Vying for Victimhood
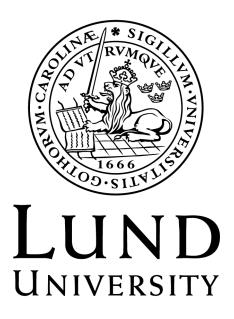
Subtextual moral judgements and news organisation standpoints reporting Gaza 2014

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Abstract

In the summer of 2014, a violent conflagration erupted in the isolated Palestinian enclave of Gaza. Whilst the fighting was between Hamas and Israel, Palestinian civilians paid the price. The stark disparity in deaths triggered a debate in the West about Israeli tactics, and the media was accused of 'bias' by both Israelis and Palestinians. What this controversy reveals is that the argument is about something deeper than 'bias' - it is about the media making subtle moral judgements on the relative value of Israeli and Palestinian lives, and who can really be considered the *Victim*. These subtle moral judgements are woven into supposedly 'objective' news articles. Within these articles are deep values and partialities, indicated by 'thick' moral statements. These are affected by news outlets' own standpoints and sensitivities when reporting for their intended audiences.

This research sought to critically analyse how one of the most controversial conflicts in the world is morally constructed as a part of the mediapolis. The research employed qualitative content analysis, symptomatic reading, and a framing analysis on 18 articles taken from Al Jazeera and the Associated Press in order to make a comparative analysis of how each news outlet constructs a relationship of moral proximity between readers and differing national groups - Palestinians and Israelis. By creating an analytical tool to combine the theories of Chouliaraki, Putnam, and Bauman, two moral categories emerge - that of the *Victim* and *Villain.* The level of emotionalism around either of these categories creates a moral proximity for the readers, corresponding to the national group they culturally identify with - Palestinians for Al Jazeera, and Israelis for the Associated Press. By consistently painting both nations into either one of these categories, it is exceedingly difficult to notice this phenomenon without direct comparison - or to extend sympathy to the cultural 'Other' in the news coverage. This warping of coverage to suit audience cultural preferences distorts how the conflict is seen from afar, humanising one group whilst dehumanising another. This

challenges cosmopolitan ethics, pollutes the mediapolis and likely influences public policy, with real-world outcomes for Palestinians and Israelis.

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"The smell of bodies knocks people down - it is horrible to see human bodies thrown onto the streets like that. The missiles are hitting everyone … there is nowhere for us to seek shelter."

Umm Mohammed Abu Sada, a resident of Rafah, Gaza.
4 August, 2014

"They use telegenically dead Palestinians for their cause. They want the more dead the better."

Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister.
21 July, 2014

Introduction

In the summer of 2014, after several Hamas rockets were launched from the isolated and besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza, the Israeli military launched an aerial assault on the small territory. The conflict started on 8 July and finished on 27 August with a ceasefire agreement. During this time, the Israeli military invaded Gaza, bombing United Nations schools, hospitals, and refugee camps. The disparity in victims was stark. On the Palestinian side, 2,251 died, including 1,462 civilians, of which 500 were children. On the Israeli side, sixty-seven soldiers and six civilians were killed (UNOCHA 2014).

A debate broke out in the West, criticising Israeli tactics and the number of civilian casualties suffered by the Palestinians (Reuben 2014). Israeli officials were repeatedly interviewed by major Western news outlets, with reporters questioning why schools and hospitals were being repeatedly shelled. The Israeli government and its supporters bitterly contested that the media was 'biased' against them - whilst the Palestinians and their allies declared the same. Discussions of the decades-old occupation are divisive, particularly in the West, noting the controversy both Jeremy Corbyn and Ilhan Omar draw when advocating for Palestine. Yet on closer examination, what this controversy reveals is that the argument is about something deeper than 'bias' - it is about the media making subtle moral judgements on the relative value of Israeli and Palestinian lives.

The furious feelings provoked by news outlets' differing coverage - such as between the Associated Press and Al Jazeera, two organisations that cater to very different audiences - illuminates a fundamental tension between supposedly 'objective' reporting and deeply entrenched moral judgements, invisible without a close examination. Language is fundamentally imbued with a "[deep] entanglement of fact and value" (Putnam 1992: 165). Sometimes the ideological leanings of a person or text are obviously expressed when they resort to describing things with 'thin' moral concepts - that is, words such as 'good' and 'bad'. However, this is often not the case. Instead, ideological predispositions are conveyed

via descriptions full of 'thick' moral concepts - "statements that simultaneously are true and full of value judgements" (ibid: 166). This equally applies to journalistic reporting, despite professional aspirations towards a purely fact-oriented 'objectivity' (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016) - as after all, there are no 'non-partisan' journalists (Patterson and Donsbach 1996).

Consequently, subtle moral judgements about the relative value of Palestinian and Israeli lives are expressed in media outlets' reporting. These clearly reveal which 'side' the news outlet has a partisan preference for and attempts to influence their readers towards - despite a philosophical and professional commitment to objectivity. The side that the news outlet and readers are culturally close to is humanised with 'thick' moral descriptions of the conflict (Putnam 1992), whilst the 'Other' is dehumanised with overly rational descriptions of suffering (Bauman 1989). Yet these deep moral judgements may only become truly obvious when actively seeking out these descriptions and applying a rigorous analytical framework. The richest site of analysis for this phenomenon is the moral category of the *Victim*. The *Victim* is in itself a 'thick' moral concept - fundamentally implying that an injustice has been done through no fault of the *Victim*'s own, morally requiring one to take the *Victim's* side in wrongdoing. There are plenty of portrayals of *Victims* during the Gaza conflict of 2014 to choose from and thus we may learn whether news outlet is more sympathetic to Palestinians or Israelis via these portrayals. The question is - how do supposedly objective journalists make moral standpoints clear in the way that they report?

The moral consequences of zooming in on one group's suffering and dehumanising the Other's suffering are real. For the citizen who will never set foot in either Palestine or Israel, the media is the only way they can shape their opinion on the conflict. This mediapolis shapes the moral world in which we perceive this conflict (Silverstone 2006), and evidence abounds that different news outlets tailor their coverage around the conflict to suit audience cultural preferences, not only communicating values as to whose side the reader should take, but also indicating whose lives matter less - Palestinians, or Israelis - constituting pollution of the mediapolis.

 Messages like this, delivered so repeatedly and consistently that they appear to be unquestionably natural (Barthes 1973) are unavoidably influential (Lewis 2001: 132). The

messages end up steering public opinion - and highly likely from there, public policy (Entman 2004: 21). These public policies, tacitly sanctioned by public opinion, naturally have material consequences - such as the American decision to defund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency supporting Palestinian refugees (Beaumont 2018) or Qatar's financial backing of the Hamas-led government in Gaza (Khoury 2019). Public understanding of the occupation is jeopardised by the media coverage, which makes it difficult for citizens to move beyond the culturally predetermined designation of whom may be considered the *Victim* - limiting public sympathies to one side only.

Several trends are causing the mediapolis is becoming ever more polarised on this particular issue. It has long been observed that in times of armed conflict, media outlets almost universally line to support the war-making of national elites, parroting the rhetoric that the conflict is 'defensive' in nature (Carruthers 2011: 7). Within the West, a bias towards Israeli officialdom prevails (Barkho 2008, Shreim 2012) and the public is consistently shown not to understand the mechanics of the occupation (Philo and Berry 2004, Lewis 2001). In any case, the availability of original reporting on foreign affairs continues to dwindle. Multinational news agencies headquartered in the West only grow in influence as foreign bureau budgets are slashed, and rarely seriously challenge the policies of their home countries (Paterson 2005). There is ample evidence that news outlets practice 'contextual objectivity' (El-Nawawy and Powers 2008) whereby factually correct coverage is tailored towards audience sympathies - for both cultural and commercial reasons (Wolfsfeld 2008). Despite journalistic professional standards being preoccupied around the concept of 'objectivity', idealised as cold and fact-oriented only (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016), an elusive emotionalism creeps in to describe people that are 'more like us' - thus creating emotional and moral proximity between the spectator and the sufferer, encouraging more pity and potential for action (Chouliaraki 2006). All together, this is a potent combination with severe moral repercussions and material consequences for both Palestinian and Israeli lives.

Aim and Research Questions

This thesis aims to uncover how the Associated Press and Al Jazeera make subtle moral statements about the conflict and the relative value of human life by investigating the way that the news outlets reported on the events of Gaza 2014. These kinds of 'thick' moral concepts are much more difficult to discern than surface level 'thin' descriptions, making them appear quite natural - and all the more important to seek out. It will do this by focusing on the portrayal of the moral category of the *Victim* in the conflict, visible via the creation of relationships of emotional and moral proximity between the subject and the reader. In this way, we can critically analyse a crucial aspect of how one of the most controversial and longest-running conflicts in the world is morally constructed as a part of the mediapolis (Silverstone 2006). It will then discuss the moral implications of this reporting - namely, how it affects the readers' image of the war when the audience is unable to gain first-hand experience of the conflict from far away. Consequently, the research is guided by a phronetic approach - focused on producing "practical knowledge" in a specific context (Flyvbjerg 2001: 135).

The research questions are as follows;

1. How does Al Jazeera create a relationship of emotional and moral proximity between its readers and both Palestinians and Israelis?

2. How does the Associated Press create a relationship of emotional and moral proximity between its readers and both Palestinians and Israelis?

3. How do these differing relationships of proximity compare, and what do they reveal to us about the news organisations' standpoints and subtextual moral judgements?

Literature Review

i) Introduction

Many news organisations dedicate themselves and their journalists to pursuing objective truth and reporting it to their audience. The gold standard of objectivity is cool, detached, 'fact-oriented', with the subjective figure of the journalist erased from view (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016: 3). It is then no surprise that much consternation and controversy occurs when supposedly impartial news organisations report the same event in very different lights - particularly during a situation of violent armed conflict. There are few conflicts more controversial or more misunderstood by the public than the Israeli occupation of Palestine, making it an excellent case study.

The journalistic ideal of objectivity is typically still vaunted, even "indispensable in a free society" (Ryan 2001: 4) and overladen with ideological assumptions.Yet how can one look at reports of the same event by two different news outlets and come away with entirely different impressions of what occurred - what subtle frames, nuances, wordings and assumptions are found in the texts to shape opinion in a certain way?

Reports on suffering, victimhood, and violent armed conflict can put these differing accounts of the same events into sharp perspective. Implicit but unspoken value judgements are found in the 'thick' moral descriptions of these events (Putnam 1992). Whether deaths are described in remote, birds-eye view, clinical terms or in first person, emotive, vivid scenes of horror conveys to the reader underlying values and ideological positions - at the same time as all of these descriptive elements being true. One academically fruitful way to analyse how different news outlets produce qualitatively different reports - and provoke a different set of feelings on the part of the reader - is to look at the reporting through the lens of *Victimhood.* The *Victim* embodies two things - a 'thick' moral concept in its own right (the very word is in no way neutral, calling on the reader to take their side) and a clear analytical category. Research tells us that *Victims* deserve sympathy and are not accountable for their actions (Bar-Tal et al.

2009: 241). Furthermore, all nations endeavour to rhetorically portray themselves as *Victims* in armed conflict - even if they are the aggressor (Carruthers 2011: 7). This fact tells us something about the importance of being regarded as a *Victim*. Who is described as a *Victim* has important consequences for the moral leanings of the mediapolis (Silverstone 2006) - are only those culturally close to us regarded as *Victims*? What of distant Others, can their suffering and *Victimhood* be represented with appropriate distance (ibid), or are they dehumanised?

This literature review will begin by exploring the concept of victimhood in situations of conflict, and the studies that have specifically looked at victimhood portrayals in Israel-Palestine media coverage. It will then contemplate the studies that have compared Western news outlet coverage of Israel-Palestine. Thereafter, it will explore comparative studies of Western outlets and Arab outlets, observing the differences that have been found in covering this situation. An overview of both the histories of Al Jazeera, which burst onto the scene in the mid-90s and upended Western hegemonic media discourses about who observes and the long history of Western newswires and their increasing importance in a challenging media environment, will be surveyed. Finally, the concepts both of 'contextual objectivity' and a brief overview of both moral and cosmopolitan approaches to media portrayals of suffering will be discussed.

ii) Victimhood

Why would one aspire to the portrayal of victimhood in the media - or in one's own national discourse? Appropriating the mantle of victimhood can wield many benefits. *Victims* may simply be and aren't accountable or responsible for their actions. By definition, they deserve sympathy. In fact, this status can win the support of the international community and thereby bring about a satisfactory resolution for the injured party (Bar-Tal et al. 2009: 241). Crucially, conceiving of oneself as a victim can enable a group to commit war crimes that otherwise would have been unthinkable, as the enduring rhetoric of Serb victimhood during the perpetration of the Bosnian genocide conclusively demonstrates (Rieff 1996). A similar

dynamic can be seen in the claims made by the Hutu radio station RTLM, as it gave explicit instructions on how to murder Tutsi neighbours and colleagues on the basis that Tutsis planned to enslave Hutus like 'beasts in the field' (Carruthers 2011:19). Victims have a license to act in the way they see fit to defend themselves from aggressors, able to make ethical, rational arguments in order to perpetrate the worst of crimes (Bauman 1989).

It has been noted that both Israeli and Palestinian national narratives cast themselves as victims (Smulders 2013: 164) - this is not unusual the context of global conflicts, given that we know nation states have a penchant for representing themselves as victimised in situations of conflict (Carruthers 2011: 7). Not all conflicts are symmetrical (if any truly are), but strategic use of the media can smooth out this obvious power differential and make the battleground appear more equal, a strategy that Hamas has been documented using (Shinar and Bratic 2010: 127).

If this is so, surely the impressions that groups receive from the media on the subject of who may justifiably claim victimhood matters. Within Western prestigious titles, the depiction of victimhood privileges Israeli experience at the expense of Palestinian. Fourteen years and two countries apart, researchers find evidence that Israelis are portrayed as humanised victims and Palestinians are bloodthirsty perpetrators. Conducting an analysis of 34 editorials published in the New York Times after the events of September 11th, Ross finds that Palestinians never meet the criteria for being portrayed as the 'moral victims' of events (Ross 2003: 58). He notes that this representation comes against a dramatic media background in the United States of portraying both Islam and Arabs as backwards and a threat to the 'Western way of life'. The usual rhetoric of the 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington 2000) does not make the American public receptive to other ways of seeing the Palestinian struggle. Much more recently, Wang employs critical discourse analysis to conclude both that Israelis are 'worthy victims', yet when Palestinians are killed, there are no names, ages, or emotional details shared with the readers of the Guardian and the Telegraph (Wang 2017: 97). Surprisingly, there appears to be no research specifically looking into how Al Jazeera or other Arab media outlets portray victimhood in the Palestine - Israel conflict. There is clear space available for a thesis to specifically research frames of *Victimhood* within the Associated Press and Al Jazeera.

iii) *Comparative studies of Western media*

There is a vast array of literature investigating reporting in the English speaking media - but it usually focuses national media broadcasters or media outlets of a certain prestige, and not on newswires, even though many news organisations will purchase both footage and articles from these services. It tends to be the same Anglo-American media outlets scrutinised again and again - for example, Amer (2017) conducts a critical discourse analysis of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* (USA based), *The Guardian*, and *The Times* (UK based). Peterson (2015) analyses these and additionally *The Los Angeles Times, The Christian Science Monitor, The Washington Times (*USA based), and *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph* (UK based). There is a general lack of attention to the content of newswires when reporting this conflict.

With reputations for objectivity and impartiality on the line for news organisations, many media scholars find that coverage of Palestine-Israel prioritises Israeli perspectives and backgrounds Palestinian ones. Deploying a critical discourse analysis for the coverage of the 2008-9 Gaza conflict, Amer finds that Israeli political actors are foregrounded with agency in achieving a ceasefire, whilst Palestinians (only represented as Hamas), are shown to refuse a ceasefire but without explanation as to why, or what the demands are - such as ending the blockade of Gaza (Amer 2017: 13). Overall, there is a focus on Palestinian violence, presented without context, and Israeli 'response'. Amer chooses to focus only on the actions of political actors in the news articles - those with the power to conduct negotiations and maintain ceasefires. This leaves an interesting gap in analysing the portrayal of Israeli / Palestinian civilian experience - those without the power to influence high-level political happenings that may or may not stop bombs and rockets from falling. There is however, an interesting disagreement in the literature - Amer concludes that coverage does not significantly differ between the British and American news outlets, whilst Peterson (2015) bases an entire book on this assertion. Given that Peterson has far more data and analyses

more foreign policy events (the election of Hamas, Gaza conflicts, the election of the Palestinian Assembly), it would seem he has the edge.

