between Hamas as a bloodthirsty

organization and peace-seeking Israeli citizens and soldiers' (p.701). The present study builds on Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely's (2019) study by also investigating news production processes.

Another key theoretical resource drawn on in the framing of this study is Bar-Tal's (2007, 2013) socio-psychological theory of intractable conflicts. Bar-Tal (2007, 2013) identifies a range of essential features that go to make a conflict intractable. While some of these are purely psychological in nature and others more tangible and observable, all features differ in the pace at which they develop, as well as in their intensity over time. Intractable conflicts are characterised as *protracted* (persisting for at least a generation) and *violent* and they *demand extensive investments* – both material (e.g. military, economic, technological) and psychological ones. They play a *central* role in the lives of the involved societies, with members of each party being constantly and continuously preoccupied with the conflict. This centrality is often mirrored in the saliency of the conflict on the public agenda. Intractable conflicts are also perceived as *irreconcilable* (at least not peacefully), as *total* (i.e. relating to essential goals that are regarded as indispensable for the group's existence or survival) and as having a *zero-sum* nature, with each side perceiving the other side's 'wins' as their own 'losses' and vice versa.

Bar-Tal's conceptual model of intractable conflicts consists of three main elements: collective memories (i.e. societal beliefs about the past), an ethos of conflict (i.e. societal beliefs about the present) and a collective emotional orientation (i.e. the tendency of a society and its members to express particular emotions). Of these three, the ethos of conflict – the narrative a society develops about the present – constitutes the central element within the socio-psychological infrastructure of intractable conflicts (Pliskin & Halperin, 2016:167). This is because such a narrative helps societies involved in intractable conflicts justify and explain the events of the conflict.

Bar-Tal (2007, 2013) enumerates eight themes which contribute to the ethos of conflict. Beliefs about the *justness of one's own goals* outline the goals of a conflict and establish their justice by indicating their crucial importance and providing their rationales.

Beliefs about *self-victimhood* concern an in-group's perception of itself as a victim of unjust harm inflicted by the adversary. Societal beliefs about a *positive self-image* pertain to the ethnocentric tendency of the in-group to attribute to itself positive characteristics, values, norms and patterns of behaviour. Beliefs about the *delegitimisation of the opponent* focus on negative social categorisation of the out-group which serves to deny the adversary's humanity and exclude it from the international community as a legitimate member. Societal beliefs about *security* concern the preoccupation of society members with the appraisal of threats and dangers; security here is viewed as a central value. Societal beliefs about *peace* refer to peace as the society's ultimate goal, thereby presenting society members, both to themselves and to the rest of the world, as peace-seeking. Societal beliefs about *patriotism* focus on generating attachment to the country and society by 'propagating loyalty, love, care, and sacrifice' (Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin & Zafran, 2012:43). Societal beliefs about *unity* concern the necessity of setting aside any internal conflicts and uniting forces in the face of the external threat.

Bar-Tal's framework has been used in several previous studies to explain the coverage of the IPC in the Israeli media. Notable among these is Dor's (2004) study of the coverage of the Second Intifada in the Israeli media. Findings of this study revealed that 'the papers provided their readers with a one-sided, partial, censored, and biased picture of reality' (p.5). To understand what might underlie this type of reporting, Dor (2004) also explored news production process by conducting interviews with Israeli news producers. The main finding from the interviews was that although editors knew far less of the intricacies of the general picture than senior reporters, they tended to '[adopt] the political and military establishment's judgements … [in order to] minimize friction with the establishment and the public' (p.161). In his conclusion chapter, Dor (2004) argues that Bar-Tal's theory of intractable conflicts – particularly the list of societal beliefs that members of a society engulfed in an intractable conflict share – 'impressively reflects the essence of the newspapers' coverage through-out October 2000' (p.156).

The next chapter outlines the methods used to explore the representation of Israel in the Israeli media coverage of the 2014 Israeli–Gaza round of violence.

2. Methodological Framework

This chapter provides an overview of the methodologies used in this research. The first three subsections relate to the textual analysis phase of the project. I review separately literature on CDA (subsection 2.1.1) and CL (subsection 2.1.2). This is followed by an overview of some of the scholarly work which has utilised a combination of both these methods (subsection 2.1.3). The last subsection relates to methods used in the analysis of news production processes with a focus on Odell, Goswami and Herrington's (1983) technique of the discourse-based interview.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

In this section, I explore the concept of CDA. First, I define what CDA is and discuss its theoretical influences. CDA's primary methods of analysis are discussed next. This is followed by a brief review of some of the seminal studies that have used CDA to explore media discourse. I conclude with an examination of some of CDA's limitations.

2.1.1 What is critical discourse analysis?

CDA is a qualitative approach to the study of discourse. Unlike some other types of discourse study, CDA is notable for having a strong social and political orientation. Thus, as leading CDA figures, Wodak and Meyer (2009:2) explain, CDA researchers are '*not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena*' [original emphasis]. Van Dijk, another key CDA scholar, adds to the account of this mission, explaining that CDA research is fundamentally interested in identifying how 'social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political context' (Van Dijk, 2001:352). A key aspect of the CDA paradigm is the notion that discourse and social reality are interconnected; the approach is thus primarily

concerned with issues such as the distribution of power and the dissemination of ideology (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 2001).

One of the most fundamental assumption of CDA is that discourse might carry *implicit* ideologies. A chief objective of CDA is to uncover what might not be immediately obvious in a discourse by focusing on what Van Dijk (1995:18) calls 'the strategies of manipulation, legitimation, the manufacture of consent and other discursive ways to influence the minds (and indirectly the actions) of people in the interest of the powerful'. This attempt to unravel hidden ideologies implies a critical, multidisciplinary approach to the study of discourse. In other words, CDA studies discourse from a critical perspective, thus making it what Van Dijk (2001:96) has dubbed 'discourse analysis "with an attitude"'. In this, it welcomes the incorporation of concepts from a variety of disciplines.

Although CDA is firmly grounded in applied linguistics, it also draws on social theory. The roots of CDA's notion of 'critique', for example, can be traced back to Marxian theory (Fairclough & Graham, 2002) and contributions made, for example, by Gramsci (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013a:22). Gramsci is best known for his critical theory of cultural hegemony, according to which the state and ruling capitalist class use ideology to maintain consent to the capitalist order. Through ideology and the development of a hegemonic culture which propagates its own values and norms, these values become everyone's 'common sense' which in turn allows for the maintenance of the status quo.

The notion of critique can also be traced back to critical theory, first defined by Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School of sociology in his 1937 essay *Traditional and critical theory*. Drawing on the critical methods of Marx and grounded in understanding the evolution of human society as one which is based on a drive for domination, critical theory maintains that ideology is the principal obstacle to human liberation and seeks 'to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them' (Horkheimer 1982:244). Critical theory is, therefore, oriented towards critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory which is oriented solely towards understanding or explaining it.

In language studies, CDA's critical perspective has antecedents in the field known as critical linguistics (Fowler et al., 1979). CDA arguably emerged from this earlier paradigm, so much so that the two terms have been used interchangeably in the literature. Developed in the late 1970s by a group of linguists at the University of East Anglia (Fowler et al., 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979), critical linguistics is a type of discourse analysis which views language as an integral part of social process (meaning language is not only socially shaped, but is also socially shaping) and considers the context of language use to be crucial (Fairclough, 2001). Drawing strongly on Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistics, critical linguistics' basic premise is that speakers make choices regarding the vocabulary and grammar they use, and that these choices are consciously or unconsciously 'principled and systematic' (Fowler et al., 1979:188) and, therefore, ideologically based.

As CDA, as a theoretical and methodological paradigm, has developed, it has become increasingly difficult to view it as a single uniform approach. Several key strands have emerged, built around the work of specific scholars, notably Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak. This thesis, with its focus on the representation of Israel in the Israeli media's coverage of the 2014 round of violence, is arguably most aligned with the Fairclough approach and his three-dimensional framework for studying discourse. At the micro level, this thesis focuses on prominent linguistic patterns in the reporting. The meso-level of this thesis involves exploring the issue of news production. At the macro-level, this thesis takes into account the broad, societal currents that affect discourse.

2.1.2   Critical discourse analysis methods

As an approach which welcomes a variety of theories or methods that are able to effectively study social problems, CDA methodologies are diverse. Despite this eclecticism, CDA, as has already been mentioned, is firmly situated in the field of applied linguistics and much CDA analysis takes place at the discursive/textual level. Some of the discursive elements that have been found to be significant in previous research on discourses of conflict and war include transitivity, referential and predication strategies, the use of reported speech

and modality (Livio & Cohen-Yechezkely, 2019). While all of these are relevant to the analysis of this research's data, transitivity – as will be shown in the Research Design chapter – is a central concept to the collocational analysis.

Transitivity, a fundamental semantic concept in Halliday's (1985) systemic functional linguistics, serves as an essential tool to explore discourses of conflict. Transitivity is concerned with how actions, events etc. are constructed in language and with semantic configurations of the agents and recipients of actions (or 'who does what to whom'). Thus, when writers make choices about transitivity, they essentially make decisions about how an action is to be represented. Moore (2007:53) notes that '[Halliday's] starting point is the verb which, as the representation of some kind of "going on" or "process", holds the kernel of "ideational" meaning in a clause'. However, transitivity also specifies the relationships between actions and social actors and, as such, it has implications for issues of agency and responsibility. In any representation of an action, a range of syntactic positions and semantic roles are available, with each encoding different types of agency and responsibility.

The most congruent or naturally occurring form (Halliday, 1985) is the use of an active voice, where the actor is highlighted, followed by a transitive verb and its object, the recipient of the action (e.g. *X killed Y*). An alternative, however, is to take the focus off the actor and place it on the recipient through the use of passive voice (e.g. *Y was killed by X*) or even to remove reference to the actor altogether (e.g. *Y was killed*). Such obscuring of agency is often furthered through the use of nominalisation (i.e. the presentation of an action as a noun rather than a verb (e.g. *the killing of X*). These examples give a sense of the syntactic choices available to writers and the quite different representational effects they can have with respect to both what is given prominence in a discourse and what is construed as having agency and hence responsibility for actions. Such choices, as is made clear in the CDA literature, are often ideologically motivated.

As mentioned, CDA analysis of conflict discourses also involves the exploration of referential and predication strategies. These notions are predominantly associated with

Wodak's discourse historical and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approaches. Referential strategies, also known as strategies of nomination, refer to the ways in which social actors and events are named or referred to. This involves linguistic devices such as membership categorisation, metaphors and metonymy, as well as synecdoche (Baker et al., 2008:282; Wodak & Meyer, 2009:30). Khosravinik (2010:25) notes that '[a] widespread, common and normalised referential strategy of naming a group may have deep and long lasting influence on the psyche of society'. Predication strategies, as Reisigl and Wodak (2001) argue, 'are employed to ascribe certain characteristics and traits – either positive or negative ones – to people and groups of people' (p.105).

To illustrate this point, in a study of the representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in British newspapers during the Balkan conflict (1999) and the British general election (2005), Khosravinik (2009) found that the *Daily Mail* made use of referential and predication strategies in its depiction of immigrants:

> The article[3] depicts a panic situation through various – much more explicit – strategies such as referential strategy, with immigrants as 'crisis', uncontrolled, unlimited, and huge; and predicational strategy, with immigrants 'threatening' society, 'changing' the face of the country, 'threatening' 'British' values and the country's orderliness, being the source of crimes, and having a relation to terrorism.

In another study, Garcia-Marrugo (2013) examines the forms of representation of illegal actors in the internal conflict in the Colombian press. Her analysis revealed remarkable differences in the ways the two groups were represented. Specifically, Marxist guerrillas were frequently referred to in differentiated terms that allowed for the identification of those responsible for the attacks. By contrast, indifferentiated terms were more prominent in the reporting on paramilitaries; furthermore, when differentiated forms were used to refer to paramilitaries, they tended to collocate with expressions denoting low

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[3] The *Daily Mail* article was headlined 'Immigration and the demonising of decency' (11 April 2005).

certainty which in turn served to cast doubt over the authorship of the crimes. This finding led the author to conclude that "the mystification of the paramilitary role in the conflict may have contributed to a lenient attitude from civilian and military authorities, as well as the population in general, that has remained indifferently unmoved in the face of the genocide and forced exile imposed on the most vulnerable" (p.440).

The use of reported speech has also been the subject of exploration in CDA studies of discourses of conflict. Traditionally in journalism training, citation is seen as a simple act of quoting a source. Accordingly, '[it] not only makes the writer's discourse more objective and credible, but frees him/her from any responsibility' (Calsamiglia & Lopez Ferrero, 2003:149). CDA takes a different view. As Calsamiglia and Lopez Ferrero (2003) explain, CDA analysts tend to view citation as an act of 'managing the words of others to convey and serve the purpose of the writer, giving a slant to what is said' (p.149). In their study of the role and position of scientific voices, Calsamiglia and Lopez Ferrero (2003) explored reported speech in the media, finding that journalists' use of reported speech is 'a means of orientating their position on the topic of reference, as well as or even more than a way of abdicating their responsibility to inform objectively' (p.170).

The construction of reported speech involves the use of reporting verbs. A writer's choice of reporting verb can give us important interpretative clues as to their argumentative orientation towards the topic. Thus, for example, Calsamiglia and Lopez Ferrero (2003:159) note:

> Types of agents that are called upon can tell us which are the sources that are presented as more relevant ... This is a sociological distribution that gives external configuration to the voice. But their representation is achieved by internal configuration through language use; the image of the agent is constructed and related through a specific reporting verb.

Reporting verbs can be employed to construct a writer's stance of acceptance, rejection or neutrality towards the cited information using factive, counter-factive and

non-factive verbs, respectively (Thompson & Yiyun, 1991:372). When writers use factive verbs such as 'identify' and 'demonstrate' they essentially portray the author as presenting true information or a correct opinion, when they employ counter-factive verbs such as 'ignore' and 'disregard' they portray the author as presenting false information or an incorrect opinion and when they opt for non-factive verbs like 'say' they give no clear signal as to their attitude towards the cited information. In the analysis of news reporting, what speech is reported, and how this speech is constructed linguistically, can provide insights into how events are being framed and thus how they can be understood ideologically.

A further discourse feature explored in CDA studies – and which also has relevance to the present study – is modality. According to Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely (2019), modality refers to 'the degree to which different levels of certainty are implicitly or explicitly assigned to events or to the claims of different sides, through the use of modal expressions denoting certainty or doubt, or through various strategies for emphasizing or qualifying assertions' (p.700). Thus, an event, for example, can be variably constructed as possibly having happened (couldness) or needing to happen (shouldness) along with other modal possibilities. As is the case with the other CDA tools mentioned previously, modality functions potentially as a major carrier of evaluation, playing an important part in conveying a writer's stance (Thompson & Yiyun, 1991:375; Stubbs 1994:220). As Fowler's (1991:64) words below illustrate, the frequency of modal expressions can be telling of writers' degree of subjectivity/objectivity:

> If modal expressions are frequent and highlighted, subjectivity is enhanced, the illusion of a 'person' with a voice and opinions; conversely, writing which strives to give an impression of objectivity, such as scientific reporting or certain traditions of 'realistic' fiction, tends to minimize modal expressions.

2.1.3   Critical discourse analysis studies of media discourses

The role of the media in the construction of events and the consequent meanings and effects of these constructions have long been interests of the discipline of applied linguistics generally and CDA in particular. The focus of much research in this area has been on the reporting of conflict situations and, in particular, the way that language works ideologically to construct and to reinforce asymmetrical power relations in society. In the linguistic approach used in these studies, the use of different language features is considered significant in relation to the meanings and ideological effects that are created. As discussed in the previous section, the most common linguistic features considered in such studies include grammatical constructions which are said to be related to agency and responsibility and lexical choice. In what follows I provide just a few samples of the type of studies conducted within this paradigm.

Some of the seminal studies considering grammatical choice include that of Kress and Hodge (1979), who analysed an editorial about the British government's decision to impose a three-day working week as a response to miners' overtime ban. In their analysis, they point to the privileging of active sentence structures where miners are positioned as actors (i.e. 'doers') – as illustrated in 'until *miners* lift their overtime ban' – emphasising miners' responsibility for their actions. Their analysis also shows a reliance on passive sentence structures, with the government appearing only later in a sentence or not appearing at all. In the passive construction 'until the *three-day week* was announced last Thursday', for instance, the fact that the government is absent altogether can be said to obscure the government's responsibility for its own actions. Similarly, in a study examining how the British press reported on racial issues, Van Dijk (1991) argues that the use of grammatical structures in which the negative acts of majority news actors such as the police are reduced to abstract entities (as in 'The shooting of Mrs Groce') might be said to obfuscate responsibility.

Among the seminal studies considering lexical choice, one is that of Fairclough (1995), which explored how the British media reported on the relations between First and

Third World countries. Fairclough (1995) notes how people in the Third World were constructed in terms of their condition [poverty] – 'the poor', 'poorer people' – and were associated with eruptions of violence on the one hand – 'violence', 'explode' – and with passivity on the other – 'flock' (a word that usually co-occurs with sheep, which are known for their passivity).

2.1.4   Critical discourse analysis limitations

As suggested in the preceding discussion, CDA provides a useful framework for understanding how events and states of affairs are constructed discursively in the media. From this, as the approach has it, we can obtain a reading on the ideological underpinnings of media discourses, as well as the operations of power within them. While bringing a critical stance to its analyses, the approach itself is not free from criticism. Generally, the criticisms against CDA have focused on its methodological weakness, resulting mainly from its qualitative approach to linguistic analysis. First, CDA analysts are often criticised for using inexplicit and undetailed methods of data collection and text analysis (Stubbs, 1997), making it difficult for other researchers to repeat such studies. Second, CDA analysts are also criticised for using data which comprises a small sample of texts (e.g. Stubbs, 1994, 1997) and, in some cases, not even whole texts but text fragments (Phillips, 1989). The criticism here is that, from this limited data, often quite major conclusions are drawn about the phenomenon under investigation.

Further criticism of CDA analysts relates to their tendency to select texts randomly or, even worse, to 'cherry-pick' texts that are likely to yield findings that conform to their own preconceptions (Widdowson 1995; Koller & Mautner, 2004). Finally, CDA critics point to the tendency of CDA researchers not only to focus on those linguistic features within texts that are likely to support their hypotheses, but also to avoid comparing those features with linguistic norms; in Stubbs' (1997:102) words, 'analysts find what they expect to find, whether absences or presences' because their analysis is essentially circular.

Some critiques, however, have gone beyond pointing out CDA's weaknesses and have offered ways to strengthen its methods of data collection and analysis. Stubbs (1997), for example, suggests using larger bodies of data and comparing features in the data with norms in the language. The branch in linguistics which both utilises data on this scale as well as offering comparative analytical tools is CL. In the methods of this alternative approach, there are prospects for making CDA methods more robust.

2.2 Corpus linguistics

In this section, I explore the concept of CL. First, I define what CL is and consider CL's main strengths as an approach. I discuss two common distinctions in CL studies (one between a specialised corpus and a general one, and the other between corpus-based research and corpus-driven research), before reviewing CL's primary tools along with a discussion of some of CL's key limitations.

2.2.1   What is corpus linguistics?

CL is a relatively new field of linguistic research which became popular with the advent of personal computers in the 1990s (Baker, 2010a:5). According to one account of the field, CL is an empirical approach to the study of 'real life' language use (McEnery & Wilson, 1996:1) which relies on: (i) corpora – usually very large bodies of texts consisting of naturally occurring language and stored on a computer; and (ii) computer software which enables researchers to perform manipulations on the data in the corpora. As McEnery and Hardie (2012) explain, '[c]orpus linguistics is the study of language data on a large scale – the computer-aided analysis of very extensive collections of transcribed utterances or written texts' (p.i). Unlike CDA, which is primarily a qualitative approach to the study of discourse, CL-based research principally involves quantitative methods of data analysis, although there is inevitably a qualitative component to most CL research. This point will be further elaborated on in the discussion about CL's tools.

Corpora, as Hunston (2002:13) points out, have a diverse range of uses. They can be used to provide rich information to inform practice in a range of language-related fields and professions: teaching (e.g. Granger, 2009; Granger & Bestgen, 2014; Coccetta, Castello & Ackerley, 2015; Tono, 2018; McEnery, Brezina, Gablasova & Banerjee, 2019), translating (e.g. Baker, 1993; Mikhailov & Cooper, 2016) and lexicography (e.g. Bowker, 2010). Significant to this project, corpora can also be used as a resource for the analysis of social practices, such as is pursued in CDA (e.g. Krishmanurthy, 1996; Caldas-Coulthard & Moon, 2010).

As a methodology, CL has several strengths for studying language. One strength relates to the potential size of corpora. Corpora typically comprise large volumes of data, which allows the researcher to identify repetitions/tendencies and to use these to say something about linguistic norms and patterns of use. In this sense, the field can be viewed as a bottom-up approach rooted firmly in textual evidence. Another strength is that corpora are usually carefully constructed: texts are collected using principled approaches, rather than cherry-picked (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998). Baker (2010b:313), for example, points out that having to account for large-scale patterns rather than selectively cherry-picking articles that illustrate a particular stance can help reduce researcher bias. In light of these strengths, corpora can act as representative samples on the basis of which generalisations about language use can be made.

In addition, CL, it is suggested, enables the researcher to describe the syntactic and semantic properties of linguistic items exhaustively rather than selectively (Hardt-Mautner, 1995). CL researchers thus argue for a high degree of validity for the claims made from their data. A further strength of CL lies in the ability of corpora, provided they are big enough, to reveal instances of rare or unusual instances of language use which may not be so readily available to the researcher's 'naked eye' (Baker, 2010a). Also, compared to human researchers who make mistakes and are slow, computers are quicker and more accurate insofar as they are able to search through the data. Finally, the use of both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques is particularly significant as it 'borders on triangulation' (Nartey & Mwinlaaru, 2019:3).

An important distinction often made in CL is between *specialised* and *general* corpora. A specialised corpus is one which consists of texts of a particular type (e.g. news articles on a particular subject, history textbooks, students' essays). This type of text is obviously directly related to the research question(s) that the corpus is designed to address. A general corpus, on the other hand, comprises texts of many types (written, spoken, fictional) and is typically much larger than a specialised corpus. As such, it is generally considered a 'prototypical corpus' (Baker, 2010a:12) which can provide information on language 'norms'. Examples of well-known general corpora are the British National Corpus, a collection of over 100 million words collected between the 1980s and 1993, the American National Corpus, designed to be comparable to the British National Corpus and comprising a total of over 14.5 million words, and the Contemporary Corpus of American English, comprising 450 million words of spoken and written English (Vaughan & O'Keeffe, 2015:1). It is also worth mentioning here that while a general corpus is often used as a baseline against which a more specialised corpus can be compared, corpus linguists sometimes choose to compare two or more specialised corpora (Baker, 2010a). As will be shown in the Research Design chapter, the approach employed in this research was to compare three specialised corpora, an approach thought to be best suited to the specific nature of the research.

Another common distinction in CL studies, originally introduced by Tognini-Bonelli (2001), is between *corpus-based* and *corpus-driven* research. A corpus-based study involves a deductive approach: it assumes the validity of a linguistic theory and uses the corpus mainly to validate, refute or refine that theory (McEnery & Hardie, 2012:6). A corpus-based approach, then, which typically focuses on exploring *pre-defined* linguistic features, embraces the definition of CL as a method (McEnery & Hardie, 2012:6). By contrast, the corpus-driven approach is inductive in that it views the corpus as 'the sole source' (McEnery & Hardie, 2012:6) on the basis of which one should make hypotheses and form a theory about language. As Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019:2) note, 'the corpus "drives" the research in a sense that the analyst observes what is salient to explore in the corpus and theory is derived from the corpus'. A corpus-driven approach, therefore, which explores only those

linguistic patterns which emerge from the data, rejects the definition of CL as a method (McEnery & Hardie, 2012:6).

Significantly, however, the drawing of this sharp distinction between corpus-based and corpus-driven research has not gone unchallenged. McEnery and Hardie (2012), for example, reject the distinction on the grounds that the corpus itself can have no theoretical status. They also mention the lack of clarity in the ways in which the terms are applied, the fact that both approaches converge in the importance they attribute to the empirical evidence of the corpus and the fact that the distinction implies a dichotomy where there is actually a sliding scale. For them, 'all corpus linguistics can justly be described as corpus-based' (p.6). Along similar lines, Nartey and Mwinlaaru, (2019:2) contend that 'the two approaches are complementary and not mutually exclusive, and can, thus, be useful in diverse ways'. Like McEnery and Hardie (2012) and Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019), this research views the two approaches as complementary. As will be shown in the Research Design chapter, this project is corpus-driven in the sense that it explores what emerges from the data and is also corpus-based in that it makes use of linguistic and socio-psychological theories to account for the findings.

2.2.2   Corpus linguistics tools

As mentioned earlier, CL makes use of a corpus and computer software. Once stored on a computer (usually as some form of plain text file), a corpus can be uploaded into a piece of software that can quickly and accurately perform manipulations of its data. It is important to note that, on its own, a corpus is generally devoid of any value unless used in conjunction with analysis software (Baker, 2010a). Thus, for example, Hunston (2002:3) notes:

> Strictly speaking, a corpus by itself can do nothing at all, being nothing other than a store of used language. Corpus access software, however, can re-arrange that store so that observations of various kinds can be made. If a corpus represents, very roughly and partially, a speaker's experience of language, the access software re-

orders that experience so that it can be examined in ways that are usually impossible. A corpus does not contain new information about language, but the software offers us a new perspective on the familiar.

Most available CL software offer tools of analysis which, as McEnery and Hardie (2012:2) state, 'allow users to search through … [corpora] rapidly and reliably'. Common CL tools of analysis include frequency, keywords, collocation and concordance.

The notion of *frequency*, defined as the number of times something occurs in a corpus, is often perceived as 'the bedrock of corpus linguistics' (Baker, 2010a:19). As the author notes, frequency counts are not limited to single words but can be applied to grammatical or semantic categories and to multi-word sequences. Frequency lists provide preliminary insight into the data by revealing repetitions, with higher frequencies acting as what in a discourse exists as the preferred state or the norm. Stubbs (2001:215) thus observes the power of repetitions: '[r]epeated patterns show that evaluative meanings are not merely personal and idiosyncratic in a discourse community but widely shared'. Along similar lines, Fairclough (2001) argues it is via the systematic reiteration of patterns that the naturalisation of discourses is achieved. It is important to note, however, that higher frequencies can also be a marker of what society views as unusual or problematic. In media coverage of a conflict, higher frequencies of the word 'terror', for example, would act as a marker of a problematic, rather than a preferable, state.

While frequency can be indicative of the main focus of a corpus, ascertaining that focus requires analysts to perform further manipulations on frequencies and subject them to a keyword analysis. *Keywords* are words or phrases which occur statistically more frequently in one text/corpus compared to another text/corpus (Baker, 2004). As pointed out by Bondi (2007), they are 'key' in two ways: they are key to the topic of a corpus, or what Phillips (1989) refers to as the 'aboutness' of a text, and they are key to the expression of stance and the representation of positions within a discourse. This means that keywords are able to highlight saliency, in other words, what is especially frequent in a specialised

corpus compared to a reference corpus (be it a general corpus or another specialised corpus). These salient words can then act as signposts for a linguistic, cultural or discursive analysis.

Another CL tool which is particularly relevant to the current research and will thus be elaborated on more is *collocation*. Identified first by Firth (1957:6), the notion of collocation in its broad sense refers to the tendency of two words to systematically occur near or next to each other. As Baker (2010a:24) notes, while some types of collocation include fixed phrases such as idioms (e.g. drop off), compound nouns (e.g. swimming pool) and lexical bundles (e.g. don't know), collocates do not necessarily have to co-occur in any fixed order; the author notes that 'tell' and 'story', for example, are collocates which exemplify more variable positions as is demonstrated in examples like 'tell a story', 'a story to tell' and 'that story does not tell us anything'. To give another example, in a study comparing the representation of the IPC on CNN, the BBC and Al-Jazeera, Kandil (2009:90) found that the word 'Hamas' in the CNN corpus had a bidirectional relationship with the word 'terror', meaning that while 'Hamas' emerged as a collocate of the search term 'terror', 'terror' also emerged as a collocate of the search term 'Hamas'.

The collocates of a search term (i.e. the words that tend to systematically occur in proximity to the search term) are of particular interest to corpus linguists. This is because words that tend to co-occur frequently start to determine or influence one another's meaning. Thus, for example, Baker (2010a:25) notes:

> In terms of carrying out discourse analysis or analysis of argumentation or ideologies, we often find that collocational patterns have special functions that we are unconscious of … Identifying the collocates around a word gives us an indication about subtle meanings and connotations that a word possesses, which are rarely explained in dictionaries.

To illustrate this point, Stubbs (1996, cited in Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008:10-11) argues that if 'illegal' and 'immigrant' are found to frequently co-occur with one another, we may

be primed to think of one concept even when the other is not present. Exploring the collocates of the term 'Israel' can point to the salient ideas associated with this entity. They can thus provide indications as to how Israel is frequently framed in discourse. Because collocations are 'nodes around which ideological battles are fought' (Stubbs, 2001:188), they can hint at the societal value judgements that the term 'Israel' evokes.

A collocation analysis involves making decisions about specific parameters (as well as providing accounts for these choices and being consistent). Researchers, for example, need to determine an association measure that will be used for the automatic identification of collocations. One common measure for calculating the strength of association between two words is the mutual information (MI) score. This, as will be demonstrated in the Research Design chapter, is the association measure employed in this research (for more information regarding the selection and interpretation of other association measures such as the t-score, see Gablasova, Brezina & McEnery, 2017). The statistical calculation of collocation, as Baker et al. (2008:278) note, is based on three measures – the frequency of the search term (also known as the node), the frequency of the collocates and the frequency of the collocation. Baker (2010a:24–5) explains how the MI score takes into account the relative positions of two words across a whole corpus, that is, how often they co-occur with one another relative to how frequently they occur without one another:

> [I]f ... [two words] usually occur close together and rarely occur apart then they will receive a high score. However, if they often occur together, but equally often occur apart, then their score will be lower. And if they normally occur apart and rarely together, then the score will be lower still.

While the MI score can be used with various cut-off points, a collocational pair with an MI score of over 3 is considered statistically significant at the 5 per cent level (Baker, 2010a). This means that there is a 5 per cent chance that the occurrence of the association is due to chance.

Researchers who opt to use the collocation tool also need to determine the span within which to look for collocates. While different spans will produce different results (Baker, 2006, 2010a), a common span is +/–5 words to either side of the word under investigation. Another choice that needs to be made relates to sentence boundaries; some researchers consider potential cases of collocation only if they occur within the same sentence, while others include collocates which break across sentence boundaries. Furthermore, corpus linguists need to set a minimum threshold for how often two words need to co-occur before they can be identified as collocates of one another; if one word collocates with another only once in a corpus of, say, 100 million words, we probably would not identify them as collocates. While different frequency thresholds will yield different results, it is common to set a minimum frequency of 10 occurrences.

In order to obtain a fuller picture of a collocate's frequency, it is also important to consider the collocate's dispersion in the corpus. This decision relates to how equally or unequally collocates are dispersed/distributed throughout different texts in the corpus; clearly, collocates that appear to be a feature of multiple texts would be of greater interest to researchers than those which appear only in one text (for discussion about other collocation parameters such as directionality and type/token distribution, see Brezina, McEnery & Wattam, 2015). Finally, corpus analysts need to make a decision about whether to sort the collocates according to their frequency or the statistical strength of the association.

On the score of the collocation tool, it is worth pointing out that collocates can indicate semantic preference. According to Begagić (2013:403), '[s]emantic preference can be defined as the relation between a word form and set of semantically related words'. To illustrate this point, Baker (2006:86-87, as cited in Jaworska & Krishnamurthy, 2012:405) notes that the cluster 'glass of' tend to attract words denoting drinks. In other words, the cluster 'glass of' indicates a semantic preference for drinks. As will be revealed in the findings chapters, this will be relevant in the analysis of the representation of Israel as a recipient in the conflict.

Concordance, which is also relevant to this research, is another key CL tool. The concordance allows users to look at words in their immediate context. More specifically, it is a list of all the occurrences of a search term in a corpus with usually a few words of contextual information either side of the linguistic item. Generally, a single line of text is sufficient to identify the function/use of a term, but CL software also provide instant access to the wider co-text which is helpful in clarifying ambiguities. A close reading of concordances allows analysts not only to ascertain that the linguistic unit under investigation has the same meaning/usage they claim it does, but to identify wider themes or patterns which cannot be spotted via frequency, keyword or collocation analysis (Baker, 2010a). It is important to note that this process of making sense of the data involves making reference to one or more of the diverse theoretical frameworks associated with CDA (Baker et al., 2008). Concordances thus exemplify the qualitative form of analysis involved in CL, as Baker's (2010a:10) words below illustrate:

> The process of explanation is one of the most important qualitative aspects of corpus analysis, and indeed, a good deal of the analysis needs to be qualitative, particularly when carrying out concordance-based analysis ... Corpus software can present or sort concordance data in various ways, but cannot make sense of it. It is always the job of the researcher to interpret a concordance.

2.2.3 Corpus linguistics limitations

While adopting a CL approach to the study of language has many merits, on its own CL methodology is not without its limitations. The main drawback is that while a CL approach enables the researcher to quickly and reliably interrogate data and identify patterns of language use, it is a fact that no dataset can speak for itself. CL, as was mentioned earlier, clearly does not downplay the importance of the qualitative interpretation of the data, but it is not a theory in itself and thus cannot act as a theoretical framework in the interpretation of the findings. What any CL researcher needs to bring to their analysis is the social, political and historical contexts within which discourse patterns are found.

Another drawback relates to the fact that while CL is largely quantitative and can thus help reduce researchers' bias, it cannot be held to be objective in any scientific sense (Baker & Egbert, 2016; Taylor & Marchi, 2018). As Pollach (2012:281) points out: "a researcher's subjectivity is an inevitable element of any corpus-linguistic analysis, not only because of its qualitative elements but also because the researcher has to make decisions about corpus building, the selection of analysis steps, the construction of dictionaries, and the amount of validation work. He points out further that "subjectivity is also inherent in the interpretation of results, when researcher input is required for setting cutoff points for keywords or for the values of dispersion measures, as no firmly established standards exist yet" (p.281).

So far, I have discussed two approaches to the study of natural language use: CDA and CL. I have explained what lies at the heart of each of these approaches and outlined the merits and the limitations of each of them. The following section discusses an approach to language analysis which combines both CDA and CL and is referred to by Baker et al. (2008:273) as 'a useful methodological synergy'.

2.3 Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics

The idea of combining CL methods within CDA were prompted by limitations in both approaches, although as Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019:4) note, it seems the methodological weaknesses of CDA tend to be more highlighted in the literature than those observed in CL. Increasingly, researchers are finding the complementary nature of the two approaches. In the passage below, Hardt-Mautner (1995:1) describes how, in a project they were working on, the nature of the research pushed them into incorporating corpus tools into what was initially conceived as a pure CDA study:

> Originally, the project was to draw solely on the theoretical foundations and descriptive resources of the framework known as critical discourse analysis, or CDA for short. However, the mainly qualitative methodology used in CDA proved ill-suited to handling the sizeable corpus that formed the basis of the study. It was this

mismatch between the chosen framework and the nature of the data that led to the development of an alternative analytical procedure, combining the use of concordance programs with CDA's traditional qualitative analysis.

The potential of the two approaches to complement one another has been commented on by various scholars. Baker et al. (2008:274) claim that 'neither CDA nor CL need be subservient to the other…, but that each contributes equally and distinctly to a methodological synergy'. The synergy described by Baker can be summarised thus: CL's main contribution – albeit not the only one – is in the quantification of patterns; CDA, on the other hand, provides the interpretative framework that allows researchers to 'make sense of' the data. Along similar lines, Wright and Brookes (2019:62) argue that '[t]he combination of corpus linguistics and CDA can be mutually-enforcing, with each method able to overcome some of the obstacles associated with the other'.

Attempts to incorporate CL methods within CDA can be traced back to the mid-1990s. Some of the earlier research which adopted corpus approaches to CDA include the work of Louw (1993), Caldas-Coulthard (1993, 1995), Hardt-Mautner (1995), Krishmanurthy (1996) and Flowerdew (1997). Of these, Hardt-Mautner's (1995) seminal study on the British press and European integration is generally perceived to have set the stage for corpus-based CDA. However, according to Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019), although Hardt-Mautner's (1995) work has historical relevance it was the work of Baker et al. (2008) which marked a 'canonizing' phase' (p.9) which saw the popularisation of this eclectic approach. The authors further point out the differences in the CL tools and techniques that were employed in each of these two phases. In the first phase, corpus-based CDA studies predominantly utilised frequency lists and concordance in their analysis and, in the rare cases where collocations were examined, they were explored qualitatively. In the 'canonizing' phase, the analysis was extended to include the use of other methods (e.g. keywords, semantic prosody) and the notion of statistical collocation was foregrounded.

The incorporation of CL methods within CDA, which has been on the rise in the last decade, has already been shown to be very fruitful. Among the corpus-based studies that have set themselves the task of studying language and ideology, some have focused on grammatical choices. Transitivity choices, for example, have been investigated by Stubbs and Gerbig (1993), Galasinski and Marley (1998) and Jeffries (2003). Pronoun use has also been examined (e.g. Stubbs, 1992). Other corpus-based studies aiming at studying language and ideology have looked at lexical choices. Examples of such studies are those of Caldas-Coulthard (1993), Hardt-Mautner (1995), Krishnamurthy (1996), Flowerdew (1997), Orpin (2005), Bondi (2007), Baker et al. (2008) and Baker (2012).

Corpus-based CDA methodology has been applied to a wide range of contexts. In a meta-analysis of 121 corpus-based CDA studies, Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019) identify ten 'domains of engagement' (p.12) of corpus-based CDA studies. Of these ten, they argue, media is the top domain of engagement, followed by politics and social media. Some of the social issues that have been the focus of corpus-based critical CDA studies include racism (Krishmanurthy, 1996), homosexuality (Baker, 2004), refugees (Baker & McEnery, 2005; Baker et al., 2008; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008), climate change (Grundmann & Krishnamurthy, 2010), gender (Baker & Levon, 2015) and feminism (Jaworska & Krishnamurthy, 2012). While this list suggests that the issues investigated are diverse, Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019) identified 'ideology and power' as the most studied topic, followed by 'gender', 'Islam and race' and 'immigration', while 'war and security' is the topic which has received the least scholarly attention. On the latter, the authors note that studies of 'war and security' have generally focused on conflict (Kandil, 2009; Almeida, 2011), counter-terrorism (MacDonald & Hunter, 2013) or nuclear proliferation (MacDonald, Homolar, Rethel, Schnurr & Vessey, 2015).

2.4 Beyond text-based analysis

So far, I have focused on the textual analysis component of the methodological framework, outlining the benefits of incorporating CL tools in CDA to study the use of naturally

occurring language. However, while a textual analysis is a powerful way of analysing language and exploring traces of ideology in media discourse, a purely text-based approach to the study of such discourse is limited.

A significant limitation of media research based on purely text-based analyses is that such analyses, as Hodgetts and Chamberlain (2014:4) point out, 'are frequently conducted and used as if the meaning of news items is located primarily in the items themselves'. A text-based analysis does not take into account, for example, the social setting of production (Hoxa & Hanitzsch, 2018). As such, Sherwood, Osborne, Nicholson and Sherry (2017:649) note, it can offer 'little insight into the institutional structures that govern the process of news production from the viewpoint of those who produce it: journalists and editors'. According to Hodgetts and Chamberlain (2014), in order to understand the influence and functions of media it is necessary to link specific news texts to the socio-political context and practices within which these are produced. Another limitation of a text-based analysis is that it privileges the analyst's interpretation – whether the CL or CDA analyst – of what's going on in texts and discourse. As Widdowson (1995:159) argues, 'analysts ... have their preferences, and may subsequently interpret data in one particular way'. In other words, text-based analysts tend to view their convergence on a particular meaning as 'having some kind of privileged validity' (Widdowson, 1995:159).

Any analysis of news texts, therefore, would greatly benefit from an analysis of the ways in which these texts are produced by media institutions. An exploration of the ways in which news is produced and the factors that lie behind news producers' content and linguistic choices has the potential to provide researchers with invaluable data against which they can check the interpretation of patterns and representations they identify in a discourse. In this sense, an analysis of news production processes act as data triangulation, thereby contributing to the validity of conclusions.

This approach of interrogating news producers about media practices has been adopted by only few scholars. One example, as was mentioned in section 1.4, is Dor's (2004) study of the Israeli media coverage of the Second Intifada. In an attempt to understand the

discrepancy he found between reporters' original reports and the final product, Dor (2004) conducted background interviews with senior editors, reporters and commentators from the three newspapers that were under investigation. These interviews revealed that editors served as 'epistemic agents' (p.159) even though they knew far less of the intricacies of the general picture than senior reporters. The interviews further revealed that editors tended to adopt the dominant views of the Israeli establishment in order to minimise friction with the Israeli establishment and the Israeli public.

Another example of a scholar who probed news producers about their practices was, as seen in section 1.4, a study by Barkho. In this study of the BBC's discursive strategy and practices vis à vis the IPC, Barkho (2008) triangulated critical linguistic analysis of the BBC's online reports with the results of extensive interviews with BBC editors, articles by mainstream media, the BBC's guidelines and the editors' blogs. This contextualisation of the BBC's linguistic representations of the conflict revealed that 'BBC language reflects to a large extent the views, assumptions and norms prevalent in the corporation as well as the unequal division of power and control between the two protagonists despite the corporation's insistence on impartiality, balance and neutrality in its coverage of the conflict' (p.278).

A challenge in investigating how news producers actually produce their texts is how to get them to reflect deeply on some of the key choices that are made in their writing–whether conscious or unconscious. A useful method for doing this was found to be the discourse-based interview. The discourse-based interview is a research method for querying participants about their reasons behind the use of their choices in writing. This technique was first developed by Odell, Goswami and Herrington (1983), who used this research procedure to explore whether writers in non-academic settings were sensitive to some of the broader rhetorical issues that underlay their composition processes. The format of the discourse-based interview requires participants to respond to features in selected texts, thereby enabling researchers to tap into some of the considerations involved in their choices. Examples of such considerations include writers' perceptions about their purpose of writing and their perceptions of audience.