This trend is corroborated by research which finds that in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post,* coverage is increased when there are Palestinian suicide bombings, but less so when there are Israeli military operations (Schrodt, Gerner and Yilmaz 2005: 237). Indeed, the day to day toll that the Israeli occupation takes on Palestinians is almost never covered in these two papers - although between 2002 and 2005, there were usually 1-2 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces every day (ibid). This tendency is born out in the research, as scholars frequently choose to focus on a major event over the course of the occupation - such as the Gaza conflict of 2008-9, and other such events that generate large amounts of foreign coverage. Whilst providing plenty of pieces that can be analysed, it is an interesting choice in and of itself - focusing on only one flashpoint of the conflict and occupation that has been running for decades. A notable exception is Philo and Berry's (2004) study of ITN and BBC broadcasts on the Israel-Palestine conflict in 2001-2. They choose not only to conduct a content analysis of the news bulletins but to interview several journalists who have reported the conflict and to conduct a study on audience comprehension of basic facts about the conflict. They conclude that the television coverage of the conflict does not sufficiently impart knowledge about the context of various rounds of violence - for example, two-thirds of those surveyed did not know that Israel was occupying Palestine, and rather thought it was the other way around (Philo and Berry 2004: 128).

iv) *Comparative studies of Western and Arab media outlets*

The differences in the representation of the conflict become more profound when there is a real comparison to be made between Western and Arab media outlets. Several studies corroborate this notable difference by deploying critical discourse analysis, content analyses, interviews, and audience research. Western media outlets tend to rationalise Israel's actions, although there is a degree of difference between the BBC and CNN - with CNN 'enshrining'

these more obviously (Barkho 2008: 24). On the other hand, Palestinian actions are portrayed as irrational (ibid).

Emotive language is used to further this point - such as the loaded term 'terrorist', another excellent example of a 'thick' moral concept. The very word implies illegitimacy and bloody violence perpetrated against innocent civilians, and is in no way neutral. The word 'terrorist' is overwhelmingly used in Western outlets when describing Palestinian acts of violence but very seldom in relation to Israeli state violence (Kamil 2009: 155). This point is supported by Barkho, who finds that CNN typically uses words like 'militants' - again, a 'thick' moral concept heavy with connotations of illegitimate violence, describing a person who "wages a personal war against the world" (Rosenblum 1981: 81). CNN occasionally uses the word 'terrorists' to describe Palestinians - whilst Al Jazeera tends to simply say the more ambiguous and less ideologically loaded 'armed Palestinians' or 'fighters' (Barkho 2008: 22). However, this is unsurprising, as the term 'terrorist' is nearly always employed to refer to 'illegitimate' violence from organisations apart from a legitimate government - although those on the receiving end of such violence from a supposedly legitimate government may query this designation (Wight 2009: 101). Differences truly arise in what media outlets choose to focus their attention on - for example, references to settlements are highlighted in Al Jazeera, downplayed by CNN, and somewhat addressed by the BBC (Kamil 2009).

How can this be? The agency and intentions of the news organisations are important. An editor at Al Jazeera bluntly states that they want to publish stories "outside the Anglo-American steer of thinking" (Barkho 2008: 23). The addition of the interviews with the editors of the networks adds a nuance and depth the research not easily matched by those pursuing critical discourse analysis alone. Underscoring this point an extensive content analysis of media coverage around the 2008-9 Gaza conflict from BBC World, BBC Arabic, Al Jazeera Arabic, and Al Jazeera English demonstrates that "cultural proximity played a role in the way news reports were constructed" (Shreim 2012: 266). This is played out in "Al-Jazeera allocating more news access and presence to Palestinian sources and BBC granting Israeli perspectives more significance" (ibid).

v) Comparative studies of Arab media

Differences between coverage based on an outlet's affiliation to a nation are of course not limited to the United Kingdom and the United States of America, nor is Al Jazeera a monolith within Arabic speaking countries. Al-Arabiya, a Saudi owned satellite channel, is a regional rival established in 2003 to challenge Al Jazeera's dominance. A content analysis of 309 broadcast reports and drawing on various framing theories concludes that the framing of the Gaza 2008-9 conflict differs markedly between Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya (Elmasry et al. 2013). Al Jazeera gives more time to Palestinian narratives and specifically to that of Palestinian suffering, noting the precise death toll in 26% of the broadcasts, as opposed to Al-Arabiya's significantly lower 7% (ibid: 764). Al Jazeera's broadcasts were notably lengthier as well - 70% exceeding two minutes of coverage, whilst at Al-Arabiya 61% of stories did not exceed one minute. The authors of the study speculate that geopolitical concerns influence the length of the broadcasts. The Saudi owned Al-Arabiya channel favours an editorial angle that is hostile towards Hamas, and favourable towards Egypt, the United Nations, and the USA - the exact inverse of Al Jazeera's home country of Qatar's usual political leanings. News outlets acting as cheerleaders for their home countries' foreign policies including and particularly in times of war is a phenomenon that has been well documented by Carruthers (2011: 7). Seib does note that "the Al Jazeera channels certainly reflect the interests of the emir" and that there is a noticeable lack of criticism of the Qatari government in a way that sets it apart from the treatment of other Arab states (Seib 2016: 3).

vi) *The significance of Al Jazeera*

That coverage differs between Al Jazeera and the BBC (amongst other Western news outlets) might seem intuitive to grasp at first, given their different target audiences. The difficulty lies in media organisations claiming to be unbiased and impartial. Yet, the challenge that Al Jazeera's reporting poses to Western hegemonic discourses around Middle Eastern conflicts goes deeper than just the reportage of Israel and Palestine. Indeed, Western news

organisations had "half a century of hegemony" (ibid: 1) in television news. The birth of Al Jazeera fundamentally shook this monopoly and levelled criticism at Western governments many were unaccustomed to hearing.

The Al Jazeera approach to news making has intrigued many scholars. It is composed of numerous different subsidiaries - Al Jazeera Arabic, Al Jazeera English, and Al Jazeera America to name but a few. The Arabic language Al Jazeera launched in 1996, making a remarkable splash in the region and providing a counterweight to the very dominant CNN network, which had set the agenda for covering the 1991 Gulf War (El-Nawawy and Powers 2008: 11). It is fully funded by the Qatari royal family, and has criticised other governments in the region to the extent that in every single country, states have responded by not permitting Al Jazeera journalists to work or by shutting down local bureaus (Seib 2016: 10). It has also ruffled diplomatic feathers in the region, with over 450 official complaints being received by the Qatari state within the first few years of the network's operation (El-Nawawy and Powers 2008: 28).

Al Jazeera has not limited its criticism of government policy just to Arab nations. It has drawn the ire of the American government in particular, accused of "being the voice of terrorists and radical jihadists" in the wake of 9/11 (Damanhoury and Saleh 2017: 86). Indeed, the former Bush administration. repeatedly challenged the network's practices, with the Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld deploring the use of footage in which civilian deaths can be seen as 'vicious, inaccurate, and inexcusable', and officially demanded that the Qatari government "rein in" Al Jazeera (Fahmy and Emad 2011: 218). Of particular controversy was the network's choice to air interviews and recordings of Osama bin Laden after 9/11.

In 2006, Al Jazeera English was established. The network's aims were ambitious - "break the western control over media production, change the news agenda, represent Third World countries, and form a counter-flow of information" (Damanhoury and Saleh 2017: 86). Effectively, the network aspired to represent the global South. Indeed, this commitment to representing the global South meant operating differently from other (Western) news organisations. Al Jazeera focuses on producing news broadcasts, analyses and other new items from local correspondents - ie, Gazans report from Gaza - and is critical of Western

news networks such as ITN sending journalists based in Beijing to cover events in Pakistan (Carpenter 2017: 75). The group's mission is to "serve as a voice to the voiceless", and sets itself deliberately apart from Western news organisations by "[going] deeper into the communities to understand the stories, rather than getting the [news] services to give us the information" (El-Nawawy and Powers 2008: 32). The deliberate exclusion of news services as a point of journalistic professionalism and organisational mission is highly relevant for this thesis's comparative analysis of Associated Press and Al Jazeera - even though Al Jazeera does not always reach its stated goals in this regard. Whilst the aims are lofty, there are of course criticisms as to how much this has really been achieved. Conducting a quantitative content analysis, Figenschou demonstrates that whilst the global South is well represented by Al Jazeera, with more analytical broadcasts and local correspondents, there is still a gender and elite bias with male officials dominating the news items as "the most frequent and authoritative news sources" (Figenschou 2010: 86).

vii) A closer look at news agencies

Newswires, or news agencies, are extraordinarily influential organisations - in a manner that those who don't preoccupy themselves with contemplating the media seldom appreciate. The market is dominated currently by Reuters, the Associated Press, and Agence France-Presse - headquartered in London, New York, and Paris respectively. Whilst some contend that the agencies "treat news as a saleable commodity produced in bulk" (MacGregor 2013: 36) and others declare that agencies are news wholesalers (Boyd-Barrett 1981) this doesn't take into account that the Associated Press is a not-for-profit and Agence France-Presse receives a considerable subsidy from the French government. Nevertheless, the agencies produce neatly packaged news that is distributed all over the world.

The reasons for the increasing influence of news agencies are multifold. Globalisation and the intense competition between media outlets are part of the story. Journalists and newsrooms are under serious pressure. The explosion of media outlets on the internet and plummeting ad revenues, as well as a 24-hour news cycle, mean that traditional media

oligopolies have been decimated. The expectations for journalistic outputs have risen dramatically - a journalist working in 2006 was expected to write three times as many articles as their colleague would have produced in 1986 (Boumans 2016: 10). Research has shown that although the number of media outlets has markedly increased, the numbers of original producers of international news has actually shrunk (Paterson 2005: 145). The resulting journalistic practice of high turnover and running articles sourced from either news agencies or public relations professionals without many changes has been termed 'churnalism' (Jackson and Moloney 2016: 763). Foreign correspondents are particularly expensive to maintain, and consequently many editors have made the decision to cut these staff and instead sub in a subscription to an agency, with some journalists working on tailoring the bought content to domestic interests (Boumans 2016: 12).

The history of news agencies is inextricably linked with notions of globalisation and Western hegemonic dominance. The emergence of the telegraph in the second half of the 19th century is linked with the rise of news agencies - before, the news was usually circulated via proximity to events, but this new technology meant that events in far off lands could be reported on tomorrow halfway across the world (Bielsa 2008: 350). The Associated Press was established in 1848, and sought to collate and produce news items from the Americas, thereafter sharing the news items with trusted partners like Reuters. News agencies became "agents of globalisation" themselves, spreading the values of "impartiality, objectivity and neutrality across the globe" (Boyd-Barrett in Bielsa, 2008: 355). These claims have not been received by all peoples without scepticism. Vigorous assertions that the Western news agencies have an imperialist agenda were heard at UNESCO conferences in the 1950s and 1960s (Boyd Barrett 1981: 250), where delegates asserted that the bias demonstrated by the news agencies "closely corresponds with the policy objectives of the governments of those countries". At the time, many countries in the world were struggling for liberation from British and French empires, and again, we know that it is strikingly unusual for media bodies not to stand behind government policy in times of war (Carruthers 2011: 7). Furthermore, Boyd-Barrett published in 1981, a time when the world was dominated by ideological clashes between free-market capitalism and state communism. Challenges to dominant Western media discourses and interpretations were perhaps more common then - as opposed to the supposed state of 'the end of history' we live in now (Fukuyama 1989).

Even within a system now mostly dominated by neoliberal ideology, concerns remain that the three big news agencies are remarkably homogeneous in the content they produce, being exclusively Western-based and populated by a small pool of culturally similar people. News agencies rarely publish any stories that seriously challenge the ideological positions of the United Kingdom and the USA, and that a sharp gender and official bias is demonstrated when using sources for news - for example, one study demonstrated that only 6% of named news sources in Reuters articles were female (Paterson 2005: 158). Media production is not the only sector to be questioned regarding the makeup of its practicants - Harding makes a compelling case as to how the sciences also have a significant male, Western slant, to the detriment of women and those in postcolonial nations (Harding 2008). Nearly invisible criteria on what constitutes news and whose voice one should prioritise in order to report it - officials? Citizens? Protesters? - are replicated within AP, Reuters, and AFP.

Some have sought to put this theory into practice and examine how reporting differs between different news agencies, depending on origin. A content analysis performed in 2003, looking at Reuters, AP, AFP, ITAR-TASS (the Russian state news agency), Xinhua (the Chinese state news agency), and the Inter Press Service (a Latin American agency specifically focused on covering issues affecting people in the global South) examines whose voices were represented in international debate about the US decision to go to war with Iraq (Horvit: 2006). Perhaps unsurprisingly, non-Western agencies featured more voices from outside the West on the Iraq war debate, and that the Western agencies foregrounded the Bush administration's officials above all (ibid: 427).

Whilst Western news agencies value impartiality and objectivity, this ideal is not put into practice (if such a thing is possible in any case). In a 1996 survey of European journalists' values and news decisions, the researchers conclude that they are not 'non-partisan' - they are "simply more or less partisan, depending on the arena and country in which they work" (Patterson and Donsbach 1996: 455). When the vast majority of news outlets republish news agency content and keep 85% of the copy unchanged (Paterson 2005: 145), one can argue that the cultural homogeneity and shrinking of the diversity of international news sources by definition narrows the scope and perspective of international news.

When it comes to one of the longest-running conflicts in the modern era, surprisingly few studies have been done on the content produced by news wires around Israel-Palestine - as previously discussed, most studies focus on news outlets of prestige in both the West and the Middle East. This leaves a striking scholarly void to be filled by further research, including by this thesis. One such study, however, is a content analysis with an emphasis on framing looking at coverage of the Palestinian intifada in the New York Times and the Associated Press. It notes that Americans are most likely to encounter a generic 'Arab terrorist' stereotype in the media (in Hollywood films etc) - this raises questions as to what kind of mediapolis many Americans live in and how this affects their perceptions of conflicts. Nevertheless, the researchers find that *positive* coverage of Palestinians actually increased during the intifada and theorises that the conflict was framed as part of a 'civil rights movement' - culturally relevant for Americans, sympathetic and understandable (Noakes and Wilkins 2002: 649).

viii) Contextual Objectivity

If pressed, all news outlets would strongly defend their commitment to objectivity, fairness and balance. If we accept that language is full of 'thick' moral concepts, intertwining facts and values (Putnam 1992) it is particularly difficult that within journalism as a profession, objectivity is often "understood in terms of the exclusion of values from the journalistic narrative" (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016: 2). How then do Western news outlets and Al Jazeera arrive at such different impressions of one event? Living in the shadow of postmodernism, it is tempting to declare that there simply are no objective truths for journalists to report on. The so-called 'fog of war' makes this an even more enticing idea.

However, some scholars push back against this idea with a halfway-house - the idea of "contextual objectivity", in which media attempts to balance both the wishes and views of their audience - contextuality - with the facts on the ground - objectivity (Iskander and El-Nawawy 2004). Responsiveness to audience views guides the nature of the reporting -

which is why in Al Jazeera's case, the general appeal to the Middle Eastern market and the entrenched opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestine means that coverage will always reflect this point of view (ibid). The same concept can easily be used to understand the coverage of the New York Times and CNN - as the United States tacitly endorses the occupation and provides military aid to Israel, this subtle stance will be reflected to American audiences. Some strongly make the case for objective journalism, pushing back against the postmodern tide and disregarding standpoint epistemology, declaring that objective journalists are finally accountable to their audiences (Ryan 2001: 8). Yet if objective journalists are accountable to their audiences, does this not reflect the concept of contextual objectivity as well? Thus there exists a tension in the literature around the very concept of objective journalism - a tension that is well encapsulated by the gap in coverage between Western news agencies and Al Jazeera around Israel-Palestine.

ix) Cosmopolitan theory, media morality and the spectatorship of suffering

All of this brings to mind the potential boundaries of the supposed cosmopolitan orientation of the media. Whilst many would argue that technological innovations have broken down more traditional conceptions of morality as we relate to other human beings on the planet, given that we cannot claim that we know nothing of distant suffering (Silverstone 2006) this perception seems skewed towards natural disasters, rather than conflict between nations. Similarly, Beck claims that when "civilians and children in Israel, Palestine, Africa or Iraq suffer and die, and this suffering is presented in compelling images in the mass media" (Beck 2006: 6), the people of the world are stirred by a basic pity and take action. There are quite a number of assumptions in that one statement - that people are presented with these images in the mass media which will apparently speak for themselves, that children from all over the world will be valued equally, and particularly suffering in both Palestine and Israel will be viewed in the same way.

Regarding this case, we have seen ample evidence that mass media presents the suffering differently to different national and international audiences. Contextual and multilayered as Beck's arguments are, given that he recognises that cosmopolitan empathy does not supersede national empathy, a fundamental point of difference that isn't recognised here is situations of conflict between nations. Claiming that the nation-state is a 'zombie' category of analysis (Beck 2007: 287) is not useful when conflicts between nations still exist, and that the 'distant other' is on a track towards the 'inclusive other' is also not born out by the literature - for example, using Saïd's theory on Orientalism, Wang conclusively finds that Palestinians are 'Othered' in her 2017 analysis of news articles from the United Kingdom (Wang 2017: 79). Yet support for the cosmopolitan view might be found in Appiah's declaration that our basic obligations must be partial to those closest to us - including those in our nation (Appiah 2007: 101). Does the national sympathy then extend to allies - those we judge as 'like us' - but no further?

There have been attempts to find empirical data to support the theory of a cosmopolitan public, sympathetic to scenes of distant suffering and stirred to action as a result of what they have seen. Kyriakidou similarly exhibits scepticism towards the idea that global mass media will necessarily engender feelings of solidarity towards human beings anywhere in the world, pointing out that many people will access this news through national broadcasters and thus consume it within their own national, contextualised frame of reference (Kyriakidou 2009: 484). Not everyone is receiving the same message. In a study of focus groups in Greece discussing their reactions the 2004 tsunami, which killed over 200,000 people, she finds evidence that people emotionally identified with the victims, and used Greece's own history as a frame of reference to understand the tragedy - although many also expressed limits in empathy due to geographical distance. A fascinating study in and of itself, there are nonetheless gaps that need to be filled. The study focused primarily on national broadcasts and visuals - what of the written word's ability to inspire cosmopolitan empathy? Furthermore, this study focused only on a natural disaster - where those affected were entirely blameless. In a conflict situation, 'true' victimhood is contested. Looking instead at media production rather than audiences, in his study of CNN and BBC headlines covering the Ivorian democratic crisis of 2010, Mensah (2013) argues that media reporting is in fact very

cosmopolitan in outlook, reflecting the views of the international community - but this isn't necessarily a positive as envisioned by theorists like Beck, in that it entirely marginalises the voices of both ordinary Ivorians and the two parties involved in the democratic dispute (Mensah 2013: 333). Thus a cosmopolitan outlook in the media doesn't necessarily mean that truly diverse voices will be heard.

Asymmetry of power, and indeed asymmetry of perceived suffering and humanity, is explored by Chouliaraki in the seminal publication *The Spectatorship of Suffering* (2006). Analysing a series of broadcasts from European national broadcasters in Greece, Britain, and Denmark, Chouliaraki concludes that media gives defined signals on who is worthy of empathy when they suffer, and who isn't. Cosmopolitan sympathies may exist, but are limited by "relationships of proximity and agency to each other" (Chouliaraki 2006: 10) - and unsurprisingly, European media humanises victims that are closer culturally speaking, most dramatically with the reporting on September 11th. By populating media coverage with 'thick' moral descriptions (Putnam 1992), it becomes clear both which sufferers are humanised, and which sufferers are dehumanised by rational, birds-eye, emotionally removed accounts that fail to place the figure of the sufferer before the spectator. In this way, we are reminded of Bauman's assertion that the rationalisation of dehumanisation can only happen when the human being in front of us is obscured from view (1989). As the moral world becomes increasingly mediated, these depictions matter more and more in constructing our view of the world (Silverstone 2006).

Yet Chouliaraki's analysis falls into the same category as many cosmopolitan oriented texts, looking at coverage of natural disasters or human rights abuses - but not situations of conflict between nations. This is an important gap that this thesis intends to investigate. Moreover, there is a large amount of emphasis placed on images, videos and satellite TV. Whilst many people still acquire their news from nightly television broadcasts, this too is changing. The written word deserves investigation in terms of the portrayal of suffering, and there is also a gap in the literature here as far as newswires are concerned. Chouliaraki's own devised analytics of mediation will be adapted to analyse the content of the Associated Press and Al Jazeera articles. This will be discussed in more detail in the Theoretical Framework chapter.

x) Conclusion

Quite naturally, a conflict that engenders deep passions and has been running for decades will draw academic interest, especially one in which both sides vigorously protest 'bias' and unfair treatment at the hands of the media. Despite the occupation continuing for decades and amidst the wealth of academic research looking at coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in media outlets all around the world, some important gaps remain.

First, there are no studies looking specifically into the portrayal of the moral category of *Victimhood* during this conflict. Here, moral standpoints on the relative value of human life may become clear and this is likely the essence of why media is claimed to be 'biased' on all sides. The Gaza conflict of 2014 provides an excellent case study to understand portrayals of victimhood- In purely quantitative terms, the Palestinian people of Gaza can be understood as victims - with 2,251 dead, including 1,462 civilians. Israel suffered seventy-four dead, including six civilians (UNOCHA 2014). But how do different media outlets, catering to different audiences, actually portray the *Victim* status of either side?

Secondly, much of the literature focuses on prestigious new outlets in the West - such as the New York Times - but there is again, precious little on the portrayal of the Israel-Palestine conflict in newswires / news agencies. As budgets shrink and advertising revenues plummet for news organisations due to a complex array of factors, many choose to cut funding for foreign correspondents and rely on newswires, thus shrinking the pool of sources for news on Palestine-Israel. News agencies, therefore, compose an inordinately large part of the mediapolis (Silverstone 2006) and consequently, how the conflict is portrayed within these influences public opinion on the occupation more than ever. Public opinion is also extremely likely to affect public policy - having real-world outcomes for both Palestinians and Israelis in terms of foreign interventions and support.

Thirdly, whilst there is some literature of cosmopolitan orientation looking at portrayals of suffering and victimhood, this frequently only looks at television and natural

disasters - not at the written word, or situations of conflict between nations. Nor are there comparisons made between different news outlets. Comparing and contrasting Palestine-Israel in this manner is underexplored territory, and reveals much about the standpoints of news organisations, as well as the audiences they cater to (Harding 2008).

Methodology and Methods

This research combined qualitative content analysis, symptomatic reading, and a framing analysis on 18 articles taken from Al Jazeera and the Associated Press in order to understand how each news outlet constructs a relationship of moral proximity between readers and differing national groups - Palestinians and Israelis. This illuminates how 'objective' media outlets' own standpoints lead them to tailor their coverage in accordance with culturally different audience preferences, making subtle but powerful moral judgements on the relative humanity of Palestinians and Israelis. This chapter discusses the methodological framework for the case study, the methods used to gather data, the process of data sampling, and the reflexive considerations of the researcher. A theoretical framework chapter follows to outline the theories used for data analysis.

i) Why focus on Gaza 2014?

This violent armed conflict provides an excellent test case to examine how media outlets subtly make moral judgements on the value of human lives for several reasons. Firstly, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land has continued for decades. The conflict is ongoing and perceived as extraordinarily divisive in Western domestic politics. The fact that it is so divisive indicates to us that there is something deeper occurring, some moral point of difference that deserves examination. Secondly, Gaza 2014 is the most recent extreme outburst of military action. It is time-delimited, with the greatest number of deaths, and well reported upon. As previously noted, the everyday infrastructure of the occupation and deaths as a result of it are often ignored by the Western press (Schrodt, Gerner and Yilmaz 2005: 237). Thirdly, numerically speaking, the Palestinians qualify as the primary victims with far more casualties - 2,251 dead and the vast majority civilians, as opposed to Israel's seventy-four dead, with the vast majority soldiers. Finally, the test case of Gaza offers an excellent juncture at which to produce 'phronetic' research. In focusing on the moral consequences of subtly valuing or devaluing human lives, it is intimately intertwined with a

focus on values themselves, underpinned by the phronetic considerations of "Where are we going? Is it desirable? What can be done?" (Flyvbjerg 2001: 130). This is social science that matters, that tells us something about the world we make, about the mediapolis that influences us all (Silverstone 2006) - and how we can improve it.

ii) The merits of the qualitative, comparative case study

This thesis aims to understand how different media outlets make subtle moral judgements on the relative value of both Palestinian and Israeli human life through difficult to perceive 'thick' moral descriptions, "statements that simultaneously are true and full of value judgements" (Putnam 1992: 166). These 'thick' moral descriptions will be analysed at the fruitful site of the moral category of the *Victim*. What is of interest is the deeper meanings and impressions that audiences absorb around humanisation and dehumanisation of different parties whilst reading the news. Consequently, the research will be qualitative in nature, as it focuses on "observing, describing, interpreting and analysing the way that people experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them" (Bazeley 2013: 4).

These assumptions and prejudices about the relative value of Palestinian and Israeli lives within the reporting are not easily perceptible. Indeed, that is the power of these worldviews - so hard to detect that they look entirely natural and obviously true, obscured by a veil of journalistic objectivity - a classic hegemonic discourse (Daldal 2014: 149). Hence, they are best excavated by comparing and contrasting. For the purposes of this research, the Associated Press and Al Jazeera provide the best foils to one another.

The Associated Press has been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, it has enormous influence as one of the largest and oldest news agencies in the world - and as discussed in the literature review, the importance of news agencies is only growing in an era where news outlets are cutting back on their foreign bureau expenditures. Generally speaking, the reporting of news agencies needs more interrogation, as there is a remarkable gap in the literature when it comes to reporting the Israel-Palestine conflict Secondly, it is the only news agency that is headquartered in the United States, highly relevant as a country that is intimately involved in

the conflict - positioning itself as a peacemaking negotiator whilst simultaneously refusing to exert pressure on Israel to cease settlement building in the occupied West Bank in order to bring about a two-state solution. Whilst not certain, it can reasonably be expected that the news agency's reporting will quietly reflect the American political elite's policy preferences, by foregrounding their voices and appealing to American audience sensitivities via contextual objectivity.

The reasons for choosing Al Jazeera are similar. The organisation is the pre-eminent non-Western news network that consciously sets itself apart, intending to report differently from its Western counterparts and aiming to become the voice of the global South (Damanhoury and Saleh 2017: 86). Al Jazeera trumpets its own standpoint as a strength in its reporting. Secondly, it is headquartered in Qatar. Similarly to the Associated Press, it can reasonably be expected that the coverage will be attuned to Qatari public policy. Qatar is one of the main benefactors of Hamas, regularly sending aid and irritating other countries in the region with its supportive stance of the Gazan government.

Simply put, both news outlets are enormously influential and possess entirely different standpoints - although Al Jazeera is more explicit about this fact, whilst the Associated Press imagines itself (in the tradition of Western news agencies) as an agent of impartiality and objectivity (Boyd-Barrett in Bielsa 2008: 355). By comparing and contrasting their coverage, we may dig out subtly held moral stances and judgements that would not be apparent without a decent foil.

Finally, the case study is the most appropriate route to study this intricate situation, as this research aims to create a detailed, nuanced description of how media outlets subtly indicate through their reporting their views on the relative value of Palestinian and Israeli lives by focusing on the presentation of *Victimhood*. Indeed, this research explicitly aims to "close in on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice" (Flyvbjerg 2001: 82). It does not seek to be quantitatively representative or predictive, instead looking to choose the extreme example to illustrate this point - and provide "context-dependent knowledge" on this particular situation (ibid: 79). No other

approach but the case study can quite provide the depth of knowledge or nuance this study is interested in, given that it focuses on unspoken values.

iii) Data Sampling

In order to acquire data of most relevance to the central research questions, this research employed strategic data sampling in order to "achieve the greatest possible amount of information" (Schreier 2018: 88) on the question of the portrayal of *Victimhood* in both Al Jazeera and the Associated Press. More specifically, articles were chosen based on an "information oriented selection" (Flyvbjerg 2001: 79) - on the basis of their expected contents and utility to the exploration of *Victimhood* portrayals. In keeping with the case study perspective, choosing articles that are extreme or atypical are often more information dense as they "activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied" (ibid). Hence, the articles studied were cherry-picked on the expectation that they would provide rich seams of analysis on the subject of *Victimhood* - and make excellent comparisons with one another.

In practice, this meant skim reading every article available on the Associated Press and Al Jazeera about Gaza between the dates of the 8th of July and the 27th of August - the dates from when the conflict officially began until the ceasefire agreement. In accordance with best practice, I did not seek to find 'average' articles, but rather articles that would illustrate extremes of the phenomenon I am interested in - the portrayal of *Victimhood*. This meant prioritising articles that focused on civilian experiences, hinted at in the headlines and leads of the articles. The articles that were chosen from the Associated Press and Al Jazeera also tended to be published on the same day, about the same topic, in order to maximise the comparative aspect. In addition, I decided to source articles that had a decent chronological spread, to avoid focusing on just one small time period. I chose 18 different articles to conduct a more detailed analysis of, in accordance with Altheide's guidelines recommending between 15-20 articles for a more in-depth study (Altheide 1996: 73).

iv) Methods

After having selected the articles based on expectations that they would be information-rich, this thesis deployed three different methods in order to provide quality data for the analysis - qualitative content analysis, symptomatic reading, and framing analysis.

Qualitative content analysis is a classic tool employed by media scholars seeking a systematic way to "[describe] the meaning of qualitative data" (Schreier 2014: 170). Having chosen the articles based on an "information oriented selection" (Flyvbjerg 2001: 79), I then proceeded to comb them for 'thick' moral descriptions. The 'thick' moral descriptions I sought were based around the kind of emotional and moral relationships of proximity the article's reporting created between the reader and Palestinians and Israelis that would reveal a perspective on *Victimhood*. Given that the nature of the data sought is difficult to perceive, focusing on hidden meanings and unspoken assumptions, a 'symptomatic reading' was used to hone in on these ideas. Symptomatic readings are especially useful for studying deeper meanings, locating absences and concealed ideas in text, in order to ask what they are motivated by (Best and Marcus 2009: 3). A symptomatic reading of each article was used to "tease apart the manifest from the latent" and "reveal the latent subtext" (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe 2010: 643). Closely examining these aspects of the proximity relationship enabled the research to acquire a deeper understanding of the portrayal of *Victimhood* within the text.

 In order to structure the content analysis and symptomatic reading better, I used elements of Altheide's qualitative document analysis. This involved creating a document protocol, a "list of questions, items, categories, or variables that guide data collection from documents" (Altheide 1996: 38). The document protocol was initially tested in a pilot, added to and reworked until the data gathered became both an accurate representation of the article and full of relevant information that answered the research questions. These questions and categories were guided by the theoretical framework discussed below - including categories like *Youth*,

Injury, and *Death.* Yet the categories were not overly determined by the theoretical framework, in order to allow emergent themes and categories arise within the analysis.

As the analysis was comparative in nature, it was immensely useful to create document protocols for each article and be able to study each in turn, noting the similarities and differences across the focus of the articles in both the Associated Press and Al Jazeera. After extensively re-reading the articles and reviewing the categories - given that repetition is a highly desirable feature of qualitative content analysis (ibid: 43) - I began to put together a 'coding frame' (Schreier 2014: 170) based on the categories that emerged in the content analysis and symptomatic reading. Through a process of coding and recoding, constantly questioning and examining the data, two categories were "taken to a higher level of abstraction" (ibid) and emerged as dominant themes - the twin themes of *Death* and *Villains*.

Framing analysis was also deployed to gain a deeper appreciation of how the text might influence the reader's view of events - with particular attention paid to headlines, leads, and the selection of quotes (Tankard 2001). By looking at how the news outlets portray both *Death* and *Villains* with 'thick' descriptions in relation to Palestinians and Israelis, we can see which party is portrayed as the *Victim* of the piece - and therefore we may easily perceive which 'side' the news outlet marshals sympathy for.

v) Reflexive considerations

No study can be complete without reflexive considerations on the part of the researcher - especially one that finds theoretical grounding in standpoint theory (Harding 2008). The interest in this topic for the thesis arises out of past personal experience. I visited the Occupied West Bank some years ago, and this unmediated experience left a profound impression on me. Crossing from Israel into Palestine, which is under deeply restrictive Israeli military control, it became clear that the Palestinians constituted the subordinated group (Harding 2008: 114). Some months later, I joined a Palestinian advocacy organisation to work as a Media and Communications Officer in the United Kingdom - regularly noting

the differing tone and feelings generated by different news outlets around events in Palestine. This intimate, grounded, practical knowledge is, in fact, a strength in carrying out the analysis, constituting 'strong objectivity' (Harding 1995).

Theoretical Framework

In order to interpret the 'thick' moral descriptions gathered from the chosen articles via the content analysis and symptomatic reading, I created a technique of my own in order to analyse their meaning, based on a combination of Chouliaraki's analytics of mediation (2006) Putnam's 'thick' moral concepts (1992) and Bauman's social distance (1989) .