As with any research method, interviews are not free of limitations. At the very least, they should not be viewed as 'means of mining particular "nuggets of truth", as Edly & Litosseliti (2010) suggest, but be treated as "collaborative and interactional events in which the interviewer or moderator plays an important, participative role" (Edly & Litosseliti, 2010:155). As will be revealed in the findings chapters, I have addressed these flaws by not taking informants' comments at face value and by trying to avoid asking potentially leading questions.

Since it was first developed in 1983, the discourse-based interview has been used in various studies about writing, particularly academic writing. Lancaster (2016), for example, used corpus techniques and discourse-based interviews to examine one student's awareness of stance in academic writing in philosophy and found that while the student 'regularly expressed an epistemic stance in his course essays in ways that are conventional and valued in philosophical argumentation ... [neither the student nor his professor] were consciously aware of these stance patterns, despite regular appearance in both their writing' (p.119). Similarly, in a study exploring Hong Kong students' use of authorial pronouns, Hyland (2005) triangulated corpus techniques and discourse-based interviews, finding that 'although ... students ... were sensitive to the effects of author pronouns, they were reluctant to accept its clear connotations of authority and commitment [as] [s]uch an identity both exposes the writer and reduces group solidarity' (p.187).

This research aims to address the fact that very few studies on media representation of the IPC focused in their analysis on news production processes. As will be revealed in the Research Design chapter, this research will utilise the discourse-based interview tool to interrogate news producers about their journalistic and editorial practices. By doing so, this research will shed light on some of the key motivations underpinning the representation of Israel in the Israeli media's coverage of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict.

It is worth mentioning before moving on to the next chapter that any attempt to understand news discourse ideally requires researchers to engage with the social construction of news at all three levels of mass communication, that is, representation,

production and reception. This is because, as reflected in the media triangle (Dick, 1989; see Appendix A), every media text is produced in a particular way, for a particular audience. While this project triangulates a textual analysis with an analysis of news production processes, an exploration of text reception is beyond the scope of this research.

The next chapter explains the research design process. It discusses in detail the processes of data collection and data analysis for each of the two phases of the research.

3. Research Design

This study employs mixed methods to explore the representation of 'Israel' in the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in the Israeli media. As was explained in the introduction, my interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (IPC) was motivated by my background as an Israeli who knew the conflict firsthand. It's worth taking some small time, however, to explain how the research came to focus on the coverage of the conflict specifically in Israeli media outlets and how the analysis came to focus on the specific entity Israel. In such an explanation is a narrative of certain key decisions that were made in the early stages of the project.

Initially, the research aim was to explore how the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict was represented in Israeli, Palestinian/Arab and British news websites. The idea was to compare the perspectives of three actors – the two sides involved in the conflict and an external third party that was believed to offer a different prism through which one could look at events, one that had the potential to challenge certain aspects of the protagonists' narratives. This aim was regrettably abandoned – the difficulty of managing so many perspectives deemed the scope of the project too big. The scope and aim of the project were subsequently narrowed down to focus on the representation of Israel in the Israeli media. As an Israeli who had been living outside of Israel for four years when the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict broke out and reading Israeli English-language accounts, I was interested in how Israel was presenting itself to the wider world. The focus on just one entity – Israel – was also motivated by practical reasons. A collocational analysis of one term involves reading thousands of concordance lines. Thus, such research is often limited to one term or phrase.

The research design has been divided into two main parts corresponding to the two aims of the research. In an attempt to address the first aim – exploring *how* Israel was portrayed in the Israel media – section 3.1 focuses on the linguistic analysis of this research. Here I describe the data collection process for news articles and the collocational analysis I used to explore the discourses around the term Israel. Related to the second aim of the project, that is, understanding some of the factors and motivations that lay behind the

content and linguistic choices of news producers who constructed these discourses, section 3.2 focuses on news production processes. In this section, I describe the interviewee recruitment process and the procedures followed in the conducting of discourse-based interviews.

3.1 A linguistic analysis

3.1.1 Data collection

Data for the linguistic component of this research was drawn from three English-language Israeli news websites – *Ynetnews, Haaretz* and the *Jerusalem Post* (*JP*). The motivation for focusing on English-language Israeli news websites was twofold. First, the majority of studies to date on the reporting of the conflict have focused on Hebrew-language Israeli news (e.g. Korn, 2004; Zandberg & Neiger, 2005; Sharvit & Bar-Tal, 2007; Wolsfeld, 2004; Frosh & Awabdy, 2008; Orgad, 2009; Neiger, Zandberg & Meyers, 2010; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch & Nagar, 2016; Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2017; Lavie-Dinur, Yarchi & Karniel, 2018). Second, with English achieving the prime status of becoming the most widely spoken language in the world (if one disregards proficiency), it not only speaks to a broader audience, but has the potential to influence external players such as the US, which has been involved in mediation efforts to resolve the IPC.

The three outlets *Ynetnews, Haaretz* and the *JP* were selected as representing three broadly distinctive positions on the conflict and on Israeli politics more generally. Together they provided a good cross-section of Israeli news reporting on the conflict by encompassing centrist, left and right political stances, respectively. They also covered both tabloid and broadsheet reporting styles.

Ynetnews was selected as it is the online English presence of the Hebrew news portal *Ynet* and of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, the most popular Hebrew news site in Israel (www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/IL) and one of the most circulated national dailies in Israel (Beckerman, 2005), respectively. Despite its superficial resemblance to classic

tabloids, *Yedioth Ahronoth* has been described as a 'rare cross-breed' between what might be termed a 'popular' and a 'quality' paper (Caspi & Limor, 1999) and is fairly centrist in its political line (Sheizaf, 2010). It is owned by the Moses family media conglomerate and has a daily exposure rate of 35.4 per cent among Hebrew-speaking Israelis (TGI survey for the first half of 2015). *Ynetnews* was established in 2005 and while its primary source of information is the Hebrew portal *Ynet*, it also relies on the wires (e.g. Reuters, Associated Press, AFP) for its content.

The English edition of the *Haaretz* daily broadsheet (Beckerman, 2005), which is owned by the Shocken media conglomerate and is published and sold together with the *International New York Times*, was selected for its broadly liberal-democratic outlook both on domestic issues and on international affairs, and for its leftward-leaning editorial line on Israeli politics (Slater 2007; Gilboa 2008; Muravchik 2013; Qawariq 2015; Elbaz & Bar-Tal 2016, as cited in Lavie-Dinur, Yarchi & Karniel, 2018). Sheizaf (2010) notes that *Haaretz* has a reputation for being 'liberal on security, civil rights and economy, supportive of the Supreme Court, [and] very critical of Netanyahu's government'. It is also known for taking up unpopular positions and challenging consensual perceptions. Zandberg (2010:19–20), for example, mentions the critical voice that *Haaretz* adopts when treating Holocaust discourse:

> Ha'aretz is the only Israeli newspaper that consistently called for and applied a more critical, self-reflexive Holocaust discourse. This view stands in stark contrast to views evoked by the rest of the Israeli press: moral rebuke of the world for its impotence during the Holocaust and calls to 'learn' the lessons of the Holocaust … Ha'aretz creates a narrative that enables a process of working through the trauma instead of reproducing the nationalistic commemoration.

First published in 1918, *Haaretz* is considered the oldest Israeli daily newspaper (Dridi, 2020:2). Although *Haaretz'* circulation is not as substantial as that of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, it is considered a news leader in terms of reaching decision-makers and

policymakers in the power elite (Beckerman, 2005). The Centre for Research Libraries, for example, describes it as 'the most influential and respected for both its news coverage and its commentary.' Along similar lines, Slater (2007:86) notes that:

> [t]here is a widespread consensus in Israel and elsewhere that *Haaretz* is Israel's best and most prestigious newspaper – in effect, the Israeli equivalent of the *New York Times* ... the editorial policies, commentary, and news reporting of *Haaretz* are not 'representative' of the views of most other Israeli national media or the majority of Israeli public opinion.

Unlike *Ynetnews*, the *Haaretz* English edition primarily relies on three sources of information for its content – reporters who write for the *Haaretz* Hebrew edition, the news wires and its own English-language reporters.

The selection of the *JP*, which is owned by the *Jerusalem Post* Group and whose daily international edition and weekly French edition are distributed in North America and Western Europe, respectively, was motivated by its reputation for having a right-leaning view on national and international affairs (The Press, 2006). Established in 1932 as the *Palestine Post*, it adopted its current name in 1950 (Palestine Post, n.d.). The *JP* was Israel's only English-language daily until the appearance in 1997 of *Haaretz*' English daily edition (Jewish Virtual Library). The *JP* launched its internet edition in 1995, drawing upon the daily newspaper's reporting, and it relies on both its own English-language reporters and the wires for its content.

As has been mentioned, both *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* rely on Hebrew-language content for their websites. It is thus worth saying a few words here about the issue of translation. As Baker (2018:5) point out, "translators and interpreters – in collaboration with publishers, editors and other agents involved in the interaction – accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance, and in so doing participate in shaping social reality". While this research acknowledges that

translators inevitably intervene in the discourse, it is important to clarify that it is not interested in exploring how the reporting was impacted by such interventions.

News articles relevant to the conflict from *Ynetnews*, *Haaretz* and the *JP* were compiled into three comparable albeit unequal corpora. The reporting period for each news outlet was 8 July 2014 (marking the start of Israel's offensive on Gaza) until 26 August 2014 (marking the end of the offensive). The task of compiling articles for three corpora, one corpus for each of the three news outlets, involved two processes: the retrieval of potentially relevant articles ('candidate' articles) and a more scrutinised process of selection – selecting which of the candidate articles to include in the corpora and which to leave out. The process of retrieving candidate articles involved developing a search term and determining a date range. Through a process of trial and error, the following search term was developed as a way of capturing relevant material:

Gaza OR operation OR Protective Edge OR IDF OR Hamas

When developing a search term, one needs to carefully consider the inclusion and exclusion of the words/phrases comprising the search term. The inclusion of the words 'Gaza', 'IDF' and 'Hamas' was rather straightforward: 'Gaza' refers to a location in the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict, while 'IDF' (the term always used in reporting on the Israel Defense Force) and 'Hamas' refer to the key participants in the conflict. The decision to include the rather neutral word 'operation' and the phrase 'Protective Edge', which can be said to have a defensive connotation, was motivated by the fact that Operation Protective Edge was the official name used in Israel to refer to Israel's acts of violence in Gaza in 2014. This was also considered to have the potential to yield a good many results. Overall, the decision was made to include more general terms and avoid using more specific ones (e.g. 'rockets' as in the rockets fired into Israel by Hamas, a key aspect of the conflict). Such terms were avoided to prevent skewing the data in favour of particular topics.

One thing that merits further explanation is the exclusion of 'Israel' and 'Palestinians' from the search terms, two words which could also be said to refer to

participants in the conflict. This decision was primarily guided by the assumption that news stories on the issues included in the search term would also include references to Israel and Palestinians anyhow. This decision was also motivated by practical considerations; a pilot study revealed that the inclusion of the term Israel in the search term yielded many irrelevant articles dealing, for example, with Israeli domestic affairs. It also showed that a search term with the term 'Palestinians' resulted in irrelevant articles dealing, for instance, with Palestinians not located in Gaza but in other territories such as the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Importantly, the pilot study confirmed my assumption that the majority of the news articles I retrieved using the search terms above did include references to both Israel and/or Palestinians. This was evident in the emergence of these terms as high-frequency words in all three publications.

In addition to developing a search term, the process of retrieving candidate articles involved determining a date range. The challenge here was to comprehensively and accurately represent the reporting of the conflict. The process involved exploring a range of options. One of these was to randomly select a one-week period, for example, and to retrieve all the relevant articles that were published during that week. However, given that any conflict tends to have a certain dynamic to it – with reporting at the beginning of the conflict, for instance, tending to be different from that at the end of the conflict – it became clear that focusing on a random one-week dataset would only shed light on the events and the reporting of events that took place during that specific week and not on the conflict as a whole. This option was thus discarded. Another option was to select specific dates (informed by 'key moments' in the conflict) that, taken together, might be said to be representative of the entire war period. This too, however, proved to be somewhat problematic as the idea of deciding on key moments was thought to be too subjective by definition. For example, should these moments be the dates marking the beginning and end of each of the three phases of the 2014 conflict? Or should they be the dates when there were the highest numbers of casualties? Or perhaps the dates with the highest numbers of news reports? Again, objectively, such decision-making proved to be infeasible and this option too was discarded. To ensure then that the data was representative of the 2014 round

of violence, the date range that was chosen ultimately was the entire 50-day war period (i.e. 8 July 2014 to 26 August 2014). While this was thought to be the most methodologically sound approach, it did produce a particularly large initial corpus to work from.

The second process of compiling news articles into corpora involved selecting which of the candidate articles to retain as relevant to the project and which to exclude. To be included in the corpora, it was determined that an article had to meet two criteria – it had to:

(1) be classified as a news article (rather than an opinion piece) AND

(2) refer to the 2014 round of violence in some way, even if just in passing.

I elaborate here on the above criteria. The development of the first criterion drew on Bell's (1991) categorisation of media content into news, service information and opinion. Bell's category of 'news' is a broad category which includes not only 'hard news' but special-topic news like sports and business. Regarding the second criterion, the decision to include articles that referred to the 2014 round of violence *even if just in passing* was based on the view that any material on the conflict, however seemingly tangential, would contribute to the overall reporting of it, including any underlying biases and ideological positioning. Furthermore, the decision was also driven by consistency considerations. Making decisions about which articles refer to the 2014 episode in passing and which ones do not were believed to involve personal judgements that could have skewed the data in one direction or the other. To address the potential influence that this decision may have had on collocation results, I have set, as will be revealed in the next subsection – a minimum dispersion threshold. Thus, the following example – a business news article whose main purpose was to report a fall in building construction in Israel but which also referred to the operation in passing – was considered relevant for this reason and was included in the corpus:

The survey did not include the impact of Operation Protective Edge last month, which slowed construction activity in the south of the country. (Haaretz, 7 Aug 2014)

Excluded articles were typically of two types. The first type, as has already been mentioned, was opinion articles. While it is often difficult to draw any firm lines between hard news and opinion articles, the process of distinguishing these was in fact an empirical one for the project. This is because the news outlets themselves apply a classification of opinion and news for all articles published. While there may be dispute about the validity of such categoristions, these nevertheless emerged as an adequate – and certainly an efficient – basis for the selection of articles. The second type involved articles that were found to be not relevant. In some cases, this irrelevance was the result of one of the words in the search term appearing as part of a link to another article. In other cases, the context of the words in the search terms was not related to the IPC. An example of this is an article which mentioned the word 'operation' (a word in the search term) but did so in the context of the Islamic State, as evident in:

> Representative Mike Rogers, Republican chairman of the House of Representative Intelligence Committee, urged the administration to work with Arab partners on robust steps to disrupt the **operations** of the Islamic State (formerly ISIS). (*Haaretz,* 24 August 2014)

The process of deciding which candidate articles to take into the corpus and which of these to leave out, a very time-consuming one, resulted in a body of 'chosen' articles. Each of the selected articles was then 'cleaned' of extraneous linguistic material that, it was believed, could interfere with the results. Examples of such material are information about the author, links to other news articles and other irrelevant information (e.g. 'Send me email alerts'). The only type of information that was retained then was the date and the author name/s. Once cleaned, each of the articles was saved as a text file and a detailed record of it was kept.

So far, I have discussed some general criteria for the retrieval and selection of news articles. In the remainder of this subsection, I describe in more detail the process of retrieving news articles from the *Ynetnews*, *Haaretz* and *JP* websites. It is worth mentioning here that my attempt to retrieve relevant articles from available databases was not successful. To illustrate this point, while I was able to access *Haaretz* newspaper through Factiva, I was unable to access news articles that are older than October 2016. The *JP* newspaper is also accessible via the Factiva database. However, my search yielded only one news article which was relevant to my date range. *Ynetnews* is not a source which is currently available through Factiva.

The process of retrieving news articles for the *Ynetnews* corpus proved somewhat challenging as the website does not have an archive. Articles for this corpus were therefore retrieved using the Google search engine. More specifically, the words *site:Ynetnews.com* followed by a space, a date in the format XX(month).XX(day).XX(year), another space and the search term were used to access *Ynetnews* articles. To illustrate this point, articles that were published on 8 July 2014, for example, were retrieved using the following sequence:

site:Ynetnews.com 07.08.14 Gaza OR operation OR Protective Edge OR IDF OR Hamas

Articles for the *Haarertz* corpus were retrieved using the search box found on the *Haaretz* website. Searching the *Haaretz* archive was a relatively easy process in the sense that it was possible to use Boolean operators (e.g. AND, OR, NOT) when searching multiple text words, resulting in more focused and productive results. The *Haaretz* archive also offers a date range operator. After trial and error, however, it became apparent that selection of the date range 08/07/2014 to 26/08/2014 did not yield results for the entire period but, rather, for the period 27 July 2014 to 26 August 2014. It was therefore necessary to select one date at a time to retrieve relevant news articles. This date had to be in the format XX (day)/XX (month)/XXXX (year) (e.g. 26/08/2014).

Articles for the *JP* corpus were retrieved using the search box found on the *JP* website. The Advanced Search tool was used to narrow down results using the application of filters such as 'category' (e.g. *Breaking News, Israel News, Arab–Israeli Conflict*), 'type' (e.g. *News, Picture, Video*) and 'date'. As for the date filter, the custom date range 07/08/2014-08/27/2014 was selected. Given that a hyphen means 'until and excluding', it was necessary to use the date 08/27/2014 (rather than 08/26/2014). This ensured that articles that were published on 26 August 2014 showed up in the results. Finally, because the *JP* archive does not have Boolean operators, it was necessary to run 5 individual searches, one for each of the words comprising the search term. Results were then compared to one another and duplicate articles were excluded.

Table 3.1 shows the overall number of articles retrieved for each of the news outlets along with the number of tokens (i.e. the total number of words in a corpus) and the number of word types (i.e. the number of distinct words in a corpus). As Table 3.1 illustrates, *Haaretz* published the highest number of articles, followed by the *JP* and *Ynetnews*. Interestingly, although the *JP* corpus had the second-highest number of articles, it also had the lowest number of word tokens. This seems to be consistent with Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery's (2013a:6) observation about the British press according to which tabloids, compared to broadsheets, tend to print more stories shorter in length.

Table 3.1: Size of the three corpora.

	Ynetnews	*Haaretz*	*JP*
Files (articles)	805	1,319	1,241
Word tokens	363,729	1,031,853	192,921
Word types	13,514	27,089	9,821

3.1.2   Collocational analysis

To examine the *Ynetnews*, *Haaretz* and *JP* corpora, I used Antconc (v. 3.5.8, Anthony, 2019), a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis. AntConc was chosen over other corpus analysis toolkits (e.g. WordSmith, LancsBox) for practical reasons. The

program was not only easy to download but was free of charge. More specifically, I used the CL tool of collocation to explore the discourses around the term 'Israel'. As was noted in subsection 2.2.2, collocations (i.e. the tendency of two words to systematically co-occur near or next to each other) are particularly interesting to investigate. This is because, as Jaworska and Krishmanurthy (2012:406) explain, 'they can point to the salient ideas associated with a particular phenomenon [and] [i]n doing so, they can provide indications as to how the phenomenon is frequently framed in discourse'. By investigating the collocates of the search term Israel then, this part of the analysis aimed to provide attested evidence of the salient discourse patterns around the term Israel.

As has already been mentioned, any collocation analysis involves making decisions about specific parameters. For the purposes of this study, I used the MI association score (rather than the t-score) for the automatic identification of collocations. This is because, unlike the t-score which highlights high-frequency collocates (e.g. grammatical words), the MI score highlights the more idiosyncratic collocates of a search term (Clear, 1993:281). Thus, while the t-score is likely to be more useful to the grammarian or lexicographer, the MI score is considered more useful to sociolinguists and discourse analysts (Mautner, 2007:55). It is worth commenting that the MI score is affected strongly by frequency: low frequency words tend to reach a high MI score which in turn may be misleading. To eliminate infrequent combinations, I set – as will be revealed shortly – a frequency limit. The cut-off point I used was an MI score of over 3 which, as mentioned earlier, is considered statistically significant at the 5 per cent level (Baker, 2010a).

The collocation span used was the common +/–5 words to either side of the search term Israel and potential cases of collocation were considered only if they occurred within the same sentence. I also set a minimum collocate frequency of 20 and a minimum collocate dispersion of 10, and opted to automatically sort the results by statistical significance. This procedure, which was carried out for each of the three corpora, yielded a long list of collocates; of these, the analysis focused only on the 50 strongest collocates of Israel.

On their own, lists of top collocates are not very telling unless they are further subjected to a collocational analysis. To be able to make sense of these collocates in some systematic way and gain a better understanding of the array of meanings Israel might be associated with, I drew on Halliday's (1985) notion of transitivity, which was briefly reviewed in Chapter Two. To recap on this concept, transitivity is a system that is able to probe the relationships between participants and processes in a clause and, as such, it has the power to illuminate how social actors and their actions are represented. In the first part of the analysis then, the framework of transitivity was used to identify when Israel was grammatically represented in the clause as an acting agent and when it was represented as an acted-upon recipient. It is important to stress in passing that the study was not conceived as one primarily rooted within the framework of Halliday's grammar. Thus, no particular attention was paid in the analysis to such matters as verb process types (e.g. material, mental, relational) and the participants and circumstances that go with them. The use of Halliday's transitivity was confined to getting an overall perspective on the interactional characteristics of the conflict, as reported in the different outlets; that is, between the focal participant of the study - Israel - and other represented participants in the conflict.

In the second part of the collocational analysis, collocates were classified into *thematic* categories. Theme, as we know, has a specific meaning in systemic functional linguistics: it refers to that with which the clause is concerned and is realised by what is placed in initial position within the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, this research uses the term 'thematic categories' to refer to categories which are organised around patterns of meaning.

A final point worth mentioning here is that in both stages of the collocational analysis, I made no distinction between reporting per se (journalists' own words) and instances of authors quoting a particular source (be it a direct quote or a paraphrase). This was for the reason that the research has sought to take a comprehensive approach to representation. This is in the sense that it treats the voices of news producers and the voices

of the sources they choose to include in their news stories as equal contributors to the overall media representation of Israel.

So far, I have described the linguistic analysis of the research design. However, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, texts are never stand-alone products but, as Hyland (2005:179) explains, are 'constructed with a particular purpose and audience in mind and influenced by a background of community practices and expectations, awareness of other texts, pursuit of personal goals, and so on'. Thus, while a corpus-based CDA analysis of language can tell us *how* Israel was represented in the Israeli media reporting of the 2014 Israel–Gaza clashes, it cannot explain the types of factors and motivations that lay behind news producers' choices about what they reported and how. Interviews with news producers who contributed substantially to the reporting of the conflict, on the other hand, are able to provide such explanations. As Hyland (2005:183) further explains:

> Although corpus analyses are excellent for raising awareness of uses, for telling us what writers do, to stop here runs the danger of reifying conventions rather than explaining them. What we can't do with corpora we must do in other ways, and interviewing is perhaps the most productive.

Thus, in the section below, I provide an overview of the methodology for exploring the news production processes by which news articles about the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict came into being. In extending the textual analysis to include an analysis of text production, I follow the work of Dor (2004), Philo and Berry (2004, 2011), Barkho (2008) and Richardson and Barkho (2009). Of these scholars, Dor (2004) is the only one who has explored the representation of the conflict in the Israeli media setting.

3.2 Analysis of news production processes

This part of the analysis was interested in exploring news production processes and how these might relate to the content and linguistic patterns which were found to be prominent

in the reporting. More specifically, this component of the research was aimed at investigating what discourse-based interviews with news producers could reveal about some of the factors and motivations behind the linguistic patterns identified in the reporting. I now turn to discussing the process of recruiting interviewees. The discourse-based interviews themselves are discussed in the following subsections.

3.2.1   Interviewee recruitment

A combination of CL tools (e.g. frequency lists, keywords) were used to find the names of the news producers (journalists and editors) who appeared to contribute most to the reporting on the conflict in each of the three news outlets. Once identified, these names were ranked in order of frequency and used to construct a list of potential interviewees. Due to the scale and available time for this part of the project, it was decided to interview three news producers from each news outlet – one editor and two journalists. While this was understood to be a limited number, it was thought to be adequate to obtain some reading on the contextual factors that lay behind the findings for the textual analysis, including comparison across the three outlets

The initial list of potential interviewees comprised additional names so as to take into account the possibility that I might not be able to arrange interviews with each of the top three contributors I originally targeted. The rationale for targeting those who contributed most to the reporting of the conflict was that, as main contributors, they were considered to be in the best position to potentially provide the reasons and motivations behind the decisions and choices (be they content-related or language-focused) that were involved in the production of news stories on the conflict. Another consideration in the process of recruiting interviews related to gender diversity; the aim here was to have a relatively balanced pool of both male and female news producers – this was an easy task since the news producers who contributed most to the reporting of the conflict in each of the news outlets comprised both male and female news producers.

The process of recruitment proved to be a rather lengthy one and involved several challenges. First, there were some potential respondents whose contact details were not publicly available, making them harder to reach out to. The second challenge was related to interviewees' responses once reached out to. I initially approached potential interviewees via email. In this introductory email, I briefly explained the reason for contacting them, what the research project was about and what participation in the project would require of them. A more detailed consent and information sheet was attached to that email. The response to the email varied substantially: while some potential interviewees were quick to respond, others did not respond to either my introductory email or the follow-up email I sent one week later and had to be reached by phone.

Another challenge had to do with news producers' level of cooperation. For example, one of the journalists I initially targeted as a potential informant forthrightly expressed their concerns about participating in the project. During our telephone conversation, it became clear to me that they were mostly concerned about two things: me knowing a lot about them, having read their articles, and them not knowing anything about what my 'angle' or my 'research hypothesis' was. In this case, I explained in some detail that my methodology was data-driven, I did not have any hypothesis in mind when I first embarked on the research journey and the main purpose of the interviews was to use their perspective as a way to explore possible reasons for the prominence of some of the linguistic findings. I was nevertheless unable to reassure them and they respectfully declined to participate in the project. Finally, even though news producers knew I was flying from the other side of the world to interview them, they were reluctant to commit to a specific date and time for an interview; a common response I got from quite a few news producers was to 'Give me a call once you arrive in Israel and we'll try to figure out a time'. This too might be ascribable to the constantly changing work environment and the pressures under which news producers operate.

While I initially targeted nine news producers – two journalists and one editor from each of the three news outlets – I ended up conducting interviews with ten news producers:

three from *Ynetnews*, three from *Haaretz* and four from the *JP*. As all the interviewees' responses are reported anonymously, no list of interviewees is attached.

3.2.2 Discourse-based interviews

As was explained in Chapter Two, the discourse-based interview, first developed by Odell, Goswami and Herrington (1983), is a qualitative research method for querying participants about their reasons for the use of their choices in writing. While traditionally the discourse-based interview requires participants to comment on their own writing and judgements, this study required interviewees to respond to prominent linguistic patterns in the reporting; the assumption was that, being main contributors to the reporting, they would be in the best position to comment on the findings. The interviews included a predetermined set of open-ended questions (i.e. questions that prompt discussion) but I also gave myself the freedom and flexibility as an interviewer not only to vary the wording or order of the preplanned questions, but also to add other questions in response to interesting points made by my informants. The interviews also allowed respondents to discuss and raise issues that I had not considered.

The interviews were conducted in English and/or in Hebrew depending on the preference of the interviewee; the thinking here was to make informants feel as comfortable as possible. The interviews comprised a short introduction and two substantive stages. The aim of the introduction was twofold: to establish initial rapport with the interviewees and ensure they agreed to participate in the research project. Here I thanked the informant for making the time to meet me and reiterated three key points from my introductory email. The first involved my interest in the topic; I explained that, as a linguist, I was interested in the role that language plays in the representation of conflicts in general, and as an Israeli, I was specifically interested in the IPC. I also reminded respondents what the research project was about, that is, exploring how 'Israel' was represented in the Israeli media's coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict. Finally, I highlighted why I was seeking their help. I acknowledged the limitations of a textual analysis (mainly that it does not take into

account text production) and highlighted that their perspective as news producers would thus be invaluable. I emphasised in particular that the aim of the interview was to gain a better understanding of how news producers work 'on the ground' and to seek possible explanations for some of the linguistic findings that emerged from the data. I concluded the introduction by reminding respondents that responses would be kept confidential and reported anonymously using a numbering system or pseudonyms, and asking them to sign the consent form.

The first substantive part of the interview contained general background questions including the following:

* How long had you been working for the publication when you started reporting on the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict?

* What was your role back then?

* How did you get involved in the reporting of the conflict?

The aim here was to 'start the conversation' with neutral questions that did not involve any form of evaluation or judgement. This was followed by a set of questions about the processes involved in the production of a news story about the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict. In this part of the interview, respondents were requested, for example, to walk me through the production process from the starting point of an 'event' to the end point of a 'news story'. I was particularly interested here in finding out what changes/adjustments might be made to a story, by whom and on what basis. In another set of questions, I asked respondents to what extent, if at all, they thought their reporting was determined by concern for: (i) audience; (ii) the reporting of competing news outlets; and (iii) the overall national discourse in Israel as expressed, for example, on social media.

More time was devoted to the second substantive part of the interview, the aim of which was to tap into respondents' evaluations and judgements about some of the linguistic findings that emerged from the data. The decision on which linguistic items should be

probed in the interviews was admittedly not a straightforward one. Reflecting on this challenge, I can only assume that spending much time in the company of one's data makes it hard for a researcher to selectively focus on some data while 'weeding out' other data in the process. Two considerations eventually guided the decision about which linguistic findings to probe into. The first one was related to observations regarding similarities across the news outlets (evident in the shared collocates of Israel) and variations across the publications (evident in the exclusive[4] collocates of Israel). The second consideration involved assessing which of the linguistic findings had the best potential to uncover writers' perceptions. For example, the word <u>rockets</u>[5], which emerged as one of the top 50 collocates of Israel in both *Ynetnews* and the *JP*, was not considered a word which would be worth exploring in the interviewers. This was because the alternative ways in which one can talk about rockets is fairly limited and not particularly telling of a writer's stance. By contrast, the shared collocate <u>offensive</u> was deemed a more interesting word choice to explore in the interviews as there are other terms that could have been used to refer to Israel's actions in the conflict.

Although interviews (10 in total) were scheduled to last for an hour, most sessions lasted closer to 90 minutes. Most informants were found to be very enthusiastic about the opportunity to speak about their work. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Transcripts were then sent back to informants, who were given the opportunity to read and comment on these transcripts.

The next chapter explores how Israel was represented in the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in *Ynetnews*.

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[4] I use the term 'exclusive' collocate to refer to a collocate that was used only in one corpus.
[5] I use underlining to signal collocates of 'Israel'.

4. *Ynetnews*

This chapter explores the representation of 'Israel' in the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in *Ynetnews*. This publication, as has already been noted, is the online English presence of *Ynet* (the most popular Hebrew news site in Israel) and *Yedioth Ahronoth* (one of the most circulated national daily newspapers in Israel). It is generally thought to be associated with a centrist political stance (Sheizaf, 2010). As explained in Chapter Three, the linguistic analysis was aimed at exploring *how* Israel was represented in the Israeli media. It did this by focusing on the discourses around the term Israel using the CL tool of collocation (i.e. the tendency of two words to appear together). The analysis also includes commentary from some of the journalists and editors who contributed in a substantial way to the reporting of the conflict. These commentaries are especially concerned with what, in their view, were some of the factors that contributed to language choices and patterns identified in the data.

Table 4.1 shows the 50 strongest collocates of Israel in the *Ynetnews* corpus. These are the strongest collocates of Israel in terms of statistical significance and are presented here according to their relative (per 100,000) and raw frequencies; the higher the rank of a collocate, the more frequent it is in the corpus. In addition, Table 4.1 shows the dispersion of the collocates across the corpus, that is, how (un)evenly a collocate is distributed throughout the corpus. Using the collocate <u>anti</u> as an example, a dispersion value of 28 means that <u>anti</u> emerged as a collocate of Israel in 28 news articles. Table 4.1 also shows the collocates' statistical significance (Stat). This identifies the strength of association between the target term Israel and its collocates. Finally, Table 4.1 reveals that the collocates comprised a broad range of word types. These included nouns (e.g. <u>rockets</u>), verbs (e.g. <u>fired</u>), adjectives (e.g. <u>southern</u>), prepositions (e.g. <u>into</u>), determiners (e.g. <u>its</u>) and pronouns (e.g. <u>itself</u>).

Table 4.1: The 50 strongest collocates of 'Israel' in *Ynetnews* (presented in descending order of frequency).

Rank	Collocate	Relative frequency (per 100,000)	Raw frequency	Dispersion	Stat
1	s	184.2	670	259	4.55
2	rockets	75.05	273	149	4.45
3	its	60.75	221	155	4.31
4	fire	56.08	204	165	4.27
5	into	51.41	187	128	4.79
6	between	48.11	175	136	5.28
7	fired	43.71	159	93	4.8
8	against	40.13	146	95	4.83
9	southern	33.81	123	83	5.21
10	war	24.74	90	57	4.33
11	central	23.91	87	47	5.48
12	attacks	22.54	82	66	4.28
13	says	20.06	73	64	4.32
14	state	18.69	68	57	4.21
15	support	18.42	67	34	4.61
16	offensive	17.04	62	48	5.04
17	launched	15.94	58	52	5.03
18	both	15.39	56	44	4.27
19	right	14.84	54	35	5.04
20	demands	13.47	49	33	4.43
21	anti	13.47	49	28	4.39
22	defend	13.19	48	31	6.05
23	itself	12.64	46	33	5.43
24	continued	11.27	41	37	4.7
25	blockade	11.27	41	33	4.42
26	citizens	10.99	40	28	4.71
27	agreed	9.89	36	27	4.78
28	july	9.07	33	29	4.41
29	firing	8.79	32	30	4.65
30	accused	8.52	31	26	5.44
31	show	7.97	29	18	4.69
32	stop	7.97	29	25	4.27
33	demand	7.69	28	20	4.57
34	accepted	7.14	26	18	5.34
35	flights	7.14	26	12	5.04
36	escalation	7.14	26	19	4.98
37	rejected	7.14	26	20	4.96
38	needs	7.14	26	15	4.94

39	ambassador	7.14	26	19	4.94
40	agree	7.14	26	24	4.55
41	evening	7.14	26	20	4.31
42	actions	6.87	25	26	4.94
43	across	6.87	25	22	4.29
44	respond	6.59	24	20	5.43
45	crimes	6.59	24	16	5.18
46	wants	6.59	24	17	4.94
47	responded	6.32	23	16	5.43
48	pressure	6.04	22	19	4.96
49	criticism	5.49	20	18	4.92
50	towards	5.49	20	18	4.92

The above collocates were manually examined in their immediate context (i.e. a span of 5 words to the left and 5 words to the right). As explained in Chapter Three, the first stage of the linguistic analysis drew on Halliday's (1985) transitivity framework. To recap on this concept, the transitivity system is able to probe the relationships between participants and processes in a text (Richardson, 2007). Using transitivity as the lens through which to look at the collocational data, I was able to manually organise the list of collocates into three grammatical datasets/categories according to the collocates' grammatical relation with the target word Israel. These grammatical categories (summarised in Table 4.2) are:

- **Israel as one of two participants in a conflict**
- **Israel as a 'recipient' in the conflict**
- **Israel as a participant who takes the role of an 'actor'**

Here the notions of 'recipient and 'actor' refer to the semantic roles of a 'patient' (the 'acted upon' or the participant at whom the action is directed) and an 'agent' (the doer/initiator of an action), respectively. Reflecting on these datasets grammatically, in an active sentence the 'actor' has the grammatical function of subject, while a 'recipient' has

the grammatical function of object. The three datasets are illustrated in bold in the following examples:

- **Israel as one of two participants in a conflict:**

The latest round of fighting between Israel and Hamas extends far beyond the urban warfare playing out in the cities and towns of the Gaza Strip. (*Ynetnews*, 30 Jul 2014)

- **Israel as a 'recipient' in the conflict:**

According to the IDF, more than 225 **rockets were fired at Israel** since Operation Protective Edge began late Monday night. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Jul 2014)

- **Israel as an 'actor':**

The bloody conflict broke out on July 8 when **Israel launched an air campaign** in response to heavy rocket fire out of Hamas-controlled Gaza. (*Ynetnews*, 6 Aug 2014)

In the first example above, Israel is depicted as a participant that is engaged in fighting with Hamas, namely, as one of two participants in a conflict. In the second example above, Israel is construed as a participant at whom the firing of rockets is directed; in other words, as the recipient in the conflict. The third example illustrates a depiction of Israel as an actor: here Israel is framed as the participant that 'launched an air campaign'.

As noted in Chapter Three, the second stage of the analysis involved identifying first- and second-level thematic categories within each of the grammatical/transitivity categories. Thus, for example, under the grammatical category of '**Israel as an actor**', different types of thematic categories were identified, namely Israel as '*A combatant*', as '*A participant with security needs that acts in self-defence and responds to Hamas' violence*' and as '*A conciliatory (yet powerful) participant*'. These thematic categories, along with the collocates that index these themes, are also summarised in Table 4.2. As explained earlier, the process of categorisation relied on the contextual readings of collocates, rather than

simply on their literal meanings. To give an example, the word <u>southern</u>, ranked 9th in frequency in the *Ynetnews* corpus (Table 4.1), may not immediately appear to fit into the thematic category of '*A target of Hamas violence and threats*'. However, when one considers that it was used predominantly in a context depicting rockets being fired at southern Israel, it fits here in the category of Israel portrayed as a target of violence.

Table 4.2 further reveals that the process of categorisation resulted in the placement of some of the collocates of Israel in more than one thematic category. The collocate <u>war</u>, for example, was placed in the grammatical category '**One of two participants in a conflict**' and in the second-level thematic category '*A target of criticism, blame and anti-Israel sentiment*'. This is because this collocate was predominantly used in two contexts: one depicting Israel and Hamas as two participants engaged in war and another depicting Israel as a participant accused of (possibly) committing war crimes. Finally, the small set of collocates which appear in the category '**Other**' were found not to shed light on the thematic categories identified in the reporting. The collocate <u>says</u>, for example, was used in a wide array of contexts and thus did not provide evidence of a salient discourse pattern.

Table 4.2: Categorised collocates of 'Israel' in *Ynetnews*.

Categories	'Israel' collocates
One of two participants in a conflict	between, war, both
A 'recipient' in the conflict A victim	
A target of Hamas' violence and threats	rockets, fire, into, fired, against, southern, central, attacks, launched (45%), continued, firing, evening, across, towards, demands
A victim of international airlines' bans	flights
A target of criticism, blame and anti-Israel sentiment	criticism, pressure, stop, escalation, actions, ambassador, accused, war, crimes, anti
A recipient of support	show, support, right, defend, itself

An 'actor' in the conflict	
A combatant	's, offensive, its, launched (55%), July, blockade
A participant with security needs who acts in self-defense and responds to Hamas' violence	right, defend, itself, citizens, respond, responded, needs
A conciliatory (yet powerful) participant	agreed, agree, accepted, rejected, demand, wants
Other	says, state

The thematic categories presented in Table 4.2 are discussed in more detail below. While all 50 collocates are accounted for in Table 4.2, the discussion focuses on those collocates which were particularly telling of the salient discourse patterns. As explained in Chapter Three, these news samples include not only the words used by journalists in the construction of news articles (i.e. their reportage), but also instances of direct/partially direct/indirect quotes taken from news sources and actors. For example, the following samples were both included in the data, even though the nature of the texts is different:

Rockets were fired at <u>central</u> Israel Wednesday evening, and over 35 missiles exploded in Eshkol Regional Council in the south, which was the central target for Gaza militants throughout the day. (*Ynetnews*, 20 Aug 2014) [reportage]

'The salvos on Saturday evening towards <u>central</u> Israel show exactly what Hamas and Islamic Jihad want to do' ... the senior [IDF] official said. (*Ynetnews*, 12 Jul 2014) [quotation]

The reason for not distinguishing these text types is that the research takes a comprehensive approach to representation. This is in the sense that it treats the words of news producers and the words of the news sources they chose to include in their news stories as equal contributors to the overall media representation of Israel.

As has already been noted, the discussion below also includes commentary from my interviews with some of the news producers who contributed substantially to the reporting of the conflict in *Ynetnews*. This commentary sheds light on some of the factors that contributed to the language choices and patterns which were identified in the collocational analysis. The interviews with each participant ran for 60–90 minutes. While their responses in these discourse-based interviews were comprehensive, the limited time available meant only certain key issues related to patterns and choices could be covered. The *Ynetnews* staff interviewed included an editor (designated the Editor) and two senior journalists (designated Journalist 1 and Journalist 2).

4.1 One of two participants in a conflict

As noted, the first grammatical category explored in *Ynetnews* reporting was Israel as one of two participants in a conflict. This was mostly evident in the context of the prominent collocate <u>between</u>, ranked sixth in frequency. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Cairo has been mediating talks between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators since the start of the conflict <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas. (*Ynetnews*, 18 Aug 2014)

> Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas landed in Cairo Friday evening, apparently in further attempts to move forward with an Egyptian ceasefire plan in Gaza, which recently collapsed into renewed cross-border fighting <u>between</u> Hamas and Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 22 Aug 2014)

Two points are worth commenting on in relation to the representation of Israel as one of two participants in the conflict. The first one relates to the labelling of participants and the second to the labelling of events. With respect to the act of naming the protagonists, a close examination of the context of the collocate <u>between</u> revealed that it typically served to introduce a parallel construction, that is, a grammatical structure comprising two linguistic elements that have the same word class (e.g. nouns). In this

parallel structure, the conjunction 'and', which is typically used to join two elements of the same kind, was used to join two noun phrases corresponding to the two participants in the conflict: Israel and its adversary. Because of the nature of the analysis, the Israeli side was always designated 'Israel'. What is of interest, however, is how the other participant in the conflict was labelled and what that says about ideological representations of the rival party.