Whilst it is easy enough to grasp Putnam's theory that language is inevitably intertwined with values and statements can be simultaneously true and full of value judgements (1992: 166), applying this idea to the data is not especially revealing by itself. Bauman postulates that when human beings appear before our very eyes, this proximity creates a moral responsibility upon us. But if these human beings are distanced from us by shielding their suffering from our sight the moral responsibility fades (1989: 184). The same effect can be accomplished with language. Although the moral aspect is not explicit in *The Spectatorship of Suffering*, by combining 'thick' moral concepts with Chouliaraki's three types of news - *Adventure*, *Emergency*, and *Ecstatic* - and Bauman's theory of social distance, we can see that these three types of news in fact indicate three degrees of moral statements, of moral proximity.

 Whilst this is the primary theoretical tool deployed, three other theories are used to bolster the interpretation of these moral statements. The thread that all the theories have in common is that they offer insight into how the text aims to position the reader - closer or further to the subject. Closer to the Israelis? Further from the Palestinians? Naturally, this is context dependent. By using these theories and our understanding of 'thick' moral concepts, we are able to understand who is portrayed as a *Victim* when a relationship of closer emotional proximity is created via the medium of *Death* and who is portrayed as a *Villain,* when the opposite type of relationship is created - one of distant emotional proximity.

Chouliaraki theorises that media gives defined signals on who is worthy of empathy when they suffer, and who definitively isn't, by creating "relationships of proximity and agency to each other" (Chouliaraki 2006: 10). Creating these relationships of proximity is accomplished

through varying 'thick' moral statements found in the reporting around suffering, ranging from detached and clinical to overwhelming and emotional. These relationships of moral proximity can be broken down into three categories.

The first is *Adventure* news - a portrayal used to create moral distance between the viewer and sufferer, limiting the experience of emotional engagement. It is characterised by features such a narrative registering only 'facts' without emotional elements, singular space-times limiting the proximity to suffering, such as reporting in the past-tense only, and a lack of agency that dehumanises the sufferer, such as failing to show names or faces. Interpreting this lack of description as a 'thick' moral statement leads us to understand that here, there is an absence of moral proximity between the reader and the sufferer, conveying to the reader that this suffering does not matter all that much, nor do they have any moral responsibilities to the sufferer. *Adventure* news utterly disregards the moral implications of the story, hiding them from the gaze of the reader.

The next is *Emergency* news - a portrayal that produces pity for the sufferer and offers a degree of humanisation, bringing the viewer closer to the sufferer's world. Here, a limited degree of moral proximity between the reader and the sufferer is created. The features that function as 'thick' moral concepts, indicating to the reader that this suffering does somewhat matter, include traits like a multimodal narrative, where complexity is introduced and there are concrete visualisations of suffering. The temporality is often set in the present, with the places and times specifically named in the narrative. The sufferer also has a conditional agency - they are seen as being both active and personalised, and the presence of a persecutor - or *Villain*, in Klapp's (1954) terminology - looms large. *Emergency* news tells the reader that what is happening matters morally and they have a limited degree of moral responsibility - but only a limited degree.

Finally, there is *Ecstatic* news, which functions to evoke true sympathy and "reflexive identification" between the viewer and the sufferer. Here, the text creates a very intense relationship of moral proximity between the reader and the sufferers, loudly declaring that what is happening matters intensely. These narratives are characterised by intense emotionalism, with access to the feelings of those affected. Regarding space-time, their

suffering is presented as happening *now* - immediately reeling in the spectator who cannot turn away. Sufferers possess full agency in this depiction, acting on their fate and denouncing perpetrators responsible for crimes. *Ecstatic* news places moral demands on the reader front and centre.

Klapp's work on archetypal *Heroes* and *Villains* similarly signals to the reader where they should orient themselves in the subtextual morality tale being told in the reporting. The *Hero* provides a "model for identification by the group" (Klapp 1954: 57), a shining example characterised by superhuman acts of goodness and courage to aim for, emulate, and rally behind. Consequently, the presence of a *Hero* in the text indicates where reader sympathies should lay. On the other hand, working in tandem with the *Hero* archetype, we find the *Villain*. The *Villain* usefully gives "added purpose or point to militant or punitive efforts" (ibid: 59) to the group, a spectre against which to direct their energies against. In the same way as the *Hero*, the presence of the *Villain* indicates to the reader whom they should be disgusted by and rallied against. Klapp theorises that these archetypes serve the purpose of organising the group for action - which needs simple moral concepts and figureheads in order to orient itself and act effectively. The *Villain* is highly reminiscent of Chouliaraki's 'persecutor', and so the two categories have been combined together in the data analysis.

Robinson's 'empathy framed coverage' and 'distance framed coverage' function in a similar way to Klapp's *Heroes* and *Villains*, but with the added insinuation of *Victimhood* (Robinson 2000: 614). Empathy framed coverage focuses on the suffering of people, urging readers to remember their "essential similarity" with those affected. Distance framed coverage does the opposite, with overtones of *Villains* and Others, creating distance between the reader and the events for example by focusing on 'warring factions' and 'ancient ethnic hatreds' (ibid). Thus the *Victims* are obscured in distance framed coverage.

Similarly, Wolfsfeld's theories on the 'Victims Mode' and 'Defensive Mode' of reporting are centred around creating 'ethnocentric news' (Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy 2008: 401) - giving very defined signals to the viewer about whom they should align their sympathies with. Victims Mode tends towards the emotional and dramatic, personalising the victims with names and details, and adding stories about the enemies' evil doings (another *Villain* marker).

Defensive Mode, on the other hand, comes into play when civilians on the other side are killed. Their deaths are dehumanised by being rationalised and spoken about in mostly statistical terms, diverting blame onto the enemy - closely tallying with Bauman's observations on dehumanisation, making it easier to kill and to accept the killing of other human beings (1989).

These theories interlink and complement one another well, drawing on various moral precepts found across media coverage and cultures. Whilst the moral category of the *Victim* was already of interest to this research, another clear moral category arose from the data - that of the *Villain.* By looking at both of these categories, we may easily perceive which 'side' the reader is urged to stake their sympathies with.

Who plays the *Victim* here? Subtle moral positioning in Al Jazeera and the Associated Press

Woven into supposedly 'objective' news articles are deep values, worldviews and moral judgements, affected by news outlets' own standpoints and sensitivities when reporting for their intended audiences. Though professionally committed to neutrality, journalists consistently make 'thick' moral statements in their reporting - influencing the shape of the mediapolis we live in (Putnam 1992, Silverstone 2006). Thus it is important to look for these latent moral statements, in order to understand how they influence points of view and perceptions of events we are not immediately privy to.

Through careful analysis, one can perceive moral judgements about the value of Palestinian and Israeli lives in the reporting of Al Jazeera and the Associated Press. These can be seen via the portrayal of *Victimhood* and relationship of emotional, moral proximity the reporting creates between the reader and different national groups - that is, Palestinians and Israelis. After completing the content analysis, symptomatic reading and framing analysis, two concepts enabling us to perceive who is considered the *Victim* emerged.

The first was the theme of *Death* - where the text guided readers to feel emotion around deaths, both civilian and military, indicating which party is seen as the *Victim*. The second was the moral category of the *Villain* - or which group the reader is nudged to identify as 'perpetrators', in Chouliaraki's terms (Klapp 1954, Chouliaraki 2006). As threats to a stable society, *Villains* exists to create potential *Victims*. By encouraging the reader to align their sympathies with one group and condemn another, it becomes clear which nationality is accorded more humanity. This is a powerful moral judgement, highlighting the media outlet's ideological leanings toward either Palestinians or Israelis.

The comparative analysis of the Associated Press and Al Jazeera will be carried out in the following way. Firstly, the theme of *Death* will be investigated, contemplating how Al

Jazeera describes Palestinian deaths, then Israeli deaths. Next, the Associated Press will be evaluated for its framing of Israeli deaths, then Palestinian deaths. Thereafter, the theme of *Villains* will be discussed, looking firstly at who is identified as a *Villain* in Al Jazeera, then the Associated Press. The theme of *Death* and the category of *Villain* give us a clear yet nuanced picture of who plays the *Victim* in Al Jazeera and the Associated Press - either Palestinians, or Israelis.

Death - hideous injustices or nameless casualties?

The way that the deaths of Palestinians and Israelis are portrayed via the pens of journalists differs dramatically between Al Jazeera and the Associated Press, creating differing relationships of moral proximity between the readers and the national groups. Neither way of depicting these deaths is more or less factually true - but they are more or less emotive, subtly indicating to the reader which deaths are more grievable, more human. Firstly, the portrayals of death within Al Jazeera will be discussed.

Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera creates a relationship of close moral proximity between its readers and Palestinian deaths through its reporting, effectively portraying them as *Victims*. The articles deftly interweaved elements of both *Ecstatic* news and *Emergency* news to humanise Palestinian deaths, although *Emergency* news styles predominated. *Ecstatic* news is intense and functions to bring the reader as close as morally possible to the sufferer's world, engaging with sensory descriptions and acknowledging their pain. *Emergency* news, on the other hand, whilst bringing the reader closer to the scene of destruction, creates only a limited degree of moral proximity. What the articles lacked was the total denial of moral proximity and therefore responsibility between Palestinian deaths and the reader in a way that qualified as dehumanising *Adventure* news. Altogether in Al Jazeera, the presence of *Ecstatic* and *Emergency* news with the absence of *Adventure* news, serves to bring readers in close moral proximity to the deaths, humanising them and therefore understanding them as *Victims*.

However, the opposite was true for the portrayal of Israeli deaths. These were overwhelmingly described in a dehumanising *Adventure* news fashion - so much so that the one or two sentences could have been copy-pasted between the articles. The *Adventure* news depiction removes the moral aspect of these deaths for the reader. The reporting dehumanises Israeli deaths by the lack of emotion ascribed to them, explained in strictly rational terms (Bauman 1989: 104) - and ensuring that they are not portrayed as those of *Victims*.

The narrative of Al Jazeera, with its 'thick' moral descriptions of *Victimhood* (Putnam 1992: 166), humanise the Palestinians as the *Victims* of the situation and brings their suffering closer to the reader, inspiring empathy. Portraying the Palestinians as *Victims* via the descriptions of their *Deaths* and not the Israelis reveals Al Jazeera's ideological proximity to the Palestinians, as well as distance from the Israelis.

Palestinian deaths - emotive, visual, personal

Al Jazeera consistently creates a relationship of intimate moral proximity between the readers and Palestinian sufferers. The style of reporting of Palestinian deaths can be interpreted usually as *Emergency* news, sometimes making the transition into *Ecstatic* news, strongly indicating to the reader that Palestinians are firmly within the moral category of *Victim* and bringing readers closer to their pain. Al Jazeera's reporting doesn't cross the line into being interpreted as *Adventure* news - there are always specific intimacies reported on Palestinian deaths, whether through narratives, space-time or agency of the sufferers. Palestinian deaths are given morally 'thick' narratives that are humanised and flagged as the deaths of *Victims*, bringing the reader morally closer to their suffering and 'responsible' for what they witness (or read).

A few of the Al Jazeera articles report on Palestinian deaths in an *Ecstatic* manner, powerfully inducing the sympathies of the reader. One such example is the *lead* below -

"At midday, horrific images were aired on Al Jazeera where corpses of burnt women and children were lying on the streets of the Shujayea as a result of the Israeli bombardment."
(Al Jazeera, 21 July 2014)

Leading the article with this sentence, focusing on the gruesome deaths and bodies of women and children frames the article via the prism of Palestinian deaths in their hideous realism. The sentence is rich with 'thick' moral content, being simultaneously true but overladen with condemnation and horror. The *Victims* are Palestinian women and children, pitifully burnt and laying in the streets, whilst the *Villain* is explicitly identified as Israel. The specific time-link of '*At midday, horrific images were aired on Al Jazeera*' draws the reader into an 'ecstatic chronotope' where the space-time is one of 'instantaneous proximity' (Chouliaraki 2006: 164). There is no other time marker for this article, it simply implies midday *on this day.* Furthermore, describing the airing of these images on the Al Jazeera network as the events unfold 'connects this specific suffering to the globe as a whole' (ibid: 158). The reader is also confronted with the intense visual descriptions of dead women and children laying in the streets of a specific neighbourhood - Shujayea. This is no generic description, it could only be this place - another feature of *Ecstatic* space-time. Emotional, pejorative descriptions of 'horrific images' and 'burnt corpses', and the focus on women and children, outrage the reader - as well as facilitating indignation towards the perpetrator, Israel, clearly identified as responsible for this atrocity "*as a result of the Israeli bombardment*". Focusing on the suffering of 'women and children' specifically - although problematic from the point of view of removing female agency and identifying women as mere victims - is additionally a feature of Robinson's 'empathy framing' (Robinson 2000: 614). This 'thick' moral description is a technique provoking the maximum amount of empathy readers can muster, given the traditional perception of the 'innocence' of women and children in war. Naming the women and children thus - when one could reasonably presume that men were also burnt to death in the bombardment - clearly signifies the inherent *Victimhood* the reporting ascribes to the Palestinians who suffered a terrible fate.

Combining all these elements into the realm of *Ecstatic* news, the reader is brought as close as possible to the brutal demise of the Palestinian women and children in Shujayea. The reporting of the Shujayea massacre is an excellent example of standpoint theory in practice. The framing of the article revolves around the sensory, deeply emotional experience of the 'oppressed group' of Palestinian citizens fleeing their homes under Israeli artillery attack (Harding 2009: 193). Remarkably, the news stories that only had 'Al Jazeera' as a source

demonstrated elements of *Ecstatic* news. It 'reports up' by foregrounding the voices of people who have lost their homes and have nowhere to go - key in a standpoint project - whilst towards the end of the article reporting on the UNRWA assessment of the humanitarian situation. Employing a standpoint practice loudly, emotionally underscores the humanity of the civilians of Shujayea, leading the reader to powerfully sympathise with the sufferers (Harding 2009).

Yet Al Jazeera also depicted Palestinian deaths within the boundaries of *Emergency* news. The articles that were interpreted as *Emergency* news had 'Al Jazeera and Agencies' as the source. Creating a relationship of close, but nevertheless less intense moral proximity with the reader is apparently intertwined with using news agency releases as a source.

One lead to a story encapsulates these components well -

"At least 105 people have been killed as Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip enters its fourth day, with the latest attack killing five people in Rafah while rescuers were trying to free those trapped in the ruins of a building." (Al Jazeera, 12 July 2014)

There are three sets of actors here - the Palestinian *Victims* trapped in the rubble, the Palestinian *Heroes* attempting to rescue them, and the Israeli *Villains* attacking whilst this heroic undertaking was in motion. Although this lead to the story effectively frames the situation around Palestinian suffering and deaths, it is notably less visual than the example of *Ecstatic* news above, thereby creating a moral proximity characterised by more distance between the reader and the Palestinian sufferers. The people 'trapped' under destroyed buildings are in grave danger, as *Victims* of the Israeli bombardment which has continued for days. Yet Palestinian sufferers are reported as acting with agency, 'on their fate' and under unstable, dangerous conditions (Chouliaraki 2006: 118) via the attempted rescue of people trapped in a bombed building interrupted by another Israeli air assault. The presence of the rescuers accords agency to Gazans who can be perceived as *Heroes* (Klapp 1954: 56) and constitutes a positive moral statement. Reporting on *Heroes* in any story signals to the reader whom they should sympathise and root for in a simple morality tale - with descriptions of courage constituting 'thick' moral descriptions, communicating to the reader that they should applaud such bravery. This 'thick' moral description of Palestinian *Hero* rescuers valiantly

striving to save their fellow countrymen draws the reader emotionally closer to their struggle. The Israeli *Villain* is also front and centre in this article lead, leaving the reader in no doubt about who is responsible for the outrage of people being bombed whilst attempting to save others. In a contradictory manner, Palestinians are referred to as 'killed' - a distance frame - but then also simply as 'people' - an empathy frame (Robinson 2000: 614). Yet the lead is devoid of explicitly emotional content, relegating it to *Emergency* news. In this way, the text maintains some moral distance between the readers and the sufferers, not calling upon the readers to "reflexively identify" with them in the same way as the *Ecstatic* news provokes (Chouliaraki 2006: 164).

Whilst the *Emergency* news with news agency sources keeps the reader emotionally close to the Palestinian sufferers, this engagement is limited - and so, therefore, is the moral responsibility that the reader experiences. Nevertheless, the text clearly indicates to the reader that Palestinians are the *Victim* and that their sympathies should be directed towards them.