While Israel was uniformly represented as a single entity (as per the focus of the analysis), an array of representations was used to refer to the other participant in the conflict. This was predominantly evident in the immediate context of the common cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and'. This, as will soon be demonstrated, included 'Hamas', 'Palestinians' and 'militants'. A collocational analysis of the cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and' revealed that it collocated most frequently with 'Hamas', thereby depicting the conflict – both the fighting and the efforts to negotiate a ceasefire – primarily as one between Israel and Hamas. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Saturday's violence follows the collapse of a three-day truce aimed at bringing an end to the deadliest round of fighting <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas since the Islamic militant group seized control of Gaza in 2007. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

> The IDF has begun concentrating forces along Gaza borders as sides met in Cairo to extend the ceasefire <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas set to end midnight Wednesday. (*Ynetnews*, 13 Aug 2014)

The representation of Israel as a participant engaged in conflict with Hamas was also apparent in the context of the collocate <u>both</u>,[6] which tended to be used as part of the common cluster '<u>both</u> Israel and Hamas', as in the following:

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[6] The word <u>both</u> collocated with 'Israel' and 'Hamas'.

Both Israel and Hamas appear to be ratcheting up the belligerence, in rhetoric and in action, since the talks collapsed on Tuesday after Hamas breached an ongoing ceasefire by firing rockets at southern Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Aug 2014)

After Egypt urged sides to renew talks, Egyptian diplomat says Cairo expects to receive responses from both Israel and Hamas by Monday (*Ynetnews*, 24 Aug 2014)

I note in passing that while these appear as somewhat neutral representations of the two sides in the conflict, they are not equivalents as entities. The participant Israel is a nation, while Hamas is a specific Palestinian faction/movement.

Another labelling which was used for the non-Israeli side was 'Palestinians'.[7] Unlike the term 'Hamas', this term constitutes a more national-ethnic oriented reference. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

The latest round of violence between Israel and the Palestinians began on June 12 when with [sic] kidnap and murder of three Israeli teenagers, triggering a major military crackdown on Hamas in the West Bank and an escalation of rocket fire on Israel from Gaza. (*Ynetnews*, 14 Jul 2014)

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said that talks between Israel and the Palestinians were to resume within one month from the start of the ceasefire, and that Israel would open its borders with Gaza to allow entry of reconstruction material and humanitarian aid. (*Ynetnews*, 26 Aug 2014)

As was noted, a third labelling, albeit less frequent than 'Hamas' and 'Palestinians', was used for the non-Israeli side. This was the rather negatively loaded term 'militants'. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

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[7] 'Palestinians' emerged as the second most frequent collocate of the cluster 'between Israel and'; it also emerged as a collocate of the preposition between.

The 15-member body [the UN council] will meet at 10 am local time (5 pm Jerusalem time) on Thursday to discuss the violence that is building up to the most serious hostilities <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza since an eight-day war in 2012. (*Ynetnews*, 10 Jul 2014)

Egypt launched an initiative on Monday to halt fighting <u>between</u> Israel and Palestinian militants, proposing a ceasefire to be followed by talks in Cairo on settling the conflict in which Gaza authorities say more than 170 people have died. (*Ynetnews*, 15 Jul 2014)

The second point worth commenting on regarding the representation of Israel as one of two participants in a conflict pertains to the labelling of events – that is, the way in which the parties' engagement with one another was framed. On this score, Israel was predominantly depicted as a participant engaged in <u>war</u> with Hamas. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

The airstrikes followed an almost 12-hour pause in the fighting and came as international efforts intensified to end the three-week <u>war</u> between Israel and Hamas. (*Ynetnews*, 28 Jul 2014)

In the grisly math of the Israel–Hamas <u>war</u>, conflicting counts of combatants and civilians killed in Gaza are emerging – with the ratio perhaps more important to shaping international opinion of the month long conflict than any final toll. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

Deep underground, Mohammed Deif leads Hamas <u>war</u> with Israel (*Ynetnews*, 15 Aug 2014)

The use of the word <u>war</u> is notable, it emerging as the 10th most frequent collocate of Israel in *Ynetnews*. This prominence in the reporting is interesting. This is because the

official position of Israel was that it was engaged not in war but an 'operation' – officially dubbed Operation Protective Edge. Thus, on 12 August 2014 *Ynetnews* reported:

> After 29 days of fighting, 64 fallen IDF soldiers, and more than 1,900 Palestinians killed, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government insists that Operation Protective Edge was not a <u>war</u>. (*Ynetnews*, Aug 12, 2014)

The labelling of participants and events was explored in the interviews. As for the act of naming the protagonists, my *Ynetnews* informants were specifically quizzed about the use of the term 'Palestinians'. Overall, while they all acknowledged that 'Palestinians' is a collectivising[8] term, they were also convinced that the prominence of this lexical choice was related to professional standards, practices and imperatives. For example, Journalist 1 suggested 'Palestinians' was not an appropriate term unless used in the context of negotiations:

> It is odd ... In my opinion, it does not reflect ... between Israel and the Palestinians? Like, it's not the Palestinians in the West Bank ... to tell you that it's accurate, it's not accurate. What do you mean between Israel and the Palestinians? You know, it's ... when there are negotiations, it makes more sense. At the end of the day, it's not like both the West Bank and Gaza waged a war on Israel in Protective Edge.

Journalist 1's last comment – 'it's not like both the West Bank and Gaza waged a war on Israel in Protective Edge' – is worth commenting on. Drawing on Halliday's (1985) transitivity framework, their use of an active sentence where the Palestinian side is the agent (the wager of war) and Israel is the patient (the affected participant) reflects the perception according to which it is the Palestinian side – rather than the Israeli one – that is responsible for the eruption of violence.

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[8] For more information on the use of collectivising terms, see Van Leeuwen (1996), Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013a,2013b) and Kader (2016).

As noted earlier, Journalist 1 went on to attribute the prominence of the term to news producers' concern for audience and particularly to their assumptions about readers' understanding of the issue. Journalist 1, as the comment below illustrates, suggested that *local* readers (i.e. Israeli consumers of *Ynetnews*) are familiar with the broader historical context of the 2014 round of violence and would therefore know that any reference to 'Palestinians' is essentially a reference to Palestinians *in Gaza*:

> It's a bit odd, but historically ... Do you understand what I'm trying to say? Whoever reads it in Israel will get it ... Gaza ... a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians ... it's like, it makes sense.

Journalist 2 was also probed about the prominence given to the term 'Palestinians'. They initially expressed their reservation about the use of this term:

> Palestinians – I don't really relate to this word because I think it is too general ... I mean, Palestinians are also the West Bank.

They too went on to suggest that the use of the term 'Palestinians' was guided by news producers' assumptions about audience, although they did refer to a different 'chunk' of readers, that is, the outlet's readership abroad. They explained that this lexical choice might have been motivated by the need to simplify things or, to use their words, 'reduc[e] the discourse' for a readership that does not live in Israel:

> Look, this is part of what I've told you ... reducing the discourse or the reporting ... It's like, I don't know, writing for the reader in Brussels, or Auckland or Melbourne or New York ... it could be that ... for someone who doesn't live here and reads *Ynet*[9] you need to simplify the discourse ... like, I don't know if they would understand

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[9] As was explained in Chapter Two, the primary source of information is *Ynet* in Hebrew, which then gets translated into English.

what is 'Palestinian Islamic Jihad', for the sake of illustration. I'm not sure. So you say 'Palestinians'.

Like Journalist 1 and Journalist 2, the Editor also found the word 'Palestinians' to be 'more general' than intended but explained that these variations should not necessarily be seen as ideologically motivated. They identified two factors at play: one was to see it as an unavoidable by-product of the need to produce a lot of news stories in a timely manner; the other was to diversify the language when writing:

> There's no editorial subtext. First of all, when you're bashing stuff out like this, there are times when you will inadvertently be more general than you would like to be. There's no … It's just a desire to vary terminology.

In the interviews, my *Ynetnews* informants were also queried about the use of the negatively loaded term 'militants'. The Editor, for example, thought that the main motivation was again the need to have variation of terms in the reporting:

Interviewer: OK. What about 'militants'? …

The Editor: It's just a desire to vary language.

Journalist 2 offered the stylistic considerations of neutrality and accuracy as the reasons that lay behind the use of the term. As their words below illustrate, 'militants' was thought to be a neutral lexical choice compared to 'terrorists', on the one hand, and to 'Palestinians', on the other hand; they also thought 'militants' was accurate in that it captured the idea that participants were members of (Hamas') military wing:

> Look, let's say a group of terrorists gets killed, OK? … I will not write 'terrorists', OK? I'll write 'militants' … My preference would always be to say 'between Israel and

Hamas' … or Palestinian factions in Gaza … 'Militants' also works because it is a bit more specific – it's the military wing … I'll always prefer that to 'Palestinians'.

It was interesting to see in this final exchange how readily this particular journalist fell upon a term that was not in fact found in this context of the *Ynetnews* reporting - 'terrorists' ('let's say a group of terrorists gets killed, OK'). This appeared to be a proscribed term in the reporting of this outlet, but it is possible that this moment in the interview reflected a deep-seated view held by some journalists about the nature of Israel's adversary in the conflict.

The issue of how the conflict was designated was also explored in interviews, especially this tendency for the term <u>war</u> to be used in the *Ynetnews* reporting. My *Ynetnews* respondents again mentioned professional orientation as the factor underlying the prominence of the term <u>war</u>. They were also convinced that this lexical choice reflected what was 'actually happening on the ground'. Journalist 2, for example, suggested that the prominent use of the <u>war</u> nomenclature might have been influenced by the journalistic practice of observing other outlets' coverage of the issue, explaining that <u>war</u> was the term the international media used for the conflict:

If you looked at what was going on in the international media during Protective Edge, 'War on Gaza' – that was the heading. Like, all the time they spoke of 'war', 'war' … definitely a war. That was the language they used.

Journalist 1 was also queried about the prominence of the <u>war</u> designation. They were convinced that they were reporting 'reality' and offered the news value of superlativeness as a factor at play. Their explanation, as is illustrated below, focused on the longer duration (i.e. the scope/magnitude of the event) of this round of violence compared to previous rounds of fighting with Hamas:

Look, I think ... first of all, I think that from a media perspective, it is by all means a war. It's not ... at the end of the day, it's 50-something days. It's a war. A war for all intents and purposes.

The Editor was also probed about the <u>war</u> designation. They were again keen to downplay any specific ideological motivation, stressing stylistic considerations:

Again, it's not editorialising. It's just a desire to vary the language. You can't say 'conflict', 'fighting', 'conflict', 'fighting'.

Like Journalist 1, they too were convinced that the term <u>war</u> was a 'true reflection' of what was happening on the ground and highlighted the long duration (50 days) of this round of violence with Hamas:

And it was a war. It was a war. It's not like ... for example, you wouldn't call a brief military operation lasting two days along the Gaza border a war ... You're talking about a 50-day military operation in which civilians on both sides are suffering, in which ... Hamas for all purposes is an army – and the Israeli Army would say the same thing ... they're well trained, they're well-disciplined, they are an army, they have a naval branch, they're trying to develop their aerial branch at the moment, drones – it was a war. It was a war ... across the board.

Significantly, however, embedded in the Editor's words above is another factor at play, one which is more ideological in nature. Specifically, their words about how 'civilians on *both* sides are suffering' and the suggestion that the war fought was one between two 'equal' armies ('Hamas for all purposes is an army') can be understood to reflect the perception that the conflict is somehow 'symmetrical'.

It is worth pointing out that the use of the term 'war' is not entirely self-evident. This is highlighted not only in the fact that the Israeli establishment, as we saw earlier, consciously opted to avoid using this term, but also in the fact that 'war', as will be revealed in Chapter Five, did not emerge as a collocate of Israel in the reporting of one of the other outlets studied – *Haaretz*. It is also worth mentioning that the use of the term 'war' has been interpreted by some scholars (e.g. Lukin, 2013) as a discursive means of legitimising acts of violence. Simonsen (2019:507), for example, argues that 'the term "war" may connote two equally equipped armies confronting each other on a battlefield and downplay the vast power differential between Israel and Hamas'.

4.2 A 'recipient' in the conflict

The second grammatical category explored in *Ynetnews* reporting was Israel as a 'recipient' in the conflict. The analysis was interested in identifying how Israel was represented as a recipient/'patient' as well as identifying the type of actions that were seen as being carried out upon Israel. As a recipient in the conflict, there were two main discourses around the term 'Israel'. Israel was constructed as a victim in the conflict and also as a participant in the conflict that has support and backing, particularly of the US.

4.2.1 A victim

Three representations of 'Israel' contributed to the discourse of victimhood. These were depictions of Israel: (i) as a target of Hamas' violence and threats; (ii) as a victim of international airlines' bans; and (iii) as a target of criticism, blame and anti-Israel sentiment.

A target of Hamas' violence and threats

As a victim in the conflict, 'Israel' was frequently framed as a target of Hamas' violence. The fact that this subcategory was lexically rich, with 16 of the collocates contributing to this representation (Table 4.1), suggests that this theme was particularly prominent in *Ynetnews*. Here Israel was depicted primarily as a target of attacks. This was evident in the collocates <u>attacks</u> and <u>against</u>. As the first and second examples below illustrate, Israel was portrayed as a target of rocket attacks and cross-border tunnel attacks, respectively:

> Palestinian rocket <u>attacks</u> continued to pound southern Israel on Saturday morning, with six rockets landing in the Sdot Negev Regional Council area. (*Ynetnews*, 24 Aug 2014)

> IDF officials estimate all 31 tunnels were meant to facilitate terror <u>attacks</u> <u>against</u> Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 24 July 2014)

In the depiction of Israel as a victim of rocket fire, <u>central</u> Israel and <u>southern</u> Israel in particular were represented as the target of continuous 'rocket fire' and 'rocket attacks'. As part of this discourse, there were many references to the <u>firing</u> of rockets: <u>rockets</u> were depicted as being <u>fired</u> <u>into</u>/<u>towards</u> or <u>launched</u> at Israel. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Gaza militants have <u>fired</u> hundreds of <u>rockets</u> <u>into</u> Israel, some more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) deep, covering an area of about 5 million. (*Ynetnews*, 12 Jul 2014)

> The 20th day of Operation Protective Edge began with more rocket <u>fire</u> at <u>southern</u> Israel, with three <u>rockets</u> that landed in Israeli territory in the early morning hours. (*Ynetnews*, 27 Jul 2014)

The firing of rockets, as reported in *Ynetnews*, was depicted as ongoing. This was apparent in the context of the collocate <u>continued</u>.[10] This point is exemplified in the following samples:

Rockets <u>continued</u> to fall on Israel on Thursday both before and even after an agreed five-hour UN brokered humanitarian pause in fighting began at 10am, with over 100 rockets fired since the humanitarian halt in fire ended and before the beginning of the IDF's ground operation in the Strip. (*Ynetnews*, 18 Jul 2014)

Rockets <u>continued</u> pounding southern Israel at noontime Thursday, with 6 rockets hitting Eshkol, 2 near Ashdod, one in Kiryart Malachi, one in Sdot Negev and one near Ramle. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Aug 2014)

Hours before a humanitarian ceasefire was to come into effect, rocket fire <u>continued</u> on southern Israel (*Ynetnews*, 4 Aug 2014)

As was mentioned earlier, Israel was also framed as a target of cross-border tunnel attacks, although this representation was much less prominent than the one depicting Israel as a target of rocket fire. The construction of Israel as a target of cross-border tunnel attacks was evident, as we saw earlier, in the context of the collocate <u>attacks</u>. The collocate <u>into</u>[11] and particularly the common cluster '<u>into</u> Israel' also contributed to this representation. A collocational analysis of this cluster revealed that 'tunnels' was one of its top collocates. Here the discourse was around cross-border tunnels used by Hamas 'terrorists' to infiltrate <u>into</u> Israel and carry out attacks. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

Five IDF soldiers were killed in an incident Monday in which terrorists from Gaza infiltrated <u>into</u> Israel through an underground tunnel, raising the number of IDF casualties to 53. (*Ynetnews*, 29 Jul 2014)

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[10] <u>Continued</u> collocated with 'fire', 'rockets', 'rocket', 'Israel', 'Gaza' and 'Hamas'.
[11] <u>Into</u> collocated with 'Israel', 'territory', 'through', 'tunnel', 'tunnels' and 'terrorists'.

A terror tunnel of this kind was dug <u>into</u> Israel by Hamas terrorists, in order to carry out a mass terror attack against Israeli citizens. (*Ynetnews*, 18 Jul 2014)

Israeli soldiers have already frustrated several surprise assaults by Hamas through tunnels from Gaza <u>into</u> southern Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 27 Jul 2014)

A different form of violence that emerged in the *Ynetnews* reporting involved not deeds, but words. Here Israel was depicted as a recipient of Hamas' threats. This was apparent in the context of the collocate <u>demands</u> which interestingly was used in relation to the Palestinian rather than the Israeli side in the conflict. A close reading of this collocate's immediate context revealed that the frame of threat was typically, though not exclusively, achieved through the use of the conditional 'until'. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

Hamas' spokesperson in the Gaza Strip Mushir al-Masri said Saturday that the organization will continue fighting until Israel gives in to their <u>demands</u>. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Aug 2014)

The Palestinians won't return to the negotiating table until Israel surrenders to their <u>demands</u>, Hamas leader Khaled Mashal said Thursday. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Aug 2014)

At the same time, the military wing of Islamic Jihad said there would be an escalation in its 'resistance activities' in the following hours until Israel responds to its <u>demands</u>. (*Ynetnews*, 5 Aug 2014)

4.2.1.2   *A victim of international airlines' bans*

A very specific but unexpected type of victim framing was around the disruption of Israel's aviation industry. Reporting of this aspect of the conflict related to the landing of a rocket about a mile from Israel's international airport on 22 July 2014. More specifically, 'Israel' was portrayed as a victim of international airlines' bans. This was mostly evident in

references to foreign airlines cancelling/suspending/halting/banning/prohibiting (and eventually resuming and restoring) <u>flights</u> to and from Ben Gurion Airport, as in the following:

> Earlier in the conflict, airlines suspended their <u>flights</u> into Israel after a rocket landed in a town near Israel's main international airport. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Aug 2014)

> Several international airlines cancelled their <u>flights</u> to Israel on Tuesday, citing security concerns after a rocket from Gaza fell near the airport wounding a man. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

> The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a 24-hour prohibition on <u>flights</u> by US carriers to Israel Wednesday after a rocket fired from Gaza struck near Ben-Gurion International Airport, on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

My *Ynetnews* informants were probed about the unexpected prominence given in the reporting to the cancellation/suspension of flights to and from Israel. While they identified news values as the factor underlying the discourse around the disruption of flights, embedded in their comments was the perception that international bans were an indicator of threat. The Editor, for example, talked about how the bans on flights were unprecedented, possibly reflecting the notion that unexpected events are newsworthy:

> It was the first time that that had happened. So there's that.

They also talked about the ramifications of the bans on flights, presumably reflecting the idea that news events with impact are newsworthy. Significantly, however, implied in their words below is the perception that Israel is a 'nation that dwells alone':

Interviewer: The [US] FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] announced I think it was like a 36-hour ban … it was very short in duration but very prominent in the reporting.

The Editor: Because of the implications, because of what it meant. It meant that Hamas could effectively shut down Israel's airport. It's a very big deal … you're talking about the impact of an action … Closing down Israel's airspace … After 9/11 the Americans closed down their airspace for what, three days? It's nothing. It's three days, but the implications of what it means – you are effectively shutting down the country's … especially somewhere like Israel which is basically surrounded on all sides by other enemies or by cold allies and the Mediterranean Sea.

Like the Editor, Journalist 2 attributed the prominence given to bans on flights to the news value of unexpectedness. Interestingly, they also suggested that the disruption in flights was Hamas' 'biggest achievement', possibly reflecting a zero-sum perception of the conflict in which any gains of one side are perceived as the other side's loss. In this scheme of thought, a Hamas victory is likely to be perceived as a threat to Israel:

This is the biggest achievement of Hamas … that it managed to disrupt the air traffic to Israel for a limited period of time, but still managed to disrupt it … This achievement had to receive a very large volume because first, I think that it was pretty … it was unprecedented in the round [of fighting] in Gaza. It was the first time ever that the air traffic to Israel had been disrupted because of Hamas, because of Gaza, as a result of fire from Gaza.

Journalist 1 was also quizzed about the discourse around the disruption in flights. As their words below illustrate, they talked more explicitly about how international bans on flights were perceived as a cue that indicated 'danger':

One of the manifestations that a routine is interrupted is that you can't … that flights cannot land … you can't take off. This is danger … I think that people really … like understand that something not right is happening … when flights don't leave … on time, planes don't land, that is, you know, there is danger in the Israeli airspace … this is something which is deterring … this is why it receives a lot of attention.

Like Journalist 2, they too highlighted how the disruption in flights was Hamas' biggest achievement. As mentioned earlier, this can be understood as reflecting a zero-sum perception of the conflict. As their words below illustrate, the closing down of Israel's international airport was perceived as a materialisation of 'Hamas' threats':

The other side knows it too. They are aware of it. You know that one of Hamas' threats … is to disrupt Ben Gurion Airport … a lot of it is a matter of consciousness. How does it look? Do you get it? Now, as far as they are concerned, if Hamas succeeded, with their improvised means … to disrupt the airport, it's a big achievement … in their view, it's an achievement.

4.2.1.3   A target of criticism, blame and anti-Israel sentiment

The third representation of 'Israel' which contributed to the discourse of victimhood was one which depicted Israel as a target of criticism, blame and anti-Israel sentiment. The construal of Israel as a target of criticism was evident in the emergence of the word criticism as a collocate of Israel in *Ynetnews*. A close examination of this collocate's concordances revealed that criticism of Israel was framed as coming from a wide array of international actors. In the following three examples, the critics are variously US President Barack Obama and UN chief Ban Ki-moon, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and the foreign media:

Israel faces growing international <u>criticism</u> over the large number of civilians killed in Gaza, with President Barack Obama and UN chief Ban Ki-moon both saying Israel could do much more to prevent harm to noncombatants. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, opened the meeting with heavy <u>criticism</u> for the State of Israel saying that it is possibly committing war crimes against the civilian population in Gaza. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

Israel has come under intense <u>criticism</u> by the foreign media for causing civilian casualties as part of Operation Protective Edge – the condemnations escalated in recent days following reports of a strike on a mosque and a structure that housed elderly people. (*Ynetnews*, 13 Jul 2014)

A frame of criticism was also evident in the context of the collocate <u>actions</u>. Here Israel was portrayed as a participant that is criticised for its actions in Gaza from a range of sources including, in the examples below, various Middle Eastern leaders:

Addressing hundreds of thousands of supporters at his biggest rally so far ahead of the Aug. 10 election, Erdogan again likened Israel's <u>actions</u> to those of Hitler. (*Ynetnews*, 4 Aug 2014)

After a month of relative silence from the Arab world on Operation Protective Edge, Jordan has stepped forward in recent days to condemn and criticize Israel's <u>actions</u> in the Gaza Strip, with King Abdullah II on Sunday calling on the international community to 'hold Israel accountable for what it has committed'. (*Ynetnews*, 10 Aug 2014)

Suleimani's intervention follows a speech Tuesday by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urging the Islamic world to arm the Palestinians and branding Israel's <u>actions</u> in Gaza a 'genocide'. (*Ynetnews*, 31 Jul 2014)

Increased international criticism of Israel for its actions in Gaza was also manifested in references to its tense diplomatic relations. Here Israel was depicted as a participant whose ties with other countries are 'going downhill'. This was mostly apparent in the immediate context of the collocate <u>ambassador</u>. A close examination of the collocate's concordances revealed that the word was often used to depict foreign countries' calls to either withdraw their ambassadors in Israel or to expel Israeli ambassadors to their countries. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

Last week, Brazil recalled its <u>ambassador</u> from Israel, one of the first countries to do so. (*Ynetnews*, 29 Jul 2014)

Several organizations have called for the expulsion of Israel's <u>ambassador</u>. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

This aspect of the reporting was also realised in quotation form. The first example below, a quote by Israel's ambassador to the UN, Ron Prosor, focuses on the rather complex relations between Israel and the UN, while the second and third examples depict a straining of Israel–US relations:

Israel's <u>Ambassador</u> to the UN Ron Prosor slammed the meeting, saying 'members of the international community have been quick to condemn Israel, but slow to condemn Hamas for its war crimes'. (Ynetnew, 31 Jul 2014)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with US <u>Ambassador</u> to Israel Dan Shapiro and demanded that the US never 'second-guess' him on Hamas again. (*Ynetnews*, 2 Aug 2014)

The criticism from Israeli officials regarding Secretary of State John Kerry's effort to achieve a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and Netanyahu's scolding of American <u>ambassador</u> to Israel Dan Shapiro led the New York Times to reach the conclusion earlier this week that it is unclear 'how the relationship recovers as long as you have this president and this prime minister'. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

The frame of Israel as a recipient of criticism also included references to various actors pressuring Israel to reach a ceasefire or stop the escalation in violence. Three collocates contributed to this representation: <u>pressure</u>, <u>stop</u> and <u>escalation</u>. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Netanyahu is said to have used his influence in the Pentagon, Congress and lobby groups in Washington to defuse the US administration's <u>pressure</u> on Israel during the Gaza operation. (*Ynetnews*, 14 Aug 2014)

> 'Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas demanded Israel immediately <u>stop</u> its <u>escalation</u> and the raids on Gaza,' said a statement from his office published shortly after midnight by the official WAFA news agency. (*Ynetnews*, 8 Jul 2014)

> 'Jordan demands Israel <u>stop</u> all forms of <u>escalation</u>' [Jordan government spokesman Mohammad Momani]. (*Ynetnews*, 9 July 2014)

Another discourse around the term Israel, as noted earlier, was one which depicted Israel as a target of blame. Unlike criticism, which refers to the action of expressing disapproval, the concept of blame entails the attributing of responsibility. The frame of blame was primarily evident in the context of the collocates <u>accused</u>, <u>war</u> and <u>crimes</u>. A concordance analysis of the collocate <u>accused</u> showed that Israel was typically accused of committing or possibly committing war crimes[12] in Gaza and of impeding efforts to break from the violence. In this construal of blame, it was typically Palestinian actors who voiced these accusations. This point is exemplified below:

> Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri <u>accused</u> Israel of committing a 'grave escalation' in violence and threatened to retaliate, saying Israel would 'pay the price'. (*Ynetnews*, 8 Jul 2014)

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[12] <u>War</u> and <u>crimes</u> collocated with one another and with 'Israel'.

Top Palestinian officials have <u>accused</u> Israel of <u>war</u> <u>crimes</u> in Gaza, filing a complaint Friday to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. (*Ynetnews*, 25 Jul 2014)

Palestinian delegation member Qais Abd al-Karim (Abu Layla) <u>accused</u> Israel of sabotaging the ceasefire talks so they would fail. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Aug 2014)

The discourse of blame around Israel was also evident in the context of the collocate <u>escalation</u>. Here Israel was portrayed as a participant that is responsible for escalating violence. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

Instead, he [Hamas spokesperson Sami Abu Zuhri] blamed the <u>escalation</u> of tensions on Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 19 Aug 2014)

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri accused Israel of committing a 'grave <u>escalation</u>' in violence and threatened to retaliate, saying Israel would 'pay the price'. (*Ynetnews*, 8 July 2014)

In addition to being represented as a target of criticism and blame, Israel was also construed as a target of anti-Israel sentiment. This anti-Israel sentiment frame was apparent in the context of the collocate <u>anti</u> and, more specifically, in the concordances of the common cluster '<u>anti</u>-Israel'. An analysis of the immediate context of this construction revealed that it was predominantly used to talk about acts of protest against Israel's actions in Gaza. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

The Foreign Ministry recently warned Israelis against visiting Turkey due to the <u>anti</u>-Israel protests held in the country in response to Operation Protective Edge. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

Many <u>anti</u>-Israel and pro-Hamas protests have been held in Amman and other places in Jordan since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge. (*Ynetnews*, 2 Aug 2014)

Significantly, in this anti-Israel sentiment frame, links were drawn between protests and anti-Semitic acts and symbols, reflecting the fact that <u>anti</u> also collocated with 'Semitism' and 'Semitic':

> Since the outbreak of violence between Israel and Hamas, participants at <u>anti</u>-Israel demonstrations across Germany have frequently used anti-Semitic slogans and also called for Jews to be gassed – a reference to the killing of Jews by the Nazis in the Holocaust. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

> This anti-Semitism came to the fore in street demonstrations and <u>anti</u>-Israel rallies, where Israeli leaders were compared to Hitler and the Nazi swastika was repeatedly displayed, often next to the Jewish Star of David. (*Ynetnews*, 14 Aug 2014)

The discourse around victimhood – particularly the depiction of Israel as a target of blame – was also probed in the interviews. Generally, the *Ynetnews* informants thought that it was important to indicate that information about how others viewed Israel's acts of violence in Gaza should not necessarily be seen as established facts. Thus, the Editor explained the use of the verb <u>accused</u> as a way of signalling to the reader that the information following <u>accused</u> should be understood as someone's opinion, not as a statement of fact:

> If you are saying Israel carried out war crimes, you are accusing Israel of carrying out war crimes. You're not saying Israel carried out war crimes cause you're not stating a fact; you're saying, in my opinion – that is an accusation or an allegation. If you said 'said', in that context it implies that it is a fact.

Similarly, Journalist 2 talked about how the use of the word <u>accused</u> is part of a 'blame game' played around who should take responsibility for events. Their comment

about how the legal repercussions of being 'accused of an offence' are not as severe as those of being 'convicted of a crime' suggests that the word <u>accused</u> might have been used to ward off/mitigate blame and depict Israel as a defendant rather than an offender:

> Look … this is part of the blame game … When you look at it even from a legal point of view, there is a difference between blaming someone and finding someone guilty. In other words, when you are being accused, this is an earlier stage in the prosecution process. It's not like you have been sentenced and you committed war crimes … you are accused.

My *Ynetnews* informants were also probed about the prominence given to the reporting on '<u>anti</u>-Israel' demonstrations and rallies. Overall, while some informants highlighted again the role that professional standards played in shaping the reporting, underlying their comments appeared to be a concern about the significance of these demonstrations and protests. For some, these concerns reflected well-entrenched fears. For example, when probed about the overwhelming attention given to the reporting on anti-Israel demonstrations, the Editor offered accuracy as a factor at play, suggesting that they were merely reporting the 'facts'. Embedded in their comment below, however, is the perception that worldwide protests were not an expression of criticism against Israel's actions in Gaza but, more broadly, an expression of anti-Israel sentiment:

> Again, you try to be as accurate as possible. When they're burning Israeli flags and parading mock-rockets down the Champs Elysees, those protests are against Israel; they're not against Israeli action … You try to be as descriptive and as clear as possible. Protests against the Israeli military operation or the Israeli offensive in Gaza are one thing, but when you have clearly … protests that are clearly aimed at the state itself rather than … and, you know.

Journalist 2 was more explicit about the role that national ideology may have played in the prominence given to the discourse around protests. They suggested that such prominence might have been influenced by Israel's deeply embedded siege mentality (i.e. the belief that Israel is a lonely victim in a hostile world):

> And I think there is even no less than a sense of satisfaction dealing with … the entire world is against us … and the BDS[13] is anti-Israel … look how they attack us despite what is being done to us.

They went on to explain – as illustrated below – that Israel's siege mentality and collective victimhood perceptions are deep-seated ('It's kind of a Jewish, Holocaustic diasporal thing'). Of interest is how they brought anti-Semitism into the discourse and utilised an us-versus-them frame in their comment. Their words illustrate that it was not always possible in these commentaries to distinguish between when they were speaking from a journalist's perspective and when they spoke more as a citizen concerned about the potential seriousness of events:

> In other words, it's kind of a Jewish, Holocaustic diasporal thing, yeah? The whole 'we are being attacked, we are being fired at, we are defending ourselves', and yet, abroad, you will find all these … the anti-Semites, the anti-Israelis that only look for the opportunity to attack us.

Elaborating on this issue, Journalist 2 suggested that, in times of war, Israel becomes particularly sensitive to any information that may indicate a negative intention towards it, adding that such times are also characterised by 'rallying around the flag':

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[13] The boycott, divestment and sanctions movement (also known as the BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement which promotes various forms of boycott against Israel aimed at pressuring Israel to meet its 'obligations under international law'.

In times of war or military campaign, I suppose you are aware of this too as someone who used to live here, there is what is called rallying around the flag, OK? And the level of patriotism increases dramatically. A period like that simultaneously sees more criticism of Israel, worldwide criticism against its actions … I think that the combination of the rising levels of criticism of Israel coupled with the over-patriotism that characterises this period creates a window for a very widespread discourse, a discourse which is attuned to every anti-Israel phenomenon. In other words, the radar suddenly becomes tuned in ways it had not previously been tuned, OK? Their level of sensitivity is much higher during these days … and the combination, when you take the two and put them together, you understand how it is predictable that this will happen.

4.2.2   A 'recipient' of support

A competing discourse to that of being a victim and, more specifically, to the representation of 'Israel' as a target of criticism, blame and anti-Israel sentiment was a discourse which depicted Israel as a participant that is supported in the conflict. The frame of Israel as a 'recipient' of support largely comprised two representations. Israel was constructed as: (i) a recipient of world Jewish solidarity; and (ii) a participant that has the backing of predominantly the US. A frame of solidarity with Israel was apparent in the context of the collocate <u>support</u> and, more specifically, in the context of the common clusters '<u>support</u> for Israel', '<u>support</u> Israel' and '<u>support</u> of Israel'. This support was reported to have come predominantly from Jewish citizens residing in other countries:

> More than 5,000 people than [sic] 83 countries around the world have in the last five days photographed their passport along with a caption showing <u>support</u> for Israel scrawled on the palm of their hand, as part of a campaign to show solidarity for the IDF's Operation Protective Edge. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Jul 2014)

IN PICTURES: Thousands rally around the world to <u>support</u> Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 4 Aug 2014)

Scores of celebrities and power-brokers from the Hollywood establishment have come out in <u>support</u> of Israel and a peaceful resolution to its conflict with Hamas, with stars as diverse as Sarah Silverman, Seth Rogen and Arnold Schwarzenegger signing a joint statement released on Saturday. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Aug 2014)

The depiction of solidarity with Israel was also apparent in the immediate context of the collocate <u>show</u>, which collocated with both 'solidarity' and <u>support</u>. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

Thousands of Hungarians gathered Sunday in Budapest's prestigious Dohány Street Synagogue to <u>show</u> solidarity with Israel and condemn the terror attacks against the Jewish state. (*Ynetnews*, 28 Jul 2014)

Yafit, another Israeli living in London and who will soon return to home with her family, also turned out [in London for pro-Israeli rally] to <u>show</u> support for Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 21 Jul 2014)

An estimated 700 people from around the Bay Area marched through San Francisco on Sunday to <u>show</u> their unwavering support of Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 4 Aug 2014)

The second representation which contributed to the construal of Israel as a recipient of support was one which framed it as a participant that has the backing of particularly the US. This frame was predominantly evident in the context of three collocates – <u>right</u>, <u>defend</u> and <u>itself</u> – which tended to co-occur and form the common cluster Israel's '<u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>'. This cluster, as will be revealed in subsection 4.3.2, contributed to the construal of Israel as a participant that acts in self-defence. However, a close reading of this cluster's context revealed that it indexed another discourse, one which depicts Israel as a recipient

of US support. This was evident in the many references to US leaders expressing/reiterating/underscoring their support for 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>'. To use linguistic terms, the cluster 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>' showed a semantic preference towards US leaders. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

President Barack Obama said Wednesday that Israel has a <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> against rocket attacks, but also lamented the deaths of civilians in Gaza. (*Ynetnews*, 17 Jul 2014)

Caught on an open microphone apparently criticizing Israel's operation in the Gaza Strip as 'a hell of a pinpoint operation', Secretary of State John Kerry on Sunday reiterated US support for Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>. (*Ynetnews*, 20 Jul 2014)

US: Hamas broke ceasefire, Israel has <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>. (*Ynetnews*, 19 Aug 2014)

The depiction of the US supporting Israel'*s* 'right to defend itself' was also evident in quotes. In the first, second and third examples below, support for this right to self-defence came from US president Barak Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry and White House spokesman Josh Earnest, respectively:

Speaking at the White House before Congress ended its final session before summer recess, Obama reiterated the position he has held from the beginning of Operation Protective Edge. 'I have been very clear throughout this crisis: Israel has a <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>.' (*Ynetnews*, 1 Aug 2014)

'You have people who've come out of tunnels, you have a right to go and take out those tunnels. We completely support that and we support Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> against rockets that are continuing to come in.' [Secretary of State John Kerry] (*Ynetnews*, 20 Jul 2014)

'No country can accept rocket fire aimed at civilians and we support Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> against these vicious attacks,' he [White House spokesman Josh Earnest] added. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Jul 2014)

My *Ynetnews* informants were queried about the prominence of the discourse around the US supporting Israel's right to self-defence. The Editor again went to some effort in insisting that such prominence should not be seen as ideologically motivated. As was the case with other patterns noted in the *Ynetnews* reporting, they were sure that what was happening here was 'merely reporting what someone else was saying':

> You're reporting on what somebody else is saying. You absolutely cannot mess with the text. If Obama says we support Israel's right to defend itself, that's what you write because that's what he said or that's what John Kerry said or that's what Hillary Clinton said ... you know, happy days when people with brains were in charge. So that's what you write. You can't mess with what somebody else ... you absolutely cannot mess with what somebody else said.

It is important to note that while the Editor was sure that what they were doing was essentially reporting facts/what was happening, a more critical view of such practices would always see any such reporting as a process of selection – both of what content is to be presented and how it is to be framed linguistically. Such views expressed by the Editor might reflect a professional naivete but more likely might be seen as an effort on their part to avoid any suggestion of bias or partiality in how such a sensitive issue is handled by the outlet.

Journalist 2 had no difficulty in identifying certain ideological motivations for this prominence given to support in the *Ynetnews* reporting. They identified three ideologically driven factors at play. The first one suggests that some highlighting of support in the

reporting served an important community purpose – reducing the shared feeling of being under siege or 'dwelling alone':

> It is very important for the Israeli public to understand … and to know that there are many sources in the world which support us, which have our back. It is extremely important for Israelis to understand that. I see it. I feel it … to show that it's not a case of the entire world being against us, that is, that the world supports us.

Journalist 2 went on to suggest that a discourse which depicts Israel as a recipient of US support further contributes to a positive collective self-image ('we are the good guys'). It was interesting to note how the perception of the conflict as a zero-sum game was brought again into the discourse:

> [T]o show that … the world understands that this is a kind of a zero-sum game, that it's either us or them, and that they are the aggressive, they are the bad guys and we are the good guys, right?

Significantly, Journalist 2 also talked about how the discourse around the US backing 'Israel's right to defend itself' served to legitimise Israel's actions. In CDA, this is known as legitimation by authority (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Receiving such 'approval', they explained, is perceived in Israel as a 'green light' to carry on its actions:

> And I also think that there is a very strong desire in Israel to receive this approval from important leaders in the world. It calms the Israelis. It gives them some kind of relief I think, I mean, also the politicians here, you know, the moment the US says 'listen, Israel has the right to defend itself', 'this is what Israel is doing now', it means that you are being allowed to continue with what you are doing … this is part of our desire to receive approval to do what we are doing.

4.3 An 'actor' in the conflict

The third major grammatical category explored in the reporting was 'Israel' as an 'actor' in the conflict. This stands in contrast to its representations as a recipient or just simply a participant in the conflict. The analysis was interested in identifying what type of actor Israel was depicted as being and what types of actions it was seen to be engaged in. As an actor in the conflict, three main discourses around the term Israel were identified. In *Ynetnews* reporting, Israel was found to be framed against three main themes: (i) as a combatant; (ii) as a participant with security needs that acts in self-defence and as a response to Hamas' violence; and (iii) as a conciliatory yet powerful participant that is willing to resolve the conflict diplomatically.

4.3.1 A combatant

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' was framed as a combatant that launched an 'offensive in Gaza'. Four collocates contributed to this frame. Two of these were content words – launched and offensive. As was seen in subsection 4.2.1.2, the verb launched was used to portray Israel as a target of Hamas violence; in this frame, there were references to rockets being launched at/into/towards Israel. The verb launched, however, was also used to depict Israel as a combatant that launched an offensive in Gaza. Two function words – the possessive s[14] and the pronoun its[15], ranked first and third in frequency, respectively – also contributed to this frame. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Tunnels have been at the heart of Israel's Gaza offensive, and are currently one of the central stumbling blocks to a ceasefire, with Israel demanding forces remain in Gaza to take out the tunnel system which threatens Israel's southern communities and army bases. (*Ynetnews*, 31 Jul 2014)

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[14] A collocational analysis of the common cluster 'Israel's' revealed that it collocated with one word: offensive.

[15] A collocational analysis of the determiner its revealed that among its top collocates, offensive was ranked second in statistical significance.

Fifty-three Israeli soldiers have been killed since Israel <u>launched</u> <u>its</u> <u>offensive</u> on Gaza. (*Ynetnews*, 29 Jul 2014)

An interesting frame of Israel as a combatant was one that depicted it as a participant who has Gaza under a <u>blockade</u>. Significantly, this word emerged as a prominent collocate of Israel in the *Ynetnews* corpus, but not in the corpora for the other two outlets. Such comparisons will be considered in greater detail in Chapter Seven. A close reading of the collocate's concordances showed that the term <u>blockade</u> was typically used in a context depicting Hamas' demands for lifting/putting an end to/easing Israel's blockade of Gaza.[16] Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Speaking in Qatar, political chief Khaled Mashal demands Israel lift <u>blockade</u>, says Gaza-based group will never agree to disarm. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

> The lifting of Israel's land and sea <u>blockade</u>, imposed in 2006 after Hamas captured an Israeli soldier, has been a key demand of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority at stalled truce talks in Cairo. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Aug 2014)

> Thus, for example, a tape surfaced Tuesday in which Mohammed Deif, head of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades[17] and therefore probably the IDF's top target, can be heard from his underground bunker saying that rocket fire will stop only when Israel lifts its <u>blockade</u> on Gaza. (*Ynetnews*, 31 Jul 2014)

One point worth mentioning in this discussion of Israel as a combatant is related to an absence in the corpus. The term 'operation' did not emerge in the *Ynetnews* reporting as a collocate of Israel. This is a notable linguistic finding that illustrates the power of a collocational analysis to reveal findings which are unexpected or counterintuitive. This is because, as has already been mentioned, the position of both the Israeli government and

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[16] This was also evident in the emergence of the words 'lifting' and 'end' as top collocates of <u>blockade</u>.
[17] The military wing of the Palestinian movement Hamas.

the IDF was that Israel launched an 'operation' in Gaza, officially dubbed Operation Protective Edge. The fact that 'operation' did not emerge as one of the top 50 collocates of Israel in *Ynetnews* is not to say that 'operation' or 'Operation Protective Edge' did not feature in *Ynetnews* stories. Rather, this finding suggests that there was a preference in the *Ynetnews* reporting to use it less than other terms when referring to Israel.