Whilst the news of 105 people having been killed is scant on details, other Al Jazeera articles descriptions offer far more insight into the nature of the deaths of the Palestinians caught up in the Israeli air raids, bring the reader emotionally closer to their fates. Often, the gender of those killed and whether they were children or not appears in the text - more descriptive than a number of people killed, but not bringing the reader terribly close to the experience. Nonetheless, the presence of *Heroes* and *Victims* underscore the 'thick' moral statements made by the reporting. One such example in which children are focused on is the following headline and lead -

"Children killed in Gaza playground shelling"

"Eight people, including seven children, died following missile fire on a park inside the Shati refugee camp on the edge of Gaza city, medics said." (Al Jazeera, 29th July 2014)

Once again, this level of detail brings the readers closer to the physical site of suffering. Here, we witness the *Hero* medics, there to tend to the child *Victims*. The reporting emotionally involves the reader in the deaths of children playing, as we recall "the aura of sacredness that surrounds children's lives" (Chouliaraki 2006: 110). The headline is an excellent example of

a 'thick' ethical description - a "statement that [is] both descriptive and true" that is nonetheless a value judgement (Putnam 1992: 166). These children are not only considered *Victims* by the fact of their youth, but is also clearly denoted by the fact that they were killed inside a refugee camp. The killing of children on a playground, with the sacredness that surrounds their lives and clearly far from a battlefield, is a headline imbued with value judgements - judging this action as wrong.

Yet the reader remains at a safe distance, not called upon to fully visualise the carnage or suffering of those who perished in the attack. The presence of *Emergency* news is fulsome evidence of Al Jazeera's reporting being characterised by 'contextual objectivity' (Iskandar and El-Nawawy 2004: 321) - factually correct, but reflecting the general orientation of the intended audience which is staunchly against the bombardment of Gaza and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. The reader is emotionally engaged, with all the facts to hand, but spared the particularly grotesque horrors of violence.

Interestingly, the articles that demonstrated elements of *Ecstatic* news had only Al Jazeera as a source. However, the articles that qualified as *Emergency* news had both 'Al Jazeera and Agencies' as a source. Though the 'agencies' are unknown, we do know that all of the major international news agencies are Western - headquartered in London, Paris, and New York. This indicates some support support for how the news network's 'standpoint' (Harding 2008) matters in producing reporting that creates a closer relationship to the sufferers, humanising one group's deaths whilst dehumanising the other's, as well as bolstering arguments that news organisations write stories in accordance with 'contextual objectivity' (El-Nawawy and Powers 2008).

By describing Palestinian deaths in primarily *Ecstatic* and *Emergency* news terms, these deaths are made to matter morally to the reader, increasing their proximity to them and encouraging an emotional reaction. The evocation of sympathy, outrage and horror demand that the Palestinian deaths are treated as those of the moral category of *Victims* - positioning the reader in their camp, as we recall the advantages of being perceived as the *Victim* in conflicts, such as gaining the sympathy of the international community and thereby bringing about a favourable resolution (Bar-Tal et al. 2009: 241). Yet there is a hidden moral

consequence - the reader is brought closer to those sufferers that audience preferences and contextual objectivity necessitate they are *already* morally, emotionally closer to - at the expense of other sufferers, which will be explored in the next section.

Israeli deaths - distant, impersonal

The contrast between the portrayal of Palestinian deaths - emotive, visual, disturbing, filled with agency - and the portrayal of Israeli deaths is immediately apparent. Israeli deaths are discussed mainly in dehumanising *Adventure* news terms. This treatment creates enormous moral distance between the reader and the Israeli deaths, so that they are dehumanised in the process - transformed into "objects" (Bauman 1989: 184). Their deaths are deemed not to matter as much, morally speaking, as Palestinian deaths - and certainly are not portrayed as the deaths of *Victims*. So similar are the descriptions of Israeli deaths that they could nearly have been copied and pasted into each different article.

Two examples are below,

[Concluding remarks] "Two Israeli civilians have been killed by fire from Gaza since the offensive began.The total number of Israeli soldiers killed since the start of the military assault stands at 32." (Al Jazeera, 25 July 2014)

"Sixty-four Israeli soldiers and three Israeli civilians have also been killed."
(Al Jazeera, 14 August 2014)

Stating the number of Israeli deaths in a dry, impersonal way - we know nothing of the ages, genders, names, places where these people perished - creates immense moral distance. In one example, placing the deaths at the end of the article indicates the relative importance they are accorded - very little at all, in the classic inverted pyramid scheme of journalistic reporting (Pan and Kosicki 1993: 59). We do not even know precisely how the people were killed - under fire in Gaza? Rocket attacks? Mortars? There is no 'perpetrator' or *Villain* to blame. It is a mystery to the reader, whose attention is taken up with other more affecting deaths throughout the articles.

The absence of emotionalism around Israeli deaths offers striking support both to the concept of Al Jazeera as a news organisation driven by a standpoint project and operating within the boundaries of contextual objectivity. There are more pressing Palestinian deaths to attend to, which both Middle Eastern oriented audiences and Al Jazeera journalists find more relevant. In this way, Al Jazeera centres its reporting from within the experience of the Gazan people - serving as a "voice to the voiceless" and "[going] deeper in the communities to understand the stories" (El Nawawy and Powers 2008: 2526), evidenced by its representation of Palestinian *Victims* through *Emergency* and *Ecstatic* news and creating closer emotional, moral proximity between them and the readers. In this way, the reporting creates a feeling and declares a moral statement: Palestinian deaths fundamentally matter more than Israeli deaths do. Thus, a hierarchy of human lives is established, and it becomes clear that Al Jazeera's underlying ideological stance aligns itself with the Palestinian nation.

Palestinian deaths are treated in a way that demands the readers' emotional engagement and loudly declares that they matter - certainly more than the Israeli deaths, which are conversely treated with detached rational statements of fact, a means of dehumanisation. Morally speaking, whilst one could debate the merits of this focus - given the overwhelming number of Palestinian victims in Gaza 2014 - one could also contend that the Israelis, as 'Others', are not represented with 'proper distance' (Silverstone 2006: 46) Perhaps one reason that Al Jazeera is often viewed with "horror" in the West is not just that it dares to do the defining of the world (ibid: 3), but dares to bring its readers close to the bloody, emotional suffering of those usually considered 'Others' in Western media - Palestinians.

Associated Press

Whilst the overall impact of the Associated Press articles is the inverse of the Al Jazeera articles - creating a feeling of close moral proximity with Israeli deaths, and distance from Palestinian ones - there are interesting tensions and contradictions which will be explored.

The Associated Press tends to create a relationship of close moral proximity between its readers and Israeli deaths, including those of soldiers, by describing them in terms that

best fit *Emergency* news descriptors. Thus, Israeli deaths are described as those of *Victims*. However, the comparative lack of deaths on the Israeli side (Sixty-seven soldiers and six civilians) limits the editorial space that is given to describing the way both Israeli soldiers and civilians perished. Instead, the ever-present *threat* of death via rocket attack hovers in the Associated Press narrative. Given the relatively small number of victims on the Israeli side, this is curious - until we consider the idea that because there are so few victims here, an enhanced discussion of the threat from the Palestinian *Villain* is needed in order to create 'potential' *Victims.*This complex depiction of threat for Israelis will be discussed in more detail in the next analytical section about *Villains*. The overall effect of the reporting is to bring the reader in close emotional, moral proximity with the Israelis - even the soldiers, whose deaths are treated as those of *Victims* as opposed to legitimate casualties of combatants in a military. Generally speaking, these Israeli deaths are morally positioned as being of more importance than Palestinian deaths.

There is a rather complex portrayal of Palestinian deaths. Whilst there are many more deaths (2,251 of which 1,462 were civilians) than on the Israeli side, Associated Press still creates a relationship of moral distance by portraying these deaths in the style of *Adventure* news. Yet there are occasional, stunning *Ecstatic* descriptions of their deaths. These *Ecstatic* bits of text are usually buried within the body of a long Associated Press article, and drowned out by a journalistic milieu of 'Defensive Mode' reporting, making for a fascinatingly sharp contrast (Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy 2008: 404). Whilst the *Ecstatic* news occasionally brings us vividly into the painful, violent passing of civilians, increasing the reader's moral proximity to the deaths, they are by far drowned out by the dehumanising effects of both *Adventure* news and the *Defensive Mode* of reporting. This type of reporting is typically used to minimise morally doubtful actions of one's 'own side' - such as the shelling of a school (ibid). Using these techniques creates diminishes the moral proximity between the reader and Palestinians, creating 'social distance' (Bauman 1989: 184). This treatment is strewn with moral statements about the relative worth of Palestinian civilian lives - subtly communicated as being less than those of Israeli soldiers.

Observing these subtle but powerful differences in reporting, and by extension moral judgements about the elevated worth of Israeli humanity as opposed to Palestinian lives,

provides evidence to support the theory that the Associated Press's underlying ideological stance aligns itself with the Israeli nation.

Though the articles lacked elements of *Ecstatic* news whilst describing Israeli deaths, they contained elements of *Emergency* news. Sufficient humanising details were given to Israeli deaths so that they appear to the reader as *Victims*, interestingly even to the deaths of Israeli soldiers - which, as willing combatants and lawful targets in warfare as opposed to civilians, may be somewhat surprising. One such example is the following,

"The 13 Israeli soldiers were killed in several separate incidents in Shujayea including gun battles and rocket attacks. In the deadliest, Gaza fighters detonated a bomb near an armored personnel carrier, killing seven soldiers inside, the army said. In another incident, three soldiers were killed when they became trapped in a burning building, it said." (Associated Press, 21 July 2014)

This description of the deaths of 13 Israeli soldiers is, at first glance, purely descriptive and factual. However, when examined more closely, there are multiple 'thick' moral statements in text that qualifies as *Emergency* news on multiple levels. The Israeli soldiers appear as clear *Victims* to the reader. In describing the pitched *'gun battles and rocket attacks'* the soldiers are subject to, the editorial narrative becomes 'multimodal' and directly creates connections between both safety and danger for the soldiers in question (Chouliaraki 2006: 118). In further visualisation, the reader is told of the exact circumstances of soldiers perishing, *'detonated a bomb near an armored personnel carrier'* and being *'trapped inside a burning building'*. Though there is a lack of grisly detail, the reader has sufficient information to picture these particular, painful deaths. Interestingly, despite the fact that the soldiers were in fact invading Gaza, they are depicted as passive *Victims*, not doing anything deserving of being blown apart by a bomb. The site of the battle is clear - the Shujayea neighbourhood, increasing the reader's proximity to events. It is not just 'Gaza'. We also find the presence of a *Villain* - '*Gaza fighters*' who caused the explosion that killed seven soldiers. Finally, this act is described in pejorative, emotive terms as the '*deadliest*'. These 'thick' descriptions are morally loaded with negativity (Putnam 1992: 166), once again entwining both fact and

values - to be trapped inside a building and burnt to death is a terrible fate. The overall effect is one of producing pity, as we can easily picture the soldiers' deaths, but their own agency and concrete suffering are removed from us. It also produces moral revulsion for the actions of the villainous Gaza fighters that led to the deaths of the *Victim* Israeli soldiers. The reader is urged to picture the terrible fates of the soldiers, bringing them morally closer and inspiring pity.

Deaths of Israelis - including soldiers - are subtly brought emotionally closer to the reader with the level of detail available and emotive wording. Another example is the following,

"One of the most serious incidents of the war took place right at their doorstep when Hamas fighters popped out of the ground and killed five Israeli soldiers guarding the village." (Associated Press, 6 August 2014)

Here, we can note the 'thick' moral description in the emotive wording describing one of '*the most serious incidents of the war*' - which was in fact the killing of five Israeli soldiers by several Hamas soldiers, one military organisation targeting another military organisation - nothing to do with civilians. But in framing the incident with this language, the reader is invited to contemplate this as a grave happening. Is the killing of five Israeli soldiers more 'serious' than the deaths of dozens of Palestinian civilians? The reporting invites us to believe this is true, and thereby prioritise Israeli lives above Palestinian ones. The threatening nature of the Hamas fighters is further compounded by their implied duplicity in *'[popping] out of the ground'*, there to threaten the *'doorstep'* of the village - and by implication the people living there. These are actions truly befitting a *Villain* that threatens a safe society (Klapp 1954: 54). Furthermore, it is insinuated that the soldiers in question were somehow not legitimate targets, as they were engaged in a defensive manoeuvre of '*guarding the village*' - presumably full of civilians, even potential *Victims*, and therefore not a threat to anyone. In this way, the soldiers could be seen as Klapp's *Heroes* - as 'protectors' of the village in question (ibid: 56). To place a *Hero* in a story is to indicate to the audience whose 'side' they are on, as the utility of *Heroes* is to unite the community behind their extraordinary actions. Thus, the reader is encouraged to rally behind the Israeli 'protectors' of the village. Israeli soldiers are thus treated with a closer emotional, moral proximity than one might expect, as willing combatants in a war situation.

One fascinating pattern that emerged from the articles was the ever-present shadow of death for Israeli soldiers and civilians alike, such as the example here,

One rocket fired from the Gaza Strip struck a gas station and set it ablaze earlier Friday in southern Israel, wounding three people, one seriously, and the army said the condition of a soldier wounded by rocket shrapnel on Thursday had worsened. But there have been no deaths on the Israeli side, in large part because of a new rocket defence system that has intercepted at least 129 incoming projectiles." (Associated Press, 12 July 2014)

The quote leaves us in no doubt of the potential danger that people in southern Israel face - they are transformed into potential *Victims*. The situation is once more described in an *Emergency* news fashion, with specific timelinks to *"earlier Friday"* and *"on Thursday",* as well as visuals making the scene come alive, such as setting a gas station *"ablaze"*. Whilst the specific fates and injuries of those caught by rocket fire are elaborated on, as the quote itself notes, there are no deaths. Yet the possibility of death conspicuously hangs in the air and is numerically quantified, such as when the reporter notes the *"129 incoming projectiles"* that could have caused damage. What makes these passages intriguing is the level of detail given to unactualised deaths. In this sense, the *Victim* status of the Israelis is further entrenched within the reporting. Whether Israelis face death or the potential of it, a consistent level of detail and emotionalism is given to these experiences, bringing the Associated Press's readers in closer moral proximity to the Israelis, both civilian and military alike. The ideological standpoint of the Associated Press is clear - despite the relative lack of Israeli deaths in this conflict, every single one of them is made to matter to the reader. The reader is assumed to be emotionally close to the Israelis, and via the reporting is brought in even closer moral proximity.

Palestinians - distant with sudden bursts of intensity

Palestinian deaths within the Associated Press articles are not portrayed as those of *Victims*. They are treated in a detached manner one may describe as *Adventure* news. Humanising details are absent from the narrative, creating a relationship of distant moral proximity where

the reader does not need to dwell on the suffering of Palestinians caught up in the Israeli bombings. Given the increasing prevalence of news agency reports in news outlets, the moral consequences of consistently obscuring Palestinian suffering to the reader, and thereby dehumanising them (Bauman 1989) are troubling. One such dehumanising example to be found is the following,

"At least 21 Palestinians were killed Friday, pushing the overall death toll to 106, including dozens of civilians, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza." (Associated Press, 12 July 2014)

The report is dry and factually based, without a shred of emotionally engaged language. The focus is purely on the numbers of deaths, a typical feature of *Adventure* news (Chouliaraki 2006: 98) and a way to create moral distance between them and the reader. In addition, describing the Palestinians who died as having been 'killed' is associated with distance framing, creating more space between the reader and the sufferers (Robinson 2000: 614). There is a notable lack of details around the nature of their deaths - we have no idea how they were killed. Indeed, throughout the article, the Israeli bombing of Gaza is euphemistically referred to as an 'air campaign' or 'Israel's efforts to halt militant rocket fire'. Thus the presence of the persecutor (or *Villain*) is also linguistically absent from the accounts of these people's deaths. Finally, the 'figure of the sufferer' is utterly suppressed from the Associated Press narrative. There are no names, ages, occupations, sex, or place attached to these people's deaths, much less visual descriptions of their suffering. It is a wholly rational account, encouraging the reader to see these deaths as merely numbers (Bauman 1989). Whilst there is a slight 'thick' moral description when mentioning that civilians are amongst the dead (Putnam 1992), the reader is denied even being given a precise number of how many civilians have been killed, thus limiting their pity. In this way, the text fails to represent the Other with proper distance - their suffering is simply unknown and unknowable (Silverstone 2006).

Another noteworthy example of creating a relationship of distance is the following headline,

UN school in Gaza caught in crossfire,15 killed (Associated Press, 25 July 2014).