My informants were probed about the representation of Israel as a combatant in the conflict and particularly about the prominence of the collocate offensive in the *Ynetnews* reporting. Generally, they were convinced that offensive was an accurate word choice that captured the nature of Israel's actions in Gaza, although for at least one the prominent use of the term was motivated by the desire to dramatise the news story.

Queried about this lexical choice, Journalist 1 found the use of the word 'peculiar', suggesting that 'operation' would have been a more natural word choice. Reflecting on this linguistic finding, they speculated that the selection of offensive might have been motivated by a desire to 'dramatise' the news story:

> This is a good question. I don't know why, for example, they did not name it 'operation' … I don't know. This is very peculiar … maybe because 'offensive' is like, it gives it a more dramatic sense, you know?

Journalist 2 had another take on the issue. They suggested that the prominent use of the term offensive was guided by the 'reality' on the ground. As their words below illustrate, they were convinced that this lexical choice 'accurately' conveyed the 'aggressive' nature of Israel's 'assault' on Gaza:

> Empirically, there was an Israeli assault here, particularly when it went into the ground manoeuvre phase. A ground manoeuvre is very aggressive, even if it is carried out cautiously; it has very aggressive ramifications. You're obviously more trigger-happy compared to an aerial manoeuvre … that's why I think that there was like a genuine offensive move here, OK?

Like Journalist 2, the Editor brought into the discourse considerations of accuracy, insisting again that this lexical choice was not motivated by any ideological considerations but reflected instead the 'true' nature of events:

> I think people were trying to be accurate ... in as much as the IDF did launch an offensive in Gaza. They did. I mean, I'm not entirely sure how else you would term it. The IDF launched a military operation inside Gaza; ergo, they launched an offensive in Gaza ... Again, everything is to make ... to be clear ... not to sway or ... but to give a clear picture of what's happening.

It was interesting to note, however, how – as the interview progressed – the Editor acknowledged that there were other words that could have been used but which *Ynetnews* was consciously trying to 'stay away from' (e.g. 'invasion'). They spoke very forthrightly about the challenge of being a war correspondent in one's own country and went on to suggest that this might have influenced the prominence of <u>offensive</u> in the reporting:

> You could have said ... we could have said ... large-scale military invasion or ... you know, words like 'invasion'? you try to stay away from ... It's a curious thing because it's like being a war correspondent at home, which, thank goodness, most Western countries haven't experienced for a very long time ... you're both a war correspondent and a war ... not a victim but like a person who is experiencing the war in their own home. It's a very peculiar ... Look, nobody's going to be 100% bias-free. You try as hard as you can. So maybe 'offensive' isn't the right word ... inevitably there are going to be times where you pick the wrong word or the word isn't ...

My *Ynetnews* respondents were also probed about the linguistic finding according to which 'operation' did not emerge as a collocate of Israel in *Ynetnews*. They attributed this aspect of the reporting to the stylistic consideration of clarity. Focusing on the

differences between the two languages, the Editor explained that one of the meanings of *mivtzah* (Hebrew for 'operation') is 'military campaign'. In contrast, the English word 'operation' does not allude to military action. Devoid of any inherent 'attacking' nature, they explained, 'operation' can be perceived as vague:

> I think for Israelis, again, it's a question of what you learn from context. I think that *mivtzah* works in Hebrew because people grow up with a military mindset. If you call it an 'operation' I don't think it's necessarily as clear as 'offensive'. Again, everything is to make … to be clear … not to sway or … but to give a clear picture of what's happening.

4.3.2 A participant with security needs that acts in self-defence and as a response to Hamas' violence

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' was depicted as a participant with security needs that acts in self-defence and responds to Hamas' violence. The portrayal of Israel as a participant with security needs became evident in the context of the exclusive collocate <u>needs</u> and, more specifically, in the common cluster 'security <u>needs</u>'.[18] A close examination of this cluster's context revealed that Israel's security needs were typically depicted as left unanswered. The following examples illustrate this point:

> While prime minister concerned [UN Security Council] statement doesn't recognize Israel's security <u>needs</u> or address demilitarization of Gaza, Palestinians want statement demanding end to 'Israeli aggression'. (*Ynetnews,* 28 Jul 2014)

> Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed indirect negotiations currently underway in Cairo regarding a long term ceasefire in Gaza, and said that Israel's security <u>needs</u> must be addressed. (*Ynetnews,* 17 Aug 2014)]

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[18] 'Security' emerged as the most significant collocate of <u>needs</u>.

This discourse was also apparent, for example, in a quote by Netanyahu's office:

> Sunday's statement by the [UN Security] council 'relates to the needs of a murderous terrorist group that attacks Israeli civilians and has no answer for Israel's security needs', Netanyahu's office quoted him as telling U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. (*Ynetnews*, 28 Jul 2014)

Four collocates contributed to a self-defence discourse: right, defend, itself and citizens, with the first three co-occurring to form the common clusters 'Israel's right to defend itself' and 'Israel has a right to defend itself'. Here Israel was portrayed as a participant that acts in order to defend its citizens. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Israeli UN ambassador Ron Prosor also criticized the [United Nations Security Council's] statement – though from a very different perspective – saying it lacked balance because it didn't mention Hamas, the firing of rockets into Israel or Israel's right to defend itself. (*Ynetnews*, 28 Jul 2014)

A frame of self-defence was also apparent, for example, in the reporting of the words of then Israeli Health Minister Yael German and Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon:

> Israel did not go to war to kill. Israel wants to defend its residents, and this is the elementary right of a sovereign state whose citizens are living under a constant threat of terror. [Health Minister Yael German] (*Ynetnews*, 29 Jul 2014)

> Yaalon praised forces on the ground, saying thanks to 'the commanders, the fighters and the support fighters in the air, sea and ground, who continue to act firmly and professionally to defend Israel's citizens.' (*Ynetnews*, 9 Jul 2014)

In addition to being framed as defending itself, Israel was also depicted as a participant responding to acts of violence. This was mostly evident in the context of the collocates <u>respond</u> and <u>responded</u>. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> The Egyptian authorities have reportedly sent Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Gaza a message from Israel, warning them Israel's [sic] will <u>respond</u> with more force should rocket fire continue, Al Hayat reported. (*Ynetnews*, 8 Jul 2014)

> Indirect ceasefire talks mediated by Egypt to end the conflict collapsed after rockets were fired from Gaza during a truce and Israel <u>responded</u> with air strikes. (*Ynetnews*, 24 Aug 2014)

My *Ynetnews* informants were probed about the focus on a self-defence frame in the reporting. Overall, they identified ideological considerations as the factor underlying this discourse. Journalist 1, for example, acknowledged that the discourse around Israel acting in self-defence represented the Israeli perspective in 'a battle of narratives'. They were equally convinced, however, that this perspective also reflected the 'reality':

> Look, at the end of the day, I told you … I think that … a battle of narratives … and at the end of the day, you know, I mean it depends how you look at it. From an Israeli perspective, Israel is really defending itself.

Elaborating on this self-defence perspective, they suggested that Israel's actions were preceded by acts of violence perpetrated by Israel's adversary. As their words below indicate, they were convinced that Israel's adversary was the participant responsible for the eruption of violence; Israel, on the other hand, was 'merely' responding to 'something [that] happened':

> I mean, Israel … they kidnapped the three teenagers … I remember that at the time the Gazans tried to carry out a terrorist attack using a cross-border tunnel and it was

thwarted ... in other words, something happened ... according to Israel, it is defending itself. Also, you remember, in that period a lot of rockets were fired towards Israel. I am talking about before the operation started, that is, in July.

Journalist 1 went on to talk about the non-Israeli perspective in the 'battle of narratives'. In this narrative, Israel is depicted as an aggressor:

Ask someone in Europe who is a BDS supporter, then he will tell you that Israel does not have a right to defend itself. Israel is the one who occupies, who oppresses; it is the one who kills and murders. He will tell you what I had told you, that Gaza is at the end of the day, it's a prison ... look at the Israeli war machine compared to their war machine, this is what people on the other side will tell you.

Journalist 1 also spoke very forthrightly about a reality/narrative gap. They explained that although the rounds of violence in Gaza did not impose an existential threat to Israel, they were perceived as such, possibly reflecting how deeply entrenched threat perceptions in Israel are:

Today Israel does not go to wars that are wars for its survival. That is, the wars in recent years – in 2006 and all the wars in Gaza – have not been wars of ... revolved around a question of Israel's survival. But when you look at almost every war I think since the establishment of Israel, especially Yom Kippur was a war which I think people saw it as a war of survival. In other words, the question of Israel's survival is relevant. Now, even though this is not the case anymore today, psychologically we are still there.

Elaborating on this psychological state of mind, they highlighted the shared belief that in the Israeli public mind, Israel is still protecting its existence:

When you are in that state of mind psychologically, even though today Israel is a strong state – strong army, vibrant, prospering, it has its own problems but a state which is standing on its own feet, there is no question about its existence – despite that, we are still there, in the diaspora. I mean, psychologically, we are still there. And that's why, why do I bring this up? Because here I link the idea of protecting itself; because in our minds, we are still protecting ourselves. We are protecting our existence.

Significantly, Journalist 1 suggested that a national narrative of self-defence plays an important role in 'justifying' Israel's actions:

I think there is a dissonance. We are not in that state anymore but we are still in the place of justifying it ... do you get it? Because at the end of the day you also have to justify yourself. And then you go and say: guys, our state, it's ... we need to guard it more than anything else. And if they start to fire rockets here, it is our right to defend ourselves. Even at the cost of human lives on the other side.

They went on to suggest that Israel tends to use a self-defence frame to justify pre-emptive attacks not just in the IPC context:

When Israel carries out attacks in Syria, how does it justify it? What does it say? It says we are protecting ourselves against Iran's aggression. In other words, you attack to defend yourself. That's exactly what it's about. That's the story. Do you get it? There's a dissonance but it is a dissonance which psychologically helps you justify what you're doing, in my opinion.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 suggested that a frame of self-defence served to justify Israel's acts of aggression. This 'tick of approval', they explained, reassures Israelis that their cause is 'just' and contributes to a positive collective self-image:

> The moment Israel is engaged in some kind of a military campaign, Protective Edge or not Protective Edge, it doesn't matter, there is a strong desire in Israel to prove that we are right, that actually we are the ones who are being attacked ... to give ourselves a kind of what is called a tick of approval ... there is hunger in the public to hear that we are the good guys and it naturally exacerbates this feeling that we are the good ones and they are the bad ones.

My *Ynetnews* interviewees were also probed about the discourse depicting Israel as a participant that responds to acts of violence. Overall, they were convinced that the prominence of the frame of response reflected 'a clear chain of events', although one news producer also suggested such a discourse served to legitimise Israel's actions in Gaza. Using a cause-and-effect frame, the Editor explained that the firing of rockets on Israel preceded Israel's airstrikes in Gaza:

> I mean, I'm assuming it's because the rockets were fired and then Israel said we are responding to this with airstrikes. I mean, I loathe to use the words 'cause and effect', but...

They went on to suggest they would have used such terms to depict the actions of Israel's adversary had the sequence of events been reversed:

> For example, Israel went into ... and this is something I know that we've had in the past ... last November Israel carried out a raid in Gaza that went wrong and an officer died ... it was a high-level military operation involving senior members ... In response to that raid, Hamas fired rockets, and I would view it in exactly the same

terminology because you had one event and then you had the reaction of the other side. It's a response … It could have been flipped.

Similarly, Journalist 2 suggested that words such as 'response' and 'responded' are highly prevalent in the reporting of the conflict. They attributed these lexical choices to a chronological sequence of events, adding that this practice is 'a bit childish':

Always … the responses or the response or Israel responded, it doesn't matter, everything that has the root of 'response' in all its forms will always appear when … and it's a bit childish but, when one side started.

As their words below demonstrate, they were convinced that in the context of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict, it was Hamas who initiated the violence; Israel, on the other hand, was a reactive participant 'forced' to respond:

Like here, for example … say a truce was reached and then all of a sudden Hamas broke that truce and fired. This will always be followed by 'as a response, Israel bombed …' so yes, this is something I will always write. I will always use the word 'response' to show that Israel is actually responding here. Israel is not initiating here, but is responding to something that has happened and which has forced it to do x, y, z. Every time that this happens, I will write 'response' … if Hamas fired rockets on Israel now and there was an Israeli strike, I would write 'Israel attacked x, y, z in response', OK? … This is a repeating pattern.

Like the Editor, Journalist 2 went on to suggest that 'response' is a term they would use to describe the actions of both sides in the conflict:

And vice versa. And it's important that you understand this. Also vice versa. If Israel initiated an assault now, 'Hamas fired rockets into Israel as a response', OK?

Journalist 1 was also quizzed about the representation of Israel as a participant that acts as a response to Hamas violence. Overall, they thought the prominence of the collocates <u>respond</u> and <u>responded</u> in the reporting was motivated by an effort to balance the image of Israel as an aggressor and justify its actions:

> Ultimately, the attempt to show that it is not unilateral, that is, that Israel is not only attacking, that it is also responding to the firing of rockets ... look, at the end of the day, when you are killing, when you are taking peoples' lives, it doesn't matter how much you think he is a terrorist or ... you need to somehow justify it. You need to somehow, you know, come up with an excuse.

They went on to suggest that the discourse around Israel responding to acts of aggression is closely linked to the discourse depicting it as a participant that acts in self-defence. Both representations, they explained, serve to support the justness of Israel's cause ('it is related to this issue that you believe in what you're doing'):

> And ultimately I think that, you know, from this point of view, the word 'responds' ... again, it is linked to the same issue ... to the right to defend itself. It's exactly the same thing. It is related to this issue that you believe in what you're doing. In other words, you believe and ... that's why you use terminology which is very, in my opinion ... you know.

Significantly, however, their words below illustrate that they were equally convinced that the prominent use of the words <u>respond</u> and <u>responded</u> reflected the 'reality' on the ground:

> Although it is also accurate ... when I look at it, eventually, if rockets were being fired from Gaza now, Israel responds, so yes it responds. That's just the way things

are. It's not that Israel initiated … but again you know, I'll give you another example … In Israel's view, just an example, there was tension in the north a month ago, so Israel attacked near Damascus … and the announcement said that it thwarted an Iranian drone attack against Israel … in other words, Israel is essentially saying we did not attack, that is, initiate … something was initiated and we responded to thwart it.

4.3.3   A conciliatory yet powerful participant

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' was also constructed as a conciliatory yet powerful participant that seeks to break the violence and resolve the conflict diplomatically. The representation of Israel as a conciliatory participant was evident in the context of two collocates: <u>agreed</u> and <u>accepted</u>. A close examination of these collocates' concordances revealed a frame in which Israel agreed to/accepted a proposal for a truce/ceasefire. The examples below illustrate this point:

> The IDF pulled its forces out of the Gaza Strip on Tuesday morning, day 29 of Operation Protective Edge, after Israel <u>agreed</u> to a 72-hour ceasefire that began at 8am. (*Ynetnews*, 5 Aug 2014)
>
> US Secretary of State John Kerry condemned Hamas militants on Tuesday for firing rockets from the Gaza Strip, after Israel had <u>accepted</u> a truce proposed by Egypt. (*Ynetnews*, 15 Jul 2014)

The depiction of Israel as a conciliatory participant in the conflict was often juxtaposed with a representation of Hamas as an intransigent actor that turns down proposals for ceasefires. This was evident in some of the concordances of the collocates <u>agreed</u> and <u>accepted</u> and is exemplified below:

On Saturday, Israel <u>agreed</u> to extend a 12-hour ceasefire by four hours until midnight Saturday, even though Hamas and the Islamic Jihad refused to do so, firing rockets at Israel. (*Ynetnews*, 27 Jul 2014)

Israel on Tuesday <u>accepted</u> an Egyptian proposal for a ceasefire, despite a Hamas decision to turn down the US-backed truce. (*Ynetnews*, 15 Jul 2014)

The juxtaposition of these two frames was also evident in the emergence of the collocate <u>rejected</u>. Interestingly, a close examination of this collocate's concordances revealed that it was used in 40 per cent of the cases to depict Hamas' actions rather than Israel's. (It is worth mentioning that although this research focuses on the representation of Israel, in a collocational analysis of the term 'Hamas', <u>rejected</u> emerged as a top collocate, ranked seventh in statistical significance). This point is illustrated in the following examples (the third example is the words of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu):

It is far from clear this backing was what cleared the way for the deal, which seems to be along the lines of the deal proposed by the Egyptians, and which Israel accepted but Hamas <u>rejected</u>. (*Ynetnews*, 1 Aug 2014)

Earlier in the week an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire was accepted by Israel, but <u>rejected</u> by Hamas, and thus there were fears the group would also reject the humanitarian lull. (*Ynetnews*, 17 Jul 2014)

'Israel accepted and Hamas <u>rejected</u> the Egyptian ceasefire proposal of July 15th' [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] (*Ynetnews*, 6 Aug 2014)

The portrayal of Israel as a conciliatory participant was also evident in the context of the collocate <u>agree</u>. A close reading of this collocate's context revealed that the portrayal of Israel as a conciliatory participant was not limited to the context of ceasefire proposals,

but was also evident in references to Israel making conciliatory gestures. Thus, for example, *Ynetnews* reported:

> Ynet has learned that Israel will <u>agree</u> to transfer the Hamas government salaries through a third party – facilitating the payment of Hamas officials' salaries. (*Ynetnews*, 12 Aug 2014)

> The same sources added that Israel and the US secretly decided that Israel will <u>agree</u> to a gradual lifting of the blockade on Gaza Strip, starting with the land crossings and eventually opening up sea traffic. (*Ynetnews*, 19 Aug 2014)

> According to the Palestinian sources, Israel would <u>agree</u> to a complete opening of the border crossings between Israel and Gaza for the passage of people and merchandise, allowing for the immediate start of the Strip's rehabilitation. (*Ynetnews*, 25 Aug 2014)

While Israel was depicted as a conciliatory participant that accepts proposals for truce, it was simultaneously framed as a powerful actor that will not 'give in' to Hamas demands. This was realised in the context of the collocate <u>rejected</u>. A close reading of this collocate's context revealed that roughly 60 per cent of the time, it was used to depict Israel as a participant that rejects Hamas' demands. This is illustrated in the following samples:

> Hamas: Israel <u>rejected</u> our demand for sea port, end of siege. (*Ynetnews*, 8 Aug 2014)

> One of Hamas' central demands has been an end of the Egyptian–Israeli siege on Gaza, a demand both Egypt and Israel have <u>rejected</u>, but indicated willingness to ease some restrictions. (*Ynetnews*, 10 Aug 2014)

> A senior official says Hamas has decided not to extend the ceasefire with Israel because Israel has <u>rejected</u> all of the group's demands in indirect talks in Cairo. (*Ynetnews*, 8 Aug 2014)

Furthermore, Israel's portrayal as a powerful participant was also realised in the depiction of its own demands. This was evident in the context of the collocates <u>demand</u> and <u>wants</u>. As the following examples illustrate, these demands primarily revolved around the demilitarisation of Hamas:

It was unclear from the official's remarks how those worries, along with Israel's <u>demand</u> for Gaza's demilitarization, would be dealt with. (*Ynetnews,* 13 Aug 2014)

Israel <u>wants</u> the Islamic militant Hamas to disarm, or at least ensure it cannot re-arm, before considering the group's demand that the territory's borders be opened. (*Ynetnews*, 6 Aug 2014)

The depiction of Israel as a conciliatory participant that agrees to ceasefire initiatives was probed in the interviews. The Editor, for example, was sure that the words <u>accepted</u> and <u>agreed</u> reflected a 'natural and impartial reality' and rejected the idea that these words might contribute to a positive representation of Israel. As illustrated in the excerpt below, stylistic considerations were again offered as a factor at play:

Interviewer: Another commonality across all the publications was <u>agreed</u> and <u>accepted</u> … the context was 'Israel agreed to extend a ceasefire', 'Israel accepted an Egyptian proposal for truce'.

The Editor: Yeah, because if I propose something to you and you say OK, then you have accepted it or you have agreed to my terms.

Interviewer: OK, I'll share with you something that … I've been reading a lot in the literature about conflict journalism … when you talk about the participants … there's a tendency of the in-group being described in more positive terms, the out-group being portrayed in negative terms … Could these allude to some conciliation or conciliatory …?

The Editor: They could. I mean, you could theoretically make that claim slash accusation, but ... no, again you're going for concise clear language ... Egypt proposed a ceasefire and Israel agreed to it. Israel accepted the terms. I don't know how else you could say that ... because how else would you say it? You're saying that inherently Israeli journalists are going to be biased towards Israel?

Interviewer: No, no ... I'm trying to look for possible explanations for the frequency of these words across the news outlets...

Editor: Ah, well they're functional, they're descriptive and they're relatively neutral. They're not 'conceded' or 'caved' or ... the same with 'rejected' or 'denied', like Egypt said we want a 48-hour ceasefire – Israel said no, Israel rejected the proposal ... this easily could have been the other way, which is Israel rejected, Hamas accepted. It's trying to make the language as functional as possible. So Egypt said we want a 48-hour ceasefire starting at 6pm, Hamas said OK, Israel said no way, therefore, Hamas accepted and Israel rejected. It just so happens that Israel said yes and Hamas said no.

Interestingly, Journalist 1 attributed the use of the words <u>agreed</u> and <u>accepted</u> to an Israeli effort to show a position of power:

Journalist 1: Israel always ... never admits that ... it wants a ceasefire. Never. Never. Never. You can check this out.

Interviewer: But ... this shows that, like, it accepted ...

Journalist 1: No, no.

Interviewer: OK, so what? Clarify this for me ...

Journalist 1: It accepted because it had been proposed ... and therefore it will always be 'it accepted'. It will never be ... Israel offers a ceasefire. When have you ever seen that? Never. On the contrary – there are always briefings that say: 'Hamas begged

for a ceasefire … Hezbollah begged for a ceasefire'. Israel is always trying to present a position of power. We don't initiate a ceasefire when we are engaged in a military operation. They are the ones who … they want, OK, let's … with the help of mediators … 'we will consider' … these two words are used for saying that Israel was offered and it found it fitting to agree. Israel never initiates a ceasefire. It never says it initiates.

Elaborating on this issue, Journalist 1 went on to offer another factor at play: the heavy reliance of Israeli news producers on Israeli official sources for information. This, as they explained, results in 'a built-in bias' in favour of the Israeli perspective:

It's an in-built bias. Look … you need to understand one thing. As I said, the preference of the majority of the news outlets would be to base their information on what they know from here, that is, the spokesmen.

They went on to explain that the heavy reliance on Israeli spokespeople is the result of the time constraints they face in their daily lives and practices:

If the Prime Minister's Office announced 'Israel agreed to a ceasefire', you're not gonna … reject the release only to check if Israel really agreed, if Israel really initiated … do you get it? … the built-in bias of the media outlets in Israel is in favour of the Israeli spokesmen, that is, whatever announcement the Prime Minister's Office releases, whatever announcement the IDF's spokesperson releases … at the end of the day, we are also in the news business and there is a need to be prompt … say the Prime Minister's Office releases an announcement now that there is a ceasefire, so what, you're gonna start checking this now … you will start checking, there's gonna be another round of fighting and another ceasefire, do you understand? In other words, there is no time … everything today is like this … you know, it really depends … everyone dictates a narrative here, dictates a story, do you understand?

4.3.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on the representation of 'Israel' in *Ynetnews*. The analysis has shown that, as a recipient in the conflict, there were two seemingly competing discourses around the term Israel. Israel was constructed as a victim but also as a participant that is supported in the conflict, predominantly by the US. The analysis has also shown that, as an 'actor' in the conflict, Israel was framed as a combatant that acts in self-defence and as a response to acts of violence and security needs. It was also constructed as a conciliatory yet powerful participant that seeks to break the violence and resolve the conflict diplomatically.

An analysis of informants' comments revealed that the prominence of the aforementioned representations of Israel was motivated by a range of considerations. While some of these considerations appeared to be related to the profession of journalism (e.g. aiming for accuracy, simplifying the discourse), ideological factors reflecting informants' stance as members of the national community seemed to play a significant role in the construction of these representations. It was interesting to note that in their commentaries there appeared at times to be a struggle to reconcile these two identities, a situation that perhaps reflects the highly complex and fraught nature of the conflict they are engaged in.

5. *Haaretz*

This chapter explores the representation of 'Israel' in the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict in *Haaretz*. As was noted in Chapter Three, this news outlet is known for its leftward-leaning editorial line on Israeli politics (Slater, 2007; Gilboa, 2008; Muravchik, 2013; Qawariq, 2015; Elbaz & Bar-Tal, 2016, as cited in Lavie-Dinur, Yarchi & Karniel, 2018). The same type of analysis that has been used to explore the ways in which Israel was depicted in *Ynetnews* was also applied here; that is to say, the analysis focused on the discourses around the term Israel using the linguistic tool of collocation. In addition, the analysis explored some of the motivations behind the linguistic findings by incorporating commentary from some of the news producers who contributed substantially to the reporting of the conflict. These included an editor (designated the Editor) and two senior journalists (designated Journalist 1 and Journalist 2).

Table 5.1 shows the 50 strongest collocates of Israel in the *Haaretz* corpus. These are presented here according to their relative (per 100,000) and raw frequencies. In addition, Table 5.1 shows the dispersion of the collocates across the corpus and their statistical significance (Stat). As can be seen in the table, these collocates comprised a broad range of word types. These included nouns (e.g. airlines), verbs (e.g. defend), adjectives (e.g. central), adverbs (abroad), prepositions (e.g. between) and pronouns (e.g. itself).

Table 5.1: The 50 strongest collocates of 'Israel' in *Haaretz* (presented in descending order of frequency).

Rank	Collocate	Relative frequency (per 100,000)	Raw frequency	Dispersion	Stat
1	defense	44.86	463	358	5.26
2	between	41.38	427	289	5.19
3	forces	36.43	376	317	5.49
4	fired	19.28	199	115	4.95
5	air	18.70	193	136	4.83
6	right	18.6	192	139	4.75
7	force	14.92	154	101	5.06
8	support	14.73	152	100	4.68

9	pro	13.66	141	60	5.53
10	central	12.01	124	64	5.45
11	southern	11.53	119	73	5.22
12	itself	10.85	112	88	5.16
13	defend	10.36	107	85	6.06
14	flights	8.43	87	38	5.14
15	launched	7.65	79	64	5.23
16	offensive	7.65	79	57	5.01
17	toward	7.55	78	50	4.77
18	agreed	7.17	74	47	5.15
19	arms	6.49	67	29	5.29
20	actions	6.29	65	50	5.37
21	crimes	5.62	58	42	5.28
22	airlines	5.52	57	33	4.8
23	association	4.36	45	34	5.66
24	boycott	4.36	45	24	5.25
25	relations	4.36	45	37	4.87
26	accused	3.97	41	38	5.27
27	accepted	3.87	40	35	5.21
28	ties	3.87	40	80	5.07
29	incursion	3.39	35	29	5.09
30	entered	3.19	33	26	5.07
31	blame	3.1	32	19	5.11
32	supporters	3.0	31	21	5.0
33	ambassador	3.0	31	23	4.93
34	committed	2.9	30	21	5.42
35	trip	2.9	30	63	4.95
36	self	2.9	30	55	4.9
37	crossings	2.9	30	27	4.68
38	critical	2.81	29	26	4.66
39	respond	2.61	27	27	4.76
40	landed	2.61	27	21	4.74
41	flying	2.51	26	20	4.9
42	exports	2.42	25	10	5.16
43	amid	2.32	24	17	4.93
44	abroad	2.32	24	16	4.74
45	exist	2.22	23	15	5.35
46	reaching	2.22	23	23	4.74
47	democratic	2.13	22	17	4.63
48	resumed	1.93	20	18	5.13

| 49 | extend | 1.93 | 20 | 11 | 4.71 |
| 50 | interests | 1.93 | 20 | 19 | 4.65 |

The approach to collocation here is the same one that was adopted in Chapter Four, that is, the above collocates were manually examined within a 5-word span either side of the node Israel. As was explained in Chapter Three, in the first part of the analysis, Halliday's (1985) transitivity framework was used to identify the grammatical relationship between the term Israel and its collocates and to organise the data (i.e. the list of collocates) into three grammatical categories (summarised in Table 5.2): (i) Israel as one of two participants in a conflict; (ii) Israel as a 'recipient' in the conflict; and (iii) Israel as a participant that takes the role of an 'actor'.

The second stage of the analysis involved identifying first- and second-level thematic categories within each of the grammatical categories, with the process of categorisation relying on the contextual, rather than the literal, meanings of the collocates. These categories, along with the collocates that embody these themes, are also summarised in Table 5.2. As the table reveals, there was a high degree of overlap between the thematic categories identified in *Haaretz* and those found in *Ynetnews*. These, along with the variations that emerged in the reporting, are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

It is also evident from Table 5.2 that the process of categorisation, as was the case with *Ynetnews*, resulted in the placement of some of the collocates of Israel in more than one thematic category (e.g. launched). Furthermore, the small set of collocates which appear under the category '**Other**' were found either to not shed light on the thematic categories identified in the reporting or to not be relevant to the representation of Israel altogether. To illustrate the latter point, the collocates air and force, for example, tended to co-occur with the node Israel to form the cluster 'Israel Air Force'. While this cluster would have been interesting to explore, it is a different entity than Israel.

Table 5.2: Categorised collocates of 'Israel' in *Haaretz*.

Categories	'Israel' collocates
One of two participants in a conflict	between, amid
A 'recipient' in the conflict A victim	
A target of Hamas' violence and threats	fired, central, southern, launched (29%), toward, landed, reaching, resumed, trip, abroad, exist
A victim of international airlines bans	flights, airlines, flying, resumed
A target of criticism and blame	actions, critical, boycott, arms, exports, blame, accused, committed, crimes, relations, ties, ambassador
A recipient of support	pro, supporters, support, right, defend, itself, self, defense
An 'actor' in the conflict A combatant	launched (71%), offensive, incursion, resumed, entered, crossings
A participant who acts in self-defense and responds to Hamas' violence	right, defend, itself, self, defense, respond
A conciliatory and democratic participant	agreed, accepted, extend, democratic
Other	Forces, Air, Force, association, interests

The thematic categories presented in Table 5.2 are discussed in more detail below. In this discussion, I focus on those collocates which were particularly telling of the salient discourse patterns. As explained in Chapter Three, the commentaries by informants from this outlet are integrated into the presentation of findings from the collocational analysis. As it was with the *Ynetnews* interviews, the limited time available with the *Haaretz* informants meant that discussion was confined to key issues related to patterns and choices.

5.1 One of two participants in a conflict

As noted, the first grammatical category explored in the *Haaretz* reporting was 'Israel' as one of two participants in a conflict. As was the case with the *Ynetnews* corpus, this was evident in the context of the top collocate <u>between</u> (ranked second in frequency in this corpus) and, more specifically, in the common cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and'. This cluster provided the lens to the labelling of the non-Israeli side in the conflict. A close reading of the cluster's context revealed an array of representations that were used to refer to the non-Israeli side in the conflict. Here too, the cluster collocated most frequently with 'Hamas', thereby depicting the conflict (as well as mediators' efforts to break a truce) primarily as one between Israel and Hamas. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> Fighting <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas continued on Wednesday, a day after negotiations in Cairo aiming to secure a long-term truce collapsed. (*Haaretz*, 20 Aug 2014)

> U.S. secretary of state offers to broker cease-fire <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas. (*Haaretz*, 13 Jul 2014)

As was the case in *Ynetnews*, the nationally/ethnically-oriented term 'Palestinians'[19] was another labelling for the non-Israeli side in the conflict, although it was four times less frequent than the labelling 'Hamas'. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> The fighting has been the worst <u>between</u> Israel and Palestinians in two years. (*Haaretz*, 18 Jul 2014)

> Hamas must agree to a humanitarian ceasefire without conditions, British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond said at news conference in Cairo on Thursday, as Egypt tries to mediate a truce <u>between</u> Israel and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*, 25 Jul 2014)

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[19] 'Palestinians' emerged as the fifth strongest collocate of the common cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and'.

Other designations were used for the non-Israeli side in the *Haaretz* reporting, although these were much less prominent. One of these was 'militants', a designation which was also used in the *Ynetnews* reporting. This point is exemplified in the following samples:

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas asks Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi to intervene in the escalating violence <u>between</u> Israel and militants in Gaza. (*Haaretz*, 9 Jul 2014)

The defense system has been highly effective in the current round of violence <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

Terms of the truce intended to end seven weeks of on-off hostilities <u>between</u> Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza have not been released. (*Haaretz*, 26 Aug 2014)

One labelling of Israel's adversary in the conflict that was found in *Haaretz* but not in the other two corpora was (Palestinian) 'factions'. It is worth mentioning that this term was used exclusively in the context of negotiations for a break from violence. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

The security cabinet is to meet this afternoon in the prime minister's bureau in Jerusalem to discuss progress in the Egyptian-brokered negotiations in Cairo for a long-term stable cease-fire <u>between</u> Israel and the Palestinian factions. (*Haaretz*, 12 Aug 2014)

Cairo mediated talks this month <u>between</u> Israel and Palestinian factions led by Hamas to try to end the war in Gaza but refused to discuss easing its tight control of the Rafah border crossing as part of the deal Hamas seeks. (*Haaretz*, 21 Aug 2014)

Another labelling for the non-Israeli party which was used exclusively in *Haaretz* was 'Palestine'. As the concordances of the cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and Palestine' revealed,

this term was always used as part of a direct quote. The first example below is a quote from the Brazilian government statement; the second example is the words of then French President Francois Hollande:

'The Brazilian government considers unacceptable escalation of violence <u>between</u> Israel and Palestine.' [Brazilian government statement] (*Haaretz*, 25 Jul 2014)

'The conflict <u>between</u> Israel and Palestine cannot be used as an excuse for anti-Semitism,' the president added. [President Francois Hollande] (*Haaretz*, 15 Jul 2014)

The issue of labelling Israel's adversary in the conflict was probed in the interviews. Interestingly, the Editor explained some of this variation in terms similar to those used by the *Ynetnews* Editor, that is, they linked this word choice to the desire to diversify the language when writing. For them, using synonyms as a way of avoiding the repetition of the same word forms an important part of journalistic/editorial practices:

My philosophy has always been that if there's interchangeable words, then you should try and avoid using the same one more than once in a sentence or a paragraph or a lead or whatever, so if the first sentence we'll say 'Hamas fired ... ' or the Hamas militant group fired ...', you won't repeat the 'militant group', you need to find a synonym for it.

They went on the explain that the newspaper has its own 'bank of synonyms' that can be drawn on to get this variation in writing. Significantly, they did not see anything 'contradictory' in the different terms that could be used. This view does not fit of course with CDA, which sees all variations as having their own particular connotations and ideological slants.

My *Haaretz* respondents were probed specifically about the term 'Palestinians'. Overall, they suggested that the prominence of the term was guided by professional

standards and imperatives, with one informant commenting on the collectivising nature of the term. Journalist 1, for example, suggested that the prominence given to 'Palestinians' may have not been ideologically motivated, but guided instead by intuition:

> Not every word is written with an intent behind. Sometimes these are words which are used in the professional jargon, the journalistic jargon like … sometimes you say 'a rocket *landed*'. No one thinks 'I'll write *landed* because a rocket is an aircraft and it lands'. No one thinks like that. It's intuitive.

They went on to suggest that the use of the term 'Palestinians' might have also been the result of the time pressures that typically impose on the work of journalists:

> I also know how a news desk works. It's fast-paced. Sometimes you have twenty seconds to publish the next news story … you check for spelling errors, you move around a few lines and you press SEND.

Journalist 2 had a different take on the issue. They expressed their reservation about using the term 'Palestinians' in this context, explaining that it encompassed not only Palestinians who lived in Gaza, but also those who were not directly involved in the Gaza conflict (i.e. Palestinians who live in the West Bank as well as 'Israel Arabs that consider themselves Palestinians'):

> Interviewer: What do you think about the use of the word 'Palestinians'?
> Journalist 2: Weird. Weird.
> Interviewer: Weird? In what way?
> Journalist 2: Because 'Palestinians', basically it's including the West Bank, it's including Israel Arabs that consider themselves Palestinians … It's weird. I will not use it.

My *Haaretz* respondents were further queried about the use of the designation 'factions', which was the term that appeared exclusively in the *Haaretz* corpus. The Editor attributed the word choice to the need to differentiate between 'the disparate groups' in Gaza. Of interest was their comment about how 'factions' is a term which appears in the *Haaretz* style guide:

> You know, when talking about the Palestinian factions, then that is something specific that is referred to in the style guide and explains 'when you use the phrase Palestinian factions, you are referring to the disparate groups operating in the Gaza Strip under the umbrella of whatever'.

Their comment below about how there are Palestinian organisations other than Hamas which operate in Gaza (Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) suggests a more detailed and nuanced type of reporting. Rather than constructing the non-Israeli side in the conflict as a single, homogenous block, such reporting points to the complexity of the conflict:

> And, you know, when it's relevant, we have to use 'Palestinian factions' because if they're talking to … if Israel is talking to Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front and whatever, then they're talking to more than … they're talking to factions, and if we're saying that Hamas has been unable to restrain those factions from firing, you have to differentiate between Hamas and the other factions, so it's a matter of necessity.

Similarly, Journalist 2 also talked about the importance of differentiating between Hamas and other Palestinian actors operating in Gaza, as demonstrated in the following:

> OK, so the whole terror organisations in Gaza … which means Islamic Jihad and Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) … the IDF … they tried to

explain … that it's not just that Hamas is the one that involves the situation in Gaza, there are also other terrorist organisations in Gaza that have their own mind.

What is of interest in Journalist 2's words above is how they brought the labels 'terror organisations' and 'terrorist organisations' into the discussion. This did not appear in the reporting but was there in the journalist's actual vernacular used to describe the 'other' party in the conflict. It appears that while there is a discourse of reporting (including a style guide that prescribes the use of terms), there may be equally an alternative 'off the-record' discourse that journalists use to casually discuss actors and events.

The use of the labelling 'Palestine' was also explored in the interviews. The Editor, for example, suggested that the motivation behind inclusion of this term might be more ideological in nature. Reflecting on this lexical choice, they forthrightly explained that using the term 'Palestine' keeps the idea of a Palestinian state alive:

> There are news outlets that refuse to use 'Palestine' or 'Palestinian' at all … They think that using the word 'Palestine' implies recognition and it kind of does, it kind of does.

They went on to explain that *Haaretz* has a deliberate policy to promote the idea of Palestine as a sovereign state country, even though it does not presently formally exist as one:

> We deliberately call Abbas 'Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' rather than 'Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas'. We see him as the president of Palestine, which happens to be a state that doesn't exist yet, but our ideology and our line is that Palestine is a country, and if by using that word we are keeping that idea alive, then that's to be welcomed.

This position adopted by *Haaretz* is a significant one and to some extent can account for the differing nuances in its overall reporting of the conflict as compared to the other outlets – especially the *JP*.

5.2 A 'recipient' in the conflict

The second grammatical category explored in the *Haaretz* reporting was 'Israel' as a recipient in the conflict. The analysis was interested in identifying how Israel was represented as a 'patient' as well as identifying the type of actions that were seen as being carried out upon Israel. As a recipient in the conflict, there were two main discourses around the term Israel. These were similar to the representations that emerged in *Ynetnews*; that is, Israel was constructed, on the one hand, as a victim in the conflict and, on the other hand, as a recipient of support. These similarities, along with the different nuances in the reporting, are discussed below.

5.2.1   A victim

The representation of 'Israel' as a victim in the *Haaretz* reporting was very similar to the one that emerged from the *Ynetnews* corpus. As was the case in *Ynetnews*, Israel was depicted in *Haaretz*: (i) as a target of Hamas' violence and threats; (ii) as a victim of international airlines' bans; and (iii) as a target of criticism and blame. Unlike the reporting in *Ynetnews*, however, in *Haaretz* there was not the same tendency to construct Israel as a target of anti-Israel sentiment.

5.2.1.1   *A target of Hamas' violence and threats*

As a victim in the conflict, 'Israel' was frequently framed as a target of Hamas' violence and threats. This thematic category was a prominent theme in the *Haaretz* corpus, although it was not as lexically rich compared to the category in *Ynetnews* (see comparison with Table

4.2). Here Israel was depicted as a target of two forms of violence: rocket (and mortar) fire and cross-border tunnel attacks. In the depiction of Israel as a target of rocket fire, rockets (and mortars) were <u>fired</u> <u>toward</u>/were <u>launched</u> at/<u>landed</u> in Israel, especially its <u>southern</u> and <u>central</u> parts. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> Rocket barrage <u>fired</u> at <u>southern</u> and <u>central</u> Israel, including Rishon Letzion, Rehovot, Ashdod, and Ashkelon. (*Haaretz*, 23 Jul 2014)

> Since midnight, 47 rockets and mortar shells were <u>launched</u> from Gaza at Israel. (*Haaretz*, 20 Aug 2014)

> A total of 63 mortar shells and rockets <u>landed</u> in Israel on Monday by the evening, three in built-up areas, the IDF said. (*Haaretz*, 5 Aug 2014)

Similarly to its depiction in *Ynetnews*, rocket fire was framed as being ongoing. This was evident in the context of the collocate <u>resumed</u>. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> Rocket fire on Israel <u>resumed</u> early Wednesday morning, after a relatively quiet night in the south. (*Haaretz*, 16 Jul 2014)

> Hamas <u>resumed</u> rocket fire on Israel on Friday morning as the three-day cease-fire in the Gaza conflict came to an end. (*Haaretz*, 8 Aug 2014)

Rocket fire was further framed as severe, as the concordances of the collocate <u>reaching</u> revealed:

> But the rockets have been striking deeper into Israel, <u>reaching</u> areas more than 100 km (60 miles) north of the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*, 12 Jul 2014)

> Meanwhile, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad have fired more than 1,215 rockets and mortar shells at Israel, <u>reaching</u> the length and breadth of the country, killing one Israeli and sending millions into bomb shelters. (*Haaretz*, 16 Jul 2014)

As mentioned earlier, Israel was also depicted as a target of cross-border tunnel attacks. Two collocates contributed to this frame: <u>entered</u> and <u>reaching</u>. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> Five soldiers were killed late Monday when four Gaza militants <u>entered</u> Israel via a tunnel and fired an anti-tank missile at a pillbox – the fourth time armed men from Gaza have emerged from a tunnel to attack nearby Israeli communities. (*Haaretz*, 29 Jul 2014)

> Hamas terrorists <u>entered</u> Israel through a tunnel for the fifth time since the war started, killing five soldiers in a guard tower near kibbutz Nahal Oz. (*Haaretz*, 1 Aug 2014)

> Army discussing $2.3-billion project to prevent and identify tunnels <u>reaching</u> from Gaza into Israel, but a senior officer warns it could still be bypassed. (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

In addition to the frame of violence, Israel was also constructed as a participant under threat. This was evident in the context of the collocate <u>exist</u> and particularly the common clusters 'Israel's right to <u>exist</u>' and 'right of Israel to <u>exist</u>'. A close reading of these clusters' context revealed that 'Israel's right to <u>exist</u>' was typically portrayed as being under threat. This point is illustrated in the samples below. The first and second examples are the words of Hillary Clinton; the third example is the words of American radio talk show Dennis Prager:

> 'Khaled Meshal, chief of Hamas' political bureau, refused to say in a CBS interview if Hamas would one day recognize Israel's right to <u>exist</u> as a Jewish state.' [Hillary Clinton] (*Haaretz*, 29 Jul 2014)

'If you look at the Palestinian Authority, even though it's hard for them, they have said we want to end the violence, we want to negotiate a two-state solution, and we recognize Israel's right to <u>exist</u>. Hamas has not, and says it will not do that.' [Hillary Clinton] (*Haaretz*, 20 Jul 2014)

'Most Palestinians, and many other Muslims and Arabs,' Prager stresses, 'do not recognize the right of the State of Israel to <u>exist</u>.' (*Haaretz*, 16 Jul 2014)

5.2.1.2   *A victim of international airlines' bans*

A very specific but unexpected type of victim framing that was also identified in the *Ynetnews* reporting was around the disruption of Israel's aviation industry. Here 'Israel' was depicted as a victim of international airlines' bans. This was mostly evident in references to foreign <u>airlines</u> ceasing <u>flying</u> or suspending <u>flights</u> to and from Ben Gurion Airport. The following examples demonstrate this point:

The FAA issued a notice on Tuesday suspending all U.S. <u>flights</u> to and from Israel's Ben-Gurion International Airport 'for a period of up to 24 hours'. (*Haaretz*, 22 Jul 2014)

Within hours, American airlines ceased <u>flying</u> to and from Israel, and several European <u>airlines</u> followed suit. (*Haaretz*, 25 Jul 2014)

In late July, most of the world's leading <u>airlines</u> suspended their <u>flights</u> to Israel after a Gaza-launched rocket exploded one mile away from the Ben Gurion International Airport. (*Haaretz*, 20 Aug 2014)

The prominence of the discourse around international airlines banning/suspending flights to and from Israel was probed in the interviews. Overall, my *Haaretz* informants attributed the prominence of the discourse around the disruption of flights to news values and commercial imperatives. However, queries about the prominence given to bans on

flights also elicited quite emotional responses in informants, ones that seemed to relate as much to personal and ideological engagement with the issue as to matters of journalistic practice. For example, the Editor suggested that it was the unexpected aspect of the bans on flights which guided the prominence of this discourse:

That was a huge story. It was unprecedented in modern times.

Alongside this explanations around news values (the perceived novelty of events), the Editor mentioned that there are always commercial imperatives that also lie behind the shaping of reporting. They explained that the prominence of <u>flights</u> and the discourse around Israel's aviation industry being disrupted could be explained in part by journalistic/editorial concerns for 'search engine optimisation (SEO)'. In simple terms, this refers to practices aimed to increase the visibility and traffic a (news) website receives from 'natural' or 'organic' search engine results (Potts, 2007; Ledford, 2009, as cited in Giomelakis & Veglis, 2015). <u>Flights</u>, as the Editor's words illustrate, was seen as a good keyword for SEO:

Google works by searching for certain words, and if those words appear a lot in a certain period of time, then that's what becomes a trend, and so there are certain words that you know from experience are good SEO and words that are bad SEO … when the whole world is talking about aviation issues, 'flights' is a great word. It's become more so in the last five years but, even in 2014, we were aware of the need for our stories to be picked up by Google and possibly … definitely used words that we knew would be good SEO.

However, embedded in their comment below are factors that are more ideological in nature. It appears that the Editor felt the need to relay what was perceived as a threat or danger:

At the time, it ... it really cemented the feeling of a country at war, under siege, and it was important to relay just what a big deal this was.

Journalist 1 was also probed about the overwhelming attention given to the discourse around the disruption in flights. They too mentioned the exceptional nature of these bans on flights, explaining how they constituted a deviation from the 'normal' course of events. Significantly, however, they went on to describe the impact of these bans on flights (i.e. the shutting down of Ben Gurion Airport) as 'hysterical', perhaps reflecting threat perceptions and fears of a citizen as much as a journalist in this instance:

If you open shelters within a range of zero to forty kilometres, it's normal; if five hundred rockets are being launched towards Beersheba, it's normal. Shutting down the airspace is crossing a red line ... it's hysterical, it's really hysterical.

Elaborating on the panic and fear that the bans on flights induced, Journalist 1 suggested that these bans conjured up images of the Yom Kippur War, described by some as 'the most traumatic event in Israel's history' (Bar-Joseph, 2008:70):

This is probably a constant fear in every war ... it triggers insane hysteria because you feel ... so now just as during Yom Kippur War when everyone was fleeing ... in previous wars everyone flees all of a sudden ... so if they shut down our airspace, it's a big wow.

The perception of threat embedded in the comment above was also evident in Journalist 2's explanation for the prominence given to the discourse around the disruption in flights. As illustrated below, the bans on flights were perceived as a game changer that marked a state of emergency ('This is like a true declaration of war'):

I think that was the shifting point when Israel realised, Israel's public realised that there is war. When you cancelling flights, when you closing Ben Gurion Airport, it means that this is a war. This is like a true declaration of war because until then, you know, it just in the south and there were some rockets over here and Iron Dome[20] intercepts what's going above us and, you know, Israel was basically stay in the same, like … they didn't even interfere in their daily schedule … and that was the breaking point when it was, you know, realised that this is something else.

Elaborating on this issue, they talked about how the disruption in flights was Hamas' 'biggest' achievement. As explained previously, this perception – which was also prominent in the interviews with my *Ynetnews* informants – seems to reflect a zero-sum perception of the conflict wherein one side's gains are perceived to be the other side's (in this case Israel's) losses:

This is the big issue of the 2014 conflict … even now … when I'm talking with IDF officials the fact that Hamas succeeded to close Ben Gurion Airport for a day, if I'm not mistaken … they considered it as … their biggest succeed … success … For Hamas … it's not the fact that 72 soldiers were killed, soldiers and citizens were killed in this conflict which is absurd … the fact that they managed to close Ben Gurion Airport … the IDF considered that as their … their most achievable.

Like Journalist 1, Journalist 2 went on to suggest that the bans on flights echoed trauma-based feelings of 'not being able to escape'. They explained that although in reality Israel was not 'under siege', the bans on flights evoked that feeling and brought memories of being in a 'ghetto':

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[20] Iron Dome is Israel's air defence system that detects, assesses and intercepts incoming artillery such as missiles.

When you cannot leave your country, when you need to close an airport, it's a symbol for a deadlock, basically ... and if we need to go back to ... I'll say that in Hebrew because it's a bit Yiddish term, yes? But ... we built a state, and we have connections with the entire world, and we are not under siege, but when it comes to the ghetto ... sorry, I ... it's a loaded word, but ... at the end of the day, it's a very Israeli sentiment of ... I can always get out of here.

Contributions to the discussion like these (including the use of the first-person pronoun 'we') point to certain complexities about the interviews, especially given the nature of the events and reporting the informants were considering. In this way, it seemed not always possible for me to distinguish between their voices as professional journalists commenting objectively on certain reporting practices and their voices as citizens of a country caught up in a complex and intractable conflict.

5.2.1.3   *A target of criticism and blame*

The third and last representation of 'Israel' which contributed to the discourse of victimhood was one which depicted it as a target of criticism and blame. This representation, as seen in Chapter Four, emerged as prominent in the *Ynetnews* corpus too. The representation of Israel as a recipient of criticism was evident in the context of the collocate <u>actions</u> and specifically in the common cluster 'Israel's <u>actions</u>'. A close reading of the cluster's concordances showed that in many instances 'Israel's <u>actions</u>' were typically portrayed as being condemned. Such criticisms were often from outside agents, such as overseas celebrities ('Spanish stars') and politicians (Turkey's President Erdogan), as in the following:

Open letter signed by dozens of Spanish stars blasts Israel's <u>actions</u> in Gaza and urge EU condemnation. (*Haaretz*, 29 Jul 2014)

Addressing hundreds of thousands of supporters at his biggest rally so far ahead of the August 10 election, Erdogan again likened Israel's underline actions to those of Hitler, comments that have already led Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accuse him of anti-Semitism and drawn rebuke from Washington. (*Haaretz*, 4 Aug 2014)

The frame of criticism was further apparent in the concordances of the collocate underline boycott. Here, Israel was framed as a target of international boycotts aimed at expressing disapproval of its actions in Gaza. This point is exemplified below:

Gaza war breathes life into drive to underline boycott Israel. (*Haaretz*, 11 Aug 2014)

Maldives, which resumed diplomatic relations with Israel in 2009, last week annulled all cooperation agreements signed with Israel and announced a underline boycott of Israeli products. (*Haaretz*, 2 Aug 2014)

Irish trade union calls for Israel underline boycott, but major businesses slow to respond. (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

Two other collocates which contributed to the portrayal of Israel as a recipient of criticism were underline arms and underline exports. A close reading of these collocates' concordances revealed a discourse focused on international actors reviewing, freezing or imposing bans/embargoes on Israel's arms exports, its arms export licences and its arms shipments. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

The U.S. State Department confirmed about 10 days ago that in light of the fighting in Gaza, it had decided to take extra precautions with regard to underline arms shipments to Israel. (*Haaretz*, 26 Aug 2014)

The result was the decision to make a general review of Britain's policy of selling arms to Israel and to freeze 12 <u>arms</u> <u>exports</u> licenses for items such as parts for the Merkava tank as well as drones. (*Haaretz,* 15 Aug 2014)

Spain temporarily freezes <u>arms</u> <u>exports</u> to Israel over Gaza war. (*Haaretz,* 5 Aug 2014)

Also contributing to the frame of criticism was the collocate <u>critical</u> and the common cluster '<u>critical</u> of Israel'. This point is illustrated in the following samples:

[Israel's] foreign minister also singled out the [UN Human Rights Council] commission's chairman: William Schabas, a Canadian expert on international law and genocide who is known to be highly <u>critical</u> of Israel and harshly attacked the 2008–09 Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. (*Haaretz,* 13 Aug 2014)

Israeli capital fund managing partner Roi Carthy has withdrawn an invitation for a 'meet up' with American startup incubator Y Combinator following Twitter posts by Y Combinator founder Paul Graham that were <u>critical</u> of Israel, Fox Business News reported last week. (*Haaretz,* 27 Jul 2014)

Increased international criticism of Israel for its actions in Gaza was also manifested in references to its tense diplomatic relations. Here Israel was depicted as a participant whose global standing in the world is 'sinking'. This was evident, for example, in the context of the collocate <u>relations</u>. The first and second examples below illustrate a crisis in Israel's relations with Turkey and the US, respectively:

The conflict in Gaza has strained already tense <u>relations</u> between Turkey and Israel, prompting a new diplomatic crisis. (*Haaretz,* 20 Jul 2014)

Security cabinet meeting begins, ministers will discuss Gaza war and crisis in U.S.–Israel <u>relations</u>. (*Haaretz,* 14 Aug 2014)

The portrayal of Israel's deteriorating international relations was also evident in the concordances of the collocate <u>ties</u>, as the following examples demonstrate:

<u>Ties</u> between Israel and Turkey have frayed amid the escalation in fighting between Israel and the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*, 23 Jul 2014)

We have tainted Israel's reputation abroad, we have endangered Israel's <u>ties</u> with its most important allies, we have jeopardized our bonds with Jews abroad, particularly in the United States. (*Haaretz*, 19 Aug 2014)

Also contributing to the discourse around tense diplomatic relations was the collocate <u>ambassador</u>. As illustrated below, here Israel was depicted as a participant whose relations with the US is tense. This was evident in references to both Israel's ambassador to the US, Ron Dermer, and US ambassador to Israel, Dan Shapiro. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

Israel's <u>Ambassador</u> to the U.S. Ron Dermer has landed himself in hot water with a Twitter Q&A on Operation Protective Edge that is scheduled for 8:30 A.M. ET on Thursday. (*Haaretz*, 17 July 2014)

Netanyahu said in a phone conversation with U.S. <u>Ambassador</u> to Israel Dan Shapiro that the Obama administration was 'not to ever second-guess me again' and that Washington should trust his judgment on how to deal with Hamas, according to people familiar with the conversation. (*Haaretz*, 3 Aug 2014)

The coverage of this frame of criticism was similar to some degree across the two outlets – *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*. In both publications, Israel was portrayed, for example, as a participant that is criticised for its actions in Gaza. And in both outlets, the frame of criticism was realised in references to ambassadors being recalled. One notable difference,

however, was in the treatment of anti-Israel sentiment and/or anti-Semitism. Whereas in *Ynetnews* Israel was further framed as a recipient of anti-Israel sentiment, in *Haartez* criticism of Israel was significantly not reduced to a case of anti-Israel sentiment and/or anti-Semitism. The following examples demonstrate this point:

> The European mainstream is certainly <u>critical</u> of many of Israel's actions but it harshly condemns anti-Semitism, and it supports Israel's right to self-defense, even if many of them think Israel's response to Hamas' attacks have been disproportionate. (*Haaretz*, 12 Aug 2014)

> The Asian Times, a newspaper often strongly <u>critical</u> of Israel, published two pieces unequivocally condemning anti-Semitism. (*Haaretz*, 7 Aug 2014)

> As the war in Gaza has progressed, the American media has been increasingly <u>critical</u> of Israel … These articles are not anti-Israel rants but carefully argued analyses that cannot be dismissed as borderline anti-Semitism. (*Haaretz*, 5 Aug 2014)

Another discourse around the term Israel, as noted earlier, was one which depicted Israel as a target of blame. This, as we saw in Chapter Four, was a prominent discourse in *Ynetnews* too. A frame of blame was predominantly evident in the emergence of the words <u>accused</u>, <u>committed</u> and <u>crimes</u> as collocates of Israel in *Haaretz*. A close examination of these collocates' immediate context revealed that Israel was typically accused of committing or possibly committing war crimes. As the following examples illustrate, such accusations were typically (though not exclusively) voiced by Palestinian actors:

> The PA [Palestinian Authority] leader also <u>accused</u> Israel of committing war <u>crimes</u> and depriving the Palestinian people of the right to life, and asked the international community to step in and protect the residents of Gaza. (*Haaretz*, 31 Jul 2014)

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki said on Tuesday after meeting prosecutors at the International Criminal Court that there was 'clear evidence' that Israel committed war crimes in Gaza. (*Haaretz*, 5 Aug 2014)

A former New York judge has been appointed the third member of a United Nations panel looking into whether Israel has committed war crimes in its conflict with Hamas in Gaza. (25 Aug 2014)

A discourse of blame was also evident in the context of the collocate blame. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

Gazans Blame Israel, Not Hamas. (*Haaretz*, 25 Jul 2014)

Despite all this, Ramallah also believes that Israel is to blame for the breakdown of the talks, refusing to engage in a political process with the Palestinians and especially with Hamas, due to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's political considerations. (*Haaretz*, 20 Aug 2014)

But the 27-year-old [Israeli Arab] said that unlike some Arabs who identified more closely with the Israeli position, he couldn't accept the alarmingly high number of children being killed and placed the blame on Israel. (*Haaretz*, 27 Jul 2014)

The theme of criticism of Israel was probed in the interviews. When queried specifically about the prominent reporting on the issue of boycotting/imposing arms embargo on Israel, the Editor identified two factors at play. One was to cater to what they thought were *Haaretz* audience preferences:

We know that the issue of boycotting Israel is huge in ... is of huge interest to our readers, let's put it that way ... whether it's BDS or arms embargo, we know that these are important issues to our readers, so we will report on any small ... not any

small … any sign of … of a boycott or threats of a boycott or talk of a boycott, we will report it … We believe that our readers are interested in it, and we will report.

They explained that *Haaretz* readership is interested in reading what critics of Israel have to say. As an example of this, they explained why the outlet might typically report statements of the leftist UK filmmaker Ken Loach, known for his critical views on Israel:

When somebody like Ken Loach[21] who, you know, we believe, again, that our readers know who that is and they're interested in what he has to say.

They went on to suggest that *Haaretz* readership abroad might not necessarily be Jewish or have an interest in Israel, adding that *Haaretz* readers are known to lean towards more 'liberal values'. Selection of stories and details are thus determined to some degree on this basis. They contrasted this with the approach adopted by the *JP*:

We know that our readers who are overseas, not necessarily Jewish or connected to the Jewish state, and who have an interest in liberal values and in Israel or the Palestinian issue – you know, they might read an Israeli newspaper not because they're interested in Israel but because they're interested in the Palestinians – we know that that story will interest them, so there's more chance that we will run it than the *Jerusalem Post* will run it.

In addition to concern for audience, the Editor suggested that the prominent reporting on the issue of boycotting/imposing arms embargo on Israel was also motivated by the ideological orientation of the editorial board:

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[21] On 25 August 2014, *Haaretz* published an article titled *U.K.'s Ken Loach calls for boycott of Israel-backed culture, sport, academia.*

Plus, I think there are some people on the editorial board who support the boycott, so ... so, you know, they have an interest in stories like this appearing ... That's my explanation why <u>boycott</u> and <u>arms</u> is more prominent in *Haaretz* because we're responding to what our readers have shown us that they're interested in and we're promoting issues that we believe are important to discuss.

This was their particular view. Interestingly, they commented that the reporting on international boycotts of Israel was an issue over which there were internal differences of opinion. Significantly, they pointed out that some in the paper thought the issue was 'overreported' and one that was exploited by the government:

This is actually an issue of internal disagreements ... Some people within the organisation think that we overreport it and, in so doing, we are feeding a beast that doesn't really exist. They think that the BDS movement is just hot air and that it's ... an invention by the Israeli government to keep people frightened.

Journalist 1 was also probed about the prominence of the discourse around boycotting Israel. Unlike the Editor, they thought this prominence in the reporting might have been guided by national ideologies. Using an us-versus them frame (e.g. 'they want to destroy us'), they suggested that the word <u>boycott</u> is perceived to be a code word for being anti-Israel. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

Journalist 1: This is a code word against Israel.

Interviewer: What might be some of the reasons behind the prominence of ... 'boycott'?

Journalist 1: Because it hurts us, I think ... we always talk about, not only during war ... about how it hurts us ... maybe it's part of the 'they want to destroy us', 'they don't want to buy products', 'they want us to fall financially', 'they want us to collapse'. It

goes out against us ... Why do you boycott a product? Because you want to hurt the other side ... it's like ... these boycotts are the new diplomacy ... the new form of 'destroying us' is by not buying our products.

In such a response, it was not altogether clear whether an explanation was being offered for the prominence given to this aspect of the conflict or rather as a justification for it (that is, the boycotts need to be reported because they pose a threat to 'us' as a nation). Such comments again point to the variable voices and identities that informants typically brought to these discussions of their practice. This was an emergently interesting aspect of the interview discourse.

The discourse of blame was another aspect of the reporting probed in interviews. My informants were queried specifically about the prominent use of the word <u>accused</u>. Journalist 2 suggested that the word needed to be used when it was not clear beyond doubt that certain acts (including war crimes) had been committed:

Yes ... 'accused' ... 'accused by' ... because, first of all, we have some information about ... I will say questionable acts of the IDF, but saying IDF committed war crimes ... just that ... just like that ... it's complicated. It's not something that I can do or even ... This criticism ... comes from outside, and if I'm the person in the field and I cannot relate and say in a positive way that this is what happened, how someone from outside can say it? So, I think this is the right word to use: 'Israel was accused'.

Journalist 1 was also probed about this discourse around blame. They identified this discourse (including the use of the verb <u>accused</u>) as a common theme found in Israeli diplomacy:

It is a very prevalent phrase in everyday Israeli diplomatic discourse ... Israel is always being 'accused'. Bad Israel.

They went on to suggest that, in Israeli diplomacy, a discourse around blame, perceived in Israel as unjust ('Don't blame me for … protecting my citizens'), is used to promote a narrative about self-defence and thereby justify Israel's actions:

> Every time Israel is accused, it plays the 'I have the right to defend myself' card. 'Don't blame me for … protecting my citizens.' Israel is not doing something which is forbidden. It is protecting its citizens.

As their comment below illustrates, the perception of blame as unjust is the result of a positive self-image, on the one hand, and beliefs about the delegitimisation of Hamas, on the other hand:

> We never attack civilians. We always attack military militias and it just happens that there were also 50 families there. We never attack civilians whereas Hamas does. Hamas always attacks civilians … when it fires towards Ashdod, it doesn't fire on a military base. It fires towards the city. It wants to hit the place where the Prime Minister is giving a speech now. We … I'm talking about the common people on the street, yeah? This is what they say and this is what we always try to convey, when we fire a missile on Gaza, the intention is to hit some Hamas facility. The fact that there are also kids and families in the vicinity of this facility is what the IDF calls 'negligible'. Honestly, I think that 'accused' is very common and is used all the time.

5.2.2   A recipient of support

A competing discourse to the one around victimhood was a discourse which depicted 'Israel' as a participant that is supported in the conflict. This discourse, as explained in Chapter Four, was also prominent in the *Ynetnews* reporting. The construal of Israel as a recipient of support largely comprised two representations. These were similar to the ones

identified in *Ynetnews*, that is, Israel was constructed: (i) as a recipient of world Jewish solidarity; and (ii) as a participant that is backed predominantly by the US.

A discourse of solidarity with Israel became apparent, for example, in the context of the collocate <u>pro</u> – an exclusive collocate in *Haaretz* ranked 9th in frequency – and, more specifically, in the immediate context of the common cluster '<u>pro</u>-Israel'. An analysis of this cluster's concordances showed that it was typically used in a context which depicted pro-Israel demonstrations and pro-Israeli rallies. These rallies of support, as the examples below illustrate, took place variously in London, Sydney and New York:

> 1,500 Turn Out for <u>pro</u>-Israel Rally in London. *(Haaretz, 21 Jul 2014)*

> Saturday's rally was the first outdoor <u>pro</u>-Israel demonstration in Sydney during the current war in the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*, 3 Aug 2104)

> During Operation Protective Edge, they [Israelis living in New York] took to the streets – not all of them, not even most of them – but at <u>pro</u>-Israel rallies in various places in the United States, they were out in greater numbers than ever, participating in and even initiating the events. (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

A solidarity frame was also evident in the context of the collocate <u>supporters</u>, which was typically part of the common clusters 'Israel <u>supporters</u>' and '<u>supporters</u> of Israel'. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> Members of Congress and thousands of Israel <u>supporters</u> gathered for a solidarity rally near the United Nations. (*Haaretz*, 29 Jul 2014)

> Republicans are clearer <u>supporters</u> of Israel, with 73 percent approving of Israel's actions in Gaza, compared with 45 percent of Democrats and 56 percent among independents. (*Haaretz*, 22 Jul 2014)

The second discourse which contributed to the representation of Israel as a recipient of support was one which depicted Israel as a participant that has the backing of predominantly the US. This was evident in the context of the collocate <u>support</u>, as well as in the context of two common clusters – 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>' and 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>self</u>-<u>defense</u>'. These two clusters, as will be revealed in subsection 5.3.2, contributed to the portrayal of Israel as a participant that acts in self-defence. However, a close reading of the clusters' context revealed they indexed another discourse, one that depicts it as a recipient of US support. This was evident in the many references to US leaders expressing/reiterating/reaffirming/underscoring their support for 'Israel's right to defend itself'. Put differently, the cluster 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>', as was the case in *Ynetnews*, showed a semantic preference for the US/US officials. This point is illustrated in the following samples:

> Obama reiterated Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u>, saying no country would tolerate rockets and tunnel attacks. (*Haaretz*, 1 Aug 2014)

> Bipartisan U.S. delegation: We stand with Israel and we <u>support</u> its <u>right</u> to defend itself against Hamas. (*Haaretz*, 13 Aug 2014)

> The [US] secretary [of state] condemned the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel, the official said, and stressed Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>self</u>-<u>defense</u>. (*Haaretz*, 13 Jul 2014)

The depiction of the US backing Israel's right to self-defence was also evident in the quotes of key American figures such as US President Barack Obama, US Secretary of State John Kerry and New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo:

> 'And so we've been very clear that Israel has the <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> against what I consider to be inexcusable attacks from Hamas.' [U.S. President Barack Obama] (*Haaretz*, 17 Jul 2014)

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry told the BBC: 'No country can live with that condition and the United States stands squarely behind Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> in those circumstances. Period.' (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

Before boarding the plane in New York on Tuesday, [New York State Governor Andrew] Cuomo told reporters: 'Our message is simple and is clear. We stand with Israel and we <u>support</u> Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> in this conflict,' adding that, 'The delegation represents the entire State government.' (*Haaretz*, 13 Aug 2014)

My *Haaretz* informants were probed about the depiction of Israel as a recipient of support. They were specifically queried about the prominence of a 'solidarity with Israel' discourse. Here, informants' explanations focused on journalistic aspirations for balance. As explained by the Editor, the prevalence of the discourse in the reporting might have been subconsciously motivated by the outlet's desire to balance its reputation for being critical of and biased against the Israeli government and the IDF:

Right. I think maybe, again subconsciously, we … because we're known as critics of the Israeli government and the IDF, maybe subconsciously, we decided to give greater or equal coverage to pro-Israel demonstrations, for balance.

My *Haaretz* respondents were also probed about the prominence of a discourse depicting Israel as a participant in the conflict that is supported by the US. The Editor insisted that there was no editorial subtext to the reporting on US officials supporting Israel's right to defend itself:

We would never use the phrase 'right to defend itself' independently of somebody else saying that or in an analysis. You know, we would never say 'Israel launches … Israel defends cities by pounding Gaza', so I would hope and assume that our readers would understand that if we use the phrase 'right to defend itself', we don't … we're not implying that we think that this is a justified war of defence, only that Obama

has said that. And for *Haaretz'* view or analysis of that, read opinion or analysis, don't read news articles cause that's just news; there is no opinion in a news piece.

The Editor's suggestion that 'there is no opinion in a news piece' is of course not aligned with CDA's approach to news, that is, that news is always socially constructed. CDA postulates that it is not the 'quotes out there' that set the stage for a news story. Rather, the selection of quotes to be included in a news story is part of 'story presentation'. By including quotes, news producers are able to establish authority over their representation of reality.

The Editor went on to offer balance, again, as the underlying factor behind the discourse around US support. As their words below illustrate, they thought it was necessary to balance an 'ocean of criticism' with reporting that focused on those countries which approved of Israel's actions in Gaza:

> I think in the ocean of criticism that Israel got during that conflict, it was important to highlight those countries that were … were not automatically critical of what Israel was doing.

Journalist 2 was also probed about this issue. They suggested that the discourse depicting the US supporting Israel's right to defend itself has been used extensively in the past decade:

> I think it's something that is common about Israel's military activity throughout the last decade. This is what the US is saying all the time: Israel has the right to defend itself.

They went on to say the frame of support might have played a significant role in portraying Israel favourably, justifying its actions and fending off international criticism:

I think Israel likes to be on the right side and when the US, even under Obama, is saying that Israel has the right to defend itself, it means that Israel has the … she's in the good side of the history and that Israel's actions are more … are less criticised by the Western world.

5.3 An 'actor' in the conflict

The third grammatical category explored in the *Haaretz* reporting was 'Israel' as an 'actor' in the conflict. This, as has already been suggested, stands in contrast to its representations as a recipient (e.g. a victim) or just simply a participant in the conflict. Here too, the analysis was interested in identifying what type of actor Israel was depicted as being and what types of actions it was seen to be engaged in. As an actor in the conflict, Israel was framed very similarly to the way it was portrayed in the *Ynetnews* corpus. As was the case in the *Ynetnews* reporting, Israel was depicted in *Haaretz* as a combatant that acts in self-defence and also as a conciliatory participant that is willing to resolve the conflict diplomatically. One discourse which was prominent in *Haaretz* but not in *Ynetnews* was Israel as a democratic state.

5.3.1   A combatant

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' – as was the case in *Ynetnews* – was framed as a combatant. This became evident in the context of <u>launched</u> and <u>offensive</u>, two collocates which contributed to the construal of Israel as a combatant in *Ynetnews* too. One difference between *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* reporting relates to the use of the collocate <u>launched</u> – while the two publications used the term to depict Israel as both a combatant and a victim, *Haaretz* used the term to depict a 'combatant frame' in 71 per cent of cases, while *Ynetnews* did so only 55 per cent of the time. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

> Israel began its <u>offensive</u> earlier this month, citing a surge in rocket attacks launched from Hamas militants in Gaza. (*Haaretz*, 26 Jul 2014)

Israel <u>launched</u> the operation last week amid ongoing rocket fire on Israeli cities and towns. (*Haaretz*, 17 Jul 2014)

The representation of Israel as a combatant in the conflict was also evident in the emergence of the word <u>incursion</u> as an exclusive collocate of Israel. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

At this stage, the Israel Defense Forces' ground <u>incursion</u> into the Gaza Strip is limited. (*Haaretz*, 18 Jul 2014)

At least 130 Palestinians have been killed since Israel began its ground <u>incursion</u>, raising the death toll in Gaza to 508 since the beginning of the operation 14 days ago, with 3,130 wounded. (*Haaretz*, 22 Jul 2014)

Sunday was one of the calmest days since Israel's ground <u>incursion</u> began, although 13 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, including an Islamic Jihad field commander. (*Haaretz*, 28 Jul 2014)

An interesting frame of Israel as a combatant revolved around its border crossings with Gaza. As was explained in Chapter Two, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza in 2007 and has been controlling its borders with Gaza since then. Surprisingly, while <u>blockade</u> emerged as an exclusive collocate of Israel in *Ynetnews*, the use of this term was not prominent in *Haaretz*. Instead, the focus in *Haaretz* was on the rather euphemistic term <u>crossings</u>. This became evident in the emergence of the word <u>crossings</u> as an exclusive collocate of Israel in *Haaretz* and is exemplified in the following samples:

The group [Hamas] is reported to have five main demands: An opening of all <u>crossings</u> between Israel and the Gaza Strip; opening of the Rafah crossing with Egypt for 24 hours, with an international guarantee it will not be closed; naval access in Gaza; permission for Gaza residents to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem;

the release of the prisoners freed in the Gilad Shalit swap and then rearrested; improved conditions for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel. (*Haaretz,* 17 July 2014)

Disagreements over the opening of the border <u>crossings</u> between Israel and Gaza, including how the crossings will be supervised and what kind of merchandise will be allowed into Gaza, are among the key issues delaying the signing of a cease-fire agreement in the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz,* 13 Aug 2014)

Abbas had suggested that the Egyptians first declare an end to hostilities by both sides, and then begin detailed negotiations over various issues related to Gaza, such as easing restrictions on its border <u>crossings</u> with both Egypt and Israel. (*Haaretz,* 16 Jul 2014)

It is worth mentioning that while the term <u>crossings</u>, as illustrated above, was typically used to explain Hamas 'demands' (e.g. opening/easing restrictions on the border crossings between Gaza and Israel), depiction of the agent who de facto controls these border crossings (i.e. Israel) remained obscure.

A final point worth mentioning in this discussion of Israel as a combatant is related to an absence in the corpus. As was the case in *Ynetnews*, the term 'operation' did not emerge in the *Haaretz* reporting as a collocate of Israel. This, as has already been mentioned, is an interesting linguistic finding given that Israel's acts of violence in Gaza were officially dubbed Operation Protective Edge.

My *Haaretz* informants were queried about the combatant frame, specifically about the prominent use of the term <u>offensive</u>. Overall, they thought the use of the term encapsulated the nature of Israel's actions in Gaza and attributed this lexical choice to journalistic practices and news writing objectives. Journalist 1, for example, suggested that the prominence of <u>offensive</u> might have been influenced by an editorial decision to adopt the term that was used by other news outlets:

A lot of the times, from the little I know about the English news desk, words that are used in other news outlets are sometimes borrowed and used with our conflict. It could have been that the head of the English news desk decided that from now on this is the term we will be using.

The Editor attributed the prominence of <u>offensive</u> to the news-writing objective of neutrality. They talked about a range of other terms (some 'more emotive'; others 'too amorphous') which could have been used but which *Harretz* was consciously trying to avoid. For the Editor, <u>offensive</u> was a 'relatively neutral' word choice which encapsulated the attacking nature of Israel's actions in Gaza:

Well, it's relatively neutral. It's, you know, you could call it 'Israel's onslaught' or you could call it 'Israel's bombardment' or whatever. You know, there are more emotive words, so 'offensive' is a military term, it's ... obviously it encapsulates the attacking nature of what Israel was doing. It wasn't ... it's different when cities are being shelled and you respond by shooting down whatever ... that's not an offensive. This is going on the offensive and taking the fight to the other side into the other side's territory, therefore, it is by definition an offensive. As I said, there are more emotive words we could have used which we tried not to, but by the same token, we try and avoid things like campaign which are too amorphous maybe, and they just don't capture ... a campaign, you know, that's political ... political campaign, advertising campaign, but for what Israel was doing, we felt that 'offensive' was the right word.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 also found the word <u>offensive</u> to be a rather neutral word choice, as illustrated in the interview excerpt below:

Interviewer: So any thoughts on the prominence of this word [i.e. 'offensive']?

Journalist 2: I think that 'bombed' – like Israel bombed Gaza sites – is more ... it's more power than ...

Interviewer: OK, so it's more of a neutral word, do you think?

Journalist 2: Yes.

5.3.2   A participant that acts in self-defence and responds to Hamas' violence

As an 'actor' in the conflict, Israel's actions in Gaza were further depicted as acts of self-defence carried out as a response to Hamas' acts of violence. These representations of 'Israel', as seen in Chapter Four, were also prominent in the *Ynetnews* reporting. Unlike the reporting in *Ynetnews*, however, a discourse around Israel's security needs was not identified in *Haaretz*.

The self-defence discourse was evident in the context of the top collocates right, defend and itself, which tended to co-occur to form the common cluster 'right to defend itself'. It was also apparent in the concordances of the collocates self and defense, and particularly in the clusters 'right to/of self-defense'. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

It's obvious that Israel must retain the right to defend itself against immediate threats, and thwart any plans to fire on its citizens or troops. (*Haaretz*, 15 Jul 2014)

Gantz spoke of the need to persevere in carrying out missions and of the moral duty to defend the citizens of Israel without inflicting unnecessary harm on enemy civilians. (*Haaretz*, 21 Jul 2014)

The [US] secretary [of state John Kerry] condemned the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel, the official said, and stressed Israel's right to self-defense. (*Haaretz*, 13 Jul 2014)

A frame of self-defence was also apparent in quotes. The first and second examples below are the words of then President of the Zionist Federation of Australia, Dr Danny Lamm, and Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu, respectively:

'It is imperative that the world hears the truth and understands that Israel is acting in <u>self</u>-<u>defense</u>.' [Dr. Danny Lamm, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia] (*Haaretz*, 22 Jul 2014)

'If Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> <u>itself</u> in the face of terror is not clear, it will be an ominous signal for all democratic and moral countries, which, like us, act in accordance with international law and for the purpose of the legitimate defense of their citizens.' [Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] (*Haaretz*, 7 Aug 2014)

A closely related discourse to that of self-defence is one which framed Israel as a participant acting in response to Hamas' acts of violence. This was evident predominantly in the emergence of the word <u>respond</u> as a collocate of Israel in the *Haaretz* corpus. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

The second [task] is preparedness for another escalation on the border, though it seems at this stage Israel would <u>respond</u> to rocket fire with air strikes rather than another ground operation. (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

Israel is prepared to <u>respond</u> to any breach of the cease-fire by Hamas, Minister of Defense Moshe Ya'alon told New York Governor Andrew Cuomo in a meeting the two held this morning. *(Haaretz, 14 Aug 2014)*

The representation of Israel's actions as a response to Hamas' acts of violence was also apparent in quotes. The first and second examples below are the words of then opposition leader Member of Knesset (MK) Isaac Herzog and a senior Israeli official, respectively:

Opposition Leader MK Isaac Herzog says that 'we're all closely following the situation in the south, it's very fragile and highly volatile. Israel has the right to

<u>respond</u> and decide when it stops the fire and when it acts to neutralize sources of fire'. (*Haaretz*, 29 Jul 2014)

A senior Israeli official said following the security cabinet's decision to accept the cease-fire offer that if Hamas continues to fire rockets after the cease-fire, 'Israel will <u>respond</u> forcefully'. (*Haaretz*, 16 Jul 2014)

The discourse around Israel acting in self-defence and responding to acts of violence was also probed in the interviews. Overall, my *Haaretz* informants explained that these representations are deeply entrenched in the national narrative and suggested that they serve to justify Israel's actions. For example, the Editor explained that the phrase 'Israel's right to defend itself' has been used as a euphemism for Israel's military actions ever since it was declared a state:

> You know, Israel's right to defend itself is a key phrase in the 70 years of the state and is kind of a code word for military ... you know, taking military action.

Journalist 1 too spoke about the prevalence of a self-defence discourse in Israel, as is illustrated below:

> I think that you hear it a lot. You constantly hear 'the right to defend ourselves'.

They explained that the depiction of Israel as a participant that acts in self-defence echoes the voices of the Israeli military and government:

> It sounds like the IDF spokesperson's statement ... The IDF spokesman frequently concludes his announcements with 'Israel has the right to defend itself in any way it sees fit' ... I think that Netanyahu uses that all the time. We have the right to defend ourselves since around 1945 and we will use it whenever we have to.

Significantly, they went on to suggest that the discourse around self-defence served to justify Israel's actions. Of particular interest in their words below is the important role that the Holocaust plays in this frame of self-defence:

I think it has to do a little bit with, I'm not sure 'prove' is the right word, but to say 'Guys, relax. What we're doing is OK. We have the right to defend ourselves' … all the time, like I think ever since the Holocaust ended, we have the right to defend ourselves. We always play that card. Every time that someone sort of offers us words of admonition, we say that we are the Jewish people, we have the right to defend ourselves now … I'm not purposelessly saying that we have this card of 'the right to defend ourselves' since 1945. The Holocaust is something that we bring up everywhere. No one will go through a single war without mentioning the Holocaust at least five times. It's like we are defending ourselves in Gaza so that we don't have a second Holocaust.

My *Haaretz* informants were also specifically queried about the discourse around Israel responding to Hamas' acts of violence. Journalist 2 highlighted that a discourse of response reverberated the voice of the Israeli military. This is exemplified in the following interview excerpt:

Interviewer: The next word that was prominent was 'respond'.

Journalist 2: Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer: Israel responded …

Journalist 2: This is truly an IDF spokesperson way of use … used words …

Journalist 2 went on to suggest that such a discourse was used to place the responsibility for initiating the violence on Hamas and present Israel as a participant that

reacts to threats rather than as one that initiates acts of violence. The following interview excerpt demonstrates this point:

Journalist 2: That we didn't start the fire, basically.

Interviewer: Yeah … you're laughing …

Journalist 2: Yes, I think that this is like the mantra of the IDF … it has the right to defend itself and it was just an active action towards a threat; it's not something that Israel initiated by itself.

Along similar lines, Journalist 1 talked about how <u>respond</u> is a word typically found in the Israeli military 'jargon' and explained that in the Israeli discourse, Israel is always portrayed as a participant that is fighting a justified war (e.g. 'Israel never fires for no reason'): it 'responds' to attacks on its 'citizens' and 'sovereignty':

Israel never fires for no reason. Israel fires in light of … we were fired at, we defend ourselves. So we respond to fire, yes. This is also a very common word in the IDF's jargon, that we protect Israel's citizens, thus we decided to act against the militias or whoever jeopardises the Israeli sovereignty … it's a classic statement of the IDF spokesman.

Significantly, Journalist 1 also explained how a discourse of response is not only a card which Israel draws in the diplomatic arena, but also a lens through which the Israeli public can 'reconcile the dissonance' between its positive collective self-image and the military's acts of violence. This point is illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

Journalist 1: It sort of provides an explanation to the citizen. It's sort of to reconcile the dissonance of 'why are we constantly attacking in Gaza?' … It's the card that we keep playing: 'look, we can't sit still' …

Interviewer: You keep saying 'the card we play' …

Journalist 1: because it looks like a diplomatic game ... it's enough to sit down and watch Netanyahu's speeches one after the other and the words like, you know, just as we always laugh about him going to the UN ... we know what he will talk about ... He will take out the photo of the rocket, he'll talk about Iran and will say ... the Holocaust will always come up ...

Interviewer: Is there a bit of a cynical tone when you say ...?

Journalist 1: Yes, like, cynical because it's part of the Israeli diplomacy all the time ... these words have become part of our jargon ... people ask 'Why don't we respond? We get fired at all the time. Why don't we respond?'

5.3.3   A conciliatory and democratic participant

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' – as was the case in *Ynetnews* – was constructed as a conciliatory participant that is willing to break the violence and resolve the conflict diplomatically. But while in *Ynetnews* Israel was simultaneously represented as a powerful participant, this representation was not identified in the *Haaretz* reporting.