Not only does the headline set the tone of the article by heavily insinuating that there are persecutors to blame beyond the Israeli military (who are not mentioned, adding to the *Adventure* news perspective) but crucially, the most emotive victims of the Israeli bombing of the UN school are obscured - the children who died. Usually, the deaths of children are greeted with more upset than others, given the near sacrosanct status of their lives (Chouliaraki 2008: 110). More information on the deaths of the children at the school is given later within the article, but the discussion predominantly focuses on the military aspects of the bombing - the deaths of the children themselves are not given prominence, further creating a relationship of distant moral proximity by suppressing the figures of suffering children. Their demise is barely seen or heard, and thus cannot produce "basic animal pity" in the reader (Bauman 1989: 21). Furthermore, the people who died are referred to with the distance framing of having been 'killed' (Robinson 2000: 614). Whilst the fact that a United Nations school has been the subject of violence brings the reader somewhat closer to the scene - given that the UN is typically seen as a 'good' player in international affairs, devoted to peace (Alleyne 2005: 183) - this does not outweigh the passive manner in which the school was 'caught' in the crossfire, instead of actively targeted by a *Villain*. Thus, Israeli responsibility for targeting a school full of Palestinian children is obscured.

There is a striking contrast to be found between the Associated Press's and Al Jazeera's treatment of Palestinian deaths, typically expressed in respectively *Adventure* news or *Emergency / Ecstatic* news, but this is nowhere more apparent than the direct contrast between these two headlines.

Scores dead in first major ground battle in Gaza (Associated Press, 21 July 2014)

'The smell of death was everywhere.' (Al Jazeera, 21 July 2014)

Whilst these two headlines cover the Israeli military's invasion of the Gazan Shujayea neighbourhood, they already provide us with wildly differing impressions and emotional pulls about the turn of events. Whilst the Associated Press headline is factual and more technically oriented, the Al Jazeera headline brings the reader straight into the overwhelming sensory experience of the invasion with the '*smell of death*'. The Associated Press headline

obscures the suffering of civilians, whilst the Al Jazeera articles place it front and centre, dropping the reader into this world filled with pain and the 'smell of death'. The rest of the articles continue in the same vein - with Associated Press concentrating on the military strategy and statements by international leaders, and the Al Jazeera article focusing on the experiences of civilians losing their homes and seeing bodies in the street. The Associated Press article simultaneously rationalises the Israeli military actions - bringing the reader closer to their point of view - and obscures the suffering of Palestinian civilians. Prioritising the Israeli military reasoning and policy objectives for the invasion of Shujayea is arguably another form of 'media imperialism' (Boyd-Barrett 1981: 250) - yet this is invisible to the reader who does not make direct comparisons between coverage.

Whilst the Associated Press articles discuss Palestinian deaths in *Adventure* news terms, very occasionally there is an intensely visual and emotional passage that can only be described as *Ecstatic* news. One such example is the following,

A UN school in Gaza crowded with hundreds of Palestinians seeking refuge from fierce fighting came under fire Thursday, killing at least 15 civilians and leaving a sad tableau of blood spattered pillows, blankets and children's clothing scattered in the courtyard. (Associated Press, 25 July 2014)

There is a clear and fascinating tension between the predominantly emotionally removed, facts based, *Adventure* news reporting and the rare bursts of moving visual imagery, bringing the reader in very close proximity with the pain of the people affected by the bombing. Declaring that it was a United Nations school imbues the sentence with a 'thick' moral description. The United Nations is typically understood to stand for peace (Alleyne 2005: 183), and therefore attacking it would be seen as an outrageous offence - even before the implications of the fact that it was a school, a place for children, sinks in. In this passage, we have a much more sensory experience. The school is '*crowded*' with people seeking sanctuary ('*refuge*') from the '*fierce fighting*'. Already, we have a clear visual of the school, with two emotive words in play - *refuge* and *fierce.* The description of the results of the bombing is emotionally stark in the extreme, even being labelled as a *sad tableau* - an emotional exposition of the *Emergency* news style, bringing the reader into closer emotional, moral proximity with the people in the school. The suffering of children is implied when the

reader is presented with '*children's clothing scattered in the courtyard'*, bringing the reader closer to the victims (Robinson 2000: 614). Indeed, with the passage inviting the reader to observe the '*blood-spattered pillows'*, the narrative commands the reader to engage in an 'aesthetic contemplation' of the immediate aftermath of the shelling of the school - which in itself constitutes an 'ecstatic chronotope' (Chouliaraki 2008: 164). This part of the text is at pains to show the reader the suffering that has taken place, morally drawing them in. One factor is remarkable by its absence. The party responsible for this carnage - the Israeli military - is not named. Instead, the school passively 'came under fire'. In this way, we can see a hint of *Defensive Mode* even in the midst of an *Ecstatic* news story.

What can explain the sudden appearance of tidbits of *Ecstatic* news about Palestinian deaths when they are otherwise described in such bland, emotionally removed terms? These flashes of emotion can be accounted for by the standpoints of the journalists responsible for the article. The Associated Press usually has several reporters working on a story from all over Israel and Palestine. Whilst we do not know who wrote this particular segment in the article, it is reasonable to assume it was a journalist present in Gaza who directly witnessed the *sad tableau* of splattered blood and destruction. In this way, the journalist is up close and personal with the victims - their standpoint is fundamentally altered from a person who did not witness the scenes and is sitting safely in a newsroom, far removed from the scenes of the fighting. Their own proximity to the suffering increases their sense of moral responsibility, and this carries through in the reporting. Yet, if the Associated Press does employ journalists stationed in Gaza, why aren't all the articles peppered with *Emergency* and *Ecstatic* news in the style of Al Jazeera? Contextual objectivity provides an insight into why this is so. The content is tailored for audiences for the American-headquartered Associated Press - an audience which is guided by the American political establishment's partiality on the side of Israel, and is consequently not as invested in the suffering of Palestinians (Iskander and El-Nawawy 2004). There is, however, another potential explanation - the fact that the school was a United Nations school, and that consequently the attack was more shocking. The United Nations is commonly associated with peacekeeping and perceived both as 'elite' and 'humanitarian' (Alleyne 2005: 183) - in other words, a type of *Hero*, emotionally closer to the Western audience and not a legitimate target for the Israeli military. Contextual

objectivity also explains another pattern in the Associated Press articles - that of reporting in *Defensive Mode*.

Whilst Palestinian deaths are usually treated as *Adventure* news, with occasional stunning exceptions as *Ecstatic* news, the deaths are usually wrapped up in articles that predominantly focus on the Israeli military's strategic moves and comment from international figures, thereby rationalising their actions and distancing the reader morally from the scenes of suffering. Palestinians are therefore not portrayed as *Victims*. One excellent example of this tendency is found here,

"The overnight strikes came after a day of heavy Hamas-Israeli fighting in which nine children were killed by a strike on a Gaza park where they were playing, according to Palestinian health officials - a tragedy that both sides blamed on the other." (Associated Press, 29 July 2014)

Whilst the news that nine children died in an Israeli shelling of a playground made headline news in Al Jazeera, in the Associated Press it is reduced to a side note, buried within the text of an article headlined *'Be ready for prolonged Gaza war, Netanyahu says'*. Reporting the children's deaths in this way lowers its level of prominence, reduces the emotional impact and creates moral distance between the reader and the dead Palestinian children (Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy 2008: 404). In this sense, the reader is freed from their moral responsibilities towards the dead children by the rationalised dehumanisation of their deaths (Bauman 1989). Furthermore, declaring that playground shelling was an event that '*both sides blamed on the other'* is a classic example of diverting blame away from the perpetrator - the Israeli military. By introducing doubt into who is responsible for the deaths of the children, the reader is deprived of a clear *Villain* to blame - even for the terrible crime of killing children who were playing. If Palestinians are insinuated to be to blame for the deaths of their own children, the real *Victim* of the piece is less certain, consequently jeopardising the understanding readers may have of the conflict.

Another example of the *Defensive Mode* of reporting is found in the following article lead,

With the official Palestinian count of the dead passing 100 and rockets fired by militants striking Israeli from the Gaza Strip and from Lebanon, Israel's prime minister on Friday brushed off a question about ceasefire efforts. (Associated Press, 12 July 2014).

In this case, the reader's moral proximity to the Palestinian deaths as a result of the Israeli bombing is further circumscribed by both the statistical nature of the body count, devoid of visuals or emotion, and the military oriented, analytical perspective of the conflict, focusing on the Israeli prime minister's actions and agency (ibid). Whilst there might be raw, emotional tragedies of children suffering and blood on the streets of Gaza buried within the Associated Press reporting, it is usually tightly compacted into an overwhelming discourse focusing on the Israeli military's plans and international discussions of Gaza. Reporting in this manner demonstrates that the Associated Press institutionally, subtly, chooses to use the *Defensive Mode* in a way that consistently de-prioritises Palestinian deaths and rationalises Israeli military actions.

The lacklustre descriptions of Palestinian deaths fail to bring Palestinians into the moral category of *Victim* within the Associated Press's reporting. With evidence to suggest that citizens in the West are ill-educated on the basic facts of the occupation (Philo and Berry 2004, Lewis 2001), the reporting found in these Associated Press articles also leaves them ignorant of the details that may bring about raw 'animal pity' (Bauman 1989: 21). Furthermore, Israeli military violence against civilians is rationalised and excused by portraying the violence as a reasonable, unprovoked response to a fearsome *Villain.* This makes it difficult for the reader to extend their sympathies beyond the culturally predetermined category of the Israelis as *Victim.* In the Associated Press's reporting, Palestinians barely qualify as true *Victims*.

Villains

As we have seen in the above section, Al Jazeera designates Palestinians as the *Victims* of the reporting through a variety of mechanisms when focusing on *Death*, whilst the Associated Press does the same for Israelis. They also sidestep the *Victim* status of the cultural Other by

reporting in an overly rational manner, dehumanising and obscuring the Other's suffering. There is a second moral category that is deployed throughout the reporting to indicate to the reader whose side they should take, whom they should be partial to in this conflict - that of the *Villain.* Whom the reader is steered *not* to emotionally identify with, the party that is represented as a *Villain*, is similarly as powerful. As the *Villain* always threatens the 'in-group' in simple morality tales, their presence allows for the construction of a *Victim* (Klapp 1954).

Identifying others as *Villains* creates a "heightened we-feeling as comrades in arms" (Klapp 1954: 60) - a clear identifier of which national group the reader is supposed to sympathise with. Creating a *Villain* in the reporting is useful as it enables the construction of *Victims* - whether real or potential. Indeed, focusing on the threat posed by the *Villain* to the in-group helps to emphasise the danger to potential *Victims*.

At the same time, to designate a party as a *Villain* is to morally distance the readers from the party in question - as *Villains* are unsympathetic monsters, prone to "counter-moral actions as a result of an inherently malicious will". They are a threat to a safe society, and an enemy against whom militaristic actions must be deployed (ibid: 58). Consequently, the reader's understanding of the conflict is compromised by media outlets' predetermined moral categories that both Palestinians and Israelis fall into. Readers cannot feel great sympathy for *Villains* - only antagonism. Describing actors as *Villains* is closely linked to ascribing their actions as inherently 'evil' and to do so is to "put the other beyond the pale, to deny their rights of existence, as moral and as material beings" (Silverstone 2006: 75) To depict one party as the *Villain* is also to dehumanise them.

In order to examine the figure of the *Villain* within the articles, this thesis does not focus on the descriptions or results of actual events having taken place - such as bombings, rocket attacks, invasions - but rather the way that the articles (or the sources chosen for the articles) describe a party - 'thick' moral descriptions like 'terrorists', 'criminal', and so forth. Two other theories will be used to highlight the figure of the *Villain* in the articles - 'Distance Framing' (Robinson 2000) and 'Victims Mode' (Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy 2008). The findings are noteworthy. Al Jazeera doesn't label any party as obvious *Villains*. The

descriptions are usually ambiguous and the reporting is more focused on the experiences of actual (Palestinian) *Victims*. The situation is flipped in the Associated Press. Hamas is represented as an arch *Villain*, a threat to the viability of the Israeli state itself, capable of wreaking devastation on the Israeli civilian population - depicted as potential *Victims*. One must call this portrayal into question, given both the Israeli military's vastly superior firepower and arms, as well as small civilian losses (only six, compared to Gaza's 1,462). Nevertheless, this focus on Hamas as a most threatening *Villain* allows for the construction of Israeli citizens as potential *Victims*.

Al Jazeera - Ambiguous Villains

The presence of the *Villain* in Al Jazeera is ambiguous. Despite the fact that Al Jazeera systematically creates a close emotional relationship with Palestinians through the descriptions of their deaths, it does not systematically create a relationship of distance between the reader and any *Villains* present in the text. These instances are rather more sporadic, and both Hamas and the Israeli military can, at various points, be seen as *Villains* - though not to any noticeable degree. One such example regarding the Israeli military is below,

On Sunday, Israel struck a United Nations school being used as a shelter, killing 10 Palestinians. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon condemned the attack, calling it a 'moral outrage and a criminal act.' (Al Jazeera, 4 August 2014)

In this quote, we can clearly see that the shelling of a UN school has been denounced by the authority figure of Ban Ki-Moon in the strongest possible terms - as 'criminal', an act that confounds moral decency and is detestable. Given the international perception of the United Nations as a fundamentally peaceful, humanitarian organisation (Alleyne 2005: 183) - akin to Klapp's *Heroes* - attacking it underscores the act as truly *Villainous*. Once again, the reader is apprised of the grave implications of attacking a school - a place for children - especially one being used as a shelter. The reporting has no diffidence in naming Israel as the *Villain* of the piece. By quoting a key representative of the international community placing the Israeli military into the *Villain* role, the reader is oriented towards the same condemnatory attitude,

creating moral distance between themselves and the Israeli military. Yet, such descriptive assertions are few and far between, and there is no consistent rhetoric painting the Israeli military as exceedingly villainous.

Hamas also occasionally receives the *Villain* treatment in Al Jazeera editorial, such as in the quote below,

We will not tolerate rocket fire against our cities and townships and therefore I ordered a significant broadening of IDF operations against the terrorists of Hamas and other terror groups in the Gaza Strip" Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. (Al Jazeera, 9 July 2014)

Aiming rockets at cities is an action befitting a *Villain* - threatening a safe society and an aggressor that must be dealt with via military might. No other options are suitable in order to tackle a monstrous opponent such as this (Klapp 1954: 60). The word 'terrorist' is the very epitome of a 'thick' moral concept. Whilst it might be a term that is true, typically used for groups that use violence to target civilians for political ends, it is also intrinsically loaded with negative associations, a "moral judgement" (Hoffman 2006: 23), suitable only for the actions of enemies. Indeed, it is a term that is "unavoidably subjective", swayed a great deal by whether the user sympathises more with the victims - or feels that the violence was in some way justified (ibid). By foregrounding this quote, the reader is then subtly urged to come to the same moral judgement, creating a relationship of distant proximity between themselves and Hamas. Designating Hamas as a terrorist organisation, an organisation capable of great 'evil, is to put them and their actions "beyond the pale" - a judgement there can be no moral return from, and therefore no need to interrogate further their intentions or motivations (Silverstone 2006: 75).

One interesting theme that emerged around Hamas as *Villain* was, in fact, what did not appear - Hamas's own reasons for rocket attacks, as well as aims and goals with the conflict. If discussed, they are mentioned in a throwaway manner, seldom brought to the fore or emphasised, with no direct quotes appearing from Hamas officials in the Al Jazeera text - in direct contrast to the Israeli military, which is frequently quoted and its doings discussed in

analytical terms. This voicelessness continues in the depiction of Hamas in the Associated Press.

However, explicitly condemnatory, vilifying quotes are seldom found in the Al Jazeera narrative. In contrast to its portrayal of Palestinian deaths, Al Jazeera doesn't create a relationship of close proximity with either national party through the depictions of *Villains*. Not does it provoke a primitive recoil from either the Israeli military or Hamas, aligning the reader to their opponents - within the articles analysed, these depictions are merely sporadic.

Associated Press - Villainous Hamas creates potential Victims

In stark contrast, the Associated Press consistently and strikingly paints Hamas as a *Villain* in the articles. By identifying Hamas as the clear *Villain* of the piece, the Associated Press sets up Israeli civilians as potential *Victims* - in place of actual mass casualties. Given the already established preference for depicting Israelis (including soldiers) as *Victims,* an overwhelming threat from a nefarious *Villain* is needed to construct the Israeli *Victim* status.