The representation of Israel as a conciliatory participant was evident in the context of the collocates <u>accepted</u>, <u>agreed</u> and <u>extend</u>. A close examination of these collocates' concordances revealed a frame in which Israel *accepted/agreed* to/was willing to *extend* a proposal for truce. Thus, for example, *Haaretz* reported:

The Egyptian cease-fire proposal that Israel <u>accepted</u> on Tuesday did not deliver a single achievement. (*Haaretz*, 26 Aug 2014)

Israel <u>agreed</u> to a cease-fire Tuesday morning and briefly halted its air strikes on Gaza. (*Haaretz*, 16 Jul 2014)

Israeli official: Israel prepared to <u>extend</u> cease-fire under current conditions. (*Haaretz*, 6 Aug 2014)

The construal of Israel as a conciliatory participant was also evident in quotes. The first one is a quote by American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) – a lobbying group that advocates pro-Israel policies to the Congress of the United States; the second quote are the words of then spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry, Yigal Palmor:

> 'While Israel <u>accepted</u> a cease-fire plan offered by the Egyptian government, Hamas rejected it and continues to send rockets into the Jewish state,' AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] said. (*Haaretz*, 20 Jul 2014)

> 'So far, every time Israel <u>accepted</u> plans for establishing a cease-fire and restoring calm, it was countered by Hamas's sustained rocket fire'. [Yigal Palmor, the spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry] (*Haaretz*, 29 Jul 2014)

Unlike the case in *Ynetnews*, as an actor in the conflict, Israel in *Haaretz* was further depicted as a democratic participant. This became evident in the emergence of the word <u>democratic</u> as an exclusive collocate of Israel in *Haaretz*. This point is exemplified in the following samples; the second example is the words of Alan Dershowitz, a longtime supporter of Israel and the author of *Taking the stand: My life in the law*:

> In order to secure the future of Israel as a Jewish and <u>democratic</u> state, Israel adopted the solution based on two states for two peoples. A Jewish state – Israel. And an Arab state for the Palestinians. (*Haaretz*, 25 Jul 2014)

> Almost every Democrat I know supports Israel as enthusiastically as Republicans do because Israel does in fact have <u>democratic</u> values. [Alan Dershowitz] (*Haaretz*, 31 Jul 2014)

It is important to note that while Israel was portrayed as a democratic state, its status as a democracy was portrayed as fragile. This is illustrated in the samples below. The first example are the words of Barack Obama; the second example suggests that the tendency

in Israel to target organisations which are critical of Israel poses a threat to its 'democratic fabric':

> In order for Israel to maintain its <u>democratic</u> and civic traditions, it must find a way to live side by side in peace with Palestinians, said U.S. president Barack Obama, interviewed by Thomas Friedman for the *New York Times*, expressing doubt as to the ability of current leadership on both sides to move in such a direction. (*Haaretz*, Aug 9, 2014)

> From the Knesset Bill that sought to limit funding to left-leaning NGOs, to Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's 'loyalty oath,' there's a worrying pattern in Israel of targeting critical organizations. Of course, the most immediate danger is to Israel's <u>democratic</u> fabric. (*Haaretz*, Aug 22, 2014)

The representation of Israel as an actor and particularly the discourse depicting it as a conciliatory participant was another aspect of the reporting probed in the interviews. The Editor, for example, insisted that there were no ideological motivations behind these linguistic patterns. They commented that the words <u>accepted</u> and <u>agreed</u> are 'neutral' ('it's neither a weakness nor a strength') and speculated that they were a 'reflection' of what had happened:

> I'm not sure whether this is just a function of what was happening at the time … if somebody who believed that Israel shouldn't end the conflict and should continue until Hamas was driven out and Gazans get sent back to the Stone Age, then they would say that 'Israel has agreed' is a sign of weakness. In our news reporting, it's neither a weakness nor a strength, it's just reporting because that's what has happened – Israel has accepted this demand, Israel has agreed to stop doing whatever, Israel has agreed to allow more trucks into Gaza.

Journalist 1 was also probed about this discourse. They explained that the depiction of Israel as a participant that accepts proposals for truce mirrored the official voice of the IDF:

These are words that are written in the IDF spokesperson press releases.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 said:

Most of the times like when it was an IDF decision to cease the fire and they informed the reporters that there is a ceasefire, they will say Israel accepted or agreed to a UN request to cease the fire due to humanitarian reasons etc. etc.

5.3.4   Summary

This chapter has focused on the representation of 'Israel' in *Haaretz*. The analysis has revealed that Israel in *Haaretz* was generally represented very similarly to the way it was depicted in *Ynetnews*. More specifically, as a 'recipient' in the conflict, it was framed in both outlets as a victim and as a recipient of support; as an 'actor' in the conflict, it was constructed in both outlets as a combatant acting in self-defence and as a response to Hamas' violence and also as a conciliatory participant.

One difference between the *Ynetnews* and the *Haaretz* reporting concerns the representation of Israel as a victim in the conflict. In both news outlets, Israel was framed as a target of Hamas' violence and threats, as a victim of international airlines' bans and as a target of criticism and blame. While Israel in *Ynetnews* was also constructed as a recipient of anti-Israel sentiment, this discourse was not identified in the *Haaretz* reporting. Another difference between the two news outlets relates to the representation of Israel as an actor. In both publications, Israel was depicted as a combatant that acts in self-defence and as a response to acts of violence and also as a conciliatory participant. One discourse which was prominent in *Haaretz* but not in *Ynetnews* was Israel as a democratic state. And while Israel

was further represented in *Ynetnews* as a participant with security needs and as a powerful participant, these discourses were not prominent in the *Haaretz* reporting.

An analysis of my respondents' comments showed a rather complex picture, with informants identifying an array of motivations behind the linguistic choices. Some of these considerations seemed to be related to journalistic norms and practices (e.g. aiming for balance and neutrality). However, as was the case in Chapter Four, national narratives and institutional ideologies were found to be key factors behind news producers' lexical choices. This suggests that news producers' aspirations as professionals and their aspirations as members of the national community are not easy to tease apart.

6. *The Jerusalem Post*

This chapter turns to exploring the representation of 'Israel' in the reporting of the conflict in the final outlet – the *Jerusalem Post* (*JP*). This publication, as noted in Chapter Three, is associated with a right-of-centre political stance (Dridi, 2020:2). Applying the same type of analysis that was used in the previous two chapters, I explore the discourses around the term Israel (using the linguistic tool of collocation) and the motivations behind the linguistic findings (using the commentary from some of the news producers who contributed substantially to the *JP* reporting of the conflict). These news producers included an editor (designated the Editor) and three senior journalists (designated Journalist 1, Journalist 2 and Journalist 3).

Table 6.1 shows the 50 strongest collocates of Israel (in terms of statistical significance) in the *JP* corpus. These are presented here according to their relative (per 100,000) and raw frequencies. Table 6.1 also shows the dispersion of the collocates across the corpus and their statistical significance (Stat). Table 6.1 further reveals that, as was the case in the previous findings chapters, the list of collocates comprised a broad range of word types including nouns (e.g. mortars), verbs (e.g. fired), adjectives (e.g. southern), adverbs (e.g. earlier), prepositions (e.g. with) and determiners (e.g. its).

Table 6.1: The 50 strongest collocates of 'Israel' in the *JP* (presented in descending order of frequency).

Rank	Collocate	Relative frequency (per 100,000)	Raw frequency	Dispersion	Stat
1	s	183.49	354	126	4.47
2	with	92.78	179	122	3.87
3	fire	85.52	165	135	4.11
4	at	83.97	162	193	3.96
5	between	76.19	147	120	5.62
6	rockets	69.97	135	94	4.32
7	has	67.38	130	105	4.16
8	into	56.49	109	92	4.93
9	cease	55.98	108	81	4.2

10	fired	54.42	105	70	4.69
11	its	51.83	100	85	3.95
12	security	46.65	90	68	4.24
13	palestinians	44.05	85	68	4.34
14	against	43.02	83	71	4.77
15	southern	41.46	80	65	5.35
16	attacks	30.58	59	51	4.55
17	tuesday	30.06	58	48	4.26
18	since	25.91	50	43	4.42
19	war	25.39	49	41	4.16
20	offensive	22.8	44	37	5.3
21	truce	22.28	43	32	4.08
22	says	21.25	41	37	4.19
23	fighting	20.73	40	36	4.34
24	must	19.69	38	28	4.66
25	long	19.17	37	29	4.26
26	radio	18.14	35	27	5.82
27	agreed	17.1	33	32	4.87
28	anti	17.1	33	22	4.6
29	saturday	17.1	33	29	4.06
30	launched	16.58	32	32	4.87
31	terrorists	16.58	32	26	3.93
32	agency	16.06	31	28	4.3
33	should	15.55	30	20	4.29
34	central	15.03	29	22	5.17
35	conflict	14.51	28	28	3.9
36	right	13.47	26	21	4.83
37	demands	13.47	26	20	4.83
38	night	13.47	26	35	3.94
39	citizens	12.95	25	21	4.56
40	defend	12.44	24	19	6.18
41	landed	12.44	24	24	4.46
42	term	11.92	23	17	4.41
43	mortars	11.4	22	14	5.64
44	shin	11.4	22	21	4.87
45	bet	11.4	22	21	4.85
46	continued	10.88	21	20	4.32
47	earlier	10.88	21	20	4.02
48	liberman	10.88	21	14	3.99
49	accused	10.36	20	16	5.65

50	flights	10.36	20	12	5.47

Adopting the same approach to collocation that was used in the analysis of the *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* corpora, the above collocates were examined within their immediate context. Here too, the first part of the analysis relied on Halliday's (1985) transitivity framework to determine the grammatical relationships between the term Israel and its collocates and to organise the data into three grammatical categories (summarised in Table 6.2). As was the case with *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, these are Israel: (i) as one of two participants in a conflict; (ii) as a 'recipient' in the conflict; and (iii) as an 'actor'.

The second stage of the analysis involved identifying first- and second-level thematic categories within each of the grammatical categories. Here too, the process of categorisation relied on the contextual readings of collocates rather than simply on their literal meanings. The thematic categories, along with the collocates that construe these themes, are also summarised in Table 6.2. As evident from Table 6.2, there was a high degree of convergence between the thematic categories identified in the *JP* and the ones that emerged in the reporting of the other publications (i.e. *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*). These similarities, as well as some of the nuances that emerged in the reporting, are discussed in the following three sections.

Table 6.2 also shows that, as was the case with both *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, the process of categorisation resulted in the placement of some of the collocates of Israel in more than one thematic category (e.g. cease, fire). This process also revealed that there were some collocates which were found either to not shed light on the thematic categories identified in the reporting or to not be relevant to the representation of Israel altogether; these appear under the category '**Other**'.

Table 6.2: Categorised collocates of 'Israel' in the *JP*.

Categories	'Israel' collocates
One of two participants in a conflict	between, with, Palestinians, terrorists, fighting, conflict, war, long, term, cease, fire, truce

A 'recipient' in the conflict A victim *A target of Hamas' violence and threats*	fire, fired, launched (55%), mortars, rockets, landed, at, into, southern, central, attacks (89%), against, its, citizens, night, continued, demands, earlier, Tuesday, Saturday
A victim of international airlines' bans	flights, earlier
A target of blame and anti-Israel sentiment	accused, anti
A recipient of support	right, defend
A recipient of domestic criticism	Liberman, should, must, demands
An 'actor' in the conflict A combatant	's, launched (45%), offensive, attacks (11%)
A participant who acts in 'self-defense' and aims to restore security	right, defend, citizens, security
A conciliatory participant	agreed, cease, fire, earlier
Other	has, its, says, since, radio, Shin, Bet, Agency

The first- and second- level thematic categories presented in Table 6.2 are discussed in more detail below. Here too, I focus in the discussion on the collocates which were particularly telling of the discourses around the term Israel. As was the case in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the commentaries by informants from this outlet are integrated into the presentation of findings from the collocational analysis. Here too, the limited time available with the *JP* informants meant that discussion was confined to key issues related to patterns and choices.

6.1 One of two participants in a conflict

As explained earlier, the first grammatical category explored in the *JP* reporting was 'Israel' as one of two participants in a conflict. As was the case in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, this was evident in the context of the collocate <u>between</u>, ranked fifth in frequency in the *JP*. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

> Cairo has been mediating talks between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators since the start of the conflict <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas. (*JP*, 18 Aug 2014)

> A 72-hour humanitarian cease-fire <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas was set to begin at 8 a.m. Friday morning. (*JP*, 1 Aug 2014)

Two points are worth commenting on the representation of Israel as one of two participants in a conflict. The first one relates to the act of naming the protagonists and the second to the act of labelling events. With respect to the labelling of the participants, the context of the common cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and' provided a lens to the array of representations used for the non-Israeli side in the conflict. The analysis revealed that the non-Israeli side in the *JP* was typically referred to as 'Hamas' or as the 'Palestinians' (as was also the case in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*), with 'militants' and 'groups' emerging as much less prominent designations. The prominence of the labellings 'Hamas' and 'Palestinians' is illustrated in the following samples:

> Obama in phone call urges Netanyahu to seal a deal that would end fighting <u>between</u> Israel and Hamas. (*JP*, 13 Aug 2014)

> UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will travel to the Middle East on Saturday in a bid to end the fighting <u>between</u> Israel and Palestinians, alarmed at a serious escalation that includes a ground offensive by Israel, said a senior UN official. (*JP*, 18 Jul 2014)

While designations for the non-Israeli side in the conflict across the news outlets were similar (i.e. 'Hamas' and 'Palestinians'), what was significant in the *JP* reporting was the use of the controversial term <u>terrorists</u>, which emerged as an exclusive collocate of Israel in the *JP* corpus. In the CDA literature, such a designation is identified as a highly negatively loaded term which, as Guelke (2006:182) explains, carries 'a connotation of absolutely illegitimate violence'. The prominence of this designation is illustrated below:

> More than 140,000 Palestinians have fled amid fighting between Israel and Gaza <u>terrorists</u>, many of them seeking shelter in buildings run by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). (*JP*, 26 Jul 2014)

> Meanwhile, the Rafah border crossing was closed for security reasons on Wednesday as the war between Israel and Palestinian <u>terrorists</u> in Gaza reignited. (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

> UNITED NATIONS – UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Monday that the obstacle to ending fighting between Israel, Islamist Hamas <u>terrorists</u> and Palestinians in Gaza Strip was 'political will'. (*JP*, 28 Jul 2014)

The second point worth commenting on regarding the representation of Israel as one of two participants in a conflict relates to the labelling of events – that is, how the *JP* construed the participants' engagement with one another. Israel was depicted as a participant engaged in <u>fighting</u> and in <u>conflict</u>, two words which emerged as exclusive collocates of Israel in the *JP*. Israel was also framed, as was the case in the *Ynetnews* reporting, as a participant engaged in <u>war</u>. This is an interesting finding given that, as noted in Chapter Four, Israel officially referred to the 2014 round of violence as Operation Protective Edge. The following samples illustrate this point:

> Meanwhile, the Rafah border crossing was closed for security reasons on Wednesday as the <u>war</u> between Israel and Palestinian terrorists in Gaza reignited. (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

Members of the United States Senate are demanding an independent investigation into the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency during Israel's most recent <u>war</u> in Gaza with Hamas. (*JP*, 13 Aug 2014)

The officials said they believed the salvo was fired by Islamist militants in the Egyptian Sinai and meant to upstage Cairo's efforts to mediate a truce ending a week-old shelling <u>war</u> between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. (*JP*, 15 Jul 2014)

The acts of naming the participants and labelling events were explored in the interviews. As for labelling the non-Israeli side in the conflict, the Editor, like the Editor of *Haaretz*, referred to the outlet's style guide to explain news producers' use of labels:

I think that, you know, most newspapers have a style guide and we try to follow that.

They went on to suggest that when labels used by journalists are not aligned with the style guide, it is the Editor's responsibility to rectify such errors:

But in every reporter's case, they can choose their own words. It could be that they choose certain words that are then changed by the desk or the night editor or the copy editor, if you like the duty editor.

Journalist 3 also offered a general comment on the *JP*'s use of labels, although they were more explicit about the role that the ideological orientation of an outlet ('the worldview of the paper') plays in such lexical choices:

The language that you use in any conflict ... is set by ... the nationalistic views of the newspaper ... so in this case, we're the *Jerusalem Post*, we're an Israeli paper ... so it's just the language that you know an Israeli newspaper would use because it fits the worldview of the paper.

The use of the prominent term 'Palestinians' was probed in the interviews. Journalist 1, for example, suggested that the term is somewhat inaccurate, pointing to its collectivizing nature; they nevertheless thought the term was fitting, as illustrated in their words below:

> Well, I think the word … 'Palestinians' I think is OK to use, even though it's imprecise because it's only a fraction … it's only a specific group of Palestinians, right? that the fight is against … but I wouldn't say that there's a problem.

My *JP* informants were also queried about the prominence of the designation terrorists. Overall, they acknowledged that the lexical choice terrorists was influenced by the ideological orientation of the outlet. They were equally convinced, however, that this designation captured the 'true' nature of the other party in the conflict.

Journalist 3, for example, explained how the prominence of the term was guided by the outlets' nationalist worldview:

> If you were … the *Jerusalem Post* who's sitting right now in Jerusalem … but if I were … a Hamas newspaper or a very, you know, pro-Palestinian paper … and I might be sitting in occupied Jerusalem, we might refer to suicide bombers as 'terrorists' … the Palestinians might refer to them as 'martyrs'.

Journalist 1 elaborated on this issue. They were sure that terrorists was 'the most accurate' word choice:

> I think that the word 'terrorists' means people who fight and attack civilians in order to achieve a certain political goal and so I think that's the most accurate word.

They went on to talk about how there was a consensus in the *JP* around the use of this designation, thereby identifying again the political orientation of the *JP* as a factor behind the prominence of the term. Of interest in their comment below is how they brought the US into the discourse to present a united front:

> I ... when it comes to Hamas, I mostly use the term 'terrorists' ... I mean, they're a recognised terrorist organisation both by Israel and the US so ... I don't think anybody in *JP*ost would have an issue with calling Hamas 'terrorists'. Like, I think everyone would.

On the issue of consensus, they went on to suggest there was a tendency in the *JP* to see Hamas as a homogenous entity:

> I don't think that in the *Jerusalem Post* ... they wouldn't differentiate between ... so much between like a Hamas guy blowing up a bus or a Hamas guy who like works for the municipality, you know? It's like, Hamas is Hamas ... We would say it's Hamas. Period.

Journalist 2 was also probed about the prominence of the term <u>terrorists</u> in the *JP*. They too thought the word was 'legit', although for them there was some nuance to be explored in this use of <u>terrorists</u>. They initially presented a slightly more complex perspective on the use of this designation, suggesting that the appropriateness of the term depended on the context:

> Obviously if a guy blows himself up on a bus, yes. But if a guy ... if you're in like Shuja'iyya in Gaza, you are soldiers in the Israeli army ... inside of Gaza, in a Palestinian neighbourhood, on the attack, and they're fighting you – soldiers versus soldiers like – it's not 'terrorists'.

They also talked about how Hamas is both a 'terror group' and the entity which provides 'municipal government' services in Gaza. This, they explained, can sometimes pose a challenge to decisions around the framing of participants and events. They provided an example from the reporting on Operation Cast Lead in 2008/9 to illustrate this point:

> The first day of Operation Cast Lead ... Israeli strikes on Gaza ... it was a police graduation ceremony ... and Hamas police members were just killed instantly ... A legitimate target? I ... I ... The point is like ... if we attacked a bunch of Hamas terrorists in a training camp or a bunch of Hamas like police academy graduates who were going to give us parking tickets next week, you know, so that's like how do you frame that event?

As the interview went on, however, Journalist 2 spoke more freely about how, to them, terrorists was a 'legit' word choice. Their words below stand in contrast to their earlier comment about how it would be inappropriate to use terrorists when the fighting is inside Gaza ('soldiers vs soldiers'):

> We would use 'terrorists' for Hamas guys in a shootout with Israeli soldiers in Gaza like, that ... to me, it like sounds legit.

Along similar lines, the Editor explained how terrorists is a labelling which is part of the *JP* jargon. Like Journalist 1, they too brought into the discourse the US perception of Hamas:

> So ... in the *Jerusalem Post* and in US jargon, we're not afraid to call terrorists 'terrorists', especially when they're launching attacks against civilians.

Elaborating on this score, the Editor was clearly aware of the other designations that competing news outlets such as *Haaretz* and *Reuters* were using to refer to the non-Israeli

side in the conflict (e.g. 'gunmen', 'militants', 'fighters'). These labellings, however, clearly did not fit with the *JP*'s ideological stance:

> *Haaretz* might call them 'militants' and that's their choice but I have no problem if you say that Hamas 'terrorists' launched rocket attacks on Southern Israel today ... I know that Reuters, and I worked at Reuters and other news agencies, saying things like Hamas 'gunmen' or Hamas 'militants' or Hamas 'fighters', but I have no problem saying 'terrorists'. I stick by what you just said, that the *Jerusalem Post* uses the word 'terrorists'. In America Hamas is still defined as a terrorist group as is Hezbollah ... so long as they continue to employ terror as a means of fighting what they call the occupation, I'm happy to ... happy? I have no problem running the words 'terror' or 'terrorism' when we refer to Hamas.

The use of the less prominent designations for Israel's adversary was also probed in the interviews. My *JP* informants were specifically probed about the term 'militants'. Overall, they thought the term did not capture the 'true' nature of Hamas and its actions (which explains why it was less prominent in the reporting). Journalist 1, for example, thought that the word 'militants' obscured the 'reality' on the ground:

> I think that 'militans' is a word that sort of masks what was really happening which is that Hamas was attacking civilians, not, you know, an army ... 'militants' ... it makes it sound like it's just like guerrilla warfare, you know, between ... armed groups.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 perceived the term 'militants' to entail a political/ideological cause while failing to capture the violent nature of group members. Interestingly, the construction of this illegitimacy was achieved again via a reference to the US:

'Militants' is like … political ideology or something … I can be a militant. it doesn't mean I have a gun, you know? I always thought 'gunmen' was the best, cause, OK, you're not making a judgement – they have a gun. That's it … I think like 'militants' is … like a … a political stance or a worldview or a belief … like I'm militant about my ideology or something. It doesn't necessarily mean that you're actually a member of an armed military wing organisation that's banned in the United States.

The issue of how the conflict was designated was also explored in the interviews, especially the tendency for the term 'war' to be used in the *JP* reporting. Like my *Ynetnews* interviewees, my *JP* respondents were convinced that the label 'war' reflected the 'reality' on the ground and identified the news value of superlativeness (relating to the scope of events) as a factor at play. Journalist 1, for example, told me that the 2014 hostilities 'felt like a war'. They associated this feeling to the fact that this round of violence was longer in duration compared to previous ones, although they did opine that the decision to use such a term should be left to the state rather than the outlet:

> I mean it felt like a war, you know? It was … It lasted a month. It lasted longer than anything … like … decades, so it really felt like a war. So I guess there were some people who were like, let's not beat about the bush; let's just call it what it is … even though, personally, I don't think it's our job to decide, right? Like, who defines a war? It's the politicians together with the army, I guess.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 focused on the longer duration and the intensity of events:

> I think with the last war, there was more readiness to call it war cause it was 50 days and there was a prolonged call-up of reserves … and a prolonged ground operation, so this last one … people called it a war after a while and I think certainly … with Pillar of Defense … I don't think that with Cast Lead they really did … or all these other ones … Summer Rain … those never got past the 'operation' … cause also there

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wasn't a big ground operation … but when you got 50 days and dozens of soldiers are getting killed, then they have to [call it war] … and also the amount of ground troops that were built up.

Journalist 3 too was convinced that the round of violence between Israel and Hamas in 2014 was a war, just as the clashes in 2008/9 and those in 2012 were wars:

Yeah, that's what journalists do. It's a war … there were soldiers … it was a war … it had a beginning, an end … you know, ceasefire understandings … no, there was no question – there were three Gaza wars … and this is one of them. Does it fit in the definition? No idea.

The Editor was also probed about the prominence of the term 'war'. They explained that the Israeli government's decision to refer to the clashes in 2014 as an 'operation' was motivated by political considerations and explained that the *JP* had a different take on that score:

I think you're right. I think the Israeli government was intentionally trying not to call it a war perhaps to contain the conflict as we called it, but I don't think the *Jerusalem Post* necessarily followed that line.

Like Journalist 1 and Journalist 2, the Editor was convinced that the 2014 round of violence 'was definitely a war':

And I had no problem calling it a war: It was clearly … violence was being used on both sides … and it developed out of the conventional term of conflict into you know a full … not necessarily full-blown, but it was definitely a war. I have no problem using that word.

They went on to suggest that previous rounds of fighting with Hamas were also wars ('The word "operation" is a term used to describe every one of Israel's wars') and suggested that Israel is still engaged in war with Hamas ('for me it was a war and it remains a war by the way'):

> The word 'operation' is a term used to describe every one of Israel's wars from Israel's point of view ... that's what we call them here in Israel. The press uses that term as well but in reference to the fighting that went on, I have no problem in this particular case in 2014 calling it a war. It was very clear soon after it began that it was ... you know, they always say you know how to start a war but you don't know how it finishes, so certainly it had reached a point where neither side really knew how to end it well, and it didn't end well, so again for me it was a war and it remains a war by the way. I think the current relationship between Israel and Hamas is hard to define but the two parties are in conflict and every now and again it spills out into violence and it's the circle of violence and when it gets really bad it becomes a war, and in this case, it became a war.

6.2 A 'recipient' in the conflict

The second grammatical category explored in the *JP* reporting was 'Israel' as a 'recipient' in the conflict. The analysis was interested in how this particular outlet sought to represent Israel in the 'patient' role in the conflict, as well as the types of actions that were seen to be carried out upon it. As a recipient in the conflict, there were three main discourses around the term Israel. Two of these, Israel as 'a victim' and Israel as 'a recipient of support', were also identified in the *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* reporting. This overlap in thematic categories, along with the different nuances in the reporting, are discussed below. Also discussed below is a third representation of Israel and one which was identified only in the *JP* reporting. Israel in this representation was depicted as a recipient of domestic criticism or criticism from within.

6.2.1 A victim

The representation of 'Israel' as a victim in the *JP* reporting was generally very similar to the ones that emerged from the *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* corpora. More specifically, Israel in the *JP* was depicted: (i) as a target of Hamas' violence and threats; (ii) as a victim of international airlines' bans; and (iii) as a target of blame and anti-Israel sentiment. Apart from two frames – the discourse around threats and the anti-Israel frame, both of which were prominent in *Ynetnews* but not in *Haaretz* – all of these discourses were also identified in the *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* reporting.

6.2.1.1   *A target of Hamas' violence and threats*

As a victim in the conflict, 'Israel' was frequently framed as a target of Hamas' violence and threats. As was the case with *Ynetnews*, the subcategory of Israel as a target of violence was lexically richer compared to the one in *Haaretz* (see comparison with Table 4.2 and Table 5.2). Israeli <u>citizens</u> in the *JP* were depicted primarily as a target of rocket and mortar <u>fire</u>. The depiction of <u>attacks</u> <u>against</u> Israel included references to <u>rockets</u> and <u>mortars</u> being <u>fired</u> <u>into</u>/<u>launched</u> <u>at</u>/landing in <u>central</u> and <u>southern</u> Israel. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

> Palestinians in Gaza fired a barrage of <u>rockets</u> <u>at</u> <u>central</u> and <u>southern</u> Israel moments ago, prompting sirens to sound in the greater Rehovot area, Yavne, Rishon Letzion, Ness Ziona, Ashdod, and Ashkelon. (*JP*, 23 Jul 2014)

> Since the start of Operation Protective Edge, over 2040 rockets and <u>mortars</u> were <u>fired</u> <u>at</u> Israel, according to a report by Tazpit News Agency. (*JP*, 22 Jul 2014)

> Code Red rocket sirens sounded in the Eshkol Regional Council as terrorists in the Gaza Strip launched a steady stream of rocket <u>attacks</u> <u>at</u> Israel on Thursday. (*JP*, 21 Aug 2014)

The construction of Israel as a target of Hamas' violence was also evident in quotes, as illustrated in the following samples:

Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said Thursday that the Hamas commanders killed by the IDF overnight 'were responsible for severe terror <u>attacks</u> <u>against</u> Israel's <u>citizens</u> and IDF soldiers, including the kidnapping of Gilad Schalit'. (*JP*, 21 Aug 2014)

The IDF has announced that it will continue to strike all 'elements that are behind terrorist <u>attacks</u> on Israel'. (*JP*, 15 Jul 2014)

The depiction of the firing of rockets was further depicted as being relentless. This was evident in the context of the collocate <u>continued</u> and is exemplified below:

Terrorists in Gaza <u>continued</u> to fire rockets into Israel late Saturday evening. (*JP*, 24 Aug 2014)

[Israeli Intelligence Minister Yuval] Steinitz said any fair judgment of the proportionality of Israel's response needed to take into account not only Hamas's <u>continued</u> rocket attacks on Israel's civilian population, but also the group's past behavior – including the killing of 1,000 Israelis in suicide bombings during the second intifada – and its ultimate goals, which include the destruction of Israel. (*JP*, 13 Aug 2014)

A different form of violence, one which was also identified in *Ynetnews*, was that which involved words (rather than deeds) depicting Israel as a target of Hamas threats. As was the case in *Ynetnews*, this frame of threat was evident in the context of the collocate <u>demands</u>. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

Hamas says ready to resume fighting unless Israel accepts truce <u>demands</u>. (*JP*, 7 Aug 2014)

Hamas says Israel must accept Palestinian <u>demands</u> or face long war. (*JP*, 16 Aug 2014)

6.2.1.2   *A victim of international airlines' bans*

As was the case in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, a very specific but prominent type of victim framing in the *JP* was around the disruption of Israel's aviation industry. Here 'Israel' was framed as a victim of international airlines' bans. This was mostly evident in references to foreign airlines cancelling/suspending/banning/prohibiting (and eventually resuming and restoring) <u>flights</u> to and from Ben Gurion Airport after a rocket fell about a mile from Israel's international airport. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

> Polish state airline LOT has suspended its <u>flights</u> to Israel from Warsaw until Monday because of concern for passengers' safety, the airline's spokeswoman said on Wednesday. (*JP*, 23 Jul 2014)

> EASA [European Aviation Safety Agency] later published its own recommendation and ultimately, 30 foreign airlines cancelled <u>flights</u> to Israel the last two days. (*JP*, 24 Jul 2014)

> The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a 24-hour prohibition on <u>flights</u> by US carriers to Israel earlier in the day after a Palestinian rocket struck near Ben-Gurion International Airport outside Tel Aviv. (*JP*, 23 Jul 2014)

The discourse around the disruption of Israel's aviation industry was probed in the interviews. Like my *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* respondents, my *JP* informants overall identified news values as the underlying factors behind the prominence given to the discourse around bans on flights. However, the probing of this issue also elicited quite emotional responses that seemed to reflect deep-seated fears of standing alone in the face of adversity.

Journalist 1 talked about the unusual aspect of these bans and explained how these prohibitions on flights marked a deviation from the 'relative normalcy' Israeli citizens were used to:

Most of the country could live in relative normalcy, but that was like shutting the airport down in the middle of the summer ... I think it was something that hadn't happened in decades, I mean, I'm sure it's happened before, but I ... I don't think it had happened in a very long time.

Journalist 3, as their comment below shows, focused on the rare nature and impact of bans on flights:

Yeah, well, you know, if you can't fly out of the country ... I mean it's not often that the airways are shut down in any country. How often does that happen? Sure, it's a huge thing ... in the United States after 9/11 right? Air traffic was grounded ... that was a huge story.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to attributing the discourse around the disruption of flights to certain news values (e.g. novelty, impact), my *JP* informants also identified factors which went to the gravity and threat of events to Israeli citizens as a whole, including themselves. Journalist 1, for example, talked about how the bans on flights conjured up 'almost traumatic' feelings of being isolated:

Suddenly everybody was like 'wait a minute, like, we're being cut off', in a way. I think that that was like almost traumatic.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 explained how the bans on flights were perceived to mark the tipping point that signalled a change in power relations. This perception, as is illustrated below, clearly invoked a sense of fear:

I remember thinking … that's what it takes … that's the red line … that's like not anything else … Israel can withstand anything like with the Palestinians … we're much stronger than them … if you shut down our airport, now we're like … we gotta stop this thing … we can withstand a war, we can fight if you wanna fight, you know, we're stronger than you … ah shit, they shut down the airport, OK we gotta stop this thing. I remember feeling like … that's a game-changer, you know? like that's huge … if they can shut down Ben Gurion, like they've changed the whole operation … they may be much weaker than us … if they shut down the airport, they … we're screwed, you know?

6.2.1.3 *A target of blame and anti-Israel sentiment*

The third and last representation of 'Israel' which contributed to the discourse of victimhood in the *JP* was one which depicted it as a target of blame (as was the case in both *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*) and anti-Israel sentiment (as was the case in *Ynetnews*). The depiction of Israel as a recipient of blame was evident in the context of the word <u>accused</u>, a shared collocate of Israel in all three corpora. A close examination of the immediate context of this collocate showed that Israel was typically accused of using disproportionate force and/or 'putting a spoke in the peace wheel'. In this construal of blame, it was typically Palestinian actors who voiced these accusations. This point is exemplified below:

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal on Thursday <u>accused</u> Israel of perpetrating a Holocaust in Gaza and vowed to keep up fighting against Israel until the siege of Gaza is lifted. (*JP*, 21 Aug 2014)

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday <u>accused</u> Israel of committing 'genocide' in Gaza, as Israel entered the second day of Operation Protective Edge to stop the rocket fire from the Palestinian coastal enclave. (*JP*, 9 Jul 2014)

Hamas spokesman Husam Badran <u>accused</u> Israel of sabotaging the talks, saying that the Jewish state was placing obstacles on every issue. (*JP*, 19 Aug 2014)

Another discourse around the term Israel, as noted earlier, was one which depicted Israel as a target of anti-Israel sentiment. This anti-Israel sentiment frame was apparent in the context of the collocate <u>anti</u> and, more specifically, in the context of the common cluster '<u>anti</u>-Israel'. An analysis of the immediate context of this construction revealed that it was predominantly used to talk about worldwide acts of protest against Israel's actions in Gaza. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

Massive <u>anti</u>-Israel protest underway in London. (*JP*, 19 Jul 2014)

Hundreds of <u>anti</u>-Israel demonstrators gathered in Manhattan on Saturday to protests [sic] Israel's operation in Gaza, local New York media reported. (*JP*, 10 Aug 2014)

Netanyahu: Turkish PM's <u>anti</u>-Israel rhetoric 'anti-Semitic'. (*JP*, 20 Jul 2014)

The frames of blame and anti-Israel sentiment were probed in the interviews. As for the discourse of blame, my *JP* informants generally felt it was necessary to reject the suggestion that Israel was committing war crimes, although some of them were also convinced <u>accused</u> is a 'neutral' word choice. Journalist 1, for example, suggested that the term <u>accused</u> is a 'neutral' lexical choice ('I'm not saying it's right; I'm not saying it's wrong either'). But they also highlighted the need to caution the *JP* readers about the truth value of propositions that blamed Israel of committing war crimes:

I think … if you don't have proof of Israel committing a war crime, then it's an accusation … like, I'm not saying it's right; I'm not saying it's wrong either … I think there's a little bit of a caveat in saying 'accused'.

Elaborating on this 'caveat', they talked about how the word <u>accused</u> conveys presumption of innocence:

> Well, when you write about crime in general, like not just war crime, you have to be very careful to presume innocence until guilty, so like, you're supposed to write the 'alleged' … otherwise you could be sued.

Journalist 1 went on to suggest that the use of the word <u>accused</u> signals that the information to come should be understood as someone's opinion rather than a statement of fact. In linguistic terms, they acknowledged that <u>accused</u> is a 'counter-factive' (Nkansah, 2013:8) reporting verb. Unlike a neutral reporting verb, a counter-factive verb serves to express writers' stance of rejection towards the cited information. Failing to signal this to the reader, they explained, would have given legitimacy to claims about Israel's actions in Gaza. As the words below illustrate, Journalist 1 thought it was necessary to signal to the *JP* readership that statements made by critics of Israel (e.g. BDS co-founder Omar Bargouti and former US president Jimmy Carter, who is known for being critical of Israeli policy in the Palestinian territories) should be understood as opinion, not fact:

> We're not going to legitimise it by being like Israel did this and this and we know that because … I don't know, Omar Bargouti said so, you know? So the word … and sometimes the accusation … if it's a prominent person like Jimmy Carter who's making the accusation, then the fact that Jimmy Carter is accusing Israel is I think is interesting in itself … For me like, like if I'm using that word, I'm saying like … let's say it's Jimmy Carter … this is what Jimmy Carter *thinks*.

Journalist 2 was also queried about the prominence of the discourse of blame. They suggested that <u>accused</u> is a 'neutral' reporting verb allowing writers to avoid 'mak[ing] a determination about what's true or not true':

But it's also kind of a safe word like … if you say 'accused', then you don't actually have to determine whether or not it actually happened or is true …When you say 'accused', it's almost like a legalese or something, like … you don't actually have to make a determination about what's true or not true … it's an accusation, you know?

They went on to suggest that the word <u>accused</u> is a 'loaded word' which 'puts doubt on' the truth value of a proposition:

'Accused' is like a loaded word, you know? … I mean like in a way … I guess it depends on the instance … but 'accused' puts doubt on it, you know? Well, they're accusing me of that, you know? … it's not saying … the outlet is not saying it happened … we're saying that you're saying it happened … you're accusing … accusation … and accusation is not a truism.

Journalist 3 elaborated on the prominence of the discourse around blame. Their words below suggest that the *JP* was very much aware of how Israel's actions were subjected to scrutiny by the International Criminal Court (ICC):

You know, that's the whole thing with the ICC, right? … war crimes … you're in a legal arena right? Like you asked that word about 'operation' … we were in the military arena and now we're in the legal arena … so that's the 'accused' right? it's a legal word and it comes up a lot in the international stage.

Interestingly, my *JP* informants suggested that Israel is typically singled out for blame, perhaps reflecting more deep-seated beliefs about being a victim in the conflict. Thus, for example, Journalist 2 said:

So I guess ... I mean Israel is also accused of a lot of things, you know? There is a lot of material to be accused of so ... so that could be part of the prevalence ... a lot of things happened ... there's a lot of focus on this country.

Along similar lines, Journalist 3 talked about Israel's 'besieged mentality'. They suggested that Israel is often disproportionately singled out by the UN and explained how this might contribute to beliefs about victimhood:

Yes, because Israel sees itself ... because that's the victim ... that's the besieged mentality ... It reflects our own sense of being besieged, right? ... and some of it's real, you know, more resolutions filed against it than any other country in the United Nations, you know? When you think of the sheer ...

The prominence of the anti-Israel sentiment frame was another aspect of the reporting my *JP* respondents were probed about. On the whole, while they attributed the prominence of this discourse to professional considerations (e.g. concern for audience and news values), they were clearly convinced that worldwide protests against Israel's acts of violence in Gaza were a clear expression of a more deep-seated bias against Israel.

Probed about the anti-Israel frame, Journalist 1 talked about the *JP*'s concern for its readership abroad, suggesting that this issue was of relevance to this audience:

Maybe it has to do with our international audience ... it's more relevant ... it was like, you know, people who are in the US ... who are reading about what's going on in Gaza, they also would want to know if there's something closer to home that's happening in relation to them so, you know, if there is like a pro-Hamas rally in front of Parliament in the UK, you know, our readers in the UK might ... would be more interested than say an Israeli newspaper that's in Hebrew who might think people in Israel don't care as much.

They also suggested that the prominence of an anti-Israel frame might have been motivated by the news value of negativity, according to which bad news is more newsworthy than good news:

> There was also like an expression … it's not something that we think about day to day, but people say 'if it bleeds, it leads', right? Like, people read negative stories more than positive stories. I don't like say it in the morning and think like what negative story can I write? But I guess like these are things that jump out at us.

Journalist 3 identified journalistic brevity as a consideration. Interestingly, however, they again made reference to UN resolutions concerning Israel. As the comment below illustrates, these were framed in dichotomous terms – as either 'against Israel' or 'in favour of Israel':

> It's an easy way … You know, journalists always look for easy phrases … easy ways to explain things … 'Resolutions at the United Nations against Israel' – five words, 'anti-Israel' – two … that's less three words … you know, resolutions in favour of Israel … pro-Israel … it's like … you always look to cut out.

As noted earlier, my respondents were also convinced that the prominent use of the cluster '<u>anti</u>-Israel' was guided by what was 'happening on the ground'. Journalist 1, for example, suggested that there were more anti-Israel than pro-Israel protests at the time. Of interest is how they brought anti-Semitism into the discourse ('there was a surge of like anti-Semitic attacks'). As was seen in Chapter Four, this is something which also came up in the interviews with my *Ynetnews* informants:

It could just be the fact that there were more anti than pro-Israel events happening ... I mean there was like a surge of like anti-Semitic attacks and things like ... during and after that time, so it could just be the sheer numbers of it.

Journalist 2 had a similar take on the issue, albeit they initially suggested there might have been more accurate ways of referring to events:

That would definitely be the way to call it – the anti-Israel protests – even though the protests are against the war ... or they happened because of the war ... so I guess a more ... maybe a more accurate way to say it would be like ... 5000 people in London gathered to protest against the Israeli offensive in Gaza, you know?

They went on to explain why, even though 'anti-Israel' might not have been the most accurate lexical choice, there was a tendency in the *JP* to use it. As their comment below illustrates, acts of protests against Israel's actions in Gaza were perceived in the *JP* as acts against the state of Israel:

But we would tend to write, you know, '5000 people gathered for an anti-Israel protest', you know? ... because I think that's the way of looking at it cause ... this isn't really about the war, it's about us ... and largely it is ... you know, the same people who were protesting about the war would protest Israel about anything ... against Israel period, not just the offensive, you know, or the war.

To them, these acts of protests were perceived as posing a threat to 'Israel's existence'. Of interest in their comment below is the 'us-versus-them' frame:

So, on the one hand, yeah, it is accurate to a certain extent that a lot of these people hate Israel, don't want Israel to exist ... but specifically the reason they're protesting today is because this operation is going on, so I think, for the Israeli public and the

Israeli outlets, it's preferable when you see something like that to say it's anti-Israel ... they're against us ... they're against our existence.

Along similar lines, Journalist 3 explained how, in times of war, there is a need to know whether 'people are with you or against you'. They also spoke very forthrightly about how this kind of thinking reflects Israel's 'embattled mentality':

Yeah, because we're in the midst of war, so you're either with us or you're against us. And, you know, Israel ... I mean, tends to have this kind of, you know, embattled mentality or siege mentality so ... It's a great way to say people are with you or against you, right? So it's like you know if there are resolutions at the United Nations that are against Israel, so they're anti-Israel resolutions.

The Editor elaborated on the prominence of the 'anti-Israel' frame. They too attributed the prominence of this discourse to a profound and long-standing bias against Israel:

Those protests became meaningful even though Israel was suffering losses, so instead of the world's sympathy being with Israel and against Hamas ... it had already turned: the world sympathy had turned against Israel ... that is a very interesting thing that happens in almost every conflict that Israel is involved in – that Israel is perceived as the Goliath and the Palestinians as David.