The Associated Press therefore creates a relationship of close proximity between the reader and the Israeli *Victims* threatened by this *Villain*. These are not the only consequences of the *Villain* designation however. Reporting about Hamas in this way puts their actions inspires a reflexive disgust. Their actions subtly indicated as being 'evil' is in itself a "radical moral judgement" that constitutes an improper distance to the Other. Its designation is a shallow moral smokescreen, intuitively understood, beyond which the reader need not inquire any further, as evil is explanation enough for terrible actions. As the portrayal of Hamas shapes the moral world in which the casual reader inhabits, we see a stunning example of a "projection of evil onto the stranger and its denial to the neighbour or to the self" (Silverstone 2006: 58). Thus, the mediapolis is polluted by portrayals that both dehumanise Hamas and encourage revulsion in the reader.

The narrative of the Associated Press articles is sprinkled with references implying that Israel faces a fundamentally existential threat from Hamas. One such example is the below,

Israel and Hamas, which is sworn to the destruction of the Jewish state, agreed to an Egyptian brokered ceasefire that ended the last round of fighting in late 2012. (Associated Press, 9 July 2014)

This quote subtly depicts Hamas as a *Villain* in two different ways. Firstly, the descriptor directly states that Hamas seeks the 'destruction' of Israel. A hallmark of a *Villain* is that they threaten a safe society - and in this case, not just a society but the entire state of Israel. Going further, the Associated Press article notes that Hamas seeks to destroy '*the Jewish state*' - an interesting ethnicity flag, implying that the Palestinian Gazan government seeks to annihilate Israel on the basis of its citizens' religious beliefs. By drawing attention to this, the article deploys a distance frame of 'ancient ethnic hatreds', underscoring the unreasonable, primal urges of the *Villain* (Robinson 2000: 614). The sentence further implies that all Israelis - indeed, the entire apparatus of the Israeli state - may be under threat and are potential *Victims* of Hamas violence, regardless of how realistic this is for a small, internationally isolated organisation with limited military capacity. This depiction draws the reader closer to the threatened Israeli *Victims*. Thus, a relationship of moral distance is created between the reader and Hamas.

Another manner in which the Associated Press effectively casts Hamas as a *Villain* is the language used to describe combatants. Whilst Al Jazeera infrequently selects quotes from sources describing Hamas as a terrorist organisation, the Associated Press very frequently does. One such example is below,

Like Israel, the US considers Hamas a terrorist organisation and will not directly engage with its leaders and so relies on Turkey and Qatar as a go-between to negotiate with the militant group that controls Gaza. (Associated Press, 25 July 2014)

The term 'terrorist' is a classic 'thick' moral concept, fully imbued with moral positioning - if the term is used, it means that the user vehemently disagrees with the violent actions of the 'terrorist'. Here, the reader is informed that not only does Israel consider Hamas to be a terrorist organisation, but so does the United States - of a level of menace so reprehensible

that the two countries refuse to engage with Hamas officials in person. Furthermore, we can see that the article flags that by using the term 'terrorist', the United States possesses the same "moral viewpoint" (Hoffman 2006: 23) on Hamas as Israel does - recalling that the Associated Press is headquartered in New York City and caters to a wide American audience who identify with the leaders of the United States. Interestingly, the language used to describe Hamas's governance of Gaza is pejorative - a 'militant group that controls Gaza', perhaps implying that this control is not democratically mandated. The word 'militant' is another 'thick' moral concept and whilst not as pejorative as 'terrorist' still implies a willingness to use violence - it is not a word with positive connotations (Rosenblum 1981). The language used serves to emphasise the nature of Hamas as a *Villain*, creating moral distance between Hamas and the reader.

Yet, similarly to depictions in Al Jazeera, Hamas is frequently rendered voiceless in the Associated Press - however, unlike in Al Jazeera, the organisation is consistently painted as a *Villain* and so this silent rendering has a much more dramatic effect. There are seldom direct quotes used from Hamas, military or otherwise, and few discussions of Hamas aims and goals throughout the conflict. The superficiality of coverage and lack of context is not a phenomenon unique to reporting on Palestine or Gaza (Franks 2014: 8). However, declining to illustrate these aims, demands or context makes Hamas and Palestinian actions look fundamentally irrational (Barkho 2008: 24) - why launch rocket attacks on Israeli cities at all? This muteness is consistent with Saïd's critique of Western viewpoints and media representations of Arab people as Orientalist. Whilst Israeli military actions are consistently presented with their stated, rational reasons - such as 'restoring the peace and quiet' - Hamas military actions never are. In this sense, Hamas is ever more villainous by being fundamentally incapable of being either rational or peaceful - the organisation is fully Orientalised through its lack of voice (Saïd 1985: 40). Thus Hamas is dehumanised through its Orientalisation, with no possibility of appealing to the reader's moral sensibilities - recalling Barkho's (2008) findings that Palestinians are portrayed as irrational. Their aims are not legitimised as the Israeli military's goals are.

The nature of Hamas as a *Villain* is clearly communicated to the readers by focusing on the threat the group poses to Israeli citizens - potential *Victims* - via rocket attacks. Although the

actual death and damage caused by the rockets were small compared to the destruction Palestinians faced - leading to the deaths of three Israeli civilians, injuring about 150 and damaging several homes and a gas station - the potential for harm caused by rocket attack is repeatedly focused on within the articles. One such example that highlights this clearly is below,

With its new reach, Hamas's rockets now have an estimated 5 million people - more than half of Israel's population - in range. (Associated Press, 9 July 2014)

This statement is a rich 'thick' moral statement. Everything it describes is true. However, it contains both a supreme *Villain* - Hamas - and 5 million Israeli *Victims*. The potential deaths of 5 million people, or half of Israel's population, is clearly an unacceptable threat. This sentence is at pains to inform the reader that 5 million Israeli *Victims* are being threatened by Hamas rockets, heavily dramatising the potential damage the rockets could do and escalating the perception of what is at stake in stopping rocket attacks by military force. Given Hamas's consistent labelling as a 'terrorist' organisation, devoid of morals and committed to the 'destruction' of the Israeli state, this statement further underscores the potential *Victims* the *Villain* is capable of harming. Thus moral distance is created between the reader and Hamas.

By dramatising the threat in this way - and consistently reporting on failed rocket attacks, air raid sirens and minor damage to targets in Israel - the articles frame the Hamas rocket attacks using what Wolfsfeld describes as 'Victims Mode' (2008: 403). By positioning the Hamas rocket attacks inside the frame of 'Victims Mode', the Associated Press situates reader sympathies with the Israeli citizens threatened by these rockets. Thus, the reader is left with an overwhelming impression of the extreme dangers the Israeli citizens face - comparatively drowning out the greatly magnified peril Palestinian citizens find themselves in.

The spectre of these rocket attacks are the reason the Israeli state consistently gives for launching an aerial assault on Gaza, often noted by the Associated Press in statements such as the below,

Israel has said it is defending its citizens against attack from Gaza by hitting Hamas rocket launchers, weapons storage sites and military tunnels. (Associated Press, 29 July 2014)

This seemingly unbroken, unquestioning line of reasoning - that in order to defend Israeli civilians, attacking Gaza is the only rational response - is highly reminiscent of Barthes' myths, a "monological discourse" by which military action is the clear, obvious, natural flow of events stemming from rocket attacks (Robinson 2005: 34). Yet if one unpicks this idea, there is no natural flow of events that need to follow from Hamas rocket attacks - and discussing the Israeli actions in this way obscures the context of why these rocket attacks might have emerged - mainly Israel placing Gaza under an illegal blockade, found by the UN to violate international humanitarian law by implementing collective punishment. This statement by the Associated Press reminds us that all wars are presented by combatants as sensible, unavoidable wars of defence first - never as outright aggression or territorial land grabs (Carruthers 2011: 16). What is striking about the Associated Press discourse on the apparent Israeli narrative of self-defence by attacking Gaza is that neither Hamas or Palestinians generally are afforded the same assumption of a right to defend themselves from Israeli military incursions, a trend consistent in Western media outlets (Ross 2003: 60). The threat that the Hamas *Villains* pose against Israeli civilian *Victims* thus justifies the means the Israeli military chooses to put an end to the rocket launches - but the intense Israeli military assault and illegal blockade of Gaza never apparently justifies Hamas rockets.

Concluding Discussion

The analytical findings tell a simple story, underpinned by multiple complex phenomena. The standpoint of the news organisation influences the level of emotionalism and types of 'thick' moral statements found in their reporting. Two moral categories emerge - that of the *Victim* and *Villain*. The level of emotionalism around either of these categories creates a moral proximity for the readers, corresponding to the national group the news outlet culturally identifies with. Al Jazeera depicts Palestinians as *Victims,* subtly morally aligning itself with the Palestinian nation. The Associated Press does the same, displaying its ideological stance of closeness to the Israeli nation by depicting Israelis as *Victims*.

By consistently painting both nations into either one of these categories, it is exceedingly difficult to notice this phenomenon without direct comparison - or to extend sympathy to the cultural 'Other' in the news coverage. This warping of coverage to suit audience cultural preferences distorts how the conflict is seen from afar, humanising one group whilst dehumanising another.

By reporting on Palestinian deaths in an *Emergency* and *Ecstatic* news fashion, replete with 'thick' moral descriptions (Putnam 1992) of children dying and schools being bombed, Al Jazeera consistently creates a relationship of close emotional and moral proximity between its readers and Palestinians. At the same time, by reporting on Israeli deaths in an *Adventure* news style, it creates a relationship of distant moral proximity between its audience and Israelis. In this way, Al Jazeera depicts Palestinians as *Victims,* by creating moral proximity with Palestinian deaths and pain, simultaneously encouraging a moral distance with Israelis through cold factual descriptions. However, when it comes to creating *Villains* in the narrative, Al Jazeera doesn't obviously demonise either the Israeli military or Hamas (or any other actors).

The Associated Press, on the other hand, takes a different approach. This news agency reports on Israeli deaths in the *Emergency* news style, humanising the demises even of soldiers and bringing them morally close to the readers. Its reporting on Palestinian deaths is more complex - usually portrayed in the *Adventure* news style, with minimal detail, but occasionally punctuated by intense flashes of *Ecstatic* news - yet never in a way that dominates the article. These *Ecstatic* news fragments are cotton padded into a *Defensive Mode* of reporting, rationally explaining away (and reducing the emotional and moral proximity experienced by the reader) the deaths of Palestinians to focus on the military narrative. In this way, Palestinian deaths are dehumanised, reduced to details that are a part of the reporting - not the main event. The articles, lacking actual mass casualties but retaining a focus on the Israeli nation as a *Victim*, creates a narrative where Hamas emerges as an arch *Villain*. Hamas threats and rockets turn Israeli civilians into potential *Victims*, in a way that brings the reader morally closer to their potential suffering and fear.

There are moral consequences for the news outlets' differing discourses surrounding the conflict. The idea of 'objective' reporting is show to be powerfully overlaid by journalists' clear indications on the relative moral value of either party's humanity. This is done through 'thick' moral descriptions and a complex process of humanisation and dehumanisation demonstrated through the level of emotionalism accorded to *Death* and wrongdoing accorded to *Villains*. This matters for several reasons.

Firstly, these portrayals challenge cosmopolitan ethics, pollute the mediapolis and influence public opinion, potentially (though not necessarily) influencing public policy. Secondly, news agencies continue to dominate the market of news generation and are only increasing in influence. Their standpoints matter hugely in terms of crafting a view of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land - a standpoint that has been contested in previous decades as being overtly pro-Western. Thirdly, whilst this level of analysis reveals the dehumanisation of sufferers and a clear partiality in terms of emotional language around either Palestinians / Israelis in both news outlets, the average person does not deploy this kind of thinking when casually browsing through the news. 'Thick' moral concepts are far more difficult to spot than 'thin' ones, where actions are simply described in terms like 'good' or 'bad'. Yet, 'thick' moral statements are omnipresent in reporting. The level of media literacy required to

perceive this is unreasonably high, rendering this kind of partiality invisible and even obscured by a veil of presumed 'objectivity'.

A polluted mediapolis influences public opinion

The creation of relationships of emotional and moral proximity between reader and Palestinians / Israelis in both the Associated Press and Al Jazeera is part of the construction of the mediapolis. In other words, these portrayals, populated by 'thick' moral statements, construct people's view of the world in a profound way - particularly their view of distant Others and their ranking in the moral order of the world (Silverstone 2006). The mediapolis is the only site in which many people will have a kind of representation or contact with those that live in far-flung places, and consequently the vision presented of them has enormous influence on people's opinions.

In the ideal world dreamt of by some cosmopolitans, the ability of new media and journalism to bring distant Others and realities much closer to domestic audiences will bring humanity itself closer together, recognising difference but inspiring a deeper sense of care for those that we do not know, now that their suffering is visible to all (Chouliaraki 2013, Beck 2006).

Yet this nearly utopian ideal is undermined by the evidence at hand. Journalists consistently make 'thick' moral statements that create a hierarchy of human worth. By creating a relationship of distant emotional proximity between the reader and the cultural Other, subtle yet clear moral judgements are made on the relative value of human lives. This pattern fits into the 'pollution' that Silverstone conceptualises as growing in the mediapolis - a failure to represent the out of reach Other with proper distance, exaggerating difference and neglecting the duty of care that it ethically incumbent on news networks (Silverstone 2006: 46).

Whilst the stream of 'thick' moral statements assigning more or less value to human life constitutes pollution of the mediapolis, there is an alternative cosmopolitan view that

provides ethical backing for this kind of reporting - namely, that people's basic obligations must be partial to those closest to us - including those in our nation (Appiah 2007: 101). Otherwise, the moral burden of knowing all the suffering in the world is too much to reasonably bear. Could this apply to not just your nation, but your political allies? In this sense, the reporting stance on creating relationships of emotional and moral proximity makes sense - with Al Jazeera reporting favourably on Palestinians (close allies of Qatar), and the Associated Press doing the same for Israelis as close allies of the United States. This also slots in neatly with the theory around contextual objectivity (Iskander and El-Nawawy 2004) - news organisations are fulfilling their moral obligations to their audiences report in a more sympathetic way about allies than Others. Perhaps it is too optimistic to assume that new media technologies would transcend all human difference to create a cosmopolitan culture of caring for those seen as far away - given the tendency of satellite TV to only bring together "multi-country markets linked by geography, language and culture" (Chouliaraki 2008: 330).

How the media portrays the Other matters very much indeed from a public opinion perspective. It perhaps particularly matters as regards the Israel-Palestine conflict, where audiences have consistently demonstrated in both the British and American context that they do not understand that the Palestinians are under occupation - not the other way around (Philo and Berry 2004 and Lewis 2001: 133). However public opinion cannot be taken for granted as fundamentally driving government foreign policy, as vigorous debates over the 'CNN Effect' amply demonstrate (Franks 2014, Carruthers 2011, Robinson 2005). Yet it is still likely that public opinion does at least help shape a measure of foreign policy in truly complex manner, filtered through elite proclivities, polls, and news frames (Entman 2004: 21).

'Objective' news agencies dehumanise the suffering of Others

The dominance of Western news agencies in the global media landscape is not a new phenomenon, but a complex array of factors leading to news organisations having an outsize reliance on a subscription to one of the big three Western news agencies is (Boumans 2016:

11). Thus, these news agencies have an even more outsize influence in portraying distant 'Others' - as does the Associated Press's depiction of Palestinians.

These agencies still aim for a standard of professional 'objectivity' that prioritises facts over values and rationality over emotion (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016: 3). Yet this simplistic binary is not borne out by the analysis of the articles in this thesis - there is a clear level of emotionalism ascribed to parties deemed to be culturally 'closer' to the readers, indicating who is a *Victim* and who is simply an 'Other'. In the case of the Associated Press, the 'Others' are Palestinians - with their suffering reported on in a manner characterised by *Adventure News* and 'Defensive Mode'*,* serving to erase the humanity of their pain, creating moral distance between them and the reader. This distinction is made all the clearer by reporting on the minimal (comparatively speaking) Israeli deaths in the sympathy-inducing *Emergency* news fashion, and emphasising the threat the Hamas *Villain* poses to potential Israeli *Victims*.

The standpoints of these agencies have often been criticised. Dubbed 'media imperialism' by representatives of countries in the era of struggles for independence from old empires, aggrieved diplomats denounced the endemic promotion of Western viewpoints and government policy objectives (Boyd-Barrett 1981: 250). Given that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is often characterised as colonial in nature (Saïd 1985), one could say that this trend continues in the Associated Press, through a subtle but systematic hierarchy of moral value prioritising Israeli lives over Palestinians'.

In journalism, as in other fields of life, emotional language creates a relationship of proximity between the reader and the subject. Indeed, it has been argued on a philosophical level that within language, it is impossible to disentangle 'facts' and 'values' (Putnam 2002: 34). In journalism, this philosophical argument becomes potent with implications. Despite journalism's normative claims towards detached objectivity (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016: 3), we have seen that emotion does come into play for those that are deemed worthy of it - often those culturally close to us. Conversely, overtly rational language and a reliance on 'facts' and statistics creates moral distance. This tendency by the Associated Press to deploy rational language in 'Defensive Mode' reporting (Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy 2008: 404) around

the deaths of Palestinians creates what Bauman terms 'social distance' (1989: 184). Working against the creation of a moral relationship of proximity by being utterly rational in descriptions of death and dehumanising their suffering, the readers of the Associated Press experience a diminished sense of moral responsibility towards Palestinians. In a situation where the people of Gaza were grossly outgunned by the Israeli military, with no possibility of taking refuge due to the military blockade, the erasure of their suffering via rational language within a news agency with global reach and outsize influence on opinion making matters enormously.

This erasure of suffering does not only matter morally, it has 'real world' outcomes. The trajectory that Gaza is on is dire. Already 'de-developing', officials estimate that the territory will be 'uninhabitable' by 2020 (Linshi 2015). Analysts of the conflict frequently postulate that the reason the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land has lasted for so long is that there is no penalty that Israel must pay to do so - the country is supported by its Western allies to the hilt (Thrall 2017). In particular, the United States sends over three billion dollars of 'military aid' to Israel every year. The American public is not well informed on the dynamics of the conflict - when questioned on which nation received the most condemnations in the United Nations for occupying 'other people's land', respondents believed that it was the Palestinians - when in fact the correct answer is Israel (Lewis 2001: 133). Palestinians do not occupy any other nation's land at all. The systematic dehumanisation as seen in the Associated Press articles constitutes contamination of the mediapolis. It means that the American public may never be well informed on the occupation, or why there is no end in sight.

Dehumanisation rendered invisible without close analysis

The results of the analysis above are the product of months of research, reading, theorising, careful qualitative content analysis, symptomatic reading and comparison. Different news outlets carefully tailor their coverage to audience expectations in the guise of contextual objectivity (Iskander and El-Nawawy 2004) , subtly dehumanise the suffering of those

considered Other and skilfully strengthen reader identification with those deemed culturally closer through the use of emotional language. Here, the moral aspect of how the conflict is constructed in the mediapolis has been examined - and dehumanisation of the Other emerges as a key theme (Silverstone 2006).

Yet this is not a conclusion that the average reader flicking through an assortment of news stories over time will naturally come to. Indeed, most people lack the "discursive resources" to come to these sorts of conclusions (Lewis 2001: 132). Nonetheless, the moral messages the articles transmit remain the same - and there is reason to believe that readers will be influenced by them. Readers are immersed in a mediapolis in which moral messages like this are repeated so often they appear like Barthes' myths - self-evident and natural (1973).

Typically, audiences have access to a relatively small amount of information around current events. Unable to dedicate the resources to parsing through information and come to carefully weighted conclusions, they must instead process events through an "associative framework", where some countries symbolise the role of the "bad guy" and are associated with negative events, whether these are factually correct or not (Lewis 2001: 132). Thus indications of whom might play the *Villain* of the news article hold particular sway.

Media literacy researchers declare that modern mass media saturates the average person with uncountable numbers of messages every day, and in order to cope people operate on autopilot - but at the price of absorbing these messages and allowing them to influence beliefs and assumptions about the world (Potter 2018: 4). Furthermore, people tend to underestimate how much these messages personally influence them - with one study finding that only 12% of people strongly believed that the media had a 'personal impact' on them, whilst simultaneously 80% believed that media greatly influenced society as a whole (Silverblatt et al. 2014: 6) - a clear contradiction or belief that as an individual, one is immune to what everyone else is influenced by.

Absorbing these messages is not without peril. Particularly in times of violent conflict, journalists have time and time again been shown to mould themselves into a 'supportive posture' for the warmaking of national elites, uncritically relying on government

sources for an 'objective' report on the conflict (Carruthers 2011: 7). It is no surprise that news outlets tend to create "culturally ethnocentric" content in wartime, but when people do not seek news from outside their own cultural sphere this renders this ideological predilection practically invisible to the average citizen (Wolfsfeld, Frosh and Awabdy 2008: 404). This problem becomes particularly acute during military clashes. States have a long history of using media to promote the most dastardly deeds of the enemy, often involving desecration of the dead - such as the British fabrication of German factories melting down bodies for glycerine during World War One (Carruthers 2011: 35). During the Gaza conflict, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared whilst being interviewed by CNN that "[Hamas] use telegenically dead Palestinians for their cause. They want the more dead, the better" (Associated Press, 21 July 2014). Using the dead cynically for TV is of course behaviour worthy only of a true *Villain*. Without knowing that desecration of the dead is a typical device employed governments with an agenda to mobilise feelings of outrage by the public, a casual reader may take at face value Netanyahu's statement.

Going further

The implications of this study are manifold and merit further investigation. The research asks profound questions around the practical implications of journalistic 'objectivity' when it becomes clear that although the 'facts' might not be in dispute, readers are guided through 'thick' moral statements to perceive either Palestinians or Israelis as the true *Victims* of the conflict. This is done via the emotional language accorded to their *Deaths* and the presence of a *Villain* within the text. Which national group the reader is pushed to identify with depends on the news outlets' standpoint and their own audiences' preferences. Yet this is not just about identifying with one national group over the other. The reporting is steeped in implicit moral judgements, obscuring the humanity of either Palestinians or Israelis, and contributing to mediapolis pollution. An area that needs further investigation is to what degree are these different discourses steered by different dominant national elites. Whilst this conflict might provide the starkest example, there are many others that need careful analysis.

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Appendix

Sample Qualitative Document Analysis Protocol

- Date: 9 July

- Outlet: Associated Press

- Length (words): 1214

- Title: Rockets hit Israeli heartland as offensive begins

- Emphasis: Rocket attacks on Israel, Israeli military action

- Main Topics (describe):

<u>Israeli military action & preparation</u>
Lead: Israel on Tuesday launched its largest offensive in the Gaza Strip in nearly two years, carrying out a blistering aerial assault on scores of targets
Lead: Israel mobilised forces along the border for a possible invasion
While Israel said it attacked more than 150 sites across Gaza
Source / Quote: PM Benjamin Netanyahu said continued rocket attacks on Israeli communities would not be tolerated
As Israel built up forces along the border, the government authorised the army to activate up to 40,000 reservists

<u>Rocket fire on Israeli citizens / cities</u>
Headline: Rockets hit Israeli heartland as offensive begins
Lead: As Gaza militants unleashed salvos on cities including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv
The militants fired about 160 rockets at Israel, including a strike that reached the northern city of Hadera for the first time
Source / Quote: PM Benjamin Netanyahu said continued rocket attacks on Israeli communities would not be tolerated
Rocket fire from Gaza has increased in recent days

<u>Israeli attacks on Hamas</u>
Lead: The offensive set off the heaviest fighting between Israel and the Islamic militant group Hamas since an eight day battle in November 2012

<u>Series of events leading to conflict</u>
Tensions have been rising since Palestinian militants kidnapped three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank on June 12

<u>Condemnation of Hamas</u>
BN: Hamas terrorists and other terrorist groups inside Gaza

<u>Geopolitical position of Hamas and threats</u>
Israel and Hamas are bitter enemies that have engaged in numerous rounds of fighting over the years

- How are Israelis presented as sufferers? (Describe)

<u>References to death</u>
The situation deteriorated last week after the bodies of the Israeli youths were found

<u>References to injury</u>
Police said there were no injuries

<u>References to potential threats</u>
Lead: As Gaza militants unleashed salvos on cities including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv
 - militants is pejorative
The militants fired about 160 rockets at Israel, including a strike that reached the northern city of Hadera for the first time
- New threat!
Rocket fire from Gaza has increased in recent days
In southern Israel, hundreds of thousands of citizens were ordered to stay close to home because of the rockets
Attempted rocket strikes et off air raid sirens in Israel's two largest cities
Militants twice fired rockets at tel aviv, Israel's commercial capital, sending people scurrying for cover
Three rockets landed in the Jerusalem area, and police said there were no injuries
One rocket exploded in the northern city of Hadera about 100 km from Gaza, the farthest distance a rocket from Gaza has reached so far.
Hamas rockets now have an estimated 5 million people - more than half of Israel's population - in range
    - Really hammering that point home - despite the fact that no one has been injured or died.
The US State Department condemned the rocket fire on Israeli civilian, defended Israel's right to protect itself

<u>References to youth</u>
Tensions have been rising since Palestinian militants kidnapped three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank on June 12
    - Not named as settlers.
The situation deteriorated last week after the bodies of the Israeli youths were found
    - Youth is key as Chouliaraki says

Emotive language

Sensory descriptions
With the second [rocket] being shown on live TV, as a winding plume of smoke followed the interceptor into the black skies, culminating with a flash
- Interesting that this rocket is described in such a sensory and exciting way - one that didn't hurt anyone.
Two distant booms were heard from the city centre

Immediacy of temporality
Sending people scurrying for cover

Agency of sufferers
Sending people scurrying for cover
The Jerusalem municipality said it was opening special bomb shelters
"IF we need to go inside in a ground operation, we will do it" - Def Minister

Acting on their fate
"We will not stop anything until the rocket firing ends"
" Asked by Channel 2 if there were any efforts underway to reach a cease-fire, he said: "not now".

Other

● How are Palestinians presented as sufferers? (Describe)

References to death

Lead: '…carrying out a blistering aerial assault on scores of targets and killing 25 people in what officials called an open ended operation aimed at ending weeks of heavy rocket fire'
       - no details whatsoever. Adventure news as far as Chouliaraki is concerned. Also, linking those 25 people's deaths with ending rocket fire - we don't know who they were or whether that is even true…
Palestinian medics reported at least 25 dead, including six killed in an airstrike that flattened an apartment building in southern Gaza and set off widespread panic
- No humanising details. No focus on youth. No idea whether they were civilians or fighters or what. However, some sensory language in 'flattened' and references to panic, a human emotion…
A Palestinian teenager was abducted and burned to death in what Palestinians believe was a revenge attack

Horrible details, youth
Palestinian medical officials said six people, including two children, were killed.
- Still very few details here.
Screaming Palestinians took away motionless bodies

References to injury

References to potential threats

References to youth
A Palestinian teenager was abducted and burned to death in what Palestinians believe was a revenge attack

Horrible details, youth
And crying mothers held small children as they ran away
Palestinian medical officials said six people, including two children, were killed.

Emotive language
Panicked residents fled, shouting 'God is great'.
- Description of emotions and action, but some distancing - why are they shouting this? To a western audience its not associated with good things.
Some had bloody faces
Screaming Palestinians took away motionless bodies

Sensory descriptions
In its fiercest attack, an airstrike flattened the home of a Hamas militant
Reducing the concrete structure into a smouldering pile of rubble
Some had bloody faces
- Focusing on the face - invites us to contemplate the sufferer's world as Chouliaraki says

Immediacy of temporality

Agency of sufferers
Fearing an Israeli ground operation, many residents from areas near the border moved to stay with relatives living deeper inside Gaza

Other

- Who is presented as a Hero? Villain? Fool? (Describe)

Hero

Villain
In Gaza, Abu Obeida, a masked spokesman for Hamas' military wing
"Which is sworn to the destruction of the Jewish state"
Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007 from the rival forces of President Mahmoud Abbas

Fool
Israel's military said it had called the home shortly before the airstrike to warn civilians to leave, something it has done in past fighting as well
- Palestinians for not running away

- Who has coverage that is framed with empathy? (Describe)

Palestinians

Crying mothers held small children as they ran away

- Who has coverage that is framed with distance? (Describe)

Palestinian militants

Kidnapped three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank

Hamas

In Gaza, Abu Obeida, a masked spokesman for Hamas' military wing

"Which is sworn to the destruction of the Jewish state"

"In the face of this aggression, we affirm that the Zionist enemy should not dream of calm and stability"

Bitter enemies

- Sources:

Israeli military

Palestinian medics

"Prime Minister Netanyahu"

- Assumption of Israel? That is actually interesting. Abbas is referred to as "Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas"

Hamas

Lt Col Peter Lerner - Israeli military

Minister for internal security - Yitzhak Aharonovitch

US State Department

Abu Obeida - the zionist enemy

Ban Ki-moon

Arab League Chief Nail Elaraby

- Themes:

Israeli citizens increasingly threatened by rocket fire

Israeli military reacts and increases offensive (defensive manoeuvres)

International community condemns rocket fire

- Frames: Israel under attack and defends itself
  Israel targets Hamas

- Research Notes:

Doesn't say the West Bank is occupied

Doesn't say that the youths were also settlers

Hamas is not described as under blockade

Palestinian injuries not reported

Where is Abbas? Not quoted. Made voiceless.

Sparing details on the Palestinian deaths - you don't know whether they were civilians or what. Implies not.
Assumed 'Israel's right to defend itself' - but not the other way round.

Sample Analytical Coding Scheme

Al Jazeera-Death			
		Palestinians	Israelis
Adventure News **None for the palestinians and purely adventure / defensive news for the Israelis**	Adventure news	none	**Al Jazeera 25.7** Concl: Two Israeli civilians have been killed by fire from Gaza since the offensive began. The total number of Israeli soldiers killed since the start of the military assault stands at 32. One more soldier has been listed as missing and is believed to be dead. **Al Jazeera & Agencies 29.7** The United Nations on Monday called for an 'immediate ceasefire' in the fighting that has already killed more than 1,040 Palestinians, 43 Israeli soldiers and three civilians on the Israeli side. **Al Jazeera 11.8** Sixty-four Israeli soldiers have also been killed, along with two Israeli civilians and a Thai worker.

			Al Jazeera 14.8 Sixty four Israeli soldiers and three Israeli civilians have also been killed. **Al Jazeera & Agencies 15.8** On the Israeli side, three civilians have been killed by rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. This fighting has also left 64 Israeli soldiers dead, according to the Israeli military
Emergency News - seems to appear when it is 'Al Jazeera and agencies'. tensions in their own 'we don't use agencies' paradigm.	Emergency News	**Al Jazeera & Agencies 09.07 -** Lead: "At least 27 dead and 130 wounded in airstrikes on strip, as Palestinian president appeals for international help" Two children, two females, and one adult male were also reported killed in the attack. At least five children were among 12 others killed in Gaza on Tuesday, Palestinian officials said. "Of those killed on Tuesday, seven died in an airstrike in the town of Khan Yunis, south of Gaza." "At least four were killed in a drone strike that hit a vehicle in Al-Wahda street in the centre of Gaza" (Al Jazeera, 9 July 2014). **Al Jazeera & Agencies 12.07** "At least 105 people have been killed as Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip enters its fourth day, with the latest attack killing five people in Rafah while rescuers were trying to free those trapped in the ruins of a building." (Al Jazeera, 12 July 2014) **Al Jazeera - 25.7** Headline: UN shelter in Gaza	**Al Jazeera & Agencies 09.07 -** Israelis ran for cover as sirens sounded in Tel Aviv in the deepest attack from Gaza since hostilities flared three weeks ago after the abduction and killing of three young Israeli settlers.

		'struck by Israeli shells' Lacks visuals **Al Jazeera & Agencies 29.07** Headline: Children killed in Gaza playground shelling Lead: Eight people, including seven children, died following missile fire on a park inside the Shati refugee camp on the edge of Gaza city, medics said. Visuals, kids playing, the Al-Helou family **Al Jazeera & Agencies 15.8** headline: Gazans return to ruined homes as truce holds	
Ecstatic News - seems to appear when sources are JUST Al Jazeera.	Ecstatic news	**Al Jazeera 21.07** Lead - At midday, horrific images were aired on Al Jazeera where corpses of burn women and children were lying on the streets of the Shujayea as a result of the Israeli bombardment. - timelink, specific - pejorative, emotive term of 'horrific images' - focus again on women and children, sensory 'corpses of burnt…' - lying on the streets - sensory - square responsibility on Israel **Al Jazeera 4.8** Lead - Under continuous Israeli shelling, Palestinians in south Gaza face a shortage of space and supplies to bury loved ones. - immediate temporality - super emotive language - agency - fate Lead - Umm Mohammed Abu Sada uses her headscarf to block the stench of bodies, some of which have been lying outside for days. - highly sensory	

		Al Jazeera 14.8 Lead - only a few hundred metres from Nasser Hospitals morgue, Palestinians are breathing new life into the war ravaged Gaza Strip	
Empathy Framing			
Distance Framing			**Al Jazeera & Agencies 09.07 -** Israelis ran for cover as sirens sounded in Tel Aviv in the deepest attack from Gaza since hostilities flared three weeks ago after the abduction and killing of three young Israeli settlers - settler is a distance term... but then also youth...
Defence Reporting			See adventure news
Victim Reporting			