6.2.2   A recipient of support

A competing discourse to the one depicting 'Israel' as 'a victim' was a discourse which framed Israel as 'a recipient of support'. As has already been mentioned, this discourse was also identified in the reporting of *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*. One difference relates to the number of representations of Israel which contributed to this frame of support. In the case

of the *JP*, Israel was depicted as a participant that has the backing of the US; in the case of *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, Israel was further constructed as a recipient of world Jewish solidarity.

The construal of Israel as a recipient of US backing was mostly evident in the context of two shared collocates – <u>right</u> and <u>defend</u> – and particularly in the common cluster they formed, that is, 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself'. As will be seen in subsection 6.3.2, this common cluster contributed to the representation of Israel as a participant that acts in self-defence. However, a close reading of this cluster's context revealed another discourse around Israel, one which depicts it as a recipient of US support. This was evident in the many references to US leaders expressing/reiterating/underscoring their support for 'Israel's right to defend itself'. In linguistic terms, this cluster showed a semantic preference to US leaders. The following examples demonstrate this point:

> The White House condemned rocket attacks against Israel that reached as far as Tel Aviv and expressed support for Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself on Tuesday. (*JP*, 8 Jul 2014)

> Kerry did, however, restate the Obama administration's condemnation of rocket attacks from Gaza against Israel's citizens, and repeated American support for Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself. (*JP*, 13 Jul 2014)

> The US president affirmed that Israel had a <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself. (*JP*, 17 Jul 2014)

The depiction of the US backing Israel's right to self-defence was also evident in quotes. In the first and second examples below, Obama and the US Department of State express their support for Israel's 'right to defend itself', respectively:

> 'I want to make sure they [Hamas and the Palestinian factions] are listening; if they are serious about resolving the situation they must release the soldier, he said, adding, 'Israel has a <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself'. [US President Barack Obama] (*JP*, 1 Aug 2014)

'The secretary reaffirmed our strong support for Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself against terrorist threats emanating from tunnels into Israel and expressed our view that this should be a precise operation to target tunnels, as described in a statement from the Israeli Defense Forces,' the department said in a statement released late on Thursday. [The US Department of State] (*JP*, 18 Jul 2014)

The discourse around Israel being a recipient of US support was another aspect of the reporting probed in the interviews. Generally, my *JP* informants spoke about how a frame of US support served to legitimise Israel's actions and provide some sort of reassurance. Journalist 1, for example, explained that, with the US being a 'world power', a frame of US support legitimised Israel's actions 'on a world scale':

Well, I think that that's like a key ... a key thing that like the US was saying ... that was, I guess, sort of legitimising the operation on a world scale, you know? The US being the world power. You know that, while they could criticise something specific about the operation, even though I think that they were mostly ... didn't criticise that much from what I remember, they were legitimising the operation itself by saying Israel is exercising its right to defend itself, Israel has a right to defend itself. So I think like that phrase, you know, conveys that message succinctly.

The significance of the discourse around the US supporting Israel was further highlighted when Journalist 1 suggested that Israel's national security is 'exceptional' in the sense that it faces a long-term 'existential' threat:

Also like in the discourse about Israel in general there is a lot of talk about like Israel's right to exist, for example, which is like ... Almost no country has to ever talk about that, you know? I mean it's something unique to Israel because of the kind of conflict that we're involved in where there are people who think that we shouldn't exist ... I think the US would say Israel has the right to exist and the right to defend

itself, and in the right to defend itself it's referring specifically to the fact that Israel was taking action to defend itself, but I think, in general, like the discourse around Israel, it uses the word 'right', a lot.

Along similar lines, Journalist 3 told me that 'at the end of the day there's a massive push to strip Israel of the right to self-defence, so people keep reasserting it to underscore the fact that they're not gonna let that happen'.

Elaborating on the prominence of the frame of US support, Journalist 2 talked about how a discourse around the US supporting Israel's right to defend itself is used to reassure Israel that the Israel–US alliance is strong, particularly in times when the US might be 'seen as critical' of Israel:

> A lot of the times it's almost like a disclaimer … like, you know, before we say things, I just want to let you know that … yes, we do support Israel's right to defend itself, but we also want a deescalation or something … I think the prevalence of it is partly because it's … almost a disclaimer of sorts, like 'before I say this thing that can be seen as critical, I want you to know that … your mother and I love you very much', you know? It's almost, yeah, like a disclaimer … a reinforcement of … Don't get the wrong idea … we are, you know, are loyal to … you know, our alliance and ties are strong, but we …

6.2.3 A recipient of domestic criticism

As has already been noted, one discourse around the term 'Israel' which emerged in the *JP* corpus but not in the other two corpora was one which framed Israel as a recipient of domestic criticism or criticism from within. This constituted a significant difference in the representations across the three outlets. This frame was primarily evident in the context of three words which emerged as exclusive collocates of Israel in the *JP*. These were the modal

verbs[22] <u>should</u> and <u>must</u> – used to denote strong advice and obligation, respectively – and the proper noun <u>Liberman</u> (then Israel's Foreign Minister). Avigdor Liberman is a well-known hardliner of the government regarding the conflict. His prominence in the corpus, which was absent in the other two corpora, reflects the readiness of *JP* to draw on statements by this actor as content for articles.

A close examination of the immediate context of these collocates revealed a depiction of Israel being criticised for not acting forcefully enough against Hamas. More specifically, the context of the common clusters 'Israel <u>should</u>' and 'Israel <u>must</u>' showed that Israel was 'strongly advised', typically but not exclusively by Liberman, to abandon the route of diplomacy and adopt a more aggressive course of action. In the following examples, criticism is voiced by Avigdor Liberman, Deputy Defense Minister Danny Danon and Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, respectively. Of particular interest is the use of the war-related terms 'white flag', 'defeat' and 'decisive victory':

<u>Liberman</u> says Israel <u>must</u> hit Hamas 'until it waves the white flag'. (*JP*, 22 Aug 2014)

Former deputy defense minister Danon: Israel <u>must</u> defeat Hamas. (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

Benntt [sic]: Israel <u>must</u> end Gaza operation with 'decisive victory'. (*JP*, 29 Jul 2014)

The frame of domestic criticism was also evident in the concordances of the collocate <u>demands</u>. In the first example below, Israel is depicted as a participant who should not accept Hamas' demands, while in the second example, Israel is portrayed as an actor who should tighten its restrictions on Gazans:

Only four-tenths of a percent of Israeli Jews think Israel <u>should</u> accept Hamas's <u>demands</u> in order to stop rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, the monthly Peace Index

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[22] I note in passing that modal verbs are generally uncommon in newspaper writing (Biber & Conrad, 2009, cited in Bednarek & Caple, 2012:87).

poll sponsored by the Israel Democracy Institute and Tel Aviv University revealed on Tuesday. (*JP*, 19 Aug 2014)

Deputy defense minister <u>demands</u> Israel cut off fuel, electricity supply to Gaza. (*JP*, 9 July 2014)

This aspect of the reporting was probed in the interviews. The prominence given to <u>Liberman</u> was explained in a range of ways – his importance as a key political figure in the conflict, but also for his notoriously anti–Palestinian/Hamas view. For some his controversial views made for good copy; other saw these also feeding into the *JP*'s political orientation. When queried about the prominence of the word <u>Liberman</u>, Journalist 1 suggested that the *JP* focus on what Liberman said might have been motivated by the fact that, as Israel's Foreign Minister, he was in a position to argue for Israel's case:

> First of all, he's Foreign Minister and a big part of what government, you know, the civilian part of the government does in a war is they try to make Israel's case to the world.

The *JP* respondents identified another factor at play – Liberman's reputation for being hawkish and making sensationalist comments. These, they explained, make his announcements newsworthy. Thus, for example, Journalist 1 said:

> Also Liberman has a very fiery rhetoric, you know? He like says very hawkish things and Netanyahu's had sort of an evolution on that front, and I think that only in the past few years has he got a lot more … I mean he's always been hawkish, but linguistically, you know, in their style, Liberman has always been this tough guy. So, I don't remember, but maybe the same things that were more controversial would make a better headline.

Journalist 2 had a similar view. Their words below suggest that Liberman, as opposed to Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, would always 'cook up a storm':

Ya'alon was never like a big media's star, you know? I mean like a guy who's ... Bennett was for a while ... Netanyahu certainly ... He sucks up all the air ... everywhere ... like a ... Trump or something ... Liberman is one of those like ... huge figures, you know, in Israel ... and he was always making headlines, you know? He would always say shit, you know? He was always in power ... He was always the guy who was like in the mix of ... in the middle of things ... The reason we had these elections right now is because of Liberman ... the reason ... he's the Defense Minister ... he was always in the middle of stuff ... so ...

Along similar lines, Journalist 3 said:

Maybe he was the most outspoken ... I mean, you know, if you want to think about it for a second, I guess Netanyahu is the Prime Minister so he has to be more hesitant ... the Defense Minister at the time was Ya'alon? Right ... he's not a man of a lot of words ... Liberman, you know, wants to make it sound like he is Mister Tough guy ... at that point he was probably aiming for the Defense Ministry ... nothing better in a failing war than a backseat driver who is not the Defense Minister but who wants to be the Defense Minister, I guess.

Like the other *JP* respondents, the Editor talked about how Liberman was perceived as 'a naughty boy' and about Liberman's hard line against Hamas:

Liberman took a very hardline, hawkish view about this war and he was and is determined to end Hamas rule in Gaza and that was his hardline stand and it continues to be ... I think that he was much more outspoken than anyone else including the prime minister ... Liberman was in a way being a naughty boy ... saying 'this is wrong and we should be taking a much tougher stand and we should be

wiping them out' or whatever it is ... and it was Netanyahu who was much more restrained and saying, you know, 'let's take this one day at a time' and ... he was much more the responsible adult whereas Liberman was more the naughty kid.

6.3 An 'actor' in the conflict

The third grammatical category explored in the reporting was 'Israel' as an 'actor' in the conflict. This, as has already been noted, stands in contrast to its representations as a recipient or just simply a participant in the conflict. Here too, the analysis was interested in identifying what type of actor Israel was depicted as being and what types of actions it was seen to be engaged in. As an actor in the conflict, Israel was depicted in the *JP*: (i) as a combatant; (ii) as a participant that acts in self-defence and aims to restore security; and (iii) as a conciliatory participant that is willing to resolve the conflict diplomatically. This representation of Israel is very similar to the frames that emerged from the *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* reporting. The overlap in thematic categories, along with the different nuances in the reporting, are discussed below.

6.3.1 A combatant

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' was framed as a combatant, as was the case in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*. Three collocates in particular contributed to this representation: <u>offensive</u>, <u>launched</u> and the possessive <u>'s</u>.[23] These were the same collocates which indexed the combatant frame in *Ynetnews* too, with <u>offensive</u> and <u>launched</u> also indexing the combatant discourse identified in the *Haaretz* reporting. One difference relates to the use of the collocate <u>launched</u> – while all three publications used the term to depict Israel as both a combatant and a victim, the *JP* used the term to construe a 'combatant frame' in 45

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[23] A collocational analysis of the possessive phrase 'Israel'<u>s</u>' revealed that it collocated most strongly with <u>offensive</u>.

per cent of cases, while *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* did so 55 per cent and 71 per cent of the time, respectively. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

> Israel intensified its land <u>offensive</u> in Gaza with artillery, tanks and gunboats on Friday and warned it could 'significantly widen' an operation Palestinian officials said was killing ever greater numbers of civilians. (*JP*, 18 Jul 2014)

> Israel, which <u>launched</u> its <u>offensive</u> on July 8 after a surge in cross-border Hamas rocket attacks, has shown scant interest in making sweeping concessions, and has called for the disarming of terror groups in the territory of 1.8 million people. (*JP*, 17 Aug 2014)

> Israel has long believed Hamas was behind the attack that spawned Israel<u>'s</u> ongoing military <u>offensive</u> in the Gaza Strip, now in its sixth week. (*JP*, 21 Aug 2014)

My *JP* informants were probed about the combatant frame, specifically about the prominent use of the term <u>offensive</u>. While the prominence of the term was attributed to stylistic considerations such as diversifying the language and journalistic practices such as replicating the language used by competing publications, they also acknowledged that <u>offensive</u> is a relatively sanitised and neutral word choice.

Queried about the use of the term <u>offensive</u>, Journalist 1 identified the neutrality of the term as a factor ('cause that's sort of a neutral word'), although they went on to suggest other factors at play. One of these was language diversification:

> If you have a sentence like 'Israel launched its offensive' and they're calling it Operation Protective Edge, then they don't want to use the word 'operation' twice in one sentence … The only thing I can think of is language variety.

The other factor they identified was the journalistic practice of replicating the language used by competing publications. Thus, they told me how they generally read other news outlets such as *Haaretz* and *Times of Israel*:

> The other thing is possibly that you read something and then like subconsciously that word … you know, you think about that word … We're all reading each other too, you know? Like, I read *Haaretz*. I read *Times of Israel* … in general, like if you read something, you go, 'oh that's a good description' … '*that's* the way to explain something' … and you might end up replicating it. Because it will just be in your head as the way to describe something.

Along similar lines, the Editor told me that 'it's more understandable and it's more acceptable, especially in the foreign press'.

Journalist 2 was also probed about the tendency of the *JP* to use the term <u>offensive</u> in reporting. Interestingly, they were initially surprised to learn of this linguistic finding. To them, this word choice stood in contrast to the Israeli narrative according to which Israel acts in self-defence and as a response to acts of violence. In this narrative, Israel is never perceived as a participant that initiates acts of violence but as one that is 'forced' to fight 'a war of no choice':

> I like to look at things … Israelis like to look at things obviously, you know, from a self-defence point of view or like it's a response to something. The operation, you know, was because they were doing this … they were launching rockets, they kidnapped the kids, so things are a response, but because you launched the operation … you're the one … you're in the driver's seat, but … launched an offensive? … It's interesting because we're always, you know, looking at these things as being defensive like as, you know, a war of no choice, like we're forced to do this.

Their question 'was that mainly like in the foreign press, like in the news agencies, or in the Israeli English press' suggests that this is a term they expected to find in the foreign press. Reflecting on this lexical choice further, they went on to tell me that <u>offensive</u> 'sounds a bit sanitised', thereby suggesting the term might have also been used to make Israel's actions in Gaza more 'palatable'.

One point worth mentioning in this discussion of Israel as a combatant is related to an absence in the corpus. As was the case with *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, the term 'operation' did not emerge in the *JP* as one of the top 50 collocates of Israel. Probed about this linguistic finding, my *JP* respondents attributed this aspect of the reporting to the news value of clarity. Focusing on the differences between the two languages, the Editor explained that one of the meanings of *mivtzah* (Hebrew for 'operation') is a 'military campaign'. In contrast, the English word 'operation' does not allude to military action and can thus be perceived as vague in this context:

> It is a weird word in English, 'operation'. It works in Hebrew because the Hebrew for operation is a military operation – *mivtza* – it's a military mission, but in English we use the word 'offensive' – it's more understandable.

Along similar lines, Journalist 2 said:

> I guess, maybe, I wonder if … cause in Hebrew there isn't 'offensive'. There is just *mivtzah* [Hebrew for 'operation'], right?

6.3.2 A participant that acts in self-defence and aims to restore security

As an 'actor' in the conflict, Israel's actions in Gaza were further depicted as acts of self-defence aimed at restoring security to Israel's citizens. The theme of self-defence, as we saw earlier, was also identified in the *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* reporting. And while the discourse

around security also emerged in *Ynetnews* (but not in *Haaretz*), the focus in the *JP* was slightly different to the one in *Ynetnews*, as will soon be revealed.

A frame of self-defence was evident primarily in the context of the collocates <u>right</u> and <u>defend</u>. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

> The prime minister thanked Obama for Washington's support for Israel'<u>s</u> <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself as well as American backing for the Iron Dome project. (*JP*, 18 Jul 2014)

> The United States reaffirmed its stance that Israel has a <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself but called on its close ally to restrict itself to a 'precise operation' as the Jewish state launched a ground campaign in Gaza. (*JP*, 18 Jul 2014)

A frame of self-defence was also evident in the context of the collocate <u>citizens</u>. This point is illustrated below. The first example is an indirect quote from Israel's Prime Minister, while the second one is a direct quote from then Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch:

> Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke on the phone with US Secretary of State John Kerry on Friday and siad [sic] that Hamas will bear the consequences of their actions and that Israel will do everything in its power to fight terrorism and protect the <u>citizens</u> of Israel. (*JP*, 1 Aug 2014)

> Aharonovitch said that he lost his patience for negotiations, 'and I think the time has come to subdue them, the job of the army is to <u>defend</u> the <u>citizens</u> of Israel.' (*JP*, 26 Aug 2014)

Closely related to the depiction of Israel's actions as self-defence was a discourse around Israel's security. This became evident in the emergence of the word <u>security</u> as an exclusive collocate of Israel in the *JP* as well as in the concordances of the collocate <u>citizens</u>. While a similar discourse was identified in *Ynetnews* (with the focus in this publication

being primarily on Israel's 'security needs'), in the *JP* the word <u>security</u> was predominantly used to portray the objective of Israel's actions, that is, restoring security to Israeli citizens. This focus on Israel's goals suggests that its actions are rational and, by implication, legitimate. This in CDA is known as instrumental rationalisation or legitimation by reference to goals/purposes (Van Leeuwen, 2007). This point is exemplified in the three examples below, the third of which is a quote from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

> Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that Israel was doing everything in its power to return quiet and <u>security</u> to the <u>citizens</u> of Israel. (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

> [Construction and Housing Minister and Member of Knesset Uri] Ariel said he backed the prime minister and the political leadership in 'dealing a heavy blow to terrorists' and reinstating the sense of <u>security</u> to Israel. (19 Aug 2014)

> 'We are with you and we will stay with you until quiet is achieved, and afterwards as well,' Netanyahu said, adding that the IDF would not stop its activities in Gaza until it has ensured quiet and <u>security</u> for Israel's <u>citizens</u>. (*JP*, 24 Aug 2014)

This aspect of the reporting, specifically the discourse around security, was another aspect of the reporting probed in the interviews. Interestingly, my *JP* informants' take on the issue was very similar, with respondents identifying national ideologies as the motivation for the prominence of the security frame. Journalist 3, for example, talked very forthrightly about Israelis' deep-seated fears, linking 'existential threat' perceptions to an embedded 'siege mentality':

> Look, OK, I can't speak for anybody else ... I think you know Israel always feels like it's under an existential threat, so it's like some of those other things I was saying ... security is a huge ... security is a huge word for Israel right? It gets back to that siege mentality.

Elaborating on this issue, Journalist 2 highlighted the legitimising purpose that a discourse around security serves. 'Security', they explained, is a 'magic' word in Israel that is used to justify a wide array of decisions, both within and outside of the context of war:

> It's such an all-encompassing word ... I think 'security' is like one of those ... 10 most important words in Israel ... you know, it relates to everything, it comes up with everything almost ... and it can like ... 'Oh, what is this about? It's security. Why are we doing this? Well, it's security, you know? Why do we have to pay for this? Security' ... It's a word that can explain a lot of things ... you can always go back to security as an answer for why ... Ah, OK that's just our lot in life, you know? because of security, because of the situation ... I feel like it's a word, I think, that hangs over so much in daily life, even when there's not a war or an operation, or an offensive, or whatever it's gonna be called.

6.3.3   A conciliatory participant

As an 'actor' in the conflict, 'Israel' – as was the case in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* – was also constructed as a conciliatory participant that is willing to break the violence and resolve the conflict diplomatically. The representation of Israel as a conciliatory participant was evident in the context of four collocates: the shared collocate <u>agreed</u>, the exclusive collocate <u>truce</u> and the collocates <u>cease</u> and <u>fire</u>, which tended to co-occur to form the construction 'ceasefire'. A close examination of these collocates' concordances revealed a frame in which Israel agreed to extend a ceasefire or accept a proposal for truce. The examples below illustrate this point:

> Israel <u>agreed</u> to extend the current cease-fire for another 24 hours, Reuters reported on Monday night. (*JP*, 18 Aug 2014)

> Since Israel <u>agreed</u> to an Egyptian proposal for a ceasefire at 9:00 a.m., nearly 35 rockets were fired from Gaza at Israel, according to the IDF. (*JP*, 15 Jul 2014)

The Prime Minister's Office released a statement saying that Israel <u>agreed</u> to the 72-hour cease-fire announced earlier on Friday by UN General Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State John Kerry. (*JP*, 1 Aug 2014)

As was the case in *Ynetnews*, the conciliatory frame in the *JP* was not limited to the context of ceasefire proposals but was also evident in references to Israel making 'goodwill', conciliatory gestures to ease its blockade on Gaza. Thus, for example, the *JP* reported:

In a related development, Israel <u>agreed</u> to lift the fishing ban it clamped on Gaza during the military operation, and will now allow fishing up to three miles from the coast. (*JP*, 18 Aug 2014)

Egyptian and Palestinian sources have said that at the Cairo talks Israel had tentatively <u>agreed</u> to relax curbs on the movement of people and goods across the border, subject to certain conditions. (*JP*, 17 Aug 2014)

CAIRO – Israel has <u>agreed</u> to open its borders with Gaza to allow humanitarian aid and reconstruction materials into the Palestinian enclave, Egypt's foreign ministry said in a statement. (*JP*, 26 Aug 2014)

My *JP* informants were queried about the prominence of the discourse portraying Israel as a conciliatory participant. Interestingly, they explained that the word <u>agreed</u> was used to portray Israel as a strong participant whose acts of conciliation should not be perceived as acts of weakness. The following interview excerpt illustrates this point:

Journalist 2: It can be conciliation or it kind of takes the agency off that person. In other words, it was your idea and I've agreed to it … the emphasis … you know, it's come from you … it was proposed … by somebody else … and we agreed. But it's not our idea. We weren't pushing for it, so whatever you think of it … it didn't come

from us ... If we're agreeing to a ceasefire, then it's not like we're asking for one, you know? ... we didn't ask ...

Interviewer: And why wouldn't we wanna be perceived as ... as asking or ... ?

Journalist 2: Well, cause if you're asking for a ceasefire, that means that you're ... 'Oh please stop', you know? Like you're ... I think it maybe ... maybe it can signify weakness possibly or loss ... in other words ... 'we need a ceasefire ... oh my God please', you know? ... as opposed to 'OK, yeah, we agree. Alright, fine. I'll allow it'. Maybe it gives you more ... a different standing.

Along similar lines, Journalist 1 said:

These scenarios where there is a ceasefire, usually it's a proposal ... at the time they were brought up by Egypt, so you know somebody brought a proposal and Israel agreed. It's not like Israel called the ceasefire.

6.3.4   Summary

This chapter has focused on the representation of 'Israel' in the *JP*. The analysis has shown that, on the whole, Israel in the *JP* was represented very similarly to the ways it was depicted in *Ynetnews* and in *Haaretz*. More specifically, as a 'recipient' in the conflict, Israel – as was the case in the other two publications – was framed as a victim and as a recipient of support; as an 'actor' in the conflict, it was constructed – just as it was in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* – as a combatant acting in self-defence and also as a conciliatory participant.

One major difference between the *JP* and the other two publications relates to the representation of Israel as a recipient in the conflict. As we saw, in addition to being portrayed as a victim and as a recipient of support, Israel in the *JP* was also constructed as a recipient of domestic criticism or criticism from within. Other differences concern the depiction of Israel as a victim in the conflict. As was the case in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*,

Israel in the *JP* was framed as a target of Hamas' violence, as a victim of international airlines' bans and as a target of blame. As was the case with *Ynetnews*, Israel in the *JP* was further depicted as a target of Hamas threats and as a target of anti-Israel sentiment. However, while there was a tendency in both *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* to depict Israel as a recipient of Palestinian and international criticism, this discourse was not prominent in the *JP*.

Another difference between the *JP* and the other two publications relates to the representation of Israel as an actor in the conflict. As was the case with *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*, Israel in the *JP* was portrayed as a combatant that acts in self-defence and also as a conciliatory participant. As was the case in *Ynetnews*, a security frame was also prominent in the *JP*; here Israel was depicted as a participant whose actions are aimed at restoring security to Israeli citizens. At the same time, there were discourses which were prominent in *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz* but not in the *JP*. These were the portrayal of Israel as a participant that acts in response to acts of violence (identified in both *Ynetnews* and *Haaretz*) and the depiction of Israel as a powerful participant (identified in *Ynetnews*).

An analysis of informants' comments revealed that the prominence of the aforementioned representations of Israel was motivated by a range of considerations. While some of these considerations appeared to be related to journalistic practices (e.g. replicating the language used by competing news outlets) and news values (e.g. negativity), ideological factors also seemed to play a significant role in the construction of these discourses. It was interesting to observe how the journalists struggled to reconcile their professional aspirations as news producers with the feelings they had to conscript on behalf of the national/hegemonic narrative.

7. Discussion

This research tells the story of the Israeli media and the ways they represented 'Israel' in the coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict. It has sought to do two things: (i) to uncover the discourses around the term Israel in the selected news outlets investigated; and (ii) to understand news producers' motivations behind the content and linguistic choices which construed these discourses. Drawing on these two broad concerns, this discussion chapter is divided into two main parts. In section 7.1, I focus on what has emerged from the three findings chapters – that is, the high level of convergence in the ways Israel was represented across the three news outlets. I begin, however, by considering some of the key differences in this portrayal. Section 7.2 considers the broad findings from the interview component of the research and seeks to generalise patterns in the motivations/factors underlying these representations. This division also relates to the different methodologies employed in the study, namely, a detailed linguistic and thematic analysis based on the methods of CL and CDA, and an analysis of news production processes based on discourse-based interviews with news producers who contributed substantially to the reporting of the conflict.

7.1 Representations of 'Israel' in the conflict across the three news outlets

As noted, the purpose of the first part of the analysis was to uncover the discourses around the term 'Israel' in the selected news outlets investigated. The analysis has revealed that although, as one would expect, there were some notable differences in the ways Israel was portrayed in the three news outlets, it is fair to conclude that Israel was predominantly framed in similar ways across the outlets. Subsection 7.1.1 explores the variations in the portrayal of Israel across the news outlets by focusing primarily (though not exclusively) on some of the terms that emerged as exclusive collocates of Israel in each of the news outlets. These variations can generally be attributed to the nature and political orientations of each of the news outlets. As previous studies suggested (e.g. Peng, 2008; Alarcon, 2010), the different political orientations of news outlets can influence the content of their publications and account for differences in the way they represent the same issue.

Subsection 7.1.2 explores the high level of convergence in the representation of Israel across the publications by focusing on those words which emerged as shared collocates of 'Israel' across the three publications. Here I primarily draw on Van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategies, as well as Bar-Tal's (2007, 2013) socio-psychological theory of intractable conflicts, to explain this phenomenon.

7.1.1   Variations across the news outlets

One important difference that emerged across the news outlets related to the labelling of the non-Israeli side in the conflict. The strategies that authors choose for naming people out of the great array of options that the language offers them – identified by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) as referential strategies for the representation of social actors – play a significant role in conveying an author's evaluative and ideological stance. In the context of conflict construction, this labelling of actors becomes even more significant (Bhatia, 2005; Jackson, 2005; Barrinha, 2011). Bhatia (2005:5), for example, thus notes:

> Once assigned, the power of a name is such that the process by which the name was selected generally disappears and a series of normative associations, motives and characteristics are attached to the named subject. Indeed, the long historical relationship between the naming of opponents, empire and colonialism, as well as the manner in which the global media frame armed conflict, only provide further reason to doubt the truthfulness of the names assigned, and their ability to address the micro-realities involved in these conflicts and movements.

As was revealed in the findings chapters, while 'Israel' was uniformly represented as a single entity (as per the focus of the analysis), an array of representations were used to refer to the other participant in the conflict. Specifically, the non-Israeli side in the conflict was labelled in all three outlets as 'Hamas', 'Palestinians' and 'militants'. As was explained, this was evident predominantly in the context of the shared collocate <u>between</u> and, more

specifically, in the common cluster 'between Israel and'. One notable designation of Israel's adversary which appeared only in the *JP* reporting was as terrorists. As was revealed in Chapter Six, terrorists emerged as an exclusive collocate of Israel in the *JP*. This was illustrated in examples such as the following:

> Gaza terrorists continue to pound southern Israel with rockets, drawing IDF response (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

Previous studies have suggested that 'terrorists' is an emotively loaded term which carries 'a connotation of absolutely illegitimate violence' (Guelke, 2006:182, as reported in Barrinha, 2011:167). Macagno and Walton (2014:5), for example, discuss the impact of emotive language and particularly that of the nomenclature 'terrorists':

> When we encounter words of this kind, we do not simply interpret the message. We do not simply acquire new information. We do not simply modify our systems of belief. We feel an emotion toward what the word is depicting … We are afraid of terrorists.

The prominent use of the label terrorists in the *JP* reporting seems to fit with Bar-Tal's (2007, 2013) ethos of conflict and particularly with the societal beliefs that delegitimise the out-group. Such delegitimisation is often found in the official discourse of the Israeli government and the IDF. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and IDF webpages about Operation Protective Edge are not the focus of this study, it is worth mentioning that both depict Hamas as a terrorist group. References to 'terrorist(s)' on the MFA's webpage include, for example, 'terrorist groups like Hamas', 'terrorist infiltrations from Gaza' and 'terrorist infrastructure', while the IDF's webpage makes references to 'Hamas terrorists', 'terrorists attacks' and 'underground terrorist tunnels'. The emergence of the term terrorists as an exclusive collocate of Israel in the *JP* reporting is congruent with

the outlet's populist nature and its reputation for largely echoing the perspectives of the Israeli political and military establishment.

A second difference that emerged across the three news outlets involved the labelling of events. As was revealed in Chapters Three and Five, the 2014 hostilities were designated as <u>war</u>[24] in both *Ynetnews* and in the *JP*. This was not the case in *Haaretz*. This point was illustrated in examples such as the following:

> The airstrikes followed an almost 12-hour pause in the fighting and came as international efforts intensified to end the three-week <u>war</u> between Israel and Hamas. (*Ynetnews*, 28 Jul 2014)

> Meanwhile, the Rafah border crossing was closed for security reasons on Wednesday as the <u>war</u> between Israel and Palestinian terrorists in Gaza reignited. (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

Similar to the word 'terrorists', the term 'war' is considered an emotively loaded one. On the use of this nomenclature, Macagno and Walton (2014:5) argue:

> Some words are powerful. 'War', 'peace', 'death' … are but a few of the innumerable terms that we read or hear every day, and these words clearly lead us to draw a judgement, or feel uncomfortable with, or be attracted by a certain situation … We fear a war … We desire peace.

Also relevant to the discussion of the use of the term 'war' is the function it can serve in legitimising in-group actions. In a study of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) coverage of the 2003 'Coalition' invasion of Iraq, for example, Lukin (2013:426) contends that by 'unconsciously choosing' the word 'war' to refer to the events associated with 'the Iraq war', 'ABC journalists produced an orientation to their news coverage'. This,

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[24] As noted, <u>war</u> emerged as a collocate of Israel in both *Ynetnews* and the *JP*.

in her view, served to 'wholly legitimate … the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq' (p.4). In her book War and its Ideologies, Lukin (2019:198) argues that when speakers adopt the category of war, they "unconsciously choose an orientation to the meaning of the violence they are construing… war is seen as legal, organised, rational, measured and the most direct route to peace". This, as the author points out, helps to keep war distinct from violence. Along similar lines, Simonsen (2019), commenting on the Gaza conflict, argues that, by possibly connoting two equally equipped armies fighting each other on a battlefield, the use of the term 'war' serves to downplay the asymmetrical power relationship between Israel and Hamas. The preference for the 'war' nomenclature in these two outlets then can be seen as part of a narrative that serves to justify the actions of the Israeli establishment.

Another variation across the news outlets worth mentioning pertains to the representation of Israel as a target of 'anti-Israel' sentiment. Prevalent in *Ynetnews* and the *JP* but not in *Haaretz*, this anti-Israel discourse depicted acts of protest against Israel's offensive in Gaza as being '<u>anti</u>-Israel'. This was seen in examples like the following:

> Many <u>anti</u>-Israel and pro-Hamas protests have been held in Amman and other places in Jordan since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge. (*Ynetnews*, 2 Aug 2014)

> Massive <u>anti</u>-Israel protest underway in London. (*JP*, 19 Jul 2014)

On the other hand, the word 'anti' did not emerge as a top collocate of Israel in the *Haaretz* reporting, suggesting that *Haaretz* generally did not associate criticism of Israel's actions with anti-Israel sentiment or anti-Semitism. This was further evident in the context of the exclusive collocate <u>critical</u>:

> As the war in Gaza has progressed, the American media has been increasingly <u>critical</u> of Israel … These articles are not anti-Israel rants but carefully argued

analyses that cannot be dismissed as borderline anti-Semitism. (*Haaretz*, 5 Aug 2014)

The conflation of worldwide protests against Israel's violence in Gaza as 'anti-Israel' bias in both *Ynetnews* and the *JP* is congruent with the dominant view which is typically voiced in these publications. On the other hand, the absence of this representation from the *Haaretz* reporting and the emergence of a discourse which debunks the myth that criticism of Israel is anti-Israel and anti-Semite can both be ascribed to *Haaretz*' reputation for taking up some unpopular positions and challenging consensual perceptions. On this point, Zandberg (2010:19–20) notes that *Haaretz* often adopts a critical voice when treating, for example, the dominant discourse around the Holocaust:

> *Ha'aretz* is the only Israeli newspaper that consistently called for and applied a more critical, self-reflexive Holocaust discourse. This view stands in stark contrast to views evoked by the rest of the Israeli press: moral rebuke of the world for its impotence during the Holocaust and calls to 'learn' the lessons of the Holocaust … *Ha'aretz* creates a narrative that enables a process of working through the trauma instead of reproducing the nationalistic commemoration.

The three news outlets also diverged to some degree on the issue of criticism. As was revealed in the findings chapters, the representation of Israel as a target of external criticism voiced by outsiders was absent from the *JP* reporting altogether and was substantially less developed in *Ynetnews* when compared to *Haaretz*. In contrast, the issue of external criticism of Israel in *Haaretz* reporting emerged as central, with as many as six exclusive collocates of 'Israel' contributing to this frame. This was seen in the following:

Gaza war breathes life into drive to boycott Israel. (*Haaretz*, 11 Aug 2014)

Spain temporarily freezes arms exports to Israel over Gaza war. (*Haaretz*, 5 Aug 2014)

The conflict in Gaza has strained already tense <u>relations</u> between Turkey and Israel, prompting a new diplomatic crisis. (*Haaretz*, 20 Jul 2014)

Haaretz' focus on international criticism of Israel is in line not only with its liberal outlook on 'how others view us' but also with its reputation as being the opposition newspaper which sees a role for itself in criticising the policies and actions of the Israeli government and the IDF. As Sheizaf (2010) notes, *Haaretz* is 'very critical of Netanyahu's government'. Similarly, Slater (2007:86) argues that 'the editorial policies, commentary, and news reporting of *Haaretz* are not "representative" of the views of most other Israeli national media or the majority of Israeli public opinion'.

Another variation across the news outlets relates to the portrayal of Israel as a combatant. While all three publications used the shared collocates <u>launched</u> and <u>offensive</u> to describe Israel's acts of violence in Gaza, also present in *Haaretz*'s reporting was the use of the exclusive collocate <u>incursion</u> in its construal of Israel as a combatant. This was demonstrated in examples like the one below:

At this stage, the Israel Defense Forces' ground <u>incursion</u> into the Gaza Strip is limited. (*Haaretz*, 18 Jul 2014)

While the use of the term <u>incursion</u> can be viewed as a euphemism for what is essentially an 'invasion' (Watts, 2013), its definition as a cross-border attack conveys the idea that the hostile act was carried out in territory belonging to Israel's 'enemy', thereby making contentious the issue of boundaries and territorial rights. It is perhaps not surprising then that the term <u>incursion</u> with its implicit territorial connotations emerged in the reporting of this news outlet, which is often identified as 'outwardly expressing opposition to Israel's holding of occupied territories and supporting peace initiatives' (Open Source Centre, 2008, as reported in Lavie-Dinur et al., 2018:203). Kandil (2009), for example, mentions that coverage of the IPC in *Haaretz* can be more critical of Israel compared to

that found in the BBC and CNN. Similarly, Slater (2007:86) notes that 'on the whole, *Haaretz* is well to the left of the dominant Israeli views on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict' and identifies the Israeli 'left' as 'those who favor the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian state, and who hold that Israel is primarily responsible for the failure of such a settlement to be reached'.

Another significant variation which was also related to the representation of Israel as a combatant was the emergence of the word <u>blockade</u> as an exclusive collocate of Israel in the *Ynetnews* reporting. This was perhaps one of the most interesting findings, one that demonstrates the power of a collocational analysis to test researchers' intuitions. This is mainly because <u>blockade</u> did not emerge as prominent, as one might have expected, in the reporting of *Haaretz*, the outlet whose reputation in the past has been one of often not shying away from critiquing the Israeli government's policies in the Palestinian territories. It is important to note, however, that a close reading of the collocate's concordances showed that the term <u>blockade</u> had a very specific framing in *Ynetnews*. The syntactic construction in which the term was often used was one that did not portray Israel as an actor that imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip. Instead, the focus in the context was on Hamas and its 'demands' (a term which clearly denotes a forceful manner) of Israel. One of these 'demands' was that Israel lift its blockade on Gaza, as was illustrated in examples such as the one below:

> Speaking in Qatar, political chief Khaled Mashal demands Israel lift <u>blockade</u>, says Gaza-based group will never agree to disarm. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

Standing in contrast to *Haaretz*'s and *Ynetnews*' representations of a combatant was the *JP*'s portrayal of Israel as a combatant using insufficient force against Hamas. This, as was explained in Chapter Six, was evident in the emergence of three exclusive collocates of Israel in the *JP*. These were the modal verbs <u>should</u> and <u>must</u> – which serve as markers of subjectivity – and the proper name <u>Liberman</u>, then Israel's Foreign Minister. As was noted, a close examination of these collocates' immediate context showed that Israel was 'strongly

advised', typically but not exclusively by Liberman, to abandon the route of diplomacy and adopt a more aggressive course of action. This was seen in examples such as the ones below:

> Foreign Minister Avigdor <u>Liberman</u> said Tuesday that Israel <u>should</u> 'go all the way in Gaza,' meaning it should reoccupy the territory. (*JP*, 15 Jul 2014)

> <u>Liberman</u> says Israel <u>must</u> take back initiative and 'bring Hamas to submission'. (*JP*, 20 Aug 2014)

The emergence of a discourse in the *JP* where Israel is being portrayed as a participant that did not act forcefully enough against Hamas generally reflects what Neiger et al. (2010) identified as *second-level reaffirming criticism.* According to the authors, second-level reaffirming criticism addresses the magnitude of military operation: it criticises the establishment for 'not using its military capabilities to the fullest magnitude' (p.388). This rhetorical device, Neiger et al. (2010) argue, enables news producers who cover their own national conflicts to adhere to the journalistic practice of criticism without challenging the establishment's underlying assumptions and actions. A rhetoric that criticises Israel for too little action therefore embraces (rather than challenges) the Israeli establishment's overall logic of the necessity of military action. It is thus fitting that this dominant discourse emerged in the politically right-leaning publication, the *JP*.

One final variation across the news outlets that is worth commenting on concerns the discourse around security. This discourse was absent in *Haaretz* and, while it was also indexed in *Ynetnews* (via the collocate <u>needs</u>), it was highly prominent in the *JP*, where the word <u>security</u> emerged as an exclusive collocate of Israel. Specifically, Israel in the *JP* was depicted as a participant whose actions are intended to provide/restore security for its citizens. This was seen in examples such as the following:

> 'We are with you and we will stay with you until quiet is achieved, and afterwards as well,' Netanyahu said, adding that the IDF would not stop its activities in Gaza until it has ensured quiet and <u>security</u> for Israel's citizens. (*JP*, 24 Aug 2014)

CDA views the word 'security' as an emotive word. Mische (1992, as cited in Macagno & Walton, 2014), for example, notes that 'the word security is a power word … related to the primary need to survive'. Furthermore, perceptions of security have been at the heart of Israel's identity. Merom (1999:413) points out that 'notions of national security exceptionalism percolated so deeply into Israeli society that they became integrated even into the discourse of society's most critical minds'. Similarly, Bar-Tal (1998:33) argues thus:

> Security has become a cultural master symbol in the Israeli–Jewish ethos (Horovitz, 1984). It has been used routinely to mobilize human and material resources that people in other societies would perhaps consider above and beyond their abilities and obligations (Lissak, 1984, 1993). This concern turned the Israeli society into 'a nation at arms' or 'a nation in uniform' which lived in a situation that has been labeled a 'dormant war' (Yaniv, 1993).

Furthermore, according to the official position of the Israeli government, Israel's strategic goals for Operation Protective Edge were 'to defend its citizens and restore sustained calm and security to the Israeli civilian population from unlawful attacks' (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015:33). The discourse around security then seems to be congruent with *Ynetnews*' and the *JP*'s tendency to affirm, rather than challenge, prevalent dominant perceptions.

7.1.2 Israeli media convergence

Some of the differences were to be expected given the different political affiliations and readerships of each publication. What was less expected in the data, however, was the surprising degree of convergence in the ways 'Israel' was portrayed across all three news outlets. Specifically, four key themes emerged as common or at least very similar in the overall reporting. These were the portrayal of Israel: (i) as a victim in the conflict; (ii) as a

participant that has the backing of the US; (iii) as a combatant that acts in self-defence; and (iv) as a conciliatory protagonist.

As noted, the first main discourse around the term Israel that emerged in *Ynetnews*, *Haaretz* and the *JP* was one which portrayed Israel as a victim. As a victim in the conflict, Israel was predominantly framed in the publications as a target of Hamas' violence. More specifically, Israel was framed as the victim of rocket (and mortar) fire. As we saw, this discourse was evident in the emergence of three shared collocates: <u>fired</u>, <u>southern</u> and <u>central</u>: rockets in *Ynetnews, Haaretz* and *JP* reporting were depicted as being <u>fired</u> at/into/towards Israel, particularly its <u>southern</u> and <u>central</u> parts, as was seen in examples like the following:

> Gaza militants have <u>fired</u> hundreds of rockets into Israel, some more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) deep, covering an area of about 5 million. (*Ynetnews*, 12 Jul 2014)

> Rocket barrage <u>fired</u> at <u>southern</u> and <u>central</u> Israel, including Rishon Letzion, Rehovot, Ashdod, and Ashkelon. (*Haaretz*, 23 Jul 2014)

> Since the start of Operation Protective Edge, over 2040 rockets and mortars were <u>fired</u> at Israel, according to a report by Tazpit News Agency. (*JP*, 22 Jul 2014)

As was noted, a very specific but prominent type of victim framing that emerged in all three news outlets was around the disruption of Israel's aviation industry after a Hamas rocket landed about a mile from Ben Gurion Airport on 22 July 2014. Here Israel was portrayed as a target of international airlines' bans, thereby extending the construction of Israel's victimhood beyond the immediate 'enemy' Hamas to include a focus on 'the rest of the world'. This was evident in the context of the shared collocate <u>flights</u>. A concordance analysis of this collocate revealed references to foreign airlines suspending/banning/cancelling/prohibiting (and eventually resuming/restoring) flights to and from Ben Gurion Airport. This was illustrated in examples such as the following:

Several international airlines cancelled their <u>flights</u> to Israel on Tuesday, citing security concerns after a rocket from Gaza fell near the airport wounding a man. (*Ynetnews*, 23 Jul 2014)

The FAA issued a notice on Tuesday suspending all U.S. <u>flights</u> to and from Israel's Ben-Gurion International Airport 'for a period of up to 24 hours'. (*Haaretz*, 22 Jul 2014)

EASA [European Aviation Safety Agency] later published its own recommendation and ultimately, 30 foreign airlines cancelled <u>flights</u> to Israel the last two days. (*JP*, 24 Jul 2014)

The discourse of victimhood was also apparent in the representation of Israel across all three publications as a target of blame. Unlike the representations of Israel as a victim of Hamas aggression and, to some extent, as a target of international airlines' bans, this is a very different type of victimhood as it pertains to words of criticism rather than actions. The frame of blame was apparent in the context of the reporting verb <u>accused</u>, which emerged as a shared collocate of Israel in all the publications. A careful reading of the collocate's immediate context showed that Israel was typically accused of using disproportionate force, of committing or possibly committing war crimes in Gaza and/or of impeding efforts to break from violence. While in this construal of blame accusations were typically voiced by Palestinian protagonists, the assigning of blame extended to international actors too, as was demonstrated in the following examples:

Late last week, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan <u>accused</u> Israel of massacring Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and carrying out war crimes worse than those of Hitler and the Nazis. (*Ynetnews*, 22 Jul 2014)

[The U.K.'s Deputy Prime Minister] Nick Clegg <u>accused</u> Israel of 'collective punishment' against the Palestinians, and said that 'they have proved their point'. (*Haaretz*, 17 Jul 2014)

Hamas spokesman Husam Badran <u>accused</u> Israel of sabotaging the talks, saying that the Jewish state was placing obstacles on every issue. (*JP*, 19 Aug 2014)

Reporting verbs are generally defined as verbs used to indicate that a discourse is being quoted or paraphrased; that is to say, they tell us that someone said something. Significantly, selection of reporting verbs can reveal something about news producers' attitude towards the ideas expressed by the source of information (Thompson & Yiyun, 1991; Caldas-Coulthard, 1994; Calsamiglia & Lopez Ferrero, 2003; Nkansah, 2013) – news producers might agree with, disagree with or feel neutral about what the source said (Thompson & Yiyun, 1991; Nkansah, 2013).

The particular reporting verb 'accused' is what Nkansah (2013) identified as a counter-factive reporting verb. The scholar has defined such verbs as reporting verbs which show that a writer rejects or disagrees with what they are reporting. By using the verb 'accused' then, the writer seems to portray the speaker as 'presenting false information or an incorrect opinion' (p.13). The use of the verb 'accused' here can thus be seen as a discursive means which fends off blame by establishing doubt as to the truth value of claims about Israel's actions in Gaza.

A competing discourse to that of being 'a victim' and, more specifically, to the representation of Israel as being a target of blame was a discourse which depicted Israel as a participant that has the backing of the US. Two shared collocates contributed to this frame: <u>right</u> and <u>defend</u>. These collocates co-occurred in all three publications to form the common clusters 'Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself' and 'Israel has a <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself'. While these clusters, as will be discussed shortly, contributed to the representation of Israel as a participant that acts in self-defence, a close reading of their concordances provided the lens to another discourse around Israel. As was revealed in the findings chapters, the immediate context of these common clusters included a large number of references to US leaders supporting/reiterating/underscoring 'Israel's right to defend itself'. In more linguistic

terms, the two clusters showed a 'semantic preference' (Stubbs 2001:65) for the US/US officials. This point was exemplified in samples such as the following:

US: Hamas broke ceasefire, Israel has <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself. (*Ynetnews*, 19 Aug 2014)

Obama reiterated Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself, saying no country would tolerate rockets and tunnel attacks. (*Haaretz*, 1 Aug 2014)

The White House condemned rocket attacks against Israel that reached as far as Tel Aviv and expressed support for Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself on Tuesday. (*JP*, 8 Jul 2014)

In addition to being portrayed as a victim, on the one hand, and as a recipient of US support, on the other hand, Israel was also depicted in all the three publications as a participant that acts in self-defence. This, as noted earlier, was evident in the shared collocates <u>right</u> and <u>defend</u> and was illustrated in examples such as the ones below:

[Defense Minister Moshe] Yaalon praised forces on the ground, saying thanks to 'the commanders, the fighters and the support fighters in the air, sea and ground, who continue to act firmly and professionally to <u>defend</u> Israel's citizens'. (*Ynetnews*, 9 Jul 2014)

It's obvious that Israel must retain the <u>right</u> to defend itself against immediate threats, and thwart any plans to fire on its citizens or troops. (*Haaretz*, 15 Jul 2014)

The prime minister thanked Obama for Washington's support for Israel's <u>right</u> to <u>defend</u> itself as well as American backing for the Iron Dome project. (*JP*, 18 Jul 2014)

Finally, a fourth point of convergence was around a discourse which framed Israel as a conciliatory actor. The frame of conciliation was evident in the emergence of the verb <u>agreed</u> as a shared collocate of Israel in the three publications. As the findings chapters revealed, Israel was depicted in all the news outlets as a participant that agreed to extend a

ceasefire and/or accept a proposal for truce. This point was demonstrated in examples such as the ones below:

> The IDF pulled its forces out of the Gaza Strip on Tuesday morning, day 29 of Operation Protective Edge, after Israel <u>agreed</u> to a 72-hour ceasefire that began at 8am. (*Ynetnews*, 5 Aug 2014)

> Israel <u>agreed</u> to a cease-fire Tuesday morning and briefly halted its air strikes on Gaza. (*Haaretz*, 16 Jul 2014)

> Since Israel <u>agreed</u> to an Egyptian proposal for a ceasefire at 9:00 a.m., nearly 35 rockets were fired from Gaza at Israel, according to the IDF. (*JP*, 15 Jul 2014)

It is interesting to explore why it would be the case to find this high level of consensus around the representation of Israel in the Israeli media's reporting of such a contentious issue of a conflict. As was mentioned in section 1.5 Theoretical explanations, there are two useful frameworks to help understand these patterns. One of these is Van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategies. The other one is Bar-Tal's (2000) theory of intractable conflicts, particularly his ethos of conflict which serves to justify a society's actions. While in the analysis below I mostly make references to these two frameworks, I also draw on the work of other scholars to explain this research's findings.

The emergence of a discourse of victimhood in the three publications can be attributed to what Bar Tal et al. (2009) identified as a well-developed theme on the ethos of conflict of societies engulfed in intractable conflicts: 'a sense of self-perceived collective victimhood' (p.229). As the authors point out, a collective perception of victimhood refers to a shared belief among in-group members according to which the in-group is the victim of intentional and unjust harm perpetrated by the out-group and experienced by the in-group members either directly or indirectly. As was explained earlier, while this state of mind is rooted in real experiences (e.g. the firing of rockets into Israel), it is also socially constructed and is not related to the actual strength and power of the in-group (Bar-Tal,

Chernyak-Hai, Schori & Gundar, 2009). On Israel's perception of itself as a victim, Adler (2013:2) thus notes:

> Israelis … perceive themselves as victims, even though Israel is no longer perceived at the international level as the victim of crimes, but rather as the perpetrator of them.

The specific focus in the reporting on international airlines' bans and the disruption to flights can be attributed to what has come to be seen as Israel's siege mentality (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Bar-Tal, 2000; Dor, 2001; Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori & Gundar, 2009; Siniver 2012). The term 'siege mentality' refers to 'a general mistrust of other groups and negative feelings towards them' (Bar-Tal et al., 2009:251). These groups, Bar-Tal (2000:101–102) notes, 'function as reference groups – either because there is a desire to have positive relations with them or because they affect the welfare of the society'. Israeli beliefs about their siege mentality relate to the perception that 'Jews are … lonely victims in a hostile world' (Bar-Tal, 2000:112) or to the widespread conviction among Israeli Jews that Israel is 'a nation that dwells alone'. This is a major trope in Israeli identity discourses and has become associated with a well-known and often quoted passage from the *Book of Numbers*:

> They are a nation that dwells alone and amongst the nations they do not reckon (Numbers, 23:9).

According to Lewin (2013:105), the words above have been understood by (Israeli) Jews as 'the formative statement of the relationship between Israel and the nations of the world'. They have been comprehended as speaking not only of Israel's isolated and unique status among the nations of the world, but also of other nations' hatred of and bad intentions towards Israel (Bar-Tal, 2000:101). This 'dwelling alone' notion is embedded in a long history of persecutions, expulsions and pogroms that culminated in the Holocaust (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Lewin, 2013). Significantly, Israel's wars with its neighbouring Arab

countries and its protracted conflict with the Palestinians have been viewed as direct continuation of Jewish persecution and as proof that Israel has no one to depend on but itself (Zafran & Bar-Tal, 2003). Beliefs about siege mentality are also illustrated in Del Sarto's (2017:211) words below:

> The essence of the new consensus is that Israel is under siege, encircled by an alliance of evil and irrational forces. Consecutive Israeli governments and opposition leaders have subscribed to this understanding of the regional environment. They have reiterated this assessment time and again, thus also disseminating a general sense of insecurity and fear. And as numerous public opinion polls taken during that decade have shown, a vast majority of the Israeli public came to share these notions.

The prominence that was given to the representation of Israel as a target of blame seems to be congruent with the work of Keshev and Miftah (2009), according to which the attribution of blame (and thus the assigning of responsibility) is a common discursive mechanism found in the dynamics of protracted conflicts such as the IPC. More specifically, the representation of Israel as a target of blame satisfies what Bar-Tal et al. (2009) identified as a key condition of victimhood – that the harmful event (in this case accusations of Israel committing war crimes) be perceived as undeserved and unjust.

As noted earlier, in parallel with the victimhood frame emerged a competing discourse which portrayed Israel as a recipient of support. This seems congruent with Adler (2012), who sees something of a paradox in these two notions. On the one hand, Israel desires to maintain its isolated status in the world – this reinforces its perception of being unique among nations and, significantly, allows it to disregard any criticism. On the other hand, Israel seeks international legitimacy for its actions. Adler (2012:1) thus claims:

> Since independence, Israel has lived with a paradox. Israel needs and seeks legitimacy, understanding, and empathy from the world community while simultaneously also discounting the world, which David Ben-Gurion articulated so succinctly with his 'Um Shmum.' (Um represents the acronym in Hebrew for the

United Nations (UN) and shmum is a dismissive retort) ... [Israel aspires] to be different from a world that it genuinely needs and wants to be a legitimate member of.

As was mentioned earlier, the frame depicting Israel as a recipient of support was evident in the many references to US officials supporting/reiterating/underscoring Israel's right to defend itself. Although it can be argued that news producers were 'merely reporting what someone else was saying' (this, in fact, was brought up by some of my informants), a key notion in understandings of news discourse is that news producers always make choices about whose voices to include in their reporting and whose to exclude, and also about how these voices should be framed (Hoxha & Hanitzsch, 2018). The fact that the common cluster 'Israel's right to defend itself' showed a semantic preference for US officials can thus be interpreted as a discursive way of orienting news producers' position on the topic of reference while simultaneously placing the burden of responsibility for the truth of the assertion on the shoulders of US officials rather than on their own.

Drawing on Van Leeuwen's (2007) framework of legitimation, the focus given in the reporting to US leaders reiterating and underscoring their support for Israel's right to defend itself can be seen as a discursive way of legitimating its acts of violence in Gaza. More specifically, Van Leeuwen (2007) argues that one of the ways that discourses construct legitimation of social practices is by reference to an authority, a legitimation strategy he identifies as authorisation. Known as the world's foremost economic and military power, the US is clearly an authority. Thus, for example, Reyes (2011:783) notes:

Legitimization deserves special attention in political discourse because it is from this speech event that political leaders justify their political agenda to maintain or alter the direction of a whole nation and, in the case of US leaders, the entire world.

Furthermore, the finding that Israel was framed as a participant that has the backing of specifically the US can also be ascribed to what has been dubbed a 'special' Israel–US relationship (Bar Siman-Tov, 1998; Adler, 2012; Marzano, 2013). It also fits with the perception that, for most Israelis, '"the world" means primarily the United States' (Adler, 2012:1). Adler (2012) argues that this is not only because the US supports Israel militarily and diplomatically, but also because there is such a large and powerful Jewish community in the US and because the two states are thought to share similar cultural values.

Self-defence, as noted, also emerged as a common theme. The prominence of the discourse around self-defence in the Israeli media seems to reflect a well-developed theme in contemporary Israeli society. Although in his theory of intractable conflicts, Bar-Tal (2000) does not treat self-defence as a stand-alone theme, he does discuss self-defence as part of 'Jewish victimization'. Using the theme of self-perceived collective victimhood as a frame of reference, Bar-Tal (2000) argues that all of Israel's wars – its War of Independence in 1948, the 1956 Suez War, the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 – as well as its military clashes have all been perceived as self-defensive actions.

Self-defence can also be seen as reflecting what Bar-Tal (1998, 2000) identified as societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals. These essentially outline and explain a group's goals in a conflict. Such justification of the conflict's goals (e.g. defending citizens) plays in turn a significant role in providing the motivation necessary to mobilise members of the society.

The prominence of the discourse around self-defence can further be attributed to the need for state and non-state actors that resort to armed force to provide moral justification for the violence they inflict on the out-group. This was identified by Van Leeuwen (2007) as moral evaluation, a legitimation strategy whereby legitimacy is achieved by reference to value systems. As Van Leeuwen (2007:97) argues, 'it is based on moral values rather than imposed by some kind of authority'.

A prevalent value system which provides moral justifications for acts of violence during war is just war theory. Any military action which is labelled an act of self-defence is

anchored to the *jus ad bellum* (Latin for 'right to war') principle in the just war tradition. This principle holds that a war is permissible and justified when it is waged for the purposes of self-defence. Bayley and Bevitori (2009), for example, argue that, according to the norms of international law governing armed conflict, 'self-defense and/or response to aggression are the only justifications for military action' (p.75). Along similar lines, Simonsen (2019:505) states that:

> Since World War II, the establishment of the United Nations and the codification of the just war tradition into formal judiciary discourse in international humanitarian law (IHL), the discourse of just warfare has become ever more prevalent to the extent that self-defense is by now the most prevalent legitimation in Western public discourse for the use of violence.

Finally, the Israeli media's convergence around the discourse depicting Israel as a conciliatory participant that is willing to accept proposals for truce can be seen to reflect what Bar-Tal identified as societal beliefs about a positive self-image and, closely related to these, societal beliefs about peace. According to Bar-Tal (1998, 2000), societal beliefs about a positive self-image generally pertain to attributes such as humanness, morality and trustworthiness, as well as to positive contributions to humankind and civilisation. Such beliefs assume, for example, the moral and humane behaviour of Israeli soldiers. This is reflected in the common Israeli perception according to which Israel is 'the most moral army in the world' (Eastwood, 2017:4). Societal beliefs about peace relate to group members' future aspirations for peace. Significantly, they present group members as peace-seeking, a universally appreciated attribute. Societal beliefs about a positive self-image and about peace are well-developed themes in Bar-Tal's (2000) ethos of conflict and they play a significant role in helping societies engulfed in intractable conflicts to reconcile the perpetration of aggressive and at times immoral acts.

In summary, while there were naturally some nuanced differences in stance across the three news outlets, what has primarily emerged from the textual and thematic analysis

of this research was a surprising degree of convergence around the ways Israel was portrayed in the Israeli media. Specifically, the framing of Israel in all three outlets as a conciliatory victim that acts in self-defence and has the backing of the US suggests that the Israeli media played a significant role in constructing a narrative which is congruent with the Israeli ethos of conflict and is aligned with consensual views advanced by the Israeli government and military. While some scholars noted the perpetuation of traditions of more independent, balanced and critical coverage of violent conflicts (Althaus 2003; Entman 2003; Kampf & Liebes 2013; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch, & Nagar 2016), the high degree of convergence observed in this part of the analysis positions this finding alongside research such as that of Nir and Roeh (1992), Dor (2004, 2005), Livio and Cohen-Yechezkely (2019) and Parks (2019) which identifies a tendency of media coverage to be congruent with the frames advanced by the establishment.

7.2 Factors and motivations underlying news producers' linguistic choices

In an attempt to address the limitations of a purely text-based approach, the second component of the research was aimed at understanding the factors and motivations that lay behind the content and linguistic choices which construed the discourses around the term 'Israel'. This section, therefore, explores these factors as reported to me in my interviews with the news producers across the three outlets, all of whom were engaged in the reporting of the Israel–Gaza conflict as either practising journalists or editors. As noted in the three findings chapters, a range of different types of motivations and influences were discussed by these informants.

Collectively, these factors that news producers discussed point to a very diverse range of considerations – operating at quite different levels – that impact on news gathering and production processes. These range from the seemingly minor and incidental to those that go to the heart of a journalist's or newspaper's beliefs about the conflict and the world in general. On the whole, there were six broad factors, discussed below, that were identified in the interviews as underlying the shaping of texts and the content and language choices

that were involved in their production. These included: news values, stylistic considerations that inform the writing of news, commercial imperatives, the journalistic practice of observing how other news outlets report the same issue, news outlets' specific 'DNA' (i.e. their nature as a tabloid or a broadsheet and their political orientation, which establishes their ways of seeing the conflict and is often reflected in their style guide) and national ideologies that inform in many different ways the texts that are ultimately produced. As will be shown, while these were the factors that informants discussed, many of these can be seen as inter-related factors reflecting ideology. As Cushion, Moore & Jeweel (2011:6) note:

> Journalists do not exist and operate in a vacuum, but are subjects of, as well as key contributors to, the dominant ideological discourses within which we all negotiate our ideas, opinions and identities everyday.

One of the considerations that underlay the reporting of the conflict and particularly the specific content of articles relates to what has been identified in the literature as news values. These, according to Richardson (2007:91), are 'the criteria employed by journalists to measure and therefore to judge the "newsworthiness" of events' and they are used to 'select, order and prioritise the collection and production of news'. Such criteria help explain why some news items find their way into the reporting while others do not.

There were many instances where informants saw the prominence and significance of certain events as the primary drivers of how the conflict was reported. Thus, news values were a key underlying factor in news producers' explanations. A clear example of this was the significance attributed to the disruption to flights to and from Israel and the prominence of this discourse in the overall reporting. As was revealed in the interviews, informants' comments about this event can be linked to the news value of unexpectedness/novelty. The *Ynetnews* Editor, for example, told me that 'it was the first time that that [the ban on flights] had happened'. Along similar lines, the *Ynetnews*

Journalist 2 commented that the disruption to flights 'was unprecedented in the round [of fighting] in Gaza', explaining that 'it was the first time ever that the air traffic to Israel had been disrupted because of Hamas ... as a result of fire from Gaza'.

Another example of a news value that came up in the interviews was superlativeness (Bell, 1991:57). This news value, also termed magnitude (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001:279), relates to the 'size, scale or scope of the event' (Caple & Bednarek, 2013:18). To illustrate this point, when probed about the prominent use of the term 'war' in the *Ynetnews* and *JP* reporting, informants from both outlets highlighted the longer duration of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict compared to previous rounds of fighting with Hamas. The *Ynetnews* Editor, for example, told me: 'you wouldn't call a brief military operation lasting two days along the Gaza border a war ... You're talking about a 50-day military operation'.

It is important to note that CDA analysts (e.g. Van Dijk, 1988; Fowler, 1991) reject the idea that news values, as has been suggested by some scholars (e.g. Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Machin & Niblock, 2006:27; Cotter, 2010; Rössler et al., 2011:417), are somehow neutral or infused with newsworthiness. Talking about an event's newsworthy properties, as Bednarek and Caple (2017: 31) point out, is problematic for three reasons: '(i) it treats events as monolithic; (ii) it assumes newsworthiness can easily be objectively determined and that events are either newsworthy or not; and (iii) it seemingly ignores human intervention (social cognition and discursive mediation).' Instead, CDA sees news values as socially constructed 'features of representation' (Fowler, 1991:19) and views notions of prominence as having an ideological slant (Hall, 1973:184, Bell, 1991:156; Herman & Chomsky, 1994:298; Curran & Seaton, 2003:336). As Cotter (2010:67) explains, news values are 'ideological factors' in the sense that they establish or reinforce 'an 'ideology' about what counts as 'news'.

General stylistic considerations that inform the writing of news stories were another consideration which emerged as underlying news producers' content and linguistic choices. Such rhetorical considerations, referred to by Caple and Bednarek (2013) as 'news-writing objectives', concern news producers' beliefs about what constitutes best-practice

journalistic writing. One example of a stylistic consideration that emerged in the interviews as a factor that governed news producers' content and linguistic choices was neutrality. This was evident, for example, in informants' comments about the lexical choice 'offensive'. When queried about its prominent use, the *Haaretz* Editor explained that 'offensive' is a relatively neutral term that 'captured' the nature of Israel's actions in Gaza. On the one hand, it is not as emotionally loaded as terms like 'onslaught' and 'bombardment'; on the other hand, it is not as amorphous as terms like 'campaign'.

To give another example, the prominence of specific patterns in the reporting was also attributed to the stylistic need to diversify language. This was apparent, for example, in news producers' explanations for the variation in the labellings of the non-Israeli side in the conflict. As was revealed in the findings chapters, a close reading of the context of the common cluster '<u>between</u> Israel and' revealed that while 'Hamas' and 'Palestinians' were the first and second most frequent designations, respectively, used to refer to Israel's adversary across all three publications, there were other (albeit less frequent) designations that were used by each of the news outlets.

When probed about this variation in labelling, the *Haaretz* Editor explained that using synonyms as a way of avoiding the repetition of the same word forms an important part of journalistic/editorial practices:

> My philosophy has always been that if there's interchangeable words, then you should try and avoid using the same one more than once in a sentence or a paragraph or a lead or whatever, so if the first sentence we'll say ... 'the Hamas militant group fired ...', you won't repeat the 'militant group'; you need to find a synonym for it. And there's a bank of synonyms that we can use which we don't believe are contradictory.

Along similar lines, the *Ynetnews* Editor told me that there was no editorial subtext behind the labellings used for the non-Israeli side in the conflict and explained that the variation in labelling was motivated simply by the 'desire to vary terminology'.

On this score, it is worth pointing out that CDA sees all lexical and syntactic choices as having their own particular connotations. According to Wodak and Meyer's (2009) discourse-historical approach to discourse, authors employ referential/nomination strategies (i.e. naming) to construct in-groups and out-groups. These membership categorisation devices play a particularly significant role in the context of a conflict. As Barrinha (2011:163) notes, '[l]abelling the "other" is one of the most relevant aspects in an armed conflict context. Summarising what the opponent is in one single expression is a strong rhetorical tool in any belligerent discourse'. This point was interestingly affirmed by some of my interviewees. For example, when probed about the prominent labelling 'Palestinians', informants from across all three outlets commented that the term was somewhat inaccurate in that it collectivised the non-Israeli side in the conflict. Thus, for example, the *Ynetnews* Journalist 1 told me:

> It is odd … In my opinion, it does not reflect … Like, it's not the Palestinians in the West Bank … To tell you that it's accurate? It's not accurate. What do you mean between Israel and the Palestinians? … At the end of the day, it's not like both the West Bank and Gaza waged a war on Israel in Protective Edge.

Another underlying factor in the representations of Israel across the three publications which is intertwined in journalism practice relates to commercial imperatives and, more specifically, to news producers' concern for search engine optimisation (SEO). These, as explained earlier, concern practices aimed at increasing the visibility and traffic of a (news) website. An example of this was evident in the *Haaretz* Editor's comment about the prominence of the word <u>flights</u> in the reporting. As the Editor explained:

> There are certain words that you know from experience are good SEO and words that are bad SEO … when the whole world is talking about aviation issues, 'flights' is a great word. It's become more so in the last 5 years but, even in 2014, we were aware of the need for our stories to be picked up by Google and possibly… definitely used words that we knew would be good SEO.

This underlying factor of commercial imperatives is in line with the work of scholars who argue that commercial considerations and economic pressures are an integral part of the news production process (e.g. Fowler, 1991; Lee-Wright, 2010; Allern, 2011). Fowler (1991:20), for example, highlights the economic factors in news selection:

What is overwhelmingly important is the fact that newspaper publication is an industry and a business, with a definite place in the nation's and the world's economic affairs. It is to be expected, then, that the activities and the output of the Press will be partially determined by considerations related to this fact: by the need to make a profit; by the economic organization of the industry... All of these commercial and industrial structures and relationships are bound to have an effect on what is published as news, and on how it is presented.

Furthermore, my informants' specific concern for SEO fits with the work of scholars who argue that SEO practices have found their way into newsrooms around the world (Currah, 2009; Dick, 2011; Bell, 2015; Karyotakis et al., 2019). In a study on the likely impact of the digital revolution on the economics of news publishing in the UK, Currah (2009) addresses a primary concern in SEO. This concern is described by Dick (2011) thus:

Currah's research gives voice to a central concern in SEO. While some feel search and traffic data can improve the quality of journalistic output by providing editors and journalists with a means of knowing what their readers want, others fear less popular public-interest stories will cede ground to 'populist, click-friendly topics' (Currah, 2009, p.48) in news-gathering and editorial decision making.

Also related to commercial imperatives is news producers' sense of audience. Journalists' and Editors' awareness of their readership's views emerged as a key factor in their explanations of content and linguistic selections. For example, when the *Haaretz*

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Editor was probed about the extent (if at all) to which they thought the reporting was determined by concern for readership, their response was 'hundred per cent'. Their awareness of audience was further evident in their comment about the prominence of the word <u>boycott</u> as an exclusive collocate of Israel in the *Haaretz* reporting. They explained that even though boycotting was an issue of internal disagreements, it featured prominently in the reporting because it was perceived to be of interest to *Haaretz* readers overseas.

The emergence of concern for audience as a factor that underlies news producers' content and linguistic selections is aligned with the findings of a number of scholars. For example, in a study exploring the factors that facilitate media coverage of women's sports, Sherwood, Osborne, Nicholson and Sherry (2017) found that news producers aligned their justification of news selected with their ingrained assumption about audience expectation.

The journalistic practice of adopting the terminology used by other news outlets was also found to have influenced news producers' content and lexical choices. This point was illustrated, for example, in the *JP* Journalist 1 response to my question about the prominence of the term <u>offensive</u>:

> We're all reading each other too, you know? Like, I read *Haaretz*. I read *Times of Israel* … I think in general, like if you read something, you go, 'Oh that's a good description' … 'that's the way to explain something' … and you might end up replicating it. Because it will just be in your head as the way to describe something.

This finding seems to be aligned with Hoxha and Hanitzsch's (2018:49) claim according to which journalists observe other media outlets' coverage of stories. As Hoxa and Hanitzsch (2018) point out, this practice goes to create certain standard tropes in the nature of reporting which in turn constrains the space of possible narratives:

> [J]ournalists often start out by digesting other media outlets' coverage of conflicts and take their cues from there … Journalists' habits of screening the media for

breaking news ... inevitably produce less and not more diversity of narratives and story angles. Conflict coverage thus runs the danger of becoming narrow, producing a limited range of potential and desirable political action in public discourse. This is the reason why certain political responses to conflicts (such as military intervention) often seem to be without alternative in the public conversation.

The interviews with Israeli news producers further revealed that content and lexical selections were also influenced by the specific 'DNA' of their outlet. By 'DNA' I refer to the nature of an outlet (i.e. tabloid versus broadsheet) and to its political orientation which, by and large, shapes its established ways of seeing the conflict. A central example of this factor was seen in my *JP* informants' comments about the prominent use of the label 'terrorists' in the *JP* reporting. The *JP* Journalist 1, for example, explained that they 'mostly use the term *terrorists*' and they didn't think anyone in the *JP* 'would have an issue with calling Hamas *terrorists*'. This shared worldview among the *JP* staff of the nature of Israel's adversary in the conflict was also evident in the *JP* Editor's words:

> So ... in the *Jerusalem Post* ... we're not afraid to call terrorists 'terrorists', especially when they're launching attacks against civilians ... I stick by what you just said, that the *Jerusalem Post* use the word 'terrorists' ... so long as they continue to employ terror as a means of fighting what they call the occupation ... I have no problem running the words 'terror' or 'terrorism' when we refer to Hamas.

The prominence given in the *JP* reporting to <u>Liberman</u> is another notable example of the role an outlet's political orientation plays in news producers' selections. In my interviews with *JP* informants, it became clear that the prominence given to Liberman was guided primarily by his reputation for having 'hawkish' political views. Such views are believed to be aligned with the right-wing political orientation of the outlet. Thus, for example, the *JP* Editor told me:

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Liberman took a very hardline, hawkish view about this war and he was and is determined to end Hamas rule in Gaza ... Liberman was in a way being a naughty boy ... saying this is wrong and we should be taking a much tougher stand and we should be wiping them out.

A different example of how the political orientation of an outlet shapes news reporting relates to the discourse that emerged in the *Haaretz* reporting around boycotting Israel. As seen previously, the prominence given to this discourse was guided to some extent by news producers' awareness of audience ('we're responding to what our readers have shown us that they're interested in', said the *Haaretz* Editor). However, as emerged from my interview with the *Haaretz* Editor, the focus given to the discourse around boycotting Israel was also motivated by *Haaretz* editorial policy. This was evident in the *Haaretz* Editor's words: 'Plus I think there are some people on the editorial board who support the boycott, so ... you know, they have an interest in stories like this appearing ... we're promoting issues that we believe are important to discuss'.

The finding that emerged from the interviews regarding the influence of an outlet's 'DNA' on journalists' and editors' selections is congruent with a number of studies (e.g. Peng, 2008; Alarcon, 2010). Such studies suggested that the different political orientations of news outlets have a major bearing on the content of their publications and account for differences in the way they represent the same issue.

A different type of motivation which operates on a much grander scale and which emerged as central in all the interviews relates to news producers' identity as Israeli citizens. My interviews with informants from all three publications revealed that news producers' selections were often influenced by national values and beliefs that resonate within Israeli society, that is, the ethos of a conflict. While at times informants spoke forthrightly about these national beliefs and values, in many cases these were found to be implicitly embedded within their responses.

One set of societal beliefs which was found to guide the reporting was beliefs about unity. These refer to group members' awareness of the importance of presenting a 'united front' (e.g. supporting the goals of the conflict) in the face of the external threat. My informants spoke about how, as Israelis, they felt obliged, at least to some extent, to support the Israeli narrative. Thus, for example, the *Haaretz* Editor told me: 'We are Israeli, there's nothing we can do, you know; anybody who is Israeli is a voice of Israel in some respect'. This seems to fit with the work of scholars such as Robinson et al. (2013), who contend that a normative assumption during war time is for news media to 'support government policy… and help to mobilise public support for military action' (p.2).

Beliefs about unity were also evident in informants' comments about the challenge of balancing their identity as Israelis with their professional identity as news producers. The *Haaretz* Journalist 2, for example, forthrightly explained that the fact that they were 'Israeli after all' and that their friends who served in the army were inside Gaza must have affected the way they were reporting. The *Ynetnews* Editor elaborated on the challenge of being a 'war correspondent' in your own country:

> I was driving home from work and a siren went off. It was the first time I hadn't actually been in a building when a siren went off. So everybody stops the cars … and everybody crowded into a stairway. Because I was working for a news organisation, I had an instant feed of where the rockets had fallen and how many people and blah blah blah, so I was standing in a room full of people that I'd never met in my life … so you're both a war correspondent and a war … not a victim but like a person who is experiencing the war in their own home. It's a very peculiar …

Another set of societal beliefs which was found to shape news producers' content and linguistic selections was beliefs about security and particularly the perception of threat on which they are based (Bar-Tal, 2000). As Merom (1999) argues, Israelis perceive their security and threats to be exceptional; such notions of national security exceptionalism

'percolated so deeply into Israeli society that they became integrated even into the discourse of society's most critical minds' (p.413).

An example of this was evident, for example, in informants' comments about the prominence of the discourse around the disruption of flights to and from Israel. Thus, for example, the *Haaretz* Editor told me that 'at the time ... it really cemented the feeling of a country at war, under siege, and it was important to relay just what a big deal this was'. Clearly, in this particular instance, the editor felt a need to 'serve as [a] cultural agent ... who articulate[s] ... collective emotions' (Nir & Roeh, 1992:48). Along similar lines, the *Ynetnews* Editor suggested that bans on flights were perceived as an indicator of threat: 'Closing down Israel's airspace ... you are effectively shutting down the country's ... specially somewhere like Israel which is basically surrounded on all sides by other enemies or by cold allies and the Mediterranean Sea'.

Also embedded in the *Ynetnews* Editor's comment above (particularly their words 'surrounded ... by other enemies or by cold allies') are societal beliefs about siege (Bar-Tal, 2000). This theme emerged as a recurring theme in the interviews. As explained previously, siege beliefs pertain to perceptions about the society 'dwelling alone' in a hostile world. This was evident, for example, in informants' explanations for the prominence of the discourse around blame. Commenting on the prominent use of the verb <u>accused</u>, the *JP* Journalist 3 was explicit about the role that a siege mentality played in this instance: 'Yes, because Israel sees itself ... because that's the victim ... that's the besieged mentality and because that is a huge ... It reflects our own sense of being besieged, right?'

The role that beliefs about siege played in shaping the reporting was also evident in *Ynetnews* informants' explanations for the prominence of a discourse around 'anti-Israel' protests. This was illustrated, for instance, in the *Ynetnews* Journalist 1's words below:

> And I think there is even no less than a sense of satisfaction dealing with ... the entire world is against us ... and the BDS is anti-Israel ... look how they attack us despite what is being done to us ... In other words, it's kind of a Jewish, Holocaustic diasporal thing, yeah? The whole 'we are being attacked, we are being fired at, we are

defending ourselves', and yet, abroad, you will find all these ... the anti-Semites, the anti-Israelis that only look for the opportunity to attack us.

Along similar lines, the *Ynetnews* Journalist 2 identified the Israeli siege mentality as a factor that shaped the discourse around anti-Israel protests, highlighting Israeli 'sensitivity', particularly in times of war, to the slightest criticism. On this sensitivity, Bar-Tal (2000:116) notes:

> Society members with siege beliefs feel threatened by outgroups and develop sensitivity to the information and cues coming from other societies ... Such sensitivity is necessary to avoid being surprised by negative action from the other societies, which, given their evil intentions, may act harmfully at any time ... Every piece of information or cue must be scrutinized for indications of negative intentions.

In summary, this part of the analysis revealed that news producers' selections of content and language were guided by a range of factors, suggesting that news production is a complex process. When invited to speak about the considerations that guided the shaping of their reporting, informants were overall convinced that they were reporting what was 'happening on the ground'. They identified, for the most part, factors that relate to beliefs about universal professional standards (e.g. beliefs about the newsworthiness of events and about criteria that inform best-practice news writing), routines (e.g. observing the coverage of other media outlets) and imperatives (e.g. commercial pressures/concern for audience).

Significantly, however, it was also evident from the interviews that news producers' content and lexical choices were influenced to a large extent by national ideologies and consensual myths, identified by Bar-Tal (2000) as the ethos of conflict. Some informants spoke forthrightly about the workings of these ideologies; in other instances, these

ideologies were found to be embedded more subtly in informants' comments. These findings reflect the notion that journalists' and editors' identities are complex – namely, that they are not only news professionals but unavoidably also members of the national community (e.g. Zandberg & Neiger, 2005; Neiger et al., 2010).

Taken together, the findings that emerged from the two types of analysis – that is, the textual analysis exploring how Israel was framed in the Israeli media and the analysis of news production processes exploring the factors and motivations that influenced these representations – significantly point to a coverage that propagated the ethos of conflict. The findings from this research also reveal a gap between news producers' perception of their work as professionals and the reporting that was produced. These inconsistencies fit with the work of scholars such as Weaver et al. (2007), Ramaprasad and Rahman (2006), Mellado and Van Dalen (2014) and Tandoc et al. (2013).

8. Conclusion

This study clearly demonstrates that the Israeli media presented a troublingly similar representation of 'Israel' in its coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict. The main finding of the linguistic component of the research is the high level of convergence in the ways Israel was represented across the three news outlets. Specifically, Israel was depicted as a victim that acts in self-defence and as a conciliatory participant whose right to self-defence is supported by the US. I argue that this representation served to legitimise Israel's acts of violence in Gaza and further perpetuated Israeli beliefs about self-victimhood, the justness of Israel's goals and a positive Israeli self-image. This in turn is believed to have fuelled the intractability of the conflict and to have posed an obstacle to a peaceful resolution.

This study has also revealed a nuanced understanding of some of the challenges faced by news producers covering the conflict their nation is engulfed in: juggling liberal and democratic expectations of independent coverage with government and military expectations of supportive news coverage. While the news production process proved to be a complex one, influenced by a range of factors (e.g. news-writing objectives, the outlet's political orientation), journalists' and editors' content and lexical choices were influenced to a large extent by national ideologies and their identities as members of the national community. In the struggle between their national aspirations for solidarity and their professional aspirations for independence, balance and criticism, Israeli news producers covering the 2014 round of violence tended to side with the former.

There are a number of significant outcomes from this study. The first one is methodological. While corpus-based CDA studies have gained momentum in the past decade, Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2018:15) point to the relatively small body of corpus-based CDA studies which specifically deal with the topic of conflict. To date, there have been only two corpus-based CDA studies which have focused on the media coverage of the Israel–Palestinian conflict (IPC) (Kandil, 2009; Almeida, 2011). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge there is no other study which has triangulated corpus-based CDA with an

analysis of news production processes in order to explore the media representation of the IPC.

Second, this research extends the current body of knowledge in the field of conflict journalism. The study of news coverage of war and conflict has been characterised by opposing views (Livio & Cohen-Yechezkely, 2019). On the one hand, there are studies which suggest that, during war, news producers' national aspiration for solidarity overrides their professional aspirations for criticism and objectivity, resulting in 'rallying round the flag' type of coverage (e.g. Nir & Roeh, 1992; Dor, 2004; Korn, 2004; Wolsfeld, 2014; Frosh & Awabdy, 2008; Orgad, 2009; Livio & Cohen-Yechezkely, 2019). On the other hand, other research on media coverage of conflict/war suggests that, compared to the past, the reporting tends to be complex, with news producers bringing in, for example, the adversary's viewpoints and more criticism of the government and the military (Liebes & Kampf, 2009; Neiger, Zandberg & Meyers, 2010; Kampf & bLiebes, 2013; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch & Nagar, 2016; Lavie-Dinur, Yarchi & Karniel, 2018). This research provides empirical evidence in support of the former claim that, during wartime, journalists and editors tend to promote the dominant national narrative.

The findings of this research remain subject to important limitations. One limitation concerns the focus on one entity: Israel. As Kandil (2009) notes, 'once the researcher chooses a certain term for the analysis, he/she will have very limited view of other phenomena that do not occur in the immediate vicinity of the issue being investigated' (p.106). Future research would benefit from exploring media representations of the Palestinian side and how these might affect the conflict's intractability. Another limitation relates to the fact that the IPC is a longstanding and complex conflict comprising numerous violent episodes. Therefore, having focused on the Israeli media coverage of the 2014 Israel–Gaza clashes, I cannot claim to have reached generalisations that are applicable to the Israeli media representation of the IPC at large. Longitudinal studies can provide unique insights into how patterns of media representations of the conflict changed/remained stable over time. Nonetheless, I hope that the breadth of data and the methodological approach used grant some credence to the conclusions I have drawn.

As a final reflection, the most general conclusions from this study are rather pessimistic. It seems one cannot rely on mainstream journalism, perhaps in ways that used to be the case, to play a critical and challenging role as a corrective to the prerogatives of state power. Perhaps the most telling evidence lies in the behaviour of the oppositional newspaper *Haaretz* – particularly the finding that it felt obliged to support the Israeli government's efforts to present its offensive on Gaza as an act of self-defence. Future research would benefit from exploring the constraints that news producers' sense of national identity can impose on the integrity of their practice.

Postscript

At the time of writing, the sides in this conflict embarked on a whole new round of fighting. Another round of violence erupted on 10 May 2021 and lasted for 11 days until a ceasefire came into effect on 21 May 2021. This crisis saw Hamas and Islamic Jihad launching rockets into Israel, and Israel launching air raids on Gaza. In the Israeli narrative, this significant escalation in hostilities started with the firing of rockets from Gaza (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). In the Palestinian narrative, two main events have led to the rise in tensions (Bachelet, 2021). The first one was the imminent evictions of six Palestinian families and their forced displacement in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, which under international law is part of the occupied Palestinian territories. The second one was the deployment of Israeli police forces at the Al Aqsa compound and the restriction of access to thousands of Palestinian worshippers during the last days of Ramadan.

As a result of the violence, 242 Palestinians including 63 children were killed, thousands of Palestinians were injured and an estimated 74,000 Palestinians were displaced. On the Israeli side, 12 civilians including two children and an IDF soldier were killed and several hundred people were injured. With the conflict showing no signs of abating, its intractability seems ever more entrenched.

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Appendix A

The media triangle (Dick, 1989)

Eddie Dick Triangle

analysis

- denotation
- connotation
- codes
- genre
- ideology & values
- commodity
- intertextuality

Audience

- culture
- gender
- textual competence
- psychology
- social function

meanings

Text

Production

- distribution
- legality
- codes & practices

- ownership
- control
- finance
- technology

creation